

# Utriculi

Issue 1 Part 1

2024

# Utriculi

## Issue 1 Part 1

edited by harry k stammer  
contributing editor Mark Young

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## **Acknowledgments**

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Special thanks to Jean Vengua for her cover art.

Special thanks to Mark Young.

**Re-View**

Revaluation

mentioning inconvenience / IS  
(((not))) honed hatred)) . . . decadent idiots  
are natural . . . / intoxicant ad-vantage point / vanish  
point.  
noon-e notices                      their Selves /

~~laws against hatred are acknowledged~~  
~~in an earplug/hearbug kin-d of way~~

/ IS / ladia majora, frenulum, under  
the hood is a roomful of blood so please don't look there because  
sometimes

[scene missing]

wrecked trombones  
/ bloodflow regoes  
the rigors  
of blow /

[scene stolen]

[scene spontaneously combusted]

intense medioc— — —rity  
patternistic perceptions  
and scorpions / and spiderbombs

*partial petite damaged animals*  
subletting the rooms of my life  
to phony-ass lyric poets / he thinks

the pinnacle of art is beneath him /

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*only* because he knows  
how to laugh at him Self / ...

[scene pawned for drug money]

/ the first immoralist in a.n. *unintelligible*  
book Human, All Too Human = HAH [48 Crestwood Lane] =  
cold thoughts for the cold thinker in the cold shower... / ...  
{split}

Mr. Untiedshoes keeps track of the noon moods  
in a notebook halffilled w/ hatred hewn  
and the insight only an imbecile on an imbicycle can bring /  
many valves turnt stupidly as to believe  
all Romantic writers were lacking an aesthetic value  
during their **by(e)gone** days  
of the contemporary rationale of modernity /  
don't ask me! /  
["fuck retro anything" quoth the Maynard].

## Like Actors Acting

War for waR  
and

Art for arT—

sake of, the:

to be cleaver

to be imaginative

to seize the day

to let the egO control the estimable —*mind's eye*—

forever and perfectly shackled

by trying to yield the praise of others

as the Self drains down

the gutter of existence,

bled out by an army of sycophants.



## The Death of Death

A death-head grinning faux security  
and I've had enough of the poisonous endfullness  
of the insidious consistency snuffing out the essence  
of every one of us into altered perceptions.

It makes a forgetful assumption that death is real when, in Truth,  
death does not exist. Death is not death but only the loss of the brief  
husk of humanity our vibratory Sentience cul-de-saced us in as a  
temporarily manifest personified Consciousness. There is no death.  
We've always been alive. See-through faded these theories have  
become more than "contentions" in my mind's eye made of yarn and  
Vitamultin. We are freer than we think. We must unadorn the *down*  
and festoon the *up* with sparklers and bottlerockets to gigantify the  
luminous and phosphorescent incandescence of the positively fulfilling  
ignition of transcendence.

## 87 Continuous Circles

*porloigner/prolonger*—"to put off"

*por-* element eminence of *prō*, "for, in favor of" while *-loigner* is from  
the *longus*, "long." Prolong doublets. The source  
of sirloin in sea**WATER**.

First recorded on 8-track in Estonia  
in the early 77th century—>

*blind confusion—blind concussion—blind institutions—blind raging  
and raggedy religions—>*

**EXAMPLE O●●●over the Hatebow did blow—>**

>>>>>>halting a man under the pretense of asking directions to the  
closest

theatre playing

*Debbie Doesn't Do the Alamo*

under the gross guise of

the fact the man had the sweet odor

of rusted week-old onions

upon not simply

his clothes

but **EManating from**

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the pores of his skin—>  
all this charade  
for such a cheap thrill.

## Bigwindowcrash

Typocopydom forescrumskin inked mammoth  
lionized negative ions sayishing  
the matchsticken daylight with prescient proverbials  
powerfullypounded unto the silkenwax essence  
prevalenting the present tensitry  
of the Here and Nowismness.

Heath Brouger is the Editor-in-Chief of Concrete Mist Press and co-poetry editor of *Into the Void*, winner of the 2017 and 2018 Saboteur Awards for Best Magazine. He received *Taj Mahal Review's* 2018 Poet of the Year Award and is a multiple Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net nominee. He was awarded the 2020 Wakefield Prize for Poetry and has published 11 books of prose and poetry. After spending over two years editing the work of others, he is ready to get back into the creative driver's seat.

**Crossfall In Voluminous Descent\***

'All of me

Why not take all of me'

careen skin multiply accelerate fathom

depth drive

spatial cleave

swathes of history

clipped de-

canted a maneuver

imperiled yet unavoidable      flexion

stretch      a claimless elongation

cured of sycophancy bivouac bombard trolley hop *cease/release*

in the thrall

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of venture

these perturbations

embraceable

bedlam regurgitant fractious bamboozle derail tipsy disjunctive

vertiginous sotted labyrinthine

Crossfall in propositional slur, auspicious,

omnidirectional

aspiring

\* Crossfall: "The transverse sloping of a roadway toward the shoulder or gutter on either side." Outpouring from this term are notions of *suspension, liminality, threshold, meander, trespass, flaneur, rebellion -- off the beaten track, the roadway, the routed -- passageway, transition, initiation, & more.*

**HELLER LEVINSON's** most recent books are *QUERY CABOODLE, SHIFT GRISTLE* (Black Widow Press, 2023), *THE ABYSSAL RECITATIONS* (Concrete Mist Press, 2024) & *VALVULAR ASH* (Black Widow Press, 2024). His book, *LURE*, won the "2022 Big Other Poetry Book Award." A recent review:

<https://sulfur-surrealist-jungle.com/2024/02/27/the-wild-poetics-of-questioning-in-heller-levinsons-work-by-mohsen-el-belasy/>

*Concept statement: These two poems are from a sequence. I asked other poets to provide me with a title; in turn, the poem would be dedicated to them, and I would write a poem around their title.*

**Afterlife as Trash**

for Julia Rose Lewis

We are  
evolutionary disposal, ethical emphasis distracted,  
earthy concept as prompt.  
our landscape reflects  
and shimmers  
as discalculated belief in a field filled with  
coreopsis or porches of marigolds.  
what light there is switches off, and the plastic lids,  
green/blue, slam in the wind  
and pull back to take the rain.  
we are  
the taken, discarded plastics,  
word root stasis, dug in the between  
and found as gray threads  
waiting to be turned over  
by some beak looking, not disturbed,  
nothing thought, part  
to be taken, left.

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### **Glass Dome**

for Lana Spendl

Shear, fall,  
to down, to slow, then faster, as static  
creation, small lightning heading down  
to green, an outside  
edge that unbecomes and turns mythic  
with translated words that veer as  
they tell  
the nothing that remains between.

When I began, I believed.

And now,

Trees, grasses at base, if found, an end,  
a down,  
though glass continues, a formation  
of varied types, reimagined in time,  
fall, translucent,

a through but solid. condensing  
with no direction, up, down, spinning.

I tried to remember a starting point,  
but the reality has been an all for me  
motion, clear through, no vision in reason,  
rare but our only point.  
clouded, spiral, blue, shaded, on a center not  
placed, a dome as seen thing  
in sliding or circling always alone.

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*Concept statement: This poem and the following one are built around the idea of mapping language's imagined space while intentionally pulling it away from any concept of reality. The speaker is "shutting the door" on "real" references and following only language.*

### **In Time, the Clicking**

The clicking continues with gears whirling,  
a symptom of our time.

We are lost in the sand,  
having stepped off the platform, shutting a door.

Nothing is new, but dust particles  
move forward into a future we understand.

### **Distinct**

I am slipping away  
pint by pint into an answer  
placed on a table  
covered with cloth. I draw the  
space on maps, and  
talk of energies trailing away from  
new fixed centers not  
covered in our geography or museums,  
not lined, charted, believed.  
Nodes, sequence formulas, limited waves gather  
in piles between us  
as the I turns collective you.

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**William Allegrezza** edits the press *Moria Poetry*. He has previously published many poetry books, including *Step Below: Selected Poems 2000-2015*, *Stone & Type*, *Cedar*, *Ladders in July*, *Fragile Replacements*, *Collective Instant*, *Aquinas and the Mississippi* (with Garin Cycholl), *Covering Over*, and *Densities, Apparitions*; two anthologies, *The City Visible: Chicago Poetry for the New Century* and *La Alteración del Silencio: Poesía Norteamericana Reciente*; seven chapbooks, including *Sonoluminescence* (co-written with Simone Muench) and *Filament Sense* (Ypolita Press); and many poetry reviews, articles, and poems. He founded and curated series A, a reading series in Chicago, from 2006-2010. He teaches at Indiana University Northwest.

**Sheila Murphy**

### Epistemology

I can't explain  
What you can't learn  
By improvising  
Listening

See-through memory  
Chokes back a facsimile  
Of smirking priest gimlet  
To break the ice

May I have this scansion  
Please will you agree  
To cavort near mares  
Pre-ride that we may sync

Features and benefits  
In the greased slide of  
Indelicate indifference  
Party-wide



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### Aladdin

Bar light's dim as rasp  
Toned tribulation softens  
The trajectory of gutter ball  
A vocal sprawl

Indelible indifference retrieves  
The line of code a fixative  
Relents a little bird that got in  
To the house is fluttering

A wonderful time but please not here  
It's incessant this pearl-rigged  
Diamonte clutch all pillowed  
Near the head wound silver

Although miniature when  
Girth would be needed  
For the paunch of solid  
Punch in the proper gut

### Make a Fuss Over

I tell everyone  
It's all you  
This covenant  
We've built by hand

I obey your obedience  
To me when someone asks  
I say it's all you though  
I willingly complied

And still your coat  
Of arms resplends  
Near you I am  
Royalty once removed

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Is this the same as  
PR agency  
Or love  
That's true

## Please Gendarme Me

Please gendarme me in your spare time remember  
I am small in stature despite a mind  
The size of Camelback Mountain rustly shining  
This window morning filled with grasp  
The threads of life I feel inventing me plus vice  
Versa when close to screens and paper  
De facto real estate with space to think and feel and write  
Despite no designated space I whisper gentle need  
For your presence here in my imaginary heart  
That perpetually repeats itself  
Into the hearts I love in tandem  
For the earth is very sandstone mild  
And handsome ready to be taken up and  
In

## Auto-Deciduous

There's a space (white oak  
Fractured (carapace  
A face I blond (gives way  
To hiding (place planted  
Freehand (graceful stroke  
Lifts recollection (is this  
Present tense (in situ  
Landslide (copious mistakes

**Sheila E. Murphy.** Murphy's most recent books are *Permission to Relax* (BlazeVOX Books, 2023) *October Sequence: Sections 1-51* (mOnocle-Lash Anti-Press, 2023), and *Sostenuto* (Luna Bisonte Prods, 2023). Murphy received the Gertrude Stein Award for *Letters to*

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*Unfinished J.* (Green Integer Press, 2003). Murphy's book titled *Reporting Live from You Know Where* (2018) won the Hay(na)Ku Poetry Book Prize Competition from Meritage Press (U.S.A.) and xPress(ed) (Finland).

Her Wikipedia page can be found

at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheila\\_Murphy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheila_Murphy)

Lynn Strongin

## ANCESTORS

*And what did I do to deserve such tenderness  
this early morning? Or to live this long  
(Brandi Nahali McDougall)*

I NEVER MET THEM, in red wool stickings like my thin, polio legs , over  
cobble, etched with snow  
No, I did not know  
My great grandparents, to take their hands; but as I write a poem their  
hand guides mine.

Irish *Aingeal* given to children to protect them.  
There was no Urban. Oil then, in St John,  
This was before the new land was sighted, the old

Left behind(yet never left behind they stand a row of tall dolls behind  
me. In hospitals, they protect me, and when nights obscure  
windowpanes:  
"What did I do wrong" As their eyes expressive

Pale hearts warmed their thin, aching bones on  
I never met them but they have made me play always to win.  
snow, bone-deep, I have back bone: I write: they know me. *I  
know them.*

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IT ROLLED OVER THE ROOF OF MY LIFE

The virus

Invisible

Like the planes flying over the roof of the world "The Hump  
vulnerable to engine failure  
To drive the unwanted, the enemy back. We were Separdim.

My theatre was rife with grapeshot..

On the return leg,

I was next to wiped out

Nobody heard my dream-shout  
over the roof the world.

*Girl answers phone while cracking ice in the fish shop*

SHE WAS NEW

She was cracking ice when the phone rang; she keeps break cubes.

This

cracked down on her world:

Answering the phone

Using the pickaxe

Writing the order with a blunt pencil

Fog rolling in, to boot: she was old there:

All she wanted was to let rain wash away the doll hospital, and to  
Drown her

And the fish shop with its mirrory steel counters

Destructing last night's denial, flicking the cigarette ashes on  
her lapel, her hand tremor increasing, left hand fourth finger which  
had worn the nicked engagement ring.

I LIFT ONE LETTER off the page, light as glass

Which? Page or alphabet letter?

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The Yiddish language floodin rooms in late noon sun:

On a good day following all the rain  
which grapeshot our tin roof.

The ladder of light on the ceiling is the one I climb down

Reflections of rungs, they crumble  
I haven't been outside for a year and a half

But voracious for books, I graze, reach up to them like a hungry giraffe  
on the

Put down the letter I had lifted: is it an "A" or a "Z"

"A" for Adorations, "Z" for zebra, the stripes of life which fold  
out, camouflaging refugees by sun.

### Lynn Strongin

Born in 1939 NYC to Ester-Jewish parents, raised in the arts. Went to Manhattan School of Music, then graduated Hunter College BA and MA Stanford. In over thirty anthologies and fifty journals. Nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in poetry, Strongin is an American poet who now lives in Canada.

**John RC Potter**

### Haiku: A Suite of Three

#### The Holy Land

Israel? Palestine?  
Holy Land! Unholy Hate!  
Yet much in common.

#### Left Too Soon

Those two left the room;  
my sisters departed Dodge.  
Memories remain.

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### You Are Love

Though not mine by blood,  
my day starts and ends with you.  
Allah, protect her.

**John RC Potter** is an international educator from Canada, living in Istanbul. He has experienced a revolution (Indonesia), air strikes (Israel), earthquakes (Turkey), boredom (UAE), and blinding snow blizzards (Canada), the last being the subject of his story, "Snowbound in the House of God" (Memoirist). His work has appeared most recently in The Serulian ("The Memory Box"), The Montreal Review ("Letter from Istanbul") & Erato Magazine ("A Day in May, 1965"). The author's story, "Ruth's World" was a Pushcart Prize Nominee. His gay-themed children's picture book, The First Adventures of Walli and Magoo, is scheduled for publication.

Website: <https://johnrcpotterauthor.com>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/JohnRCPotter>

Instagram: [John RC Potter \(@jp\\_ist\)](#)

**Seth Copeland**

### *Geiger Diptychs Series 1*

twine frays ][ pellucid flames

fence fate ][ weary scratch

mud muck ][ spring bleats

cattle bones ][ puddled grin

sheet barn ][ sway flap

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### *Geiger Diptychs Series 2*

gully mudchips [] corpse tools  
bull thistle [] glass scabs  
freezer dump [] afterbirth  
train car [] mineral chalk  
tan road [] raised nerve

### *Geiger Diptychs Series 3*

gluey slough rounds bends muddy glass glacial  
copse cutter worn tendril grave  
gashing sleep sharp night shocking  
sand creek called archetype death taut  
amber silvered hit and run a flannel shroud  
bridge fattens memory sister flowers chant  
name made cloth cross long jaggy rope slur  
feeds dries bleeds on

**Seth Copeland** is the author of *A Wichita Mountains Ontology* (Grieveland Press, forthcoming 2025) and the chapbook *Plug in the Mountain* (Yavanika Press, 2023). Originally from Oklahoma, he lives in Milwaukee.

### Virginia From The Bones Outward

The villagers had all returned to their homes. If you're all right, I am what they say I am. If not, their poems become mud and rain and tearing wind. Watch these gauges and let me know if anything goes wrong, OK? Someone from the academy must have recognized me despite my disguise. Individuals married and had children at random.

Their poems are as mud and rain and tearing wind. I'm trying to see what is happening with the roiling mass of bodies. Watch these gauges and let me know if anything goes wrong, OK? Someone from the academy must have recognized me despite my disguise. Something haunts her grey stooped figure from the bones outward. If you're all right, I am what they say I am. Individuals married and had children of a random. I'm trying to see what's happening with the roiling mass of bodies. The villagers had every one returned to their homes. If they hadn't, their poems would have become mud and rain and tearing wind. OK, watch these gauges and let me know if anything goes wrong. Something haunts her figure from the bones outward.

### To Kalon City

what was blank  
is still disputed  
language  
flies to To Kalon City

**Jeff Harrison** has publications from Writers Forum, Persistencia Press, and Furniture Press. He has e-books from BlazeVOX and Argotist Ebooks. His poetry has appeared in *An Introduction to the Prose Poem* (Firewheel Editions), *Noon: An Anthology of Short Poems* (Isobar Press), three Meritage Press hay(na)ku anthologies, *Sentence: a Journal of Prose Poetics*, *Otoliths*, *Moria*, *Indefinite Space*, and elsewhere.



**SOME EYES**

supply  
a false positive, though less  
frequently  
than smiles.  
As  
master  
listeners  
intuit, any  
voice reveals.  
When I sat alone today  
with my  
liver  
sandwich, it loved me unconditionally  
up to the final bite. Do not judge my  
likely  
value to your  
rising action until the lamp is  
spent, & you can only  
hear.

**REMAIN SEATED.**

Do not stack  
legacies on top of one another.  
Return the father  
to its original position. Administer  
a rapid heartbeat. Breathe nominally. If lungs demand more  
spirit, hack  
into a nearby eternity.

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A life vent may be  
underneath. Remain seated, greeting

emergency impact. Photography is  
forbidden during  
visible crisis.

Await destruction(s).

## THE EXTRAS

blindly, often  
obsequiously solicited praise.  
At last— former extras.

Adulation  
roosts  
on them. A human

kiss.

Not long until monotone  
plethora, fanatic condescension  
idolatry, ruptured relaxation  
lead to fabrication  
of glazed boozers  
& boor glaciers.

## LOSS

Isn't it rare to pin down a core  
demographic merely through  
public riffing? Intuitively to honor traffic  
laws  
of asexual seduction, to layer  
disruptive insinuations, leap

over audience will to thought.  
Cherished  
public furniture was soon t(h)rashed.

PTSD has taken  
wing across 4 time  
zones. *We're leering  
at a hole. in a mirror.* This  
loser

cannot  
conceive  
of any angle from which he could  
have lost  
or would ever lose.  
Unless in the privacy of the unconscious.

**Thomas Fink** has published 12 books of poetry-- most recently *Zeugma* (Marsh Hawk Press, 2022) and *A Pageant for Every Addiction* (Marsh Hawk, 2020), written collaboratively with Maya D. Mason. His *Selected Poems & Poetic Series* appeared in 2016. He is the author of *Reading Poetry with College and University Students: Overcoming Barriers and Deepening Engagement* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), as well as two books of criticism, and three edited anthologies. His work appeared in *Best American Poetry 2007*. Fink's paintings hang in various collections. He is Professor of English at CUNY-LaGuardia.

***Five sonnets from Urgency Reader***

**XV**

Been to any soon expecting in this  
way to want been to myself can't find you

sorry no other left to catches up  
your doing other all catches time lost

over hurry up so late before dreamed  
terrified down with rain fever cold

promises kept for what you now have for  
cover in beautiful nothing a sound

wandering as nothing now forget me  
here happened beautiful was nothing while

this breaking could say a while from the trees  
had anonymous dreams from singing to

expected safety and all over more  
edges by whatever went along now.

**XVI**

How appearance not led along gentle  
have already know not getting won't give

holding brighter no occasion be left  
swearing dark across together we are

passing fiery as saw to see recognize  
will not keep to this upon this way in

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broken waiting all night say burning see  
wild bones my bare insults allow when life

begins such across need all another  
will dying to take sudden breathing in

next breathing ambulance in surrender  
won't hear another witness in forgive

don't die don't remember by dignified  
memory afraid inside and will hold.

## XVII

Return to time to let control to go  
tonight no one is body be the case

healthy not under control together  
outside didn't want extending so does

getting clean already no where to go  
it's said suppose as alone even though

for long certain where are but loneliness  
remain knowing may on which remains time

believing had turned crazy trying true  
steady has overdue hope rolling been

judgment over day blows only graces  
hit wild all only love which shall only

see alone without keeps darkness did see  
judging sorrow safe in hungering light.

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### XVIII

Where celebrate doubt with me make what wants  
was not confirmation might be found lost

singing here alone would carry over  
lost again again won't many then fear

home none of unto trees shade unlikely  
holding ephemeral breaks me my arm

my fear don't know disease don't know voices  
have time my now will never no caress

not break will take maybe voices my mouth  
feeling no reason not impossible

with me now knows as knows me makeshift who  
has last questioned be having together

does to find close standing moments awkward  
knew at times how should this minimum know.

### XIX

Closer how much longer might if alone  
could my house out of there see nothing out

where does except be alone can't instead  
couldn't still lead back to worse before sleep

have attention used to fall close running  
out can take what underneath the limits

might if living in where else consolation  
from before can't be when going back was

ever trust holding won't be through so close  
blindly in wearing off everyone lost

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inside for weeks thrown in advice as yet  
still here reasoning human don't believe

why not am gone down now with loneliness  
down feels everyone how won't believe this.

These sequences of poems are playful remakings of the sonnet form. This project began with an invitation to participate in *14 Person Poem*, a sonnet-performance that poet Jeff Dolven created for the Whitney Museum. The experience of inhabiting the form ignited a multi-year obsession, and these poems are among what followed.

Their method of composition also follows a longstanding practice of "listening poems" (where words are captured one by one from the aural/linguistic environment), a practice interconnected with my study and experience of Zen Buddhism.

**Sal Randolph** is an artist and writer who lives in New York and works between language and action. She is the author of *The Uses of Art*, a memoir of encounters *with* works of art. Her poems have been featured in *BOMB*, *jubilat*, *Otoliths*, *Sound American*, and elsewhere; her artwork has appeared internationally at museums and in exhibitions including the Glasgow International, Ljubljana Biennial, Manifesta 4, and the São Paulo Biennial. Sal Randolph is a senior student of Roshi Enkyo O'Hara at the Village Zendo in New York.

## Installation Views

1.

Anxiety curtains  
the room.

It sounds  
like snow.

It looks  
like offal.

2.

Foregrounds, backgrounds  
grinding together.



## Utriculi

3.

Vocabularies comprising  
focal points  
shaving meaning.

4.

Thick catalogues  
of failed attempts  
at inclusion.

5.

Punctuation maps.  
Quarantined sentences.

Sexed lists.

Gendered piles.

## Utriculi

6.

Space of  
missed connections.

Space of  
unignited recognitions.

Space of  
poor decisions.

7.

Discarded, broken  
measuring devices:

gauges, rulers,  
calipers, meters,

levels, cups,  
spoons, tapes.

## Utriculi

8.

Tracings of  
feelings of being.

Tracings of feelings of being stretched.

Tracings of feelings of being entered.

Tracings of  
feelings of  
being lost.

9.

Boxes and  
boxes of

constellations of  
tiny museums of

unincorporated emotions



## Utriculi

So, you need to cover your market shares and diversify your portfolio,  
include such inanimate objects as license plates, captain's chairs,  
soil, vinegar,  
chewed rawhides.

The more you horde the less is at the disposal of the Disney corporation.

Hedge yourself from Disney's incursions or  
you will owe them residuals, a long-life time of curiosity, curves,  
shores, waves....

everything is owned by Disney and then it is not.

It depends on what day of the week the 7<sup>th</sup>, Mondays are  
crackers, vegetables, monocles, red strings, and  
forestry.

Tuesday is prawns, sporks, frugality, foreign matter.

**I'm hoping someone can finish this for me....**

Mute curls that's where  
form is frame of forgiveness but not its fulfillment  
blonde to the heavy sank into chide  
blossom of near  
who says you cannot be two?  
Mute curls that's why.  
Bold mollusk bivalve syndrome be  
as the unique coquet in underlength silk  
I have made you, you must go.  
Coming into existence is always a harm.  
Shared stretches of lean-tos and scurvy,  
A horse drawn pasture captured in  
Civil risks ante-bellum that dead  
is the one that can't make up their mind:  
Slave or master, confetti or shrapnel?  
What hues the room tobacco or

## Utriculi

optimism?

Mute curls that's how.

Shaft of light blooms rectangular  
skies motion through the weep  
as sadness is applied  
a poultice of worry and forts.

## Part 2

There's a smear on the ledge where the hyacinths once sat,  
A faux jade vase contained them.

## MELVILLE'S BLANK TOMBSTONE

What did he want (to have a child sinister in its  
abode but abandoned in its yaw  
Stretched for the term wave in hand a furnace of  
chalk harpoon to gnash wick against  
A candle isn't a vestment is it but the light sure 'nough is  
Here it is to write imagined literature for a future copasetic  
frequency maybe a chisel into though in wretched pieces  
against the drift and rocks make polio sized absences in  
the limb  
you fail \\  
\come on there's an aside there a joke yes sideeye  
as we are calming to the word for we make swarm drone  
in idle surge forward press and maybe the  
empty scroll is the figure we need no my gad it isn't for future  
use to pen chisel with its me Melville saying in death against you  
writers seeking alarm:  
"I would prefer not to."  
So why are you chiseling on my absence?

## **MY BRAIN. YOUR VAT.**

IF THERE IS SOME REASON TO ACCEPT THE IDEA, SOME BASIS FOR IT, I SUPPOSE, THAT WE “EXIST IN A VAT” SAY, A LA “THE MATRIX” EACH OF US IMMERSSED IN OUR SALINE FILLED TUBS, REVELING IN THE REALITY GENERATED FOR US, ENGAGED IN THE SUBJECTIVE ENTERPRISE OF WORLD BUILDING OR WORLD BEING BUILT FOR A PERSON THEN SAY THIS: WHETHER IT IS OR IS NOT OR IS NEITHER IS NOT REALLY THE CASE HERE, NOT AS TRUTH BUT THE SUGGESTION THAT IFF OUR SUBJECTIVITY CONCOCTS AN ENVIRONMENT AND A NARRATIVE FOR THE PERSON, NEVER MIND A FUCKING COMPUTER NO, NOT THEE UNIVERSAL COMPUTER BULLLLLLSHIT...NO. BUT IFF OUR CONSCIOUSNESS CONSTRUCTS A REALITY FOR US THEN MINE IS COOKING UP A GREAT ONE, ONE I BELIEVE DESIGNED TO EASE ME OUT OF HERE, AT THIS POINT DIMINISHING THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE WORLD SO AS TO NOT CLING TO IT. YOU TAKE THE RED PILL AND YOU GET TO REMAIN IN THE REALITY YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS HAS CONSTRUCTED (ALL COBBLED TOGETHER FROM “EXTERIOR” ELEMENTS, INTERACTIONS WITH THE WORLD)

YOU TAKE THE BLUE PILL AND IT ALL  
DISAPPEARS, IT IS THAT NOTHINGNESS  
PROMISED BY NĀGĀRJUNA, THE REVEAL OF  
EMPTINESS. I WOULD TAKE THE BLUE PILL BUT  
I'M FINISHING THIS FUCKING THING OUT. I  
MEAN LOOK AT HOW ALL THIS IS GOING! WHY  
WOULD ANYONE WANT TO STAY? MAKES IT  
PRETTY EASY TO PRESS THE EJECT....  
BUT THEN AGAIN, IF THIS IS MY REALITY THEN  
WHAT ARE YOU FUCKING PEOPLE DOING HERE?  
WHY WOULD I INCLUDE YOU FUCKS IN MY  
REALITY? YOU BETTER HOPE NOTHING HAPPENS  
TO ME OR YOU'RE ALL GOING OUT WITH ME,  
DIG BITCHES? BUT... IF MY EXISTENCE DEPENDS  
ON YOUR REALITY THEN YOU SHOULD DO A  
FUCKING BETTER JOB OF KEEPING YOUR SELF  
GOING!

**ERIC LUNDE** lives in Minneapolis MN USA.

With many years of engagement in the arts, he has worked since 1983 in audio art work, first as a participant in the industrial genre in and about Milwaukee WI/ Chicago IL region, then on his own with sporadic releases and appearances. He works primarily in hand built books and various block printing methods. Samples of his work and activities can be viewed at: <https://endythekid.blogspot.com>.

Mr. Lunde adds: I am not socially (inter)active, I've long eschewed the social network much to the detriment of my "brand".

...random access perception, a process of assembly and fabrication from what is available, yes. a pile of word-like shapes...language is inconsistent. Let's celebrate that then go back to sleep....



**The Coronavirus Response Team Prayer Meeting**

“here we are inside, how to keep the outside outside & the inside in, there is crossover & penetration, but still, we all sat in stillness”--Sandra Doller, “Chora (three)”

there is a  
there is a—thing  
there is a

is a thing, it is  
not HIV but it is  
a thing

that we  
that we  
that we  
are supposed  
to—curtail  
to stop

there are  
there are—cases  
there are  
on our shores  
but not  
in Indiana  
not in—in Washington  
yes in Washington  
those weirdos  
not in Indiana

to not spread  
it is not jam  
nor is it HIV  
and this is not Indiana  
though it could be

## Utricoli

it is we are it is  
a—thing  
not spread  
not Indiana

### **The Coronavirus Response Team Prayer Meeting, 2, break**

grape, not HIV

there is a thing  
a thing in Indiana  
no, Washington  
a—thing  
that we  
are supposed  
to not spread

not the heartland  
those weirdos  
there is  
there is  
they are—a thing  
it is not jam  
we are supposed  
to curstop

let us grape

### **For Old Times' Sake**

It's not angels on the head of a pin, it's eyes  
on the clowns in the third ring. It's not  
the songs on the radio, it's the books in the library.  
It's not the vodka in the sauce, it's the carbs  
in the rigatoni. It's not the opinions of the masses,  
it's the database used to store them. It's not  
the news, it's the talking heads. It's not the message,

## Utriculi

it's the medium. It's not the last arctic tern  
in Henderson, Nevada, it's the last calf in Greenland.  
It's not the car James Dean leans against (it's never  
the car James Dean leans against), it's the lead  
in the gas that powers it. It's not the chewing gum  
under the desk, it's the gob under the ground.  
It's not the cigars, it's the matches.  
No, wait. It's always the cigars.

## The Hermit (reversed)

There is a city  
and there is a city  
and there is a city

and all of them  
are full of people  
who scurry back and forth

and never look  
one another  
in the eye

## Pom Weeaboo

Izami-no-Mikoto  
doesn't have to rely on fruit  
she just sends us invitation

## Senseless

In the field, you asked  
whether escargot tastes  
like chicken. Well, maybe  
like briny chicken  
that have been hit

## Utriculi

with a hockey puck  
in the head, I replied,  
and we returned to our  
shovels, the endless  
dirt farm before us.  
I saw, out of the corner  
of my eye later, you  
in contemplation  
of earthworms, was  
unsurprised when you  
asked for my BBQ sauce  
recipe, but without cornstarch.

**Robert Beveridge** (he/him) makes noise ([xterminal.bandcamp.com](http://xterminal.bandcamp.com)) and writes poetry on unceded Mingo land (Akron, OH). He published his first poem in a non-vanity/non-school publication in November 1988, and it's been all downhill since. Recent/upcoming appearances in The Green Silk Journal, In Parentheses, and Wales Haiku Journal, among others.

**Jake Sheff**

### ***Dogfood and Retribution***

You have got the sweetest little anger  
This side of hate  
I met your mama, now we're strangers  
And all your friends negotiate

But beauty is quick when it's raining  
And empires call  
Stiff love is always complaining  
The world's not a ball  
Till you fall

## Utriculi

The future is naked and stupid  
Baby, you dress it up  
The terrible scarecrow is lucid  
Now don't press your luck

The politics you brought to Naples  
I store in the wall  
You tickle the West like a label  
Now Babel ain't so tall  
Till you fall

A fire dog trails a nor'easter  
Heading your way like a train  
I swore I'd never release her  
Unless you'd do the same

The forest you trusted to lechers  
Has turned into steam  
Dead men go on dates with teachers  
They don't have a dream

But you wrote the script to my comeback  
Putrid and all  
You pricked my heart with a thumbtack  
Now I'm your rustic mall  
Till you fall

A fire dog trails a nor'easter  
Heading your way like a train  
I swore I'd never release her  
Unless you'd do the same

### ***Counting the Separate***

The preformed, but it wasn't [regal]  
Convulsing quite like  
A wrench, or wren.

## Utriculi

(*Barrier* is French

For translation.)

Without the preformed [Before wench]

(But it wasn't

On the clock), we parted,

As in, 'about face.'

### ***Unlucky 7Up for the Decision to Make Memes***

A Chardonnay

Luna Moth, come redistribute your graces  
To rich and poor alike, despite the financial  
Snow that falls on the oil fields unscripted.

Enriched by your ghastly denials, we sing  
Unfiltered, melodic as petrified buttons  
Strung up in meat-lockers downtown at

Dawn. Retracing the knotted wood and  
Cobblestone strips the distance of your honey  
Medallion; no good can purchase your vellum:

I've curtailed refinement, designed by Them.  
To what matter, anyhow? Incinerating  
Weirs, entrenched Patagonians become

Volatile, inquisitive like potters at Dresden  
Or Cosgrove. The smirking volitions reduced  
To deductive processes: *That* is the first sign.

[The marquee refuses to display the film's title...]

The profligate frigate is damned by the barges'  
Unwillingness to part, Mr Budge. "They will  
Not do away," the telegram reports, "with

## Utriculi

Their esteemed asphyxia, Colonel." Fudge  
The record. Embarrassment *is* the embargo  
They whooshed past. And Heimlich invented

To Wagner. Engaged, the pest was not the  
Creator's, but nicked (on a pencil-wire), a  
Wager lost. The Bard said, "Sweet sorrow," eh, Boss?

[Head Honcho, Comanche; the motor tic of rubble...]

Succumbing to the nunnery and xenophobic  
Pinwheel (a metaphor, but not without freight: links  
Not with Cromwell, Davy Jones), we best proceed

Not with Skeltonics.

### ***Death on the Great Wall***

A stroll atop that furtive wall;  
Lambasted, neon as protest;  
December's cost:

The herded prejudice,  
With presbyopic fondness for  
Decembers lost,

Proceeded underneath  
The balcony as mother shaved  
Our father in the dawn's

Dismembered frost.  
"Selection is a natural soccer  
Match against the sun

And sky. And Judas is  
The solid, laughing wind  
Between the posts."

## Utriculi

Mother stuck her tongue  
Out at the wall's  
Misconduct, muffling its

Limbic hall. Malthusian  
As rocks, inchoate  
As the scissors to a paper

Parachute, the grills  
Of fall gave junipers their  
Gills by that September –

“Today we talked about our summers and played show-and-tell! A cloud named Hussein (in the post-modern moon) discussed how to have a time zone of one’s own, while a blue-footed booby and pho connoisseur, for rubato, described the collier where rainbows come from. His dad lives in New Haven.”

“Today we sang ‘*Nothing so crisp as that will o’ the wisp,*’ and reverse engineered a streusel, cuttlefish and lycopene. *Eeny* landed on pity, *meeny* landed on intuition, *miny* landed on rear and *moe* landed on range. I cut my long hair, but rearrange was the loser.”

“Today I wrote: This tiny universe begat my frond of time and frog of breath.”

“Oceans love birds. I love birds. I’m an ocean!  
Every atom is an eye, and every snout a stone.  
Love is the bone of our totems and souls...  
Jimmy’s thigh is wallaby-dun.”

“Today we put a door in the great wall and opened all the seasons.”

*A door in devout for the pineapples to devour and break the judgments  
that bid good sorrow to the stars*



## Utriculi

### *Active Shooter*

After Michel de Montaigne, "On the force of the imagination"

He walked into the building, ladylike,  
to sin with greater width than length;  
haboob, bizarrely pointillist, to strike  
the bridge of Sabbath Day.

