

The Write Place At the Write Time

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"Owl" by C. Michelle Olson; <http://cmichelleolson.com/>

Owl Time

by John Grey

Wings whisper to me,
go in, go in,

the glide, the hoot,
almost in my subconscious...
this is the night of the owl.

After a day ensconced in tree hole
dreaming God's blueprints...
mouse, chipmunk, vole...

the woods change shift,
no more the wide-eyed naturalist
poking in scat or tracks
but the hum, the swoop, the kill,
the fluted hush of
tonight's invasion.

So I head home,
these hidden schools
of predator and prey
not for my lessons.

This is nature...
from light to song
to dark to owl...
no governance alike.

Bio- John Grey is an Australian born poet. Recently published in *Slant*, *Stoneboat* and *US1 Worksheets* with work upcoming in *Bryant Literary Magazine*, *Natural Bridge*, *Southern California Review* and *Soundings East*.

Reboot

by Cristine A. Gruber

Pessimism, like a pulsing drum,
beats a steady rhythm
along both temples.

The empathic one, absorbing
the pain, pulls it unto herself
with the power of a Dyson,

thus cleansing the room
of unnecessary debris,
protecting those who can't

otherwise handle
the incessant pervasion
of negative information.

Permeation gone viral, she retreats
to recharge life's battery, having long-since
mastered the process of shut-down and reboot.

Lucidity

by Cristine A. Gruber

Life's rain has come again,
warmer this time,
but torrential in scope,

heavy and oppressive,
dark and near-endless,
a streaming veil to cover the light.

No way to know
how long it will last,
unpredictable in nature,

erratic in intensity,
days of near-blackness
followed by mere moments of clarity.

Shell

by Cristine A. Gruber

He withdrew to safety that
night, back into his shell,
wishing to be unseen,
wanting to be left alone.

For only when alone
could he truly breathe.
In the presence of others,
every careful breath was

measured, as though breathing
too hard or too deeply would
only serve to bring unwanted
attention to himself,

making him more visible.
He felt his shell cracking,
breaking apart slowly,
one piece at a time,

the inpouring of light
too fast and too brilliant,
finding and illuminating
every perceived transgression.

For some, failings are too dear,
not deserving of the light...
if only in the mind,
if only for a time.

Bio- Cristine A. Gruber has had work featured in numerous magazines, including: *North American Review*, *Writer's Digest*, *Dead Snakes Literary Journal*, *The Endicott Review*, *The Homestead Review*, *Iodine Poetry Journal*, *Miller's Pond*, *The Penwood Review*, *Poem*, *Thema*, *The Tule Review*, and *Westward Quarterly*. Her first full-length collection of poetry, *Lifeline*, was released by Infinity Publishing and is available from Amazon.com.

I Am Smoke

by A.J. Huffman

rising from the wolf's mouth
as it howls at the moon. I am symbolic,
ephemeral, a fleeting moment of warmth
forced against icy night. I am language's

aftermath, the tangible tracings of tongue
as it struggles to form appropriate sound.

With Glass

by A.J. Huffman

slipper fantasies fading with each
corresponding midnight stroked arm,
fingers of wanna-be princes that are
anything but charming. Sleek-suited
toads hope to slide past the kiss
and straight into the sheets
of fairy-told forever. Too bad
for them. That book failed infinitely
years ago, and now graces the under-
lying ash of an aging chimneysweep's
corner cot.

I Dream in Backward

by A.J. Huffman

facing segments, tall as buildings
that have never touched
the ground. They mirror
each other before turning silver
gaze towards me. I see my future
multiplying itself. Smaller
and smaller, I eventually disappear
into distance, and the blink
of my own eye.

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

Birthday

by Nels Hanson

Home in the Chinese Rabbit's each twelfth
year, month's gem Orange Topaz, jewel of
friendship in Scorpio, my birthdate recurs

with November on All Saints' between All
Hallows' Eve, All Souls', Day of the Dead
in Mexico. The first was first day of winter

when worshippers stoked fires keeping sun
alive, heart beating until March. My fateful
numbers are 1, 7, 13, planet far Pluto, solar

system's last satellite, circling on separate
plane, named for Lord of the Underworld,
assailant of Persephone. Picking asphodels

as the black chariot appeared and gathered
her to his kingdom underground she tasted
a pomegranate's red seeds, sealing his spell

forever. Her reprieve marks Spring, emerald
blades rising where white feet press brown
grass. In sunlight she remains three seasons

with her mother Demeter while inside Earth
down torch-lit branching corridors a pacing
King awaits his birthday, the Queen's return.

