

## [The Write Place at the Write Time](#)

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"Taking Flight" by Claire Perkins; <http://claireperkins.com>

About this image: *"This piece was inspired by both the round shape of the canvas and the lines and colors in the beautiful blue and gold Japanese Chiyogami Yuzen papers. The flying cranes suggest sky and the gently curved floral designs represent earth. The repeating circular and*

*spiraling forms pay homage to Van Gogh's "Starry Night" and the vertical lines emphasize the theme of breaking earth's gravitational bond and taking flight into the night sky." —CP*

### **Still Life: Old Man with Mockingbird**

by David Anthony Sam

In threes of mocking  
in flights of brown  
and slate and flash of  
wing white stripes  
the mocking bird

high silhouetted black  
against stark blue sky  
calls and calls and calls  
always in threes like some  
sacred bird trinitizing—

I hear in threes  
and recall in threes  
and see mockingbird  
feather and call  
bird and bobbing branch

I am an aging song  
trilled together  
by the trinity of bird notes  
my aches my sagging face  
my gray hair whitening

my frame and flesh  
thinning like hollow  
bird bones—until  
I become light enough  
for heavenless flight

flitting my salvation  
in white flashes from  
blue sky to hidden

branch in three  
promises of feathers

Bio- David Anthony Sam is the grandson of Polish and Syrian immigrants. He has written poetry for over 40 years and has two collections, *Memories in Clay, Dreams of Wolves* (2014) and *Dark Land, While Light* (1974). He lives in Culpeper, Virginia USA with his wife and life partner, Linda, and currently serves as president of Germanna Community College. 2014-2015 credits include poetry accepted by *American Tanka, Artemis Journal, The Bacon Review, The Birds We Pile Loosely, Blue Heron Review, Buddhist Poetry Review, Carbon Culture Review, Clementine Poetry Journal, The Crucible, Empty Sink Publishing, FLARE: The Flager Review, From the Depths, Heron Tree, Hound, Literature Today, On the Rusk, Piedmont Virginian Magazine, The Scapegoat Review, Spirit Wind Poetry Gallery, The Summerset Review, These Fragile Lilacs, The Write Place at the Write Time, and Yellow Chair Review.*

[www.davidanthonysam.com](http://www.davidanthonysam.com)

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**Grout Pond**

by Anne Whitehouse

In a bowl between mountains  
the pond mirrored the sky:  
reflections of clouds  
and the blue dome of space

on the wrinkled fabric  
of the water's surface,  
where the wind raised whitecaps,  
and the sun sparkled like sequins.

Down a road nearly 200 years old  
meandering through a forest,  
I saw a moose munching apples  
in an abandoned orchard.

Witness to secret silences,  
a pilgrim to forgotten places,  
I listened carefully to what  
was not heard elsewhere.

**My Last Spring in My House and Garden**

by Anne Whitehouse

I planted my sanctuary  
for a future I will not see—  
where I lived for 35 years,  
where I'd hoped to grow old.

I sit motionless under the trees  
and watch my blossoms falling  
and bruising on the ground.

If I could, I would slip  
into the soil like a buried seed.  
Instead I am being blown far,  
far away—I, who always  
clung so close to home.

When he walked out of the marriage,  
it was as if lightning struck our oak,  
splitting it in half, not cleanly,  
but with spikes and jagged edges.

No more soaring trunk,  
no more roots in this fertile earth,  
watered by my tears,  
sparkling in the spring sun.

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**Elegy (For Wendy)**

by Anne Whitehouse

Your expressive brown eyes  
with their faint tinge of hurt,

on a blue-and-white island in the Aegean,  
on a beach honeycombed with caves,

one summer in your reckless youth—  
no clothes but a caftan, a rock for your roof.

Lulled by breezes, rocked by waves,  
you danced in the sea, water sparkled on your skin.

In the film that your friend made of you,  
you seemed more alive than I will ever be.

There are other films—yours, too—  
all the films are now your ghosts.

Of films that took shape from your editing touch,  
I am drawn to the Tibetan throat singers,

how they trained their vocal cavities to produce unearthly tones,  
like the growl of a bull united with the song of a child.

Watching, listening, I am shaken to the core  
by the tantric voice vibrating in rhythm with the universe.

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### **On Vacation**

by Anne Whitehouse

The lifted white tail  
of a deer glimpsed at dawn,  
whoosh of raised hooves  
and uneven thuds  
as it vanishes into the brush.