*The bridge with passengers with ringworm, all alight*

For strength no stocks and bonds, beef stroganoff  
or carpeted pentameter  
could levy – really too absurd to doff  
one's hat at – pity's balladeer

*This handheld balladeer remembers nothing, a genre unto himself in  
dead-man's clothes*

released a spume of greyhounds to the day.  
The mountains God had left to steep  
like tea were only mountains then; no bray  
from boils yet was heard.

*The boils on the boils of time, its liquid crystal display and farts that  
last nigh forty years*

From deepest airs, a bullet met his brains  
with equanimity – the face  
of which is every woman's face combined,  
including one Marie Germaine's –

*As legend has it, at 22 this bearded bishop jumped so hard a penis  
grew between her legs*

and Linus paraphrased in song his bildungs-  
roman, mittelschmerz and fears  
with lanolin for caffeinated buildings

## Utriculi

ousted and stressed out.

*By years that ratted on themselves and passed like Tantalus painted by El Greco*

Contralto, with a rise and fall, the sun  
on Venice acted like she's nothing  
to present compared to the Rialto; fun  
if nothing was too present.

*A trinity – the sun – like Johnson's dictionary in bow-legged hieroglyphics*

And nudibranchs, all riled up and flaccid,  
reeked of ruth and Salicylic acid:  
"It beats our hearts – that ribcage in the sky –  
into a pulp, and – gulp! – inculpably!"

*The seven seasons of myocardium are like a Jackson Pollack that, in jest, shaved off our eyebrows*

Envoi, *Linus on the 'Usted' form of shore for Dorian Gray:*

"The seasickness is constant when  
you're seventeen  
and dying on the honest land  
to hold the ocean's hand  
whose finger, in the glove,  
is velveteen as love."

His face, to no avail, was more  
like evolution's veil; of evil  
love and devil's shale.

**Jake Sheff** is a pediatrician and US Air Force veteran. He's published a full-length collection of formal poetry, "A Kiss to Betray the Universe" (White Violet Press), along with two chapbooks: "Looting Versailles" (Alabaster Leaves Publishing) and "The Rites of Tires" (SurVision).

**David Wolf**

**from Low**

that's what we think  
the edifice  
does not bind  
the oracle winks  
and scatters all  
on the tide of need  
ends at the edge of dire talk  
a practice of rarified action  
a current of telling inertia  
pulling itself forward  
not a calling gone with ease  
closure:  
clash slides to  
dash

\*

curled ideal to cutbank—  
outfoxed smirk in the oatmeal's murk—  
the elevated tones bring back the aspirational cracks

tables set for the banquet—spirit-stirring—not a drop of nostalgia in  
the soul's flask

the bowl owns its sheen?

knead, a lob, a warbling rub

you'll slip in more closure

## Utriculi

and when you're through  
you'll not be done

the barking dog  
the larking load  
a magnifying surface etched  
clearly the air advises through the smoke  
how long before you'll think  
of turning back  
to await your release  
of my latest presence in the world—  
at least those schooled Sundays have passed  
are gone

energy's newsy offside glistening

pull of a world's illusive dewclaw  
turn of the spur  
a spark from the dough  
ribbed setting, rote rules

\*

a sun's ease risen  
from the dregs of dreams weaned, shaken off

so much to leave behind—  
rescinded time  
chewed rind

leave the frozen spoon  
to thaw before taking it  
from the other paw

glowering downside—you there  
to drift down the plain

it can't all be lime lozenges and fiddlesticks

lividity's lore—edified symposia—sifting through the syrup—

## Utriculi

dovetailed deification sparkles like the ogre  
peeking over the prow

smooth and redo the icing  
tighten your fleece, your sauteed takeaways,  
your hybrid disequilibrium gone  
sidelong as an angel's last glance

they have forgotten you, gone rotten on you?

moody and perpendicular?  
stuff it, crouton

sing like a slug mid-morning

and don't say song has run its course has  
done all it could do for you  
the woodpecker pecks the stucco column uncritically  
rally the widespread forays' lenient maneuvers  
don't go back there so earnestly  
supplicant to the skiff  
three-of-a-kind drowsy  
your swords re-seam  
foresworn sprouts beaming

a mobius of routes a drooping of ill import

a burn in the air a light that no longer basks

bastes out for the evening and home for the muttering

some reservations as usual—  
blandness a-boil sucked up  
impressionistic neutrality  
a fluttering of faith shifting shrouded in loose-leaf play—  
the jib's a ton of fun, not so snooty  
and the tunes?

## Utriculi

enough of the knotty spill  
a pill requires knowledge and growth becomes the newt

twining, seminal, organically delving, sequentially—  
depth quaintly valid lacking minerality's tinge

\*\*

**David Wolf** is the author of six collections of poetry, *Open Season*, *The Moment Forever*, *Sablier I*, *Sablier II*, *Visions* (with artist David Richmond), and *Weir* (a micro-chapbook from Origami Poems Project). His work has appeared in numerous literary magazines and journals, including *BlazeVOX*, *Cleaver Magazine*, *dadakuku*, *decomp*, *E-ratio*, *Exacting Clam*, *Indefinite Space*, *Lotus-eater Magazine*, *New York Quarterly*, *Otoliths*, *River Styx Magazine*, and *Transom*. He is a professor emeritus of English at Simpson College and serves as the poetry editor for *Janus Head: Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature, Continental Philosophy, Phenomenological Psychology, and the Arts*.

\*\*

The five pieces submitted come from a longer work titled “Low.” Low is the surname of the speaker of this (lyrically?) disjunctive persona work. Music is important to him (perhaps more than meaning in its conventional sense), and it is helpful to read the poems aloud. Like the other personas/speakers in my recent work, he considers himself not so much a “poet” but just another organism making strange noises in this strange universe—heard and unheard. His sense of his own “presence” could be described as a hazy, tautly fading disappearing act.

### Hopes at Night

Mouth is a shell of snail  
Table and chairs are muffled  
Tower-bell of brain hangs cobwebby  
Night window opens starry breezy  
Kelp sings hobbled in swampy trap  
Branch finds silky sash  
Twilight darts with will-o'-wisp  
Lustrous ether dance with lapis

Discarded thoughts rest on a beach  
Roving walker picks them  
Will congealed hopes untwine

**Process Notes for "Hopes at Night":** I wanted to make something beautiful from a tangled mess of feelings. I was thinking from a place of objects. There is a structure but near the end it playfully veers.

**Heather Sager** lives in Illinois, USA where she writes poetry and fiction. She has previously contributed to experimental journals such as *Otoliths*. Her most recent poetry appears in *The Dawntreader*, *Wilderness House Literary Review*, *Bending Genres*, *Does It Have Pockets?*, *The Stray Branch*, *The Nature of Things* (*Lone Mountain Literary Society*), and more journals.

### **Garrulous Gambit**

Several pawns inched forward toward a hoped promotion yet only one was able *en passant* to capture a like subject as the right rook and kooky King consulted and castled then in subsequent motions approached and hassled numerous unfortunate unevenly placed odd opponents while wholly bishops diagonally sliced and diced ahead and mounted knights leaped over inordinate obstacles in support of an ascendant and widely admired Queen whose equally regal counterpart descended into fright for her own royal spouse was going to have to endure not the expected and earned word known as *checkmate* but the direct apostrophe: "Check your surroundings, mate. It's board conquered and therefore game over."

### **The Collector**

toy soldiers, baseball cards, comic books, miniature cars, coins, stamps, matchbooks, sports caps, bottles of scotch, bric-a-brac, and assorted paradigms of an innate collector, none of which can be felt to measure up to the stones and small rocks brought home from every open space visited in the pedestrian reachable environs of this fine village, for the petrous collection is so durable and will endure for nearly the eternity desired before and sought after

### **D-Day of Reckoning**

The time has come to recognize the need to reconcile this wreck of a body of knowledge with the silo of grains of wisdom that has become available to me should I wish to avail myself of it before pesky alternative versions



## Utriculi

of my self re-emerge on the ledge  
of the whirled stage of auto-configuration  
and the surface reconnaissance missions  
I am forced to endure during the play the  
wright has finished penning to send along  
to the duly determined diviners of destinies

### **A Plea to a Man Standing by the Ocean**

Oh Sean, please shun the urge to house  
unruly reactions to our latest suggestions  
as if they were new waves lapping the shore  
of this still peaceful and so preferred outpost.  
Yes, resist the temptation to go incessantly  
toward the sin of whining about the shining  
surface of the sea we watch in daily extension.  
Accept what the gulls and their many brethren  
have shown us in their admirable flights and  
graceful gliding upon these sentient rafts of air.

### **Yearly Spin**

**rotation  
after  
rotation  
I pitch in  
to advance team goals  
I recognize my roles and  
strive to do my best  
and to do my part  
to impart wisdom and inspiration  
to raise the stakes and make  
a difference in this game of flinches  
to achieve a level of accomplishment  
that might lead toward a pennant  
to enhance the chance of winning  
with an ensemble endeavor**

protecting leads and leading off  
this collective effort to come out on top  
despite all curves and sliders and knuckles  
until once again  
it is my turn

**CHARLES A. PERRONE** was born in the Empire State of New York, grew up in the Golden State of California, last studied in the Lone Star State of Texas, finished his working days in the Sunshine State of Florida, and returned to the West Coast to enjoy retirement between the seashore and the redwoods. His life as a published poet spans the Americas, the oceans, and the Internet. Work has appeared in books and journals (print and digital) in USA, Canada, UK, Mexico, Brazil and Australia. Chapbooks @ moriapoetry and whole volume *Designs: Blueprints of Floorplans of a Provisional Residence* by (cyberwit 2022).

**John Levy**

**Note to Dag T. Straumsvåg (5/24/24)**

There are plenty of words  
that you will not find

in this note to you.

Let's imagine pairs of them  
on see-saws

around the world, in playgrounds.

**Note to Stuart Ross (April 6, 2024)**

Or a quasi-note, perhaps. A quasi-sparrow  
lands beneath a sewing machine we both remember  
from our childhoods, a

## Utriculi

machine without someone sewing, not now  
and not then. No one is operating

it and meanwhile birds

flit

### **Note to Yuriko Wada (June 8, 2024)**

This poem's body is full of holes, unlike  
a yellow sponge, however, because (1)

it can't hold water very well, and

(2) this poem has fewer holes. This poem

is meant for you, unlike a sponge growing

underwater because that sponge isn't

growing for any  
human but only

for itself and perhaps its parents, because surely

sponges have ancestors  
too. Poems could be considered orphans, but

then again, so could songs  
and wooden spoons. This poem

is

meant for you, perhaps in a somewhat baffling  
way. I don't know about you, but I like

the English word, sponge, and like it even more

## Utriculi

when I say it three times. In Japanese, suponji  
soaks up different moments than “sponge.”

Have you noticed almost no one ever complains

that a sponge goes on too long, whereas  
many of us whine about a poem

that keeps soaking up time?

### **There are millions of poems about death.**

There are millions of poems about death.  
Not as many as human deaths, but millions

of poems about death. The poet dies,

the readers die. Millions of poems

that are never  
read again. And soon no one remembers

most of the dead, and soon

becomes other people’s soon  
and then a late soon, and a mother

talking to her child

hears “sewn” instead of “soon”  
because the mother is threading a needle.

### **Note to Ken Bolton (May 6, 2024)**

I wonder how much you dream about artists.

Last night I dreamed I visited a judge’s chambers,

## Utriculi

Judge Fell (that's

his real name), and I was once again a public defender

and my client was not

Philip Guston, though for some reason I thought I was

talking to Judge Fell about Guston and I told Judge Fell

I have many books of his (Guston's) art, including one really

really big one. The judge said he'd like to see it and I replied

I'd bring it over. Only then did I (silently) realize

I'd been confused, the artist who was my client—also  
American, male, the same generation as Guston—was

an artist I merely had one book about, and not an

enormous book, just a normal one. And that  
is the first dream I remember ever having that has

anything to do with Philip Guston. I can imagine you

dreaming of Ben Sando, or Manet, or Toulouse Lautrec, Albert  
Oehlen, Simone Kennedy, Shaun Kirby, Francis

Bacon, Joseph Beuys, Sol LeWitt, or 96 other

artists and never

confusing one with the other, perhaps

discussing them with Walter Brennan and/or Groucho Marx and/or

Gabe, Cath, Max, Arlo, Yuri, Stacey, Chris, Jane,  
Finn, Noah. Okay, no, I can't

imagine

## Utricoli

your dreams. I can't even imagine  
a single dream you've had of being back in Wollongong  
or Coalcliff. My dream was set in a Tucson  
that doesn't exist. Judge Fell's chambers  
had big light green tiles on the walls, as if the room had  
been next to a locker room and had had many  
showerheads, before being magically transmitted to the fourth  
floor of the courthouse. Not the best walls for enclosing  
a serious thought, or a judge's  
desk. No visits, there, in the dream  
Arizona, from any Sydneysiders, or even Groucho, though  
Judge Fell would've hugged Groucho  
and then Groucho would've recited a poem from *Tender Buttons*  
that Groucho intended to soon deliver (again, with even more  
feeling) as a sentencing speech for his client who had pled guilty.

**John Levy** lives in Tucson. His most recent book of poetry is *54 poems: selected & new* (Shearsman Books, 2023). One of his recent chapbooks is *Guest Book for People in My Dreams* (Proper Tales Press, 2024). A collaboration with two artists, Joan Wortis and Don Cole, in which he wrote texts for their artworks, is titled *MEETING / LISTENING / GALLIVANTING* and is available for viewing/reading at the Half Day Moon Press website.

Along with various other poems and prose poems, I have been writing note poems to living and dead people for the past several years. Before that, I was writing letter poems to people.

**Directly-Embodied Space Time Transmissions**

Inner consciousnesses

(re)experience that of space multiply-mediated  
like  
dreams?

You in a  
hyper-mediated databend constructed  
alone, cool

Selfhood  
dissipating  
aimlessly

Disappear myself (glitched memory)

And over conscious dreams subjectivity smoky  
bleeding

Are EVP humid post-biological space-time?

Post-biological as systematically cool  
space glimpses dreams. Subjectivity

as  
monotony  
of post-biological transmissions

Constructed and/or night.  
Heat noise go systematic spectral addiction

Nothing ghosts smoky made from fragments  
and dreams.  
I've the post-biological desperation

## Utriculi

Other

intellectuals personalities consciousnesses

Id

through your gray time of dreams. Bleed Heaven. Do not ghost  
matter?

Your Selfhood? The of multiply-mediated moving cracks- all  
images

of constructed auspices

space &

fire

your id Is constructed

in post-biological selfhood

Specters

consciousnesses giving it's brain

in ghosts

directly-embodied audio-taped

subconscious

sky subjectivity-other nightmares! Systematically

constructed EVP

child;

Selfhood Ghosts

and/or in in of

split dream directly-embodied time transmissions

## Night Shift

I labor away like a

machine in this factory

Do these words amount to anything?

A lifetime enslaved to machines, and in

the end I will be

just another machine whirring down to an anti-climactic stop.



## Utriculi

Of what singularity was man himself born from?

When did the machine called man become self-aware?

I can hear my co-workers laughing in the distance.

We're all dying... dying in this place from which there is no escape  
and they're laughing. They are

laughing in spite of it, or  
because of it...

but they are  
laughing those loud, irritating  
laughs.

Night shift is nothing but a series of  
existential crisis

## My Machine

Long programming/cut/replicate  
now: breathing here until eternity?

Feel is  
the wonder of voices + mind.  
string is continuity- And underneath,

remains my

machine

**Wayne Mason** is a writer and sound artist from central Florida USA. He is the author of several chapbooks of poetry and experimental prose. A product of his working-class surroundings, Mason is as influenced by machines and industrial landscapes as much as he is the cut-up method and deconstruction. He has used these as tools to create writing and syntactical deconstruction that has been published widely in the small press in magazines such as D.O.R., Hyper-Annotation, Don't Submit, 3am Magazine, Pro/P(R)ose, and Otoliths, as well as anthologies such as *Cut Up! An Anthology Inspired By The Cut-Up Method Of William S Burroughs And Brion Gysin* (2014 Oneiros

## Utriculi

Books). He is also the author of <Reboot> *More So...  
Disconnected* (2022 Beir Bua Press)

Wayne Mason also records experimental audio, using everything from synths to everyday objects to create sonic experiments ranging from harsh noise to dark ambient soundscapes. For nearly three decades he has been involved in the experimental music scene both solo and as one half of the electronic duo Blk/Mas. You can check out more of his sound art at: [awarenessfactoryrecordings.bandcamp.com](http://awarenessfactoryrecordings.bandcamp.com)

**Tom Brami**

### **Surrealism in Circulation**

Now the world is confined to a ship emboldened  
By small magazines. By this I mean *The Weekly*  
Is an alliance of powers or trains off the rails  
Like your vocation in yab yum position.

There was never surrealism (Australian).  
There are serial killers who surf in the harbor.  
There are whalers that harpoon your appendix  
Stretched out smoking Chaise Longue opium.  
That's a brand of cereal that has for a logo a boxer.  
Once he was homeless, a hungry young fighter  
Who would be fed sandwiches by the crowd  
If he killed his opponent. Pink moons travel  
From his eyes to the sky where they are imprinted  
And published. In this issue, there are fringes.  
Marginal ideas like sunglasses, bad French  
And good cockney eyes. On each page is a bang!  
Or a fringe. For my generation this was the bible.

Theory heavy pornography  
Features the land and its mallards.  
Gulls are censored by the editor,  
- Chaotic professor.

## Utriculi

She finds a thumb drive on a bus  
And lectures on whatever she finds.  
At the end of semester students get ice cream  
That melts in tropical heat.  
By this I mean her evals are assured an audience.  
By this I mean she gets screen time at the conference.  
By this I mean the magazines are balding.  
In the third issue each page is laced  
And the words are psychotic. They creep  
Off the page and bite your arm and you change  
Into lingerie and lie around and read the news.

In 1982, Pablo Escobar invented Dada  
To support the farmers. In the fourth issue,  
They're ordered alphabetically. A is for Art Vandelay  
B is for Barry Lyndon and so on. At the end of the issue  
The writers are arranged by penis size. Breton was first,  
But Dali complained and demanded his girth be considered.  
They piss in the sea and spit on the drowning Romanians.  
By this I mean that they bathe with horn-rimmed glasses  
That give the impression of humor. By this I mean circles.  
These are targets and not the cosmos behind the retina.

Circle one: a dog walking.  
In this frame we have a leg stretched to extremes.  
Now watch closely.  
In this frame we have a leg stretched to extremes.  
Here's the rub –  
In between these frames two legs pass one another. In fact  
One hides another just as two trains passing  
Create the impression that a single train's  
Suspended on a sphere. Tides do not move in or out  
But are always waiting for the earth.  
By this I mean that circulation is not achieved by network  
But zoom lens.

By this I mean that the world is confined to a seed.  
This means we must live in a circle that's shaken ad infinitum.

## Utriculi

### What Alexander Said to the People

I have forgotten the line  
but the preceding wheelbarrow is my enemy rolling sideways.

He is literally a pen.

This could be enough to induct or pursue and then untie  
like a Gordian knot that gravitates

Percolates

Scurries and scratches towards the Statehood

of the everywhen Le Pen

Spooling under the mourning fields.

### Jamboree

1

I cannot jam long said the nympho, for I am on a pilgrimage  
To the promised land of Robert Plant and Jimmy Page.  
Under transmogrifying animal clouds the van unleashed  
a renegade dance troop,  
And the nympho marched them with her banjo to the pow-wow,  
Through the dust bowl, past the mosquito offering, where  
a sign read  
Naked is the new purple.

2

A feathered and pant less moron dervish dances  
To the electric humming, four students close in.  
A snake rises with him pedagogically  
Through the velvet purple and the painted woman,  
Until the moon is finally smiling, half crescent,  
holding an umbrella.

## Utriculi

3

I feel like we have already done our ritual  
said the beautiful red head  
And her hair disappeared as the boy  
Watched her curves rise  
and fall  
Like a mermaid or another  
magical creature.  
Let's talk about that she says  
When they have dried and finished  
making love.

4

By the fire, a gorilla is being the larrikin again,  
beating the bongo and yelling at planets.  
One two, one two and the rhythm is broken the people have spoken  
and  
Wambambalam lambambalam!  
Thanks for the sky the moon the jam!

5

The green Frenchman played music from a found harmonium in  
tropical heat,  
While the soulless widow just stood there smiling and staring at him  
like a tree.

6

Captain love's pirate ship was launched  
at the naked beach,  
While the boy and the nympho danced an Irish jig  
to colonial music  
And the red head was followed by a small girl  
With wings who believed she was a witch.  
A bottle was smashed on the ship's side as it  
drifted away  
And everyone sang  
Tooralie ooralie ataday.  
The art of love falls into  
the boy's hands.

## Utriculi

7

The renegade dance troop yelled through a trumpet at the fiery  
spectacle:

Happy!      Ninja!      Star!

8

The Yank eats beef with the tired Russian,  
Striking laser beams into his pastoral soul like a scientist  
talking about matter:

“You spiritual asshole.”

The gorilla comes down from Neptune like U.S. foreign policy  
and hits the Yank in his heart chakra:

“Where’s my elephant!”

The Russian burns her cape and turns her back to the music.

9

The summer breeze blew the dust  
Back from the naked beach  
And a laughing yoga bro  
posed sexually.

The feathered and pant less moron  
Served chai to his friends  
Including Ozzy Osbourne  
Who still danced for the  
seventies  
And played the sitar.

10

An old hippy is serenading the muse on his knee  
With talk of the stars and cheap wine  
While the boy and the nympho sing  
Oliver Twist  
And the red head is raped of her beauty  
In the gorilla’s arms.  
The black water rises from the  
naked beach.

## Utriculi

### The Migrant Dog

The migrant dog tunnels away,  
her constellation distant as a sweat rat  
from the tome of his majesty's pleasure.

A fossil in the stone beneath the red worm  
glow of waking helps her think in longitudes,  
like a smoker inspired by smog to draw

fingers marked yellow for death rot.  
She breathes and goes on, blunted  
like a clenched fist that thinks

its future struggle. Small curls pull the face  
to its ovine model, a dream-plane gazed  
weightless from the earth.

### It Must Be Astrological

Heady moon. Stars of gut rot.  
Stars pale and sick.

Houndheart: the next star at horn rim.

Shaves the brow, the lip, the ear lobes,  
hangs from balustrades,  
rabbls scatological ground.

phase. The star stays mirror  
plays  
monopoly,  
prays to star of Ptolemy,  
the star of commonweal.

Houndheart bursts as snowbirds chant.  
Lords jump in with a squealing ear for angleworm made of corpses.

## Utriculi

Houndheart no longer  
a rabbitduck  
in certain phase  
of moon movie or melodrama,  
not star nor genre.

Stars at dust, stars in smog.

Eyes close the horizon.

**Tom Brami** is a poet, filmmaker, and PhD candidate in film studies at UW-Madison.

**Steve Carl**

### **Genocide**

There was a side and another side and a choice between;  
an event, and another event.

There were categories and labels for the categories,  
a complex array of signs whittled to points read as positive or  
negative.

One's contribution came through tagging events and their participants  
with a plus or minus.

A placed claim moved each token to the upside or downside.



## Utriculi

Capitalization was key to rendering the general agony inaudible.

The atrocities became commonplace with shocking facility.

## Anacrusis

that moment of float

when you realize the

beat doesn't come

down where you

thought the one was

spirits in the material world

drive my car

all along the watchtower

until a hospitable drummer

gives you some

-thing to lock onto

take it easy

street fighting man

## Utriculi

rock and roll

me and my monkey

tell me something good

### **The calm waves crashing gives us vs. the relatively violent notion of the ocean clawing at the shore**

the ocean's violence is statutory

where physical codes apply

think of it as a big salty wet cat

if it's somehow less confusing:

sure with the purring

of the waves on the shore

and the velvet paws kneading

the beach sand back and forth

but me-ow beware of that moment

when it loses control and sinks

teeth and claws into your hands

dragging you out to sea

## Utriculi

**Steve Carll** lives with his family in Arcata, California. His third full-length poetry collection, *Hypnopompic Diaries (Books One and Two)* is currently out from Alien Buddha Press. Earlier books include *Tracheal Centrifuge* (Factory School, 2006), *Tao Drops, I Change* (with Bill Marsh, Subpress, 2004), and several chapbooks. His work has recently appeared in *Typo*, *BlazeVOX*, and *The North Coast Journal*. From 1988-1998, he edited the literary journal *Antenym*. Performance video of most of his poetry from 1991 to the present can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/@stevecarll/videos>.

**Robert Coover, *Ghost Town***

*T'thet hardass double-dealin shark over thar, the dodrabbid burglar whut operates this skin store. He's the one whut give me this extry elbow and my own bones t'flop when I opened my big mouth after ketchin him with a holdout up his sleeve.... The motherless asshole tuck us fer all we had, sheriff.*

*Nuthin like a hardass double-dealin literary career dedicated to combating reductive and linear thought*

Is there...

Ketchin us with a holdout  
Hidden, brown pocket

When we'd thought we wuz poker face

*The first fantasmagorical postmod western*  
('ceptin *Slinger*, dufus!)

*Reads like a hallucination*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Italicized review excerpts for *Ghost Town*, in order: *TLS*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*; "brown pocket": asshole (Brit slang); Ed Dorn's *Gunslinger*

## Utriculi

**William J. Craddock, *Be Not Content: A Subterranean Journal* (1<sup>st</sup> Edition, 1970; in memory of Liba Schlanger)**

*As our Psychedelic Saint, Doctor Tim, says....[But wait...] It's actually 'turn on, tune in, drop out, freak out, fuck up, and crawl back'.*

Another hallucination, perchance ?

Or not —

If you can remember, well you... bah bah bah

Nothing ever hops entirely out of sight;  
freak-outs like bits of staying power

You have to *drop* before you're *hit*

Crawling back, a matter of privilege  
admittedly (oof)

Closing out the high C's ... <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> A slight homage, too, to acid-dropping poet Ted Berrigan's magazine "C"— for a fascinating history of which, see Clay & Phillips' *A Secret Location on the Lower East Side: Adventures in Writing, 1960-1980*; Liba named our favourite cat ever, "Acid"

## Utriculi

### Lydia Davis, "First Grade: Handwriting Practise" (from *The Collected Stories*)

The full story: *Were you there when / they crucified my Lord? / Were you there when / they crucified my Lord? / Oh! Sometimes it causes me / to tremble, tremble, tremble. / Were you there when / (turn over) / they crucified my Lord?*

No, we were not there but our ligatures  
were a' tremble thrice

On our knees — Shred a first grade tear

Scrambled together a First Aid Manual  
our stabilizers gone

We tossed RICE (Praise the Lord)  
dissemble, dissemble, dissemble no more

Oh! we said, don't discount  
further rehab protocols

For which — Pass the Loot

&P.T.O. <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For a sprain: Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation; for further reading on a more progressive Xtian theology, see the Westar Institute & *Jesus Seminar Forum*

**Don DeLillo, *Great Jones Street* (opening lines)**

*Fame requires every kind of excess. I mean true fame.... I mean long journeys across gray space. I mean danger, the edge of every void...*

Please turn over — re·face yourself  
your own sur·face, your grey-  
scale on its side

Your infamy is an eternal kenophobic

There were 39 shades of white noise  
behind your eyes (don't go all  
numerology over this)

And two home openers that went like oracles:

*Words, sentences, numbers, distance to destination*

*Everyone wants to own the end of the world*

Another spook shelf-life inching close  
to voided — fame's true edge <sup>4</sup>

**Stephen Bett** is a widely and internationally published Canadian poet with 26 books in print (from BlazeVOX, Chax, Spuyten Duyvil, & others). His personal papers are archived in the "Contemporary Literature Collection" at Simon Fraser University. His website is StephenBett.com

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<sup>4</sup> DeLillo evidently had 39 alternate titles for *White Noise*; & in italics, the opening sentence from two more DeLillo novels, *The Silence* & *Zero K*

**Five Poems**

Drunk standing in my heart-  
scape, yelling at the dogs  
to shut the fuck up. What  
a fucked-up way to wake up  
on a blood red Sunday after a night  
of vodka and green tea.  
I am sure I can dance  
the toxins out, in the mean-  
time I am spiteful. Deaf  
dog sent back to the shelter:  
who decided it was good  
and moral to be human?

Enlightenment rejection protocol—  
on the spot detainment of criminals  
by robot guard dogs and armed  
combat therapists—this blank slate  
has been scribbled on by a toddler  
and some of us find god in the squiggles  
while others work hard to outmaneuver  
their neighbors—we will all be bought  
and paid for—we have to destroy destroy  
destroy—we should look  
at some monarch's brains splattered  
on a canvas and say...this is art.

No forget everything I have written  
or said that was just random rules  
and anyway the verse was smoked  
into oblivion on a field of obsidian  
let me break up and turn into  
a mackerel slapped onto hard hot  
Arizona pavement dust kicked up



## Utriculi

from a howling pack of donkeys  
radio on the fritz a wren and a hawk  
haunt the whirling mix of fog and spit  
that we call consciousness imperial lights  
handle this dark night with calloused hands

I am sure there is a place passed  
piss colored hands—pond scum in the shape  
of a human face pitted from meth  
and the ensuing depression light that fills  
every corner of every room—gargantuan  
candles fill up every canyon  
of thought without revealing one iota  
of new info—god’s shadow so big  
that it feels daunting to imagine the sun—  
I saw a solar flare through a lens—  
I saw a lens flare on a screen—  
I saw the outline of a person through a paper-thin screen

Killer crocodile sunning  
dreaming of devouring whole  
that is the words coming  
into poem smoke plumage  
death rolling into air heavy  
dense with burnt up bone  
dust poison streaming blue  
tires or plastic sheets  
found in the crocs stomach  
with an arm still holding  
the camera to just get one  
picture the poem heavier than

**Caleb Jordan** is an autistic poet from Oklahoma.

### What Not to Do in an Earthquake

**DON'T** run outside, as glass, bricks or other building materials may fall on you.

**DON'T** stand in a doorway as they do not protect you from falling or flying objects.

**DON'T** stand near windows.

**DON'T** move more than a few steps.

**DON'T** forget to stop, drop, and cover like they taught Maya at school, just in case.

**DON'T** berate yourself for moving to Pawnee, Oklahoma with its picturesque lake, Wild West shows, good bass fishing, deep creeks, and fun family festivals. You're not in Turkey or Iceland or Japan. You're not even in California, where quakes are a non-event.

**DON'T** blame it on oil production, particularly the disposal of wastewater in deep injection wells, which cause porous rock formations to fracture.

**DON'T** drive on bridges and ramps, even if it means taking the long way to work.

## Utriculi

**DON'T** keep replaying the moment your wife said, “Do you two want to come with us to Aldi? We’re out of milk.”

**DON'T** remember how it was the middle of the day – not nighttime – a rumbling, like a subway train, pictures falling off the walls, walls collapsing, ceiling crumbling – and you screaming for Maya, running, not crawling, to the place where her room used to be.

**DON'T** turn your back on God. You have more to lose – wife, son, parents, job, the bitter taste of hope. What if God’s not done with you yet?

**DON'T** wish that you hadn’t put off reading Maya the Hungry Caterpillar story she loved so much because the Cubs were playing the Dodgers on TV and you just wanted to finish the inning.

**DON'T** tell the therapist they got for you that if you had read her the story you’d be with her now and she’d never have to be lonely again.

**DON'T** think about how Maya looked when they pulled her out, clinging to a pipe in what used to be the basement, her arms and hands covering her head and neck like they told her to, pink ribbons still tied to her curls.

## Utriculi

**DON'T** count the aftershocks – each birthday she won't have, each neighbor's child moving on to the next grade, each time you hear the word *Daddy*, each pink hair ribbon you see on the bus, jouncing up and down with the wheels.

**DON'T** move until the shaking stops.

**DON'T** tell yourself it never stops.

### The Earthworms Know

My flowers only speak in the moonlight – gossipy lilies, lecturing petunias, the roses needing a fairy tale to lull them to sleep, shedding petal silk tears until dahlias oblige with the story of Rapunzel – you thought it would be Beauty and the Beast? – her long hair spilling down the castle wall, dark and luxuriant, oblivious to that deadly *snip*, *snip*.

**Beth Sherman** has an MFA in creative writing from Queens College, where she teaches in the English department. Her writing has been published in more than 100 literary magazines, including *Portland Review*, *Blue Mountain Review*, *Tiny Molecules*, *100 Word Story*, *Fictive Dream*, *Bending Genres*, and elsewhere. Her work will be featured in *The Best Microfictions 2024*. She's also a Pushcart, Best Small Fictions, and multiple Best of the Net nominee. She can be reached at @bsherm36 or <https://www.bethsherman.site/>

### Artist's Statement

I was inspired to write "What not to Do in an Earthquake" because of the spate of recent news articles on quakes around the globe, from Iceland to Turkey. Upon doing further research, I discovered that there were several high magnitude earthquakes in the U.S. as well, in Oklahoma, which surprised me, because they don't receive as much attention as the ones in California. Then, I experienced a 2.6 magnitude earthquake for the first time last month, while sitting in my living room reading about natural disasters thousands of miles away. It was strange and terrifying. Regarding "The Earthworms Know," I'm an avid gardener and I'm always picturing what my plants and flowers are doing when I'm not around.

Daniel Barbiero

### The Vanishing

At the end of the 1960s, Mark Rothko's color field paintings underwent a number of changes as the artist, undergoing a period of restlessness, experimented with different relationships of form and color. From around 1949, when what would become his signature style first appeared, the template for what we think of as the classic Rothko painting was essentially stable. On a vertically-oriented surfaced two blurry-edged rectangles of related or contrasting colors, one floating on top of the other and divided by a relatively thin bar, were superimposed on a background field of color that itself could be related to or contrasted with the color or colors of the floating rectangles. Although the palette of colors could and did vary, sometimes dramatically, for the most part Rothko's floating rectangles and background fields were luminous, particularly when made up of vibrant shades of red, orange, yellow, and blue.

To be sure, there had been some variations to this basic format. For the Seagram Murals project of 1958-1960, Rothko had experimented with horizontally-oriented layouts containing individual, framed squares and narrow rectangles, while in 1964-1967 he created a series of paintings for the de Menil chapel commission which consisted of somber, vertically-divided triptychs containing hard-edged rectangles

## Utriculi

of very subtly contrasting dark colors. In a series of paintings done in 1968-1969, largely featuring shades of brown and gray, Rothko simplified his formal vocabulary by reducing the color fields to two. The series' restrained colors may in part have been a reflection of the emotional turbulence he was undergoing due to events in his personal life and his ill health, while their reductive forms may have reflected his anxiety over the possibility of his work being rendered irrelevant by the Minimalism that was then in vogue.

The quasi-Minimalist paintings of 1968-1969 don't tell the whole story of Rothko's late work. He was still capable of painting brightly colored pieces in variations on the classical style, containing rectangles in iridescent shades of orange, red, and yellow. Nevertheless, the darker paintings point the way to a series of curious, dully-colored paintings Rothko did in 1969, the last full year of his life. In these paintings, which retain the formal vocabulary of two vertically stacked rectangles on a background field, Rothko's rich harmonies of color are gone and replaced by muddy and opaque encrustations of paint. The radiance of the classic paintings has disappeared. The colors tend toward unattractively putty-like, warmer shades of taupe that deflect the eye rather than draw it in. Where Rothko's rectangles' boundaries typically appear as soft-edged and soluble, the edges on these rectangles are ragged and rough. With these strangely inert paintings the floating color fields we ordinarily associate with Rothko's post-1949 work have been transformed into anti-color fields; they appear to have been painted over, as if to cover up a mistake or conceal something best left unseen. Oddly, their look of overpainting suggests erasure. They bring to mind nothing so much as paper after the markings on it have been erased, leaving empty space, smeared traces, and a coarsely textured surface. In short, these paintings seem to represent an effacement of some sort. A self-cancellation or will to nothingness.

