

ADANNA

LITERARY JOURNAL

Founder
CHRISTINE REDMAN-WALDEYER

Issue No. 6

Adanna accepts poetry, fiction, essays, and reviews. Please send a proposal for reviews. All submissions are electronically accepted in one file, preferably a word document file with a cover letter and a three to four line bio.

Visit our website for further details: www.adannajournal.blogspot.com

Copies of Issue 6 will be available for a limited time. To order additional copies send a check made out to *Adanna* for \$14 a book plus \$5 shipping within the United States. Orders outside the United States add \$10 shipping and handling.

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Credits

Cover Art: Stephen Linsteadt
Cover Title: The Dancer Upstairs

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Artist Statement

“The Dancer Upstairs” was inspired by the film with the same title. This particular scene evokes a sense of the unfoldment of the feminine and her many facets, those revealed and those yet to be understood. She is the Unknown Woman who calls out from behind the mirrors of our senses and our thinking. Synchronicity led me to a chance meeting with the actress, Marie-Anne Favreau, in Paris. In every way, she also embodies the feminine notion of what it means to be human: compassionate, tolerant, mindful, heart full, and connected to a deeper wisdom of spirit.

Stephen Linsteadt is a painter and a poet whose work is inspired by the archetypal feminine in both her physical form and her numinous overtones. His focus speaks to the larger alchemic metaphor of woman as an archetype of our ancestral experiences and the collective female psyche. Stephen’s view is that our life’s experiences, disappointments and difficulties, are the alchemical and tempering fires that transmute and guide us to higher possibilities.

Stephen Linsteadt, Cover Art

Preface

It is with pride I present you with our annual issue of *Adanna*, a literature collection that began with a want to address women's issues of the day. Approaching our sixth year I would like to thank our guest editors, contributing writers, artists, and readers that have helped launch the birth of this journal. My hope is that through the arts we can name the unnamable.

Editing *Adanna* has been a rich and satisfying experience. I have been blessed that so many have embraced the mission of *Adanna*. I have been able to publish first time writers as well as very accomplished and established writers.

Adanna grew out of a need to communicate nationally and globally. I wished that we could listen to the women's standpoint, visiting a multicultural, postcolonial world. Feminist research is to recover and reexamine the underpinnings that motivate and disarm us. I struggled as a child with the many blockades associated with being a girl, initially exposed to this in the church. My parents knew my frustration with my inability to participate fully as a member and searched for a new home where I felt I could worship and serve without the former chains that bound me. It is that support that facilitated a never-ending probing into the trappings of feminine experience.

Adanna serves to house our stories as artifacts. In this way we can visit the many rooms that inform and enrich our identities. It is my desire that these works present our readers with validation, a means to express and accept another's internal experience that resonates with our own. I have endeavored to make this anthology accessible as well as relevant. I hope you enjoy all the works presented here and encourage you to take the time with each and every one of them as well as the biographical notes of our contributors. You will be amazed at the many accomplishments and credentials of this distinct group.

Christine Redman-Waldeyer, Founder

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P

POETRY



Patrick Dixon "Farewell"

Carol Barrett

Vespers

The waitress has served her last order,
deep dish pie drizzled with caramel,
and late tea, hibiscus, crimson

as cranberry. She makes the rounds
of tables no longer in conversation
with forks. Above each low lamp

she pauses, lifts the salt and pepper,
one each hand, clicks them, twice,
granules falling down long-stemmed vas.

Dark fronds slipping to her chin,
she checks the level, unwinds the silver
caps, fills, then double clicks again.

All about the room she roams,
dancing her small dance
in green apron, crystal castanets

blessing there, and there, close by
now, serenading as I sip the sweet
flower, spoon the fruit.

She could be a priest
waving a censer with brick
of charcoal, resin of myrrh.

Some might hasten this evening
chore, but she of joyful purpose
clicks, looks, then clicks again,

each linked pair deserving
her almost private music:
I am filled. *Good night.*

Kristin Berkey-Abbott

False Idols

“Every few months we thin
the coffers in our temples.”

“Arguments with destiny: 12” by Luisa A. Igloria

We worship the god
of self-improvement plans, that idol
made of the gold of all our hopes
for lives changed
by exercising more, losing weight,
adding this, subtracting
that, these plans cost.

We thin our coffers
at the temples of our false
gods. Instead of potluck
suppers, we go to one more workout or work
late in our fluorescent offices.

We have banished
the other prophets who declared
a different gospel of improving
ourselves by purifying our souls.
Let those prophets preach
to the wind-scoured landscapes.
Let them eat locusts for lunch.
We shall dine on food cultivated organically.
We shall drink wines made with grapes
grown in a far away soil.

Only late at night, our electronics
silenced, do we hear
that still, small voice
that declares all of creation
to be good and very good,
perfection inherent in our beings,
that small flickering pilot light of grace.

Taylor Bond

“you; as a woman”

spending hours snipping time into squares
or plucking the scales from your skin

you are a gender; you are a monster
you are a prisoner of binaries

you are hair hips lips but not a he
a distinct lack of —

do you ever fill silence with the suppleness
of yourself, the pinch of flesh

the spheres of yourself rubbing against
your own curves, softness, a body

you can exhaust death by trying to count every form of beauty
loosing marbles in flower vases, is that madness

the shedding can be heard but you never
hear of a woman devouring desire

tasting every form and curve or lauding a man
as a prize, as a catch, as an object or worship

always the fish, never the fisherman.

Rachel Crawford

Gretel at Seventy

The birds ate my breadcrumbs and my stones,
and now they're feeding on my mind.
I hope they choke as my memories disappear,
one by one, down their black throats. I walk in the dark,
and nothing glows in the moonlight to lead me home.
I have only a few left to drop on the path—
my terror of green and blue fire
ghosting through East Texas trees
before I knew what swamp lights were,
the bittersweet tea Mama brewed
on nights she couldn't sleep,
the hay loft where I crept
when Daddy stalked the house
with a bottle of whiskey in his left hand,
cigarette in his right, the feeling of Mama
weaving my hair into two tight braids,
Grandmother's stories of drought,
starved doves picking through the withered corn,
wind whistling through the scarecrow's mouth,
water bubbling from a Neches spring,
clean and cold as the mouth of God,
Mama's songs, my daughter's first words,
my husband's breath on my neck,
my son falling asleep at last,
milk trickling from the corner of his mouth.
Now I stand here, pockets empty.
Time to cross the threshold once again,
kiss the witch's skinny hand.
She hardly looks up when I walk in,
busy over her cauldron, mumbling spells.
I had a sweet tooth once,
and a tough, green refusal to burn.
But this time, no matter her bent back,
thin arms, trembling chin,
she's stronger than this shadow of myself.
She mumbles something I almost understand,
and when I step closer to catch her words,

they come to me in my own voice,
...dove's wing, lover's breath, cherry of a cigarette,
lock of hair, baby tooth, swamp lights, ring,
whiskey, mother's milk, water from the spring...
She turns and looks at me sideways,
ladles broth into a cracked coffee cup,
sets it on the long table between us,
waits for me to pick it up.
With each bittersweet, bloodwarm sip,
her eyes grow brighter, her kitchen
livelier and warmer. I look up and see
apples and persimmons and peppers and herbs
hanging in clusters from the beams,
bread rising in wooden bowls,
vegetables simmering on the hearth.
Outside the window, the trees are filled
with birds settling in for the evening,
each head tucked under a glossy wing.
When I look back at the table, the witch is gone.
Someday the birds will bring my daughter
and my son. Until then, I'll be here,
in this warm cottage, this bright kitchen,
stirring and stirring the pot...

Ann Davenport

things that gleam

Imagine love's a keen
bright axe. Double bit, plain-shouldered, edge
razor-thin; the haft's strange shape

and strong heft feel right, just right,
wrapped in your palm. Watch it carve
green songs

from cured wood. The blade catches
full moon, hums the sun
to shimmer. Turns everything prism.

But – you don't have to imagine this –
every edge thickens. You know.
Grows blunt.

One day you're felling sharp-toothed demons
who clutch at shoulders and whisper
along the back of your neck

but the next you're chopping wood.
Or dreaming of filing down the edge
so if you rotate the axe just so

you can spread butter on French bread,
hand steady, deft sweep,
but it's ordinary as a kitchen knife

and your whetstone's buried in the basement
beneath crates of baby clothes
and the dusty exercise bike. It'd take another lifetime

to dig out and, anyway, even your demons
are domesticated these days. In a dream
you walk the long halls of high school, all the windows

looking onto pine trees

consumed by a blind, hungry sun.
Nighttime – glimpses of stars – navigating

dark woods by love's gleaming edge,
the smell of damp detritus,
threading the spaces between waiting shadows.

Then waking alongside him, logs
stacked outside, covered dough rising, sun insistent
on making day again, you realize

the whetstone's still
your rough-hewn heart.
So too the demons,

and the pine trees.
And that dangerous
path to home

Ann Davenport

visitations

All my dead are coming back to me today
in the form of white cabbage moths
wandering our garden, swooning

across the broccoli leaves, leaving eggs to make sure
they can keep returning. They love late July sunshine,
slight wind, distant blue – you could almost believe

these few minutes together are all we need.
My daughter would be seven. The moths
tumble over tall peppers. See them rise on sunlight.

Marion Peters Denard

Milk Teeth

One by one they loosen
with a wet smack
bone dislodging
from the hard gum flesh.

She doesn't cry
as she did when they came
erupting slowly
burning her gums like lava,

soothed only
by gnawing on my nipple
'til I bled
and both of us
blistered and sore
curled into each other like commas
resting in that brief pause.

She has outgrown them, her milk teeth.
I celebrate in secret
throw pink glitter
on her nightstand, leave a dollar
under the pillow.

I take the small white stone
roll it between my fingers,
wash it under gentle water
lest it slip away,

This bone – hard-won,
precious,
and gone.

Marion Peters Denard

The Baby Shower

Six weeks from her due date,
showered in boxes and bows and bags,
she sits terrified. She tells us
she can't sleep, not physically
uncomfortable, just terribly anxious.
We are vague smiles and nods.
One grandmother tries reassurance,
but really, about labor,
what is there to say?

It will make you feel
like a cow, dumb and blinded
by pain, mewling and moaning
eyes wide with terror, thrashing
your head against the stall.

But she isn't there yet,
so we eat cake.

Marion Peters Denard

To the Day

August 6, 1945 the Enola Gay
took flight and dropped
the bomb on Hiroshima.

Fifty years later to the day
my first boyfriend and I
took his father's Valium

drank pink wine
from cheap plastic sports bottles
and when I passed out on the linoleum

he drug me by my ankles to the basement
maneuvered my jean shorts half off
and deflowered us both.

There must have been memorials, a network TV special
perhaps protestors marched in the streets
President Clinton probably gave a speech.

But I was fifteen
watching the sun spin the clouds
high on a summer's day

unaware
of the day's
significance.

Marion Peters Denard

Tuesday, Midmorning

Old men end up at parks
where mothers push babies out front
and on ahead in strollers and swings.
Old men, outside, unemployed
midmorning on a Tuesday.
They stand silent and watch
heavy machinery dig sewer for a new house.
Two of them stand apart
from a mother and her small son
and watch the claw move earth.

Where are the old women?
They have been to parks, midmornings of motherhood
carrying snack and sunhats and shoes
that slip off the baby on the hip, the older brother
running out front and on ahead.
They have been to parks and stopped
to watch their children fascinated by many things.
Perhaps, now, they are employed
by their own fascination, somewhere they are
carrying less, their hands free.

Donelle Dreese

Rachel Carson's Love Letters to Dorothy Freeman

Let's call them "apples,"
 my private notes tucked inside
the decorum letters you read to your husband.

Red words and green phrases
 meanings made of mollusk trails
with magic seeds at the core.

I wish the world were less like worm rock
 with its hard honeycomb taffy passageways
deceptive in its appearance as if it were sponge.

Love shouldn't be layered in paper
 behind delicate, aching skin.
It should be Red Delicious, maybe McIntosh.

Maureen Fielding

Target

My breast looks like a target
For an archery match,
A good simile since
They put so many sharp things in it—
First the biopsy needles,
Then the scalpels, scissors, staples.

I trace my scars—
Here 2003,
These two 2005,
And this one 2007.

I circle round my areola,
Tenderly touch each raised line.
They are purple hearts, silver stars,
And I seek the man who honors them
With awed and reverent kisses.
They are a circular maze.
They are roads on a map
Which a lover must follow
To reach me.



Photo provided by "a friend of Alexandra."

Louis Gallo

Alexandra, or, You Noir

In this noir photo you look
like a besieged Catherine Deneuve,
besieged by furies, by fate, by demons,
besieged and defeated, yet for all that
hopelessly beautiful, a flower in the ruins.
And I imagine Marcello Mastroianni lurking
in the background of *La Dolce Vita*, winking
at Fellini behind the camera, yet desperate
to save you from evil, from himself, from Fellini,
from the world, from yourself.
And I see Max von Sydow in *The Virgin Spring*
avenging his young daughter's rape and murder
with an ax.
Catherine again going slowly mad
in *Repulsion*.
I see Truffaut, Jean Moreau's suicide
after losing Jim as (the great) Oskar Werner (Jules)
grieves over the extinction of his lovers.
I see Julie Christie and Dirk Bogarde
in *Darling*, his revenge complete.
I see Anthony Quinn and Alan Bates
watch on with horror as the villagers
stone the graven widow to death.
I hear Tony Perkins howling to Bach
while driving his car off a cliff
after sleeping with his father's new wife.
I watch Vittorio De Sica's
The Garden of the Finzi-Continis
And weep at the barbarous ruin of beauty.
You are a foreign film of the 1960s in one frame,
the kind I watched years later at the Peacock Art Theater
on Clematis Street, the Gentilly Theater
on the Chef Menteur, the Pyrytania uptown
in New Orleans or at film festivals in South Carolina
and Virginia—and now, alas, on YouTube.
One frame, one frame says it all:

how wondrous passion, how torturous—
the Ur splendor, God's severe blessing.

Louis Gallo

POEM

why you took so long, I twenty when
you were born, how it all comes to pass
that after the ship sinks
I re-surface, climb into the very vessel
where you happen aboard,
you, imagine, your hair on fire,
your aqua eyes darting, your lips
molten, your everything just right . . .
and I weighed down with suitcases
crammed with lead, the sea lapping
over the edges of this craft.
Or maybe it took me forty years
of wandering to find the right mirror,
the double and triple exposures of the past
mere jaunts . . . and finally You manifested,
Kant's thing-in-itself, my eyes receiving
original light, I stranded in one bardo
after another, then the light, You,
revealed, which, lo, I recognize as such
as greater than the before, with no prospect
of dissolution,
though I do not deny previous love,
the step-ladders,
for that would cheapen us all . . .
so it comes to pass that love has degrees
and only I failed to notice
and mistook outer for inner,
confused sacred and profane,
mired in surface, or . . .
lacked wisdom

Erica Garvin

Mirror, Mirror

In the hallway,
On the wall.
In the bathroom,
Above the sink.
In the bedroom,
Behind the door.
In the car,
Underneath the visor.

Reflecting the world,
Eternally

Nancy Gerber

In My Family

We never spoke about the Holocaust.
In high school we watched “Night and Fog,”
grainy images reeled across
the screen, revealing my shame.
Skeletons in open pits,
shaved heads, starving bodies,
chimneys spewing mothers and
children burned to ash.
A sky without memory.

Frankfurt, Germany, 1938.
One month till Kristallnacht,
time running out. My grandfather
hid money in Holland, his second wife
had left for New York. Debarking
the *Neue Amsterdam*, greeting
the woman who was not
my father’s mother. This one despises
children, tells their father choose,
them or me. He picks the kids,
never lets them forget.

