

# THE BANYAN REVIEW



Featuring  
William Binzen  
Shelley Chesley  
Kat Crawford  
Jan Fraser  
Michael Jemal  
Elliot Pearson  
M. E. Silverman

*Cover image by William Binzen*

Literary & Fine Art Journal

Issue 19: Fall 2024

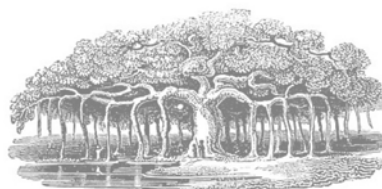


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# THE BANYAN REVIEW

*promoting art, poetry, and the natural world*

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Fati D., Editor-in-Chief  
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Terry Lucas, Issue Editor  
Hadley Hendrix, Designer



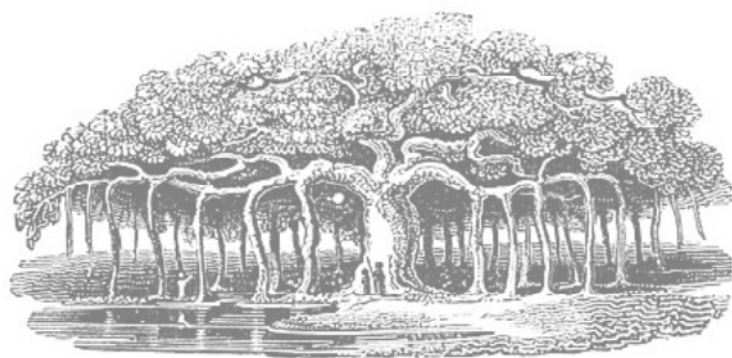
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# EDITOR'S NOTE

This 2024 fall issue of *The Banyan Review* interprets the natural world from eighteen poets, writers, and photographers. In the words of Alan Watts, "...nature is wiggly. Everything wiggles: the outlines of the hills, the shapes of the trees, the way the wind brushes the grass, the clouds, tracts of streams. It all wiggles." And yet Watts stresses that we too are part of that natural world—not as something that "came into it" but something that came from it. I've attempted to choose words and images that reflect both of those truths in ways that cannot be conveyed with any other words, forms, or images. My gratitude to these contributors and to the editors and staff of *The Banyan Review*.

**Terry Lucas**

*Issue Editor*



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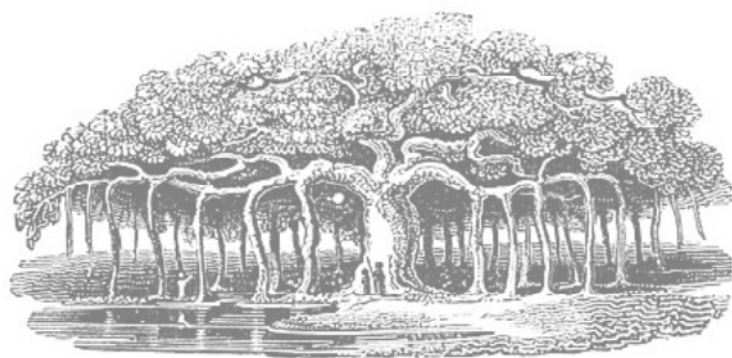
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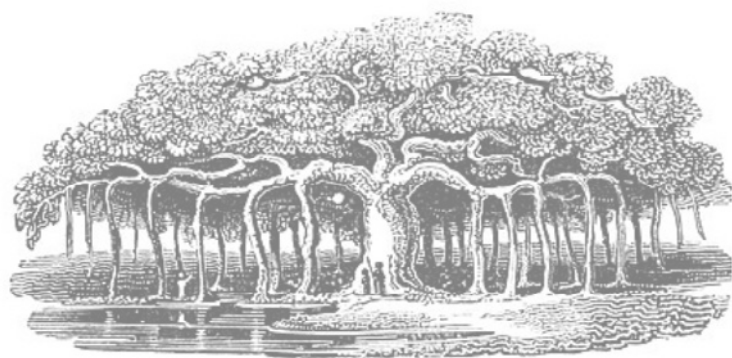


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# ISSUE 19, FALL 2024

*Edited by Terry Lucas*





# Terra Firma

Kat Crawford

clear away everything  
start with clouds a fine  
mind & open heart

all the ruckus from history piles  
up to nullify

every soft young human, notes  
written in a hurry

as reminders  
shred them

drop to your knees sink your hands in sand there is  
certainty in grains

small bits of shells they are not  
strangers & they wait for us

our bodies to learn to dig and feel how many trillions are  
there?

Comfort from warm bodies making curved impressions will wash away as the  
grand tide nears take your time but don't wait  
as soon as you're all in space becomes available mind heart soul whatever it is that makes us  
move & love

will be in full swing momentum gravitational pull something  
from below from above

stars so old and bright

soil sand rocks trails across giant fields

we don't know how they were made

in bird shapes or giant circles, lines that say *we are*  
*with you*

do not listen to garish voices  
on giant screens that say so little

Hear the call

from sister hawk brother whale

under foot get  
down  
close to the ground to hear it

# What Happens to Water

Kat Crawford

What if you get too close to the machine of hatred? Do not attempt  
to repair the machine itself. Fiery. Gargantuan. The sludge and scraps  
on the floor of the ocean and forests you mop and sweep.

Keep your eyes fixed on gold throats of hummingbirds  
even the one lying on mossy bricks outside your window.  
Many attempts she made to warn of rising water,

poisoned water, dry lake beds. She and millions of others  
called, *over here, see elegance in breath, clarity in creeks,*  
*innocence and joy in vernix of the kingdom.* Take up tools

to hammer and chisel messages for passersby. Add new signs  
keep binoculars in your packs. Every magnolia thirsts  
for your attention as they sigh from their glossy perches.

In your morning journey, in navy velvet nights, train  
your wandering mind on the fox and badger hunting to feed  
their babies. The machine is shrinking. Keep your brooms out.

Trust in owls' hoot. Truth. Bag the menace, your daily catch. No air  
in the burlap bag. Stand up to stop silt from darkening reeds that grow  
along lake shores. They stand with us, wave as skiffs and dinghies sing.

What else, what else? Succulents speak their minds  
stretching their pointy arms shouting in hushed shades of green  
*catch petals of Lady Camellia as she falls to her knees begging.*

Chipmunks and wrens gather their might to one day rise up  
and opine on the ways of their world. Upright then scurry under  
shade of jasmine and oak to confer and decide on our fate.