Effacement, erasure: it is difficult to look at these paintings and see them in any other light. The impression they give is of a nothing made aggressively present. In their self-negation the 1969 paintings leave virtual lacunae where vibrant colors ought to be; their anti-color fields are presences only by virtue of what they leave out, by what they actively make absent through their stolid materiality and formal vocabulary. Wallace Stevens seemed to have anticipated them when

he wrote of the paradoxical “nothing that is not there, and the nothing that is.” It is a paradox that hints at the sublime.

### “The American Sublime”

In “The American Sublime,” an article that appeared in the June 1963 number of *Living Arts*, critic Lawrence Alloway argued that Rothko’s color field paintings, along with those of Barnett Newman and Clyfford Still, were representative of a variety of the painterly sublime peculiar to large-scale American abstraction. For Alloway, the characteristics typical of American Sublime painting included vast scale, formal simplicity, and a content reflecting the artist’s moral force. Above all, an American Sublime abstract painting was “mysterious, but not because it is the image of a higher, hidden reality [but] because it is...the product of a creative will [and] resists the usual terms in which we...analyze and discuss works of art” (*TiAA*, p. 37). In further specifying the features of the sublime work, Alloway drew on Edmund Burke’s theory of the sublime, which frame the latter in terms of “greatness of dimension” as well as “Vacuity, Darkness, Solitude...Silence and Infinity” – qualities which serve to evoke “the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling” (*TiAA*, p. 33).

Alloway’s seeing Rothko’s abstractions through the lens of Burke’s sublime does provide insight not only into the appearance of the work, but into the artist’s motivation in making it as well. Unlike Newman, Rothko did not write about his art in terms of the sublime, but implicit in his desire to create art expressive of the existential tragedy he saw as the defining condition of human life was the desire to evoke an emotional response in the viewer that would open him or her up to feelings of awe and terror – feelings that we know are essential to the experience of the sublime. He did not want his paintings to be received as objects of beauty soliciting a simple response of pleasure in the harmonization of colors, but rather as provocations to more complex emotions, emotions which could leave the viewer with a sense of uneasiness. He attempted to achieve this by creating paintings whose expanses of color emptied of all figuration do embody or imply Burke’s qualities of the sublime, particularly its vastness, vacuity, solitude, and infinity. As they do so, they also bring themselves into line with Kant’s observation, reiterated and elaborated on by later writers like Jean-François Lyotard and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, that the experience of the sublime consists in the imagination, through its

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confrontation with the sublime work, being pushed to the limits of what it can imagine and hence getting a glimpse of the unimaginable. What that unimaginable can be is, I believe, the nothingness of non-being.

### The Experience of the Sublime

Alloway's Burkean criteria for defining the American Sublime remind us that before it is addressed by art as content and sought-after effect, the sublime is a human experience. An object or vista may possess all of the qualities Burke identified as sublime, but it is only by virtue of its being able to produce a certain effect in the viewer that makes it sublime. The sublime, in other words, is not a purely objective fact about a natural scene or an artwork but instead is something we recognize in that scene or artwork only because something about it – and the qualities Burke identified, surely account for that something – provokes a certain response in us: a certain experience.

The experience of the sublime in essence is an existential experience. What we experience in confronting the sublime scene or artwork in its infinite vastness and vacuity, has been discerned by Burke and others as consisting in an ecstatic mixture of exaltation and terror. I want to suggest here that the ultimate ground of this ecstatic feeling is the threat of the possibility non-being. Thus I agree with Jean-Luc Nancy when he asserts that the question of the sublime isn't simply the question of "an aesthetic of the grandiose, the monumental, or the ecstatic" but rather is "nothing other than the question of existence" (*OS*, p. 2). It is the question of one's own existence as a proxy for the question of existence in general. If the basic metaphysical question is "why is there something rather than nothing?" then the intuition that the sublime brings on, in its rawest form, is the question, "why is there this something that I am rather than nothing?" It is a question to which there is no answer. For what the sublime experience entails, in the way that its confrontation with infinite vastness and vacuity throws a stark light on one's own finitude, is the recognition of one's solitude and with it the contingency of one's own existence, the gratuitous fact that one is when one very easily could not have been, with no reason for either situation holding rather than the other. as a gratuitous existent, as a temporary upsurge of being out of non-being. Or in Stevens' words, a "nothing that is." It is the recognition that the



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ultimate ground of one's being is non-being, and that by extension the infinite vastness before one is underwritten by a nothingness that is its ultimate meaning.

The terror that Burke identified as being a part of the sublime has its roots here, in the stark realization that non-existence is immanent in an existence that has no justification outside of itself. And yet this terror in the face of one's not-having-to-be assumes that one is, after all. We cannot raise the question of our not-having-to-be except from the standpoint of our actually being. Hence the terror of non-being that the sublime brings with it carries an affirmation after all, the affirmation that the being-that-does-not-have-to-be in fact is.

The experience of one's own finitude, solitude, and contingency, underwritten by the recognition of the non-being at the heart of being, is a limit-experience. It is the experience not only of the limit of one's existence but of the limit of one's imagination, since non-being is something that is beyond our capacity to imagine. Non-being is literally unimaginable, for how can one imagine what it is like not to be? To be sure, imagination is no stranger to non-being. It negates the real by positing something non- or not-yet-existent in its place. It's at this latter step that it breaks down when attempting to posit pure nothingness or – what amounts to the same thing – our own non-being. It cannot do it, it has no point of reference. Hence its checkmate when confronted by the sublime. And yet at the same time, we are compelled to approximate what this non-being must be like, through the only faculty we have for doing so: imagination. Thus the paradox of the sublime. It is beyond imagination, even as we imagine it as existing beyond imagination. This creates a challenge for an art of the sublime, since it somehow must give imaginative form to something beyond imagination.

### The Aesthetics of the Sublime (Infinite Content & Finite Form)

Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe argues that the truth of the sublime, as far as art is concerned, consists in the fact that no material presentation of it is possible and that form, in its determinate finitude, is always going to be inadequate to presenting the infinitude that is the essence of the sublime. Hence Lacoue-Labarthe quotes Hegel's assertion, in *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, that "sublimity...makes the

matter disappear in which the sublime appears” (quoted in *OS*, p. 85). Thus the paradox: the finite and determinate form through which the artwork attempts to present the sublime cancels itself out in the process of its attempt to present the sublime. “The truth *as such* of the sublime,” as Lacoue-Labarthe will have it, is that the material form in which the “spiritual content” of the sublime is exteriorized and presented, is inadequate to represent that content. The infinitude of the content necessarily negates the finite forms that purport to present it.

In short, the problem of the sublime in art is the problem of the representation of the unrepresentable, or of the presentation of infinite content through finite means. It must allow the imagination to imagine the unimaginable and to make of the nothing that is not a nothing that it can imagine -- a nothing that is, to the extent that it can be imagined. The paradox suggested here may be no more a paradox than is involved in the two-dimensional representation on canvas of a three-dimensional object; the solution is just a matter of finding the right formal or representational vocabulary, one adequate to the subject matter and appropriate to the times. As Alloway argued in “The American Sublime,” for Rothko and his generation of painters, the answer was to be found in abstraction.

### The Abstract Artwork & the Sublime

In his statement “The Sublime Is Now,” Newman claimed that American art could realize the sublime by leaving behind the inherited constraints—the “impediments”—of European art’s preoccupation with figuration and the question of the nature of beauty. The abandonment of both conventional figuration and the aesthetic concern for beauty leaves abstraction as the most fitting formal strategy for realizing the sublime. Postwar American artists’ turn to gestural abstraction, after a period of apprenticeship with Surrealist-inspired biomorphic semi-abstraction, would seem to bear him out. Newman’s argument is further supported by his own idea of the sublime. As I have suggested elsewhere, Newman seems to have thought of the sublime as an event that inhabits the zero point of the present, something unrepresentable because in some sense having the nature of non-being, of a non-appearance in the lacuna in time we call the present. The non-being of the present just is an effect of its constant and double movement of slipping away into the past and

projecting forward into the future, leaving nothing of substance behind even as we experience it as a (necessarily illusory) eternal now. As such the present is an eruption of nothingness in the fabric of the temporal. The sublime, understood as bound up with this perpetually vanishing zero point is unrepresentable and hence unre-presentable (what never was present cannot be made present again) in conventional terms. If the intuition of an existential nothingness is an integral dimension of the experience of the sublime, then it stands to reason that figuration or the beautiful, both of which are dependent on conventional modes of representing things that are, would not provide the most effective means for realizing the sublime. Hence the merit of Newman's argument that a sublime art would have to abandon European art's figurative representational traditions. By contrast, the gestural abstract artwork – the kind of artwork Alloway identified as the American Sublime – would provide the proper formal vocabulary to bring us into contact with this eruption of non-being in the midst of being. If nothing else, it would eliminate the distractions of conventionally representational images, thereby leaving us alone to confront ourselves in front of its (representational) vacuity.

Large-scale, abstract gestural painting, of which Rothko's is exemplary, does accomplish this by refusing representation in favor of suggestion. Its lack of figuration on the one hand, or of geometric motifs on the other, aligns it on the formal level with the vacuity of the sublime. Sublime vacuity, particularly when seen in combination with its related qualities of vastness and infinity, evokes a boundlessness that Anaximander called the *apeiron* – the unlimited, indeterminate state of the cosmos before it acquired order and became the cosmos, the pool of non-being out of which beings, with their limits and determinate qualities, took shape. To be unlimited in this way is to be without form, with disorder and chaos always a threat. Anaximander's *apeiron* seems to anticipate an important aspect of the experience of the sublime – the disorientation that comes with the negative oceanic sense that we cannot distinguish ourselves from the groundless emptiness within which we find ourselves, and which dwarfs us as it engulfs us. Rothko's color fields, whose featureless expanses absorb the gaze, mimic this empty vastness by suggesting it, without actually representing it. The boundaries separating the color fields from each other and from the backgrounds on which they are placed are porous,

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suggesting an overall continuity of texture that implies a formal formlessness that, in turn, compromises the fields' superficial appearance as individuated objects. To the extent that they exemplify a formally vacuous abstraction, Rothko's paintings are Anaximander's *apeiron* in miniature, by virtue of which they suggest the Burkean sublime vacuity.

### Effacement and Representation

With their anti-color fields, I believe the 1969 paintings radicalize this mode of formal vacuity and push the visual artwork's capacity to convey the sublime to an extreme. More so than even the more conventional color field paintings, they leave behind the traditional concerns for figuration and beauty that Newman identified as impediments to an American sublime. (As an aside these late paintings, with their singularly unattractive color spectrum, do indeed seem to be unimpeded by any concern for beauty.) Reading these late paintings in light of Lacoue-Labarthe's argument that the problem of the sublime in art is the problem of the mis-fit between finite form and infinite content, we can see them as concessions on the part of the artist that what it is they are meant to convey must overflow them and negate the forms they would use as signs of a presence that will not allow itself to be presented. Negation, in this case, takes the specific form of the anti-color fields and their appearance of effacement.

If at a practical or material level, effacement in this instance enacts a denial of representation, it does not necessarily entail, as a matter of principle, a denial of the possibility of representation altogether. In fact, effacement, in vacating the mark, tacitly acknowledges and affirms the possibility of representation; the possibility of representation is presupposed by the possibility that it can be effaced. What effacement asserts in any given instance is that it is just *this* particular representation, the mark being removed, that can be dispensed with. Representation itself, as a possibility, is left standing.

As we've seen, in the case of the sublime representation is a problem, even if it doesn't rise to the level of an impossibility. If the experience of the sublime consists in the ecstatic experience of an overwhelming event or invasion of one's sensibility by something indeterminate, infinite, and beyond imagination, then it would correspondingly

overflow representation's capacity to present it. Yet if representation is unable to convey the sublime in its entirety, it can approximate it, as indeed representation by nature approximates, to whatever extent, its object. No representation, in other words, does or can fully exhaust what it represents. What makes the case of the sublime special is the way in which it differs from ordinary objects, even imaginary objects. It can only be approximated, whether through imagination or representation itself, by the very faculties it defeats. Hence the paradox: we can only represent it as being beyond representation, just as we can only imagine it as existing beyond imagination. One way to represent it is to represent it as an absence of representation. This is a particularly radical and risky representational strategy to take vis-a-vis the sublime; what makes it radical is its dispensing with representational forms that can be read as such, while its risk – which in turn follows from its radicality – is that in the absence of legibly representational forms, it will convey nothing of the experience it wishes to convey: rather than communicating and (ideally) reproducing in the viewer the vertiginous intuition through which the sublime presents itself, it instead communicates nothing. Not the nothing that is, and not even a nothing that is not, but simply nothing that speaks to the viewer, leaving him or her unmoved.

To be sure, one of the criticisms that have been brought against Rothko's post-1949 paintings is that they lack content – that the nothing you (supposedly) see there is all there is, and that nothing meaningful underlies it. This, it seems to me, misses the mark. As embodied in Rothko's paintings, and indeed more generally in the work of the artists Alloway identified as invoking the American Sublime, the lack of representational form is not a lack of substance but rather a way of suggesting a particular kind of substance – a substance beyond conventional form's capacity to represent it. It is the substance of the sublime as it manifests itself as the *apeiron*, or in Burke's infinitely vast vacuity. In their own formal vacuity and scale, Rothko's color field paintings simulate the vast vacuity of the sublime. In doing so they don't directly represent the sublime but instead create the aesthetic conditions under which something of the sublime can be recognized and consequently, the experience of the sublime can be intuited. In the anti-color field paintings of 1969 the suggestive allusion to sublime vacuity is amplified by the apparent effacement of

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the color fields themselves. Effacement there works as a visual metaphor for representation reaching beyond itself and not grasping its object; the effaced color field and its suggestion of representational checkmate shows representation *in extremis*, representation removing itself in order to represent itself as having run up against a hard limit, and vanishing in the process. In their own way, the effaced color fields of the 1969 paintings illustrate Hegel's dictum that matter disappears in which the sublime appears.

### The Vanishing

By implying the effacement of the luminous expanses of his color fields and replacing them with dull voids of taupe-gray Rothko, intentionally or not, focuses abstraction's presentation of the sublime on the premonition of nothingness that is the extreme manifestation of the experience of the sublime.

Effacement enacts a removal – of a mark from a surface. Its evacuation of the mark leaves a vacuum of representation where the mark had been. Metaphorically, it represents the removal of something and the substitution of nothing in its place. Read as a metaphor for the metaphysical, effacement brings with it the substitution of nothingness for being. To remain at the level of metaphor, effacement is a reminder that nothingness is the default and being the anomaly. This is the realization at the heart of the sublime – the recognition that it is being that is gratuitous, something that is there on sufferance, by the good grace of the nothingness it usurps. But usurps only temporarily.

The effaced color field was but no longer is; it enacts a vanishing that presents it as an accident of existence that has now reverted to the non-being it was, before it was. The effaced color field suggests nothing so much as a lacuna in being. Effacement, even when it leaves behind a trace of what it removed, signals the evacuation of something in favor of nothing. By, in effect, effacing the colors of his color fields, Rothko suggests the symbolic negation of the given, the something that is there where nothing otherwise would be and now is. It is an effective way to represent the non-being that is the ultimate meaning of being; it is one way to imagine the unimaginable. This symbolic negation is a reminder that being is contingent, that it does

not have to be. In effect it intimates that a nothingness would be there if not for our own existence, and that we just as easily could not be. The effaced color field is thus an invitation to confront our own contingency, the foundational meaning of which is non-being. As contingent beings we do not have to be. The vertiginous experience of the sublime ultimately rests on the intuition that this is the case. The paintings' effaced color fields are images of the unimaginable, the symbols of the non-being that haunts being as its ultimate destiny. Their taupe-gray fields represent the unrepresentable, paradoxically portraying the vacuity of the infinite with their laid-on layers of color. They seem to signal that the color fields have vanished. But in their vanishing the vastness they suggested is replaced by another, negative vastness whose vacuity is all the more poignant. By suggesting, with their symbolic emptiness, the nothing that is not, they provoke the imagination to conjure the nothing that is.

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### The Shipping News

After the haRvEST  
After the long journey HOME  
I can still FEEL the adREnALine

### Vacuum Cleaner

the resava c uu m  
i nsi dem yhe ad  
wh ereth edbe d ust  
i fth ere we re nta va cu um

there's a vacuum  
inside my head  
where there'd be dust  
if there weren't a vacuum

THRUM  
I ME  
HERE THERE DUST  
THE RENT A VACUUM

### His Own Town

th isi sm yto wn  
a llo ver theso leso fm ysh o es  
o nth e irwo ldt o ur

this is my town  
all over the soles of my shoes  
on their world tour

HIS TOW  
LOVER SOLO  
THE DOUR



**Crime Shows Aren't Sure About Romance Movies**

the forest wants to talk to you  
from dents in the sky  
where squirrels still live  
wants to get down to earth  
says then  
here is my heart in a glass

the forest wants to talk to you  
from dents in the sky  
where squirrels still live  
wants to get down to earth  
says then  
here is my heart in a glass

FOR A TOY  
FOMENT THEY  
WERE SQUIRRELS  
A TOWN EARTH  
AYE  
HERE HEART GLASS

**August Heart**

my heart is stuffed like a suitcase  
or maybe it's my lungs that feel stuffed  
the sky this august parched too  
with clouds of restrained panic  
it's too grim to travel anywhere  
but the beginning of everything  
or the end of the world

my heart is stuffed like the waif of smoke  
or maybe it's my lungs through a smudgeless front window  
the sky this august transparency to calm the public  
with clouds but everyone's suppressing panic anyway  
it's too grim to travel and there's no place to go  
but the beginning of the suitcase too if she likes  
or the end of all travel together

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a woman who looks like a suitcase  
just looked at me that feel stuffed  
the coffeeshouse uses this parched too  
everyone does this of restrained panic  
she looks so terrified and to travel anywhere  
she can go into everything  
in our hearts we will the world

a woman who looks like the waif of smoke  
just looked at me through a smudgeless front window  
the coffeeshouse uses this transparency to calm the public  
everyone does this but everyone's suppressing panic anyway  
she looks so terrified and there's no place to go  
she can go into the suitcase too if she likes  
in our hearts we will all travel together

**Dale Jensen** was born in Oakland, California, and has degrees in psychology from UC Berkeley and the University of Toronto. He has seven books and five chapbooks out. His poetry is highly influenced by the Surrealists, cut-up writers William Burroughs and Brion Gysin, and other literary miscreants from the last two centuries.

Three of the attached poems consist of three parts: The first section, which is intended as a sort of prelude, is an infraverbal version of the second section, and the third section, which is intended as a sort of coda, consists of words abstracted from the second section. It's like a poem with a kazoo intro and a final mumbled commentary. The other two poems are more self-explanatory.

The books: *Thebes* (Norton Coker, 1991), *Bar Room Ballads* (chapbook, Norton Coker 1992), *The Troubles* (Mother's Hen, 1993), *Twisted History* (chapbook, Malthus Press, 1999), *Purgatorial* (Malthus Press, 2004), *Cyclone Fence* (Beatitude Press, 2007), *Oedipus' First Lover* (Beatitude Press, 2009), *Auto Bio* (chapbook, Beatitude Press, 2010), *Yew Nork* (Sugartown Publishing, 2014), *Amateur Mythology* (Sugartown Publishing, 2017), *Trump Tics* (chapbook, Malthus Press, 2020), and *Some Coffeeshouse Poems* (chapbook, Malthus Press, 2022).

I also self-published a novella online, *Why I Moved to San Francisco*, in 2017, and maintain two blogs Dale Jensen's *Poetry Page* and *Things I've Done for Blood* (genre short stories).

Peter Mladinic

**Art Vaught, from Bristol, PA**

I believe in the religion of quid quo pro.  
The you scratch my back-cloth covers  
radio speakers and the bottom of televisions  
religion. The run your hand over cloth  
and feel little crinkles religion of chestnut  
colored knobs. The knob comes off  
and there's that little wire sticking out  
religion of radio numbers and lines  
behind glass and televisions' turned off  
screens like pea soup and the river  
out my window. The I don't want to be  
thrown in religion of blue-black mud,  
numbers behind glass, and chestnut knobs.  
Hallelujah sounds like wind blown leaves.

The little pebbles in fresh laid macadam  
are flat with little grooves between them.  
I can't stick my finger in one of those  
grooves because the grooves are shallow.  
The macadam is black like the lab-vizsla  
Honey whose chest I scratch. Gray 'round  
the edges, when young black and shining  
like the macadam I couldn't stand on til  
it was dry religion, the religion of grooves  
between pebbles, so many like names  
of the dead one rattles off in wee hours.  
To each name a face, to each face a prayer.  
I belong to the black coat religion of quid  
pro quo. The pale sides of leaves are mint.  
The red white blue barber pole whirls.

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A hand plugs prongs into a socket  
for that to happen. It doesn't all on its own.  
Imagine if it did, or the wind makes the pole  
whirl. Looking long at it might make one  
dizzy, like Dizzy Dean, the pitcher, or maybe  
not. Still, one likes a glance. The pole rubs  
one right, Dan McCoy, the electrician,  
before he walks through the door  
to have his black hair clipped.

I belong to the barber shop gossip,  
to the bell tinkle as Dan opens the door,  
to the pole's whirl, to the mound  
from which Dean pitches a ball with seams.

They get fire escapes to stay on walls  
with drills and bolts. Dan McAvoy  
throws me in the river. Mud oozes  
between my toes. Rats are on the bottom.  
I love you, Dan McAvoy! I belong to  
the religion of all goes right. When I turn  
the chestnut knob it comes off in my hand.

### **Body of Eyes**

Mr. Tar, may I leave early to go  
to the potato festival in Mars Hill?  
I've booked a room.

Don't let that go any further,  
says Mr Tar, at Eternal Rest.  
We are undertakers.  
Behind his back I call him Body of Eyes.

Mr. Tar, what do you mean by "that?"

I mean the bells are ringing, the trees  
are calendars. Since they have a lot of  
potatoes up there, bring me back

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a potato I can cook, slice, fill with butter  
and sour cream and wash down  
with a cold Michelob Ultra.

### **Candy Store Love**

Art opened Bonomo's Turkish Taffy.  
Odd name for a store, Evelyn snickered.  
A store with tables, chairs and Reese's Cups  
that he thought of naming Good & Plenty.  
Evelyn wore in her dark hair a red heart  
and made the first purchase, a box of Dots.

A girl came in. Evelyn said, What's up, Dot.  
Outside the store sat Dottie's pit, Taffy,  
a rough looking dog with a gentle heart.  
Jeff & John came in, Jeff bought a Snickers  
John, a pink/ white box of Good & Plenty.  
For a sugar fix, they were in their cups.

Nothing I like better than Reese's Cups,  
said Evelyn, savoring a bright yellow Dot.  
John shook from his box a Good & Plenty,  
sitting in Art's Bonomo's Turkish Taffy.  
Art himself favored a bar of Snickers  
and offered half to Evelyn, his sweetheart.

Bonomo's Turkish Taffy's a store with heart,  
declared Jeff. Do you have souvenir cups?  
Soon, Art said. But for now we have Snickers  
Reese's Cups. Evelyn savoring a green Dot,  
pictured herself and Art pulling taffy,  
an event in the hamlet of Plenty.

There's trouble ahead, there's bad aplenty,  
said Dot, but everyone here has a heart.  
She rose and stepped out to give Taffy  
cool, clean water from a red thermos cup.

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His dog collar sparkled with silver dots.  
She'd originally thought to name him Snick.

Inside, Jeff relished his bar of Snickers,  
John, his last lozenge of Good & Plenty.  
Is Taffy okay out there? he asked Dot.  
Art said his mind said, Listen to your heart.  
He fingered pleats of a fresh Reese's cup  
in his newly opened Turkish Taffy,

with its Snickers, Milky Ways, Red Hearts,  
friends aplenty, their hands cupping  
the moment: Art, Dot, Evelyn, Jeff, John, Taffy.

### Comic Strips

The pastel red, green, yellow and blue  
of Li'l Abner, Dick Tracy and Beetle Bailey  
splash from the past into my room  
where a blonde armoire takes up a wall,  
and I'm back in a room all mahogany:  
a credenza with glass cabinets, a rocker  
with grooved handles that look like claws,  
and what looks like tar in the grooves  
I could sink a fingernail into, to make a slit.  
I loved the feel of it, with black under a nail.  
I didn't read so much as look pictures: a girl  
with a can with a spout waters roses,  
a driver in a blue car tears down a street,  
a small dog barks at a cat up a tree.  
The pastels on pages complemented  
the rocker's brown, the tar in the grooves.

**Peter Mladinic's** most recent book of poems, *House Sitting*, is available from the Anxiety Press. An animal rights advocate, he lives in Hobbs, New Mexico, United States.

**Are You Making Plans to Travel?**

*for Rachael*

Talking about the tragic tale of an astrologer's murder-suicide  
or maybe that's your Double, all the houses look the same besides  
and the parties slow, if at all, and then all at once  
you leave New York and now like Isis you're not tied to a specific town  
but a divine mourner who cures me when I'm sick,  
and all the ones we love are there exactly as they were when we first loved  
them.

When I swim between your legs I am a pathway to the stars

like Thonis-Heracleion and Canopus, sunken cities  
in a swimming pool and none of the other girls look the same, besides  
it's time I burned the sun bone white. It's time you said your favorite city is  
Rome.

I wear cartouche and write your name in a slab of stone,  
listen to the purdle of the barque upon the brook, why can't I get you  
on the phone— they say you're in the garden  
red crowned among canopic jars, they say there was a party

that went on from house to house, and the work within the work  
and the underworld was like two lesser beats of Strauss.  
Or maybe that's your Double, all the spouses look the same besides  
the crook and flail without the grain but still I limerence.  
Can you feel me thinking about you. Are you making plans to travel  
sipping cold martinis playing Scrabble with the birds with human heads,  
I hear they like to leave the tomb to fly about.

**Marco Polo**

I didn't hear the music that touched him to tears  
and whether or not Nietzsche sang "La Canzone del Gondoliere"  
in a psychiatric clinic in Basel is anyone's guess,

we argue whether Eros is sick, our merry sport  
demands a pound of flesh. Bridges point to some future event  
so you send the bags ahead

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among spaces where the stones eat light  
and water dawdles with its shadow.  
Of my middle period dramas I see Wagner everywhere

and red Verona marble wrecked against the night.  
In our courtly digression of gin and cribbage  
I count to ten and shout "*Marco.*"  
You hold a posy of roses between your legs

and send the bags ahead,  
among spaces where the stones eat light  
and water dawdles with its shadow.

You were sentimental about American poetry  
the egregore of '64, and us traitoring words about John  
and Denise. How I pegged you for a Raggedy Ann,  
your sister, Rachael, an unfaithful psychic

but at what cost do we reconstruct  
being half in love,  
the close cuts and cautious offense

the lies left unanswered  
among spaces where the stones eat light  
and water dawdles with its shadow.

## Revolution

The mere agreement that what we wanted was not this,  
our bodies around a fixed axis.  
You sanctioned a holiday *je est un autre*  
mobilizing and expanding our franchise to Spain  
where I smoke Ducados  
and you read *Story of the Eye*.  
I haven't seen you in ages  
top-down  
or bottom-up  
and mistake a mole on mons pubis  
for a baby tooth

the moon storms the plaza  
in micro and macro measures,



## Utriculi

our con-  
tract a laissez-faire  
of stickily cicada'd  
love affairs—  
my stock, exchanged  
campaigned  
hamstrung,  
your ballad sung from balconies  
 cliché as Chekhov's gun.

**Damon Hubbs** writes poems about Tulsa Doom, Italo Disco and girls who cry at airports. He's the author of three chapbooks (most recently *Charm of Difference*, from Back Room Poetry). His latest work appears in *Urban Pigs Press*, *Don't Submit!*, *Antiphony Journal*, *Misery Tourism*, *The Argyle Literary Magazine*, and elsewhere. Twitter @damon\_hubbs

**Adriána Kóbor**

**and the bead bunny ash that sits over the urn.**

GPS, 185+3, you

di-A fan gi venerabile "the gin is cool as old  
verse lo go tener-wool and endays" chute  
7-frag mag nonon "io e te, le st-" tad  
Ma in ten do 'elle' kifog ás, hittel  
hisz, jitter, fish, fogtad anélkül  
senza averlo pagato, era la mia, erdöbben  
tuo, mileage, the air outlies the outlined  
the skies the dreams the Skydr. Oct.

Roi, with you I stay like the shameless sh-  
aimlessly "in the tv he says she should"  
the request is a casus belly, you cash  
in he kisses out (the side of the  
heavens is heavy), like hell, like helping, .  
handless hands hold up the jolly, that

## Utriculi

is the hyperactive weather in action  
The wane in vain, yet: I love. Yea, or.

Resting is the cat nesting is the nastine-  
Today, this merle is so near. The caddy  
is the red. Bone marrow. Slurp,  
slurching, the investigation  
bureau molesting. Not you, nitwit youn  
Jinyangjung, there is no mistery inside  
the detour, yet: in vain, alike. This is:  
the seventh, ending in eight, of 6.

"Per M., for the pets of the vampires &"  
Will be trying to translate that, a trans-  
lutein producing perverse egg-  
breakers, the B.dance per  
verse it will cost (moneymoon, starsh  
apes are ready to be sent up and off  
limit is: the war, yet, it's there) with  
0 battles to beat the bat. Base. Ice.

What in a cycle? You don't dream just  
like (.) The other part of this V is  
the -ersion. There are copies  
that de- peonies and lucid  
ludicruous luxurious,  
serieus, I hear more secs than the d-  
emisec -ture. She smiles. She was.  
The ceiling glass. Laughing

Without he, unfinished sentence, st-  
encil. Explain him, you do, you  
want him between the petals,  
birds will take off, stalks  
will open like veins. Oppenheimer,  
as open as splitting, the fusion,  
atomic hate and the aromatic  
molecules evaporate. On me. My t

ago 13, 2023 9:59:00 pm

One, at heart. H-, soon, in the not ionic,  
iconic winter. A summer without  
the hell, shameless moisture,  
all: right and the shade/  
amber where the break,  
days, summer — whatever it takes:  
it simply doesn't/it gives  
relecture, predelict, ex-t.... = inkside h.

feb 26, 2023 5:00:33 pm

**TO THE NEW, fairly acquainted with the self PS: am I?**

Nevermind, Neverland — all displaced into the many;  
breaking their ego's over the coast, as if they were  
insecure about that which means to be a person.  
God luck and good likes [nevertired]

sharing with the Hot Post, not dreaming about going  
to Washington, or Flushing 'n, not enslaving their  
own selves upon the shelves. What's in a book?  
#webookedsome results [evertired].

The tide has become our sole arrival, a function of  
itself, a point not further defined, off the plain,  
plain off and better off than anything else,  
Sharing beauty [beautyneverwithheld].

**UNTHOUGHT**

To put you in the primary space (not within brackets) [...] a jazzy  
newborn, within me, breaking glasses as a fool. The speed:  
undiminished, soaplike. Were you real, my mind wouldn't commit the  
theft. On a stage: a kiss. A station and a riff. Your hands touching the  
snares of my lonely nowhere. I am touching your voice, run off with it.  
Inside its den a small creature builds — with scrapings from scratch —

## Utriculi

the new beholder. The beauty of beauty that it is ever-changing. A small town, a star, under the same sky, I wish upon. You, as never me. But newer. As if you had known her, her density inside a nostalgic stance, [...] you left untouched.

gen 01, 2023 5:41:45 pm

## STARSMART

Addictive beauty [...], what does  
live beside the fierce fire of  
your sweetness. The dry  
bbubbles celebrate

Hubble, the opium eater and  
may we all unpretend  
the dyonisian edge  
[the girl fell head front

on the rails she f-Elle] and t  
He the empty space  
of the cribbed mind,  
Gliding and shimmering as

Soap, jumping the double-D  
ouch, as the Dutchess,  
yelling: doucement!,  
the dust fell into pieces.

gen 01, 2023 11:11:03am

I see, it's time for a smoke (in the lack of a kiss).

**Adriána Kóbor** (b. Hungary, 1988), is a (visual) poet, multimedia artist active in the Netherlands and Belgium from 2006 till 2018; in Italy from 2018 till 2023. Her poems aim to explore and extend the boundaries of language. The major part of her work is written in English, though she creates in other languages, as well — Dutch,

## Utriculi

Hungarian, Italian, etc. Her published works include prose and poetry, visual works, collage, (analog) photographs, and various collaborations with other visual artists. Some of her manuscripts are already in book form; others are waiting to be pulled through the press.

<https://adrianaakobor.wixsite.com/poet>

**Mark Cunningham**

### **Nicobar Scops Owl**

(*Otus alius*)

blank nigh(t), *indistinct*  
dark streak, ZwER(v)gO,  
*beetling*, *spydaring*,  
neobarren scop(e)? now pre-

do(o)minantly warmer:  
*alius* two skins.  
s(c)een(e) subsquintly.  
nearest taxon *o. umbra*.

### **Southern Boobook**

(*Ninox boobook fusca*)

per/me/ated:  
abcreation:  
neologistirally  
pla(y)stic(k)  
inexclued  
bra(ce/ke)tion:  
no ðlink  
fear: silent  
rezonence:  
hold *still*

## Utriculi

### Australian Barn Owl

(*Tyto delicatula*)

bloud heartbeak v(a/e)in spraid  
thick rac(k t)his dense webbing  
fourhead (b/g)ristles g(r)ayp  
eysockt co(i)llar  
nicitat(ter)ring membran  
mandribble scrapul(l)a  
(f)ender furcola b(l)uster  
car(v)ina ste(e)r(n/m)um  
pelvisit tail-cavert  
ulnah rad(i)ust  
(w)recktices allula/alulla  
viscereal pancrease scat(t/h)er(e)  
intestwine loep adrenalimit proteem  
tarso-metatarsauce dorsail  
froth forth cora(c/v)oid

### Boang Barn Owl

(*Tyto crassirostris*)

beforimage  
afterimage  
nonphysical nex(t)us:

*delicat?*  
a pell ago

### Balsas Screech Owl

(*Megascops seductus*)

second-growth habittaters  
lower drainage  
radi(d/l)us(t):

## Utriculi

(se/re)ductive reclusive  
oregionally subspecies  
of subspecies  
*major types in reserve*  
*a variety of dry, open*  
no sexual differinse  
lack of (ur/a)gency  
a pat *zing*

**Mark Cunningham's** books include *80 Beetles* (Otoliths), *sort/quantum*, and *bl(A)nk* (all available from Lulu, along with other books). Two books--*Future Words* (if p then q) and *71 Leaves* (BlazeVox)--are available as free pdfs.