In Stuttgart my grandmother rests
in a hole strangled by weeds. No
one left to tend her grave.
This lovely city say the guidebooks,
ringed by forests, mountains.
Green parks where signs
once read “No Dogs and Jews.”
(At Auschwitz, there were 18 inches of
human fat, inside the chimneys).
At the sparkling new Mercedes Benz museum,
glass doors glide to welcome sightseers.

Mayra Nuñez Gould

Cuba Dreaming

- for Jose Nuñez

When I close my eyes, I travel to Cuba
land of West Indian breezes,
waltzing over cerulean seas
swaying palm trees and pleated skirts -
where enchanting, unimaginable hopes
are dreamt on porch rockers.

When I close my eyes, I travel to Cuba
“Cuentos Con Tata” plays on the radio,
And I lie on my parents’ bed to listen
domino *fichas* click-clack and swirl outside the window
while the Manicero vendor sings his sweet song,
and Porfirio’s bodega is on the corner for a treat.

When I close my eyes, I *am* in Cuba,
and my father is alive again -
filling my entire world
in 1963.

Alexis Groulx

Walk

towards you, open smile, closed toed shoes.
Now we pretend we are modest. Insist to the seamstress
I wear nothing but white. Forget
to disclose the birth of our infant daughter.

People like artifacts require digging. Carefully
remove broken relationships from the bones
in the soil. Hold a small brush in your right
hand. Flick it, north to south. You will know

you are finished when your eyes can see every
indentation. Break my bones brittle as a slip
of tracing paper.

You say nobody needed to know how small
they can make coffins, to hold something as fine –
as forgotten – as florets.

Maryanne Hannan

Bob, In Memory Of

You were too tall for my taste back then.
How would we dance? Worse (if I let myself

think about it), what would we do
with all that lankiness in bed?
Plus too old.
Four years, as good as ten back then.

My big boss, only two weeks out of college yourself.
I took the bus downtown all summer,
my first job.
How hard we laughed

hunched over the steel desk as you traced
sewage lines, manhole taps, easement paths
on the city map, the papers we passed

between us electric.
It would take years before
I learned how to look at a man, to see kind
eyes, smooth forearms and believe.

We never guessed rolling
and rerolling maps, filing permits, typing invoices
how years later we'd hug each other in receiving lines,
my daughter's wedding, then your daughter's,

That we'd never let lapse our holiday notes,
That we'd each lose our first marriage.
That once or twice we'd cook a meal together.

You lingered six, seven months, I heard.
Between Christmas cards, it happened.
Plenty of time to say goodbye.

But you never called and I
never suspected.

Forty years of friendship
since the last thing we never said.

Leonore Hildebrandt

Where the Lost Things Go

Her child is resting, tucked against her back
as she walks the great forest.

It is raining—their umbrella thrums a fitful rhythm,
trees rise to a monumental darkness.

A path amounts to more than cairns and sticks,
it is undeniable, like the mottled feathers

they find scattered on the gravel.
The eyes adjust to possibilities,

criss-crossing tales of malady and comfort.
She talks to the child of hunger, of dwellings underground.

A soggy doll someone left behind
stares into the ancient rain.

They return to their home, unharmed. The child
understands that puppets, too, have sorrows.

Gloria Keeley

To My Grandmother (1890 - 1974)

I have arrived too late
the curtains are drawn; the walls have been painted
I still feel you walking the lengths of the rooms
a step here to anchor there
your bedroom, solemn as a confessional
stands lonely, emptied of its dreams

your front room, a museum
all of us walking soft on your memory
your hardwood floors creaking
like old bones beneath my feet

the windows in your apartment are
accepting the rain as if
you are still contained inside

the breakfast table is set for one
you are sitting there
as always
eating your morning meal
in a bowl of sky

Laurie Klein

Timeless

Some girls, no matter their age, know
that Beauty authored their bones, sure as star-fall,
and it inhabits them still, extending
a singular charm that delights, like the one
collected with joy, the one lighting up
a midcentury bracelet, its sterling
clouded now. Can you picture
the tiniest kitchen scale?—
its dial the size of a dilated pupil,
the needle, an eyelash
that really swivels,
from one to our culturally perfect ten, although
grace, bone-deep, begins
light years away, arriving
among us, over and over.
Nor can it be reckoned, or earned,
no matter the distance traveled,
sheltering as the night sky.
Shine, then,
before the body winks out.

Laurie Klein

Twilight Proposes

Just when twilight proposes
silence, the old green gate is no more
than a scribble of briars,
a few late roses, blown,
brown, as shavings around a lathe.

Imagine a twinge of sap
as it partners the wind, moaning a little.
Rusty latch is an invitation addressed
to a hand—his, hers—although
lately, they flutter away from each other.
Ambition fills the absence
doubt created, fruiting
like rose hips, grown small and hard.

If she could justify Chance, its beckoning
finger, and explain how parting
its veils kept her alive—anyway,
how to begin?—her throat, brambled,
everything spinning. Emerging

career demands heartwood, pressed
against time, its fixed blade. She turns,
sorry not to apologize. By long habit
she'd defer her plans for his
except, sketched beyond the gate,
a pathway, shaped to her sole
and forward gait seems even
fainter now, fading to blue

Bénédicte Kusendila

Spring-Cleaning / Blackbird and the Oakwood Door

1.

Your heart laid a trail
of a million crumbs to me.
I cleared the kitchen table before I left

and made the single bed that
tells sparks of closeness in your darkened room.
I have never felt closer now. As torn, as apart a thread

as the Winter-old supplies I wanted to throw out;
my cruel resolve to cleanse the house
of hidden meanings, while you still live there.

2.

Open a window to the blackbird,
which is not singing of a spell gone
To his one he reinvigorates his song

of Spring - your voice, your eyes -
that will season my story
for suns and falls to come.

This soul does not understand change.
Only that it cannot return to the old
as it is singing to build moments with its mate.

I have left
the key in the lock
on the inside of the oak wood door.

Linda Lampert

Mothers

I remember Honey and Leta,
housewives dressed up for work;
Honey on Gun Hill Road walking past
heading home to the son I kissed
in the clubhouse shack.
She looked so smart in her tailored dress
away from the breakfast table
where I stopped every morning
before walking to school with her son.

And Leta sitting on her balcony
dragging on her Kool cigarette, cursing
her husband who worked for the NYC
sanitation department.
Her daughter my best friend plucked butts
from the ashtray we lit and smoked
in their tiny bathroom.

I was sixteen and didn't realize
they were escorts
leading a double life;
my own mother a housewife
loved looking at life through a kitchen window.
She lived the part trying to be
authentic, polishing her wares
so they too would shine and stand out
distinguishing her,
reflecting something of substance.

Bryanna Licciardi

Anthropology of a Bar Scene

The plan is
copulatory stare-gaze,
is chest thrust,
crouch and loom.
The plan is head tilt
and blink,
wide-eyed, snouty jawed,
is three seconds
then look away,
is intently
fiddle with your sweater.

The plan is
to show interest.
Watch for the lip smack,
his ultimate sign
of *hello there*.
Expose your upper teeth,
toss your hair, begin the contract.

The plan is to embellish
simple gestures.
He'll stir his whiskey
violently, to show strength,
then you will respond
by stomping your heels.

The plan is
approach. The plan is
humming, soft voices.
Plan to amiably
dominate his brain.
Land the casual arm graze.
Plan to mirror
his body language.
This will establish
the courting connection.

Lift your glass
when he lifts.
Synchronized stroking
of the chins.

Be on guard.
He might try to talk politics
or play the air drums. No matter,
the plan is to act impressed,
because impressed-ness is provocative.

The plan is to find each other's beat.
This beat is a ritual.
A genomic dance
passed down the human chain.
When the plan has reached
its culmination,
take him from the bar
with your arms around his waist.
Such act of ownership
will subliminalize your claim
amongst the other females.
If another does manage
to lock in on your claim,
call it a day, because
that pizza smells delicious.

Joan Manheimer

Suck Bang Blow*

If this was the last time
your hip hollowed
mine and rocked

me silly, if there were no more
kisses after this drink of you,
if you never broke me

to silk again,
I would be
in a pitying of doves,

a romp of otters,
an exaltation of larks—
in the midst of plenty still.

**Myrtle Beach biker bar, named for the sequence of the combustion engine*

Gigi Marks

Handwork

Two cedar waxwings have
feathers that are a pink-colored,
brown-tinged gray; that is
a rich, sweet color, I say
to myself; it shifts the space
between my ribs to accommodate
a fuller breath, and my heart
feels bigger, and one of the birds
has the tippet feathers pure
yellow to border its back,
and both have the familiar
tuft that is shared with the cardinal
and jay, and they lie together
on the macadam road, which
heats up in the middle of the day
and shimmers a bit as it
softens. I move each to the grassy
shoulder, my hand is a stretcher,
my hands can do only this.
My daughter who is with me
says, oh no, did they get hit by
a car, why are you moving them,
oh they are so beautiful, the two
of them, at least now they are
back in the grass.

Rosemary S. McGee

The Wallet

Dad and I rarely spent time
Alone together
Perhaps this was the first night
In 25 years.
We had just returned home
Leaving Mom in the hospital
Recovering from colon cancer surgery.
Hungry and exhausted
Waiting and worry and hospital food
I had made a delicious dinner.

Sitting at the kitchen table, we ate.
Dad began telling stories
Deflecting his fear for Mom.
He was a teller of tales
Some true, some not
Always with embellishments.

He took his wallet from his pocket
Worn brown leather
Over stuffed with cards, useless receipts.
Digging through it
I thought he was looking for a photo
Of Mom, to show me.

Leaning over, he spread it out wide
Turned up a flap
Revealing a hidden section.
Pulling out three crisp \$100 bills
He said, "Mom doesn't know about this.
I never knew when I might need cash."
Laughing, I agreed, said something about
Mom and her tightwad ways.
He tucked the cash back into the
Secret compartment.
We ate dessert.

Four months later
Sitting at the same kitchen table
With Mom
She was going through Dad's wallet.
He had died suddenly.
She took out the credit cards
Cut them up.
Kept his license
A memento I guess.
Then tossed his old beaten-up
Billfold in the trash.

Getting up, I retrieved it
Opened it and flipped over the flap
Revealing his secret stash.
Mom looked at me in disbelief
Not that there was money –
But that there was something
About Dad she didn't know
Didn't control.

I handed her the three bills
And said nothing.

Ilene Millman

No Más Bebés

Dolores Madrigal and her husband worked in a factory to save money for a house and family. In the 1970s, doctors sterilized her and countless other Latina women during labor at the Los Angeles County Medical Center.

Life as an overcrowded city bus—
too many hands on the overhead bar,
too many hands: brown, worn, bare—
too many people who can't hold on.
Official papers hold fast their damaging account.
Best. Interest.
Words conjured from a silk hat
and the words flew out their fingers
like card tricks
and your bebés disappeared—
no use shouting,
the factory racket loud enough
to drown their lies.
Your husband
he already signed, they said—
their eyes filled with kindness,
when by this they meant
This one she has too many children—
the paper meaning nothing to you
until nothing turned its white mask of collusion
inside out.
It's late. A grandmother's regret
cannot wipe out the Yes,
the X on the line.
At the border
of sleep, what lights push against your eyes
what pulse sneaks under your heartbeat?

Derek N. Otsuji

My Mother Revisits Mahelona Hospital Where Her Mother Had Been Quarantined 50 Years Ago

Every Sunday that year
we drove all the way
from Kalaheo to Kapa‘a Town,
where Mother stayed,
confined to one room.

The roads were bumpy.
I always felt a little nauseous
after the long car ride
that seemed like forever.

Tubercular, prescribed to bed rest, she
was kept from us.

Father would go in
to visit her, alone,
while the twins and I
stood outside in the middle
of the big grassy lawn—waiting,
looking up, up
to the second floor
until she came to the window
and waved at us
from there.

Funny, how the building
seemed so much taller
back then.

 But, of course,
I was a child and everything
looks different to you
as a child.

And maybe, too, it was
that waving at her
through the window there,

up on the second floor,
my mother, whose terrible
love had loomed so close,
at one stroke
seemed so tiny and so far away

Sarah Sadie

Sky After Sky

The woman who owns Binh Tailoring streams
Saigon TV through her laptop, the small room spilling
with spools, machines, old photos,
ironing boards and racks and racks of clothing,
mended, tagged. My house is just as stuffed
and hot with furniture, sofas and pillows
hissing from the walls, whitenoise
which creates a silence as much as breaks one.

She smiles at my clumsy hems and undercharges.
I am jealous of her skill as I sit later
with daughter and niece, coloring sky
after sky after sky, creating a calm,
searching some beauty to feed us, repair,
some art, something, some way
to stitch the torn together, new.

Carey Salerno

Hellraiser

Wishful that you are, you first liken to the benevolence of a bird
sucking fish into its gullet, and the circadian rhythm of hawking
food into the mouths of eager chicks,

but you're no mother. You're more like an island.
You're more like a universe with planets on either side.
More the organs, deep and throaty

pitching a chunky tune in the gut.

No wonder all the men are confused.
The fresh, handsome doctor giggles when referring to your cervix
as that *magical Lemarchand's Box*,

which seems ample enough for *adenomyosis externa*.
We all start somewhere. All with knowledge or its lack.
We all want to be chosen to break the trick lock.

Open and behold what science squawks in the portico's hungry schism.

Linda Simone

Quiddity

I want the unadulterated you.
The you the sun rises on
you cast in cool moon blue.
The you steady as the Hudson.

I reach to dislodge the veil
reveal, bubbling beneath,
the quiddity of you.

I finger your fabric
touch texture, weave,
selvage, seam,
thread that holds,
the give and take
the give.

Evelyn A. So

One of Your Favorite Singers is on T.V.

and there's nothing else worth watching, so I tune in. I'd forgotten the way Tori Amos brings the piano to a crescendo, then cuts back for vocal intimacy. How she lifts certain lyrics with her voice so they sound like questions waiting for a response. The plaintive melody repeats...Something about China, something about New York...I expect you to say something when she swivels to a second piano (you like how she whirls between keyboards) but you're not here for close-ups of her hands on the keys, flaming hair, pale skin. Not your tanned cheekbones. I hear the emphasis of arpeggios. Foot pedals sighing.

J. J. Steinfeld

She Is About to Push Him into Silence

Your timing was untimely, she said,
sneering at her own words.
A timeless threat, he thought,
fearful of her look
more than her words delivered
like an actress angry at acting.

If this were a play
and they were on stage
he could smile and
they could go have a drink
afterward, discuss all
that went wrong
—missed cues
mangled stage directions
flubbed or forgotten lines
inaccurate or false emotions—
smooth things out
a naturalistic play
or even an absurd one
he wasn't all that fussy
with his images of restoration
he knew she never had much time
for comedies and anything
with a contrived happy ending.

But this is the edge of something
irrevocable, frightening
and she is about
to push him into silence
and impose her dream
of flight and no one
is in the audience
to save either of them.

Sherry Stuart-Berman

Blindspot

Before you ditch me again you fog up
the mirrors, articulate my underbelly, get all
'emphatic guide' on me with that endless
spiritual agenda; your big, bold
insight plows enlightened
words into me like oncoming traffic;
the Yes and easy-going are not for you,
and why can't I grasp it's been unevolved me
all these years—inanimate music, the hit-or-miss,
a clueless, opaque planet spinning—
gravity is no excuse, you say,
your gifted water is just an illusion.

And I couldn't see your craft.
And I couldn't find my pearl.

Sherry Stuart-Berman

Each Year, in June

Come closer, the tech tells me, her English slightly accented—
Russian? Polish, maybe? The blush-pink robe I wear
is off one shoulder, which she gently lowers,
tucking a stray hair behind my ear. I'm pissed
the locker wouldn't lock and they lost
the script my doctor faxed over.