# Unspoken Rules

Kat Crawford

The moment that I saw                      an acid-green lizard

nip and nip  
at its morning repast

one sand-colored moth

I fixed my gaze  
on this primal task, success

was not immediate

& the hunter proceeded

*keep going* one might have said

if in fact the reptile could hear a voice

then its small nimbleness

moved him closer, perfect angle  
to lurch again & again

swallowed whole his  
prey.

They do not yet know  
other furry ghost moths

gathered around the light  
left on for them

that one of theirs is gone  
stay fluttering in the glow

huddled together

on a stucco wall,

we too gather under burning stars

look up sometimes

into the indelible dark  
& some make motions

to strike.



# Hunted to Extinction by Modern Times, the California Grizzly Left His Body for a Home in the Sky

William Binzen

*In Coarsegold, at the southern end of Route 49,  
stands a monument to the grizzly*

Along the Pacific flyway were once  
vast and rousing congeries  
of migrating birds,

skeins drawing across the sky.

A hunter could close both eyes—  
shoot, and drop a duck  
convulsing to the ground.

A single stone might bring two rabbits.

Such was the verve of Earth  
once, during the Republic  
of California.

The grizzly,  
great bear of Ursa Major—  
revered by the shaman  
for his size, strength, cunning and courage  
came to symbolize the new state.

The great bear broods.  
He is massive.

He is the starry  
mountain sky.

He is gone.  
In his place  
we engrave.

A likeness.

# Cal Bear

William Binzen



# Write to Be

LC Gutierrez

a soft-fingered soothsayer, surefire tickler of language, sharpshooter of dreams, scaling your surfeit and dangling from the rafters of plenitude. It's more that you'll barter for (it's never what you bargain for). Words are gifts you don't deserve and language is flimsy gratitude from the lonely promontory of self. Helpless, hopeless, and necessary, it angles in your mouth, a stolen jewel, toothsome and bitterfine like a licorice swizzle. Longing in the tooth, the fetching dogs multiply, spoiling your sentences with saliva, breaking lines in their jowls. You fear you write a thin trapeze so you fang your phrasing: a raw and anomic beast riding the haunches of conventional language and all the hypocrisy it conceals. Til it sputters and taps out just when it's circled back onto itself. Suspect the stars are ventriloquists and the moon mocks you in her moods, making a puddle of every verse she lights under her skirt, leaving a reflection and a calling card writ: "Hate to break your heart. Again."

# Inked

LC Gutierrez

Converted to paper she took comfort in claiming she remained organic, though she'd traded her moist and abstract beauty for sharp, clear lines. Onlookers concurred, yet none would step forth, crook an elbow to walk her through that barbed transition. In kinship with cotton and likewise averse to flame, she fanned the swelling of her habitual resolve with regard to passion; a now bright charge that could take its hits. When she took to inking herself, and thus decisively committed to the word, there came no concomitant will to erase or amend. It was as though she'd found for once her natural state. And with it came a subtle gravitas; a sense of isolation, mixed with the melancholy of being slightly misread and not quite understood. She felt the burn of blame: having dared to pine for a purview of love, joy, or some approximation. In the end it could only be had through opposites, which she accepted as fate. Police report that the suspect had poured a liquid on the woman. That it appeared to catch fire when it met contact with oxygen. The very moment she stopped holding her breath.

# October

LC Gutierrez

When we begin to slide toward that bland slush, the foreshape of November; candies and costumes whacking back the quiescence. Rolls in like a snowdrift, like it or not. We've lost our leaves, the veins pinched off, parts dying for a cause. And now we're putting up a good front, though this too will frost and crack, hanging on for spring's timid dribble. Racked back with a beer, the false, green, screen light of football night, pumped up with someone else's adrenaline. But have you inventoried? Made your peace? Your soggy bowl of nachos notwithstanding, what's put away for the lean months ahead? You're no bear, you say. "It's Halloween. Why hide our little lamplit horrors, like so many winking demons, soon enough wicked out by winter?" Does not your head grow leaden like a dream? Well, that dull pull is the Blood Moon; a nickel cooled on a dead eyelid. Slow down, slow down. October, round and wounded, will need its time to heal.

# So Much Not Air

LC Gutierrez

At some point it fanned out and could only be taken in on its own terms. When it could still be said that “this is right.” Without regard to any niggling shadows nudged from within. Golden days? They were in the business of categorizing virtues: imagined ones. But this system hobbled and chagrined, even before the wedding.

He mentions the precipitous crumbings and caving in while speaking at an AA meeting, unconsciously fingering the phantom ring on the third finger of his left hand. There were friends, or what once were. And they’d changed even more than he, or so was his impression. The ones that had walked with giraffe-like vision no longer seemed so sure, nor so ready to take the proffered beer.

He analogized it all to boxing, as he was wont, though it failed long ago to pan out in the way of a science. An inch moved forward is a victory could still be affirmed. But he intuited some hidden architecture framed the comings and goings, so that any assertion was obliged to account for that invisible certitude; as far from sight as the back of his own head. These were like answers to a Math test, where he caught himself missing the air, swinging at a formula he must not have paid attention to.



# Inevitability

Michael Jemal

And because a herd of deer  
wander back of our land  
toward the open field where hunters sit in trees  
we sip our coffee anticipating the pop pop  
and the running of the deer that leap  
over the rock walls.

And because this morning after the gunshots  
you go up to your room to sit with your thoughts,  
I drive two towns over to sit  
in the used bookstore with my own thoughts,  
attempting to stare down anticipation and mortality  
with pencil and eraser.

And because I've been sitting almost an hour  
on a cold wooden rickety chair  
next to a pile of books with fingerprints—  
so many ghosts who have failed  
to escape the dark light, I understand inevitability,  
as there is no dignity in death.

# January

Michael Jemal

By the back porch  
there's some turned buckets for potting  
and a wooden pathway  
that will soon need attention.  
Sometimes I lose my way,  
I become disengaged.  
Then again it's a great excuse  
not to feel the guilt  
for getting up early with nowhere to go.  
Listen, it's January,  
for parts of the night it snowed,  
a calm snow that will never be remembered.  
On the radio  
there's a tug of war going on  
with leftover Christmas songs.  
And who can tell which one will win.  
It is clear, whatever I expected  
would come about this winter,  
will not.

# Burying The Cat

Michael Jemal

Tonight, a slow steady ache  
from the room below  
is filling the unlit stairwell  
with a whine that will not let me sleep.  
I go downstairs  
where I find a woman  
holding a dead cat close to her chest.

For parts of my life I have been given  
small handfuls of grace from strangers  
and because of this  
I put my hands together,  
Offering what little reverence remains.  
I ask if it's need  
that has pushed me here.  
She says yes.