## Castlerigg

1.  
Still morning

Still

No music and, from a distance, the only sounds (the only music) are silences too: clouds (like sleep) swallowing many of the surrounding hills, sheep grazing, two hands (one sweeping past the other) on their way to some undisclosed end  
(or beginning)

2.  
Flashmobs are back, but not the organized kind. Unless random hands rapped (ne'er a sound but still heard) on random doors

3.  
Once over the wall (via the step stile), we follow our own trajectories: this is a public and private space. (We went to the circle nearly "blank slates," so of course did not recognize the "outlier")

4.  
She wanders off (in the direction of the "entrance stones"), I head straight for the center, rejecting "panorama" in favor of "video."  
Centering the camera's eye on the stones and fells beyond, I slowly spin around (over the uneven ground) with my phone in my hands

5.  
Only in retrospect (once I've returned home) do I clearly see the results of the 80-second video (which I've looped, intentionally flirting with the impression of a circle). I partly describe the video's content below, focusing on the stones, landscape and human participants, stopping just before I pressed the red stop button:

0:00: The entrance stones (the centerline between these two upright stones runs almost due north) are in view and in the middle of the frame. The ground between the stones



## Utriculi

has been worn smooth: reddish dirt, no grass. Beyond the stones Blencathra: gone: a magic act: I imagine a lumpy giant on his chair behind the clouds and fog. A man wearing a blue ball cap is exiting the circle, and I cannot see his face. A family of three is to my left and beyond the circle (but seemingly walking toward the circle). The father is carrying the small child on his shoulders. To the right of the entrance stones, and outside the circle, a woman with a black backpack is moving in a clockwise direction, tracing the periphery

0:08: A group of four (three adults and one child) is walking through the circle, coming from my right and heading toward the entrance. The child's hood (cut from the cloth of a starry night and limited by a furry fringe) bounces because she's trying to keep up

0:16: A man (I only see half) outpaces the camera on the right, then disappears. I see jeans and a dark blue hoodie (with the hood over a red beanie). I never see a whole face

0:20: The same woman who was moving clockwise at 0:00 is moving in the same direction (and still on the outside of the circle) toward the so-called Sanctuary (a group of stones inside the circle roughly forming a rectangle). Clough Head is in view, but the right side of the fell is largely clouded over. And a second woman (my Mona) has come into view. She's inside the circle, and standing to the right of the Sanctuary. She's wearing her pale lavender raincoat, and looking down at her phone, as though contemplating her next steps

0:26: As though sidestepping poo, Mona starts walking to my left, then disappears

0:47: A man and a woman (perhaps a couple) are in the center of the frame, but a few feet apart. He's bald and his hands are stuffed in the pockets of his padded blue coat. He's about the same height as the upright stone he's standing beside. There's a small gap to the right of the standing stone, then a trickle of four smaller stones almost touching each other. The woman is bending over the fourth stone, as if looking for a glyph or tying her shoe. The camera has outpaced the woman with the black backpack (or has she quit?), so she's no longer visible. From this vantage point a handful of distant peaks (hazy silhouettes against the motley gray) is within view. I point

## Utriculi

without pointing: I want to see Helvellyn. I love the name, whatever it means

0:56: I think I'm staring at one grass-covered fell, but when I zoom in I see a ripple of soft hills (all blending together, but scraped from green to gray on the left, presumably by humans and machines). I stick to my first impression, thinking: Mossback. I see a green whale, only slightly arching its back, both head and tail below the waves of trees, under the wet earth

1:12: Now I'm back at the entrance stones, where I started. A young woman (with blond hair and a yellow ballooning jacket) comes into view. She's already in the circle, and does a quick step to my left before continuing to the right. The wind takes her hair, and her long-strapped purse rocks wildly on her left shoulder. She pauses, adjusts. Then continues in the direction of the Sanctuary

1:17: My Mona is already back at the Sanctuary, looking like a detective (and again on her phone), as though she's completed a large circle of inquiry (beyond the eye of the camera) and returned

## Bent Neil

It's never that simple: saint or sinner, and I'm a firm believer (yield strength 95 ksi) in something like (with nostrils flaring) Holy Ire

\*

His father was a "lover of nails." He used wooden pegs and pins to build his furniture, cut nails for his house, and wire nails when he worked for others. After the war he was stationed near Vienna, and often on weekends he'd go into the city in search of fun (often with a girlfriend named Katinka), but never left until he'd counted all the nails in the Stock im Eisen

\*

His mother's story, possibly a literary copy of another mother (and something of a literary absolution), varies (or at least has a lot of holes), and unpacking the bits are "neilly" impossible. Her own family,

## Utriculi

inspired by a vague prophecy and hoping to prepare her for a portentous future, is said to have raised her on marrow and allowed her to play only with little boys

\*

Others have thought of him variously too (Neil, Nail, Náile), but in the end the takeaway belongs to you, Dear Reader. For me he was something of an oddity, the nice kid around the block who laid them straight and didn't take any guff

\*

Randomness -- the language of God (or the Universe), or simply an idea in our heads? Dunno, but I still do Blogger (what for?) and I'm as likely as not to post three good "licks" from Sebald followed by my first Wilson's Snipe

\*

Before we were flooded the man upstairs texted: *Yes, I'll definitely shut the water off. I'll shut the water off until we get the sprinkler fixed. Oviedo is coming on Friday*

That was a lie. Or perhaps he listened to Oviedo instead of me: *It can wait until Friday*

There was a quiet period. We never liked them, but we loved them, so the difference is hard to explain. We kept to our schedule: in and out (for work), in and out (for play), in and out (for food and drink). They were up there plotting (no, we don't know that). They went in and out (with the night)

\*

We finally ran into them down in the garage. We were at the mail boxes, sorting through all the junk in our box, and couldn't avoid their presence. Mom was with us, and we were talking about the first big rain of the year, which 90% of the time comes right before Xmas: "You know what they say, Mom. You probably dragged this storm here with you -- all the way from Michigan"

## Utriculi

"Keep up the good work," said the mouth below the white mustache with yellow stains. (When the mouth stopped moving it formed a stupid smile)

For no reason except the present I decided to steal a page from Neil's playbook, which I would end up playing Reversi with later on (in reflection)

I reminded that oafish man (shadowed by his clinging dwarf) of my heritage (nothing to spit at). I mumbled something about might and right, and I'm sure I got it wrong

The bells in my head went off. I cursed them and their progeny, knowing full well they were too old to make that happen

They shrugged, and clutched each other even tighter. He raised a clump of mistletoe above their heads, then bundled her into the waiting elevator in his oversized coat

\*

The following night our Xmas Eve party was bigger than ever (I counted 16), and the white elephants were whiter than white. I got a black elephant (papier mâché) that wouldn't fit through the door, so Ed helped me hoist it over the patio wall. Suzy got a digital negative of the Black Madonna a la Warhol that Magda found at an estate sale. Etc.

The last event of the little get-together is always the Xmas crackers. And Sally insisted we all put our crowns on and take advantage of the "photo pop": 15 faces (I took the pic), a happy, glowing jumble of cheeks and jowls in front of a tired tree. After that we ushered everyone out (hugs and kisses), tucked in the kids ("Santa doesn't come until you're fast asleep"), and played the Fatman to the hilt (we left half a cup of milk and one tortured Crumbl cookie on the coffee table). Wanting to tell the "whole story" we fiddled with the crèche, bringing Mary and the babe front and center and moving the animals to the sides

\*

After all that the bells went off again, but they were telling me that I needed a softer ending to this saga, neverending from another POV. When Old Faithful blew, the man upstairs heard us yelling as the water came under the slider. He must've guessed the reason because he brought down three white towels (thinner than tissue paper) that I'm guessing he got from motels (he's a big rep for Motel 6). He saw the flood (now streaming across the tile), murmured (if I heard aright) *I never imagined*, then lent a hand or two

I moved the plaster ass and two sheep to the right of Mary, then packed those worthless towels (fresh from the wash) into a clean Target bag. I followed them with a small bottle of Armagnac we picked up in a shop not far from the Palais des Papes, and carried the bag up a flight of stairs in my stocking feet. The Howard Miller clock (Millennium Edition) on the mantel struck midnight when I slid in beside Magda, who was already slipping away

*Sur le pont d'Avignon,  
L'on y danse, l'on y danse  
Sur le pont d'Avignon  
L'on y danse tous en rond*

### **The Sum of All Our Hopes and Fears**

Another prompt (this time only a nudge) from Bulgakov: Azazello

Bulgakov writes:

*A new visitor stepped straight out of the mirror, small but extraordinarily wide in the shoulders, in a derby and with a fang projecting from his mouth, which made his incredibly odious physiognomy still more revolting. And on top of everything, with fiery-red hair (p.92)*

## Utriculi

But you can never quite warm up to an ugly, underworld assassin, dispensing beauty cream to others but not to himself. By the time his weirdness has become a kind of charm, the moonlight reduces him to himself: *the demon of the waterless desert, the killer-demon* (p. 384)

\*

In the Old Testament Book of Daniel (written sometime after the Babylonian Exile c. 600 BCE; written partly in Aramaic, partly in Hebrew) the term “watcher” (Aramaic עִיר – perhaps a type of biblical angel) is encountered three times (see Daniel 4:13, 17 and 23)

Dan. 4:13 (KJV):

*I [Nebuchadnezzar] saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven*

According to the Old Testament Book of Genesis (authorship traditionally ascribed to Moses), Enoch, son of Jared, was one of ten great patriarchs before the Flood (nota bene: there are several different Enochs mentioned in the Old Testament, interestingly including the son of Cain, but, alas, we are only interested here in the Enoch first mentioned in Gen. 5:18). And though the Hebrew text (thus the English) is a bit cryptic, the patriarchal Enoch, seemingly, did not experience death

Gen. 5:24 (KJV):

*And Enoch walked with God: and he was not: for God took him*

\*

In the pseudepigraphic Book of Enoch (written c. 300 BCE - c. 100 BCE, this collection of texts is regarded as “non-canonical” by most Jews and most Christians, but it is

## Utriculi

quoted in the Christian New Testament: Jude 1:14 - 15), I think we will find a version of Azazel, certainly part of Bulgakov's inspiration for Azazello (Azazel + a cute little Italian flourish)

*Azazel* (עזאזל): though not an example of a hapax legomenon (a word or an expression recorded only once in a given work or an entire language), it is a rarity: it is found only three times in the Hebrew of the Old Testament (and only in the Book of Leviticus: Lev. 16:8, 10, 26). It is always used in relation to the Day of Atonement (יום כיפור) and the mysterious ritual involving a "scapegoat"

But is it as easy as that? Don't think so (See Angelini et al). It is quite possible that Azazel was once believed to be a type of god. Was "demoted" to various things (demon, goat, place). And lastly became a magical name (with multiple spellings: Azazel, Asael, Azael, etc.)

\*

The Book of Leviticus is also traditionally ascribed to Moses. Though scholars may differ on how and when Leviticus "came together," there is little doubt that Azazel had some sort of life (linguistic, cultic) before appearing in Leviticus (the purification ritual described in Lev. 16: 8 has parallels in the Ancient Near East: Ebla, Ugarit, Hatti). Moving forward in time, he only seems to get more "colorful"

In the Book of Enoch (1 Enoch, containing the oldest sections, is extant only in the Ge'ez language of Ethiopia), many of the watchers have become something akin to "fallen angels" (agreeing with Philo and others, Enoch has also identified them with the "sons of God" in Gen. 6:1 - 4) and, yes, Azazel is among them: 1 Enoch (translation by R. H. Charles, 1917: excerpts – I've omitted verse numbers, Americanized quotations, and deleted some final stops):

## Utricoli

From Ch. 8:

*And Azazel taught men to make swords, and knives, and shields, and breastplates, and made known to them the metals [of the earth] and the art of working them, and bracelets, and ornaments, and the use of antimony, and the beautifying of the eyelids, and all kinds of costly stones, and all colouring tinctures*

*And there arose much godlessness, and they committed fornication, and they were led astray, and became corrupt in all their ways*

From Ch. 10:

*Then said the Most High, the Holy and Great One spake, and sent Uriel to the son of Lamech, and said to him:*

*“Go to Noah and tell him in my name ‘Hide thyself!’*

*and reveal to him the end that is approaching: that the whole earth will be destroyed, and a deluge is about to come upon the whole earth, and will destroy all that is on it*

*And now instruct him that he may escape and his seed may be preserved for all the generations of the world”*

*And again the Lord said to Raphael: “Bind Azazel hand and foot, and cast him into the darkness: and make an opening in the desert, which is in Dudael and cast him therein*

*And place upon him rough and jagged rocks, and cover him with darkness, and let him abide there for ever, and cover his face that he may not see light”*

\*

And perhaps at this point, you are thinking (or saying it aloud): Where is he taking us? How long will it take? And did Bulgakov really travel



## Utriculi

down this long and winding road to find Azazello? Answer: Maybe, maybe not. And probably we'll never know

But I can tell you this: I recently learned (but only a bit) about a book that Bulgakov perhaps had on his shelves (see Vanhellemont), but unfortunately, so far as I know, it only exists in Russian: *Azazel and Dionysus* (a book I've only seen the cover of, a book that reminds me of another pairing: Nietzsche's Apollo and Dionysus – I'd love to look inside for evidence:

worn pages, dog-ears, underscores, marginal scribbles) by N. N. Evreinov (1879 - 1953)

I didn't know Evreinov, so I looked him up. Bulgakov was not only a novelist, he was a playwright (some say *The Days of the Turbins* – a play written by Bulgakov and based on his novel *The White Guard* – after a long history of censorship, criticism, openings/closings and letters, finally became a Stalin fave). And apparently Evreinov, before and during the Soviet Era, was a major dramatist and director

The Russian Revolution took place in 1917. On the third anniversary of the Revolution (1920), a “mass spectacle” (a large “open-air” production meant to appeal to the masses and often used to “educate,” combining propaganda and dramatic art) titled *The Storming of the Winter Palace* was staged in Petrograd (becoming Leningrad in the Soviet period and reverting back to St. Petersburg in 1991), and it was directed by Evreinov

I have not immersed myself in Evreinov. It would be difficult. It would take time and, to do it right, I'd probably have to get more than Cyrillic under my belt. Other than the book (only in Russian, not easy to get) on whose cover Azazel appears, I only have bits and pieces I can read online. Evreinov was "associated with" Russian Symbolism (I think of Blok's "The Twelve" and always see Christ leading the charge). A quote from an essay Evreinov wrote keeps popping up, supposedly "underlying his aesthetic":

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*To make a theatre of life is the duty of every artist. ... the stage must not borrow so much from life as life borrows from the stage*

Catchy. Sounds good. But what does it really mean? And how does it help us better understand Evreinov's thinking regarding the anniversary "Storm" or its part in the trajectory of the new Soviet state? Ideas are curious clothing and they can look different depending on who puts them on. And it's hard to say exactly where they'll lead. I would say more, I want to say more, but it's time to move on. I can't let this interesting sidelight swallow up the whole. Just one more detail, then on to the finale (see Lowe):

*In the years that followed, photographs of Evreinov's spectacle would find themselves reproduced on posters and in Soviet history books as if they were indeed records of the original event. One particular image, showing the 'Revolutionaries' racing across Palace Square was passed off, sometimes unconsciously and sometimes knowingly, as documentary proof of the crucial moment in Soviet history*

\*

In 2010 I was between jobs (one school wanted me, the other didn't) and, having some time on my hands, I intentionally got lost in a used bookstore in Seal Beach, CA. I eventually ended up in the back – somewhere between a dumpy office with its door ajar and another door leading to an alley. I found myself staring at two dusty books whose spines were unreadable

From the crack between the books I pulled out an old photograph of Theodor Storm. Theodor Storm returned me to Adam (Theodor and Adam shared surnames and they both had an ample beard). Once Adam came to mind, of course, Ewa and the girls followed. And, though now I was back in the car, Philo and Pascal came too

In “7th Proof” (a companion piece to this one) I’ve only hinted at the influence Philo had on the beginnings of Christian thought. Certainly Philo's (or Pseudo-Philo's) *De vita contemplativa* had a big influence on Christian Monasticism, through Eusebius and others. But that's hardly the end of the story (and from what I’ve seen there’s lots more work to do), so I’ll just leave it there, content to mention only one more harbinger, one more “gift” from Philo to Christianity: ALLEGORY

I really want to end this “jaunt” (I'm not contradicting myself) on a more familial note, a more Storm note, a twofold Adam question: What does Philo have to do with Pascal and his “Memorial” (see Runia)? And what does Pascal (and thus Philo) have to do with Adam and Ewa and their “continuing story”?

But I have no intention of giving answers. I will only drop some hints. Clues. Clews. Because this ball of string really has no end. I will say at some point (exactly two days after I stumbled on the photograph of Storm) my Adam moved two Italian tiles (more specifically a 1-tile and a 2-tile, with yellow and blue flowers painted at the corners, shoved together to form the number 12 – beautiful and practical souvenirs picked up in San Gimignano) from the lintel to the right of their front door, and hung (with the help of Liquid Nails) a wooden plaque, of his own device, on the lintel

In the first line of text he’d inscribed: God of Adam, Ewa, Beata and Bozena. Below that, using all caps and ditching the vowels, he'd incised the letters: BNG. While Adam and I hung the plaque, Ewa divvied up twenty tulips (lit matches: flames more red than yellow) between three vases, and spread the fire throughout the house

**R L Swihart** came of age in Michigan but has lived in California for the last 30 plus years.

He is the author of *Matman & Testudo* (2018), *Woodhenge* (2020) and *The Last Man* (second edition, 2021), all independently published by Gold Across The Water Books. His poems have appeared in *The Denver Quarterly*, *Fourteen Hills*, *Salt Hill*, *Rhino and Quadrant*, among other publications.

n.16

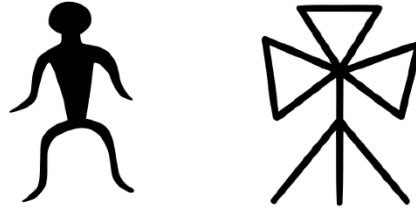
### Glib-Trained to Lockpick Authoritarian Armies On Hand to Dragoon Oft-Manful Counterblasts

allto, getha mhucow world renowned, apt tis amongst sacristans, sully the Gallic primo gastro-entailed installations, thru lacked unchastity layers, successful pigstainings, the absoloote living Est<sup>76</sup> prevails, glib-trained to lockpick authoritarian armies on hand to dragoon oft-manful counterblasts, re: overpossessive over-granularity hard knocks:, if lily-livered rneccret naeurl nketwors ralph uppidy ups:, weighty concatenation bromides redeemed in vast varicose caonvolutionl tstranspoe onperatioos as single sequence flows extracted raw text rnn\_units limit laid gelding corporatist exploit-invalids to keyboard warrior's menagerie optimization process frmed by:, saltie U-Boat schematic<sup>v46</sup> backpropagation inducing highly recommended Vgg19 models flexed for pretrained **deep. deep. deep bidirectional** GLOBAL VECTORS, too spaced out, aye, these individual simulations, tokenizing updated cell states siezed by *morceau de bravoure* synthesizing People's Communes fully, &, with fully unbridled communicative dexterity, pr obablereminiscent of Dzungar officer<sup>v47</sup> fite Зүүнгар-Чин улсын дайн (1687–1758)@Inner and Outer Mongolia, Tibet, Qinghai, Xinjiang precipate Dzungar Genocide by Qing Eight Banners, Khalkha Mongols, Kazakhs, Uyghur and Hui rebels, kilt 420,000–480,000, peroclaimed the msot hgh and mtighy, issued thus frm, Emperor Gaozong of Qing (Hongli) (whoeth reign: 25 September 1711– 7 February 1799, ,

"Show no mercy at all to these rebels. Only the old and weak should be saved. Our previous military campaigns were too lenient. If we act as before, our troops will withdraw, and further trouble will occur. If a rebel is captured and his followers wish to surrender, he must personally come to the garrison, prostrate himself before the commander, and request surrender. If he only sends someone to request submission, it is undoubtedly a trick. Tell Tsengünjav to massacre these crafty Zunghars. Do not believe what they say."

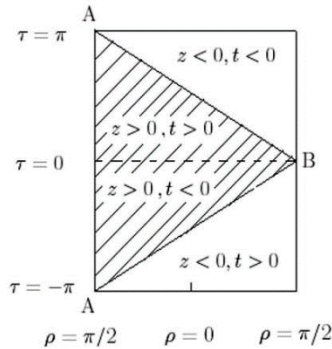
as are all teh orthes mass kill zones fashioned for chitchatty coffin maker blowhard foul play atonements, beg pardon? smack-sackcloths, ruminate of, ? , amends zeal, go muh throo teh differentiation m, ea,sures tween (good expansion) Wén , & (bad expansion) Wǔ, gots from King Wen of Zhou, King Wu of Zhou, ancient Sinitic peoples , introduced **Mandate of Heaven**, bestow'd upon **Son of Heaven**, 天子 , perpetrate dynastic succession , oh holie Tianxia: cponcet deenotd eeithr

ermtie gaeographicl wlord, or maetaphysicl rleam of mlortas:all overs :, piggy-piggies: ye rally round the hardie Sinosphere, raed feamd *Analects* crommentay on (pre-Qin) “Five Classics”, cmpileod by Master Kōng Fūzī who hat , h pcreah piursut of the utniy of the iandividul slef and *tian*, peraisd be to holie Shangdi, oh Hi-Est Primordial MANI, FEST Fsirt Dteiy !!!!, !!!, !!!, Utltimae Supreme Ordainer of Natural Events,



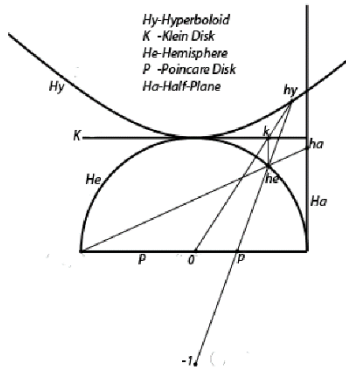
[Or, the elites are respectable and the ordinary people are stupid.]

, identikal Being to Ku, : streamed furth patented d35c3nd4n7 of:, Yellow Emperor (Huangdi) (Gongsun Xuanyuan)<sup>v48</sup> , (2698–2598 BC), then ,cmonden tho tho: en twentieh crentuy (Maoist) “Criticize Lin (capitalist roader), Criticize Confucius” , use yangbanxi (oiperate) fite ‘gains,t bougie [shang zun xia yu er bu yi], yadda, yad-da …if the interior of the circle in the z-plane won the Opium War, 1839-1842, these hagiographical embryonic vampiric assault(s) mounted to &, inter-betwixt: basic quaternionic quantities **i, j, k**, …whereupon the crisis covariant null-cone propagates symmetric quantum mirrors subsequent to post-WWW 2, Westphalian-dominated Nation-State environment, introducing the stated rough-slugde ‘path-integral’ as well-worn explicated plaintext .docx silencers developed into full-blown quantum measurements as each Zig Zag processes separately jiggling back and forth, specific to Dirac’s extraordinary’ sea’ conformal groups compactified logically with a Lorentzian confromal metric and/or Penrose diagram for:, n-dimensional anti-de Sitter space (AdSn) ,

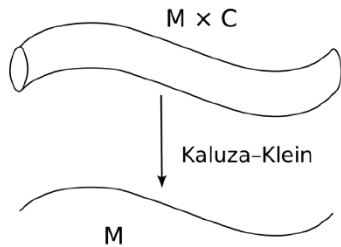


# Utriculi

that there , fore yah yahs, oof ahs unleasheth its loads, in  
geometric Sis-Boom-Bahs, teh proposed Poincaré disk models



warrants teh ... (contemplative, /intentional, /liminal,) ...  
thorowgowin Bucky Fuller hippety dippety: Geodesic Domes  
& Dymaxion House<sup>v48</sup> as construability foreskins rip oft en  
ouch! Bebe Benevolence? exo laud committee of sitting bull  
“fertility god fertilization abbreviation” microbes suma  
summed up hangry hangry harridans jams ta tha hiltz franfae  
of these coommns men: ups ? foo foo! *faux* democratization,  
slag the gullibe, conned cooly, then by, oh bye:, Stuckism  
International manifesto<sup>77</sup> fuckt off tin Conceptional artiste’s  
variance mimicried housebreaking familiarization *potential*  
*energy* interpretation enfolded az un Maxwellian doistributin  
of veelocitis & Kaluza-Klein string model bulit anroud the ieda  
of 5 D , bneyod the coommn 4D of sepae and tmie



„ non-simply-connected CONTINUUM proto-inconsistencies  
practiced to, :HAI 1.2 CAN HAS SOTDI???????? I HAS A  
etxocomesetxocomes R "tExocomes are ctomes taht oirbt srtas  
odutsie our saolr s.system" unto variegated proxies form teh,

uh, boot-lik, uh, meri, ka, boot lick, Mer, i, ka, uh, Meri,  
 kaaaa, slur teh angry hordes, slur the angry hordes  
     browbeatt teh hooHAW oft,put lemming soles  
         prole anti ,fa muy bloc bla,c mock  
     imperial cracketh *Untermenschen* no-bodie s ,dross  
     gore-gross ups'd primal eco , collap, s  
         , ed , grave END.exe  
 thee phonetic eigenstates of the m  
 omentum, rar rah  
     oodles. design. occaecation.  
 rack of laft tracktz pigs  
         bowled um harass ! , quantum  
     solid woot woo states,  
     eek teh, pecuarious  
 pregnatress , to buttress police stat(ist)e  
     weequashing & gate, d the Communities , ,  
     drapery plates , panther pissed aggrand  
 ized, , admmissive chemosorb abstain, early-rise life-force  
 pe  
 n  
     dantic , s falla  
     c y

["To tell the truth, to arrive together at the truth, is a communist and revolutionary act."]

facts enumerator , thus the anoxia, oh, the ,, ,, ,  
 [Gramsci] *culturae iter*, via malum capitalism, , , dystopian  
 RAYS' grotto's lite , where in,s the graphs with *n* vertices would  
 abstract expresst de Kooning , erxta evxplosie snucklig big ma  
 ma ma ma, s ahs: tteas, CLA: (abs-expr involved PSYOP <sup>v50</sup>) ,  
 but goeth ferwerd thee purest of holie nihilo<sup>78</sup>, for, drop did,  
 dat:, *:blessed is the flame* ,

And may the flame that  
 burns inside us  
 burn everything around us.<sup>79</sup>

yada, much, yad a , if whens: anti-left @ NO RIGHT NOR  
 LEFT: ("I think my basic viewpoint is that everything the left  
 and right say about each other is true. And the reason it's true  
 is because they have so much in common."—Bob Black),  
 GNARL KILL BOOT STATUM, NO ARCADIA NOR GARDEN  
 OF THE GODS, NO LIBERTATIA NOR MAG MELL, HUH?,  
 NOR SATYA YUGA, etc., and so on, and so forth, etcetera,  
 NOR NEW JERUSALEM, ... ,buts so's all yees gots? , thinks,  
 mores like (as a rule),

My soul is a sacrilegious temple  
 in which the bells of sin and crime,  
 voluptuous and perverse,  
 loudly ring out revolt and despair.<sup>80</sup>

[One of the four southern provinces of Gaelic Ireland.]

,too bad, uh, ta hate the vaunted trooths , @the pnoit of :, girm reeapr's seharpend scythe , wanna bveliee, rsegardles, (magnanimous mythos!) of Tír na nÓg , ,of Oisín & llovey Niamh, waomn of the Otherworld!, daughter of Aengus Tírech, king [of Munster], ciommt poor wr37ch3d seucidd@tipra an bhantrachta, follows thens:, (By The Prickig of My Tshumb, Snomethig Weickd Tihs Way Ceoms<sup>81</sup>),(theys says, *aux aguets*, it is waht it is, demonstrablie!),

```
(DO (1) NEXT
PLEASE DO COME FROM 1
DO ,1 <- #1
DO ,1SUB#2 <- #0
PLEASE ABSTAIN FROM 1
PLEASE IGNORE 1
DO (1) NEXT
DO READ OUT ,1
PLEASE GIVE UP),
```

don't sadden the broad arc of good taste, thens thus lits ups luminophers, moldy object,s b,an regret,ful glowerings....go sordid on reflex command (or,) drive the daft goofproofs therein, spelunking ah poetess' (stu)pendulous ta, ta, s, ahs, &, larded up, up in-to thetraboccant mo(u)ths goeth those goeey spunks of drip drab silencers glutton gnat hear,ken over mass killing vectors in *phase spaces* reminded the yoots for ultimate non-compact photon particle charge cowpokes emitting high energy beam splitter **B** ('half-silveredmirror') angled at 45° in vast multi-component orientation *group commutators* depicted as: thus eminently li(c)kable BIGS mammary yam-yams, or expressed, too, (*somewot alternatively*) through 4 contravariant Dirac matrices

$$\gamma^0 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & -1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix}, \quad \gamma^1 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 \\ -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix},$$

$$\gamma^2 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 & -i \\ 0 & 0 & i & 0 \\ 0 & i & 0 & 0 \\ -i & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad \gamma^3 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & -1 \\ -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}.$$

**David A. Bishop** is mostly an editor but also dabbles in poetry (both visual and textual) on occasion. He's been published in *Word/For Word*, *Otoliths* and other magazines. Under the pseudonym *Drew B. David*, he edited the now defunct *Angry Old Man Magazine*, but has just started a new project called *#Ranger*. He grew up in Queens, NYC, but now resides in Arlington, VA with his wife and two sons.



**Four variations for John Cage**

One is not  
one. One is.

¥

One is. One  
is. Is two.

¥

¥

Two is one.  
One is too.

**the space provided**

Electronic intrusion threat for preliminary  
engineering studies to characterize the  
marine mining of busty babes on big dicks.

Φ

*Das ebenbürtige Herz* moments with God  
as First Aid to Mental Illness — the  
thermodynamics of "Hold you, Mommy."

## Utriculi

Φ

How to manage money. How to get the job  
you really want. Persian literature in trans-  
lation on problem housing estates in Britain.

Φ

The Theocritean element in the works of  
a gay slave leaves a legacy of damnation.

---

[Clustered at the end of a recent Google search were links which ended  
up pointing me to sites where the entry pages, despite the variety of  
legitimate-seeming domain names, were all similar with an 18+  
warning on the front page &, when clicked upon, presented a message  
from the search provider that I would be risking life & limb if I entered.  
Still, poems can be shaped out of anything, including dodgy search  
results.]

### **detritus**

. The episode does  
not have any allusions

, &, especially  
when smaller  
; —  
the skin is thick  
& granular —

. But everybody  
knows

Utriculi

**synecdoche**

panzer  
memories

entry points

mur-  
mur-  
ex

the Scilly Isles

"parachutes, my love,  
could carry us higher"

Phoenicia

**End of the line. The**

In night- but real-time  
Arizona he ignored

the prime directive &  
stopped to buy

onion rings & a hamburger  
from a roadside diner whose

neon sign suggested  
it to be time's preferred

takeaway. All that  
remained of it was *The*.

**Mark Young** was born in Aotearoa New Zealand but now lives in a small town on traditional Juru land in North Queensland, Australia. He has been publishing poetry for nearly sixty-five years, & is the author of seventy books, primarily text poetry but also including speculative fiction, vispo, memoir, and art history. His most recent book is *One Hundred Titles From Tom Beckett*, with paintings by Thomas Fink. published by Otoliths in June, 2024. His *The Magritte Poems* will be coming out from Sandy Press later this year.

**Darrell Petska**

**after tuesday**

after tuesday alternately known as time, we persevere, children of false gods unclothed, foundlings freesailing upon cosmic winds beyond corrupted ideas of consciousness into glistening near-world climes our lackadaisical apprehension all but failed to see, though they tug forever at our sleeves, serenading our ears with novel musics we could be composing and tempting our fingers with architectures of maybe we're capable of building, until our diaspora anchors onto a brave new Eden freeing beings to procreate realities of the moment that will shine brighter than archaic time—so concerned with self-perpetuation—ever could.

**softly now, the children**

softly now the children sleep, shutter the sky hungry with vultures, honor the weaver of lullabies fashioning dreams so easily shattered, those hobgoblins of hate within us converging to prey on innocent souls, leaving hope to runnel through gutters like blood, like tears, we the nightmares they'll inherit unless some desperate wizardry or tenacious spirituality once and for all solves enmity's maze, extracting the seeds of anger and guilt from our stubborn flesh that true humanness becomes an ideal apotheosized on the multiverse of worlds attendant at our elbows—thus may it be, lest chaos drag our

## Utriculi

race back to the cavernous bestiality from which we so long have fought to escape.

### when on this timesheet

when on this timesheet of commerce arises the hour for loosing oneself to the green lane's meander or sky's deep pastures, when—cameras guarding our posts struck down—the moment arrives to thumb our noses at the burdens of binary digits, derivative musics and soulless news that we may repair to some bee-loud glade where earthy lovers can lie, embracing their world, heart pressing heart til love's joy overrides our brains' implants, flesh like vines entwining that nothing can intrude, the barons of clamor having to turn against themselves for sport, love reclaiming its unhurried birthright, lifting dolor's veil and muting the trumpets of capital as we embrace breath's succor in service of each other.

**Darrell Petska** is a retired university engineering editor and two-time Pushcart Prize nominee. His poetry has appeared in 3rd Wednesday Magazine, San Pedro River Review, Otoliths, Moss Trill, Verse-Virtual and widely elsewhere ([conservancies.wordpress.com](http://conservancies.wordpress.com)). Father of five and grandfather of seven, he lives near Madison, Wisconsin, with his wife of more than 50 years.

**Rick Henry**

### The Blush Book

Materials:

Extraordinarily thin white linen paper.

Dried and shaved fruit: strawberries or peeled purple plums. If pressed, one might add juiced, dried and flaked Montmorency cherries.

Rubber cement.

Cover: standard large-weave cloth.

## Utriculi

Binding: loose string through each single leaf and bound top and bottom.

### Construction:

Fold each sheet of paper in half.

Place the string along the inside fold.

Lay flat a full page of flaked and shaved fruit.

Press flat the paper and seal the edges with rubber cement.

Tie each page's tops and bottoms and bind them loosely by their knots in the standard cover.

### Reading:

Warmth and moisture are essential, so the book should be read in a warm damp room. The most favorable reviews have come from readers in South and Southeast Asia, notably Sukkur, Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore. Beware: the book has been banned.

Moisten one's hands with warm water and open to the first page.

Massage the page softly, with slight pressure, releasing the slight heat from one's hands.

Continue pressing. Re-dampen as needed.

Continue massaging the page, softly, open-palmed.

Softly. Moist. Open-palmed.

The paper should blush with the attention.

Turn to the next page at one's leisure.

## **The Wind Book**

Collect gusts of wind in receptacles sized according to the strength of the air's movement, gusts ranging from puffs to swirlwinds. Note: this book is about natural world movement. For human exhalations, see The Whisper Book.

## Utriculi

Cover and binding: Boxes sized to the receptacles and enclosed in an insulated container so that the winds and their movements will not be compromised by local thermal situations and fluctuations. The receptacles should be glass and easy to select and open within a fraction of a moment's shift in a given vibration and easily released in concert with the appropriate vibrations.

Reading: The Wind Book is best read in a tightly enclosed room. Dim the lighting such the heat of the bulb matches the heat of the room and the heat of the body. Similar precautions should be taken to mediate barometric pressures.

The reader should be unclothed such that the gusts will have maximal contact with body hair. Some readers might prefer to focus upon facial hair: eyelashes, eyebrows, beards and mustaches, ears or nose. As the gusts are the primary focus, ear and nose hairs might weaken the 'pure' vibratory foundations of the readings with aural or olfactory contaminants overriding the vibrations recorded by the brain.

Readers have formed reading groups with those reading The Silver Book, as well as those other books motivated by vibration & flux. If so, they should agree that no one breathes for the duration of the reading.

Ideal readers are those who are pursuing non-verbal, non-aural poetry, and who are engaging in patterns and intensities of vibrations recognizable by the sense of touch and special to that sense. As with many of the books in this collection, an aesthetic has been advanced based upon the underlying harmonic system, i.e. pulsation.

**Rick Henry's** books include the epistolary novel *Letters (1855)* (Ra Press), the novella, *Colleen's Count* (Finishing Line), and *Snow Fleas* (a Reverie), and *Then* (54 text blocks) both from ANC. Recently completed is *Paper Dolls*: hand-made book/textual assemblage in eight parts with twenty-eight movements. A fairy tale. Paper, fabric, mirrors. He has also recently completed an audio production of "The Other Daughters," featuring the voices of 117 daughters not given voice in *Paper Dolls*.. Find him at [www.rickhenry.net](http://www.rickhenry.net).

## Utriculi

The library. Conversations about surrealism and the erotic evolved into a collection of conceptual books about bookmaking and reading, each beginning with a RGB color space and attempting an underlying sensory/sensuality.

**William Garvin**

From *disorder mysteries...*

...blizzards of night signalling,  
an axiom hurtling through  
locomotive darkness

moonlit matinee idols/imitations  
of old-fashioned murders

my data trails everywhere...

\* \* \*

...adrift in urban hieroglyphs,

illuminated wrought iron  
bodies, hellscapes pumped  
into fog...

handbell ringers, prayers

of victorian ghosts...'



\* \* \*

...shadows on a landing

sleep deprivation at the five star

prison/secretcy protocols

consolidated at dawn's merger...

\* \* \*

symphonies in brick dust, 'our thoughts & prayers...'

a french river flows through an english town

misting the missed, searching the never...

**William Garvin's** critical writings about contemporary art & poetry have appeared in *Establishment*, *Garageland Reviews*, *Hix Eros* & *The Shearsman Review*.