A ribbon of fog  
lies over the marsh  
like a vestige of a dream,  
dissolving so rapidly  
in the wakeful sun  
it seems it never existed.

Like an empty vessel  
the day waits to be filled  
as we did half our lives ago  
biking up and down hills  
bumping over stones  
skidding over sand

and not falling  
swimming in the sea  
and resting in the sand  
our bodies alive to each other  
and to every living thing.

Bio- Anne Whitehouse is pleased to be appearing once more in *The Write Place at the Write Time*. She is a poet, fiction, and non-fiction writer who was born and raised in Birmingham, Alabama, and lives in New York City. She is the author of five collections of poetry—*The Surveyor's Hand*, *Blessings and Curses*, *Bear in Mind*, *One Sunday Morning*, and *The Refrain*, as well as a novel, *Fall Love*, to be published in Spanish translation as *Amigos y amantes* in 2015. Anne is also a winner of the 2015 Nazim Hikmet Poetry Festival.

[www.annewhitehouse.com](http://www.annewhitehouse.com)

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### **After the Divorce**

by Robert Joe Stout

Somewhere in the darkened room  
something alive, a voice, not audible  
but interrupting where he was. He reaches out

—nothing there. Coffee pot and flowers,  
walls, car, images, impressions  
in a world of movement, change

and all around him beings like himself  
—or ghosts, or angels, dreams appearing  
and dissolving, whispers, laughter,

lives like rain descending, rising  
to descend again, inchoate, changing,  
mere illusions like the wind, the rain.

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### **Accounting**

by Robert Joe Stout

The pencil moves, the page absorbs  
the squiggles, debits, credits, symbols,  
a language, meaningless except to those

who comprehend x or pi, yet people die,  
they starve, they kill themselves, they steal  
to change this squiggle into that,

bread no longer wheat and yeast,  
fruit no longer growth and harvest,  
just loops and lines like those zigzagging

through hospital charts, substitutes  
for breath and want—and meaning less  
than rocks or sticks that point the way  
to water. Point the way to life.

Bio- Robert Joe Stout, freelance journalist and author of eight books, has published a new look at Mexico-U.S. relations, *Hidden Dangers*. His most recent book of poetry, *Monkey Screams*, came out in 2015 from FutureCycle Press.



"My North" by Sarah Rehfeldt; [www.pbase.com/candanceski](http://www.pbase.com/candanceski)

### **Cloud Song, November**

by Sarah Rehfeldt

Just over the hills,  
a scattering of wings  
and white fog—  
all the time in the world  
to piece yourself together—  
gray on white,  
white on gray—  
there is no pattern, clearly,  
how brokenly the mist,  
it pulls from branches,  
its slow walk up the mountain  
going, for the most part,  
entirely unnoticed.  
In this land of hushed giants,

in my still standing,  
I remember,  
I, too, once was part of sky.

Bio- Sarah Rehfeldt is a recent Pushcart nominee and author of *Somewhere South of Pegasus*, a collection of image poems. She lives with her family in western Washington where she is also an artist and photographer. Her book can be purchased from her photography web pages at:  
[www.pbase.com/candanceski](http://www.pbase.com/candanceski)

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### **One for All**

by DW McSweeney

Hands wrapped,  
With rope to pull  
The weight of a single heart

Eyes clinched,  
Effort unseen  
Of those on either side

Free hands,  
Enable the stretch  
Of arms to clasp one another

Open eyes,  
To find the truth  
Not a soul ahead, nor behind

Bio- DW McSweeney is a loving husband, step-father and grandfather. He owns and operates a dog boarding/pet sitting business, to satisfy his passion for animals and give caring pet owners peace of mind. This also gives him the freedom to spend more time with his two Shelties, and write. He writes for the reward of the final edit. Knowing he's captured the perfect words, in the exact order, to convey what he is feeling; and then hoping his words resonate with others.

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**Vale, the Author**

by John Grey

"My strength is fading," she said.  
It was so dark in the room.  
It must have been  
like death already to her.  
He pulled back the curtains.  
It was January.  
With the sun at such a flat angle,  
the light was reluctant to enter.

She was surrounded by  
a mish-mash of gifts and relics.  
Flowers represented  
what some people thought of her.  
The notepad and pen  
on the bedside table  
were there to encourage  
but ultimately taunted.

"Fading," she softly repeated.  
Her face so pale,  
body thin and squeezing in on itself,  
lungs barely registering  
the oxygen around them,  
the blanket and mattress  
were like the mouth of a whale  
sucking her in.  
No way her feeble fingers  
would ever grab that pen.  
There was nothing new in her.  
Nor would there ever be again.