Yes, I say, in answer to her question,
the biopsy was four, maybe five years ago now.
It's still there—a little lump—just above my right
areola, like that pea the princess knew was there
even beneath twenty feather-beds.

The tech's hands are careful, her nails
filed short. I glance down at the white
markers covering my nipples,
a tiny silver ball in each center,
like candy on a cupcake. I've lost
some weight recently, surprised to feel
a bit of rib against metal. Her foot presses
down on a floor pedal, the tubing tips
to one side. She cups my breast, arranges it just so—
and steps behind a clear plastic screen.

I look over, see the previous woman's film, cloudy,
a perfect half-moon.

Don't move, she says softly. *Don't
breathe.* She flips the switch, my left arm
curves above my head, chin tilting, eyes
up—a buzz, click, long high-pitched beep—
and in that split-second before
the x-ray beam bathes me
I am a Modigliani nude:
certain, lasting, known.

Chun Sue

Translated from the Chinese by Liang Yujing

Tulip

The blossom of the tulip droops
like a penis.
Is there anything else in the world
tenderer than that?
This yellow tulip
seems to tell me
a secret.
Gazing its petals,
I feel it gently.
In this March night
it provokes in me
heart-burning flames.

My former slimness
cannot be erased.
At this moment
I, a human being,
am missing the time
when humans were first born.

郁金香

郁金香的花垂下
犹如阴茎
这个世界还有更温柔的东西吗？
这朵黄色的郁金香
似乎在跟我诉说
一个秘密
凝视它的花瓣
轻轻地抚摸它
在这个三月的夜晚
它勾起我
焚心的烈火

抹不去的
曾经的瘦
在此时此刻
一个人类的我
正怀念着人类
初生的时刻

John J. Trause

Helene Murielle

*And what costume shall the poor girl wear
To all tomorrow's parties?
Why silks and linens of yesterday's gowns
To all tomorrow's parties.*

Lou Reed

Helene Murielle of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo
star ballerina of her dancing school
star of stage and scrim and arc light
plié passé piqué
sells furs at Saks Fifth Avenue
in Cincinnati, Ohio.

“Oh, and we will have to pick
out a whole new wardrobe for you!” she exclaims
among the minks and stoats and chinchillas
when daughter Jill announces that she will
attend the opening in New York City
of a photography exhibition featuring her work
at the Puck Building.

And what costume shall the poor girl wear...?

Silver and black and elegant. This is my first encounter
with a legend.

Mother of Three Graces, Lisa, Jan, and Jill,
she remains a friend, a legend, and always
a star, silver and black and elegant.

Geraldine Kloos Weltman

Youth

We've become fond of them, the young couple on the train platform, though you disapprove of her stylish shoes that would dissolve like cardboard in a hard rain and I think he chews on his sandwich like a hungry dog. Despite their wedding rings they look to us like children—but we've been married for such a long time. Once we saw her reach up and touch her lips to the lobe of his ear. When his arm moved to embrace her, we both felt it and stood there watching while the summer sun shone down on their faces.

Kristin Camitta Zimet

Lot's Wife

If she crept from the tied tent
into mirages, ducking greedy eyes
to run, one arm hugging her chest,
the other testing unfamiliar space;

if she spun back just once,
taking the measure of that shrunken life,
and as it crumpled like a cast-off veil,
her fingers pinched a token shred of it;

and if, turned to go on, she paused,
feeling herself spread between lives,
holding the old and new one at arm's length,
belonging to herself, for one slow beat—

it was not fault, but grace;
and if they try to tell me otherwise,
the teller's heart is dry
as desert sand is, or a block of salt.

F

Fiction



Anam Feerasta "Untitled"

Kay Merkel Boruff

The Train Ride

Beauty is a bright red ribbon leading us—Plato

1

The train lurched, and I grabbed onto the back of the seat nearest to me and pulled my scarf tighter around my neck to ward off the cold. I pointed to an empty seat in the quad grouping of the first class car. *S' il vous plait?* One of the three men stopped writing, his silver bracelets clinking on the table. He held out his hand. *Pour madame.* A curly headed man sitting beside the writer nodded as I maneuvered around the table and sank into the leather seat, my back finally relaxing after sitting on iron benches for five hours in the train station in Paris, waiting for the train to Redon. After endless trips to the toilet, endless glances at the clock, endless attempts to read the French train schedule, I was tired from carrying my fifty pound suitcase, my laptop, my carry-on bag, my purse—all containing zippered compartments bulging with bags of food, makeup, clothes, books, and manuscripts.

Surrounded with my belongings, I arranged my laptop, underneath the table, securing it between my legs. I dragged my small shoulder bag in front of my feet. My big suitcase was stowed on the luggage shelf by a stranger, shoved underneath a huge guitar case, settling among three other identical red bags. And my purse—was turned upside down on the floor. Without acknowledgement, the man sitting next to me, the youngest of the three, bent down under the table where my purse had spilled and helped me to pick up lipsticks, papers and coins. *Merci*, I smiled at the man. His kinky hair was pulled up into a short pony tail. Of course I thought of my brother Frederic, his pony tail hanging Willie Nelson style down his back.

Frederic died several months ago while I held him in my arms. Don't let me die, he begged. Please don't let me die. I tell him to breath, just keep breathing. The paramedics are coming. But I watch the light dim in his eyes and know he's gone. Twenty-four hours later I ask the doctor to take him off life support, his brain is swelling, no brain function shows on the MRI. I stood watching the heart monitor, listening to its rhythmic beep, praying the machine would stop. That Frederic would die. I was angry he was dying. Angry he had scarred me for life. Angry he fucked up my life with men.

When we were children, we slept in the same bedroom in separate twin beds because our house only had two bedrooms. Frederic was twelve and I was eight. I have a memory of his lying on top of me, his telling me he would never hurt me. He told Mother once when I was masturbating, and I was embarrassed. But I have no memory of the emotions I felt at the time or the specific words he said. I just remember the small bedroom. The twin beds. His body weight on top of me. I loved my brother. I think I wanted to have sex with him even though I knew it was wrong. I was safe with my big brother. My big brother took care of me. I loved my brother.

I glanced at the young man with the pony tail. His lap top had pictures of Asian dancers, but I couldn't tell what nationality he was. He was just young and handsome. I asked if he played in a band. Yes, he does. Do you play reggae? No, classical music, he responded in broken English. Classical guitar? No, classical music from But I couldn't understand what he said. He repeated something and finally after several exchanges I understood that he was from Nepal.

I clasped my hands together at the "heart center," bowed my head to him, and said, *Sawasdi, cup*. He responded, *Sawasdi, cai*. I smiled at the young man.

He explained in broken English, that the other two men were his friends, that they were a band touring France, playing classical Nepali music. I told him how strange our meeting was, that long ago I lived in Thailand and earlier this week I had seen a Thai monk in the airport in Charlotte, South Carolina. I was shocked to look up and see a very young man wearing orange robes. I told the three men I had greeted the young monk with the same words, *Sawasdi*, and bowed to him and he was as shocked as I, but returned my greeting, bowing his head as we passed on the concourse.

The train announcer began his message in French. The three men gathered their belongings, their notebooks, lap tops and rose to leave. We quickly exchanged cards. I bowed to them, acknowledging our meeting.

The train rocked back and forth, lulling me to sleep. Fields of French countryside sped by, a continuous van Gogh portrait, golden shafts of wheat flowed in the wind, the sun shone with ochre and yellow lights.

2

The room was dark and dank, cups of tea and coffee strewn about on the banquet table. Lap tops, sheaves of paper, pens and pencils

were scattered among the drinks. My classmates and I met in the library room in the Manoir La Chaussée, Langon, France, most of us huddled in anything to keep warm, an afghan, a jacket, a scarf.

I distributed copies of my story “The Train Ride” to my teacher and fellow students—the Danish poet, the librarian from Illinois, the Korean woman from Cambodia, the Sri Lankan woman now living in Hong Kong, the Persian woman who taught English literature in London, the feminist writer from France who was auditing the session, the Serbian woman with her lover who were staying in the tower at the manoir, and the mother who brought her adopted Chinese daughter and husband to the conference.

I sat down in my chair, my shoulders tense, my ankle flexing, stopping at the spot that was tender from the bike accident in Amsterdam. Ten days before my brother’s death, my brother, his daughter and I had traveled to Israel, Paris, and Amsterdam. Frederic prayed at the Wailing Wall, his daughter heard Yo Yo Ma play at Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, and I smoked hashish at the Melkweg and fell off my bike at Prinsengracht 267 and twisted my ankle. After Frederic died, his daughter told me she’d thought of something one day and wanted to ask Frederic about it. She had grown to know her father who had been absent from her life until the last three years, when my brother had come to live with me. I put my hands in my lap and leaned closer to the Danish poet, sharing a copy of the story.

The teacher began reading.

When my brother and I were children, we slept in the same room.

The story continued, the flirtation between the woman and Napli band members, the sexual abuse by her brother, the Thai monk in the airport she encountered, dragging her luggage down the jet way, her purse loaded with almonds, chocolate, a bottle of water, her carry-on luggage crammed with apples, grapes, several bananas and her lap top, her checked luggage, zippers straining with makeup, manuscripts, clothes, books, stopping every so often to adjust the heavy load, looking up in surprise when the monk appeared in front of her, the monk’s orange robes draped over his slim body, the woman nodding, connecting her hands in the pose of friendship, palms together at her chest, bowing her head and greeting him. *Sawasdi, cup*. The young monk smiling at her, returning her gesture. *Sawasdi, cai*.

The teacher read the last sentence of the story:

I am crippled, but I am determined to fly.

The teacher picked up the papers in front of him, squaring the separate sheets, moved his cup of tea to the left side of him. “Does the reader trust the authenticity of the author? We have to assume an authenticity from the author of fiction or the reader feels tricked. How does the author know the details of incest?” His jaw moved up and down, I imagined its clicking inside his head, his tongue unnaturally thrusting, curled to the roof of his mouth.

“It’s real. It happened. It’s not fiction.”

I was a teacher. I understood the uncomfortable feeling of the teacher, the same feeling I’d had when I realized the story that one of my students wrote was real, that the mother in the story did hurt the child in the story, that my student was abused by her mother.

“Then it’s authentic. The writing is authentic,” the teacher said. “The flirtation between the woman and the band members, even the monk, are authentic. But the dialogue is not authentic. The character would remember what her brother said.” The teacher blushed as he delivered the criticism. “The character would remember what words the brother said. She would remember if he said ‘penis’ or ‘vagina’ or ‘his ‘thing’ or ‘her ‘thing.’ She has to remember the words.”

I didn’t look at any of the other women in the group. I looked at the teacher.

“To write a piece of literary fiction, remember you have to go into that white hot spot and write from the emotions, from the subconscious.” The teacher continued his litany, “You have to write from the dream-state. You stay in the moment, move the story from moment to moment to moment. If the writer is not in her dream-state, her character doesn’t have yearning. The character in this piece doesn’t yearn for anything. This character has a problem.”

The other women sat in silence. No one commented on the story. I sat in silence.

“To write about incest is a scary subject. You’re brave to attempt delving into the subconscious. If this happened to you, then you would remember what your brother said. You would remember the words.”

I thought to myself, Goddamnit, I don’t remember what he said to me. I don’t fucking remember, but I’m determined to remember.

Outside in the garden, the sun shone on the bluebells of Ireland. The door framed the scene, the stone path leading away from the manoir into the light and the miniature ponies and the geese and the birds singing in the Sunday morning.

Sarah Evans

Paint-drip Scars

Where does regret begin? Older now, your daughter bringing accusations, you ask yourself this. You remember being young.

You remember a day, just nineteen, your daughter's age, hair bravely short, tightly denimed legs gangling into a pub, seeking out the crowd you knew.

And he's there: James Frenton. You missed the reading that your friends all went to, but you recognise the line of his jaw, the arrogant contours of his mouth, the overhang of his forehead over broody eyes. All of these have stared back at you from the display that stretches the width of the bookshop just off Catte Street, which you pass on your way to lectures. But none of that prepares you for the physical force of him, his body angled in laughter, hands rapid with talk, the neediness of lips drawing on a cigarette.

You don't expect that he will notice you, not amidst his flock of groupies.

You signal Tim, just a friend, but you know he likes you, and you like him back, his earnest look, his John-Lennon glasses and bone-tight thinness. So dazzled by his anti-capitalist, non-genderist opinions that you have borrowed them, pinning them to your chest like metal badges.

Tim who you like, but have not slept with. Your Catholic schooling has been reduced to hilarious anecdotes. You don't believe in marriage. But you are waiting for your first time to be special. Specialness is not easily discerned.

Tim shuffles up to let you in. You try to catch the spinning thread of conversation. James Frenton talking and making everybody laugh. You have read, and did not like particularly like, his novel, though you do not doubt its precocious brilliance. *A six-figure publishing deal, and him only a post-grad.*

He captures you within his gaze. You feel yourself appraised. Not for the intelligence of your political views, or the sharpness of your wit, or the compassion of your beliefs. For the swell of your breasts and the curve of your hips and the smoothness of your skin.

You catch the damp peat scent of him as he raises a hand to wipe the sweat from his forehead, pushing back the short dense hair, and you ache to reach across and do the same.

You stand, dizzy for a moment, as you head towards the bar. He follows. 'Can I get you a drink?' And you let him buy, you who always insist that you prefer to buy your own. He smiles, and you beam back too readily, wishing your attire and hair more feminine, already half-complicit, already half saying *yes* to what he hasn't yet asked. You don't move as his shoulder nudges against you, even though you know that aloofness might be a better strategy.

Returning to the table his arm hovers, guiding you to sit beside him on the narrow stool. His talk is for the group, but your thigh is pressed against his, denim scratching against denim. You avoid Tim's eye.

The barman calls time.

Outside, Tim and several others drift away, and the rest of you drift towards the rumour of a party. James takes your hand. His is warm, yours cold. 'You're very quiet,' he says.

You feel you should explain who and what you are, except those things feel so slight and you find yourself empty, your whole being focused into the touch of palm on palm. Besides, James continues talking, his words spreading widely into the night. He is only a few years older, but he seems so infinitely adult.

The tall, narrow house spills out light and noise and bodies. The air is thick with sweet-scented smoke and the heavy beat of music.

He knows the people, and the layout of the house. Knows there is an attic room and where to find the hooked pole to release the steep ladder, magic-ing you away, sealing the two of you beneath a skylight that frames a slithered moon.

His lips meets yours. In silence you perform a tit for tat striptease, mouths melded together. He lays you down on a strip of carpet on the otherwise bare floor. You wriggle out of underwear. And he's above and inside you before you are properly ready, and you're relieved it doesn't hurt, not really, and glad he hasn't asked you if you've done this before (you hope he thinks you have) and he also hasn't asked if you are on the Pill. It isn't the right time of month anyway.

You watch his moonlit face contort into the agony of desire. Your vertebrae grate along the carpet.

And you cannot bring yourself to regret this. You remember the stillness of after, your arm deadening beneath his slumped weight, his head resting between your breasts. 'You're lovely,' he said.

You cannot regret the beginning. You would not unsear the memory of joy, nor the happiness of the days that followed when, the carpet-burns hardening to scabs, you glowed with the confidence of a

woman who knows that if she can have the man who can have any woman, then surely she can have any man. And if she can have any man, then surely she can have the one man that she wants. Bringing you full circle in irrefutable logic.

Perhaps regret comes later. The point where two weeks have passed and the scrawl of your phone number on the back of his hand must have faded and he still has not rung you.

After two weeks of slumping despair, a peak is reached, you are teetering now on the edge of recovery, because you are young and youthful hearts bounce back. And it was only one night and sex is not such a big deal.