Bio- Nels Hanson has worked as a farmer, teacher and contract writer/editor. His fiction received the San Francisco Foundation's James D. Phelan Award, Pushcart Prize nominations in 2010, 2012, and 2014, and has appeared in *Antioch Review*, *Black Warrior Review*, *Southeast Review* and other journals. Poems appeared in *Word Riot*, *Oklahoma Review*, *Pacific Review* and other magazines, and are in press at *Sharkpack Review Annual*, *The Straddler*, Four Chambers Press, *Stoneboat*, *Meat for Tea*, *Sediments*, *Carbon Culture Review*, and *The Mad Hatter's Review*. Poems in *Outside In Literary & Travel Magazine* and *Citron Review* have been nominated for 2014 Pushcart Prizes.

Editor's Note: See Mr. Hanson's poem "Other Shell" on the Interview page beneath the interview of author Joan Anderson.

I dreamt

by Steve Komarnyckyj

I dreamt, love, that the Goddesses
Compelled me like Paris to choose
Who among them was the fairest
And they paraded before me in the forest,
And as I balanced the apple in my hand
I saw that they all had your face,
And they became as shapes traced in sand
Strewn on a glass through which light plays,
And I knew then I could not choose
For he who would choose betrays,
So, love, forgive my faithlessness,
As I choose not to make a choice,
But find within your wounded heart
The sanctuary of the human voice.

Bio- Steve Komarnyckyj's literary translations and poems have appeared in *Poetry Salzburg Review*, *The North*, and *Modern Poetry in Translation*. His book of translations from the Ukrainian poet Pavlo Tychyna, *The Raspberry's Eyelash*, was published by *Poetry Salzburg* in 2011. His last collection of translated poetry, *A Flight Over the Black Sea*, which was published by Waterloo Press in 2014, won an English PEN award. He runs Kalyna Language Press with his partner Susie and three domestic cats.

Today I Wondered

by Ginger Peters

Today I wondered if the wind is really memories,
blowing across the land entering one consciousness, then another.
Perhaps the power behind the wind is the reflection of others—
sadness, laughter, tears, joy, sickness, health, war, peace, life, and death.

Take in a deep breath of the breeze,
allow the emotions of the world to be there, if only for a moment.

Today I wondered if the ominous fog that rises over the mountaintop,
sinks low in the valley, and rests by the water, is really fog at all.
Perhaps it is the souls of others who lived before us—
the dead floating together, arm in arm
their spirits entering and exiting our souls
so that they might be felt in the dampness,
noticed and always remembered.

Today I wondered if the tiny wildflowers
that bloom on the desert floor—
colored in yellow, orange, purple, and red.
Perhaps are the souls of precious children and sweet old dogs,
who left the world way too soon.
Coming back to fill our minds with an array of glorious color
and playful energy,
smell the heavenly fragrance, a reminder that the unpretentious
is the meaning of beauty and worth.

Today I wondered about the coyote as he ran quickly across my trail.
Perhaps he was a man in the beginning, but nature thought he was way
too intelligent to be a man, so he became the coyote.
He might have helped make the stars with mica dust,
and gave man the seeds to plant crops, that grow and feed.
The freedom craved, the adventurous spirit needed, the desire of survival—
all passed down from this magical hero, the coyote, who has always been
here.

Today I wondered

pretending

by Ginger Peters

pretending the dank and the darkness is not inside her
pretending the murkiness is not always seeping into her
brain, flowing through her veins, and flooding her heart—
pretending the screaming fits of rage do not exist
pretending the daily threats of suicide are never voiced

pretending I don't have to watch my back in fear
of the lies, manipulation and contention that is perched in her soul—
pretending she doesn't sit and tremble
pretending she is never irrational
pretending she is the opposite of pessimistic
pretending the cruel words like "fat and ugly" never spew
from her unbounded mouth
pretending she seeks medical help for the insanity she bathes in—
pretending she takes a pill each day that gives her peace
pretending I have never wished her dead
pretending there are no disturbances inside her
pretending no dank or darkness will seep into my blood
pretending she is forever well.

Bio- Ginger Peters is happy and proud to say that she has appeared in *The Write Place At The Write Time* four times, including this time, with poetry and a memoir. She has been writing for a number of years and no matter how much money she makes or doesn't make on a story, a poem, or a nonfiction piece, the thrill of writing something that might enrich someone's life will never fade from her heart. She enjoys her best friend and husband, Rick. She loves hiking and is always awe-inspired by nature. She feels she is so blessed to be able to spill out a few words here and there that might inspire a few wondering souls like herself.