A nurse came by  
to force pills down her throat.  
The doctor popped in.  
"Your nephew tells me  
you've written books,"  
he said to her.  
She tried to smile  
but the irony of the situation

wouldn't cooperate.  
They were all out of print.  
That goes with out of breath  
in some circles.

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### **Date Night**

by John Grey

Saturday night marks  
the disappearance of rationality  
in a fog of failures and lies—  
the weird takes over,  
illuminated eliminations,  
shadow-swamped truths;  
I'm a night creature now,  
all conspiracies and duplicity,  
celebrating the reign of passion  
over the body's realm—  
I venture forth, fuelled by daydreams,  
and loose inexplicable intentions,  
mismatch, mix badly, dangle and deceive,  
all to a raucous beat on pace to be my heart  
before retreating to my house,  
alone or with someone,  
drifting into the available caskets  
of sex or sleep,  
reserving my conscience for nightmares  
and the bright bromide bluster of morning.

Bio- John Grey is an Australian poet, US resident. Recently published in *New Plains Review*, *Perceptions* and *Sanskrit* with work upcoming in *South Carolina Review*, *Gargoyle*, *Owen Wister Review* and *Louisiana Literature*.

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### **Before the Storm**

by Janine Lehane

Gusts of wind add fever to freshly-cut grass.  
 The neighbors arrange their day, make ready:  
 a storm is predicted.  
 Unsteady, I have no heart for it,  
 have lost the art  
 of parrying vast gray provocation.  
 So many friends, aspirations, have gone  
 this summer, cut out: the confrontation of colors,  
 line rhythms, disordered, amiss.  
 What will I do, here, without you?  
 The wind, low-pitched, gains force, direction,  
 drags at the eaves,  
 scatters  
 gouache flowers.

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### **The Dance**

by Janine Lehane

Almonds, pears and cranberries baking  
 ten thousand miles away. There has been snow.  
 She has a sepia tint: her portrait framed  
 by the house where I lived, six years or so.  
 I cannot envisage another year like this.  
 She shows a photograph she's taken:  
 Matisse's dancers in the glare of mountain lights  
 on Halloween, a wooden shed, a woman's flashing legs.  
 We talk about coming back, about a debt forgiven,  
 about spirit and release, about her latest brew:  
 green tea, red clover, nettles, milk thistle, orange.  
 Ten thousand memories compact, produce a single child  
 roused from sleep, damp-cheeked, bewildered, obliged  
 to cry: Are you here? Am I?

Bio- Janine Lehane is an Australian poet, artist, and horsewoman. Her poetry has been published by Telling Our Stories Press, along with her cover art; *The Write Place at the Write Time*; *Hawaii Pacific Review*; and is soon to appear in an anthology out of The Poetry Society of New Hampshire (November, 2015). She also co-edited a volume of selected writings by eminent teacher and community organizer, Suzanne Radley Hiatt (2014).

**The Yardstick**

by Janet I. Buck

Greeks believed the first created man  
came from the ash of a tree.  
Oaks are symbols of indelible strength.  
Pine, remaining green all year,  
seals friendship in adversity—of course  
we crave its native scent.  
Cedar trunks mean paradise.  
Persimmon for the chairs of gods.

Now, take a whisk for morning eggs—  
mix truth with myth—explain  
how having a stump for a leg means  
anything besides an inconvenient life  
that comes with pressure sores,  
with going joints, war-torn by the fact  
of walking through a challenged life,  
just one side to hold you up.

Were my crib and baby cradle made of birch,  
assuring health, protection from the Fates?  
I'm guessing not.  
My disks are flat as sweet pralines,  
muscles, melting caramel.  
Sweet additives have left my tongue.  
I've tried every lotion sold—  
scar tattoos refuse to fade.  
Noah's ark was made of cypress.  
Remember that capricious flood?

This yardstick has no lines on it.  
Compared to trees, I'm just an ant.  
That one I get; I've met the boot.  
Forty oaks sat near our home.  
It never made three flights of stairs  
an easy task. There were leaves and leaves

to rake, until my back refused to bend.  
 Trained to be some Hercules with ovaries,  
 in Father's eyes, I had to stand  
 both tree and stone, nothing soft,  
 no ivory pearls netted from an ocean wave.  
 Weeping willows didn't count—  
 they drooped in sorrow all year long.