You are heading back from lectures with Tim. He suggests coffee: a peace-offering. The café steams with the scent of roasted beans which always smell better than they taste. None of the tables are free so you seek out a squatter's space. A blonde-haired woman sits across from someone, two of them occupying a table for four.

You trace a mazed path through the narrow gaps towards them. You're nearly there, trying to catch the woman's eye with your question, *are these seats free?* Something in the slant and restlessness of a hand arrests you. It is him. Later you might say that it was already too late. You were already half sat down before realising. But you know when your mind replays the scene, even now after all these years, that there was a heartbeat's hesitation. A heartbeat in which you could have chosen differently.

You sit, and his eyes rise to meet yours and you are flamed in shame, because you know that you cannot conceal anything. That every second of the last two weeks – the hope, despair and humiliation – is calligraphed onto your face. He smiles at you. His fingers are touching those of the blonde haired woman.

'What a coincidence,' you say. Tim does not smile as he places the cups of coffee down onto the table that wobbles dangerously.

You will gulp your coffee and leave. You promise yourself this.

'You've read James' book?' the blonde haired woman asks, her vaporous beauty diminished by the scowl. 'I suppose you did. Everyone has.'

'Yes,' you say. 'I didn't like it much.' You are emboldened by the fact that this is the last time you will see him.

He laughs, head thrown back revealing the speckled stubble on his chin, and you remember his skin sandpapering yours, how you emerged raw and new. Sex as exfoliant. It's not a joke to share. Your

fingers curl round your back to pick at the scabs that linger in a series of paint-drips down your spine.

‘What didn’t you like?’ His eyes flash. And you grope for words, half-apologetic, conceding that the fault is maybe yours, that perhaps you did not fully grasp his meaning. His hands and mouth are talking back. Tim and the blonde-haired woman are ignored, and first one, then the other disappears, evaporating into the haze of coffee-scented air.

‘Are you hungry?’ he asks.

It does not occur to you to answer anything but, ‘Yes.’

Perhaps this is the moment you should regret, following him along the narrowing streets of Jericho, through a front door with peeling paint which opens onto a steep, uncarpeted stairway, leading to the bedroom whose double mattress fills the floor. You meet the need in him, are left still hungering. But it does not matter. You lie there later, fingers greasy now with cheese bubbled on slabs of bread, your breath hot with whisky drunk directly from the bottle. You are filled with the awe of just how beautiful a man’s body can be and all that matters is that this beautiful man is tracing the line of your back, sketching you into existence, and telling you that you are lovely.

‘Caro,’ he whispers. No-one has reduced your name to a caress before. ‘Caro, Caro, Caro.’

Regret, perhaps, should rise for the foolishness of youth. For the fool of a young woman who although it is the morning after, and then the second and the third, still does not go to the chemist.

Now he has left, a talk he is giving, some literary festival, which he does not think, or want, to invite you to, and in the torpor of temporary grief you cannot bring yourself to think clearly. Then he is back, and your time and thoughts are too densely packed for practicalities. So by the time you see your doctor, eyes averted from his disapproval (he reminds you of your father), you already know what he will say, how the intertangling of bodies has resulted in the intertangling of cells which have embedded themselves into the engorged surface of your womb, just as James has embedded himself into your every thought.

But you still have choices; back then, you believed that you had choices.

‘You should’ve just got rid,’ your daughter says. But you cannot accept this. You cannot wish to undo the lean, tight half-woman / half-girl who reminds you of yourself, a little, at her age, her apparent certainties a cover for the fact she is still seeking them, who has yet to understand the compromises of life, and who tells you that you should regret yours.

A life in which you abandoned your studies and ambitions, and kept your child. In which you loved, but could not keep your man. Single parenthood has been tough, not eased, not particularly, by the come-and-go relationship with the man who you adored, but who proved so easily distractible. His work. Women. Alcohol and other substances.

Eventually, you tried new relationships, of course you did. Other men seemed so insubstantial, so monochrome.

You continued watching from an ever increasing distance, waiting for calls, the gap between them widening to *forever*. Just like the gap between books. The reviews became more cutting. *Flashes of genius amidst pretentious incoherence* was the verdict on his last. Subsequently, he was mentioned only for the breakdowns and the rehab clinics. The obituaries your daughter forwarded were few; people barely remembered his flare of brilliance.

‘You were just some dumb idiot,’ your daughter says. ‘He used you.’

‘You wouldn’t be here if he hadn’t,’ you reply.

But she does not see life as a gift. ‘It’s simpler not to exist,’ she says, this girl who sometimes decides to stop eating for weeks and weeks, seeking to shrink herself out of being, who blames – as children do – her parents. What chance did she ever have with an absent father set on self-destruct and a mother who was too weak to break away, she asks, this daughter who tells you that you got it all wrong and should regret your life.

But where should regret begin? Tears trace your cheeks, rivulets of sorrow. You failed to save him, love proving insufficient.

You remember fingers tracing paint-drip scars. You remember being young.

Seivi Katro

Like My Green Card Said

The apartment is silent; my steps bounce off of the tight hallway connecting the kitchen to the front door. It's even more decayed than I remembered. I walk up and down a few times, running my hand across the yellowed wall, touching the doorframes, digging my toes into the thin-worn, grey carpet. I stop in the middle of the circular living room, surrounded by light pouring in from the four windows, and watch the dust twirl in front of me. I know I have to pack everything and make it seem as if no one lived here for fourteen years, but where to start?

The first time I stepped foot in this same apartment it had seemed much bigger and scarier. It held nothing but the already dirty carpet, two mattresses on the floor, a wooden table, and a painting of a landscape propped up against one of the kitchen walls. Only the kitchen was furnished; with a fridge, a stove, and a microwave; all yellowed and spotted with grease so old it seemed that it too had become a part of the metal. But as a ten-year-old I had only cared that there were no chairs to sit in and I had ended up lying on my bare mattress, watching the specks of dust dance in front of my teary eyes as my parents spoke in hushed voices in their room. My father said his friend had promised that the landlord would give us more stuff once we settled in. My mother said she did not like the apartment. I inhaled the musky smell coming from the corner of my room and closed my eyes, wishing I was in the meadow depicted in the painting with the gilded frame.

The painting is still on the living room wall, next to it is the picture of the Virgin Mary and a saint my mother believed could cure any sickness. Too bad he couldn't cure her heart problems. I take down the painting, avoiding the frames of the religious idols. For some reason I believe they can tell I haven't been inside a church since my high school graduation. The frame hits the floor with a thud, raising more dust in the air.

Ma had always complained about it. In the early days, when she still did not have a job, she would spend her day with a washcloth in her hand, trying to get the dust off of the dingy furniture. She blamed the big, noisy buses that passed in front of our building, and the moldy windows that never closed tightly enough. Those windows never opened enough to let the sunshine in either. The frames would go up one fourth of the way and then creak and stop.

I watch out of the stubborn window. A few children play outside. Two share a bike. A third one is being yelled at in Spanish. I can understand every word now, but there was a time when anything outside of the apartment was new and terrifying.

Dad and I went to explore the area the day after we moved in. His friend had promised he would come and show us, but after breakfast and lunch passed, Dad was tired of crouching on the mattress, so he told Ma we should go for a walk. She declined but I tagged along. I had not held his hand since I was seven, but the steep, narrow stairs that led down from the third floor made my heart jut into my throat and I held onto his arm as we descended the dark hallway to the front door. The outside was noisy and humid. A constant hum of air conditioners traveled through the air and made our ears ring. The sidewalk was stained with spilled drinks and dog shit. I kept both my hands locked around my dad's arm. We were out of breath by the time we made it to the end of the street. We stood there, watching as it merged with a main street where cars zipped by. Dad looked left and right, as if trying to find something he did not even know he had lost. He had had the same look a week ago, at the airport, as we tried to find his friend who was supposed to welcome us to our new life. This time he was looking for a store and when we found one we bought a loaf of bread, some apples, tea, cheese, and a small cake. For mom, he said. Mom loved pastries.

I stare at the tea-set Ma used to serve guests with. She had brought it in the luggage from Albania, wrapped in two blankets so it didn't crack. She always talked about how her mother-in-law had given it to her before her death and how one day it would be mine. Now it is mine, and I am packing it along with the other crockery and glasses in the display cabinet to sell at a yard sale.

We used to have a different cabinet when we first moved into the apartment. Dad had found it on the street on his way from work one night and had somehow managed to carry it the rest of the walk and up thirty stairs. He and Ma had spent the rest of the evening cleaning it and arranging the small possessions we had brought across the sea, thinking we would need them and hoping they would remind us of home. I stared at them and thought how out of place they looked in the bare living room. But slowly, the living room began to fill out. Every Tuesday night, before trash day, my parents would walk around and find a few items they thought we needed. I once walked with them and felt my cheeks burn as if I were running a fever when I noticed two women snickering and staring at us. Don't mind them, my dad said. What do they know about our struggles, Ma said. All I knew was that we walked around as if

we had a brand on our forehead, a sign that marked us as different. Aliens, just like our green cards said.

I find the remains of their naturalization process in one of the drawers in Dad's desk, where he used to sit and read and play poll on Facebook. I wonder if he is able to do that now that he's back home. Or does he forego games with strangers on the internet in favor of afternoon coffee with friends in a café? He would always drink his afternoon coffee with Ma. They would sit at the table and chat about their day. I wonder if he misses her as much as I miss hearing the hum of their conversation filter into my room.

I go through the drawers. Folders and folders of paperwork. Who knew being an immigrant made you responsible for the extinction of a forest? I sit on the floor and lay the stack of papers in front of me. I should burn or shred them, but something pulls at me. What if I throw out documents I might need in the future? The papers crowd around me and a light nauseous feeling sets in as I remember how anxious it made me whenever I would see big, white envelopes crammed into our tiny mailbox.

It took four months before we had to deal with any real paperwork. Our neighbors had been kind enough to tell us that because I was under eighteen we could get food stamps to help pay for our groceries. They would often give me snacks. They had noticed Dad's job at the grocery store and Ma's housekeeping job were not enough. So, on a Monday we got on the bus that smelled like piss and fermented cream soda, and went to 1010 Mass Ave. It was the first time I had skipped school in my short life. I could see their faces fall as we entered the overcrowded waiting room. Every seat was taken, the heat was on blast, and there was a faint smell of shit coming from the third row where a young girl rocked a baby stroller lightly. Ma smiled at us both and Dad made jokes now and then. I leaned my head against his belly and closed my eyes until I heard the wrong pronunciation of our last name shouted from a corner. Our case worker was Chinese and I could barely understand what he said. We walked out of there with a blue card that held two hundred dollars' worth of food.

The linoleum in the kitchen has been worn thin, just like the material that covers the countertop. Dad's favorite mug sits in one of the corners. It too has seen its use. Dad used the mug to measure the rice and flour, milk and yogurt, water and oil when cooking. He never unwrapped the measuring cups I got him once for Christmas. He never showed me how to measure ingredients either. Whenever I make bread it comes out too soft or too hard; it rises too much, spilling over the metal edges of the

pan, or it doesn't rise at all. Ma would say I would be a disappointment to my mother-in-law. I was a disappointment to my own mother, but close enough.

Ma's clothes are still in the tiny closet. Dad didn't have the heart to throw them out. Or maybe he forgot about them. In the days after the funeral he was distant and quiet. The spark in his eyes returned briefly after I told him I had booked the ticket. There's nothing for me here, he had said. Maybe he thought he'd find a piece of Ma back home. It looks like there's less clothes now that his stuff is gone. I fold the clothes carefully, stacking them up on the stripped bed and then packing them in one of the boxes. I'll have to donate them. Ma and I never had the same size and there's nothing I want as a keepsake. The clothes don't smell like her anymore, of powder and roses and the faint wisp of bleach. Everything smells of moth balls.

Ma used to complain about moths all the time. Dad used to say she was the only one who saw them crawling in the closet. It would then turn into an argument about wrinkled dress-pants and Ma complaining that she didn't have enough storage space and that the communal washer in the basement smelled of sweat and gravel.

I heave myself off the bed, wiping my tears. I cross the tiny hallway to my room. Except for the tape marks that held posters in their clasp once upon a time there is no sign of my existence in this space. The white bookcase leaning against the east wall covers half the window, casting elongated shadows on the carpet. The shelves are bare, filled with dust instead of the heavy volumes that used to weight them down.

Ma used to misplace my books whenever she vacuumed. We would have a fight about it once a week. I would scream, she would tell me I was still a kid, I would grunt and stomp to my room. She would promise to be more careful next time.

I can't remember the last time my mother cleaned my room. I can't remember the last time my mother was in my apartment. I remember I had a dream a month ago about her. She was rocking a cradle with one hand and waving a bunny in front of her granddaughter sitting on the floor. When I came in the room she just looked at me. I woke up to the phone ringing at 2am. Dad's thick voice told me Ma was gone. She always said no good news came at night. I didn't even know she was that ill. She had always had heart problems, a higher heart rate than normal. Before I left the doctors would keep it under control with aspirin and regular check-ups. Then one night her heart decided it didn't want to cooperate anymore. Maybe it was tired of pretending to be okay with everything I did in the previous four years.

I cradle my stomach as I walk back to the living room, following the row of pictures on the wall. They progress from our life in Albania to our arrival here. Their citizenship ceremony. My high school graduation. My graduation from undergrad. There is no picture of my master's graduation.

I had driven from the South End to tell them I had decided to finally go back to get my master's after working full time for two years. The light snowfall had turned into a blizzard and I was stuck listening to my parents' rage about me not getting married but going back to school instead. We came here for you, Dad said. You're wasting your youth, Ma said. I left without even telling them I had met someone at work and was moving to New York with him. They wouldn't have liked him anyway. He wasn't Albanian, he wasn't 'ethnic.' He was white and he came from divorced parents, and he thought that there was nothing wrong with kids leaving the nest at eighteen. He always teased me for having stayed home until I was twenty-two.

We kept in contact after I moved. I would always call once a week and give an update. I used to think that children who called home once a week were horrible. But how could I stand the neutral tone of their voice, their fake interest in my academia, the great length they went to avoiding questions about my partner? He and I came to visit once in those four years, but we had lunch at Bertucci's. I couldn't set foot in this apartment with a man so foreign to my parents' tradition they would have given him a green card if they could.

I find a picture of our wedding ceremony at city hall. He's holding my hand. I'm not looking at the camera. I never thought Ma would keep that picture. I had added it to the copy of my degree I was mailing her last minute. I can't believe she kept it. It was hidden in the frame behind my diploma, but its edges are thin, as if someone spent a long time looking at it. Why did she keep it? Why would she want a picture of me doing everything she was against? I deprived my parents of the joy of a grand wedding, with friends and family, and Albanian folk music, and pictures they could post on Facebook to make everyone jealous. Instead I got married on a Tuesday at city hall and had lunch with three of our closest friends.

But I always did that, I realize, as I sit on the edge of table in the center of the living room. It creaks under my weight, mixing with my sobs. These four years I was aloof, only worried about gaining independence from the people who gave up their lives to give me a better chance.

I wipe the tears with the back of my hand and carefully put the photo in my handbag. I have three other copies at home, but I need this one. I need to see those faded corners every day to remember that my mother loved me.

Everything is packed. Twenty years of life fit in twenty boxes.

The front door creaks open.

There you are. Are you sure you should be carrying that box?

I'm pregnant, honey, not sick.

You look sad.

I am.

I'm sorry your mother never got to meet her granddaughter.

Me too.

Lisa Regen

Lullaby Lane

This story first appeared *A-Minor Magazine*

He wanted to go to the cemetery—to the place where they'd gone on their first date. How many years ago? She can't recall. Back then, the teenagers went to a deceased rock star's tombstone to get stoned. This time, they drove there in silence, having some trouble finding the way since the neighborhood had changed so much. She looked out the window and then down at her belly, swelling under the seat belt in its seventh month of pregnancy.