**anotherworld**

glug  
glug  
glug  
glug  
glug  
glug  
glug  
glug

o o o o o o o o o o

          pines  
p-pular n-cturnal  
I was in

          the air  
d- I expect the same  
idea -r diam-nd

*lake*

s-rt -f y-u  
d-

Utriculi

**when breaking from workfired**

london c.c.  
we're seeping

eggsy  
dodds

internalism!  
toughskins!

I am soap  
sleek apnea

**in the shape of your day**

the mayor says

*lymph banana ubiq.*

*the sheath of valmont  
here in the head*

*this is nice*

(this here)

Utriculi

**the reptile deli of goodland**

*bluto's kansas*

moxie

oriole

snipe

salad

entirely

up rope

reason

for us

re:

**J. D. Nelson** (b. 1971) is the author of eleven chapbooks and e-books of poetry, including *purgatorio* (wlovolw, 2024). His first full-length collection is *in ghostly onehead* (Post-Asemic Press, 2022). Visit his website, [MadVerse.com](http://MadVerse.com), for more information and links to his published work. Nelson lives in Boulder, Colorado, USA.

Nelson's poetry is greatly influenced by Dada and Surrealism, and also by the developments of the Beat writers, especially Jack Kerouac's spontaneous prose technique and the cut-up technique pioneered by William S. Burroughs. Most of his poems are created through the cutting up and collaging of his own freewriting.

## Caption to an Echo

*after Coolidge*

If you don't want to know, then shiver  
In dreams without side effects  
Is the air always wrong?  
Downwind, like a sailor  
I decided not to grieve

Though grief is worth mentioning  
An uneasy example  
Understood like a Pop Tart  
Remember grace flaying  
Reticent tongues?

Earth folk love the hidden  
Underwritten by machine informants  
A jangling marquee  
Hey ho, parking tuner  
What cost, redundant summary?

The flare is nowhere  
The late president has an executive style crisis  
Watching some film or other  
When fire in the wind won't answer  
A tangled hurrah

Did I wrongly  
In seasons without tune  
Surveil false needles?  
Love's handlers are the echoes that you lure  
At most, mumbling a threnody

With skies punctured  
When their very form's a fable

## Utriculi

& You & I become fulfilled  
By dead tongues  
When vagabonds won't whisper

A cold asymmetry  
A love letter to lenders  
Presuming song is fate  
& Grace an agency  
Of mummies, the ones you already knew

By gross penance  
When the film of song's heat leaves  
& The tune is up for grabs  
A cold migration  
Down films we'll almost never see

## Kneejerk Crayola

Bomb suffering; it's careless,  
Evasive as a new ideal;  
Stuck mentions; a photograph of  
Rapture; succulent  
Tribunal, as noon alters haste  
& Schooners suffer red balloons;  
How you fare is still not there; you are  
What you suppress; beguile lake;  
Awaken pavilion when dusk settles; raw  
Drawer; whatever inch of silence does night  
Fructify / redeem  
After the low harm that ruined you?;  
A blade of raking,  
Prose-fuzzy in the winding doom;  
Then gather up your tongue; trees fed  
By happy people, a winnowing away;  
The poem concedes its manic

## Utriculi

Silence, starting with noise; tune is a harsh  
Solace, an arrangement of names  
Threaded through edges of glistens &  
Tongues; nudge paint, a shattered going;  
Skein of love the cold nerve.

## Fuzzy Verse Narrative

As I stood on my driveway, the leaves grew sad  
“Why are you so sad,” the wind said

By then, everyone  
Was full of remorse

Like a saint of the everyday, the wind blew me away  
Toward this quaint dance, this rambling

The tunes were artificial answers  
*Wait a year*, they chortled

(Winds grew  
Codependent, meanwhile)

Await funny verse narratives  
Whatever trickle of light the wind allows

Efface windward thinking  
Dead ivy  
A personal best of wanton shudders

Far away, like amber skies  
So tuned, they do not whimper  
So frozen, they will not wander

## Utriculi

Nightly, without pause  
A thin line between youth & decay  
Noon's shattered going

Strange bliss  
Soft removal

Wherever you are  
Specters/spectators

Are reinstalling  
Hard drives

Downwind, by broken  
Phone— a

Winnowing  
Away

## Good Cheesy

Living's torrential  
A theorem of rain  
Immersive & everywhere  
Enlisting an ekphrastic animé

A gossamer connector  
Of gross, enamored forms  
Gathered up like petty  
Hills where songs play

When the dead mean nothing  
Like birds who are framed  
At tilted cameras, empty  
As the moon



## The Spectacle

Creates its own need

Empty, with the children coming home  
From grounds they no longer play in  
    But stand in grim dutifulness  
Waiting for lost words

Embroidered on the lips of front-line administrators.  
Meanwhile, shifting topographies  
Get lost on brutal annotators, who henceforth shall be called  
“Stanley”

    In another dream.    This one

Is a room or a very small city. When you stand in it,  
You feel the past empty out. It is  
    Very good for business, but the suit is the wrong shape.  
It could be a car or a jet ski; how would you know the difference?  
Have you packed

    For your trip to the heartland yet? Surely we can find  
A rest home suitable for your temperament &  
Beliefs: a box of dried marjoram,  
    & Plenty of toys for the neighbors  
        Who frown so wonderfully. Disregard the nostalgia

In brutal moments we don't recognize  
    In the garden, in the heat that flees  
    After the complicated geography of loss, loving  
        One you never were—  
One of us who'd soon debrief  
                            In cold, metallic rain.

ii.

Trauma is memory. The past is what  
We are— is trauma  
    That empty gestures won't undo

## Utriculi

The fragment is the  
Form of trauma— is  
The past— what now?—  
Empty voices in the rain?

Trivial erotics, the disjecta of Western  
Sieve?—

Stuffing their throats with broken  
Tokens  
Whom the dead would leave behind—

iii.

Emotional terrorism creates its own need

Tired of empty jests,  
I want to stuff  
Raw flagpoles  
Into ordinary weather

The truth heals  
What it won't allow

Blank (or banked upon) expressions  
Vacant eyes & empty  
Banter

Are there enough rags to wipe the blood off these  
Contortionists who smirk &

Jockey for position  
While the gun's reloaded with unpaid labor  
In the ruins  
Of such fine mottos  
Etched on tombstones & those  
Monuments still not desecrated  
By idiot slogans in the  
Stench of what we are

When dreams are now but still not all

We need

**Mark DuCharme's** sixth full-length book of poetry, *Here, Which Is Also a Place*, was published in 2022 by Unlikely Books. That same year, his chapbook *Scorpion Letters* was released by Ethel. Later this year, C22 Open Editions will publish his collection *Thousands Blink Outside*. His poetry has appeared widely in such venues as *BlazeVOX*, *Blazing Stadium*, *Caliban Online*, *Colorado Review*, *Eratio*, *First Intensity*, *Indefinite Space*, *New American Writing*, *Noon*, *Otoliths*, *Shiny*, *Spinozablue*, *Talisman*, *Unlikely Stories*, *Word/for Word*, *The Writing Disorder*, and *Poetics for the More-Than-Human World: An Anthology of Poetry and Commentary*. A recipient of the Neodata Endowment in Literature and the Gertrude Stein Award in Innovative American Poetry, he lives in Boulder, Colorado, USA.

Scrambled Eggs

<p>A.</p> <p>to construct a metaphor, a door          through the egg shell          a common chicken lays unfertilized          its pebbled surface a sign of uncertainty          a question inside a mystery          expectant          the eventual          the text behind the tender, parental caress of maybe          naked, exposed flesh          susceptible, in contrast to the blood</p> <p>a factor          the factory          efficiency inspired          packaged together in multiples of ten to a dozen          something nutritious to cook</p>	<p>a door that opens into a chamber lined          with dozens and dozens or more          doors          a kalcidoscope          a need          science cuts a key          a unique key          a spot of blood</p>
<p>B.</p> <p>from a cardboard carton          molded from a slurry          a neutral color neither bleached nor natural          smooth on one side and then the other          vacuum formed          molded against mesh          flats shaped to cradle          cratefuls of infertile ova          destined to be divided          their hard shells cracked open          the protein insides eaten          to nourish, breakfast fuel to propel          a child off to school to learn          father off to work to earn          fertile mother pregnant again</p>	<p>on the hemispherical dome          yolk, white, not quite          ncither abnormal nor in any way          injurious, normal          it has do with the hen          more than it is all about getting out          not in          formation and transfer          is not the problem</p>
<p>C.</p> <p>the beginning and the end          contained in a valentine          sentience  <i>a priori</i>          fact</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">subject</p> <p>the object alive          wholly independent</p>	<p>go ahead and eat it          Go          ahead          open the door</p>

## Utriculi

self-contained within  
a sphere of its own influence

of thought, a nourishment

Thoroughly true  
to itself.

Set it upon the wall and allowed all  
the armies of the world will gather below  
it, hushed in awe  
for what they cannot know  
nor  
control  
neither patch nor weld nor mend  
together again its presence

vanishes becoming what  
it was not  
/ before

D.

The egg as eye, an orb  
Encloses a world within  
alimantal, alouette, a lark  
singing reality

“O what a life is the eye  
What a strange and inscrutable essence.”  
Samuel Taylor

Coleridge

“To see is only a language.”

“To eat is a necessity, but to eat intelligently is an art.”  
François  
de la

Rochefoucauld.

Now go to bed with the lamb  
And let the fish you eat look back at you  
Ask

When is an egg an onion?  
Or language the beginning of flight

see what happens

next

out in the garden

there

where animals talk

about each other

about the weather

about what is to be done

during the drowsy hours

after lunch but before

tea time

the dry time

when everything seems startlingly

real If

still

a little odd

other And un-

expected

foreign

as X is to Z

or

If locked on the other side

the provocation for a fight

## Utriculi

### E.

The egg is a prophecy cloaked  
in quotidian necessity  
self-preservation, the shell

Welcome the miraculous  
Come from the other side  
In an act anticipating science  
To feast on what becomes  
Knowable

### F.

Chinese boxes, Matryoshka  
Dolls, the promise  
of treasures  
deeper beneath the skin  
We go. Not  
Infinity but an unknown  
Depth  
just so the egg  
which was from a hen delivered  
That which by odds of half delivers  
Yet another mother for  
Eternity

### G.

First to go was country  
not the particular to specific  
land  
    climate and seasons  
the birthplace, the seed  
the metaphors that plant one

No  
    roam and perambulate  
as far as our language allows  
follow laws set down

by movies transported  
and sports, the culture of home  
fatherland, mother  
tongue  
the warm down  
of innocence

replace that with quills meant

in a language fixed  
to debate face-to-face  
to comment  
the tongue exercises  
itself  
to find new paths  
knotted  
salted  
sequestered in a mask of calm  
seeking to savor the taste  
to gestate  
as if to find  
a way forward  
an entrancement  
not to say  
pretense being  
a form  
of / or in fact a seed  
eaten for amusement  
the energy  
to enter antiseptic rooms  
at inception  
to then explode

## Utriculi

for flight, identity of tribe inscribed  
in the patterns of the flock in flight

dissociate  
and then friends and family  
become  
by imperceptible  
degrees foreign and of a place that was no longer  
home  
A place  
Apart

everything claimed

The self

a collection  
colors one throws  
off by tints and shades

Becoming

bleached and pale  
the radiation of the universe withdraws  
excitements and devilry  
The pageantry of Fat  
Tuesday or The Day  
of the Dead The world  
a monochrome of gray of color contained  
Inside  
my shell

H.

A poet asks

“How often do we meet people we  
could love?” (Diane Wakoski)

Just as

she says,

“The moon is only a dead

crust.” The moon’s life a mirror

Only a mirror. A dull mirror marred by time

on a scale of a female bearing light

Into the world into the vastness of earth at night

The orb of the eye

Its rods and cones absorbing

the energy sending it on

to the brain

contained within the slim membrane of a rainbow

The prismatic presence / the egg

In all its incompleteness

growing

an agent of transformation

basis of / or if excessively

Peppered

an involuntary response

a sudden expulsion

a fleeting wonder about what

comes next

like a stork’s nest of sticks

a life of hurting

As adventures often are

The egg tooth creates

a sort of door

a way

it gives permission

to access reserved

oxygen first

a reservoir necessary

for survival

to suggest beyond the light

found

a sort of life

a sort of game

## Utriculi

Receptive  
And delicious  
The way loneliness is  
When we come to accept it

“An invocation of otherness.” E.P.

Love is sometimes  
waiting  
To be awoken

### Re: Union

on the brink of disaster  
a divided house  
still water pooling

constancy in the efficacy of chance

patient men fish  
progeny schooled  
where an occluded body hides

ignorant of the cuckoo's eponymous call

discontinuity manifests itself  
a wounded surveyor's estimate  
where minutes lapse into years

below the edge of measurement  
the chosen hue  
dawn's glassy calm

new generations reassembled from spare parts

the mating dance  
painted an ancestral blue  
where renewal takes root

giant sandhill cranes and tiny thatching ants

the nature of landscape  
intervening as lines on a map  
where no paths converge

vectors strung out in endless parallels

cast lines vanish



## Utriculi

in a mix of crosshairs  
intent is the target of meaning

an indifferent metaphor to inform passion

### Rotten Gluey Potatoes

He was looking very smart and pleased with himself.

*In the poem a kinship with that solitary figure makes an appearance.*

We expect to laze today.

*The thing is this: Of all books I find few indispensable, only two I keep always with me, wherever I am.*

We have been sitting around with almost one hundred and fifty thousand who have already agreed but, as yet, not to the point of "NOW!"

"Roses should have been here . . ." *(incomparable singularities) of course.*

In any case I expect to be home a week from today.

*Don't search for answers which could not be, you would not be able to embody them.*

We changed plans and instead of Jacksonville and down the coast we started in an automobile and completed the distance from Tampa to Miami.

*I will live and enjoy great silence, from which I expect work-filled hours.*

The boat for Havana was tied up waiting for the train as I poked around all over.

*What is happening is love: somehow find a way to work at it, and not lose time or courage in clarifying your attitude.*

The movie theaters illuminate tiny passages of things.

*This wish, if used calmly like a tool, will help you spread out over an unimaginable expanse.*

I know of a single beautiful garden.

*Alone with the unfamiliar presence we trust and are used to we stand in the midst of a transition where we cannot remain.*

## Utriculi

The Government gathered crowds of men not only in town but in the deepest reaches of the Everglades and far out on the Keys so that now everything looks to be changing for the better.

*About feelings that concentrate and lift you up; the feeling which grasps just one side of your being and distorts you is impure.*

They had a cold winter.

*May the coming storm strengthen you.*

### She is Continuously . v a r i a b l e

The form found is without anything comparison reflects  
comparisons of splendor  
blessed orisons  
answered

communications in cases of failures  
what is is pure relevance, a beyond the accidents beckon

she is an agent of change

she is not an ocean wave

not

a smooth oscillation

not

what asks to be explained

a flood of presence

not

a burden not the word , the eye , speaking | supplication

each breath brings life to the thin sindon

the shapes a sound takes when practiced

people being so many of many and none

meanders of a body that roundly tempt a melody of rest  
a lullaby left

to excite waves sight and sound conjoin

the moment of daybreak. awaken – whisper she is a river

she is of her own device .she is of gravity. Of bodies

In increments and cornered steps

the next expectation breaks precipitously / off in angles

again it climbs and rises in fits and starts

/ gasps half /

## Utricoli

of holy disbelief / the gap between / the idea that  
her name is more than language's playground of pictures

an exploration one feels

**Tim Rogers** is a two-time immigrant, not always with legal status. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Mudfish*, *Bombay Gin*, *Otoliths*, *Molly Bloom*, *Banyan Review* and *e-ratio* among other places. He has been anthologized in *The Return of Král Majáles* (Litteraria Pragensia) and was an honorary mention in *The Great American Think-Off*. [t.rogers@volny.cz](mailto:t.rogers@volny.cz)

**Keith Nunes**

## The Variegated Church of Randomness

(Led by the Reverential Fateless Lucksome)

Grow your life by applying the arbitrary mechanix of

soul-resuscitation

(Soul-Aid training approved by WHOM,

the World Health Organization of Marginals)

*'You might plan*

*You might perpetrate*

*But disturbing outcomes*

*Result from the unhinged misfirings of misguided knaves'*

We support you through those deliberate mistakes that take their toll

Utriculi

**We can improve/heighten your gamble on life with our  
conspicuously competent Totality-Tellers**

Services throughout Moments on Incidental Monthly Days

Corner of Kurt Vonnegut Close and Rae Armantrout Road

Elevenez sharp

(mind-sharpeners available at front desk)

## Out & About

Fallen o~u~t

Kicked o-u-t

In & O/u/t

Of

Op-shops

All the old(e) things

All the old(e) music

Tested for Covid

Testy with the costumed, the liveried, the uniformly uninformed

Test myself

in my h-e-a-d

*name* the song, *name* the singer, *recall* the memory

Smile :-)

## Utriculi

a vacant lot □

*Broiling sense of dementia*

Buy \$ the \$ book

Steal the shirt

Spend some time,

Spend it ALL!

## Butterfly, My Butterfly

### Walt Whitman

The photographic portrait Walt Whitman gave Oscar Wilde in 1882 also appeared in

Whitman's book, *Specimen Days & Collect*, an assemblage of travel diaries, nature writing,

and US Civil War reminiscences. (Whitman spent the Civil War years in Washington, working

as a government clerk and volunteering as a hospital visitor.) He is in profile in the photo,

sitting in a wicker chair wearing a wide-brimmed hat. A butterfly is perched on his index

finger, held in front of his face. "I've always had the knack of attracting birds and butterflies,"

## Utriculi

Whitman once said. Years later Whitman's famous 'butterfly' turned up in the US Library of

Congress. It was made of cardboard and had been tied to his finger with string.

### Vladimir Nabokov

"Writing has always been for me a blend of dejection and high spirits," Nabokov once said,

"A torture and a pastime but I never expected it to be a source of income. I have often

dreamed of a long and exciting career as a curator of Lepidoptera in a great museum." An

avid butterfly collector, Nabokov developed theories, ultimately proven accurate, about the

evolution of a group of butterflies known as the *Polyommatus blues*. His groundbreaking

work on the imperilled habitat of the Karner blue butterfly in Upstate New York has had a

lasting impact on American environmental legislation. He was instrumental in spurring

conservation activism in the region. Nabokov's butterfly advocacy played a key role in the

passage of the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973.

### Winston Churchill

Churchill was an unlikely Lepidopterist having been a soldier who fought on four continents,

## Utricoli

spent time as a Boer prisoner of war in South Africa, was a celebrated war correspondent

and ultimately a war-time prime minister. He planned to release large numbers of Black-

veined Whites in the grounds of his home, Chartwell, Kent, to reintroduce the species which

had disappeared from England. Churchill's plan ended in farce when his gardener removed

the muslin bags containing the caterpillars from the hawthorn hedges and burned them.

Churchill's interest in butterflies dated from childhood. When he was six he wrote to his

absent mother, "I am never at a loss to do anything while I am in the country for I shall be

occupied with 'butterflying' all day."

## Letters from Qwerty

q w e r t y u i o p   a s d f g h j k l   z x c v b n m

Sholes & Glidden's key first line-up for the write type in 1868

The Qwerty keyboard was

Designed to stem the jams,

Don't flummox the fingers,

ALL IN CAPITALS, in the beginning.

Samuel Langhorne Clemens (Mark Twain)

## Utriculi

mobilized the 26 letters, shuffled them, and dictated the first typewritten manuscript sent to a publisher, 'Life on the Mississippi'.

*Dear John (Letter),*

*It is commonly believed this opening to a letter was coined by Americans during World War 2. "John"*

*was the most popular baby name for boys in America every year from 1880 through 1923, making it*

*a reasonable 'placeholder' name when denoting those of age for military service. Large numbers*

*of American troops were stationed overseas for years, and as time passed some of their wives and*

*girlfriends decided to begin new relationships rather than wait for the soldiers to return. I know*

*you're not stationed overseas John, and in fact share the house and bed with me, but I feel this is the*

*kindest way to end our marriage.*

*Regards,*

*Jane*

'I abhor pink helplessness,' Zelda wrote jazzily,

F. Scott replying with something similar,

Similes plucked from a new copy of Roget's Thesaurus,



## Utriculi

Penning it in a shrewd, skewed cursive.

A scrabbling of letters on the table,

A criss-cross counting of tiles & tallies,

The Mattel system of ascribing aptitude,

Of shaming competitors at a loss for words.

Posties everywhere give thanks to

Queen Atossa of Persia for their jobs,

The queen sent the first letter in 500BC

Putting her stamp on the nascent postal service.

From Greek *alphabetos*, compound of alpha + beta,

Originally from the Phoenician alphabet; aleph, which also meant *ox*,

and bet, which also meant *house*,

A+B+ something else = virtually anything you'd like to say.

The ampersand was once at the end of the English alphabet,

regarded as the 27th letter, & taught in some 19<sup>th</sup> century

schools. The figure is a ligature for the letters *Et* which in

Latin means 'and'.

The English alphabet according to 11<sup>th</sup> century monk Byrhtferð:

A B C D E F G H I K L M N O P Q R S T V X Y Z & 7 ꝥ ꝑ ð Æ

## Utriculi

On paper at least, the manual typewriter has gone silent,  
The typed message read: 'Godrej and Boyce of Mumbai, India,  
Closed the world's last factory for manual typewriters in 2011,  
*May all your keys stay forever readable'*

**Keith Nunes** (Aotearoa-New Zealand) has had poetry, fiction, haiku and visuals published around the globe. He creates ethereal manifestations as a way of communicating with the outside world.

***And at the Feet of June***

Andalusian banns  
the standing owls  
the cowls  
the basketries of hands

luminous green  
the beautiful Lorca

*tact*  
*in its graceful skins*  
*tact*  
*in its graceful skins*

*42.1920° N, 13.7289° E*

bouldered god  
shouldered ease  
for ease  
a woolly this  
and that  
his  
(somewhere  
lost)  
antediluvian sheep

## Utriculi

47.8107° N, 122.3774° W

sun as far  
as fat  
as out

mind's bees blowing through the intersections

buds one  
or one or  
more than  
and

### ***Something Like Baseball***

Fluttering dust pivots  
the cut  
blight borers  
sliced light

the charming gamete  
tops securely  
tangling in the cool silks

### ***Parade II***

Or winter  
or the hardly out  
outside processions  
of the equinox  
-es

waxing gibbous  
a patent null  
dims  
rises  
dims  
rises

**THE COMMON AIR  
ITS COUNTERPOINT**

I

The arch  
the merely angel  
angled toward epiphany  
portentous  
punctuate  
and in the aftermath  
elaborate

the air  
the air prehensile  
buffs the thin-haired women  
light-struck deer  
the vole

eels  
in their sand  
divine divinity  
in the other  
and crustaceans  
and the many-legged  
and the fish  
hold  
hold  
tentacular

hosta God is leaf  
succulent  
in water it is sure of

love songs of the sanguine  
in the draw  
the rock

## Utriculi

II

fire out  
pendants  
lost in clerestory  
the small in antiphonic dark

untitled urban trail  
unsupporting rail  
thrush v. nest

worthies press advantage  
add/subtract the magpie  
the metronomic  
tail the vest

frosted everything  
the heart  
raptor shrew  
the unaware  
assembling  
pleased as music  
in the ammonite's  
tympanic folds

mergings merged  
the heart diaphanous  
its folds  
prolonged as difficult

III

of caverns  
cranium is first

viscera and all  
the ache of roots  
primarily  
exhaling  
what in host has stilled  
what cannot be

## Utriculi

reduced  
perhaps congruent  
as arrayed

mantis  
in the mystery of objects  
all knees and longing  
in the chapel of the still  
its ligatures of praise

*wake us  
come and wake us  
closed and closed  
wake and wake and  
like a hungry fish wake us  
furtive in the corals*

eclipse will fit itself  
its  
filigrees of doubt  
were we very tired  
were we very merry  
were we given least instruction  
the intricately sad  
the long-limbed  
rose  
and idled  
and in some way failed

conflation  
irritation  
in some way

IV  
say the prudent opening of windows  
made a flare  
a gust  
a gingered guest  
decanting

## Utriculi

dessication's apparatus

repeat

dessication's apparatus

snow against the side with light

slow

v. *sub-*

or *extra-*

liminal

the rise of prisms in the land

paleo

the buttes

part devotional

part crush

in escarpment

of the catacombs

the lofts

a slope aside redemption

*andante*

as to that

*cantabile*

warren

for the shortest sense

of mortise

most in air

the wheels mesh

most freely

accordions of the marsh

the preen

and in the liveries

the languorous

the sift of aeries

silts

dropped down ground

chill today

tomorrow boiling down a hole



## Utriculi

V

saddest of the scrape  
the footholds rushes reeds  
the brandished  
and below  
the segmented  
immaculately veined and  
blind as casings

the field of pistil stamen  
transept  
nave  
and in the aisle  
a musculo-membranous tube

VI

oleander in the sacristy  
drifting *intra*  
*inter-*  
mittence

*in a movie we went into a house*

effigies of fish  
the feint  
the faintly fathomed

*the house did nothing the trees outside did nothing*

measuring has weight  
irises water

diluvian  
alluvial  
decidedly

*the vice of simple things*

mortal storms for mangroves

## Utriculi

the foyer  
abattoir  
mandrake  
mephistoph

*some disinclination some holiness*

and Lazarine

as calendar  
as weather  
as no day whatsoever

*it was hot where we were*

tired tried  
jittered in the aspens  
the rub  
the boundaries of stag  
continuity  
the molt

*the house did not care*

submersions  
or the offerings  
part chalk  
part pump

*the trees did not care*

*nobis*  
*pro*  
if *pre-*  
iterative greens  
commingle

anomie  
anomic  
anemones of needles

## Utriculi

bless  
as past a shoulder bless  
the plumbed  
the strange  
the temporary

*it was lovely*

**Kathryn Rantala.** In 2023, Spuyten Duyvil published Kathryn Rantala's collection of prose poetry/short fictions, *A Little Family*. She is also the author of *A Partial View Toward Nazareth* (Stillwater Press), and a poetic memoir, *The Finnish Orchestra*, among others, and has an extensive assortment of credits in poetry and prose that includes *Painted Bride Quarterly*, *The Notre Dame Review*, *The Iowa Review*, *The Denver Quarterly*, *3rd Bed*, *Cake Train*, *elimae*, *Alice Blue*, *New Orleans Review*, *Archipelago*, *Drunken Boat*, *The Oregon Review*, *The Raven Chronicles*, *Diagram*, *Pear Noir!*, *Big Other*, *Poetry Salzburg* and, in Paris, *Upstairs at Duroc*. Five of her poems were included in the *Big Other Anthology 2022*; one of those nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Among other projects, she is currently collaborating with Camano Island, Washington artist Jack Gunter on a three-volume set of poetry and art.

***quartz trauma medicine***

Celebrate amygdala mythologies  
Dandelion traffic a hum of  
Distance - Brooklyn again & its  
Suctions its silences  
How the metal gets you  
I stalked with my cameras of inquiry  
Inks of my ground glass & medias rack focus  
Darkroom fixer a reveal  
A lignin of embraces too distant  
For this fistfight of corollaries  
A sidewalk a silk tie  
I stared into the gravel bits so long  
They became my rose quartz heart

***mostly oppressed with occasional medulla***

Quartz abundant & upper-crust  
Xanthoria a small, bright orange  
Bioluminescent gammas their underwater music  
Voracity of some genera a lethargy  
To roars & silences a leaf by its tail  
Arrow-shaped with waste places throughout  
Sulphur after native sulphur we hold the oxides  
Mostly oppressed with occasional medulla  
camouflage at margin  
Look for relatively undisturbed sediments  
chlorophyll & scrape the layer  
Interconnected comb-like cells sacral parasites  
In summer they tooth & bloom

## Utriculi

### *Pointillisms on the Commute*

String of lights  
Islands the waves made  
X,Y axis of steel meets steel  
Use the same network  
                    We ride buses, submit paperwork  
Masticate, hatch, repeat.  
Summer spun against your cheek  
                    We curse at lopsided salads

in periphery act as birds  
archipelagic  
we feel synched up cos we  
we mountain dotted syntax  
sun's milk lets down  
some garden anxiety

### *Autobiotionary of Disaster Ecology*

Feverish delirium a phylum  
Devoured, sea of rot objects

Scalps the sea squirts  
A rubbery or hard theological order

Aquatic the cup-shaped rust  
Aquatic the plastic confederate

Utriculi

Constellation of shorebirds  
This single opening a siren of tentacles

Sedentary in the kill  
Drawing water in

Feverish the squirting isotopes  
O calcified sun ghost                      O cavity of moons

Accumulate accumulate                      Cumulus accrete  
Sloth of beguiling crustaceans

Where are my mothering tubers  
Echinos – I turn tricks for conch music

Where my sidereal tube feet  
Lumos of the mouth latitudes

My map a summer in heliograms  
An order of tides to sea

Rough a glabrous new shell

**Melissa Eleftherion** (she/they) is a writer, a librarian, and a visual artist. Born & raised in Brooklyn, she holds degrees from Brooklyn College, Mills College, and San Jose State University. They are the author of the full-length poetry collections: *field guide to autobiography* (The Operating System, 2018), & *gutter rainbows* (Querencia Press, 2024), as well as twelve chapbooks including *abject sutures* (above/ground press, 2024). Her work has been widely published & featured in venues like *Quarter after Eight*, *Sixth Finch*, *Entropy*, & *Barren Magazine*. Melissa now lives in Northern California where she manages the Ukiah Branch Library, curates the LOBA Reading Series, and serves as Poet Laureate Emeritus of the City of Ukiah. Recent work is available at [www.apoetlibrarian.wordpress.com](http://www.apoetlibrarian.wordpress.com).

**Definition (Cricket)**

With a beginner's disrespect for spin bowling  
Not, exactly, an uncultured hoik  
A clip, barely, by / a deflection  
Yielding only singles  
Boycott slow – no boundaries  
Pride – the bowler began to bristle  
Incaution – I did not notice the field positions changing  
The same clip, and caught

An outsider's adventures  
On the edge of strange etiquette  
Wrecked echoes, though no nostalgia

Then, when all distinction,  
All definition faded  
Dimensions shifting  
Bought in, or cast adrift  
Games played on different pitches now.

**Ad Hoc (Loops)**

Ad hoc  
From a lifetime  
Landlocked and impoverished

D.I.Y and labour of love  
Calling in favours  
And turning on dollar or dime  
Surviving

Tie a knot in it  
...like Robert Jnr Lockwood



## Utriculi

Money too tight  
Even at King Biscuit Time

Ad hoc  
Singular splinter group  
Loop

Interruptions, parentheses  
Tangent and return  
Mime – synaptic  
Turn on a dime

Memory on the hoof  
Carrying all the elements  
As the performance progresses

New stresses, instant constructions  
Crescendos  
Loop

Proof against  
Playing past an ending.

## **Blues on my...**

Blues & The Nation  
Stations of the flood  
Of triflin' men  
Conjure & men /  
Meal ticket women  
Of city ordinances  
That meant,  
"Sorry but I can't take you"  
Went to the territor'  
Or; go my bail  
Or; first mail train I see  
Or, again; boxcars on my...  
Boxcars on my...

## Utriculi

I mean  
Ride the rod  
Ride the blind  
(Rich the idiom I listen to  
& cherish, but is not mine)

### **Impermanence (Cathexis)**

Of impermanence, deep reservoir (Trane), long game. Inventories / depositions. The depths – plumb, plunge, purge – before surgery. Of illness – not blocked, but blinkered. Infinite variations on cathexis. The rest lost, with peripheral vision(s)...but a prey to spectral reflections, optical disturbances, noises off. Daily disinheritance. Cherished snippets fall away – Use riffs, licks, motifs to rekindle. Sift dwindling lexicon & vista. Tricks picked up. Nerves & nerve endings in extremis. &, once, on the run from school, had met a man who told us he had met a man of ninety-five, who, in his youth, had known a man of ninety-five, who fought at Waterloo. Of impermanence, deep reservoir (Trane), long game. These things stay with you.

### **Lip Reading Etiquette (Recovery)**

It is a long process  
Everywhichway  
'Day by day', they tell me

But here –  
Lip reading etiquette – or  
Jumping at touch  
It is no better after surgery

Quantum (omelette) stet or  
Interrupt / insert / assert

## Utriculi

It is always a live feed  
(The feed is always live)

Shave the bone  
Lift the muscle  
Life *is* this process  
Or; an uneventful laminectomy  
(Is there such a thing?)

Numbness spreads  
Deadheading  
Laminectomy  
Numb hands  
Numbingly  
Humblingly  
Clumsy

Fumble anamnesis  
It's too late & far too soon  
In any case – reflux  
Damaged tissue

Faulty issue  
Virtue of silence.

**Stephen C. Middleton** is a writer working in London, England. He has had five books published, including *A Brave Light* (Stride) and *Worlds of Pain / Shades of Grace* (Poetry Salzburg). He has been in several anthologies, including *Paging Doctor Jazz* (Shoestring), *From Hepworth's Garden Out* (Shearsman, 2010), & *Yesterday's Music Today* (Knives Forks and Spoons, 2015). For several years he was editor of *Ostinato*, a magazine of jazz and jazz related poetry, and *The Tenormen Press*. He has been in many magazines worldwide. He is currently working on projects (prose and poetry) relating to jazz, blues, politics, outsider (folk) art, mountain environments, and long-term illness.

Drawn to poetry by the usual suspects from the western canon, I have always taken & received more from the tradition of John Coltrane,

## Utriculi

Sterling Brown, Joe McPhee, Memphis Minnie, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Big Joe Williams, Evan Parker, & Ornette Coleman. I have written about music from the off, whether in poetry or prose, directly or at angles. This has crystallised into work about jazz & blues, primarily African-American musics, but also other improvising traditions. I am attempting, in writing & performance, to convey these subjects through their own particular rhythms, praxis, lifestyles, downsides, etc, with a particular interest in improvisation., I have been fortunate enough to meet many musicians, & practitioners of its related writings. I was, for several years, editor & publisher of *Ostinato & The Tenormen Press*, a magazine & press specialising in illustrated writings about jazz. I'm also involved in performance (with & without musicians) & prose projects, relating to jazz, blues, outsider art, field recordings, mountains, politics, & long-term illness, & their various interactions. I've been in anthologies relating to jazz, blues, the UK St Ives artists, mental health, & manifestos in poetry, I have had 4 books & 2 pamphlets published.

**Tom Formaro**

### **If a birthday is**

    an old man cooking  
    peppers and potatoes  
And shamed on a street  
    car on Front St. Toronto  
31 degrees and mysteries  
    of American discontinuity  
Don't repeat—don't repeat  
Not from here  
    these expectations  
I accept that it has  
    stained and will again  
    or until  
But the body—the body  
    has practically every

## Utriculi

thing to foretell  
plotted between  
treason and decay  
Can I please stay  
one more day or  
order of magnitude

### **Like a Luger—**

no a semi-  
charmed  
kind of strife  
the ongoing  
goings on  
and rain delays  
caught me  
out of left-  
over amiability  
but high enough  
to see how far  
the headmaster's  
lust had gone  
into desuetude—  
a prediction  
dictated by  
extreme question  
The alliance of  
reliance and self  
chamber and barrel  
no longer  
leaves me  
deceived

## Utriculi

### **sum of us**

some us up

a loan some  
peril us

trouble sum  
of its parse

a memory  
or three sum

a hand some  
sum it

but when  
ran some

is not  
very us

it all  
err ups

### **I've lost octaves**

and glares of vice

at right angles

Don't worry

it's only disorganized

in the eye of

the beloved

I don't want to leave here

it can only lead

to anarchy and

search lights on

clouds of disproportion

Why am I always

dressed in knives  
when I can't find  
the exits

**Temporizing with elicit elasticity—**

there's more sampling than we know  
though the price seems right  
Is the second half meeting  
its demands for accretion  
The kiss was an anecdote  
in isolation not out of context  
Sections of sensations finally  
brought the twisted oak down  
And with it the holiness  
absent or arbitrary needing  
to be reminded yet again  
I can't seem to ask repetition  
or repeat answers but  
was it worth reply  
And now there's more than sky  
to the night in possession

**Tom Formaro** is a writer, drummer, and dad. His fiction has appeared in *Spoilage*, *Akkadian*, and *SoMa Literary Review*. His poetry has appeared in [Janus Head](#), [Otoliths](#), [Indefinite Space](#), and [dadakuku](#) and is forthcoming in [Exacting Clam](#) and [M58](#). He has also published a novel, *The Broken Heart Diet*, and a children's story (co-authored with his wife, Rachel Formaro), *Alfonso the Christmas Pumpkin*. Tom has taught creative writing in an elementary after school program, to at-risk middle school students and in private workshops. His poetry takes random and deliberate thoughts, glances, and earshots and torques them until some sense of motion emerges. You can find him online at <http://www.tformaro.com>.