So I go to my truck for a shovel  
and begin to dig out back  
beside the willow planted just last spring  
where she all but genuflects  
fitting her cat into the imperfect hole  
with the usual dear God stuff.  
But there is nothing said  
that can alter the weight of the dirt  
or the suffocating darkness  
that will take us all.

# A few weeks before my father went missing

Michael Jemal

he began complaining  
about his butterflies.  
How they ignored him,  
flew off on their own,  
taking to stems they found  
without his approval.  
My father never understood  
the life of a butterfly.  
He expected them to live  
as he lived  
wild as a pragmatic person can be.  
Instead they mated with strangers  
taking flight  
not knowing how far they would go out  
and still be able to find their way back.

# Relevance

Michael Jemal

I've gone to bed early  
hoping to bypass the boredom.  
By morning there will be snow  
piled throughout these backwoods—  
a beauty and ugliness  
you really can't put into words.  
You have to simply stand in it  
knee deep and just be.  
I suspect my uncle thought the same  
The day the snow came down like a wall,  
Years ago while walking these hills  
In a foot and a half of it.  
One step after the other,  
breathing hard,  
harder than usual  
right before his heart exploded  
and he fell awkwardly face up  
with his coat open,  
the cold creeping across  
the so many thoughts that fell out of him  
as if they were a mist in the storm,  
nothing that could be put into words.

# An Uprising

Mandy Beattie

*after Stanislav Zhukovsky's, Snowdrops, 1910-11*

A skein of blue snowdrops bandstand: clash symbols  
in wooden allotment's drab bay window. A dribble  
of blue snowdrops rebel, look crabwise from wood

worm, wood lice, kindling-squibs and black opal coal  
Blue snowdrops whirligig towards sky's blue beckoning  
from blue wainscoting of blue and blue's diluted days

Blue snowdrops yen company with wood calligraphy  
and dousing's forked bough. They lean-to a wallowing  
of twiglet gnarls, stirrups of juniper, chirrups and giggles

of gaggles of younglings in tree forts and nests. Snow  
defrosts and white snowdrops peep sextuplets of petal  
like tepals—Three tip notches an upturned V for Victory

when Spring's sleepy sternum cracks open, breaks into  
trot and canter. Winter is wraith as tree pipit's trill  
whistle, incubate. Blue snowdrops nod and bob

# Not Even a Handfasting

Mandy Beattie

*All is safe with a lady engaged: no harm can be done*

— *Mansfield Park*, Jane Austin

In a fit of pitch the one ditching his surname  
in mud flung her bridal bouquet of azalea

fuchsia and hollyhock to carpet the knave  
Sleeve of broderie anglaise shut between rowan

door and grave. At cherry tree's hem he slumped  
to skinned knees like a felled stump. Head bowed

in a prayer book of the dead; platinum rings  
knuckled-shredded tissue among pocket's crumbs

His button-hole sprig of gypsophila, waxflower  
and eucalyptus wilt a gypsum of guilt on his morning

suit; as northern cardinals and blue jay's glut  
on wedding breakfast of cherry pie, bakewell tart

clafoutis. Prunus serrulata bobbed its parasol  
and a murmur of pink starlings fell on his

starched collar; not jilted by Gaia but stamen, petal  
stipule to nape of his neck over Damocles' sword

Beaks took his yearnings, kennings, grievings on  
pollen's flight path to four corners. But where dawn

crusade's its sunning is a woman with fireflies in her hair  
Not waiting but walking South seeking late night talking

She has no need of puppet strings

*\*Handfasting was a Celtic marriage tradition still practiced today.*



# The Pentland Firth

Mandy Beattie

To the Whale Road they came far from where  
they had backpacked knapsacks of their stillborn

newborns for days. Pining, cowning, leaving  
breached-beaches, air-drowning, culls'

harpoon-grenades. To the Whale Road they came  
sonar-speaking clicks, whistles, squeals in pods

stepping out with braying black-browed albatrosses  
reading menus for leftovers. To the Whale Road

they came baleen and toothed cetaceans to feast  
on clean crustacean, schooling fish, marine

mammals. Those wise, giant gymnasts gambolling  
among white wave-horses and whistling whirligig-air

To the Whale Road did they come after my incantation  
invitation? Many more than before whale-worshipped

by locals, baptised as the black and white, *Second Coming?*

To the Whale Road they came. To the Whale Road

they keep on coming like pigeon's homing  
into safer waters

*\*Over a thousand whales a year are killed for their body parts*  
– Whale and Dolphin Conservation

# Cubic Wolf

Paul Vermeersch

They have built a Cubic Wolf. This is not a riddle.  
It can't be solved. It is a cube. There are no icons  
or markings on its sides. It is a wolf. All of its famine  
and all of its wrath are equally enclosed within the equal

dimensions of the cube. Its savagery is there, distilled,  
and its glee at the tang of organs, and its relentless hate  
for the inert, inaudible threat it senses deep within another  
cube—a rival for its status or a hunter bent on taking it.

It is an intrinsic wolf with an intrinsic howl that cannot  
be heard. It could be any shape; it is a cube. It could be  
any living thing; it is a wolf. And where is it? It does not  
know. It only knows it is a wolf. Do not ask how.

They have built a Cubic Wolf. What have they done?  
It's no mere symbol of a wolf. It is a wolf. It wants  
what all wolves want—to endure on blood and love its young—  
but mutely, unstirring, without ever breaking from its form.

# An Endless Field of Identical Green Dots

Paul Vermeersch

To begin with, no one could understand it. The first attempt to engineer the forest's writing system resulted in an endless field of identical green dots. Each dot a tree—a vocabulary of one word. The same dot and the same green without any variation or grammar. A pattern arrayed like wallpaper. It was a failure.

Introduce a yellow dot. Chartreuse. Orange. Coffee. A blank space. A blue spruce. Introduce slight deviations in the size of the dots, and/or make some slightly more elliptical than others. Add a blank line between rows of dots that represents a path thru the trees, dots for breadcrumbs, and a sunken dot to mark the witch's house.

The more the forest writes itself, the larger the page becomes, the wilder, and what at first appeared to be an endless field of green dots is now a language that has lost all sense of order. The red dot, the red dot, the red dot moves along the empty line between two rows of arboreal glyphs followed by a furious circle of black scribbles.

Care was taken to devise a writing system that would allow the forest to express its full vocabulary of inhabitants, its vast topographical syntax. It required the illusion of repetition in a non-repeating system: *a tree a tree a tree a tree*, of course, of course, but not the same tree! Until at last it produced an endless field of identical green dots.