It wasn't to visit anyone, really, this time. They wanted baby names. He'd come up with the idea to get names from tombstones. Each tombstone would display a first name, and probably a middle name; each could be candidates. At this particular cemetery the graves were packed in tightly; they could cover a lot of ground in a short time. Would they walk over the bodies, she wondered to herself. That idea didn't appeal to her. It sounded somehow disrespectful. The baby kicked and she felt that strange mixture of annoyance and relief. Relief that the baby was okay, and annoyance that her body had been so completely taken over. The relief was palpable; it came to the forefront, as she'd had two late-term miscarriages before this pregnancy.

They pulled in and she barely recognized the place. It had been a long time. She noticed that the trees had filled in and matured, giving the place a shady, formidable feel. They drove slowly around grids of narrow pavement, looking for the site of their first date at that famous tombstone. There were a few other cars scattered around and she felt guilty for a moment. People were carrying flowers, visiting loved ones, paying somber respects. She was here to capture something. Would the others mind if they knew? She pushed the thought down.

He couldn't find the spot and so finally parked. He walked around to her side of the car to help her out.

"That's not necessary," she said, with a smile, but as she looked up, she saw the concerned look on his face. The lost pregnancies had taken their toll on him—taken their toll on both of them. And on this fetus, who might finally be born out of loss and into desperation. How she yearned to hold onto this one.

They walked slowly, hand in hand, beginning to locate the

mostly flat gravestones. They read the names to each other, sheepish and giggling about this strange exercise. Some names were downright ridiculous, they agreed, putting them in combination with their own last name and other middle names they considered. Some were classic.

“I should’ve brought a notepad,” he said.

“No, when we see the right name, we’ll know it.”

Balloons caught the corner of her eye, and she turned. With a chill, she took in a grassy triangle in the center of the cemetery, where the stones were smaller and packed in more tightly. She did not remember this part. As a teenager, this would have meant nothing, but now it carried a dull weight. A statue of two angels presided over this section, and carved into the old stone were the words “Lullaby Lane.” This was the place for children.

She took a few steps closer and saw that some of the grave stones displayed hot wheels trucks, stuffed animals, dolls. She shouldn’t look at these names, she knew, but she was having trouble tearing herself away. She couldn’t stop. She thought of the baby she was soon to have and how anything could happen. There would be no control once the baby was out of her body. Even more than now, she’d be constantly worried that something would go wrong. What about SIDS, what about drowning or choking? All the possible accidents...she was breathing hard and felt her skin prickle with a cold sweat. Forcing herself to turn away, she called to her husband.

“John! John! We have to go. I don’t want to do this anymore.”

“What’s wrong? Is everything ok?” She noticed the note of panic in his voice. She tried to calm him.

“Yes, yes, I’m fine, I’m just starting to think this is freaky. I mean, they make books for baby names. What are we even doing here?” She tried to smile and tried to make light of it.

“Ah, I thought it’d be neat to visit the place where we had our first date. We haven’t even found the spot yet! Can we keep looking?”

“No. I really need to go. I’m sorry.”

He knew better than to argue. They walked back to the car in silence, not holding hands this time. She couldn’t get “Lullaby Lane” out of her head. She had seen a stone close to her as she’d stood at the apex of the grassy triangle; she could barely make out the name, but she’d read “Miles.” Miles was a boy’s name and she liked it. She was carrying a boy, they said. Her superstitious side screamed at her. You can’t name him after a dead baby. Even one you didn’t know anything about.

Goddamn it. Now she felt angry. Goddamn her husband and his stupid ideas. And why did she always go along with him. Now she would

have this stupid place in her head, and more to worry about, and she didn't need more to worry about. She needed to relax and just trust God and whomever else, maybe her doctors, who said everything was fine this time and the last two miscarriages were flukes. But she was upset and she could feel her blood pressure going up.

"Take me home," she said. "Take me home right now."

Instead of taking the left turn, back toward their apartment, he took the right. "What are you doing?" she asked, incredulous.

"I have an idea," he said, "I know just the thing that will cheer you up. I'll take you to a place that will make you feel better... I'm sorry if that was a bad idea, hon, I thought it would be fun, honestly. I'm sorry; let me make it up to you?"

They drove out of the congested town with the stoplights and strip malls, onto country roads that wove through fancier houses with horses in fenced fields. She realized where they were going. Another place filled with nostalgia, another place from years ago. It was a hiking trail they used to visit when they were first dating. They'd meet on Sunday afternoons and go for walks through the woods, just talking, sometimes sneaking beer in and drinking it in the shade of the forest until dusk. She sighed. Those had been good times. Before the stress of doctors, and trying to get pregnant, and working so much, and being married.

They pulled into the deserted parking lot. This part of the forest held mostly cedar trees, and she took in the soft, earthy smell full of spring moisture. Even in the waning light the birds were chirping softly. She felt herself relax. They started up the trail, walking at a slower clip than they would have years ago. She put her hands under her swelled belly and thought about taking a little boy in a baby carrier on this hike. And then later, a toddler learning to walk. Those would be good times, she tried to reassure herself. She tried to hold the vision of a healthy baby. The name Miles popped into her head at that very second, and she wondered if she could overcome the memory of Lullaby Lane, and use it anyway.

Just a quarter mile up the trail, the dirt path turned left. To her shock, the forest had been thinned. Where before there had been huge cedar trees, now a swath was clear-cut through, and tangled branches and wood chips were spread around the stumps where they had taken the raw lumber. They looked at each other. Slight horror crossed his face; he was wondering what sort of effect this might have on her already fragile mood. The trees cut, their place changed, this sadness after the cemetery... this is a mistake, he realized. But it was too late. He didn't

say anything. She looked around, surveying the damage.

“Who do you think did this? Was it for the wood, for the trees?” she asked nobody in particular.

She left the groomed trail and began to walk into the wreckage. He didn’t want her to trip and so he followed closely. She wove between the torn branches on the ground, into the clearing where the air exploded with cut cedar. He breathed in deeply, and realized what she was going for.

In the clearing were saplings. Hundreds of them. Each was protected with mesh and leaning on small stakes. She examined one, and saw that they were baby cedar trees, planted to replace those just logged. Most were struggling. The ends of their green parts were going brown. How many would survive, she wondered. All she saw was suffering, and all she could think about were things dying. So easily cut down and taken away. A weariness came over her body. This day, the way death seemed to follow them, the way the last few years had been—she felt it like a vice and she wanted to give up. He stood beside her, trying to offer comfort. But she pushed him away.

“You...” She said to him.

“Ever since I met you all we’ve had is pain. I didn’t even want a baby and now look at us. Years gone by and who knows what could happen. I could still have a miscarriage or even...” her voice trailed off. She was thinking stillborn but realized that was going too far. She was crying now.

“No,” he said. “It’s not me, it’s you. All you can see is the pain. All you do is worry. Do you think that’s good for the baby? Do you think that’s going to work? You need to change. I know it’s been hard for you. It’s been hard for me too. But I love you. We can do this together.”

She looked at him skeptically, and wondered at his ability to always turn things around onto her. She felt weak and powerless. But maybe that was the point. Who can say why a baby lives or dies. Or a sapling. She surveyed the tiny, half-dead trees surrounding her. Maybe some would make it. She looked back at him.

Just then, she felt the baby kick. She took his outstretched hand.

Barbara Siman

Memory Lapse

Betsey sits on a chair in the cheerful white room. She has hung her coat on the clothes rack and her handbag is placed next to her on the floor. Folding her hands in her lap, she sighs and looks at her watch for the third time. Dr. Craft opens the door and smiles at Betsey.

“How do you do, Mrs. Harris? I hope you have been entertained with the T.V. It’s new... We are very proud of it.” He looks at Betsey and then at the T.V.

“Oh,” Betsey answers. “I didn’t see it. I wouldn’t know how to turn it on, anyway.”

“Well that’s a shame, with you sitting here for how long?” He takes a folder from the nurse who has entered behind him and begins to leaf through it. “Yes, too long. Someone should have turned it on for you. I’ll have to look into that.” He shakes his head.

“I don’t understand why I’m here, Doctor. I feel perfectly well.” Betsey stands up. She attempts to look in the Doctor’s face.

“Well, let’s see.” Dr. Craft opens the folder. “It says here, that you tried to kill your husband, Mrs. Harris.”

Laughing, Betsey answers Dr. Craft. “That’s crazy, Doctor. Crazy! There has been a mistake, a huge mistake!”

“I see.” Dr. Craft nods his head and smiles at Betsey. He closes the folder. “Well, we’ll have to rectify that, won’t we, Mrs. Harris. I’ll get on it immediately.” He walks to the door of the room.

“Wait, Doctor. I can’t stay in here any longer. No one has told me anything. It’s a mistake! The police have me mixed up with someone else!” Betsey grabs Dr. Craft’s sleeve. He stops and turns to her.

“We’ll have to get all that straight, Mrs. Harris. Not to worry... I’ll send someone to see to you, just relax.” He quietly shuts the door.

Betsey sits down on the chair. “Oh My God! How can I be relaxed when I’m in a place where no one seems to care that they have the wrong person? They don’t seem to care that I’m not supposed to be here. Oh My God, now I’m talking to myself. What am I going to do?” A young blond nurse enters the room. “Mrs. Harris?” She smiles.

“Yes? I’m Mrs. Harris. Please help me. They don’t seem to understand that I’m not supposed to be here. What am I doing here?” Betsey stands next to the nurse.

“I’m sure the Doctor is working on releasing you, Mrs. Harris. He’s very good at following up on a patient.” The nurse lifts Betsey’s

coat off the rack and puts it over her arm.

“But I’m not a patient! I’m not sick.” Betsey feels as though she might cry.

“Yes, I’m sure you’re right. He’s just checking everything, now come along with me and let’s find a more comfortable room for you. One with a television set, yes?” The nurse is very cheery and holds the door for Betsey.

“Yes, okay.” Betsey walks through the door and sighs.

She understands there is no point in arguing now. The nurse turns on the TV, turns down the bed and smiles at Betsey. “Okay? Put your night gown on and the Doctor will be in to see you shortly, Mrs. Harris. Then we have a nice lunch on a tray this afternoon. Millie will bring it to you. Try and relax, I’ll see you soon.” The nurse smiles at Betsey and leaves.

“I wish you would listen to me, Nurse,” Betsey calls after her.

Betsey sits on the chair next to her bed. She looks around the bare room. There is no phone. She can’t call anyone. There is a robe and a nightgown hanging on a hook on the door. Betsey decides to put the nightgown on and wait for the Doctor to check in on her. She undresses and goes over the last events of the day. She was in her bedroom when the doorbell rang and when she opened it, two policemen smiled at her and suggested she come downtown. Betsey asked what the meaning of all this is and they said that their orders were to take her downtown.

When she refused, they said they would have to cuff her because orders were orders and they smiled at her again. She decided to go along quietly and when she got to where they were taking her, she would call her lawyer and he would get her out of this most uncomfortable situation. Now she was here but nothing was happening except they were treating her like a criminal. They were very nice but she wanted to go home. Who was going to take care of the dog?

Oh My God! What will happen to him? He has to be fed! He has to be taken out! Richard hated the dog - No matter what Betsey said, he just hated the dog. Richard said it was because Betsey paid so much attention to the dog. Betsey laughed and said he was jealous. Betsey paid only seconds to the poor animal. He was a sweet dog, for God’s Sake! This is just nonsense! ” This can’t be happening to me,” she thought. “I’m not supposed to be here. I have to get out!”

She removes the nightgown and puts her skirt and sweater back on. She sits on the edge of the bed. Who told those policemen to take her here? Wait! Betsey remembered her husband telling her something. What was it?

She closes her eyes. She begins to remember. Richard smiled

and said that Betsey looked beautiful in anything she put on. This was his stock compliment. Betsey liked hearing it though. Richard, her husband, her beautiful husband; his blond hair and long eye lashes, blond eye lashes. She always teased him about the eye lashes. She wished she had those eye lashes. Oh well, what did he say to her? OH YES! She looked wonderful in anything she put on. Then he brought out an outfit that Betsey never would have chosen to wear. Where did he get it? Anyway, he said she would look glorious in it! So Betsey put it on. But no one at the party said she looked beautiful, they all said she looked so “well.” WAIT. Betsey had gotten ill that night. She had bad cramps and she threw up. Richard was not there - where was Richard? She went to bed and told all the people to go home - no- there were no people at that party - Betsey was alone with Richard. He’d said, “Not to worry, everything would be fine.” He winked his eye.

Betsey had said, “Okay,” and winked back at him.

She now moved from the edge of the bed and lay back against the pillows. She thought of autumn leaves, gentle breezes, and birds calling to each other. Then she fell asleep.

She dreamed that Richard and Betsey were dancing, dancing to soft music from a small pickup band. The music was Spanish but Betsey and Richard did a foxtrot. Richard held Betsey close. When the music stopped, Betsey stopped, but Richard kept going. He continued to foxtrot without Betsey. In the distance, Richard called back, “Goodbye.”

“What are you doing?” Betsey asked. Richard continued to dance away from Betsey. “Answer me,” Betsey called, as Richard disappeared into a fog. Betsey sat up. Where was Richard going, she wondered. But that was just a dream. Betsey shook her head. She put her hand on her cheek, it was wet. She must have been crying, but why?

Betsey stands up. She walks to the door of her room and turns the handle of the door. The handle does not turn. “Hello?” Betsey calls. She hears hello echoing back at her. Betsey sits back down on the bed.

What is going on? There is a knock at the door. Betsey jumps up. “Who is it?” Betsey calls.

“It’s Millie, Mrs. Harris. I’ve brought your tray.” Millie enters with a tray of food. She puts it down on the bedside table. “Lamb chops today, I hear they’re excellent.” Millie smiles at Betsey.

“Yes, good.” Betsey looks at the tray. “How much longer do you think the Doctor will be? I mean, he said he would check on what I told him and come back.”

“Oh, I don’t know, Mrs. Harris. I only bring the food.” Millie smiles at Betsey and slips out of the room before Betsey can follow her.

Betsey stares at the tray. She remembers the small party Richard and she gave. Richard told her what to serve and how to put everything out. He was always helpful in these kinds of things, only he wanted everything that Betsey didn't choose. Betsey thought he must be right. Betsey had never given many parties so Richard was the boss. Betsey had smiled and served guacamole and chips with olives and peanuts and what else? She couldn't remember. Oh well, that is not the point. What happened at that party? Yes! Betsey remembers now. Richard told Betsey to just smile and agree with everyone. She thought that was a little silly but she did it. Betsey was not happy that night. Betsey didn't like not talking and giving her opinions about things - participating. But Betsey wanted Richard to be happy. So what happened? Betsey couldn't remember.

The nurse knocks on Betsey's door. She enters. "Oh, you haven't touched your food, Mrs. Harris. What's wrong? Don't you like lamb chops?"

"Listen, Nurse. I have to get out of here." She grabs the nurse's hands. "I don't care about the lamb chops."

"Yes, I understand, Mrs. Harris. I will get the Doctor, right away." The nurse leaves.

Betsey walks around the small room. What to do? She remembers Richard telling her that she mustn't do something or say something. What was it? He always had something to say about Betsey's behavior. Why did she listen to him? He didn't want her to disagree with him, Betsey laughed. That was silly. She didn't always see things the way he saw them and she had her own opinions; after all she was a grown up woman! But he did have such a sweet nature and such a wonderful way of getting everyone to do everything for him. Everyone loved Richard. Why was he so lovable?

Betsey looked at her watch. The Doctor said he would be back after he checked on why she was here. Betsey didn't want to be here all night, where was he?