Dwindling Light

by Jacqueline Jules

It's not the frost,
but dwindling light
that makes the leaf lose its green,
blush red or pale to gold.
Pigments emerge
when darkness intrudes
minute by minute
curbing chlorophyll
and other chemical desires
till stems shrivel
and lose grip in the wind.

If I flutter away now,
create space
for fresh spring buds,
can I come back
a pine needle?
To enjoy a heavy wax coating
and cells filled with anti-freeze.

I want to be untouched
by the absence
of light or warmth.
To remain elegant and green
under falling snow.

Removing Red-eye

by Jacqueline Jules

Yesterday is mine
like a jpeg on a screen.
With a few simple clicks
I can brighten backgrounds,
crop stray arms,
remove red-eye, and
whiten that stain on my tooth.

Yes, the past can be controlled—
unlike my view of tomorrow
taken at night without a flash.

Worse yet, is my vision today
as I fiddle with settings and squint,
attempting to capture events
only clear in retrospect.

Too Sentimental For a Trash Can

by Jacqueline Jules

Snugly tucked
beside sweaters he seldom wears,
I find a bird's nest of scraps from 2005.
Concert tickets used in a snowstorm.
A receipt from a diner on a drive to New York.
Gas station stops. Grocery lists.
ATM slips too faded to read—
all stashed in the drawer
like a magpie's shining stolen treasure.

My husband is too sentimental
to use a trash can,
unable to toss an empty pill bottle
without prompting.

It makes me feel safe, as a wife,
knowing
I won't be easily discarded.

Bio- Jacqueline Jules is the author of the poetry chapbooks, *Field Trip to the Museum*, published by Finishing Line Press, and *Stronger Than Cleopatra*, published by ELJ Publications. Her poetry has appeared in over 100 publications including *The Potomac Review*, *Soundings Review*, *Gargoyle*, *Main Street Rag*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Innisfree Poetry Journal*, *Red Booth Review*, *Gravel Magazine*, *OffCourse*, *Third Wednesday*, *Poetica*, *Imitation Fruit*, *Connecticut River Review*, *Pirene's Fountain*, and *The Poetry Friday Anthologies*. She is also the author of two dozen books for young readers including the *Zapato Power* series, *No English*, *Sarah Laughs*, and *Never Say a Mean Word Again*.

You can visit her online at www.jacquelinejules.com

One More Summer

by Stephen Philip Druce

Slowly unclenching, the pollen-stained fists of the gods
unleash their disobedient rivers of wine, to chase
skimming birds through seamless meadows,
sweet-scented pastures and cornfields of screaming inertia.
In the sweeping singed residue of fresh fire sunlight,

feathered fragments cut a weary breeze
but perish in a heedless wilderness,
as we majestic in slumber, perch a balmy embrace
below the shimmering oak. Our ripened prayers answered—
one more summer.

Bio- Stephen Philip Druce is a forty-nine-year-old author from the UK. He is currently a music teacher. At college his literary tutors nicknamed him 'The real fantasist'; such was the vivid imagination he would display in his essay writing. Stephen enjoys reading Bukowski, Keats, WH Auden, and Philip Larkin.

Nightfall

by Howard Winn

Standing in the shadow of motion
where bare tree limbs lurch
in the winds of winter,
a spectator is whipped by wraiths
of darkness and light,
and becomes part of the scene
without choice.
Light and dark flicker
over him.
Motion between is the essential
character of the moment.
Oak leaves still hanging until now,
become detached in this gesture
of invisible force and fling themselves
as brown shadows of substance
across the landscape.

Jokers

by Howard Winn

It is quite possible that some
of the post-post-modern artists
are pranksters of the first degree,

displaying wit and a love of money equally,
like clowns at a children's party,
fun entertainers but paid well,
to please the childish characters
who believe intelligence comes
automatically with large bank accounts
and the ownership of multiple homes,
perhaps a yacht or two, as well,
knowledge and ability beyond
the digital algorithms that makes them rich.
The oligarchs of all nations,
with more money than common sense,
at least of an artistic bent,
aching to be profound as well
as admired, do not recognize
the jesters plying their trade
in the billionaires' court.
Hedging their investments as
they have with their money market funds,
they view with one another at
the art auctions of Sotheby's or Christie's
for the ultimate treasure that will stamp
them forever, or at least for a lifetime,
as the wise and wealthy connoisseur
of all that is beautiful, original, and enduring,
never recognizing they are the butt of
the artists' joke.