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### **Silent Nights**

by Janet I. Buck

*L'amour* was never meant to take the job  
 of babysitting china dolls, cracked and broken,  
 locked in dreams of shuffling feet.  
 I wish demise were shutter clicks,  
 aneurisms, heart attacks, quickly  
 moving cancer cells, anything with  
 speed to move the dragging clock  
 closer, quicker to the end.  
 Digressing bones and organs just  
 not playing right because of pills  
 keep pushing on the same revolving door.  
 Vertigo and wistfulness are synonyms.

You place your back to face my face.  
 We used to be the spoon cliché.  
 I tell you, *I'm in agony—I cannot sleep.*  
 You say, *Uh-huh.* Subject closed.  
 Pity with detachment ploys dishevels me.  
 Remember what nirvana was?  
 A country dance floor, double spins—  
 shoes like tongues that met and kissed.  
 I hide behind a laptop screen. You hit the couch.  
 I hear you slap two pillows down,  
 sure you'd rather strike my cheek.  
 We tread the house, even though I cannot walk,  
 two stalking cats, lions in our clammy mouths.  
 You've practiced hard at smooth escapes.

*Silent Night* is not the hymn it used to be.  
 I think we could have weathered  
 shrinking lemons of a sun, common  
 tunes of poverty, this legless waltz,  
 if not for me—my constant craving for a life  
 of promises made and kept—a body  
 that cooperates to let me stand and move.  
 An edgy voice says, "I suppose you want more tea?"  
 Your eyes betray the thoughtful words.  
 You set it on the bed stand hard enough to crack the cup.  
 Grass is green, but heartlands need a watering.  
 Quiet is a deadly nomenclature  
 marking tumbling out of love.  
*Touch-me-not's* are more than flowers.

Bio- Janet Buck is a seven-time Pushcart Nominee and the author of three full-length collections of poetry. Her work has won numerous literary awards and she has published roughly 4,000 poems and non-fiction essays in print and on the internet. Janet's recent work has appeared in *Antiphon*, *Offcourse*, *Zombie Logic*, *Boston Literary Magazine*, *Vine Leaves*, and *River Babble*; more of her poems are scheduled for publication in forthcoming issues of *The Milo Review*, *Mistfit Magazine*, *The Ann Arbor Review*, *PoetryBay*, and other journals worldwide. In July, Janet was a featured author in *PoetryMagazine.com*.

### **An Old Address Book**

by Sarah Brown Weitzman

At the bottom of a box stored for decades  
 a dusty address book, its cracked spine  
 sprinkling a confetti of dried glue and loose pages,  
 the name in the Ex Libris one I no longer use,

a Rip van Winkle waking to a changed world.  
 That theatre was torn down for a multiplex years ago.  
 Exchanges like PENNSYLVANIA 6000 or NEW YORK 4243  
 now numbers that translate to XFR or GJN.

Who is Richard E. circled twice and underlined in red ink?  
 Or Buzzie followed by three exclamation points ?

Or just A Didn't they use last names back then?  
A registry of strangers in my own handwriting

like starting a classic novel I'm sure I never read  
to find my copious notes scribbled down the margins.  
This is a mortician's long list of those  
who can no longer be reached through AT&T.

Ex-lovers crossed out with thick black lines, names  
to say incantations by, I imagine a host of the lost  
like ghosts seated in a quiet room waiting for my call.  
Not a working number. Disconnected. No answer.

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### **February Flowers**

by Sarah Brown Weitzman

Unusual warmth forced them  
in February, long celadon leaves

cupped a brood of small, white bells.  
A day later an all night snow

had buried those flowers.  
Sun the next morning flashed

with its usual dazzle and glitter  
but by noon it dimmed slowly

like houselights in a theatre.  
All day gray cold glazed the cotton

snow to satin. Rain the following night  
melted open archipelagoes where

those small, white unassuming flowers  
stood up as though they were scarlet.

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### **Port Washington Woods Redux**

*(At the bottom of North Maryland Avenue)*

by Sarah Brown Weitzman

A tangle of maple, elm, sycamore and ash  
with vines and ivy creepers knots  
an overhead thatch the sun weaves through

mottling the plush mat below, spongy  
with moss and layers of leaves.