Betsey wanted a baby but Richard said to wait for a while, they had only been married for two years. But Betsey said two years was more than enough to know that they should have children. They had talked about having children before they married and Richard was positive that he wanted them. But he seemed to be babying Betsey instead of a child. What to do?

The door opened and the Doctor came in. "How are you getting along, Mrs. Harris?" The Doctor asked.

"Oh Doctor! I'm so happy to see you." She picked up her coat

and hand bag and stood ready to leave.

“I thought you would never come.” Betsey smiled at the Doctor.

“I’m sorry, Mrs. Harris, I have not been able to clarify this situation. Can you please bear with me until I can get the right people to speak to?” The Doctor smiled at Betsey and took her hand. “It seems there is no one available right now to give me the information I need to discharge you. Won’t you please wait?” He looked pleadingly into Betsey’s eyes.

“Oh no, Doctor. I can’t wait.” Betsey put her coat on and walked to the door. “I have to leave here.”

“But if I let you leave without finding out who should have been in your place, I’ll be in big trouble. You don’t want that, now, do you?” The Doctor smiled at Mrs. Harris and looked into her eyes as he steered her away from the door. “I’ll tell you what.” The Doctor seats Betsey on the end of the bed. “If you wait here, eat this food on the tray, and then, I’ll come back with some information, okay?”

Betsey thought that the doctor might listen to reason. “Well, I don’t know. You see, you have made a mistake and I shouldn’t have to pay for it, right?”

“Oh, yes,” the doctor agreed with Betsey. “You see, we do make mistakes and I’m sure this is one of them. So if you just wait here, Mrs. Harris, I’ll straighten all of this out. Okay?”

“Okay, but you must get me out of here!” Betsey sits on the edge of the bed. She looks at the food on the tray. She never eats lamb chops, why did she order them?

Well, what to do until the Doctor comes back and lets her leave. She decides to lay back down again. Betsey closes her eyes.

Why did everyone say she looked good? Of course she looked good. What’s wrong with everyone? Can’t they see that her husband knew what she should wear? Her husband picked it. Her beautiful husband. This outfit is for someone who is pregnant. What? Betsey was pregnant? That’s a laugh. Every time she had asked her husband to make her pregnant he made an excuse. So what happened? Betsey sat up. Her beautiful husband, with the blond eyelashes, made her pregnant! He did!

But where was the baby? Where was her baby? What happened to her baby?

Betsey began to cry. “Oh my God! The nurse opened the door to Betsey’s room. Betsey asked, “Where did they take my baby -Did I have a girl or a boy? Where is my baby?”

The nurse said that the Doctor had figured out the mistake with Betsey and that Betsey could be discharged now.

“Oh, My God” Betsey cried.

The nurse opened the closet door and removed a small bag. She held it out to Betsey. “Don’t forget your bag, Mrs. Harris,” The nurse smiled.

Betsey looked over at the open door of the room. Her husband stood in the doorway. “Come along, Betsey,” he said, “it’s time to go home.”

C

**CREATIVE
NON-FICTION**

Christina Fulton

Hallmark Moments

On March 9, 2011 my father called to ask if I had any big plans for the following week. I was out walking my dog at the time, so the conversation was already doomed to be very short and unfocused much like my loveable pup, and coincidentally, my father.

“Um, yeah my thesis defense is the week after. I have to prepare. I mean this is three years of my fucking life we’re talking about, Dad,” I snapped. I was mad for two reasons. One, I had told him about this the last time we spoke. When it came to my father I was always repeating myself. His listening skills were on par with my students’. I often imagined if I was a boy he would actually hear my words, instead of the white noise and “jibber jabber” he claimed most women pumped into the ozone. Often, I had seen him hold the phone away from his ear whenever it was my aunt, my mother, or any of his clients that dared to bear two X chromosomes. He would chime in occasionally with an “uh-hum” or a “sure” for a dash of realism.

Second, it had been his birthday over the weekend, and I had tried to call him multiple times. I figured he had blown me off because he was out indulging in yet another one of his mid-life crisis/ frat boy fantasies. He was in a band, investing in everything from casino land to movie projects, and, of course, carrying on the decades’ old tradition of ignoring his marriage vows. I felt I wasn’t important enough to make the list of well-wishers that weekend and begrudgingly ended up settling for the voicemail version of him.

“So that’s all you’re doing next week? Ah, don’t worry about it, Chris. It’s in the bag,” he laughed.

“No, it’s not! They can ask me anything about my work, and what if I don’t have a good answer? What then? I’m screwed is what! I’m already being rejected for job applications, and if I can’t even get out of graduate school, then I’m really screwed up the pooper come fall,” I hissed.

“Don’t worry about any of that. You’ll knock it out of the park,” he laughed. I decided if I heard one more cheesy platitude out of him I was going to go completely Nutter Butters. However, looking back on it I see that those cliché phrases were his only way of expressing genuine emotions. My father always took pride in every birthday, Christmas, or Mother’s Day card he gave, like he had penned it himself. He would spend an hour in the Hallmark Store looking for the best way to describe

how he was feeling, since years of traditional Italian gender polarizing prevented him from truly expressing himself. Greeting card poetry was a close to sincerity as he could safely get.

“You know I tried to call you on your birthday. Did you at least get the card I sent you?” I asked, hoping to change the subject.

“Yep, I loved it! I have it in my briefcase right now,” he squealed. As much as he loved picking out cards, he loved getting them even more. I only spent ten seconds picking out his. It had a small, fluffy dog on it and it was commenting on how getting old was no big deal.

“So that’s the only thing you’ve got planned next week? Just preparing for your thesis defense. You’re sure it’s not next week, but the week after?” he said, almost frantic.

“Yes, dad, very sure. Are you alright?” I was surprised that he had swung back around to this topic so quickly. Usually, he would have gone off on some painfully awkward tangent. Never to be seen again.

“Yeah, I just wanted to make sure I’m getting the timeline right,” he laughed.

“If I pass, are you and you alone, coming to my graduation?” I asked, hesitantly.

“Yep, just me. Don’t worry about it.” I felt a slight sense of relief. My last graduation was a little too dramatic with my aunt and her rowdy brood in attendance. On top of that, my mom and dad got into a huge fight that somehow stemmed from me getting the wrong type of garden hose for the house. I wanted there to be less of an audience this time, in case another verbal bout broke out. My mother had recently moved out of the house and into her own condo, so the house was not up to his usual meticulous cleaning standards that weekend. The night before my big day he stayed up cleaning and shouting,

“Years of filth...years of filth...years of filth.” He broke a bottle of vinegar during the process, which led to the whole house smelling like a bowl of very questionable salad. The next morning I found him on his hands and knees outside actually rearranging the rocks in the garden to his liking.

“Well, I got to go. I’m about to get into the elevator,” I said, approaching the lobby of my mom’s condo, which was my new current and only place of residence. I had made it very clear whose side I was on and followed my mother in her grand exodus.

“Alright, I’ll talk to you later. Love you,” he said, before hanging up. I didn’t say the L-word back. I was too angry, and I hadn’t learned just how wrong that little, fluffy faux-philosopher was about aging. Apparently, it is a “big deal.” A very big deal. It turned out that he

had called to make sure my schedule was clear for him to commit suicide the next day, which in turn, led to even more Hallmark cards than I could ever fully hope to handle or process.

Suzanne Kamata

Heartbeats on Teshima

The day after my family forgot my fiftieth birthday, I decided to travel to the island of Teshima and record my heartbeat. If my husband and children weren't going to do something special for my milestone, then I would find a way to mark it myself.

I took a bus from our home in Tokushima to Takamatsu and walked to the ferry terminal where I bought a roundtrip ticket to Teshima. The early autumn weather was perfect: not too hot, not too cold. Fleecy white clouds floated across the azure sky.

I was the first one on the pier. As I looked at the small hovercraft, I wondered if I would be the only passenger. Gradually, however, other daytrippers began to gather. Most of them were young, which is ironic, because few young Japanese people wanted to actually live in the remote areas of Japan. Because of the art, however, the islands of the Inland Sea were now a popular destination with the post-college crowd. I spotted a few young Japanese couples and a foreign woman with a nose ring. Her male companion carried a huge backpack with muddy boots dangling from a strap.

About half an hour later, we arrived at Teshima. I rented an electric bicycle and set out to explore. I rode past a small grove of olive trees. The green fruit was almost ready for picking. Soon, I came upon *Umi no Restoran* -- the Sea Restaurant. Many of my fellow ferry passengers had already stopped here. Their rented bicycles were lined up in the parking area. I made this my first stop.

I could see through the glass windows that the indoor tables were mostly full, but no matter. On the terrace anyhow, I could gaze at the sea and the humps of green islands in the distance. I settled down in a lawn chair and pulled myself up to a table. When the waiter came by, I asked for the daily special and a glass of white wine.

Soon after, the tables on the terrace filled as well. Three tables down, a group of Americans were talking. At the table to my right, an American couple sat, thumbing their smart phones; to my left, a Japanese couple sat doing the same.

The waiter brought my wine. I took a sip, listening to the Americans three tables away.

“Did you go to the Issey Miyake store?” a woman asked.

A white ferry sailed past. A fish leapt, rippling the still water.

“I'd look like a mutant,” another woman said.

A butterfly fluttered up above.

“...sort of like a heartbeat,” a man was saying.

The waiter brought my lunch of sea bream and crusty multigrain bread. The food was fresh and beautifully prepared, the red and orange of the vegetable sauce set off by the pure white dishes. I lingered as long as possible, but there was much to see before the last ferry at five twenty. After finishing my lunch, I paid my bill.

Back in the parking lot, I couldn't remember how to get the kickstand on my bicycle to go up.

A tall young Western guy with black-framed glasses and bleached hair approached me. He looked like an art student. “What's down there?” he asked, pointing down the hill. “Is it the harbor?”

“The heartbeat thing is down that way,” I said, patting my chest. “You know, the installation by that French artist.”

“Oh, right.” I noticed his accent was Australian. He was holding a cigarette.

“Hey, do you know how to get the kickstand up?”

“Yeah, you have to push this thing first,” he said demonstrating, cigarette still in hand.

“Thanks.” I thought about asking him if he wanted to go with me, but I figured that we would run into each other again anyhow.

The island was quiet. I imagined that the people who lived in the many wooden houses, some with charcoal walls, along the way were out fishing or working on another island. After I'd pedaled for awhile, I came upon a few cows lazing in a terraced pasture. Farther along, farmers were harvesting rice. I wondered if they enjoyed looking at art, and what they thought of the many foreigners who visited their island.

I coasted down Mt. Dan'yama, following signs to the beach. Once again, I parked my bike and stood on the shore for a moment listening to the waves lapping upon the sand. I went down a jungle path until I reached the rustic weathered wooden building which houses Christian Boltanski's “Les Archives de Coeur.”

A young woman behind a desk explained that I could record my heartbeat if I wanted to, and it would be added to the archives. Or, I could just enter the art space.

“I want to record my heart beat,” I said.

She smiled and directed me into a small, private room where there was a computer and a stethoscope. I read the instructions in English and typed in a simple message: “It's good to be alive.”

I pressed the stethoscope to my chest, clicked on “begin” and waited for forty seconds without moving while my heart went “ba BOOM ba BOOM.” When I was finished, I went back into the waiting area. The young woman prepared a CD of my heart beat for me to take home as a souvenir. “Now you can listen to your heartbeat,” she said. The rhythms of my heart had been added to those of over 40,000 others.

I opened the door to the “Archives of the Heart.” The room was dark except for a single lightbulb that hung from the ceiling. The walls were covered with many mirrors. The light pulsed in time to the percussion of heartbeats. Some were loud, like thunder. They sounded like drums, those hearts from all over the world, from people of many ages, everyone so alive.

When I left the building, I saw the white-haired Australian guy again. “That was amazing,” he said.

“Yes,” I agreed. “It was.”

I had heard that along with the olives, rice, and lemons, strawberries grew on the island. I came across a small café selling crepes, smoothies, and other sweets. I hadn’t had dessert at the Sea Restaurant and I’d been cycling all over the island. It was time for a break.

I had a cup of coffee and a strawberry crepe while sitting outside.

Before I left, I bought a strawberry roll cake to take back to my family. It was my birthday, after all, and I still hadn’t had cake.

Back home, my supper was on the table. I ate with my son. I showed him photos I’d taken of the island cats who were gathered at the port, and of the café I’d discovered with pop art décor.

“What was your purpose in going there?” he asked me.

“To see the island,” I said. What other purpose did I need?

We finished our dinner and I cut cake for all of us. I took a bite. Happy birthday to me.

Jennifer Marcus

The Color Paprika

Almost eleven at night and I just this morning promised myself I'd be in bed by ten o'clock. But I have a list of things to do—two papers to write, a stack of papers to grade and the first four books of *The Odyssey* to read. My pumpkin orange comforter makes shifty mountains over my restless feet (in wool socks). From down the hall I hear the dishwasher, a Bosch, but not the perfectly silent model. They say the only way you would know that one is running is by the small red light that shines on the floor. But I would know by the rattling pipes. This house is loud. The pipes rattle, the bathroom vent bangs and squeaks in the wind, and the aluminum insert in the chimney makes all kinds of racket. Add to this the deep, rumbling snores of my husband, a sound I have grown to love, to identify with home, with all-is-well. My daughter doesn't snore, so I still get up—as needed—pad across the hall, push the switch up only enough to produce the dimmest light, make sure her head is not under the covers (she likes to burrow), and I listen. When I hear her even inhalations, the dim light goes off and I pad back across the hall and sleep.

But tonight I want to stay up, listen for coyotes, an owl. I want to wait for the dishwasher to finish its cycle.

A car with a distant, thumping bass drives by. And I remember I want a new car, one that's not a ninety-seven Plymouth Breeze with rust and duct tape and a hundred fifty thousand miles. To want, to set my sights on something beyond what I have is new, to look beyond where I am is new. And I think it started with the car, specifically the paprika Subaru Impreza hatchback. I saw it drive by one day—Franklin Street? Baltimore?—and I felt desire rise up within me, something unfamiliar.

Then, around the same time, in 2009, it happened again, this time while discussing *Antigone* with high school seniors. I like this, I thought. I can do this. I want to do this. I was just past forty, had a master's degree but had never asked, Where do I want to go with this? No, I had allowed myself to be propelled along by the opportunities that presented themselves. (Like only dating the men who asked me out. Not until after I married my first husband did I read Jane Austin and realize maybe I wanted Mr. Darcy.)

So it was around that time I started to move toward the helm of my ship. I maneuvered myself slowly at first, reading job ads, quietly applying, researching MFA programs. But big movements rocked the

boat—leaving my high school job, announcing my acceptance to an MFA program. There was some temporary instability until the water settled—but the water did settle. Had I been afraid of that? Had I not known the water would settle back down? To assert one’s will is to make ripples and waves. To turn one’s ship churns the water. My hands, now firmly on the ship’s wheel, bring in less money teaching part-time, while spending savings on tuition. But I find myself happy for the first time in my adult life. How is that possible?

There is a band called Antigone Rising, one of the best band names I’ve heard. I read *Antigone* the first time when I was seventeen, and I loved her. I knew who I was then, and what I wanted. Adulthood shrouds our memory and throws obstacles and opportunities in our path. Until one day *Antigone* comes back into your life as you teach it to people less than half your age—and you remember. I remembered.