Mother and Child

by Howard Winn

My mother sits in a straight-backed chair
that forces her to sit stiffly upright.
Her long blond hair is primly folded
and wrapped into a matronly bun
on the back of her head.
She looks like a young girl, in spite of it.
She is nearly twenty and her first son
sits on her lap for the camera.

She is in profile, gazing with love at his round head.
He is dressed in a long laced gown
and might be of either sex.
They would have had to hold quite still
for the portrait camera used a decade
into this twentieth century.
I wonder how she managed to keep a child unmoving
and to look so calm and composed.
Now the picture is sepia, browned by age
from sharp contemporary contrast of black and white.
The picture does not reveal hopes or dreams,
past or future or even character.
She was four months pregnant
on her wedding day,
rebellion against the
Victorian world of her parents.
That mutiny is not in the photo.
It is merely this truth in one time
and this falsehood forever and ever.
She is dead and so is he.
I have this picture framed and hung
on my wall with many others.
I combine it with countless other portraits
and memories, none of which is Truth,
but what I know of reality. Enough.

Bio- Howard Winn's fiction and poetry, has been published recently by such journals as *Dalhousie Review*, *Taj Mahal Review* (India), *Galway Review* (Ireland), *Antigonish Review*, *Southern Humanities Review*, *Chaffin Review*, *Thin Air Literary Journal*, and *Futures Trading Literary Journal*. His B.A. is from Vassar College. He has an M.A. in Creative Writing from Stanford University. His doctoral work was done at NYU. He has been a social worker in California and currently is a faculty member of SUNY as Professor of English.

An Umbrella for a Raincoat

by Jacqueline Markowski

Has it been a hundred years, yet? Sun backs
young oak leaves, draws glaring outlines between
them and sky. Another Sunday. Our marriage
owes us something. Smoother edges
of conflict. Coffee's bitter regret dampened
by cream. The deaths through which we hold
hands cause blisters that callous instead
of heal. The little things surpassed and
put away, not becoming chronic
danger zones. Passion fades into what we are
owed. Midlife crises fit nicely, self-
contained in corners. We prove resistant
to hot lava, our marriage untouchable.
Ordinary drama and unfulfilled dreams
absorb the burden. Let the rawness of process
not become magnified, backlit, as we
count pills and chart days. Ridiculous,
I know, to request a seatbelt for an airbag.

Bio- Jacqueline Markowski's work has appeared in *San Pedro River Review*, *Storm Cycle*,
Rainbow Journal, *Kentucky Review*, *Blast Furnace* and is forthcoming in *Bird's Thumb*
and *S/tick*. A Pushcart Prize nominee, she won first place at The Sandhills Writer's
Conference and was a semi-finalist for the 2014 Auburn Witness Poetry Prize. She is
currently working on a collection of poetry.

Changing Season

by Jared Pearce

The leaves don't stick
To the sidewalk;
All up third street
You've a clear path.

It's the dry air
Sidles them to the grass
Margins, and the wiping
Kicks of teenagers

Dreading their way
To school and home,
Ditching the husks
Of their manufactured breakfasts

That cling to the vines
And shrubs and trees
Of the timber above
The creek that barely survived

The Indian summer.
The fallen leaves hold
To the grass; perhaps
The simple breaths wet

Enough to trap them, the spines
Of their fingers enough to catch,
Like fogging a spoon so
It dangles from your nose,

Like the stick of rained on
Clothes, or the teens
Working out someplace to cling
Or let go.

Bio- Jared Pearce teaches writing and literature at William Penn University. His work has recently appeared in *Earth's Daughters*, *Fourteen Hills*, *The Derronda Review*, *Hospital Drive*, *Marco Polo*, and *Tiger Train*.

Out of Body

by Chanel Brenner

My therapist says,
*Do the things that make you happy,
even if they don't anymore.*
I go to lunch with a friend,
order champagne,
but while eating Steelhead and salad,

I feel disconnected from my body.
My friend, holding her chalice
of sparkling water, confides
she's pregnant.
I say I'm happy for her, and I am.
Not happy like I would have been
if my son were alive, but happy
enough to toast her with champagne,
while I float
above myself like a bubble,
staring at the gutted
fish on my plate.