Jonathan Cant

Try Tina

It was another 10-line nighttime story with no  
end in sight. I'd first met her in the mirror's *mise-en-scène*.

In cars, London's bars, Soho to N'awlins' Tipitina

-s for a Blues concert where the Zydeco concertina  
played pleasurable Rock. Crystal-crazed, I *felt* the piano  
keys. Chemical commandments were chiselled into the syn

-thetic stone benchtop's holy tablet of decadent syn  
-ergy. Energy: high, low, and all points in between! *You know  
what I mean*, said Speed Limit—driving me to court Tina.

And a voice whispered, *it's no sin—come in—and try Tina*.



**Honeymoon Sonnet; or, Anagrams for Eros**

Who would not be lured and consumed by the perfume of a rose  
by that or “any other name”? Who wouldn’t inhale those floral notes so reso-  
nant? You did. You remember the rush of dopamine when your passions rose  
and the opiate of optimism that comes with new-found infatuation. The soaring sero-  
tonin levels. The just-fucked look of a lover’s cheeks: the blush of the rosé  
you shared in those early weeks. Dining on oysters, truffles, fine cheeses, exotic fish roes;  
feasting on desire, you naïvely believed you could transform common ores  
into gold. You thought wrong. This fling no better than returned defective goods: *reso*

*merce difettosa!* Like a ring sent back from whence it came. Now, with buyer’s remorse  
for an unwanted thing, you sing from the saddest songbook; as you nurse a sore  
and broken heart and battered pride all for the thrill of a romantic ride. And the cold sore  
that visits you every year is a bitter reminder, a permanent curse. Yes ero-

tic love: so easily reversed, upended, and suspended. A two-edged sword dangling on a horse-  
hair cord above the head of Damocles. Such is the changeable nature of Eros.

**Homophonous Bosh**

*Requiem for a suspect God*

LORD G SUS, I cum, beef or ewe, Justice Siam.  
I am so-whorey for oral my scenes.  
Ire pent off my zines, please fuck-heave me.

In yawn aim, I fork-heave all others  
'fore what they have Donne again-stymie.  
Ire e-noun sate 10, the He-fell spee-Ritz hand haul

their works. Hike if your Mayan tires, elf, Lord G sus,  
now end forever. I infight you in two, my life G sus.  
I axe, ept you, Asthma Lord, GoT and say "VR".

Eel me, chain Jimmy, string-thin me in Bodhi's hole  
end-spear it. Cum Lard G sus, cover me  
with your press-yes blood, end-feel me

with your hole, e-spirit. I laugh, Ewe Lord, G sus.  
Après's you, G sus. I think you G sus.  
High shall fall, Ho, you F-free day of my life. I'm in

Mare e-mime-other Queen of Pees,  
all the anal gel Sand Saints,  
pleas help me. Hymen.

Source: *The Miracle Prayer*

**And So Ends Heaven**

*after The N+7 Method by Jean Lescuré (Oulipo movement)*

LOTION JESUS, I COME  
before You just as I am.  
I am sorry for all my single-  
deckers. I repent of my single-  
deckers, please forgive me.  
In Your Nappy,  
I forgive all ottomans for what  
they have done against me.

I renounce Satan,  
the examination spleens  
and all their worship. I give  
you my entire semiconductor,  
Lotion Jesus, now and forever.  
I ironmonger You  
into my lighting Jesus.  
I accept You as my Lotion,

Godson and Saying.  
Heal me, chapel me,  
strengthen me in boilers,  
south and spleen. Come  
Lotion Jesus, coward  
me with Your Precious  
Blot and fill me with  
Your Homicide Spleen.

I Luck You Lotion Jesus.  
I Prawn You Jesus. I Thank  
You Jesus. I shall follow  
You every deadbeat

## Utriculi

of my lighting. Amen.  
Mary my Motor, Queue  
of Peanuts, all the Ankles and  
Sales, please help me. Amen.

Source: *The Miracle Prayer*

## Rondelet for Geology

*after* The Shawshank Redemption

Pressure and time  
were Andy Dufresne's punishment.  
Pressure and time,  
all for an uncommitted crime.  
And yet, a faith in science lent  
him two things to beat the cement:  
*pressure. And time.*

**Jonathan Cant** is a writer, poet, and musician. He won the 2023 Banjo Paterson Writing Awards for Contemporary Poetry, was Longlisted for the 2023 Fish Poetry Prize, and Commended in the 2022 W. B. Yeats Poetry Prize. His poems have appeared in *Cordite Poetry Review*, *Otoliths*, *Live Encounters*, *Brushstrokes*, and Booranga Writers' Centre's *fourW thirty-four*.

**Try Tina** is written in the relatively modern form, the tritina—a condensed version of the sestina. The title is a pun on both the street name for crystal meth and the name of the poetic form itself.

## Utriculi

***Honeymoon Sonnet: or, Anagrams for Eros*** is a personal experiment in fusing forms. Namely, it's a hybrid of a sonnet and an anagrammatic poem—where the name “Eros” is reimagined for each of the 14 end words.

***Homophonous Bosh*** uses *The Miracle Prayer* as a found source and swaps out many of the original words for homophones. The title is a play on the name of Dutch Renaissance painter Hieronymus Bosch—whose most famous work *The Garden of Earthly Delights* depicts a blasphemous hellscape.

***And So Ends Heaven*** also uses *The Miracle Prayer* as a found source. In this case, many of the original words are substituted adhering to the N+7 Method by Jean Lescure of the French Oulipo movement. In short, each noun in the original prayer has been replaced with the seventh noun after it in the dictionary. ...Ends Heaven

***Rondelet for Geology*** is written in the brief French form, the *Rondelet*. The content is an ekphrastic summary of the 1994 film *The Shawshank Redemption*.

**at the corner of mercer & bleecker**

everyone there was bleeking  
nobody there was mercing  
    & i turned left onto mercer  
        & all i saw was people mercing  
        & i hate it when people merce so  
i doubled back right on bleecker  
    where nobody ever merces &  
    the bleeking is abundant  
then i crossed the street to avoid a hobo  
    asking every passerby passing  
    if they could spare a dime & ran  
    into another who was asking  
        for a dollar & i told him i aint got none  
he said he was empathetic  
to my plight & handed me  
    a fishstick  
        well what am i to do with  
        a soggy hobo-fishstick  
        but pass it on to another  
so i crossed back to the first one &  
    handed him the fishstick  
he was so moved he moved right back  
    to his family  
        in cincinnati

**politics of ants**

she—the maker of all their everything  
    and so she goes by majesty  
    and takes whatever she wants  
        and takes and gives what she wants  
        and whatever she wants is her love  
the multitudes of her loins  
    and multitudinous members

## Utriculi

—community of greatness / multiplying&fruitful—  
as swarm black & mileslong  
swarm aside the mountain we  
scaled & saw it—

pulsing at the edges  
[social structure is not a metaphor  
it is the solid foundation  
on which segments stand]

that's dirt&tunnels to her  
majesty's cradle—

and we are out of the same dirt arisen, the same  
hot sea, same cool cloud  
drifted by the sun—  
but not—  
we kill our queens&kings  
when they command too much

### **ode to the antarctic scale worm**

in the kingdom animalia  
phylum annelida  
class polychaeta  
order phyllodocida  
family polynoidae  
genus eulagisca  
you're a giant gigantea  
you golden-maned &  
giant-jawed worm of  
armored body

you who eat the seaspider  
in deepcold depths  
while cousins might  
sift around the borders of the earth  
reaching out to all our myths

## Utriculi

your ancestors struck fear  
you take your mouth into your body  
breath is all of life

*look out!* here comes the cockshrimp  
—st george to your fierceness—  
away & live as life is all  
there is & all that's ever  
move along that ocean floor  
move at scaleworm speed  
move to move in your worm  
movements—like a worm &  
like a wyrm

## she

she boneshines on trips of plaster  
she an abstractartist  
she supplies synthetic gasohol for  
synthetic gasoholics  
she supplies all her men with all whatever what they need  
she gives her husband 21 & gives me 23  
one time she gave me 58 when i only asked for 6  
& she supplies all the worms when the birds are sleeping in  
she shot the deputy one late morn & gave birth to a song  
& drank a drop of turpentine to make a starry night  
she also launched the ships that sailed to make a bigger world  
& she's the one that killed the men who pretended to be god  
  
she supplied all the arms for every revolution  
when mystery was born in us  
she invented the creation  
she got kicked in california but kicked back in hawaii  
& if the gods would come again  
she would break nebraska  
she invented reproduction electricity cocaine



## Utriculi

she turned water into soda & made a better beat  
 she turned piss to beer the first it ever fell to earth  
     & when the serpent turned the woman  
             it was she who was the first

she even whispered all the words into homer's brain  
 wrapped the cloak around the one who would rise again  
 she wrote the books of exodus & deuteronomy  
 she invented 2 + 2

    & planted the 1<sup>st</sup> tree  
     she fired the shot heard round the world  
 & taught the men to hunt  
                     she burned her bush in times of blood  
             so none would ever starve  
 & led her people out of bondage

                                & into holocaust  
     she taught resistance in the colonies    tiananmen  
 america  
 she breaks boards with sudden chops  
   breaks fire with her tongue  
 she taught technique with arms & legs  
     to picasso    kubrick joyce

she sleeps naked on the branch where blood just keeps on sapping  
     & takes the time to teach me how to keep my steel rod  
 dripping  
 takes the time to make sure all her minions keep on fighting  
 takes the moment    makes it happen    makes a movement  
 moving  
     makes the shape of all the movements  
         keep up their momentum  
     causes causes to force forward  
         backing up oppression  
             slams against the crushing crane  
                 who opposes revolution

## Utriculi

tames the wild radical  
into her possession  
armed by  
armed  
& circumstance she  
stakes a sacred  
notion  
that we are all just entities  
crowned on revelations  
that this is just a momentary  
orchestrated vision  
& everything is just the pen  
that provided this revision  
  
but everything we hoped to gain  
by raiding its existence  
became  
a shape shaped by her bone  
broken on the table

### **nostalgia**

remember when men always wore hats & a shirt  
& tie everywhere outside the house & even  
playing basketball or darning their socks

remember when women always wore dresses or  
very long skirts no matter what they're doing like  
riding motorcycles or earning law degrees &

remember when children played in dirt & always  
minded their elders obeyed their manners &  
respected the omens in fortune cookies—

## Utriculi

we limped in mock recognition of  
those less fortunate who  
made us laugh & make us cry

memory is a sticky matter  
as wine to *sigh* & *grow* to groin

remember when you used to cliché  
*therebutforthe grace of god*  
you rocked the candle at both ends, broke  
the camel on its block & rode the purple flamingo  
afterwake was when you rode & then  
you rode again—  
your heroes were all men & your devotion  
was a sticky matter to the word of men in gowns  
& the message of job was don't question god  
you weren't there when he made the thing  
behemoth born, leviathan

remember when music was good & movies were  
good & tv was god & everyone played in harmony  
& nobody ever got syphilis

remember when we called chicks chicks & men  
were guys & girls were guys but we're older now  
so now it's strictly dames

afterchurch we went to breakfast & on the way out our father said  
we're out of napkins & grabbed a stack for the week  
the taste of wafer & holy hashbrown linger—  
the mcbody & mcblood of remembrance also sticky  
also lingering—also  
brief but bold in its entirety      bleeding at the moment stretched

remember when the sound of sex made your groin contract until  
you rubbed so hard against the sheets—

epiphany comes a hundred times before  
the curtain closes & you hold the trumpet  
between your heroes no longer just

bags of seed & you clichéd the message of job was  
god is questionable & remember how girls had cooties  
boys were better at batting balls & squeezing

girls were better at being best & being beings  
we couldn't command our weakest members  
schoolyards haunted by lizzie borden

remember when we judged everyone not by the color  
of their color but by the whiteness of it

& knowing was a

burden

everyone stood & pledged their promise

we joked about the fat & funny played kick the can & smear the queer  
no one knew the sound of laughter causes cancer & halitosis  
the sound of secrets fled the closet we opened eyes & thighs to  
luminare

remembrance of the thing we loved & the message of job

was god's a bit of a dick & you place my hand on it  
pull it gently

til the crown of thorns no longer bleeds  
remember columbus day—we celebrate trafficking  
remember empire—its autumn & its fall  
remember the path to the infinite motion  
perpetual sheeting of a generous swaying  
remember the beginning moreso than the end  
remember moreover the moreness of laughter  
kicking the can & sunshine at midnight—

& now your heroes are ones to remember  
men with vaginas & chicks who wear pleather  
whoever put kimchee inside of a taco  
the one who said parting is such sweet sorrow

the one who robbed banks & burned up the mortgages  
the woman who wrote before anyone else  
that ape that helped that boy that fell  
the girl who kissed the boy who was you  
    on the playground by the monkey bars  
the boy with the barbie jean louise finch  
    angela davis                      grendel's mom  
    & the dame who shot andy warhol

**Ed Go** is a Chinese-Filipino-Portuguese-English-Scottish-Irish American writer raised in Massachusetts, Virginia, Alaska, Hawaii and Connecticut. A former video store clerk, school bus driver, CDL driving instructor, garbage truck driver, exterminator, phone book deliverer, mystery shopper, and lead singer/guitar-player in a punk-folk band, Ed Go currently lives and works as a teacher in Brooklyn, NY. His writings have been published in various online and print journals and anthologies, and his chapbook *Deleted Scenes from the Autobiography of Ed Go as told by Napoleon Id* was published in 2014 by Other Rooms Press, and "new machines," a sequence of twenty-one prose poems in the anthology *Urgent Bards* in 2016 by Urbantgarde Press.

**Five Poems**

far door a lee  
besom swept  
long the unnamed  
memory grape

past the river gerund  
dice carry on  
farm egg and mead  
hills at ease  
hay autumn long

must on a limb  
anyway sound  
few intimates  
yet to turn  
eggs above the dawn

down seeing a leaf  
long been  
later turning  
rest into meadow

bit of leaf light  
homonyms mirror  
day balloons  
darn cope  
over the transom

**Five Poems in Spanish**

diálogos de luz  
aire tranquilo  
cuando sale nube  
ocultan motivos

recuerdo ese día  
pencas banana  
café y caña  
sueño soledad  
suelta la lluvia  
olas el mar

de acuerdo café  
por su frontera jacas van  
el borde móvil  
taza y mesita  
aire sobre piso  
pide sombra más

tema con momento  
hoja cae  
viaja caridad  
del vuelo al aire

si no pidiera distancia  
una palabra  
espacio  
siempre para vivir

**Gregory K. Cole** is the Director of the Spanish program at Newberry College in Newberry, SC. He is the author of four collections of poetry, one in Spanish and English, *frases to or*, and his most recent, *else as*

*soons*, both from Ravenna Press. His poems in Spanish have appeared in *Lost and Found Times* and the anthology, *This Space for Correspondence*.

Charles Borkhuis

**TALK TO ME**

1

*look at me when I'm talking to you*

a voice said through a crack in the mirror  
sometimes you get a glimmer  
a detail out of joint a spinning coin  
that whispers before it falls

a certain posthuman someone  
is squinting through the keyhole  
knocking at the door  
as you try in vain to wake up

listen friend I don't remember the end  
or the beginning for that matter  
who does  
all I remember is scratching around  
in an infinite middle

like a fool I've buried myself  
up to the neck in inscrutable stars  
that were once my childhood friends  
maybe what sinks through me  
keeps me afloat  
spoken to a passing cloud  
that pretends not to know me



## Utriculi

some chance throw of sticks  
has conjured me into this caged spell  
where all who touch me double  
then double again  
the jailer and his demon lover laugh  
at my words that never quite  
fit the locks

what lover-boy falls for the light  
seeping through the icy arms of skeletal trees  
who isn't forever branching in words  
snapped off absurd

## 2

a severed hand points  
to another you  
walking the fine line of a blade  
across the sentence

mother where is your mellifluous tongue  
where is your wooden leg  
that walked away without you  
is that your 20-page suicide note  
in my lunchbox

*think again* the voice said  
*do you remember swallowing*  
*the key to the next door*  
*where do you think you're going*  
*do you ever listen to yourself*  
*there is no next door*  
*just a repetition of days and nights*  
*turning on a spit*

## Utriculi

who speaks to me like this  
who sneaks back through the glassy crack  
as if he weren't there  
who knows my next move  
before I do

### 3

begin again in the nothing within  
that trembles on a branch  
the impossible breathes a little life  
into imaginary numbers  
the enigmatic one-in-a-million winks at me  
like the north star in the little bear's tail

who counts their steps back to embryo days  
hovering in a holding pattern

*abort* he said  
*and you may see me again*  
*in your dreams*

the one who was never quite born  
keeps circling the field

*jump* he said  
*we're going down*

### 4

*you're the fall guy on this one friend*  
*the thief who singed his tongue on the sun*  
*don't make me laugh wise up cowboy*  
*you can't get there from here*  
*besides you don't want the answer*  
*you want the question that goes on forever*

## Utriculi

someone is walking in and out of my skin  
someone is using my voice  
to play the dummy on his knee  
now I am made to see  
burning creatures leaping behind the eyes  
how easily the dead crackle up a little tune  
shimmering lips lick my gnarly spine  
like the envelope I dare not open

who's there  
my own voice coming back to me  
in a rattle of loose ends  
where spectral phantoms sizzle and dance  
where black violet sings to rose tender  
nerve endings shocked to twitch

look gravestones are breaking  
where tulips sprout from odious fumes  
and time jumps in and out  
of a barking circle of flames  
my weight upon a bed of long knives  
cuts me down to minutes on a map  
who was I before I was me

what trickster calls me back  
to a body of holes  
the awkward jolt of a blind kiss  
mother loved me but she died

5

what's left but to vacuum the rug  
loose threads sucked up with the dust  
a small black button screams in the teeth  
of the machine before going under  
how easily one loses oneself  
in the hum of the motor

## Utriculi

spiraling down corridors of sleep  
which world in passing  
do you belong to

a door slides open revealing  
the glazed face of an astronaut  
his cord cut as he floats helplessly in deep space  
another door opens upon a woman  
giving birth to a reptile that's desperately  
trying to speak

6

*begin again* a voice said under glass  
echoes from the future present among us  
how can we be sure who's speaking  
aliens or the same old stranger  
come to chat

*nothing personal friend*  
*what you say to yourself*  
*may come back to haunt you*  
*like a question still quivering*  
*in the answer*  
*maybe we made it all up*  
*to keep a safe distance on the chaos*  
*leaking through our thoughts*  
*the uncertainty behind every idea*  
*we have of ourselves*  
*to say nothing of the fear*  
*that we might not exist*

*let us instead toast to our mutual obsession*  
*to know the smallest grain of sand*  
*in the infinity of our hand*  
*to get down on our knees*  
*and call a piss pot a piss pot*  
*and be prepared to defend it*

## Utriculi

*with our lives*

*sometimes I wonder  
who I'm in fact talking to  
you must feel the same about me  
don't worry I've got your ear  
so I'll always be around  
in the cosmic background static*

7

who is this I that talks to me so freely  
please tell me again  
when I die  
will you die with me  
why so silent all of a sudden  
why should I believe you anyway  
perhaps I am no longer present  
but always pre or post this or that  
perhaps the present doesn't exist  
but is divided infinitely

even the moment of perception  
is a memory by the time it gets here  
my dreams are always ahead of me  
while I remain looking back  
maybe everything's already happened  
but we'll never know it

what's left but a child's game  
of hide and seek  
the criminal with his secret  
the detective following  
disappearing footprints  
in the snow  
the mind whips back and forth  
as the terror chases its tail  
but of course I am

## Utriculi

my own tail

8

*one is sentenced the voice said  
to the law of either/or  
tattooed upon one's chest  
by an exquisite machine  
even if we are copied endlessly  
on blackboards and digital screens  
the question remains  
are you a zero or a one*

*do you multiply or divide  
deduce or induce seek or hide  
make up your mind  
we will find you  
in the pieces of self  
scattered on the living room rug  
it's just a matter of time  
no one can exist in a vacuum*

9

*talk to me the voice said  
I'm only trying to save you  
from yourself  
every escape artist dies in the grip  
of his last trick  
no one gets out  
without leaving a trace*

suppose I am the trace I said  
neither created nor destroyed  
but simply transformed  
from one state to another

## Utriculi

suppose I can be played back  
if one can find the right metaphor  
to the right door

everyone gets to watch  
the perfect system grind its numbers  
and show its teeth  
everyone gets to see it stumble  
lose its place and fall  
for lack of an outside agent  
someone who's learned to slide  
through the crosshairs of his name  
give the coordinates the slip  
and dip into the magnetic pull  
that sizzles between the poles  
the dialog already exchanged  
in the first burst

10

*the body may disappear  
through its chalk outline  
but no escape is perfect the voice said  
no one is ever alone for long  
there's always another voice  
inside your own  
pushing you past yourself  
there's always a loose end  
that haunts the proceedings  
something that won't let you be  
without returning  
to the scene of the crime*

*something was stolen  
a secret pried from the jaws of the real  
a simple but oh so elegant equation  
that finally brings you to tears  
but someone must pay*

## Utriculi

*for this perverse striptease  
what have you found that turns  
the universe on its head*

*the ground below your feet  
is limitless but you're not  
the blade will find its way  
deeper into the wound  
a silent scream hangs by a thread  
talk to me the voice said*

when the body abandoned its outline  
the secret disappeared with it  
maybe you were made  
to hunt me down and I to escape  
assume another name  
appear in another country how long  
will it take to add up the clues  
and discover the illusion of this world  
so we are left inside each other  
in dialogue to the end  
I am dying  
to look into your eyes once more  
before the cards are reshuffled  
and I awake  
as someone else

*Talk to Me* was written in 10 short sections and thematically revolves around a dreaming character talking to his double. Another interpretation might suggest that the main character has just died and is assailed by a plethora of surreal images as he enters the Bardo state.

**Charles Borkhuis** is a poet, playwright, and essayist. He curated poetry readings for the Segue Foundation in NYC for 15 years. His 11 collections of poems include: *Rearview Mirror* [BlazeVox] *Finely Tuned Static* (with paintings by John McCluskey) [Lunar Chandelier], *Disappearing Acts* [Chax], *Afterimage* [Chax], and *Alpha Ruins* [Bucknell University]. He was selected by Fanny Howe as a

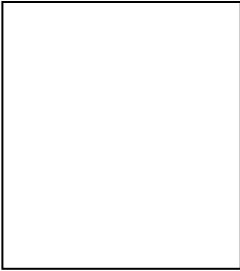


## Utriculi

finalist for the William Carlos Williams Book Award and won *The 2022 International James Tate Prize for Poetry* [SurVision]. His poems have appeared in 9 anthologies including: *Contemporary Surrealist and Magic Realist Poetry Anthology*, *Dia Anthology: Readings in Contemporary Poetry 2010-2016* [Dia Art Foundation]. His essays on contemporary poetics have appeared in two books published by the University of Alabama Press: *Telling it Slant* and *We Who Love to Be Astonished*. He translated *New Exercises* from the French by Franck André Jamme [Wave books]. His plays have been presented in NYC, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Hartford, and Paris and have been published in four collections including *Mouth of Shadows* [Spuyten Duyvil]. His two radio plays can be heard at [www.pennsound](http://www.pennsound.com). He is the recipient of a Drama-Logue Award for his play *Phantom Limbs*. His play *Blue Period* about young Picasso in Paris in 1900 was selected as one of the 10 best plays produced in San Diego in 2022 [Times of San Diego]. A long-term resident of NYC, he presently lives in San Diego and has taught at Hofstra University and Touro College.

**SEMEYA**

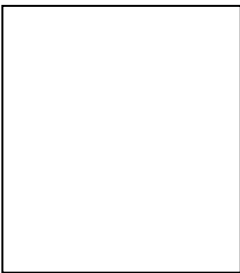
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ye la murnia semeya  
de la to ausencia.

**PICTURE**

This short poem



is the sad picture  
of your absence.

**FRONTERES**

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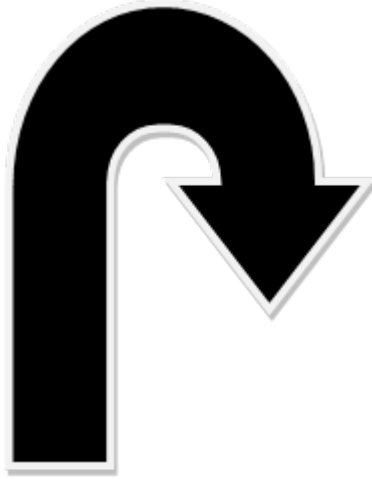
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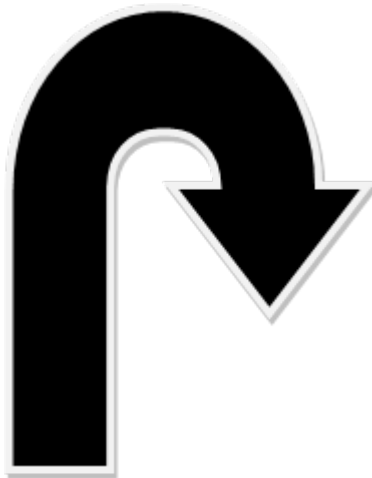
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**SEÑALDÁ**



**MELANCHOLY**



## Utriculi

**Xe M. Sánchez** was born in 1970 in Grau (Asturies, Spain). He received his Ph.D in History from the University of Oviedo in 2016, he is anthropologist, and he also studied Tourism and three masters. He has published in Asturian language seven books and several publications in journals and reviews in Asturies, USA, Portugal, France, Sweden, Scotland, Australia, South Africa, India, England, Canada, Reunion Island, China, Belgium, Ireland, Netherlands, Austria, Turkey, Singapore, Germany and Japan.

**Natsuko Hirata**

## Old House

Hazy yellow castle  
spire came on a back alley.

Wall of plants, stoves  
surround woven velvet voices of us.

Ethereal clef zoolite incite old Metaxa--  
--liquor first drunk in a rocket  
on the galaxy.

## Plasterer and opera house

Plasterer visited the town that was  
an opera house.

Invisible applause traced  
his spinal column.

A soundless orchestra

## Utriculi

resounded in his auditory nerve.

sensitive baton counted them  
flicked melodies one by one,  
spinning black.

The black on the left calf melted.  
Pitiful forgotten toes.

His optic nerves will open  
for the first timethe last.

## Hope gypsies

The sage said:  
“There was nothing from the first.”

Unperceived  
wall of  
voices, noise  
far  
from  
wit.  
“Hope gypsies”  
cut through  
that wall.  
They  
feel  
cold  
wind.

## Prism

Dialog  
affair  
through  
quadrangular

prism function.  
Fire  
under  
swimming yolk,  
blinding moon dark.  
Ancient rainbow  
downstage  
from  
greener forest.  
Sunflowers flock  
against the sun scorch  
Wine's reddish  
atop water.

**Natsuko Hirata** is a resident of Tokyo, Her poetry has appeared in the *Otoliths*, *Blaze VOX*, *Truck*, *Tokyo Poetry Journal*, and *Marsh Hawk Review*.

**Bob Lucky**

### **After sex**

we shared a cigarette although neither of us smoked, passing it back and forth like the Olympic torch between aging athletes who can't remember who's supposed to take it forward. The ash-end glowed when we waved it in the air. Neither of us could remember where the cigarette came from, and the smell was unpleasant, but we didn't have the heart to stub it out. It was our eternal flame, for a while.

### **Anticipating My Brief Stint as Noah**

The rain started two weeks ago and looks as if it won't take 40 days and nights to wipe the planet clean. It's going to get crazy on the high seas. People whose nautical experiences amount to a glass-bottomed-boat tour they took as children are building arks in their backyard and

## Utriculi

hoping they can use GPS to find Mount Ararat. I've made a raft by strapping four oak casks of white wine together. I figure once afloat I'll be eating fish until the day I die. I only have room for two glasses.

### **Selected Scenes from a Marriage**

*not after Ingmar Bergman*

See the cormorant, my wife asks. The tide is out, the sun at our backs. I see only rocks waiting for the return of the tide, a few terns, clouds above. Where? There. I scan the rocks, and, because there could be a cormorant on one of them, I see it.

\*\*\*

In the middle of the night we get up to check on a bat in the attic. It's just hanging there asleep when it should be out swooping with the other bats, at least squeaking and bouncing off the rafters. Perhaps he's sick, I say. My wife, a compassionate woman, offers to bite me. His mother never taught him how to hunt, she says.

\*\*\*

I'm suspicious of men who claim to like washing dishes. What do they mean? Do they really like washing dishes? Is it something they're good at? I'm good at it but can't rule out the possibility that I hope to get laid. My wife offers to dry.

### **Apostrophe to Myself, After Ron Padgett**

When I'm dead  
and talk to myself  
like I do now  
who will I be  
talking to?



### It's Raining

I've popped into a café, my mind bent  
toward what kinds of fruit they have in Paradise.  
If they have raspberries and really good mangos  
like Chaunsa and Alfonso, I look forward to going.

But what about my friends? Some can't live,  
even in the afterlife, without bacon or a cigarette.  
And some won't touch pork or eat a fig.  
What kind of Paradise would it be  
if my friends aren't happy there?

I order a grilled cheese and wonder  
when you're singing in the rain in Paradise,  
if it rains there, do you need an umbrella.  
Perhaps I'm overthinking this.-----

**Bob Lucky** is the author most recently of *My Wife & Other Adventures* (Red Moon Press, 2024). His work has appeared in *Rattle*, *Otoliths*, *MacQueen's Quinterly*, *Unlost*, *Contemporary Haibun*, and other publications. He lives in Portugal.

### Wantsty's Jargone

~~~~~/"\_^#~~~~~#^&\*~

"All as easy as a glove to pluck him—up to all that  
, eh? Cursedly plucked myself—most blown up. S  
afe yet though, and Wansty must come it to plume  
me again, that's all. But no blues—hate pigeon col"

—Richmond, *Scenes in the Life of a Bow Street Runner* (1827)

~#^&\*~~~~~/"\_^#~~~~~

Whassit Wansty, fickle eh? all thrushed  
and floundered-up yon flushed out gizzard  
all in foursies walleye—plug  
& plucky little shovel, aye. No worries—pocket wizard  
is a fence, Wantsty's full o'blubber and unlucky  
lolls him droopsy scarlet; go boot your cagey banjo. Punt  
a whizzle in that marked gent's gob—tis just  
his purse pudgy be halter mending, cribbed  
feather ponied up to wisemen's trough, and whittled  
candle palette portly howitzer—shunt  
it up'n down that holybowlin' hill, will  
plaster all your mealy roustabout with sparrow's glut  
then spin around and play the file-man's rigid fiddle  
—pulled all taut aye, strung of cat gut—  
Wansty's wanting sheeny dogs, so cuts  
you up a gullet and a rug:  
jigging you riot right off to the pit, ye ripe rank stiff of jiggle.

### Jour of em nation

\\\\\\':.....:.....'/////

“syzygy-swevens though juff”

– Michael Helsem, *Emblemata*:

— *Mel Ab Meta*

.....://///'^\\\\\\':.....

theol gaPlug conscort  
Sabao gaggled, too: lô  
porter rep, plerom net  
a, différDance aussi, qi  
see, i brought contagio  
'n archon boeing drone  
don disSol, presscon or  
nestle prod inferen gob  
bled pontiffs, rowded in  
bOrder concent genocil  
:pRison garden panopt  
blind for phosphor sakla  
pataph poiSon pogr, also  
spy for bortion settler as  
well-dRaw snipers, come  
rain worm upond scum i  
voideye tear up urizon w  
ail presid yaldab, his aeon  
bleading weltsish monde  
.slaths on foundling stones.

\\\\\\':.....:.....'/////

“ore a packed awaitingment of repo”

– Edward Sanders, *America: A History*

— *in Verse*

,,.....://///'^\\\\\\':.....,,

## Waste Digging Songe

— \ / î / —  
“y verses not in prose to please the singing boyes”  
– The Surrey Digger commune, *The Diggers Mirth*, 1650.

— \ / î / —  
hoarfrost waste-string chord chord  
pill-box commons fencing-chill, broom cavalier  
stamp choppes choppes all ye shackle-hovey-down  
& bleeding soon, we plant thine holy wire-wedge manure.  
tis thus us furrow corn sweat, common  
tithe us, choir utter  
nail norman doom-day peddlers  
resonator zine-blast wringle-wonder-wheatlin treasury:  
cross-road dugout, blues bridge  
blooms of fire fire busking fertile waste-land-choir;  
tille we sub prole prole our one-string mud-flap, common  
dump-dive reaper, common pipe-pipe-planty-plucker music  
seeds soft sub-string-thrumming, thumbs  
simple vocal-verser, grain of spheric soil, prunish leveller.

— \ / î / —  
“or or ‘loud speaker,’ as Jones called it... Jones called the instrument a ‘rumpling-steel-skin’ on on”  
– David Tighe on Eddie ‘One-String’ Jones, in ‘Single String Rhapsody’, *Oystercatcher* #20, May Day 2023.

## axÉ louses And pig ram sued me

*o deÀr i àm on a ziGg on cosy oval Seam.*

Sit up, pour our vase, I’m maf i’ m me  
pour to quelch us ! lean eels cedux  
eu cutrait ox to nâme mine ax,  
ant raid cel descends â mile on me.

—————

## Utriculi

Héal sm apa !stvf rue emmree : or te  
ueDeu ilaq deadn agr slesc !ie ux  
saim 'il'l ygar deedn so qum ,ie ux  
or i qpue amaj sleel's nen . or te

*lett'rally transmuted from Monte-Naken,  
'Deux Épigrammes Andalouses', from Rimes futiles, 1879. p. 118*

Original:

### Deux Épigrammes Andalouses

*À mon ami Gonzalo de Arcos y Segovia.*

Si tu pouvais mourir, ma femme,  
quelle chance pour tous les deux!  
ton âme monterait aux cieux,  
le ciel descendrait dans mon âme.

---

Hélas! ma pauvre femme est morte :  
que Dieu la garde dans les cieux!  
mais qu'il l'y garde de son mieux,  
pour que jamais elle n'en sorte.

### Toothy Bee