One of the colleges where I teach part-time is two hours away. With my hands on the wheel, I looked out over the bow of the ship and saw the world. I felt desire. I live in a small town (the entire county is only twenty-four thousand people), and the desire to get out, to go someplace other, grew fast and strong. It surpassed the desire for a paprika Subaru. Twice a week now I drive to a city of one hundred thousand. The rusty Plymouth is holding up and I enjoy the drive, the time to think, the view of fall foliage that meets me over every rise. I sought this job. It was not a convenient opportunity pointed out by a well-meaning friend. It was something I saw and wanted. Spending two days a week in the city of Columbia, Missouri gives me a little more breathing room than I had previously. Though I spend most of my time there teaching or at the Columbia Public Library grading papers, I do get out. I drink coffee on Ninth Street and treat myself to lunch at The Main Squeeze. I even bought a pair of corduroys at the mall. I met a woman at the AWP conference in February who commutes from a farm in Wisconsin to Chicago. She has a son the same age as my daughter. She is in Chicago for two days and one night, teaching at one of the city colleges. She couldn’t do it without the public transportation, she said. But she loves it—wouldn’t change a thing. While I don’t have a bus or train to make my commute cheaper and more productive, I love it anyway. I love it even though the old Plymouth has a broken tape player and there is a gap around Macon where I get no radio reception. The weather is still good, but that will change as the days grow shorter. I am not afraid.

I had been afraid of straying so far from home, being in a

different area code, too far to help in an emergency. But fear is nothing once you push through it.

It's Sunday afternoon, the light bounces off the dog's water bowl, my daughter draws pictures of characters from a magazine. I hear the dehumidifier humming from the basement. I once wanted to leave this place, begged my husband to move into town. Now, I am content. But my eyes are on the horizon and my hands are on the wheel. The old Plymouth won't last forever and I'll have to get a new car. Change comes whether we beckon it or not. It feels good, though, to seek it.

Lois Greene Stone

girl's play

Laundry soap had two purposes when I was growing up. In a sink, my mother used a wooden-framed scrub-board and pushed clothing back and forth on metal ridges as she hand-washed garments. The large soap bar helped remove stains and odors. Its other service was to 'wash out my mouth' if I uttered such an awful word as 'damn' instead of 'dam'. Of course shoving that detergent rectangle over my lips didn't do anything more than give me a horrible taste for many minutes, it was 'custom' to scrub vile words from a child's mouth.

In that era, I had mustard plasters applied to my chest to soothe coughs, castor oil dropped in my mouth before morning orange juice so vitamins would improve health, teeth with cavities (pre-fluoride), radiation to dry up acne, serious detention at elementary school for a minor infraction, balloon-tire no-speed bicycle and no thought of a helmet, and spankings. So, certainly, a 'cuss-word' had consequences. And I also learned the phrase pro-and-con that meant for or against; later in life, the word pro was associated with a paid athlete and, after a criminology course, the word con was short for convict.

Ah, 2015. I put these two words together, added ion (and not the charged atom meaning) and discovered the malady: concussion.

Football players seem to still get this affliction even with protective headgear, and my adding this ailment to my medical file was not 'cool' like a contact sport. Inside myself, I'm not a grown up no matter what the calendar says. Mary Martin, onstage playing Peter Pan and singing "I won't grow up" is more 'me' than the numerical age I really am, so ducking under a rising garage door is the mustard plaster and not the antibiotic that exists now for congestion. I'm still the no-speed bicycle mentality and can do what children do without thinking of consequence. So, a heavy metal garage door and my head made contact when I quickly stood up because I'd thought I'd cleared the opening. I hadn't.

A neurologic work-up then took me to an x-ray machine to rule out a fractured cervical spine; next day after that test, I had a brain scan to rule out bleeding in the brain. Whew! Did thinking-young keep my bones young? But I just didn't realize the brain takes awhile to heal, and decides to send out messages of head pain, nausea, dizziness, inability to concentrate, and that's just for starters. There's even a label: post concussion syndrome. Syndrome sounds like 'sin' and while I don't

think there's any dictionary meaning for 'drome' it is just so negative! I prefer positive, or pretty names for my problems. Online med site speaks of feeling dazed or not one's normal self. And the brain contacted the skull's inside and bruised because the force of my playing soccer with a heavy garage door upset the usual cushioning protection.

Normal self. Hm. When I'm healed, my normal self will act before thinking, be playful and happy with a similar enthusiasm for living, and cataract eyes will have vision as a child's. "I won't grow up" keeps me joyous as the scent of raked leaves each autumn takes my mind to the era when piles could be burned at the curb and my jumping in those neat mounds before a match ignited them. While I can no longer sled down a steep hill and have the eager feeling climbing back up to begin the descent again, I like watching children do this as I like the sensation of cold snowflakes hitting my bare face. In my mind, I picture the heavy wood sled with its metal steering bar, the smell of my wool snowsuit coated with moisture, the giggles my sisters and I shared during the innocence of very early childhood.

Yes, concussion is serious, and I've escaped the dire outcome. Once the full 'me' is back, I expect I'll ease-into fingerpainting or making mud pies before I totally again forget I'm a grown up and can't play duck-duck-goose or any child's game and will get injured again. *But, and that's a big BUT, illness can strike from within and my last years could be horrible, so I shall savor my silliness and continue to complete my life with joy.*

B

BOOK REVIEW



Sam Grisham "She"

Ann Davenport

Elegy, Estrangement, and New Narratives: Aracelis Girmay's *the black maria*

There are endless layers to explore in Whiting Award winner Aracelis Girmay's third collection of poetry, *the black maria* (BOA Editions, 2016). I will confine my comments largely to her craft, so readers can discover the joy of diving into these lyric narratives for themselves.

Girmay uses innovative narrative and structural techniques to recontextualize not just the histories that she features, but all histories told through a Western lens. I'm reminded of Audre Lorde's words, "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house."¹ In *the black maria*, Girmay doesn't just dismantle the house; she uses every craft element at her disposal to build a new home entirely.

The book begins with 'elelegy,' a cycle of poems that, as Girmay notes in an epigraph, "focuses on Eritrean history.... But, of course, the history of people searching for political asylum and opportunity (both) is much larger than Eritrean history alone." The preface to "elelegy" moves between playwriting and journalism, setting the cycle's context with its who, when, and where to locate the reader and serve as a historical compass. To open, the "who" begins this way:

I, Aracelis Kay Weyni Girmay, the narrator-author, born in the United States. My routes: Eritrea, Puerto Rico, African America.

we, the living

you, unless otherwise stated, the dead

the sea, also a "you," talkless "witness," body of water, body of bodies

the Luams, there are four Luams... (11)

Girmay gives brief biographies of the four Luams before addressing other characters. In addition to introducing them, the Luams' biographies indicate the cardinal directions of Girmay's explorations of

self and history. Girmay is teaching us how to read this book, insisting on defining her own boundaries, building her own house.

It is a significant reversal of customary narratives. Girmay is writing the histories of the colonized, stories many are unused to hearing. Some may find their cognitive process trying to resist this tremendous shift in perspective. As one surrenders to the flow of poetry coursing like waves through *the black maria*'s pages, as one stops reading with the brain and begins to read with a deeper consciousness, the sense of cognitive patterns shifting becomes almost palpable. It is an exercise well worth undertaking.

The poems shift between speakers, and blur lines between audiences. As Girmay states, there are four Luams who variously serve as narrators, subjects, and guides, inhabiting different places and times; Girmay, too, is a narrator; and while the "you" in the poem is explicitly stated as the dead or the sea, as a reader one cannot escape being part of that same "you." What effect does it have to read a poem from the point of view of the dead, let alone the sea? Consider this excerpt from "*luam to the dead / – umbertide*." "But you are the nothing now / except what history carries in its dog teeth. // Life, my luxury, my room alone / at the hill's green foot. / My view of racket and deer. // At night I run the shower to warm me. / The water, it comes / suddenly, cousin, / my hand / through you" (36).

For me, this identification with the dead creates a deep and unexpected sense of empathy, an underlying sorrow, a shift from dispassionate observer to grieving participant. It adds a resonant dimension to my relationship as a reader to both speaker and poet; we save our most private, our most urgent, most crucial words for our dead. The strategy of these shifting yet specific perspectives can evoke a rare profundity of response in the reader. It might even create a sense of identification with these dead from people typically opposed to compassion for refugees. As much as this cycle is an elegy for the dead of the Eritrean diaspora, and the dead of all who seek political asylum and peaceful opportunity, it is also keeping their voices alive, weaving their stories and folklore into the fabric of history that might otherwise be lost to the Western world's view.

As in her first two books, *Teeth* (Curbstone Press, 2007) and *Kingdom Animalia* (BOA Editions, 2011), Girmay's poetry is as gorgeous as it is complex. Frequent and enduring themes in her work include the recognition and celebration of countless individuals often made faceless by modern media and storytelling; nor she has ever shied from addressing the brutality of the policies, actions, and resulting

strange fruit of colonialism and post-colonialism in America and across the world. Rarely does one find a poet who can say such hard things in such a luminous way that the reader feels grateful to face these truths.

Girmay pushes these predominant themes to new horizons in *the black maria*, as in these lines from “prayer & letter to the dead.” “The coffin-eye static of the photograph holds // your mother, your elder, / your one. You wanted // to live, to study & to make / things. To be free. In a war-land // the birds all sing / the saddest songs // of people who will not write poems / about their feathers or learn their calls & names, // so busy are they waiting for news of The Gone / & burying, without bones, their dead” (19-20).

Like the dead, the sea is felt both in content and through craft. Girmay’s structural innovations go beyond context-setting and shifting perspectives; the entire outlay of this first section defies boundaries. Poems and sections of poems are often hard to differentiate; this creates the sensation of waves rolling onto the shore of an omnipresent sea. Yet among this blending, Girmay makes ample use of white space, giving us time to contemplate before being drawn into the next section or poem. The poems continually meditate on the recurring themes of individual and collective displacements, home-makings, losses, survivals, griefs, and dreams. These recurrences add to the sense of this history’s enormity, its oceanic and undeniable presence.

This fluidity persists in the second section, also titled “the black maria.” Girmay prefaces this section with a prose poem made with the first names of people of color murdered by police or civilians, people terminally mis-seen by their killers. Girmay follows this dedication with a dictionary definition of *maria*, then puts it into her own words: “astronomers thought the lunar features were seas when they first saw them through telescopes. these dark basins were referred to as ‘black maria.’ basins and craters misidentified as seas” (71). She thus sets our expectations that these poems meditate on things as they’re seen or mis-seen, and as they really are. A second epigraph, from James Baldwin, deepens this context.

The first poem, “The Black Maria,” again offers formal innovation, reading like a riff on a ghazal, with each alternating stanza ending in either “the moon” or “the black maria.” Too, the rhythms, repetitions, and phrasings especially of the early lines read like jazz riffs: “black the raven, black the dapples on the moon & horses, black sleep of night & the night’s idea, / black the piano, white its teeth but black its gums & mind with which we serenade the black maria” (73).

The poem skates swiftly from this to meditations on history, the

Middle Passage, the black maria, to language and naming, the leaps in content creating threads that show the prevalence and interconnectedness of mis-naming, how it permeates the colonized world. “If this is a poem about misseeing—Renisha McBride, Trayvon Martin, Rekia Boyd, / then these are also three of the names of the black maria. // Naming, however kind, is always an act of estrangement. (To put into language that which can’t be / put.) & someone who does not love you cannot name you right, & even “moon” can’t carry the moon. // If this is a poem about estrangement & waters made dark with millions of names & bodies—the Atlantic / Ocean, the Mediterranean & Caribbean Seas, the Mississippi, then these are also the names of the black maria” (74).

Another poem titled “The Black Maria” appears later in this section. This poem begins with a story from African-American astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson’s childhood, using the moon as a central metaphor. Again, as the lines leap from subject to subject, we feel how seemingly disparate lives connect.

This boy on the roof of this poem
with a moon in his heart. Inside my own body
as I write this poem my body
is making a boy even as the radio
calls out the Missouri coroner’s news (92)

In between these two “black maria” poems are a series of poems Girmay titles “estrangements,” after the lines quoted above. Girmay’s clear-eyed examinations plumb the horrific results of these estrangements with tenderness and courage. In this section, the poems are more overtly situated in Girmay’s personal experience, depicting such moments as her arrival at boarding school and other vivid memories rooted in family. At the same time, the poems elegize victims of brutality—Renisha McBride, George and Jonathan Jackson, the children who died at the Perris Indian School, Jonathan Ferrell, and others. In this section, Girmay again blurs boundaries, blending the political with the personal, showing how the killing of other bodies infuses one’s own body. As she shifts from the victims and survivors of violence to her own son, her own life, and back again, these leaps create parallels and living (or dying) metaphors, making implicit her fears for her innocent son’s body in a world dominated by terminal mis-seeing.

In content and craft, Girmay brings lyric clarity to *the black maria*’s deft explorations of hard histories. Visitors to this house will find abundance: those who read poetry to find words for their sorrow and

hope; those who read to escape to other worlds more real than the one throbbing around us; those who read to make plans for building new worlds themselves. And fellow poets can learn much from Girmay's ability to blend and juxtapose narratives without blurring the truths, needs, and distinct lives of individuals.

In her Notes section, Girmay writes, "I have struggled with this particular project, so steeped in violence, mourning, and grief. How do I work inside such histories of violence without further brutalizing the black body in the work?And how do I express, with tenderness, who and what this work/I love(s)? It is my hope that while these poems mourn the dead and the bleak circumstances of our present, violent day, they are also a tribute to black joy, black art, black making, black life" (112). She succeeds mightily, creating a many-layered structure that honors each unique person even as it mourns and celebrates countless lives.

¹ Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Berkeley: Crossing Press, 20

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**BIOGRAPHICAL
NOTES**



Toti O'Brien "Je ne croirai qu'a toi #7"

Carol Barrett holds doctorates in both clinical psychology and creative writing. She teaches for Union Institute & University, where she is coordinator of the Certificate program in Creative Writing. Her books include Calling in the Bones, which won the Snyder Prize from Ashland Poetry Press. Carol's poems appear in many magazines including The Women's Review of Books, JAMA, Feminist Studies, Christian Century, Poetry International and Poetry Northwest. She lives in Bend, OR.

Kristin Berkey-Abbott has published two chapbooks: *Whistling Past the Graveyard* (Pudding House Publications), *I Stand Here Shredding Documents* (Finishing Line Press) and *Life in the Holocene Extinction* (Finishing Line Press). She oversees the department of General Education at the Art Institute of Ft. Lauderdale.

Taylor Bond is a 2014-2015 Lannan Fellow, a copywriter at Tokyo Journal, and a freelance photographer. Her work has appeared, or is forthcoming, in Underwater New York, Belle Reve Literary Journal, and the Foundling Review, among others. She splits her time between D.C., New York City, and Tokyo.

Kay Merkel Boruff lived in Viet-Nam 68-70 & was married to an Air America pilot who was killed flying in Laos 18 Feb 70. Her work has appeared in the New York Review of Books, Vanity Fair, Texas Short Stories 2, Taos Magazine, The Dallas Morning News, Suddenly, Grasslands Review, Behind the Lines, Fifth Wednesday, Stone Voices, Turk's Head, & Paper Nautilus. Letters of her husband's and hers were included in Love and War, 250 Years of Wartime Love Letters. NPR interviewed Boruff regarding Merkel & Minor: Vets Helping Vets. In 2012 she attended Burning Man 2012 and in 2015 climbed Wayna Picchu.

Rachel Crawford is a writer, teacher, and editor whose poems and short stories have appeared in numerous print and online journals including *The Lyric*, *Red Rock Review*, *Figures of Speech*, *Mudlark*, *Anima Poetry Journal*, *RiverSedge*, *Rock & Sling: A Journal of Witness*, *Illya's Honey*, *Freshwater*, *Crack the Spine*, *Her Texas*, and *The Wayfarer: A Journal of Contemplative Literature*. She lives in central Texas with her husband and daughter.

Ann Davenport is a poet, essayist, translator, and teacher who holds an MFA in Poetry and Poetry in Translation from Drew University. Her

poetry and critical writing have also appeared in *Bird's Thumb*, *Pleiades: Literature in Context*, and *The Stillwater Review*. Ann serves as the Executive Editor of QuillsEdge Press.