Vanilla Milk

by Chanel Brenner

Today, when I walked by the lab
where you had your blood tested
all those times, I saw our ghosts,
sitting side by side
on the gift shop bench,
looking at the book about dinosaurs.

You chewed your Spider-Man shirt collar,
and I read aloud
about the barosaurus and triceratops.
You stopped me at the pliosaur,
who could swallow a person whole.
What's extinct mean? you asked.

It wasn't the best book for a child
who had almost died.

I got one thing right that day.

I remembered to bring
your vanilla milk in a box.
When the nurse came in,
I handed it to you,
told you to wait until I said *when*.

You never noticed the needle go in:
you sucked steadily through the straw,
your brown eyes glued
to the picture of the pliosaur
in the open book,

and when I said it was time to go,
you asked in your sweet,
soft voice,

Already, Mommy?

Shifting Sand

by Chanel Brenner

I sit beside my son's
hospital bed.
The fluorescent lights are so bright
I don't know how he sleeps,
but he does.
His father paces the hallway,
still in his suit jacket,
phone to his ear.
When I shift my foot, I feel sand
between the linoleum
and the sole of my shoe.
Yesterday, my son swung
and jumped like Superman,
landed in the safety of the playground.
After school, I shook the sand
from his shoes on our front porch, annoyed
by how it seemed never-ending.
Now, his blue Nikes
lie between me and the bed,
sand spilling out.
I shift my foot, grinding the finite grains
against the scarred linoleum,
to the rhythm of his breathing.

Bio- Chanel Brenner's collection of poems, *Vanilla Milk*, will be released by Silver Birch Press in October, 2014. Her poems have been published or are forthcoming in *Poet Lore*, *Rattle*, *Cultural Weekly*, *Diverse Voices Quarterly*, *Glassworks*, and elsewhere. Her poem, "What Would Wislawa Szymborska Do?," was displayed at the James Whitcomb Riley Museum in Indianapolis; and her poem, "July 28th," won first prize in *The Write Place At the Write Time's* contest, judged by Ellen Bass. She lives in Los Angeles with her family.

Addiction

by Maya Haziza

he makes me want to start again
inhaling and exhaling
so that maybe,
our lips will frame at their edge
at the very same time

so that maybe I can sit and watch
the traces of smoke swirling through the air
so beautiful, so fading

so that maybe I can press my nose against
your body and inhale your scent that's remained
so sweet, so strong

we will inhale the same poisoned air
and our addiction will bind us
when we have nothing else to share

Love and Hate

by Maya Haziza

Some say the world will never know
really know, true love and true hate
Some say there is no divergence
they are intertwined at their innermost core
From what I've tasted of passion
I hold with those who still have yet to know

still have yet to reach the understanding
there is no divergence
The two are entangled in an endless maze
chasing after each other like a cat chasing a mouse
never seizing
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for loathing,
Love will be sitting in the corner of the room,
legs crossed, resting its back against the rigid chair,
waiting
waiting to meet at the end of the day
and when hate walks through the door,
love will look like an old friend, waiting to catch up on all she's missed

The Heart Sits

by Maya Haziza

We let our hearts sit inside of us
untouched and pure,
gentle and compassionate
until the day someone comes in
breaking down its doors
shouting your name,
waking you up
and making sure you can hear them

We let our hearts sit inside of us
protecting our treasure from intruders
as if covering it with bubble wrap,
taping it down, extra, extra, cushion
doing anything we can in order to keep it intact
in order for it not to shatter

We let our hearts sit inside of us
content with itself
reassuring ourselves that it is safe and sound
asking ourselves why we plastered the bubble wrap,
the tape, and the cushion onto our treasure
why we put it there in the first place

We let our hearts sit inside of us
untouched and pure
protecting our treasure,
reassuring ourselves that it is safe and sound
but we never stopped to look inside of it
see what it really wants

We let our hearts sit inside of us
afraid of escaping its confine
afraid of accepting intruders with open embrace
afraid of what we might find buried beneath its jewels

Bio- Maya Haziza is a senior at Milken Community High School in Los Angeles. She has always had a passion for writing, but has found a particular interest in poetry and song-writing. Besides her passion for writing, she enjoys traveling, photography, and dance. Maya hopes that after reading her work, you gain a new perspective about different concepts.