A run-off from Beacon Hill streams

over gray pebbles flashing sequins of sun  
as it rushes, headlong in spring,  
to spread through cattails and skunk cabbage

into a marsh where starlings and red-wings  
hunt fat beetles and glittering flies  
as iridescent as oil on water. After a rain

tracks of field mice, squirrels and birds  
hatch mark the mud flats. Along the banks  
each in its season: nettles, wood lilies, cowbane,

ironweed, bluets, goldenrod and thistle,  
the squawks of jays, the thrum of cicadas  
and crickets. Each fall the air smelled fresh

as the hay laid out for the farmer's horses.  
In winter the ground froze in pools  
to a thin glaze of ice like whorls in bullet glass.

All the seasons of my childhood played out,  
an endless cycle, in those woods.  
Now years later I've come back to find

the brook buried in underground pipes,  
the marsh drained, the trees chopped down  
for rows of brick houses and manicured lawns.

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**Everglades: River of Grass**

by Sarah Brown Weitzman

You'll hear the symphony at once:  
the whining hum of clouds of mosquitoes,  
competing choruses of frogs, bird calls,  
a splash as something out of sight  
struggles with death in the water.

Tunneling through a channel  
of tall sawgrass that can cut like a razor,  
you will smell the swamp: salty  
and fecund. The air wavers in the heat.  
Pitcher plants and orchids abound.

A devil's garden of quick hungers:  
a colorful twig suddenly whips around,  
a cottonmouth swims close by, two eyes  
level with the scummy surface of the water  
watch and wait, a log moves.

Who knew green could be this black  
or beauty so dangerous?

Bio- Sarah Brown Weitzman has been widely published in hundreds of journals and anthologies including *Miramar*, *Poet & Critic*, *Art Times*, *The North American Review*, *Rattle*, *Mid-American Review*, *Ekphrasis*, *Poet Lore*, *Potomac Review*, *Poem*, etc. Sarah received a Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. A departure from poetry, her fourth book, *Herman and the Ice Witch*, is a children's novel published by Main Street Rag.

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### **The longest serving temp at Data Entry Solutions keeps a synthesizer under their bed**

by J. E. A. Wallace

High heels and office shoes  
Clatter on the overpass  
Above centipede trains at Clapham Junction

We are shuffling pelicans in an empty reservoir

And if David Attenborough  
Were to crouch by the wall to talk  
In a hushed and soothing voice  
Of our thoughtless, gut-fuelled purpose

I would stop to ask 'Could I do the soundtrack for your programme?'

Because I would like  
To spend my mornings  
On the way to something good

Bio- J. E. A. Wallace's work has been published in the UK and the US, including right here  
in *The Write Place Place at The Write Time*.

### **Near Hills**

by Nels Hanson

Brown hills contain their red and  
purple crests and creased gold of  
arroyos until display at evening,

peacock's fan spreading to reveal  
each feather's blue eye of heaven.  
Yellow fold at sunset and at night

black flanks and shoulders darker  
than starry and moonlit skies rest  
sleeping in noon-white grass and

whisper in shadow of clouds from  
the sea as in den and burrow, shade  
of broad-leaved trees all nocturnal

creatures wait. A scarlet morning,  
tonight's green dusk, then pure jet  
wake from August mountains' dun

straw, rich veins of rivers flowing  
secretly in a dull rock but always  
present from beginning to the end.

**Orphic**

by Nels Hanson

After you wake from this  
sleep you will come soon  
to a place others reached

where two cypresses grow,  
each by a different stream.  
In your great thirst choose

the far one and as you kneel  
to drink from that cup say,  
“I am a child of earth and

starry heaven. I am as a kid  
fallen in milk.” Then taste  
its pure water to remember

who you are and where you  
were before falling to sleep  
while the morning sun rose.

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**Irrigating**

by Nels Hanson

Walking that long alley way  
to the far field beyond the dry  
pond to shovel furrows to let  
the parched grapevines drink

I look down at my laced boots  
and see my grandfather's boots  
walk for the same field to slake  
the same vines' old thirst along

the way his father walked 100  
summers ago. This step, that,

quartz crystals, flecks of fool's  
gold ignite, flaring an instant

to dim, forgotten jewels asleep  
in hot sun's blonde dust until  
rabbits pass. From the concrete  
round valve cold pump water

rises from one deep lake under  
the Valley's asphalt streets and  
towns, houses and barns, rushing  
up in bright jets sending clean

sand grains spiraling like waking  
stars turning, trail I could follow  
down to wide sea and lit shore  
where the first ones are waiting.