# Abroglyphs

Jan Fraser

*The name for carved shapes and symbols in the bark of living trees.*

Variegated shell in patches  
exposes brittle parchment,  
rich brown copper strips  
peel and shed  
in splintered fragments,  
drift to rocks below.

You embrace the lonely outcast  
suspended over water,  
caress its sinewy trunk  
ripped clean of bark,  
slide your fingers  
over knotted muscles  
inhale, press your cheek,  
consume the fragrant scent,  
hints of autumn fruit.

Beneath a veil of green,  
scarred by wind and salt,  
lined with insect tracings,  
tattooed limbs hold stories—  
small hearts carved by lovers,  
initials left behind by L+D,  
commitment can be fleeting,  
theirs is here to stay.

A passing stranger  
paralyzed with grief,  
scaled down these rocks in 1964,  
stared into cold black waters  
seeking absolution  
amidst one burnt out strand of light.

# Blackberries

Jan Fraser

*after Robert Hass*

We strain to reach the purple gems,  
swollen shapes of loss and longing,  
perfection dropping unannounced  
in tangled brush—fresh,  
ripe, impossible to touch.

My mother used to slip away,  
break through the thicket  
grasping prize beyond  
a barricade of thorns.  
Nothing made her more content,  
pails filled to overflowing.

Just below the church,  
warm bands of light  
scatter inside forest,  
paint patterns over blood-tinged legs.  
Sea planes drone—giant  
crickets rubbing wings  
sing songs of summers past.

I still see my parents seated,  
smiling in the kitchen.  
Aromatic balm enfolds them,  
bubbling jam, jars in rows  
to fill one final time.

My daughter prowls, gathers—  
unwavering resolve  
bestowed through generations—  
she takes her turn, preserves  
the poignant, sticky fruit.



# The Underside

Jan Fraser

Down the path to Narvaez Bay,  
you take the turn  
for Monarch Head, trek uphill  
past a quiet stand of alder  
where forest fronds unfurl.

En route, lens in hand,  
your inner child lingers,  
dips her hands in forest litter,  
probes tangled roots,  
adrift in microscopic wonder.

Sifting rainbow layers,  
you hear webs of fungi humming—  
fragile threads connected  
below the surface.

You lean down to magnify  
the masses, a dozen species,  
mingling on one single rock,  
tiny primeval forests  
lush with emerald wands.

There's more light today  
than shadow. Sun etches  
trail, upper branches  
weave a portal.

You long to know the workings  
of this place where life and death  
engage a fragile world of opposites  
in ceaseless repetition.

## From the Riverine Series

William Binzen





# Optical Study, Smith River, OR

William Binzen



# Manta Ray Reverie

Shelley Chesley

National Geographic's latest teaser  
streams across my phone screen:  
*"Some manta rays have giant brains—"*  
takes me by surprise  
and isn't that the point?  
I feel more than hear the snickers—  
giggles, more benign—  
vibrate in my palm

*Why only some?*

I'm prodded towards anthropomorphism  
bidding us conjure rays around coolers—  
flirting and shooting the breeze,  
well, no

*Still, why only some?*

Some with overgrown cerebellums?  
Serving such ceaseless wafting and floating—  
the grace in space that they are—  
all mesmerizing motion

But, no, look close, catch the *dance*—  
see that one snub the other?  
clear rebuke for flap or jab

Poor thing without the blessing—  
now blushing on its lonesome

# Silence

Shelley Chesley

Black snakes made free with our attic that spring,  
Smooth, dry-skinned and thick as young girls' arms,  
They laid claim and coupled in silence  
Among Halloween costumes, vintage dishes,  
Atop dusty boxed pornography

Wisteria granted rustle-covered access  
Red-painted soffits beckoned them in,  
They multiplied silently, repeatedly,  
Inspired by photos whose thump and drive  
Swelled between rub of scale on scale

Snakes discovered by un-luck—unsuspecting  
Insurance adjustor—agog at their presence—  
Their writhing lives—broke silence along with our ceiling  
Penetration by way of high-heel

Days later a lonely, lusty straggler strained  
To woo my mother, draped itself in seductive coil  
Round her wall-mounted medicine chest  
Arced and tongue-flicking, all fiery-eyed but silent

Father dead since winter, duly ashed and scattered—  
Only one who knew—silent as the tomb  
His trove? His father's archive?  
Content unbridled, running to excesses—  
Gave snakes all kind of permission

My mother nursed such bitter fruits  
Insurance couldn't cover—  
Told anyone who would listen so everyone  
heard. I never saw the evidence  
for her succored animus, just the violence it did silence

I never got to parse my heartstrings  
Till she no longer knew me, seemed to look right through me  
And it no longer mattered whose wanting side I clove to,  
One each side the grave—they sunder me with silence

# Interlopers in the Jasmine

Shelley Chesley

We safety-cordon off front door—  
drape of limp blue masking tape  
Welcome darkness uncontested,  
lest nesting finches stress  
under porch light's false circadian

We interpret any randy chirp,  
such foraging jabber chatter—  
their calls exchanged like teddy  
bears, 'You're there, I'm here...'  
'You there?...' 'I'm here!'

We vigilantes, shoo bad actors—  
feral cats—to other wheres  
No stealthy death dealt on our watch—  
tending jasmine's squatters

We dig down on house finch incubation,  
clutch size ranges, parent's roles  
Why so chatty as she broods?  
That c a n n o t be adaptive

We scrawl *meal worms*, live not dried  
on every random list  
Assuming father's feeder duties  
ensures he'll succor her as well?  
Our perfect thriving family



We remind ourselves this nest may fail  
a high proportion do  
It's anticipatory grief, a kind of control—  
birds will have another go while we hum  
our closed-eyes lullaby—

We have no need for cares like these—  
*our* nest down to two, the end of our line

# “All Things are Full of Gods”

Shelley Chesley

— attributed to pre-Socratic philosopher, Thales

Human heart look-alike—  
cast trailside in Peru  
Plateau-topped for its aorta,  
this rock calls out for thumb rubs.  
Liver purple, speckled deftly—palpable  
vascular beds, pits and scar bursts—  
veritable constellations

Handed me by one of oblique-speech—  
where stones are divination—  
Years before I'd know its truth—  
uncanny anvil of a heart—angling left  
for perfect fit in any upright chest

Domestic now on bedside table,  
far-off in northern California  
Up close with Chinese text,  
scripted on night's water cup—  
blue chalk rows of platitudes