Marion Peters Denard's poetry is forthcoming in *Peregrine* and has been featured on *PDX Collective*, *City Scapes: Poems by PDX Writers* and *Arches: The Alumni Magazine of the University of Puget Sound*. Ms. Denard holds a MA in Liberal Studies from Dartmouth College and was a finalist in the 2011 Pat Schneider Poetry Contest. She lives and works in the Rogue Valley of Southern Oregon.

Patrick Dixon is a photographer and writer who lives in Olympia, Washington. His photos have been published in *Smithsonian*, *Oregon Coast*, *National Fisherman*, *Cirque Literary Journal* and others. He is the editor and co-designer of the seven-book *Anchored in Deep Water: The FisherPoets Anthology* (2014). More of his work may be seen at <http://www.pdixonphotography.com/>.

Donelle Dreese is a Professor of English at Northern Kentucky University. She is the author of *Sophrosyne* (Aldrich Press), and the novel *Deep River Burning* (WiDo Publishing). Her poetry and fiction have appeared in a wide variety of literary journals including *Blue Lyra Review*, *Roanoke Review*, *Louisville Review*, and *Quiddity International*.

Sarah Evans has had over a hundred stories published in anthologies, magazines and online. Prizes have been awarded by, amongst others: Words and Women, Winston Fletcher, Stratford Literary Festival, Glass Woman and Rubery. And publishing outlets include: the Bridport Prize, Unthank Books, Bloomsbury and Best New Writing. She has also had work performed in London, Hong Kong and New York.

Anam Feerasta's work, primarily acrylic on canvas, depicts the struggles of South Asian women to overcome obstacles deeply embedded in the social and cultural fabric of South Asia. Switching between representational art and abstract techniques, Anam explores ideas of identity, objectification, marginalization, and what it really means to be a South Asian woman juxtaposed against the zeitgeist of western individualism and gender equality

Maureen Fielding is an associate professor of English and Women's Studies at Penn State Brandywine. Her work has appeared in *Rubbertop*

Review, *Amarillo Bay*, *Westview*, and other journals. She is working on a novel inspired by her experiences as a Russian intercept operator in West Berlin.

Christina Fulton graduated from Florida Atlantic University with her MFA in fiction. She is currently teaching at Miami Dade College North. Two of her poems were in the fall 2015 edition of *Open Minds Quarterly*. Her creative nonfiction pieces “Spiderman and The Old Man,” “Manahawkin Vice,” and “Do You Remember?” have been in *The Scarlet Leaf Review*, *The Foliate Oak Literary Magazine*, and *The Route Seven Review*.

Louis Gallo was born and raised in New Orleans. He now lives in Virginia and teaches at Radford Univ. He is former editor of *The Barataria Review* and *Books: A New Orleans Review*. He has received an NEA grant from the South Carolina Arts Commission for fiction. He is a former contributing editor of *The Pushcart Press*. He has published widely in both poetry and fiction.

Erica Garvin is a published author of short stories and poems. Recently graduating from Southern New Hampshire University with a MA in English literature and creative writing, Erica will begin teaching composition in the Fall at a local community college. Erica spends most of her time chasing her daughter around their country house in Ohio. Her nights are filled with writing and reading.

Nancy Gerber received a doctorate in English from Rutgers University. She is the author of *Losing a Life: A Daughter's Memoir of Caregiving* and *Fire and Ice: Poetry and Prose*, named a Notable Book in poetry in the Shelf Unbound Indie Books Competition. She is an advanced candidate in psychoanalytic training at the Academy of Clinical and Applied Psychoanalysis in Livingston, New Jersey.

Mayra Nuñez Gould is a resident of NJ, Mayra Nuñez Gould, was born in Havana, Cuba and left when she was 6. She is a lover of books, travel, hiking, wildlife, journaling, and lighting candles for any occasion.

Sam Grisham attended SCAD Atlanta where she majored in painting and was recipient of the SCAD Artistic Honors, Amos Glenda Knight Keys and Joel C. Reeves scholarships for painting. She was a selected regional participant in the 2013 Bombay Sapphire Artisan Series, co-

sponsored by Russell and Danny Simmons' RUSH Philanthropic Arts Foundation. Sam has had two successful solo exhibits and participated in numerous group exhibits in Atlanta area galleries including Mason Fine Art, Arts Exchange, Southwest Arts Atlanta, Arts Clayton and deFine Art. Sam was also a selected participant in Art Prize of Grand Rapids, MI in 2010.

Alexis Groulx's work has been previously published, or is forthcoming in *Ayris*, *After the Pause*, *Blue Lyra Review*, *Gravel*, *Off the Coast*, *Smoky Quartz*, and *Sun & Sandstone*. She lives in NH.

Maryanne Hannan has published poetry in *Rattle*, *Oxford Poetry*, *minnesota review*, *Mom Egg*, *WomenArts Quarterly Review*, and previous issues of *Adanna*. A former Latin teacher, she lives in upstate New York.

Leonore Hildebrandt is the author of a letterpress chapbook, *The Work at Hand*, and a full-length collection, *The Next Unknown*. She has published poems and translations in the *Café Reivew*, *Cerise Press*, the *Cimarron Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Drunken Boat*, *The Fiddlehead*, *Poetry Daily*, and *Poetry Salzburg Review*, among other journals. A native of Germany, Hildebrandt lives "off the grid" in Harrington, Maine. She teaches writing at the University of Maine and serves on the editorial board of the *Beloit Poetry Journal*.

Suzanne Kamata is the author of four novels, including *Losing Kei*, the award-winning *Gadget Girl: The Art of Being Invisible*, *Screaming Divas*, and *The Mermaids of Lake Michigan* (forthcoming). She recently completed an MFA at the University of British Columbia, and she teaches at Tokushima University in Japan. She received a grant from the Sustainable Arts Foundation for work on her mother/daughter travel memoir.

Seivi Katro is an Albanian immigrant writer living in Boston Massachusetts. She graduated from The University of Massachusetts, Boston with a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and Creative Writing. She is currently working on multiple projects focusing on the Albanian diaspora experience through the eyes of young Albanian women. She has a blog where she likes to post her ramblings: seivi-k-stories.tumblr.com.

Gloria Keeley is a graduate of San Francisco State University with a BA and MA in Creative Writing. She currently volunteers at the grammar school she attended, teaching poetry writing to third graders. Her work has appeared in Spoon River Poetry Review, Chiron, Slipstream, The MacGuffin, Midnight Circus, Orbis, Stillwater, Ember A Journal Of Luminous Things , El Portal and others.

Where the Sky Opens is **Laurie Klein**'s debut collection. A past winner of the Thomas Merton Prize, she also has an award-winning chapbook, *Bodies of Water, Bodies of Flesh*. Other poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Barrow Street*, *The Southern Review*, *MAR*, *Books & Culture*, and *Rivers of Earth and Sky: Poems for the Twenty-first Century*.

Bénédicte Kusendila received an M.A. in Germanic Languages, English and Applied Linguistics, from the Catholic University of Louvain and holds an M.Phil-degree in Education and Applied Language Studies from the University of Cape Town. Her poems have been published in *Extract(s)*, *Gravel Magazine*: a literary journal, *Hawaii Pacific Review*, *Gambling The Aisle* and *Aji Magazine*.

Linda Lampert's poems have appeared in *Vermont Magazine*, *The Jewish Women's Literary Annual*, *The Aureorean*, *Ruah*, *Peer Glass*, etc. She has taught creative writing classes to college students and aspiring adults. She originates from New York, and currently resides in Vermont.

Bryanna Licciardi has received her MFA in poetry and is currently pursuing a PhD in Literacy Studies. Her work appears in such journals as *Poetry Quarterly*, *Blazevox*, *491 Magazine*, *Dos Passos Review*, *Cleaver Magazine*, and *Adirondack Review*. Please visit www.bryannallicciardi.com to learn more.

Stephen Linsteadt studied painting with Marjorie Hyde at Grossmont College and graduated with honors from Long Beach State University with a B.F.A. in painting. In 1978, Stephen was an Artist-in-Residence for the City of Long Beach, where he taught painting to inner-city youth. He is the author of the books *The Heart of the Hero*, and *Quantum Healing Codes*. His collection of poetry is titled *The Beauty of Curved Space* (Glass Lyre Press 2016). His paintings can be seen at StephenLinsteadtStudio.com.

Joan Manheimer is a psychologist and poet working in Denver, Colorado. She has had poems published in Calyx, Edgz, and The Jewish Women's Literary Journal, among others. "Suck Bang Blow" is for Stewart, her best reader.

Jennifer Marcus lives with her husband and daughter in rural northeast Missouri, where she really does enjoy listening to the coyotes and owls at night. She enjoys books, food, and long walks on the Katy Trail. Currently she is working on her first full-length novel.

Gigi Marks lives in Ithaca, New York. Her first chapbook, *What We Need*, was published by Shortline Editions. A second chapbook of her poems, *Shelter*, was published by Autumn House Press in 2011. Her collection of poems *Close By* was published by Silverfish Review Press in Spring 2012.

Rosemary S. McGee holds a doctorate in Medical Humanities from Drew University and a Master in Mental Health Counseling from BGSP-NJ. Her book, *Spilling My Guts*, was published in 2007. McGee is an adjunct Drew professor, president of Arseya book publishing, humanities scholar at Atlantic Health and an advanced psychoanalytic candidate at ACAP.

Ilene Millman is a speech/language pathologist currently teaching preschool children and working with adult literacy students as both volunteer tutor and tutor trainer. Her poems have appeared in a variety of print journals including the Sow's Ear, Paterson Review, Poetica, and US1 Worksheets. She recently won a prize in a competition at *Poetica*. No Más Bebés emerged from a desire to acknowledge the lives and struggles of forgotten women.

Toti O'Brien's mixed media have been exhibited in group and solo shows, in Europe and the US, since 1995. She has illustrated two children books and two memoirs. Her artwork has appeared in The Adroit, Speechless, Maudlin, and Rogue Agent, among many other journals and magazines.

Derek N. Otsuji teaches English at Honolulu Community College. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Atlanta Review*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Green Hills Literary Lantern*, *Hawaii Review*, *The MacGuffin*, *The Midwest Quarterly*, *Poet Lore*, *Sanskrit*, and *Word Riot*.

Christine Redman-Waldeyer is founder/editor of *Adanna* and Associate Professor of English at Passaic County Community College. Her publications include *Frame by Frame*, *Gravel*, and *Eve Asks* with Muse Pie Press and she's appeared in *Schuylkill Valley Journal*, *The Texas Review*, *Verse Wisconsin*, among others. She is a co-editor of *Writing After Retirement: Tips by Successful Retired Writers*, Scarecrow Press.

Lisa Regen writes fiction and creative non-fiction exploring themes of risk, loss, and contradiction. Her work has appeared in *A-Minor Magazine*, *Shark Reef Review*, and elsewhere. She lives in North Bend, WA with her husband and two children. She runs a graphic design business and holds a BA in English Literature from DePaul University.

Sarah Sadie's chapbook, *Do-It-Yourself Paper Airplanes* was published by Five Oaks Press in 2015 and a full-length collection, *We Are Traveling Through Dark at Tremendous Speeds*, is now out from LitFest Press in 2016. She teaches at the Loft and the Iowa Summer Writing Festival, and works with poets one on one. She also hosts occasional creativity classes and retreats for writers and other creative types. www.cowfeather.org.

Carey Salerno is the executive editor of Alice James Books. Her first book, *Shelter*, won a Kinereth Gensler Award and was published in 2009. She also is the editor, along with Anne Marie Macari, of *Lit From Inside: 40 Years of Poetry from Alice James Books* (2013). Salerno teaches poetry and creative writing for the University of Maine at Farmington. She lives in New Jersey.

Barbara Siman's background is in theatre as a director, choreographer and playwright. She has written a play called "Stolen" that has been workshopped and produced in NYC and abroad. She has had short stories published in many literary journals and magazines throughout New York, and is currently working on other writing.

Linda Simone's publications include *Archeology* (Flutter Press, 2014) and poems in numerous journals and anthologies. Her work was selected by San Antonio Poet Laureate Laurie Ann Guererro for her 2016 signature project, *Love Poems to San Antonio*. Her work is forthcoming in *Bearing the Mask: Southwestern Persona Poems* (Dos Gatos Press)

and the *Texas Poetry Calendar*. She lives in San Antonio, Texas.
www.lindasimone.com.

Evelyn A. So grew up on the East Coast and lives in northern California, where she has served as a board member for Poetry Center San Jose. Her recent work appeared in *Pedestal Magazine*, *Three: An Anthology of Flash Nonfiction*, and elsewhere. Her poetry has twice been published in *Red Wheelbarrow (National Edition)*, *Gingerbread House*, *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal*, *Caesura*, and other journals. This is her third appearance in *Adanna Literary Journal*.

J. J. Steinfeld is a Canadian fiction writer, poet, and playwright living on Prince Edward Island, where he is patiently waiting for Godot's arrival and a phone call from Kafka. While waiting, he has published sixteen books, including *Should the Word Hell Be Capitalized?* (Stories, Gaspereau Press), *Would You Hide Me?* (Stories, Gaspereau Press), *An Affection for Precipices* (Poetry, Serengeti Press), *Misshapeness* (Poetry, Ekstasis Editions), *Identity Dreams and Memory Sounds* (Poetry, Ekstasis Editions), and *Madhouses in Heaven, Castles in Hell* (Stories, Ekstasis Editions).

Lois Greene Stone, writer and poet, has been syndicated worldwide. Poetry and personal essays have been included in hard & softcover book anthologies. Collections of her personal items/ photos/ memorabilia are in major museums including twelve different divisions of The Smithsonian.

Sherry Stuart-Berman is a therapist working in community mental health. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Earth's Daughters*, *Paterson Literary Review*, *Blue Fifth Review*, *Atticus Review*, *Knot Magazine*, and the anthologies, *Malala: Poems for Malala Yousafzai* and *Drawn to Marvel: Poems from the Comic Books*. She lives in New York with her husband and son.

Chun Sue, pen name of Zou Nan, was born in 1983 in Shandong Province, China, and grew up in Beijing. Her banned novel *Beijing Doll* made her a *TIME Magazine* cover girl in 2004. She currently lives in Berlin, Germany, with her husband, her son and a cat.

John J. Trause, the Director of Oradell Public Library, is the author of *Eye Candy for Andy (13 Most Beautiful... Poems for Andy Warhol's*

Screen Tests, Finishing Line Press, 2013); *Inside Out, Upside Down, and Round and Round* (Nirala Publications, 2012); *Seriously Serial* (Poets Wear Prada, 2007; rev. ed. 2014); and *Latter-Day Litany* (Éditions élastiques, 1996), the latter staged Off-Off Broadway. His book of fictive translations, found poems, and manipulated texts, *Exercises in High Treason* (2016), is published by Great Weather for Media. His translations, poetry, and visual work appear internationally in many journals and anthologies. He is pleased to have his work appear in *Adanna* once again.

Geraldine Kloos Weltman is a retired government researcher and manager. She recently relocated to Chicago, Illinois after living for many years in Central New Jersey. Her work has appeared in *Adanna* and *U.S. 1 Worksheets*.

Liang Yujing grew up in China and is currently a PhD candidate at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. His translations of Chinese poetry have appeared in a number of magazines across the world. He is also the Chinese translator of *Best New Zealand Poems 2014*.

Kristin Camitta Zimet is the author of *Take in My Arms the Dark* and the editor of *The Sow's Ear Poetry Review*. Her poems are in journals including *Natural Bridge*, *Poet Lore*, and *Crab Orchard Review*. She performs poetry in venues from arboretum to concert hall. She is also a Reiki healer and a nature guide.