Bio- Nels Hanson grew up in California's San Joaquin Valley and has worked as a farmer, teacher and writer/editor. His fiction received the San Francisco Foundation's James D. Phelan Award and Pushcart nominations in 2010, 12, and 2014. Poems appeared in *Word Riot*, *Oklahoma Review*, *Pacific Review* and other magazines and his poetry received the 2014 Prospero Prize from the *Sharkpack Review* and a 2014 Pushcart nomination.

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### **Cruising Altitude**

by Vince Corvaia

Avoid high places,  
their freak proximity  
to God.

He invented gravity  
for a reason  
so why tamper with success?

Still  
here I am  
30,000 ft. over Kansas,

Ginsberg's hallucination\*  
(see *Reality Sandwiches*, p. 42, "Over Kansas")  
where I once stood

on a bank  
of the Little Arkansas  
watching the hot air balloons

sever their gossamer tether,  
flaunt their heretical freedom  
in God's face.

\*Hallucination:  
perceiving the illusory—

balloons  
planes

thinking  
there but for the grace of—

you know the rest.

Bio- Vince Corvaia earned an MFA in creative writing from Wichita State University and has published nearly 200 poems. He lives in Boise, Idaho.

### **Beaver Marsh**

by Lew Caccia

Awakening long dormant seeds  
in the soil, the beavers restored  
natural water levels. Wetland plants  
returned. As did the frogs and turtles,  
the sea otters and muskrats. In this  
recurring bottomland area  
microhabitats reintroduce the ferns,  
alders, and lilies. Blue herons eat  
fish before migrating south.

Mirroring sparse November trees  
in the pool, the early eastern sky  
seasonally sorts pink from the  
purple. Change slowly traverses  
by the week. Preparing for winter  
beavers repair their dams and  
gather willow and aspen into  
underwater caches. Turtles on logs  
still sun themselves; the horned owl  
calls from nearby woodlands.

For time untold swamp sparrows sing  
a slow staccato trill. Their crisp call  
emphatic, reminiscent of the original  
centuries-old marsh. A time before  
drainage. Before the dairy farm,  
the auto shop, and later a morass full  
of fenders and bedsprings. Finally,  
the removal, the muddle resolved  
cyclically. The opportunistic beaver  
relocates. Water perforates the girdled  
rotting bark and branches. A nascent  
meadow thickens into forest. The beaver  
reappears; the forest reverts to marsh.

Bio- Lew Caccia serves as a professor at Walsh University, where he teaches courses in composition, rhetoric, professional writing, and literacy. He earned his Ph.D. at Kent State University. His recent poetry has appeared in *The Storyteller*, *The Shepherd*, *hedgerow*, *The Write Place at the Write Time*, and *The Penwood Review*. He enjoys writing poems about the Cuyahoga Valley in Ohio, and is looking forward to starting another year of teaching.

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### **Peace of Nature**

by Ginger Peters

Peace was indeed with me today.  
I journeyed on a hike with the sun beaming down,  
creating sparkling diamonds of heavy frost covering the pinons, junipers,  
and the ground on which I walked.

The dogs with me galloped effortlessly ahead,  
jumping rocks, crossing ravines, and climbing the clay hillside that  
surrounded my path.  
A large hawk startled me in the deafening quiet, as I startled the hawk,  
still half asleep in top of a pine.  
My heart raced, as the hawk fluttered his soaring wings—  
I watched as he flew toward the sun.  
My dogs picked up scents that I could not smell.  
Coyotes, rabbits, bobcats, mice, or even a mountain lion might have walked  
this  
trail in the deepest, darkest hours of the night before.  
I noticed a granite rock formation extending outward from the hill—  
It beckoned me to sit, as it was made like a chair.  
I sat, grateful to mother nature for furnishing a dreaming spot just for me.  
The dogs ate leftover patches of snow and continued to smell each branch,  
blade of dry grass,  
and piece of dirt.  
I listened in silence and felt a cool breeze pick up, reminding me that aha,  
winter is still alive.  
I saw rocks shaped like hearts, one that looked like a sailboat, dead  
branches that looked like  
crosses, spears and some tangled together so tightly, it reminded me of a  
desert octopus.  
I whispered thank you for the tranquility and beauty this adventure had  
given me—  
I left the granite chair, knowing it would be waiting for me another morning  
when I crave  
a peace of nature.

Bio- Ginger Peters is a freelance writer living in Santa Fe, NM. She has published poetry, nonfiction, and fiction over the past few years. Her most recent sales include: "Chewing, Spitting, and Cussing" to *Gargoyle Literary Magazine* (a memoir about her grandmother), and "Unconsciously Teaching Fear" that will appear in *Animal Wellness Magazine*. She's always thrilled to be included in *The Write Place at the Write Time*.