And Snowy Owl in plastic—she  
vigils atop her petrified wood-chunk,  
polished to crow-catching sheen—  
Omen of death or wisdom depending

Bronze tile from Arizona—stamped  
and dipped in verdigris  
Relic of bell realm—*Arco Santi*—  
land of sand, wind and white-sun  
clarity, now quiet witness at my bedside

Last—red silk pillow, plump of pulses,  
weighted for my eyes  
From one-time yogi who oft supplied  
supple knuckles to my soles

These god-filled things, vainglorious—  
jostle in dark's heaven  
Regaling each other with origin stories,  
loosed worming through my dreams  
I waken to soft nudges, almost-silent  
owl wings hefting me aboard her—  
Text on cup glows neon, a pulsing  
Times Square billboard—silk pillow  
my saddle and tile my shield—  
We hover over the heart stone—  
dark planet sucks us in

Where pit becomes crater, scars crevasses,  
crisscrossing vessels a maze of arroyos,  
dry, stiff and choked with sand-slides  
Do I have a wand, a willow-wand,  
a healing incantation?

My origin story? My life review?  
Always *this* heart—*It is written*—  
written in my genes, like a back-up plan  
for my demise if nothing else presents—

Stone looms large as a sun now,  
just like death—getting closer—and here  
am I, I am here, riding the back of an owl

# Hive

Victoria Anderson

an ill-lit hostelry  
    silked and hollowed  
        a vibrancy, tangible, coiled

entrusted to the hour  
    of animal's quiet churning,  
        of the deeper

corridors of mystery  
    dark untellables

these angels  
    of nothing  
        these small, plural things

Sources: C.D. Wright, Aracelis Gimway, Jenny Xie

# Forager's Exit

Victoria Anderson

hived: shrined: vesseled

cells swelling

a strange unutterable music

in the dark center

a shifting: seismic

an exit:

wide and loose: a god's mouth

unfastened

a tilt

towards the throats

of wild blossoms:

shrines

to their own longing

Sources: Jenny Molberg, Jill Osier, Mary Szybist

# Swarm Psalm

Victoria Anderson

a burnished ripple  
    swells and goes flat  
        a song unfastens

shrine to their urge  
    urge and nothing but

god glitter in our minds  
    divinity enough  
        this wholeness finishing

Sources: Linda Gregg, Hart Crane, Cathy Linh Che

# The Emptying

Victoria Anderson

light's unforgiving reveal  
a diminishing fugue  
an intricate ballet of leaving

headlong into the muted world  
the crevices between  
the world and not world

the ruin fresh  
some minor god's instrument  
broken

Sources: Yusef Komonyakaa, Dorianne Laux, Ada Limon



# The Hem of the Story

Victoria Anderson

Little gods trying out their wings  
harmonize in silence  
cannot be held  
by my gaze.

I follow the clues  
all the way past  
the flowers dilating,  
past the leaves,  
under their sheen.

Some have flown  
past death,  
radiant beings urging  
every kind but my own.

Sources: Mary Jo Bang, Victoria Chang, Anne Carson, Linda Gregg

# Elegy Fugue

Damian Montoya

When my grandmother died, I titled an elegy, “Correcamino,” placing my husk and mute meat, red everywhere inside except where my tripitas wriggled in their off whiteness, in proximity of my maternal tongue. Correcamino-Mother-Grandmother. And so, what I did was, I dragged the figure of her body up staircase lines, escalating stanzas with, I guess, missing steps. Through more stanzas, some without doors, others, likenesses of her recent storage closet with garden tools. Imagine a grinding, machine mouth. “Correcamino” ate itself. Mama Lupe had wings, for sure. But my bird for her was the stomping predator for the horned lizard. I imagined my grandmother with heaps of sand and precise talons. Her chapters, what I barely knew, I amplified into quaking legacy from just one story I’d heard, where, it ends with a knife she had thrown across the kitchen vibrating in the door near my Grandfather’s head. In one stanza, I placed my uncle the one we never knew, on the mouth of the arroyo where they found him, drained. I left him there, enjambed. At the end of the poem, the confusing thing was that Mama Lupe had somehow also, or then become the horned lizard, dodging the roadrunner’s shifting gait. Home to her baby horned lizards. I cast Salinas as a damning gavel on legacy and waterways. A cold stanza built to push and dump bodies at the perimeters. The Salad Bowl. The jowls and valleys, moles and mountains of the face of the planet. I don’t know. I reach for words that would cover just the planet, humming. When I say reach, I probably mean, sift. I sift words. And that notion resonates somehow with my uncle’s lanky frame sprawled on that arroyo and the dust there. A later draft asked whether the planet was for dressing with bodies. Another draft asked no questions.

# Song

Elliot Pearson

He found a songbird  
in her heart  
dripping jubilant  
belying black rain—

plucked its strings  
tender thing,  
held gently, held tight  
in desert barren

as voice grew weary  
words faded away—  
melody within  
spreading thin—

so he stabbed the bird's  
still beating heart—  
and by killing the bird  
killed Song itself.

# Abide with Me

Elliot Pearson

I'm eating out of a volcano  
trying to find my soul today—  
will you stand by my side?  
Forever near-far away  
with high hopes, high hopes  
of fir bark burning bright  
sandalwood, cedar, swirling  
in the night valley of modesto  
basin bowl to take me  
out running on turbo core  
across passport open shores,  
peach trees, in paradisum—  
in this room a lexicon devil  
when I was a wolf  
knocking down your door  
on the last slipstream hunt  
down a never-ending magma river—  
oh, Lord, the red-scented magenta  
firm hand on bare raw rump thigh,  
tongue-tied tanned figure of eight  
ouroboros majestic.

# Bones

Elliot Pearson

You should have flown with her,  
soaring over mountains of mundanity.

You should have drowned with her  
below dark depths of a tempestuous sea.

Instead, you sought newer pastures green—  
when she was standing right in front of you.

Galleons of gold that soon turned to shipwrecks,  
washed up alone, worthless, on a barren shore.

Who could have seen, foresaw,  
four years of solitude forevermore ...

Shadows flow this way and that,  
and the bones of man, fused, lie in a tide pool,

growing algae and moss, crustaceans and rot,  
waiting for the brine to soak, swirl, all out to sea.

# The Tribulations of Wood Frogs

Christian Ward

Off the path, a vernal pool  
brimming with the forest's eyes:

wood frog embryos, no bigger  
than kiwifruit seeds, agoraphobic

in the confines of transparent cells,  
gelatinous and massed

like metaphors. Easy pickings  
for dragonfly larvae scouting

pools and ponds like dogs  
wed to a fugitive's scent.