Schizophrenia Night

Inspired by John Nash and the 2001 film, A Beautiful Mind

by Michael Lee Johnson

I am a chalkboard computer brain.
I have updated drawn raw
images even the classroom
students cannot see, hear, nor understand.
They sit quietly in Disneyland
wondering about my eccentricities
I capture their stillness, then I speak.
I am the professor, special agent of government
dream tracer of crossroad puzzles.
Photographic memory in private rooms,
did I hear a critic, erase
destroy dissociative thoughts.
I walk out unsteady in disbelief.
Is there a shadow of storybooks following me?

I am a genius; I know who I am.
I spend nights in formula construction
drawing full color images of my brain,
percentages of gray matter lost.

I stick my ego to the eagle of the sky.

When on a high on an airplane, self-love,
full bloom, I keep my enemies at bay.
I shelter the skeletons of thought.

I trust Jesus because His image is stable,
every group I have ever known says "The Lord's Prayer."
Even then, new members leave, disappear, I hear what they said.
I had an MRI to trace all my youthful abuses.
There were no images there but voices I remember.
I cast there shadows, audio, visual for show, in the background.
In time, they quiet their voices. I walk beyond their images.
I pass on, they still screenplay.

You have to stretch lean, refer to sanity,
drink Asian tea, smooth out hallucinated sounds
before that stage, I took that Nobel prize,
even before, I forgave you.

Bio- Michael Lee Johnson lived ten years in Canada during the Vietnam era. Today he is a poet, freelance writer, photographer, and small business owner in Itasca, Illinois, who has been published in more than 850 small press magazines in twenty-seven countries, and he edits eight poetry sites. Author's website <http://poetryman.mysite.com/>. Michael is the author of *The Lost American: From Exile to Freedom* (136 page book), several chapbooks of poetry, including *From Which Place the Morning Rises* and *Challenge of Night and Day*, and *Chicago Poems*.

He also has over 69 poetry videos on YouTube as of 2014:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/poetrymanusa/videos>

Betrayals

by David Anthony Sam

The wind howls storm.
It means nothing
It means nothing that
I have been betrayed
and the storm rains me.
The two do not connect.
Not really. But I rage
that he has stolen
my soul with false love.

The dark mist,
the deep rumbling
suit me fine. Now.
It's better to rant a storm
all out of proportion
than murder love.
Being a poet is
a smaller crime.

He was my father.
Now he is mist
sprayed against
filthy glass.
It means nothing.
It means everything.

Bio- Born in Pennsylvania, David Anthony Sam is the grandchild of immigrants. He has lived in Michigan, Florida and now resides in Virginia with his wife and life partner, Linda. They have two children and three grandchildren. Sam has written poetry for over 40 years and has been published in various journals, most recently the *Hurricane Review*, the *Summerset Review*, and *Literature Today*. He has two collections, including *Memories in Clay*, *Dreams of Wolves* (2014). He has taught creative and applied writing, currently serves as president of Germanna Community College, and persists in poetry that seeks to reveal the unity of all being.

Driving Mary Home

by J.E.A. Wallace

Driving Mary home
From *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?*
She lost out on fifty grand
And she says she doesn't care

But in her eyes are faster cars
In faraway adventures
Burying alarm clocks
And too much pain to mention

Where she ends and
The window begins
Is being blurred by
A rainy neon wind

I'd crossed my fingers waiting
Back in the polar car park
Willing out a star from the satellites
As it was getting dark

She stirs and rests her head on me
To hear my breathing in
Under service station castles
She begins to softly sing

*When this journey ends
In a sinking pillow sigh
My eyes will close themselves
As this storm rolls grumbling by*

Our hearts beat along
To the windscreen wiper night
I try to make mine spell out
We will be alright

Bio- J.E.A. Wallace is a poet who moved from London to New York a few years ago after marrying a woman who asked him for a cigarette. His poems have been published in the U.S. and U.K.—including his very first U.S. publishing credit right here on *The Write Place At The Write Time*.

Eye Contact

by Linda Emma

Avoidant, intense, apathetic
Searing to severing
In a single muted conversation
Then craving anonymity
Melting into the folds of a gray hoodie
Amid fallen tresses of unwashed hair

Defiant, compliant, submissive
In deafening silence
Punctuated by staccato response
In monosyllabic assent
Camouflaged in a lackluster resilience
Bleeding in glistening drops of saline

Invasive, intrusive, penetrative
In fruitless effort
To uncover answer without query
In frustrated desperation
Poorly armored in defective defenses
Against stakes far too exceedingly high

Bio- Linda Emma is an author, educator and educational marketing writer. She creates client content and supervises a small team of freelance writers, helping them to hone their individual skills and styles while always maintaining the client voice. Linda also works at a small New England college where she has served as instructor, writing tutor and learning consultant. In the spare moment or two she can eke out of any week, she pens posts to a tongue-in-cheek blog titled Kidssuck.net and tries to still maintain a relationship with the fictional characters of her forthcoming second novel. She is married with two children who always inspire.