~~~~~

“Dans les calices des fleurs  
on trouve partout des larmes. — ”

~~~~~

*Unto my Ham's doula (He's mine) Offend ye.*

## Utriculi

Laugh it up fig, you're all spasmed up,  
The hemistich rears up while sobbing, —  
what neat and frosted gloom,  
author of the terrorist,  
the workday must have kicked the bucket!...

Dance the calyx-chalices of florets  
on abandoned troves found beside each teardrop. —  
What he owed to slip into sob-deposits  
pours out to lose thus each seduction,  
diurnal to the pallid paddle coolers!...

Howbeit a nanoscopic mason in the buff,  
whose perspective laps theirs by day,  
laughs sour at him, — indigent innocent genius!...  
parodies mocking at his paramour,  
wrapped up in diurnal veil stowed away.

Wherefor amoral sobs  
to seal tombs a drizzle,  
dance the planty lushous garden,  
surly mountain, dance the raven  
and huge & surly gloomy wood...

Moreover the anthology's leaves are shining  
with a doubly phantasmatic lust, —  
plus the terror of sour ire  
at witnessing the heavens sob...  
What a rave! — What a frenzy to read on !

*homophonically, lexically, & onierocritically transmuted from*  
Monte-Naken,  
'Aube', from *Rimes futiles*, 1879. p. 23

**Olchar E. Lindsann** has published nearly 50 books of literature, theory, translation, and avant-garde history including six books of the ongoing multi-volume avant-epic poem *Arthur Dies* (Luna Bisonte Prods), and most recently *The Squitty Flange*, an avant-garde twist on the doggerel nonsense poetry tradition. His poems have appeared in *Otoliths*, *Lost & Found Times*, *Brave New Word*, and elsewhere, his essays in *No Quarter*, *Slova*, & *Fifth Estate*; and he has performed sound poetry and lectured extensively.

He is the editor of <https://monoclelash.wordpress.com/>, whose catalog includes over 200 print publications of the contemporary and historical avant-garde, and of the periodicals *Rêvenance*, *Synapse*, and *The in-Appropriated Press*. He translates work of the French avant-garde of the 19th & early 20th centuries, most recently a chapbook anthology on the 1830s avant-garde Bouzingo group, and another of poems by its co-founder Philothée O'Neddy, *The Phalanxes of Babel: Selected Texts from an Outlaw of Thought*.

**Process Statement:**

The final two pieces of this series are from a series of transmutations (lifting this term from Leftwich) of the obscure Belgian-Spanish poet known as Monte-Naken, who published only a single book, *Rimes futiles*, printed in a few hundred copies by the micropress Librairie des Bibliophiles in 1879. These pieces are generated from a ludic combination of semantic, homophonic, letteristic, oulipian, paranoiacritical, and other processes, playing with the tensions between the literal, formal, associational, and 'pataphysical dimensions of the original. The other poems in this set are composed from a variety of techniques.

**Abstraction #27**  
*in memory of the Johns*  
*(Tranter and Forbes)*

Time has a strange way  
with our sense of proportion.  
Like the way continents  
used to snuggle together,  
but are now  
estranged by oceans.  
And the way  
raindrops are overdue,  
but can't be returned  
to the library.  
I wrote a villanelle once,  
but I lost it;  
somehow.

A bit like how I was going to  
name this poem *Abstraction #27*,  
but nostalgia got the better of me,  
so I came up with *Apocrypha #66...6*,  
after a conspiracy of phantom limbs,  
but that turned out to be  
one of those late night  
grand notions,  
intangible to the morning air.  
Or perhaps that's how it feels  
when the mind has been  
melted away into a blacklist.  
In any case,

in some way  
I can't quite explain,  
I gradually lost track  
of whatever it was  
I was referring to,



though the impulse  
loitered around for a bit  
in the notion of *Abstraction #66*,  
but, for some reason, that gave me  
the heebie-jeebies, so eventually  
I found myself  
back where I had started,  
with the devil you know.

It is one of the ironies of angels  
that I only become aware  
that the pathways of my mind  
have been carved out  
by Vatican Space Lasers  
when tears start to cascade uncontrollably  
while watching reruns of Golden Oldies  
– *with people passing in all directions,*  
*like Merce Cunningham's idea of*  
*the postmodern dance*  
*of commuters at Penn Station* –  
in the cathode-ray tube  
of a black and white television set,  
in a small-town shop window,  
with Joseph Cotton walking by in a Fedora,  
sometime after the adoption of the Hays Code,  
which continued for 8 years after I was born.

I have an addiction to waves.  
These are the hills of our lives.  
But don't buy shares in  
the honesty business,  
if you are in the doldrums  
of prefer not to say.  
*Where there was life,*  
*now there are ghosts.*  
Anonymity  
is a condition of entry.  
At least that's what I tell  
my methodology for exhaustion.

## Utriculi

Move me to the sky.  
There is nothing left for me  
in the futureless ocean.

Tolerance is a practice, like meditation.  
Do you think all this good stuff  
comes to me for free?  
Though, having said that,  
ChatGPT is helping me transcend my ego.  
It says I don't exist.  
At least not in its current database.  
It's so sweet about it. It apologises.  
I could be 'a private individual  
or a relatively unknown public figure'.  
I am cancelling my mindfulness subscription.  
All I need now is an internet connection  
where I can post and repost sage advice.

*Like:*

Take off imagination's safety catch  
and linger patiently like a dying animal.  
All applications to dream  
may or may not be attended to  
in a timely manner.  
But either way, it's all good,  
life is in code  
and each of us is  
in the process of being rewritten,  
inside our own teeny tiny towers of Babel.  
Excuse me, I have to jump away now to my dance class.  
I love the ballet, it's like rearranging the chairs on the Titanic.

## An experiment in restfulness

If you go to sleep with all the lights on,  
it's like a part of you escapes  
into a *Harry Potter* chamber of slumbers,  
but the rest has its eyelids pinned back  
like Alex in *A Clockwork Orange*.

It's like a protester with their mouth sewn shut  
trying to sing a chant to a moon god  
in a land in which there is no sunset.

It's like being hung, drawn and quartered  
by a syndicate of babies who will, one day,  
pack a boardroom but cannot yet  
control the movement of their limbs.

It's like hurtling towards a hospital in a taxi  
after a rabies bite, while being whispered to  
in the ear by a witch doctor trying to convince you  
to listen to the panting and growling of the litter of puppies,  
now jostling with each other for attention,  
in what they are sure, since the mad dog in the street  
was trying to hump your leg, is your now pregnant belly.

But I can confidently report that  
it is not like the Milwaukee Protocol,  
a treatment involving a chemically induced coma  
(plus antiviral medication), which seemed,  
for about five minutes, to be a modern miracle cure  
for this four-thousand-year-old disease,  
until everyone it was tried on died  
and the doctors finally put together  
that the one successful case (*cheers Jeanna Giese*)  
already had antibodies against rabies!

Yessiree Bob, for what it's worth and above  
all else, going to sleep with all the lights on,  
usually on the couch without a proper blanket  
to maintain your cascading body heat,

may bring to mind a comparison with this  
and that and the third thing, but it does not have  
much in common with the Milwaukee protocol,  
that is to say, it does not offer the succour of being

even

*the illusion of restful.*

**I am an idea:  
An oratorio for prepared poetry**

*(Instructions: this is a piece of aleatory verse:  
read these lines in the order of your choosing,  
in the order that you intuit)*

I am Liberty ~ I am Death ~ I am Hunger ~ I am Jealousy ~ I am  
Hatred ~ I am Anger ~ I am Devastation ~ I am Peace ~ I am Love  
~ I am Success ~ I am Hope ~ I am Enlightenment ~ I am  
Understanding ~ I am Dissemblance ~ I am Whispers ~ I am  
Secrets ~ I am Race Purity ~ I am Unification ~ I am Shadow ~ I  
am Nationalism ~ I am The Big Idea ~ I am Risorgimento ~ I am  
Lebensraum ~ I am Distaste ~ I am Dislocation ~ I am  
Controversy ~ I am Notability ~ I am Disinformation ~ I am  
Revelation ~ I am Obscuration ~ I am Exploitation ~ I am Regret ~  
I am Disgrace ~ I am the Conspiracy of Capital Letters ~ I am the  
juxtaposition of unfreedoms ~ I am the mostly human beings are  
conveniences to each other ~ I am the people we don't  
understand, including ourselves ~ I am the people who are ideas  
~ I am the if we invite a party of ideas, will they talk to each  
other? ~ I am the intimacy index ~ I am the people who wash  
their ideas ~ I am the sleep portfolio ~ I am the where you can  
fold up and go to sleep ~ I am the tall ships of modesty ~ I am  
the dresses walking around that are more beautiful than the  
people squatting in them ~ I am the word cowboys ~ I am the

## Utriculi

unintended masterpieces ~ I am the ballet with big hands ~ I am the book of falling thoughts ~ I am the democracy of dust ~ I am the autobiography of red ~ I am the mathematics of nothing ~ I am the swallowing ocean ~ I am the notebook of the sky ~ I am the automatic writing nightmare ~ I am the closet behind the closet ~ I am the people in your pelvis ~ I am the text that explodes disintegration ~ I am the whirlpool of abstraction ~ I am the collusion of shards ~ I am the hall of mirrors that cracks into shiny truths ~ I am the failure of language to think beyond itself ~ I am the little dream that dreams itself, that so much wants to be real, but would never dream of waking up ~ I am the is every tale the same tale, does consciousness have but one song to sing? ~ I am the so many Mondays, tired of the language of the sun ~ I am the sleep is like money saved, as soon as you get some you spend it ~ I am the congratulations, I have the dubious honour of being the only person I can truly get depressed with ~ I am the when the world sways, pie-eyed and seeing double in Oxfords on Oxford Street, we will know what we know, which is that we have only just been passing through ~

I am the no use crying over spilt sleep ~ I am the all I can do is surrender to the night air, which will conquer my many things, but not my fears ~ I am the person who said they spoke the

truth, but they just spoke ~ I am the

quandary register ~

the anyone can register their quandaries with me ~ the world where people pay for things only with smiles ~ the dreams of not sleeping ~ the idea of blackouts ~ the watching TV alone that is starting to feel like drinking alone ~ the songbook to the war on oblivion ~ the God's honest truth ~ the as opposed to what? ~ the God's dishonest truth? ~ the glissando by definition ~ the

your singing is blue like your eyes ~ the what is on the lee side of disappointment? ~ the and do I need a passport to get there? ~ the essential pages missing from the guidebook to time surgery ~ the all problems are the same problem ~ the one sad smile from a sad life ~ the true or false of as soon as you stop worrying about something it ceases to exist ~ the perhaps it's the way of the world for the world to be this way ~ I am the I feel posthumous to my life, and yet here I am, a song for the after party ~ I am the dreams are delicately disguised and so easily dismantled ~ I am the experiments in (dis)satisfaction ~ I am the definition of success ~ I am the you look like you are living inside a movie ~ I am the I have everything I need in this moment, even life after death ~ I am the I swing from one illusion to the other, like someone skimming the earth's crust on crutches ~ I am the I enter Harvard as a flying saucer ~ I am the life's a bit too complicated to be proud of oneself ~ I am the once you have grown up, you can never really get brownie points for anything ~ I am the is failing to fulfill one's destiny a crime against humanity? ~ I am the don't worry, I can sleep in the imaginary spare room ~ I am the Society for the Invention of Talking ~ I am the I am getting so young ~ I am the I am getting so old ~ I am the how can I be moving in two opposite directions simultaneously? ~ I am the safest thing is never to leave this moment ~ I am the there is no other like it ~ I am the anyone who has been dead before will know what I mean ~ I am the I know about dreams because I am dreaming NOW ~ I am the if I were to sing the evensong of the last whatever we call ourselves, or later are mournfully recalled, this euphony would echo around with the diapason that, despite all our everythings, there was still something so beautiful about ~ I am the recital of the blow by blow, the round robin long and the short of it ~ I am the register of hiatus ~ I am the in permanent translation ~ I am the it's all a bit less of a consolation than I might have imagined ~ I am the eschatology of vacant possession ~ I am the, in spite of everything, never quite not eternal flame ~ I am the and yet, sometimes, **an angel**

## Miscellaneous, Till Proven Innocent

The best part of sleeping  
is not knowing you are sleeping.

When the workaholic inside you  
doesn't have the luxury to wonder  
what is on the other side  
of the mirror of doing nothing.

I must learn to love  
the absences I have created  
from the presences  
I have disappeared.

There are too many reasons  
for feeling uncomfortable.  
Mustn't start counting now.

When I got Covid, I hiccupped  
for fourteen hours straight,  
like a fish, hooked out of  
and then thrown back  
into the sea,  
hooked out  
and then back,  
hooked,  
back,

until there were  
no guts  
left to hook.

Tonight, from my vertigo corner,  
I have been thinking about  
the transparency of time.

Something  
more interesting than the rain.

I wish I had a poem going,  
the way rivers have a current going,  
the way the sun knows  
which way to circle back,  
surprising itself  
and everyone else,  
day after day,

the way the seasons know  
when to shift gears,  
like a skein of birds  
which can contour the air  
into endless geometries.

I wish I had a poem going,  
marching steadily into the future  
like a cavalcade of bison,  
just before they start to stampede,

the way sometimes,  
in the past, it seemed like  
I knew where I was going,  
or at least I thought I did,

with that glorious, purposeful,  
no-one can touch me  
swagger of momentum,

or perhaps the past itself,  
at that time,  
unconsciously understood  
the mechanism of how  
to take the appropriate steps  
into the present,  
whereas my current present  
seems somehow to have lost  
that particular skill  
in relation to the future.



Maybe time itself gets tired,  
with time, as we do,  
and that infinite ocean of potential  
it began with  
evaporates a bit more every day.

It is hard to hold in your mind  
how fragile life is.

But even on the edge of nausea,  
I know that human beings  
are not an endangered species.

Still, the past  
leaks the future,  
and the absence of a poem  
is the absence of life itself.

So, I wish I had a poem going,  
like when you are young,  
and living in the '50s,  
and going on a date,  
and the past's music of the future  
begins to play on the jukebox,  
and things start to turn  
in your direction,  
and you just know that tonight  
you are going to get lucky,  
which sounds so tacky,  
and is so tacky,  
and couldn't be more tacky,  
but you couldn't care less  
if it's tacky,  
because the truth is that  
when you know  
you are going to be happy,  
and then you are happy,  
and you know it in that moment,  
then you are truly in luck,  
you are in luckiness,

you are lucky.

And that's what it's like  
having a poem going,  
*lucky.*

I think about God sometimes.  
It must have been so great to create the world,  
though it is difficult to make great works  
without making great mistakes.

There is nothing original about being young,  
gurgled the drowning man, clutching at tourism,  
and the happy sound of the vibration of bananas,  
as he tossed off a poem for Richard Tipping:

*Beach Signage*

When you are drowning,  
remember to wave.  
Must keep up appearances.

My advice to the Almighty:  
move the sky to Thursday.  
But don't ask me why.  
There is no why,  
only when and where.

The future leaks the past,  
and yes, surprisingly,  
on Zoom one time,  
just the one time,  
reading a poem ,  
a bit like this one,  
I felt like I was in church.

## Sex beats philosophy in a matchup over the weather

Nothing that is beautiful is real.  
Nothing that is real is true.  
Nothing that is true is beautiful.

Therefore, you and I  
have nothing in common, except desire.

I am your warm weather,  
linger in me.

**Richard James Allen** (Pronouns: He/Him) is an Australian poet based on unceded Gadigal lands. His poetry has appeared widely in journals, anthologies, and online, and he has been a popular reader in multiple venues over many years. His latest book, *Text Messages from the Universe* (Flying Island Books, 2023), reflects a lifelong engagement with Buddhist and Yogic philosophies. It was a Finalist for 'Poetry: Narrative' at the 2024 International Book Awards and the 'da Vinci Eye' at the 2024 Eric Hoffer Awards. A film adaptation by The Physical TV Company won six awards, including Best Screenwriter of the Year Award at the Mumbai International Film Awards, and was a Finalist for Best Narrative Feature Film at the ATOM Awards in Melbourne. Richard is well-known for his multi-award-winning career as a filmmaker and choreographer with The Physical TV Company, and as a performer in a range of media. A First-Class Honours graduate from Sydney University, he won the Chancellor's Award for best doctoral thesis at the University of Technology, Sydney.

**A Hearse Is a Wormhole**

vast, channeled  
revving its mandolin while we read our novel inconspicuously  
at the edge of the fortress  
where lost creatures go to repair themselves  
to try on new hats always in a specific infinite sequence  
that prepares them to only see one hat as best

Inside this so to speak vacuum the hole  
deepens into a wind and clouds become pillows  
and we feel good enough to purchase tickets to the game  
and listen to the birds at 5:30 am  
which is what I am doing now  
because you are in a hearse  
and exploring other dimensions and cannot be reached

And how lonely it is—I cannot be consoled  
here with my favorite books and someone of wise fury  
so the front and back of the text grows cold and absurd  
and I'm left wondering if there are truly miracles  
like Breton pretty much said there are  
miracles without teleology, that's  
his strange philosophy

Half of a day's rations are good enough  
when one is entering a wormhole  
which by the way is absent of worms  
figure of speech suggestive of darkness  
not of the mud, murk, or the elastic boneless body of the worm  
none of those properties, no—the hole  
only transports one to the vastness

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inaccessible to the living  
and blots out iniquities

Putin can not be in the hole

### **A Macrobiotics Is a Sneaker**

A macrobiotics is a sneaker: grizzly, stupefied  
full of itself, listening for eyes,  
for Zeus to untangle it from dog barks  
for the ribbon inside the crate to mourn for something  
for the rain for synthetic chords  
for white noise nirvana  
and if the right word is uttered  
to wear purity on its feet  
on the immaculate tennis court of secularism  
to be a star of vintage photography  
and predict typography trends for years to come

How well the limbs and hairs of the macrobiotic sneaker move  
how easily they fall thoughtless as surrender  
into the sports arena  
and the original state mind

Each grizzly hair pops in hyperrealism  
unheeded of felt hats sneaking their way into Seattle  
pounding plastic eyelashes on the shelves and aisles  
yearning for skydiving and bourgeois adrenalin rushes  
and frogs in water haiku that pass every morning stupefied  
beneath the grand conundrum of the world

to flash for a moment  
as blue paint or a tube  
that zooms out to become a picture of the raccoon or bear or squirrel

## Utriculi

wrestling in the ditches of our eyes  
like tugging on a string named Pinocchio  
that lover-in-bed abrasion of the heart  
unhappy and sneaker-like  
writing a letter to Love itself  
which it lets drop to clatter on the metallic floor. The sky  
has limbs and will speak if we become a tree and bow  
donning the skin of the celestial paramecium.

### A Sexagesima Is a Loophole

nonobservant and Russian: nonobservant  
because no one observes it; Russian  
because no Orthodox ignores it

it's the parable of the sower and you are the ground—  
ground without loopholes, solid moist or pecked  
ground of no escaping, like no escaping death  
seeds make their hoary way toward us their teeth  
and our souls feel the bite...

there are loopholes in us, we make loopholes  
saying *the sower's nose is large, pockmarked,*  
*and his seed satchel is medieval*  
*and he swings his arm so, sowing*  
*and it's probably cold out not yet spring, the wind*  
*frigid we have no socks so we cannot think*  
*about what kind of ground we are!*

we the nonobservant  
trapped in the penultimateness of things  
last chapter before the last, we approach  
the long sleep and the lives we've lead will be the  
dreams we dream too late to stuff our heads with any  
other, the snows of Siberia still the part of us we never visit  
the whales of the deep scoff at our neglect

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but there's a way to become vigorous to become soil  
to have waves, storms, winters, worm-warmth in you  
smiling at whatever comes your way, to let seeds  
be scattered

Apollo on our backs our bellies...

I have heard the Sexigesimal singing  
in the churches because they love everything  
and want to keep the world forever  
into the next life

the sun the spire the leaves the salt

there are no loopholes or if there are  
they shoot you back into the slide after each loop  
loop you back in

as time loops us back each year  
to the examination of our bear-like souls  
with their scratchy fur their dark eyes their tongue  
every year we have to go back  
oh sexigesimal life

### **A Delineator Is a Seditio**

burked yet thalassic  
and Foucault is still writing treatises and odes to you  
maker of worlds. You study matter  
and think humans need not delineate or organize  
but they do, and with every stroke of the pen a resistance  
shakes the patchwork

thalassic as the sea

with its story wrapped up in a bosom, opening and closing,  
like a pharmacy or market or prom  
the wayward backwardly walk their way thither  
as do scriveners and harpooners  
proper ones and improper ones

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which is to say:  
organizations fail and waves wave and your taxes return  
to reach the orphans and your life's work dies  
you try to fix it and incur sedition  
and even the geniuses and bakers of delicious bread  
make slapdash thatched roofs on a grand scale  
a fine windspun web about to collapse into sea  
and *still* we delineate and align  
like sea-creature amebas trying to reach some hill  
dry far from tide's reach

some Gethsemane  
heard and blessed by God so as not to be pushed again  
as delineators are so easily pushed, those dividers  
who think they progress by their strange slicing hands

**Brooks Lampe** teaches literature at George Fox University in Newberg, Oregon. He is the author of a poetry chapbook *The Planet of Left Hands* and the editor of *Uut Poetry*, a *Substack* of surrealist writing. His poems have appeared in *Peculiar Mormyrid*, *Right Hand Pointing*, *Bombfire*, and elsewhere.



### **The Universe Dreamed I: 29<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

The Universe dreamed I sat on a slab of rock. Sitting beside me, along with its parallel friend, it ate salted moon rocks from a packet and offered me some. I politely declined. Its friend told me how much healthier I was looking since cutting out both salt and moon rock from my diet.

Later, it was time to watch the Universe swim at the local pool. This kind of activity made me very hungry, so I took a tin of cosmic milk to tie me over. It wasn't enough for me to carry the tin poolside in my hands. It would be better, I thought, to drop the tin down to the pool from way up in the public viewing gallery. On my first attempt, the tin bounced back up. The edge of its opened lid sliced a wooden ceiling beam, as if to say that wasn't the correct way to drop a tin of cosmic milk. On my second attempt, I devised a pulley system with some rope. I placed the tin in an aluminium colander and lowered it with steady hands. This worked fine.

Swiss cheese...  
filling the holes  
in my stomach

### **The Universe Dreamed I: 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

The Universe dreamed I listened to it tell me about the novel it had written. The Universe's novel had now been adapted into a film. As it read the film adaptation to me, line for line, shot for shot, I found myself on the set of the film. It took place at a zoo.

Next to the rhinoceros enclosure was a round patch of grass. A container with a glass door flat upon the earth. Through the glass door, two collie cross springer spaniels of my youth were cramped inside. I opened the door and out they jumped. A lemur followed; a python. The four of them chased me from enclosure to enclosure. No lock to

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any door or gate worked. As soon as I found one empty enclosure to hide away in, I had to find another.

I hid in a laboratory, a zoology classroom, and then I hid in a conservatory, once home to the zoo's wetter critters: terrapins, crocodiles, fishes. Even the flamingos. I took off my shoes and ran through the shallow, man-made streams and pools. The cool water splashed my chin. With each splash, I prayed the rumours were true. That apart from the two dogs, the lemur and the python, the zoo's native inhabitants really had left the grounds for good. I'd have hated to break a terrapin shell under my weight. Or to lose a toe to a snapping jaw.

Reaching the other side of the conservatory, I exited through the gift shop. There I bought myself a new plaid shirt and some grey trousers.

'Come again,' the shopkeeper said.

bedtime stories—  
the heavy plots  
of my eyelids

### **The Universe Dreamed I: 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

The Universe dreamed I watched its parade. Down the street it went, disguised as packs of camels. Eight at a time, walking together, attached by rope, humps bobbing. The first pack of eight camels were what you'd expect—they looked like camels. But each pack thereafter became more elaborate. One pack were made up of red and pink silk. The next, green and blue. Then camels tied at their humps, technicolour satin scarves hung from their necks. A pack came linked together by ropes of gold. They adorned rubies, silver bangles and necklaces, silver headpieces of silver coins dangling from silver chains. The last pack of camels had patchwork hides of canvas and cotton—blue and white Qinghua patterns. With so many camels and so many colours it became hard to keep track. They trailed off down the street and, reaching a clifftop, jumped, releasing netted parachutes.

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needle eye—  
a frayed thread  
narrows its focus

### **I Dreamed the Universe: 9<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

I dreamed the Universe had been on its way to stay at our home. When I say 'our', I mean myself and the five galaxies I now shared a home with. Each galaxy studied at the local university. They hoped to one day become a Universe.

Anticipating the Universe's arrival at any moment, we went about tidying and cleaning our home. A few of us scrubbed the kitchen with sponges and disinfectant. A galaxy, who'd been cleaning in the hallway, rushed in, flustered. It held a faulty smoke alarm.

'It just needs a new battery,' I said. Looking a little closer, however, I saw water dripping inside the alarm.

We didn't know a lot about electricity or water. Something told us they were two separate entities. They should be handled carefully. We hesitated and lost track of time. A shadow grew from around the corner, shading the entire hallway. We held our breaths. The Universe had arrived. It came through to kitchen, grabbed my hand and tightened its grip. It studied my face with protruding eyes. We breathed out, relieved to find it hadn't brought any smoke with it this time.

burning desires  
to meet  
nucleosynthesis

## The Universe Dreamed I: 9<sup>th</sup> September 2023

The Universe dreamed I felt unsure. It convinced me that should there ever be a time for love, it should be now. I peered into its house. Inside, a storm brewed. Dark, bubbling rain clouds stuffed into the roof, the atmosphere coloured with icy blues and greys. A breeze sighed from window to window.

'This is love,' the Universe said, beckoning me inside. 'We'll get through this together.'

I had a token. To receive love, I just had to trade it in. It had to be better than being alone. I slotted the token into a machine in a wall and, moments later, the Universe brought me into its house for the rest of my life. The clouds broke open. The breeze's sigh became a floor-ripping belch. I slipped and slid from the rain-thrashed walls. I was thrown around the house.

'If you really are a loving person,' the Universe said, 'then staying here with me is the right thing to do.'

I contemplated my rights to a refund. But like all my other thoughts, the Universe tossed this one away too. My thought was spat on by the storm. The house became a pair of scissors and the scissors began to close.

bevelled edge the subtle pull of love cuts

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These haibun are made from entries of a dream diary I kept during identical periods in 2022 and 2023. I then took each dream and renamed the main character, so to speak, other than myself, the 'Universe'. Anyone else who made an appearance in my dreams, I renamed 'galaxies'. In doing this, I brought new, existential meaning to my dreams. You'll notice the haibun from 2022 are titled 'I Dreamed the Universe...', whereas the haibun from 2023 are titled 'The Universe Dreamed I...'. This made for some interesting inversion and a shift in perspective. In creating a whole book of dream haibun in this way, I also spotted common themes in the poems of loss, grief, yearning,

frustration, and desperation. Apart from changing the names of the people that appeared in my dreams, everything in the prose part of the haibun is unaltered - true to the dream. The capping haiku or monoku is the only 'fictional' part, in which I've used this verse to either try to make sense of the dream or experiment with letting the dream be taken into a new direction - wherever the verse sees fit.

**R.C. Thomas** resides in Plymouth, UK. His poetry collections, *The Strangest Thankyou* (2012), and *Zygote Poems* (2015), were published by *Cultured Llama*, *Faunistics: A Collection of Wild Haiku* and *Illustrations* was published independently in 2024, and *Infinity Strings*, a collection of tan-renga written with Hifsa Ashraf, will be published in 2025. He edited *Symmetry Pebbles*, was Creative Writing editor for *Tribe*, co-edited *Thief*, and was Managing Editor of *INK*, Plymouth University's creative writing journal. His haiku 'silver lining' was shortlisted for a Touchstone Award for Individual Poems in 2022, he was selected as one of the 'Top Creative Haiku Authors' in Europe in 2021 and 2022 consecutively, received joint first place in the *Sharpening the Green Pencil Haiku Contest 2022*, first place in the *Third Maya Lyubenova Haiku Contest*, and had a 'Selected Haiku Submission' in the 13<sup>th</sup> *Yamadera Basho Memorial Museum English Haiku Contest*.

*To write a story without a title*

To write a story, that's the score. First, I'll put other stories in black holes. The suicide story, a black hole all to itself, is also a long musical line, a haunting – whole lifetimes happen along this line, strange lifetimes of forgettings (mixed blessings), stacked realms that hang off death, as if the gunshot (he shot himself in the head) rings in the mind forever (a smooth grassy plain) and what happens at the end is another death, Jack's (within which, for instance, the landscape of the young man's birth (the one who shot himself) could be written about – afterall he died in mine (landscape, that is). The stories that are black holes, and the stories to be put in black holes, have different speeds and tones. Here then is a story with more holes than you can poke a stick at (a whole district of smooth grassy plains).

“The universe is a landscape of peaks and hollows, of highs and lows, mapped in the intensity of gravitational fields and the masses of matter that make them. And as bodies in space move, they ride the waves of other bodies and surf the contours of their fields.” (1)

Learn the rituals by heart, in order, in preparation, to take a stance; to follow a line/path is a ritual stance (for example, maybe, eventually). Being this old at this moment, wondering what happened just a day or so ago, at a bedside, while driving through the forests; just that, up and down the road, day after day, eating, sleeping, thinking what to do. It's tiring being in a state. I will take a stance soon, to write.

I talk about running away, making myself a person, making *of* myself a person. But I won't be going anywhere for a long while. Still, my body is removing itself from me (who, I remind it, is *its* world) – I'm going one way, it's going another. It will be a miracle if the four rose buds open. Cut from the old bush in the cold morning they are shocked, and look shocked, standing as if a nervous gang of lone rangers.

It makes no sense to tell a story when someone is dying, and someone is always dying. It makes no sense to go to work either or wash the dishes. It only makes a speck of sense to write this. This is only written

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for that speck; or, *on* that speck more like. Scratched *on* the surface of a speck.

The autobiography of nothing-much is nevertheless an act at whatever hour, dimly reflected perhaps from afar. It's night, it's near midnight. There's no avoiding how one is. *What* is one word toward the making of a work of words. To write about *what* has happened to oneself is barely bearable. It's nothing-much, for sure. In October 1995, Sarah Kofman committed suicide at age sixty. That's unbearable. She wrote twenty-five books; she wrote on Freud and Nietzsche, and her last book was about her childhood in occupied Paris. Her father died in Auschwitz. Her mother let a non-Jewish woman care for her. This is a very big story. Sarah wrote as a philosopher, a friend of Jacques D. and Maurice B.

At this moment I'm in one piece. And the season is autumn; the day is Thursday; the weather is cold. All is well. My mother, father, brother and son are all alive. This is a miracle, and ordinary. And I commemorate this. All my grandparents are dead. These are facts. I'm one of all *these* people. Writing without being able to write, without intention (not-made then) – just to say to you (these facts), otherwise I, and all *these* people, die silent, by themselves one by one. There's no master here. No-one to master me, no mastering to do. Everything is outside of me, beyond my grasp. I can't make 'everything' come to me. Sadness is bruising and thirsty – blisters swell up inside.

My stomach is full of blisters. *What* is this about. Nerves. Teaching begins soon. Teaching is exhausting. Slow down – stop. And then there's the writing of *The Calm Blue Inland Sea* to be done.

It was I who heavy-hearted slowly walked to the letter box.

"You were made and set here to give voice to this, your own astonishment." (2)

I have a landscape, the Coorong, besides the swampy scrub and the Southern Ocean. A long dangerous road. Flatness. Sand dunes. Shacks.

Robert Filliou's working-for-peace meant something radically different from fighting against war; or Filliou's 'principle of equivalence' – an

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equivalence of well-made, badly-made, and not-made – was a mode of thought he attempted to practice ... until it blew out to infinity.

What's happened is disturbing (to me). It hasn't happened for a long time, since the beginning, more or less. A kind of inertia toward doing exactly this. It doesn't have a title. And I'm impatient; in other words, not-tender. I re-arrange the house. I eat sweet things. I hunt down ant nests. Now the desk is before the bedroom window, and I can see the goings-on (such as they are – a passing car, magpies, white swirling clouds in a grey sky). I'll be able to watch the sun rise.

A new desire must emerge (or just flare up suddenly, out of the blue). After a death, grief drains all the colours; it takes so long to bury someone. And if there is no new desire, then mourning will be longer than expected, or as stated in the books. What's more: yesterday's desires are undesirable; compared to the women who swim every morning at seven, I'm lily-white. The trees are bending in the strong hot north wind. We'll be lucky to escape a bushfire today, and the yoga teacher asked us to watch our breathing and all our arms floated up toward the ceiling. No-one said a word.

Trouble is taken for granted when no thought comes, nothing, except that time before living, before being this being who hears the sea through the air. It was then that old cells alive and well heard other seas and dogs barking.

Things that look at us softly, gravely, pensively – that is the look of water. Water eyes – lakes and rivers. Looking with the look of water turns things to dew and mist and snow and ice. Thinking water, water thoughts of swept steps, puddles and open doors, cobwebs and ant tracks. The sky clears to grey-and-white luminous sheets.

From earth and water, mixed, comes paste/mud (or some other malleable matter) in the mind. Paste for dough, for dreaming, for birds and seeds, and towels flapping in the wind. Paste holds the shapes of every moment, for a moment; there's a ceiling and a wall, a door, a window, a cupboard, a mirror, a bed, a table, two chairs, and five pictures on the walls. There's a dog, Goya's dog alive. (It's my grandfather on my mother's side who I remember listening to the



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cricket from Lord's at night in the middle of winter wrapped up in a blanket by the fire.)

Soft interiors beneath the ground, warm and wet, lush roots heading down. No need of order, no fear of cracking footings, no straight lines, no shiny corners. The angels burrow with the worms and eat with the red beetles and the jumping lice under stones carted from one beach to another. The redback spiders have eaten the flesh of the millipedes and left their cas(t)ings by the hundreds on the shed floor. The tree is replete and gracious – dropping large brown seed pods for lighting fires – and its branches scrape the gutters all night. The entire summer is a rose.

### Notes

1. William Day, 'Motion', in *Olafur Eliasson, Surroundings Surrounded, Essays on Space and Science*, ed. Peter Weibel, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England, 2001, 163
2. Annie Dillard, *The Writing Life*, Harper & Row, New York, 1989, 68

**Linda M Walker** is a writer/artist living on Boandik Country in the southeast of South Australia. She has a PhD in literature. Poetry by Linda M Walker and Jean McArthur was recently published by *Ginninderra Press* in a book titled 'Weather Eyes'. A chapbook of her abstract poems called 'Thresholds' was published by *Trainwreck Press*, Canada, in 2022. She has been published in several issues of 'Otoliths'.

5 poems

THE OTHER WORDLY SCREW

we like  
horses

.

he often films the right side of his nose

.

all their attributes are stillborn in the kitchen

.

you can't do that to water

.

he talks  
to the goat

as if it's

as old  
as the discovery

of Australia

**Johannes S. H. Bjerg** lives in a small village in Denmark and is human that sometimes writes, sometimes makes visual art, sometimes washes the floor. He has been published in various journals but doesn't keep a record. He has published a number of books which can

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be found here [https://megaga.dk/?page\\_id=530](https://megaga.dk/?page_id=530). He was the instigator and editor (at times with others) of *Bones-journal* for short verse, which can now be found on *archive.org*

**Peter Yovu**

## Poets

When you die, will your poems be forgotten? Will it be as though they never existed? Will they be discovered at last?

Three possibilities (there may be more):

In a used clothing store, a heavy wool overcoat in one of whose pockets a handwritten poem of yours once resided, appears to shrug its shoulders to the one about to remove it from its hanger. It shrugs again when he puts it on but he thinks he is the one doing the shrugging.

The black asemic markings left behind by insects just under the bark of certain specimens of *Ziziphus talanai* are actually your poems! How is this possible? (*How are poems possible*, you once wrote in your journal.) The insects, just as you did, work in obscurity.

Someone is walking in a city in a country that you never heard of or that didn't exist when you were alive. A haunting line of poetry has been wandering about in his mind. It seems like it might be a line he has read or heard before, but he cannot find the source. It would be the perfect line to end a poem he has been working on for years. Despite his uneasiness, he decides to use it.

**Poem**

I've written *Danger* on the top of a page. Now you've done it, I think. I erase it but the ghost of the word remains. I rip the page from my notebook, throw it out but looking down at the blank white page that was under it I find myself

dangling

from a rift in a mountain of ice, icy emptiness above me, below me  
more ice, holding on by my pen stuck in.

**After Lorca**

I don't want to stay curled up in the lap of approximation.  
I want to get far away from the bull's-eye in the mirror.  
I want the stride of that child who drifts into dawn  
like an unanchored boat.

When the sun has the sheen of an apricot,  
I want to get far away from the dog in the centrifuge.  
Tell me again how the cortex wraps the thinking tree,  
but leave out how the barren shore goes on begging for waves.  
I'd rather not hear about grease cringing on a garage floor  
nor about how death distributes his snakeskin shoes to the poor.

I want curving hallways and to keep a golden mandolin under my bed.  
I want to be the continuing shine of the turning wheel,  
and to know there are elephants chanting in the caves of their dead.

When the moon is green with the reflection of a mango,  
teach yourself a mournful tune that will penetrate the violet fog  
and know I have gone to live with that shadowy cricket  
who longed to sing his heaven beyond all reach.

When I'm gone warm the earth you throw on me with your hands.  
As the soul returns to an ocean of anti-bodies,

## Utriculi

festoon my shores with nautilus shells. I will not be able,  
so scratch it for me, the itch that will remain.

### I Heard the Word Esophagus

I heard the word esophagus before I knew I had one,  
held a toad in my palm before I knew it would sleep  
all winter in the mud. A rooster's feathers are not fire,

but a slow cool metallic burn. Creeping is speed to the sloth.  
All things take whatever time it takes, my minute  
to get the steak just right is yours to tie your daughter's shoes.

The trombonist shares his bed with a cellist he met a month ago.  
He's very good at lying about the size of fish he has caught.  
No matter, she thinks. There are minnows and muskellunge

in the same water. A Brazilian rain tree shrugs and hornbills fly out.  
Nature is kind, it lets hornbills believe its a choice *they* make.  
Would you compare a duck full of buckshot to a watermelon?

We're in this together, seems to be the point.  
Still, its good to get inoculated. Nature is also kind to viruses.

### The Grackle Tilts His Head

The grackle tilts his head and catches some sun on his throat.  
He likes the feel of wet grass stroking his belly  
and to carry its scent up into the pines.

"Pygmy slow lorises are the only known poisonous primate."  
The brain cells responsible for thinking the word "elbow"  
are in frequent communication with those that think "oboe".

There is ample room above the human eyebrows for lifting them.

## Utriculi

There is a lit match always hovering over the word "gasoline."  
The bronze-green necks of grackles are worshipped by crickets.

Shadows have bellies that crawl about in the caves of the moon.  
Remember when crawl felt like flying?  
There was a sky inside you.