The wood frog freezes itself  
solid in the winter, becoming

as heavy as a paperweight,  
an unthrown stone waiting for the glass.

Defrosts in spring, ready to kiss  
the forest back to life. The frogspawn

twitch from what lies ahead.  
You would pull your eyes out

if you knew what was coming, too.

# Lendkanal Metaphor

Herbert Colston

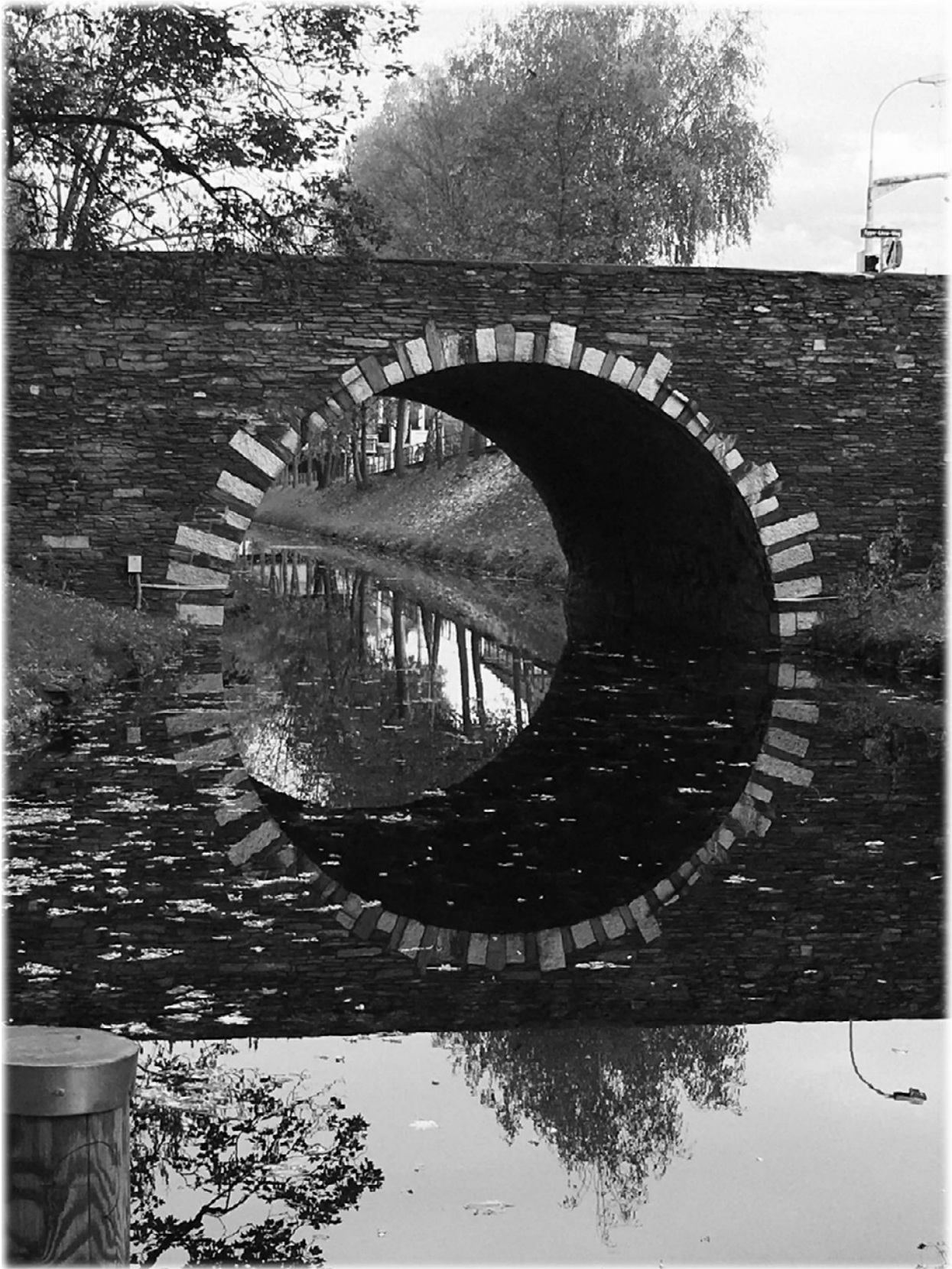


human hands have crafted where a sea meets a land, the bridge of one reaching into the other, a camera corrals where a heaven touches ground, the boundary of a sphere in a sphere, blurred, a poem will render a vision's morphing with text, where senses may conjure an idea's soul, incursions of a one into another, the entities coinciding, their shared empathies merging as one



incursions viewed on approach must widen, growing as they near, receding toward their origin, a blending of realms enhanced, as seas mingle with lands, their vintage strengthened with age, as are lines born when two points co-incure, the connection established, their projections enabled, the union a broaching of infinity, where a nothing awakens to an everything, a birth of meaning