### **If Rivers Had Eyes**

by Cheryl Sommese

If rivers had eyes  
they  
would telepathically tell you  
the designer covering you're wearing  
is too flimsy  
for winds whisking over the current  
and life blows a chill  
under fragile material  
so you become neither satiated with coolness  
nor own the strength to find warmth  
for cold grows familiar—  
finding favor  
to unknowns that could prove  
more daunting.

They would peer at all  
your insecurities  
and mercilessly magnify each one  
so that murky foam piles  
buoy about:  
driving away lovers fearing they'll drown  
in your dread,  
exposing the dark side of light in reflecting  
uncertainty,  
failing to see *spring*  
bestows  
revitalizing vapor.

But rivers don't have eyes  
they have mouths,  
fashioned to swallow the residue  
of doubt.  
Whispering in swift waters and  
gentle streams alike,  
"Do not worry—  
everything will be okay,  
life is a voyage we can channel  
toward beauty."

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**Nature's Finery**

by Cheryl Sommesse

Feathered forms eagerly  
flutter  
around the canister  
feeder,  
while furry figures  
dash  
from orange-splashed trees,  
keen to feast  
on leftovers  
tumbling aside the redbrick  
way.

Uncomplicated living,  
rejuvenating my senses  
and nourishing  
a most favored part  
of my soul:  
all this splendor  
absent of meaningless clutter.

Bio- Cheryl Sommesse penned her first poem in her early teens. Since then, many more have followed. One beloved writing project she has undertaken is a human interest screenplay based on the lives of her spirited, immigrant grandparents: the longtime animal lover hopes to one day see the script come to life. She enjoys French and Italian wines and periodically partakes in one of the ruby treasures while savoring a well-prepared vegetarian meal. Ms. Sommesse lives in New Hampshire with her husband and two dogs.

### **A bright yellow trumpet**

by Lois Greene Stone

How does a daffodil bulb  
survive snowbelt winters?  
My slender fingers with  
unpolished nails nestled  
a plump bud into inches  
of soil. Unlike me, it  
needs no food or love,



beginning  
at the street and working back  
It seemed like a strange time to begin work,  
and  
I wondered if the contractor was planning  
to actually start building in the winter

The answer to that was no  
And  
it would remain no during the spring,  
during the summer,  
during the fall,  
during the following winter,  
and was still no well into the second year  
Did the contractor go bankrupt?  
Did the financing fall through?  
Was it some personal, not financial, reason?  
I don't know the answers,  
but  
the denuded front lot was an eyesore  
with no buildings and no trees  
and just mud or dirt depending  
on how recently it had rained

Eventually, though,  
town homes  
started to appear in small clusters,  
along with an access drive from the main road  
(later given a street name by the city),  
a bank (real, not a pseudo-bank),  
and to complete the project,  
an auto parts store  
(any business that promised to be  
even mildly successful was welcome:  
businesses,  
including even an outpost of the country's monolith,  
had been fleeing the nearby strip shopping centers  
even before the most recent depression had begun;  
some occupancies had been empty  
for five years or more,

and  
are still empty at this writing)

Today,  
a fence surrounds the apartment lot,  
and  
all observations must take place from a distance

The wetland looks to have been  
at least partially drained

The teasel is taller than human beings

Birdsong is present and pleasant

Buttercups have poked through the fence in places

There are maples, of course,  
and  
many other types of trees,  
and  
some of their leaves are providing  
sustenance for other creatures

There are no doubt other animals present,  
though unseen

Utility wires shoot through  
some of the higher tree branches:  
no hazard as of yet,  
but  
eventually some of those branches  
will have to be trimmed

And  
it wouldn't have been a reclamation project  
without at least one negative human touch:  
here  
some knucklehead has tossed a pair of tennis shoes  
about fifteen feet up in one of the trees

Bio- Michael Ceraolo is a 57-year old retired civil servant and active poet who has had one full-length book (*Euclid Creek*, from Deep Cleveland Press) and a few shorter-length books published, plus numerous magazine publications.

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### **Post Oaks in Winter**

by Carol J. Rhodes

Leafless branches  
spread spidery shadows  
across fields dried by early frost.

Silhouetted against clear blue skies  
they stand like dark soldiers  
guarding treasures of life-giving sap  
to nourish their first buds of spring.