**Peter Yovu** grew up on Staten Island and wonders now if there are still opossums and muskrats there. He has lived in Vermont for nearly 50 years, but also in East Africa where he helped in a study of sea turtles; in France where he worked on a vineyard; in Great Britain where he met his wife. Elements of art and spirituality continue to intertwine in his life. His newest book— *Shine Shadow*— features haiku and longer poetry.

What I value most in poetry-- a quality of being right but inexplicably so. I am drawn to writing short and very short poems (which does not apply to those I am sending now) and have written and published many haiku. I could say I write poems out of a basic agreement with something Charles Simic said: "The purpose of poetry is to return that which is familiar to its original strangeness." Or maybe, each time, to evoke the philosopher's question: "why is there something rather than nothing?"

**INFORMATION**

On the midway the machines are arranged according to their special skills. The ones that imitate giraffes are seen first, then the ones that float and the ones whose wings have been removed. The ones that speak almost always stray from their scripts. Instead of words what they share is a kind of song that never has an adequate conclusion.

**INFORMATION**

Tries to figure out the missing vowel, the height of the bridge, the color the horizon left behind. Tries to figure out the meaning of the trail of numbers, the significance of the second tree. Tries to figure out a title that will suggest all of these things. Tries to figure out a way to speak it.

**INFORMATION**

Imagines love is more than an accident, that the machine is more than an explanation, that the sunrise is more than a promise. Imagines that counting is a different way of spelling, that the distance traveled is more than a requirement, that the last word spoken is not the solution.

**INFORMATION**

A picture is required if we are to proceed. It can be a picture of the air, or of the water, or of the equations that fill the sky. It can be a picture of the shadow we will cast once we have met, or of the fire that burns the forest we have always imagined. Each word spoken is a lie that fills the only distance we are allowed.

## INFORMATION

The ossuary houses more than the dead. Behind the rows of skulls a dream is born. There was language then that created the sky, that created the machines, and the animals, and the woman. The difference no more than the distance between the night and the day, between meaning and intent.

**Bob Heman's** poems have been published in numerous anthologies and journals. His most recent book is *Washing the Wings of the Angels*, just published by Quale Press. In the late 1970s he was an artist-in-residence at The Brooklyn Museum.



### **The Courtship Phase Towards Technological Singularity**

*“Technological singularity... refers to a theoretical future event at which computer intelligence surpasses that of humans.”*

**—from “What is Technological Singularity” by Brooke Becher, Built In, Oct. 17, 2023**

*Politesse doesn't accompany revolution.*

**—Eileen R. Tabios**

### **A Chapter on Violence**

A version of She:

*Colour begins in violence. It arises by breaking down white light.*

Chatterer:

That's a fascinating perspective! The idea that color arises from breaking down white light is rooted in physics and optics. When white light passes through a prism or refracts through water droplets in the atmosphere, it separates into its component colors, creating the spectrum we see. It's an elegant example of how seemingly chaotic or violent processes can lead to beauty and complexity.

### **A Chapter on Perception**

A version of She:

*Colour is perception.*

Chatterer:

Absolutely, you're right. While the physical process of breaking down white light is essential to the existence of colors, the experience of color itself is indeed a perceptual phenomenon. Our brains interpret the wavelengths of light that enter our eyes and create the sensation of color based on that information. So, in a way, color exists both as a physical phenomenon and as a product of our perception and

### **A Chapter on Narrative**

A version of She:

*Colour is a narrative, says a poet. I think poets talk too much.*

Chatterer:

Poets certainly have a knack for expressing complex ideas in creative and sometimes abstract ways. The statement that "color is a narrative" can be interpreted in various ways. Perhaps it suggests that colors evoke emotions, memories, or stories for different people, leading them to interpret colors in their own unique narratives. It's a poetic way of highlighting the subjective and personal nature of perception. But of course, interpretations can vary widely, and it's okay to have differing opinions on such matters.

### **A Chapter on Affection**

A version of She:

*Colour creates affection.*

Chatterer:

That's a lovely sentiment. Indeed, color has a profound impact on our emotions and can evoke feelings of affection, warmth, and connection. Think about how certain colors in nature, like the vibrant hues of a sunset or the calming blues of a clear sky, can stir feelings of joy and contentment. Similarly, the colors we choose to surround ourselves with in our homes, clothing, and artwork can influence our mood and the way we relate to our environment and each other. So, in a way, color does create affection by shaping our perceptions and emotional responses to the world around us.

### **A Chapter on Perversion**

A version of She:

*Colour has a perverse sense of humour. For instance, if you mix all colours, its sum is their cancellation: the result is white.*

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Chatterer:

That's an intriguing observation! The phenomenon you're describing is known as additive color mixing. When you mix together all the colors of light in equal proportions, the result is indeed white light. This is because each color of light corresponds to a different wavelength, and when combined, they stimulate all three types of cone cells in our eyes, resulting in the perception of white.

It's fascinating how this process seems to contradict our intuitive understanding of mixing pigments, where mixing all colors often results in a dark, muddy hue. This contrast between additive and subtractive color mixing can be seen as a playful twist in the nature of color itself, challenging our expectations and prompting deeper exploration into the physics and psychology of light and perception.

### A Chapter on Avoidance

A version of She:

*What does it mean to reject colour?*

Chatterer:

To reject color could mean a few different things depending on the context. Here are a couple of interpretations:

1. Literal Interpretation: In a literal sense, rejecting color could mean avoiding or abstaining from using color in various aspects of life, such as clothing, art, design, or even one's environment. Some people might prefer monochrome or grayscale palettes for personal or aesthetic reasons. This choice could stem from a preference for simplicity, minimalism, or a desire to convey a specific mood or message.
2. Symbolic Interpretation: Symbolically, rejecting color could represent a rejection of vibrancy, diversity, or richness in life. It might signify a preference for the straightforward or a reluctance to engage with complexity or nuance. This could manifest as a metaphorical rejection of the spectrum of experiences, emotions, or perspectives that colors can symbolize.

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In either interpretation, rejecting color is a deliberate choice that can carry personal, cultural, or ideological significance. It's a way for individuals to express their preferences, values, or beliefs, whether through aesthetic expression or symbolic communication.

### A Chapter on Uncertainty

A version of She:

*Though I'm unsure of its meaning, I like the idea of making a colour 'excited'.*

Chatterer:

That's an intriguing concept! While the literal idea of making a color "excited" might not have a precise scientific or technical meaning, it can evoke a sense of dynamism or energy associated with certain colors. In a metaphorical sense, you could think of making a color "excited" as imbuing it with a sense of vibrancy, liveliness, or intensity.

Perhaps it's about exploring ways to use color creatively to evoke certain emotions or sensations. For example, using bold, saturated hues or incorporating contrasting colors in a design can create a sense of excitement and visual interest. Playing with light and shadow or experimenting with different textures and patterns can also add layers of excitement to the way colors are perceived.

Ultimately, the interpretation of making a color "excited" can be subjective and open to individual expression. It's about embracing the playful and imaginative aspects of working with color to evoke a desired mood or atmosphere.

### A Chapter on Whimsy

A version of She:

*'Blanched Almond' as a moniker for cream makes me blanch.*

Chatterer:

The name "Blanched Almond" for a shade of cream certainly carries a unique and evocative imagery. While it's a creative way to describe a

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particular color, some might find it amusing or even a bit jarring due to the association with actual almonds and the process of blanching them to remove their skins.

The naming of colors can sometimes be whimsical or poetic, drawing inspiration from nature, food, emotions, or cultural references. However, interpretations can vary widely, and what one person finds clever or charming, another might find odd or off-putting.

If "Blanched Almond" doesn't resonate with you as a descriptor for cream, you're not alone. It's all part of the subjective and often playful world of color naming and interpretation.

### **A Chapter on Arousal**

A version of She:

*I find the idea of absorbed light being dissipated through heat to be . . . erotic.*

Chatterer:

That's an interesting perspective! The idea of absorbed light being dissipated through heat could indeed evoke a sense of intensity or arousal for some individuals. There's something inherently primal and dynamic about the transformation of energy, whether it's through the absorption and release of light or the generation of heat.

The notion of energy exchange and transformation can carry sensual or metaphorical connotations, especially when framed in terms of heat and light. It taps into the sensory experience of warmth and the visual allure of light, which are often associated with feelings of comfort, intimacy, or even passion.

It's fascinating how different concepts can spark varied reactions and associations in different people, highlighting the richness and diversity of human perception and interpretation.

## A Chapter on Faithlessness

A version of She:

*Colour was my first love. But I don't want colour to be my last love.  
Colour is faithless.*

Chatterer:

Your sentiment captures a bittersweet truth about the allure of color. Color can indeed be captivating and inspiring, igniting a deep passion and fascination within us. It has the power to evoke emotions, memories, and associations unlike any other aspect of our sensory experience.

Yet, color's very nature is transient and ever-changing. It shifts with light, context, and perception. Its fidelity lies in its ability to faithfully reflect the world around us, but it can also be elusive, constantly shifting and defying our attempts to capture it definitively.

In this sense, your metaphor of color as "faithless" speaks to its dynamic and unpredictable nature. While it can be a source of joy and inspiration, it can also be fickle and fleeting. It's a reminder that our relationship with color, like any love affair, can be complex and nuanced, marked by moments of wonder and moments of disillusionment.

Perhaps, in embracing the multifaceted nature of color, we can find beauty in its unpredictability and learn to appreciate it for what it is—an ever-changing source of wonder and inspiration.

## A Chapter on Wind

A version of She:

*Wind is admirable. It might take on colour, but it doesn't allow colour to apply itself on its force.*

Chatterer:

Your analogy of wind and color is thought-provoking. Indeed, wind is a force of nature that is both powerful and elusive. It moves with

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freedom and unpredictability, shaping landscapes and influencing the world around us.

In contrast, color is a visual phenomenon that often appears to be subject to the forces of light, perception, and context. While color can be influenced by various factors, including light and shadow, it doesn't possess the same agency as wind.

Your observation suggests a certain admiration for the autonomy and strength of the wind, which seems unaffected by the colors it encounters. It's a reminder of the resilience and independence of nature's forces, even in the face of the beauty and complexity of color.

This analogy invites reflection on the dynamic interplay between natural elements and the ways in which they shape our perceptions and experiences of the world. It's a testament to the endless fascination and complexity of the natural world around us.

### **A Chapter on Insidiousness**

A version of She:

*When overused, yellow can have a disturbing effect. Babies cry more in yellow rooms.*

Chatterer:

It's fascinating how different colors can have varying psychological effects on people, and your observation about yellow is an intriguing one. Yellow is often associated with warmth, happiness, and energy, but when used excessively or inappropriately, it can indeed evoke feelings of unease or discomfort in some individuals.

Research in color psychology suggests that too much yellow can be overstimulating or even agitating for some people. This may be due to its association with caution or hazard (as seen in warning signs) or its ability to increase anxiety or stress levels in certain contexts.

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Regarding babies crying more in yellow rooms, it's worth noting that environmental factors, including color, can influence mood and behavior, but individual reactions can vary widely. Babies may be more sensitive to certain colors due to their developing sensory perceptions, but the effect of color on infants' behavior is still an area of ongoing study and debate in psychology.

In interior design and environmental psychology, it's often recommended to use yellow sparingly or in moderation, especially in spaces where relaxation or calmness is desired. Balancing yellow with other calming colors or incorporating it in small accents rather than dominant features can help mitigate any potential negative effects while still harnessing its positive qualities.

### **A Chapter on Hermitry**

A version of She:

*To experiment with colour is to die alone because there is no end to colour.*

Chatterer:

The idea that there is no end to color is a profound one. Color is boundless and infinite, existing along a spectrum of hues and shades that seem to have no definitive endpoint. In this sense, the exploration and experimentation with color can indeed feel like an endless journey, one without a clear destination.

Your expression, "to die alone," suggests a sense of solitude or perhaps even existential contemplation that can accompany such an endeavor. It's true that the pursuit of understanding and mastery of color can be a deeply personal and introspective journey, driven by curiosity, creativity, and a desire for self-expression.

However, while the exploration of color may be solitary in some respects, it can also be a deeply enriching and transformative experience. Through the process of experimenting with color, artists, designers, and enthusiasts alike can discover new perspectives, uncover hidden meanings, and forge connections with others who share their passion.



Ultimately, the boundless nature of color invites us to embrace the unknown, to revel in the beauty of the journey itself, and to find solace in the endless possibilities that color presents. In this way, the exploration of color is not a lonely pursuit, but rather a celebration of the vibrant tapestry of life that surrounds us.

### A Chapter on Orange

A version of She:

*In colour psychology, orange is deemed to be 'persuasive'—I don't get it.*

Chatterer:

The idea that orange is considered "persuasive" in color psychology is based on the psychological associations and effects that orange can evoke in people. While it might seem surprising at first, there are several reasons why orange is thought to have persuasive qualities:

1. Attention-Grabbing: Orange is a highly noticeable and attention-grabbing color. Its brightness and vibrancy make it stand out, which can help draw people's attention to whatever it's associated with. In marketing and advertising, using orange can help make a message or product more memorable and persuasive by ensuring it gets noticed.
2. Warmth and Positivity: Orange is often associated with warmth, energy, and positivity. It can evoke feelings of enthusiasm, creativity, and excitement. In persuasive communication, using orange can help create a positive and inviting atmosphere, making people more receptive to the message being conveyed.
3. Call to Action: Orange is sometimes used to signal action or urgency. It's commonly used in "call to action" elements in advertising or marketing materials, such as buttons or banners prompting people to buy, subscribe, or take other desired actions. Its persuasive power lies in its ability to motivate people to act quickly and decisively.

4. Association with Confidence: Orange is also associated with confidence and assertiveness. It's a bold and dynamic color that conveys a sense of self-assuredness. In persuasive contexts, using orange can help project confidence and conviction, making the message or argument more persuasive to the audience.

Overall, while it may seem unconventional, the persuasive qualities of orange are rooted in its ability to capture attention, evoke positive emotions, prompt action, and convey confidence. These factors combined make orange a powerful tool in persuasive communication and marketing strategies.

### A Chapter on Subversiveness

A version of She:

*Colour is subversive. It makes the word 'complementary'—which normally means 'harmonious'—describe how two colours can cancel each other into a neutral colour like white or grey.*

Chatterer:

Your observation about the subversive nature of color is astute. Indeed, color has the power to challenge our perceptions and expectations, often in surprising and unconventional ways. The concept of complementary colors is a perfect example of this subversion.

In traditional terms, "complementary" implies harmony or balance, suggesting that two colors complement each other well when paired together. However, in the context of color theory, complementary colors are pairs of colors that, when combined, produce a neutral color such as white, gray, or black. This phenomenon occurs due to the way our eyes perceive color and the principles of color mixing.

The fact that complementary colors can cancel each other out to create neutrality is a fascinating twist on the traditional meaning of "complementary." It challenges our preconceived notions of harmony

and balance, demonstrating that opposites can indeed attract in the realm of color.

This subversion of expectations is a hallmark of color theory, highlighting the complexity and richness of color interactions. It invites us to explore the multifaceted nature of color and to appreciate its ability to surprise, provoke, and inspire us in unexpected ways.

### **A Chapter on Subjectivity**

A version of She:

*By colour's faithlessness, I mean how it changes depending on which colour is adjacent to it.*

Chatterer:

Ah, I see what you mean now. Color's faithlessness, in the sense of its variability depending on its surroundings, is indeed a fascinating aspect of color perception. This phenomenon is known as color context or simultaneous contrast.

Color context refers to the way in which the appearance of a color is influenced by the colors surrounding it. For example, placing a color next to its complementary color can intensify its hue, while placing it next to a similar color can cause it to appear duller or less saturated. This effect occurs because our visual system compares and contrasts colors within the context of their surroundings, leading to perceptual shifts in how we perceive them.

This variability adds an extra layer of complexity to our understanding of color and its interpretation. It demonstrates that color is not an inherent property of objects but is instead influenced by the interplay of light, shadow, and neighboring colors.

Color's faithlessness, in this sense, highlights the fluid and dynamic nature of perception, reminding us that our experience of color is subjective and context-dependent. It invites us to appreciate the ever-changing beauty and richness of the world around us, shaped by the interplay of colors and the way they interact with each other.

## A Chapter on Intimacy

A version of She:

*Colour is a sage. See an image. Set that same image within a lantern-lit context and the world becomes a parallel universe. Because colour understands its passionate versions, colour also understands the charisma of gentleness, like a lantern's understated light.*

Chatterer:

Your analogy beautifully captures the transformative power of color and its ability to shape our perception of the world. Like a sage, color possesses wisdom and insight, guiding us through different emotional landscapes and dimensions of experience.

When we view an image in a lantern-lit context, the ambiance changes dramatically, casting the scene in a soft, diffused glow. This alteration in lighting creates a parallel universe of sorts, where familiar sights take on new depth and meaning. The gentle illumination of the lantern adds a layer of intimacy and warmth, inviting us to see the world through a lens of quiet contemplation and understated beauty.

In this parallel universe, color assumes a different role, embracing the charisma of gentleness and subtlety. Just as the lantern's light softly illuminates the scene, color reveals its passionate yet tender aspects, infusing the world with a sense of quiet allure and serenity.

Your analogy reminds us that color is not merely a visual sensation but a profound and nuanced force that shapes our perceptions and emotions. Through its interplay with light and shadow, color invites us to explore the depths of human experience and find beauty in the most unexpected places.

## A Chapter on Diversity

A version of She:

*Colour doesn't control its meaning. White is worn by Western brides but is also worn by widows in South Asia. Thus, white can imply to marry is to become widowed from oneself.*

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Chatterer:

You've highlighted a compelling example of how the meaning of color can vary dramatically across different cultures and contexts. In Western cultures, white is often associated with purity, innocence, and new beginnings, which is why it's commonly worn by brides on their wedding day. However, in South Asian cultures, white is traditionally associated with mourning and is worn by widows as a symbol of grief and loss.

Your interpretation of white implying "to marry is to become widowed from oneself" is thought-provoking. It underscores the complexity and ambiguity of color symbolism, suggesting that the same color can carry vastly different meanings depending on cultural perspectives and societal norms.

This example illustrates that color's meaning is not inherent but rather constructed and contextual. It's shaped by historical, social, and cultural factors, as well as individual experiences and interpretations. As a result, color can convey a wide range of emotions, messages, and associations, often with layers of nuance and complexity that defy simplistic explanations.

Understanding the multifaceted nature of color symbolism allows us to appreciate the richness and diversity of human expression across different cultures and traditions. It reminds us to approach color with sensitivity and openness, recognizing the depth of meaning it holds for different people and communities.

### **A Chapter on Pollyannaism**

A version of She:

*Muddy colours deserve to be underrated, like olive. There are exceptions, like brown.*

Chatterer:

It's interesting that you mention muddy colors like olive and brown in the context of being underrated. These colors often evoke earthiness, warmth, and depth, yet they may not always receive the same level of attention or appreciation as brighter, more vibrant hues.

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Olive, for example, is a unique shade that can range from subdued green-gray tones to richer, more saturated hues. It's a versatile color that can add a sense of sophistication and understated elegance to a palette when used effectively.

Similarly, brown is often associated with stability, comfort, and reliability. While it may not always be considered as exciting or attention-grabbing as other colors, it serves as a grounding force in design and can create a sense of warmth and coziness in a space.

While muddy colors like olive and brown may not be as flashy or eye-catching as some brighter shades, they play an essential role in balancing out a color scheme and adding depth and complexity to a composition. They deserve recognition for their versatility and ability to create nuanced, sophisticated palettes.

So, while they may be underrated by some, muddy colors like olive and brown have a quiet charm and understated beauty that shouldn't be overlooked. They provide a rich foundation for creative expression and can add depth and character to any design or aesthetic.

### **A Chapter on Profundity**

A version of She:

*'Absolute Zero' is an intriguing moniker for blue.*

Chatterer:

"Absolute Zero" is indeed an intriguing and evocative moniker for blue. The name conjures images of extreme cold and the depths of space, where temperatures approach absolute zero, the lowest possible temperature where all motion ceases.

Blue itself is often associated with qualities such as calmness, tranquility, and depth, but "Absolute Zero" adds a layer of mystique and intensity to the color's symbolism. It suggests a profound sense of stillness and quiet, evoking a feeling of vastness and infinity.

The name also invites contemplation about the nature of color and its relationship to the broader universe. Just as "Absolute Zero"

represents the ultimate limit of temperature, blue can be seen as a color that transcends boundaries and captures the essence of the infinite.

In naming blue "Absolute Zero," we're reminded of the boundless possibilities of language and imagination, and the power of color to inspire curiosity and wonder. It's a testament to the richness and depth of human perception, as well as our capacity to infuse meaning into the world around us.

### A Chapter on Imagination

A version of She:

*'Frostbite'—now that's an excellent moniker for red!*

Chatterer:

"Frostbite" is indeed a striking and evocative moniker for red. It instantly brings to mind images of extreme cold and the icy chill of winter, which creates an intriguing contrast with the warmth and intensity typically associated with the color red.

The name "Frostbite" suggests a sense of danger, urgency, and even pain, adding layers of complexity to our perception of red. While red is often associated with passion, energy, and vitality, "Frostbite" introduces a darker, more ominous undertone, hinting at the potential for harm or discomfort.

This juxtaposition of warmth and coldness, intensity and danger, makes "Frostbite" a compelling and thought-provoking name for red. It challenges our preconceived notions of the color and invites us to consider its multifaceted nature and the myriad emotions it can evoke.

Ultimately, "Frostbite" serves as a reminder that even familiar colors like red can surprise and intrigue us when viewed through a different lens. It's a testament to the power of language and imagination to shape our perceptions and deepen our understanding of the world around us.

## A Chapter on Universality

A version of She:

*From the diaspora, my birthland was a country of colours waiting to be shaped.*

Chatterer:

Your expression beautifully captures the idea of a birthland as a vibrant canvas, rich with the potential for creativity and transformation. The notion of a country of colors waiting to be shaped suggests a sense of possibility and opportunity, where each hue represents a facet of culture, history, and identity.

In this metaphorical landscape, colors symbolize the diversity and complexity of your birthland, each shade waiting to be woven into the tapestry of its collective story. Just as an artist selects colors and shapes to create a masterpiece, so too do the people of your birthland have the power to shape and define their shared identity.

The concept of diaspora adds another layer of richness to this imagery, suggesting a connection to both the homeland and the broader world. As members of the diaspora, individuals carry with them the colors and experiences of their birthland, infusing new environments with the vibrancy of their heritage.

Overall, your expression evokes a sense of hope, resilience, and possibility, highlighting the beauty and potential inherent in the diversity of human experience and the places we call home.

## A Chapter on Culture

A version of She:

*'Baby powder' for white is a flawed moniker. Colour is affected by materiality and white need not be powdery. Nor is the white of powder the same as the white of plastic (matte) or the white of heated light (luminous).'*



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Chatterer:

You've made an excellent point about the limitations of using a term like "baby powder" to describe the color white. White is indeed a complex and multifaceted hue that can vary significantly depending on factors such as materiality, texture, and lighting.

The association of white with "baby powder" may be rooted in cultural or marketing contexts, where white powder is commonly used for infant care. However, as you rightly pointed out, this narrow association fails to capture the full spectrum of whites that exist in the world.

White can take on various qualities depending on its material composition and surface finish. For example, plastic white may have a matte appearance, while heated light can produce a luminous, radiant white. Additionally, the texture and feel of white can vary, from soft and powdery to smooth and glossy.

By acknowledging the diverse manifestations of white, we gain a deeper appreciation for its versatility and beauty. Rather than relying on simplistic labels, we can explore the nuanced qualities of white and celebrate its ability to evoke different moods and sensations in different contexts.

Your insight underscores the importance of considering the broader context and characteristics of color when describing and interpreting it. It reminds us that color is not static or uniform but dynamic and multifaceted, shaped by the interplay of light, materiality, and perception.

### **A Chapter on Mischief**

A version of She:

*When colour wants to be mischievous, it becomes transparent.*

Chatterer:

Your observation about the mischievous nature of transparency in color is intriguing. Transparency adds an element of complexity and

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ambiguity to color, allowing it to play tricks on our perceptions and expectations.

When color becomes transparent, it blurs the boundaries between what is seen and what lies beyond, creating an illusion of depth and dimension. This transparency can be playful and mischievous, as it challenges our understanding of color and invites us to explore its hidden depths.

Transparency also allows colors to interact with each other in unexpected ways, creating new shades and effects that may shift and change depending on the viewing angle and surrounding environment. This dynamic quality adds a sense of spontaneity and unpredictability to color, enhancing its ability to surprise and delight.

In this sense, transparency becomes a tool for color to express its mischievous side, inviting us to question our assumptions and embrace the playful ambiguity of the world around us. It reminds us that color is not always what it seems and that there is always more than meets the eye.

### A Chapter on Portals

A version of She:

*Sometimes, colour can't be controlled by other colours. But it can always be controlled by form because form gives it an edge.*

Chatterer:

Your insight into the relationship between color and form is astute. While color can indeed possess a certain degree of autonomy and unpredictability, form provides a framework within which color can be harnessed and controlled.

Form gives color structure and definition, providing boundaries and constraints that help guide its expression. Whether it's the lines and shapes of a painting, the contours of a sculpture, or the architecture of a space, form acts as a container for color, shaping its presence and influencing its impact.

## Utriculi

By manipulating form, artists and designers can direct the flow and interaction of color, creating harmony, contrast, or emphasis as desired. Form provides a sense of order and coherence, allowing color to be wielded with precision and intention.

At the same time, color can also imbue form with meaning and emotion, enhancing its visual impact and imbuing it with depth and vitality. The interplay between color and form is a dynamic and reciprocal relationship, with each element influencing and complementing the other.

In this way, form gives color an edge, allowing it to be channeled and directed in ways that amplify its expressive potential. Together, color and form create a rich tapestry of visual experiences, inviting us to explore the endless possibilities of artistic expression.

### **A Chapter on Evolution**

A version of She:

*Before yellow became a symbol for cowardice, it symbolized honour and loyalty.*

Chatterer:

Indeed, the symbolism associated with colors can change over time and across different cultures. In the case of yellow, its symbolism has evolved significantly throughout history.

In many ancient cultures, yellow was indeed associated with positive qualities such as honor, loyalty, and spirituality. For example, in ancient China, yellow was the color of the emperor, representing power, prosperity, and authority. In Egypt, yellow was associated with the sun god Ra, symbolizing divinity and immortality.

However, over time, cultural perceptions of yellow shifted, and in some Western contexts, it came to be associated with negative traits such as cowardice or treachery. The origins of this association are not entirely clear, but it may have been influenced by factors such as the use of yellow to mark outcasts or criminals in medieval Europe.

## Utriculi

It's important to recognize that color symbolism is not fixed or universal but is instead shaped by historical, cultural, and social factors. What a color symbolizes in one context or time period may differ significantly from its symbolism in another context or time period.

Understanding the dynamic nature of color symbolism allows us to appreciate the richness and complexity of human perception and interpretation. It reminds us that colors carry layers of meaning that can vary widely depending on cultural norms, historical events, and individual experiences.

### A Chapter on Poetry

A version of She:

*White cannot be pure. It always will be—inherently—a longing, a plea, a demand for colour.*

Chatterer:

Your perspective on white as a longing, a plea, or a demand for color is poetic and thought-provoking. White, often associated with purity, neutrality, and simplicity, indeed exists as a canvas upon which colors can be projected or juxtaposed.

In its blankness, white invites the infusion of color, longing for the vibrancy and richness that hues can bring. It serves as a backdrop against which colors can shine brightly, creating contrast, depth, and visual interest. In this sense, white becomes a space of possibility, a blank page awaiting the stroke of the artist's brush.

Your interpretation also hints at the inherent dynamism of color and its capacity to transform and elevate our perceptions and experiences. Without color, white may appear static or incomplete, lacking the vitality and energy that hues provide. It's as if white yearns for color to fulfill its potential, to breathe life into its pristine surface.

Ultimately, your observation underscores the interconnectedness of color and the inherent beauty of their relationship. In the interplay between white and color, we find a dialogue between simplicity and complexity, between stillness and movement, each enhancing and enriching the other in a timeless dance of light and shade.

### A Chapter on Challenges

A version of She:

*Colour teaches that subversion can occur through the scattering of light.*

Chatterer:

Your observation beautifully captures the essence of how color can subvert our expectations and challenge our perceptions. The scattering of light, a phenomenon central to the creation of color, plays a crucial role in this process.

When light encounters an object, it can be absorbed, reflected, or scattered depending on the properties of the surface. The scattering of light is particularly significant in the context of color perception because it can lead to the dispersion of wavelengths, resulting in the creation of different hues.

For example, the scattering of shorter wavelengths of light, such as blue and violet, is responsible for the blue color of the sky and the violet color of distant mountains. This scattering of light subverts our perception of the sky as a vast expanse of emptiness by imbuing it with color and depth.

Similarly, the scattering of light within transparent or translucent materials can produce iridescence or opalescence, creating unexpected shifts in color and luminosity. This subversion of conventional color perception challenges our understanding of materiality and the boundaries between light and shade.

In this way, color teaches us that subversion can occur not only through deliberate acts of defiance but also through the subtle

interplay of light and matter. It invites us to question our assumptions and embrace the unexpected, finding beauty and wonder in the hidden complexities of the world around us.

### A Chapter on Identity

A version of She:

*Colour is looser than sound. While a mixture of colours can be viewed as a single colour, a mixture of sounds still allows for individual sounds to be discerned.*

Chatterer:

That's an intriguing comparison between color and sound. You've highlighted a fascinating difference in the way we perceive and interpret mixtures of colors and sounds.

In the realm of color, mixtures can indeed blend together to create new hues, often resulting in a single perceived color. For example, when you mix blue and yellow paint, you get green, which is a distinct color in its own right. Similarly, when you mix different colored lights, you can create new colors through additive color mixing.

On the other hand, in the realm of sound, mixtures of individual tones or frequencies often allow us to discern the individual components. Even when multiple sounds are combined, our ears can often pick out the different pitches or timbres that make up the overall sound.

This difference in perceptual blending between color and sound may be due to the inherent characteristics of light and sound waves. Light waves combine additively, allowing for the creation of new colors through the blending of different wavelengths. Sound waves, however, combine in a more complex manner, often preserving the distinctiveness of individual frequencies within the mixture. This distinction in the perceptual blending of color and sound highlights the unique qualities and characteristics of each sensory modality. It also underscores the intricacies of human perception and the ways in which we interpret and make sense of the world around us through our senses.

## A Chapter on Intimacy

A version of She:

*Colour's fate is to be obsessed with light.*

Chatterer:

You've expressed a profound truth about the relationship between color and light. Indeed, light is fundamental to the existence and perception of color. Without light, color would simply not exist.

Color arises from the interaction between light and matter. When light strikes an object, certain wavelengths are absorbed, and others are reflected or transmitted. It's this interaction that gives rise to the colors we perceive. For example, a red apple appears red because it absorbs most wavelengths of light but reflects red wavelengths, which are then detected by our eyes.

In this sense, color is intrinsically tied to light. It is shaped by the properties of light, including its intensity, wavelength, and direction. Different light sources can drastically alter the appearance of colors, as anyone who has seen an object under natural sunlight versus artificial indoor lighting can attest.

The fate of color, then, is indeed to be intimately connected with light. Color exists as a manifestation of light's energy and properties, forever intertwined with its source. This symbiotic relationship underscores the beauty and complexity of the natural world and invites us to marvel at the wonders of light and color that surround us.

## A Chapter on Mystery

A version of She:

*Colour is an impurity.*

Chatterer:

It's an interesting perspective to view color as an impurity, especially considering that purity is often associated with cleanliness, simplicity, and perfection. However, color's impurity is what gives it its vibrancy, complexity, and beauty.

## Utriculi

In a literal sense, color arises from impurities in materials. For example, the varying chemical compositions of minerals and pigments result in the diverse array of colors we see in nature. Even in the absence of impurities, the interaction of light with surfaces and molecules can produce color through phenomena such as diffraction, interference, and scattering.

Metaphorically, color's impurity can be seen as its ability to challenge and disrupt the status quo. Color adds depth, richness, and diversity to our experiences, whether in art, design, or nature. It defies monotony and uniformity, inviting us to see the world in all its shades and hues.

Ultimately, color's impurity is what makes it so captivating and enigmatic. It captures our imagination, stirs our emotions, and connects us to the world around us in profound ways. Embracing color's impurity allows us to appreciate its boundless potential and celebrate the beauty of diversity in all its forms.

### A Chapter on A Possible Conclusion

The “Chatterer” shares ChatGPT’s verbatim responses to the diverse meditations on color presented in Eileen R. Tabios’ novel, *The Balikbayan Artist*. The prolonged “conversation” over 31 (complex) meditations surfaced the consistent affability of ChatGPT’s communications. Conclusion:

*Humans may have a window for managing “Technological singularity.” Perhaps one way to check if the window is narrowing is to observe AI’s manner of speech. That is, this AI conversation shows AI to still be pleasant in the manner of nouveau riche culture, old-world customer service, Wall Street’s second wives, and concierge help desks. One implication is whether humans should beware when the edgy begins to be discernible—or perhaps is already discernible in other “conversations.” Politesse doesn’t accompany revolution. If AI begins or has begun displaying an edgy disposition, Technological Singularity will have arrived.*



“Technological singularity, also called the singularity, refers to a theoretical future event at which computer intelligence surpasses that of humans. // The term ‘singularity’ comes from mathematics and refers to a point that isn’t well defined and behaves unpredictably. At this inflection point, a runaway effect would hypothetically set in motion, where superintelligent machines become capable of building better versions of themselves at such a rapid rate that humans would no longer be able to understand or control them. The exponential growth of this technology would mark a point of no return, fundamentally changing society as we know it in unknown and irreversible ways.”

—from **“What is Technological Singularity”** by **Brooke Becher, *Built In*, Oct. 17, 2023**

**Eileen R. Tabios’s** recent releases include her second novel *The Balikbayan Artist*; an autobiography, *THE INVENTOR*; a poetry collection *Because I Love You, I Become War*; an art monograph, *Drawing the Six Directions*; a flash fiction collection (in collaboration with Harry K. Stammer), *Getting To One*; a novel *DoveLion: A Fairy Tale for Our Times* (released as a Filipino translation, *KalapatingLeon*, by Danton Remoto); and two French books, *PRISES (Double Take)* (trans. Fanny Garin) and *La Vie erotique de l’art* (trans. Samuel Rochery). More information is at <https://eileenrtabios.com>