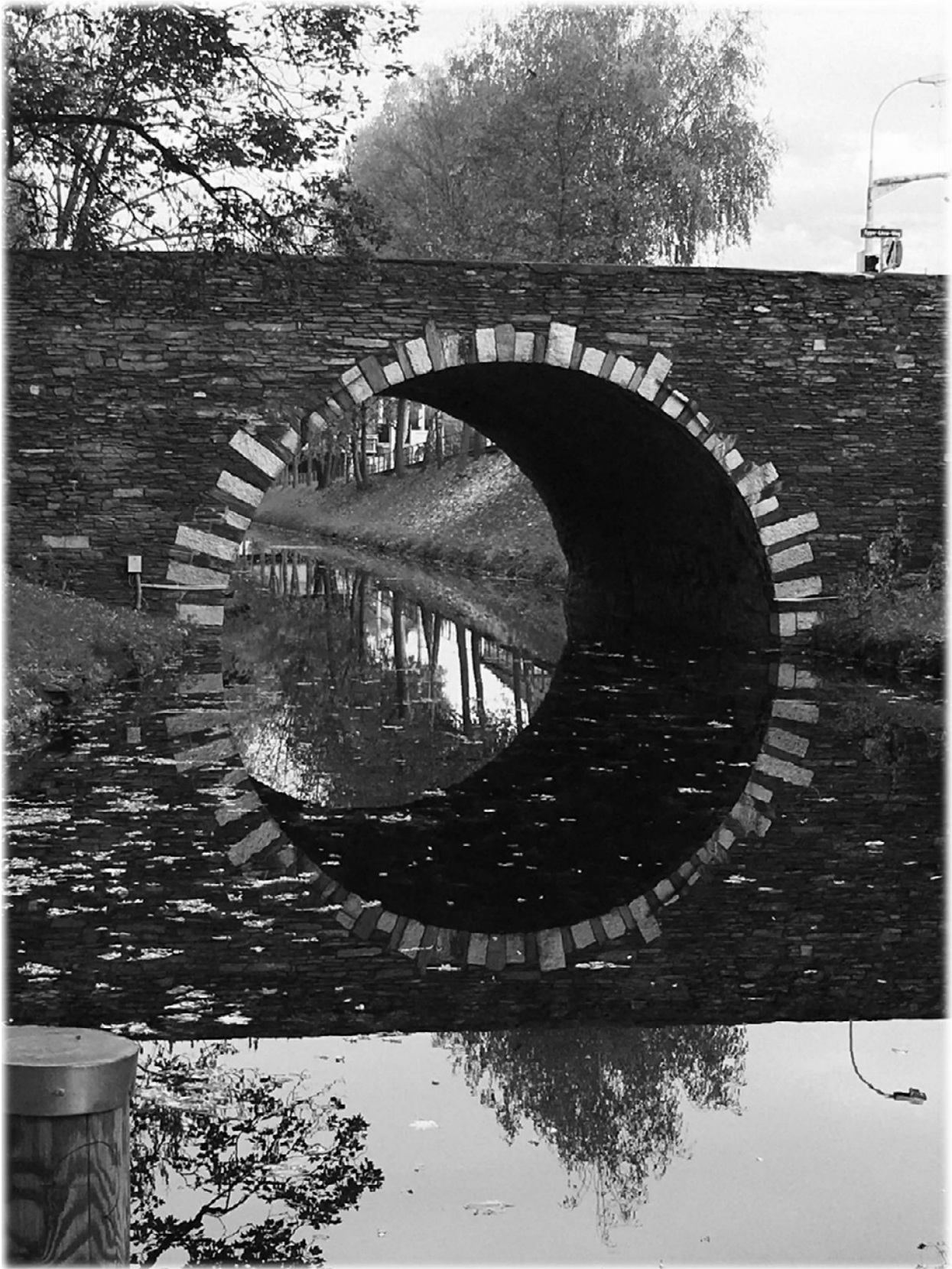
Two ways crossing, like reeds in a basket, a one over another.

Although the paths are unequal, one reflects upon the other,  
rendering the juncture a piercing, the threading of a needle.

The line passing through expands the other, stretching it,  
inverting its perspective, casting a nuance of flotsam upon it,  
highlighting its inner curvatures, revealing its undersides,  
clarifying its strengths, wedging open its façades to see through.

And all going unnoticed, as the over-way is traversed. While the  
throughway lies inert, its once wave-rippled surface now placid.





A photograph, and some words, a nested case of reflection  
upon reflection, like faced pairs of mirrors, two, making infinity.

A crossing united, two infinite lines sown together, stitched,  
we see the circle of the beyond, within the circle of the near,  
from perception of the through way, reflecting upon the other,  
a metaphor in a metaphor of the metaphorical root of meaning.

Nulls and crosses, x and o's, a ball and jacks, tic-tac-toes,  
meaning comes from the hole, where one line can enter another,  
poetry is the assembled keystones, preventing us from falling in

# The Lazarus Effect

Oran Ryan

Consider Lazarus, a person once dead and then alive. Of the other species of humans that lived on Earth, no one that we know of was resurrected, except in fiction. Would he relapse from whatever made him die? Any relapse would make no sense. So, allowing for no death and no disease, would Lazarus ever die? Would he have an eternity gene? Would he need food? Water? Would he be immune to all communicable diseases? Would he sleep or age? Would Lazarus then be immune to death? So, allowing for Lazarus the eternal Superhuman, would there be a run on eternity genetics on the stock exchange of ideas? Would he get bored? I mean living forever can be a drag, but it does allow for eternal curiosity. So, allowing for Lazarus loving philosophy and science and knowledge, being indestructible and immune to diseases and having eternity genetics and possibly new passport as he was once pronounced dead, what about sex? If Lazarus were to procreate and pass on his genetic profile, would the Earth quickly become overpopulated with people like him? Would overpopulation eventually bring on a mass extinction event? Would the New Human consume what's left of the Earth? Would humanity have to move off world? Would humanity no longer have death as the end? Would space rather than time be our final frontier? Would humanity spread across the galaxies? Would Eternity Humanity dominate all of Space Time? What if Lazarus become like an AI, able to learn and grow and reproduce forever? What if Lazarus Frankenstein realized his potential? Would he go nuts with power and destroy the cosmos? Would he develop a god complex? Would the Lazarus Effect be the end of philosophy, religion, science, politics, history; indeed everything we've ever known? What then?



# Homecoming on Father's Demise

Taofeek "Aswagaawy" Ayeyemi

I step into our street and thunderstorms welcome me,  
a group of fowls races towards a fishmonger's shed,  
a dog leaps out of an apricot garden which, already,  
has lost its scent and sheen to the May flood, debris  
from the rainstorm hits a face staring by the window,  
vultures clash over the vestige of a sacrifice.

I snap at a firefly, and it falls like the ember  
of a lantern wick blown off by the Maghrib wind.

I wade through these waves and crashed by the freshness  
of father's grave, squeezing the red earth in my palms,  
wishing it was all a series of expensive pranks.

My eyes swim in the pool of the dark veranda,  
the intermittent hisses from the lantern at a corner  
alerts the pain that beclouds my cravings.

In the embrace of my closed eyes is a flag flailing  
in the dry wind over a hilltop, beside a damp me—  
staying longer for ablution contemplating tayammum.

I write letters and restyle them into poems  
wishing that one day I'll pick a copy of the collection,  
fold it into a bottle and fling it down the Styx to my father.

# The Augury of Dreams

Taofeek “Aswagaawy” Ayeyemi

*What does it mean to hold a feather in one's teeth?*

It calls for feast, a reburial of a dead  
father. I sprain my back lifting the  
memory of his joy, and the tears  
of how luck ran past him at old age.  
With ungrace, what confers royalty may  
demand your loyalty. Life is like teeth,  
rare bones tearing birds into sacrifice,  
where God falls a rain of daisy over a  
congregation. From a tide of eyes,  
I fetched a sea home, its sands  
in my palms, its shells burdening my  
pocket: this is how father shredded  
his skins in the heart of strangers,  
pieces by pieces. Sometimes  
we shred ourselves into birdfeeders,  
into notes within the beaks of albatross.  
That is to say, hunger is the generosity  
of pangs, a kind of emptying  
that lightens your body for flight.