Sarasota Bay

by Jan Ball

Lunch debris on the picnic table
at Starfish Restaurant on Cortez
Road:

leftover fries
an empty diet coke can,
a few wavy green lettuce leaves,

we wait and read the humorous
signs (We are on island time here)
while our daughter serenely rocks
on the maple swing at the end
of the dock
—back and forth
—back and forth,
only her pony tail identifiable
from the back as she breastfeeds
our granddaughter; in front
of them, the pelicans docile now
float in Sarasota Bay like bath
toys, one brown, one white,
almost protective.

The chunky woman (like me)
in striped top and capris, waits
for our table discreetly gazing
over the boats as if she's setting
up a photograph and says she
understands when I proudly
indicate our daughter, "I breastfed
four children; don't worry about
the wait," she smiles, either from
the soft sun or the memory.

I know those heady days, too,
the baby cheek against blue-veined
breastskin, Sarasota Bay undulating
inside.

Bio- Jan Ball taught ESL at DePaul University in Chicago. Since she started submitting poems for publication in 1998, 168 of her poems have been published in journals such as:

Atlanta Review, Calyx, Connecticut Review, Mid-America Review, Nimrod and Verse Wisconsin. Jan has published her two chapbooks: *Accompanying Spouse* (2011) and *Chapter of Faults* (2014) with Finishing LinePress. They are available on Amazon. Jan is a member of the Poetry Club of Chicago. Besides writing poetry, Jan wrote a dissertation at the University of Rochester in 1996: *Age and Natural Order in Second Language Acquisition*. When not writing, teaching, or gardening, Jan and her husband travel and like to cook for friends.

A Cherished, Funny/Sad Man

by Cheryl Sommesse

Can pain be measured like
time or sound?

The type of pain that overrules
the senses
and bequeaths invasive grief
as an episodic burden
to the heart.

Expressive eyes—kind eyes,
resolute to escape that sort of agony
and now shut,
while loved ones inherit segments
of the said despair—mingling it with their own:
silently longing for
a do-over
in confines where re-dos
of this genre
remain impossible.

Can that type of pain
be calculated?

Rivers of Tears

by Cheryl Sommesse

Her voice meant everything—
spewing snarky words that widened eyes,
witty insults causing audiences to gasp
and then cackle in hysterics
as if an agreement had been
reached
it would be okay if the world blew
up afterwards.
The quips leaving some
stupefied,
others vitalized,
others stupefied and vitalized.

She was certainly a beguiling woman,
obvious fillers plumping surface crevices
yet leaving hidden gaps
untouched.
Impelled by a robust sense
of self,
an ego bordering on narcissism with
a heart
alleged to be as vast
as the Nile.

But her voice meant everything,
so it seems rather tragic
it would come to
silence her words.

Bio- Cheryl Sommese is a freelance writer. Her past contract work includes ghost blogs, multi-topic articles, authoritative reports, and medical posts. Additionally, she writes poetry, short stories, and nonfiction: a number of her creative pieces have been included in print and online publications.

Ms. Sommese has also completed a screenplay based on her immigrant grandparents' lives as they successfully assimilate into 20th century America and come to confront an unscrupulous, life-changing family member. The writer's dream is to bring their fascinating story to life.

Ms. Sommese lives in New Hampshire with her husband and two dogs.

Remembering That I Have Not Forgiven My Father

by Chrisilla Beascochea-Tsuyama

His hands are calloused from working,
to manually afford the lives he created.
An honest business man with a firm
handshake. He shows his children every day
how to work for what you have. At home,
he warms the couch, flipping channels in silence.
But if he were at home more he would realize the
foundation of our home is cracking.

My father is charismatic, with words eloquent
enough to inspire a person, even if he only knew
them a day or two. He smiles, yet they only see
the trust gleam in his teeth. I wait for his words
to inspire my affection. I wonder if he knows
we have the same smile with one dimple.
But his charisma does not translate into
words at home. We share idle talk
that always fades into silence.