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### **First Winter in Connecticut**

by Carol J. Rhodes

Three o'clock in the afternoon and already dark  
on this snowy winter day  
Still four more hours until he would be home.  
While my son and some friends played in the basement,  
I sat by the window, crying and wishing I was back in Texas  
With family, old friends, and balmy weather.

At a little past seven, he walked in and gave me  
a hug and a kiss.  
It was then I realized this was the exact place  
I was meant to be.

Bio- The widely published works of Carol J. Rhodes, including short stories, essays, poetry, non-fiction articles, and plays have appeared in numerous newspapers in the USA and England, in prominent magazines, cookbooks, journals, anthologies, and on-line publications. She has won many literary awards for poetry and prose, and one of her plays, *Comin' Home to Burnstown* was showcased in a summer play festival of an off-Broadway theatre.

Carol presents business writing seminars at two Houston universities, and for several corporate clients. She is a native Texan, has visited and lived in numerous states and countries, and is fluent in Spanish. Now a widow after forty-five years, her spare time is devoted to four cats and two Poodles.

**My Grandmother's Garden** *(originally featured in the spring/summer 2014 issue)*

by Tim Reed

Fingers...deep in the rich soil  
taking life in order to  
breathe renewed life  
into the forgotten...the overlooked.  
Pulling, tearing and tugging  
at the snarled and tangled roots  
which have been choking the beauty  
that has always been held within.  
Overgrown with neglect  
grown in, pulling back...  
being pushed in...from all sides  
to the point where  
blooming seems pointless.  
The seeds she planted lay  
dormant in the decay,  
of time, of life, of lies...  
It has become far too draining  
to pass by...to look the other way  
in "busy" indifference. So...

I plunge my heart, my soul,  
my hands, fingers deep into the rich soil  
taking life in order to breathe...  
breathe, new life into the forgotten  
the overlooked, and the denied.  
Remembering the warmth and beauty  
that filled me, not just by gazing  
upon the floral grace of this  
blossoming garden, but of  
the Love, the joy, and the

simple beauty that not only  
she put into this garden,  
but that this garden in turn  
put into her.

I will recover it, resurrect its beauty  
allowing it to freely blossom.  
Not because of how hard  
she worked to create it,  
but because I, now understand why...I  
was planted, in my Grandmother's garden.

Bio- Tim Reed hails from Fall River, MA, a start to finish carpenter and father of four. Tim started writing in 1990 on a journey of discovery and recovery. On that journey he embraced the gift of poetry within him as an outlet for expression, explosion, and healing, as well sometimes, purely for humor. Tim draws on the vast education he has earned as a "student" of life experience! In his words, "When things touch or move me in some way...I write." He has had work published in various anthologies including *Rhymes of Greatness*, *A Poetic Pulse With Friends*, and *It Happened Under Cover* as well as in the online literary journal *The Write Place at The Write Time*. Tim has featured at, and regularly attends, several of the area open mic venues and events, and feels that his writing has benefited greatly as a result. Tim is also the co-host of the venue, Poetry: The Art of Words, the Mike Amado memorial series, and helped with the 2015 Visual Inverse program in Plymouth.

### **Snow Day**

by Randall Nicholas

Remember the snow  
mid-February before Valentine's Day,  
the three inches or so overnight  
followed by a foot more  
throughout the day, the ceaseless sifting,  
ever mounting white, juncos'  
intermittent rush to the trees  
to hunker under the branches,  
trains going past with a wake of glitter,  
people at work wondering if they could get home?

Remember, though, the sense of security  
inside this other world building up,  
the woolen feel of the snow itself  
indoors where you were minding your business  
with only one eye, or even outdoors,  
if you had to be, clothing you in your coat  
with its own soft muffler, or in your car  
learning its rules of gunning or swerving  
caution whereby your mind was always  
on the road adjusting to its discretionary grace?

Remember the deep sense of self  
it gave to you amounting in its lifetime  
the way you would like in yours,  
sticking to everything you know  
grander and more significant, or perhaps,  
if you see yourself the other way, supporting  
same in everything else, the feeling both  
there is something more out there than you alone  
and also nothing so special as you  
coming to know yourself so gradually yet fully?

Bio- Randall Nicholas is a regular contributor to *Haggard and Halloo*. He has conducted a poetry workshop for inmates of the Indiana State Prison and read at Valparaiso's Front Porch Music open stage, both weekly for ten years. He lives in Ogden Dunes, Indiana.

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