He is the boss, the one that answers your
questions. Settles your doubts on the spot.
He is not afraid to stand up or to lend a hand,
but his voice is loud and commanding. I cannot
hide from his presence. He can tell me what to do.
Father knows what is best. Yet, he cannot tell me what
my favorite color is. A man who knows little about a life
he created, should not claim to know what is best.

My father demands the best for his
family, for himself. He fills his garage with
trucks, his trucks with tools, and he lends them to
anyone, even the neighborhood fools. He is not
afraid to share his things, his time, his
money. He built a life from the brutal words of a
father who didn't believe in him. But the hurt leaked
into his new home, and he can't tell his daughter
I love you.

Just once would have been nice, Father.
I wrote you a letter once, left it on your nightstand,
but I found it in the trash two days later.
I waited for you to watch my games,
my performances, my life, yet you scowled
from the sidelines. I am not angry, not
anymore. I became something, someone
more than you could have imagined,
and I did it all without your help, Father.

Bio- Chrisilla Beascochea-Tsuyama is a Colorado native currently living and working as a Freelance Editor in Denver with her husband. She enjoys painting and rock climbing, and believes that through writing we can communicate to the world powerful moments of existence that reach each individual in a profound way. She has a B.A. In English with a creative Writing emphasis and a minor in Women Studies from Colorado State University-Pueblo. Her poetry and works of fiction have been published in the literary journal *Tempered Steel*.

*

by Simon Perchik

You limp and her casket
breaking open, its splinters
lose hold and this dirt

is water again, each ripple
wider and wider drags ashore
though the pebble you tossed

covers the sea with a darkness
that spends its life drowning
—a tiny rock broken off

from your step by step holding on
forever—you walk on water, close
to the crater's rim half wood

half storm, half where her voice
could be mistaken for moonlight
for the one stone more who in the end

is dead and you lift it
gently, lower it to your lips
as if it was a whisper, or a mouth.

*

by Simon Perchik

This envelope never dries, her name
tightening a faceless turn
that has the sky to itself

—she is still leaving, rising
thinning out while your hand
still damp holds on to a curtain

that is not a dress
and between your fingers
wasted words, wasted years

wasted you—what's left
is a room half walls
half emptiness, half cold mist

as if there's not enough light
to sweeten this note kept naked
covered with rivers and your arms.

Bio- Simon Perchik is an attorney whose poems have appeared in *Partisan Review*, *The Nation*, *Poetry*, *The New Yorker*, and elsewhere. His most recent collection is *Almost Rain*, published by River Otter Press (2013). For more information, free e-books and his essay titled "Magic, Illusion and Other Realities" please visit his website at:
www.simonperchik.com

Midway

by Janine Lehane

The council's recent beautification
efforts succumbed to her passage,
young trees and bushes thrashing against
the undercarriage. Chartreuse, she noted,
as she swept them away, her favorite
color. Oncoming motorists swerved
to the outer lanes as she adjusted
the volume on the radio: Orbison
in his heyday which was pretty much
all the time as far as she was concerned,
that 70s slump simply characteristic
of hefting a great gift. Next came
Emmylou for whom tragedy was no
mask but downright par for the course.

Maintaining an even speed
on the divided highway in the old
Toyota Corolla she charged along
the median strip. Betrayal will do
that to you, send you veering
into uncharted paths.

Professor

by Janine Lehane

He swept his eyes heavenward,
habitually, out of harm's way,
and uncovered the history
of the music in a fragile
falsetto, thematically,
tragically, and rendered
secrets in comical asides,
bowing with upraised glance
at the rightness of the calamity
out of which he spoke
of the perils of genius.
And the music sped

through him relentlessly,
mercilessly, breaking
his circular harmonies
to rush down the city streets
and into the brown river,
then out to the seas
and across the globe.

I always took the front row
to listen to him, a barrage
of raw fellow-feeling.
On another continent
his sphere enlarges
to the precarious natures
on the verge of justice.

Bio- Janine Lehane is a poet, artist, and horsewoman from Brisbane, Australia. She completed postgraduate study at The College of William and Mary, in Virginia, in 2006. Her poetry has been published in anthologies by Telling Our Stories Press 2012, and 2013.

No Seven Dwarfs

by Lois Greene Stone

Snow White; a fairy tale.
Cold, grey; spring is
swift, autumn and summer
also brief. Winter goes on.
Focus on flakes, skaters,
skiers. Wrap colorful
scarves to elevate spirit.
Snow white: pretty and
silent, clinging to trees.
Fireplaces with flirty
flames. Northeast
winter is also a
state of mind.

Bio- 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.

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