# The Augury of Bones

Taofeek “Aswagaawy” Ayeyemi

There is nothing this black nylon bag  
would carry, than a body of paunchy flesh.  
You received it all teeth, but opened it  
and found a deer’s *head*: your hands  
almost trembled the deer back to life.  
Your eyes became a blurry camera lens  
as the final share was dissected:  
You spread your hands and submitted them  
under the burden of the *back* of your hunt.  
And while fellow hunters entered their homes  
with meat and smiles, you swam in the wind  
of grief with a bagful of bones.  
You called it a nightmare but father said:  
*Not every sad dream is sadness de facto—*  
At times, to dine and wine with a ghost  
is to savour the key of treasure,  
to carry the body of a dead on your head  
to the cemetery is to carry a bag of gold.  
And about this dream he said:  
When death is taking everyone,  
he would ask you to stay *back*;  
When a continent is formed,  
you’d be asked to become the *head*.

# Moon Pie Love

M. E. Silverman

I walk out my blue peeling front door to get away from the day. Down and down the road until barbed-wire fences vanish where borders are marked by this way or that. Pavement shifts to the crunch of pebbles, where trees, thick with time, whisper history. I stop only to drink or to snap a photo of some flower's bursting bloom. I head for tall grass more yellow than green that sway in wind's refrain, rolling into horizon. A stack of river rocks reveals an almost hidden trail. I journey along whistling back at birds, humming with crickets.

A stream stops my path.

I discover a lawn chair, well-worn, on the bank's edge, and an empty cooler, faded red. Here, at this secret fishing spot, I see eight moon pies carefully arranged to form a face. Two big chocolates for eyes, a single nose yellow, and five clown-white ones for the smile. Each has a mouth-size bite in the middle. Carefully arranged but abandoned. The ants and wasps have not yet found this artwork; I must have just missed the creator. I think about taking a picture, posting it for posterity, to brag about this find, except the carefully chewed through centers create a sense of privacy. Or maybe I know this type of sweetness, the one I hold in the middle of myself that I love just enough to sample but not enough to keep.

# Man in the Moon

M. E. Silverman

*There liveth none under the sunne, that knows what to make of the  
man in the moone.*

— John Lyly from *Endymion* (1591)

The Man in the Moon stands in line while a meteorite cools in his left pocket. He hopes no one notices the smoke and waves his hands the way people do when bothered by cigarette puffs. The man in the Thor shirt in front of him never looks back, orders a large Shot in the Dark with two sugars, and quickly moves along. The Man in the Moon buys a double cappuccino extra foam, and the barista asks for his name. Mani the Norse god sans pursu-  
ant from Hati the Great Wolf. She flicks a long wisp of hair that hangs over her right eye, releases a heavy sigh, and writes down: “Ted”. He counts the cost in pennies and dimes. He wonders if he should add an additional cake pop, how they look like little planets balanced on a stick. Too late. He moves to the next waiting spot, and hums to the comforting churn of coffee grinder, the metal cup’s low drum, the percussion of register, and the accompanying delicate buzz of fluorescent bulb. Today, he hears a tune from the 70s:

*Everybody was dancin’ in the moonlight*

*Everybody here is out of sight*

*They don’t bark and they don’t bite*

Cup in hand, he begins to shoulder shimmy. He wiggles his waist, nods his head, and exits.

# Pow to the Moon

M. E. Silverman

*After Russell Edson*

A father throws Baby high in the air, higher and higher. He calls her his little meteor. Father is an athlete with a sack of potatoes. Same routine, same time. Every day, every way. When the child wakes, he begins with the easy straight up spin toss, one handed, back handed, double spin half flip, around the back, and snake-slide across his shoulders. Higher, shrieks Baby, all hand-clapping giggles. So he does all the difficult tricks: loopy de loop, through the ceiling fan, the two-wall racquetball bounce, over the cracked chimney, above the treetops, higher and higher.

Pow to the moon, he shouts.  
Moo-moo moon, echoes Baby.

So he leans back and heaves baby through clouds and sky, all the way to the moon. When Baby smacks into the lunar crust, they both laugh at the little pinata-pop sound. Stop, says Mama, you are hurting the moon. Listen to the tears; listen to the hurting heavens. Oh no, oh no, he says, that just won't do. She builds a rocket. Father climbs aboard and together they blast to the crying moon.

She kisses the moon. He hugs it close.  
Shhh, they say in unison, there there.

# Moonfish

M. E. Silverman

They still remember living long ago on the moon, making squid pie and playing gambling games. The perfect wide-eyed shill, they bet with krill, and cannot pass by a game of three shells and a pea. When they had nothing left to lose, they bet on the moon and lost. Now, they spend their days in warm waters, waiting for nightfall to chase cuttlefish in the cold, reflective sea. And when nets lift them onto ships, they open-close-open their mouths, mourning their moon days with one last song.

# Yellow Boxfish

M. E. Silverman

The second thing anyone notices is how their lips bulge cocaine-white. The first is their sunny, square-shaped bodies that inspire German cars to shift swifter down the Autobahn. While their self-stabilizing fins look built for racing fun, they spend their days solo. Within cells of reefs, the cubicle boxfish try to relax like meditating monks. When angered, their inner Hulk puffs fake muscles, releasing toxins. Like a bad gag, they spew deadly smoke, a cough that kills any fish near, even itself. Insane polka-dotted clowns of the sea! They dream of seamounts with endless seaweed, countless algae, and mouthfuls of mollusks. They hope for a world of sharkless waters, calm as elevator jazz, where no grouper dwells and no nets grab. Just pitter-patter rain, hum of ocean, and bath salts that bubble burst-brine.

# Flightpath

Alyson Miller

Take-off and landing are statistically the riskiest, which might explain the vomiting, a body-surge rejection of danger. The noise is the shearing of air masses, echo-trapped in the hair cells of the cochlea, and a reminder that if a plane goes too high, there isn't enough oxygen to fuel the engines. I ask how you feel about a jump, only two minutes and 48 seconds to the ground if we immediately reach terminal velocity, so little time and yet also, perhaps, forever. More survivable on water than land, aviators call it ditching, a memory of that hole we dug when the earth seemed a safer place. The air is sieved through the wet spaces of other people's lungs, and curved routes are shorter than straight ones, leaving the Pacific Ocean to bone-heavy dugongs, needle-beaked curlews, and sea otters, who hold together in sleep, anchored in kelp for fear of the drift. There are skipjack, yellowfin and albacore, brawny fusiform bodies that spindle into jetlagged dreamscapes, hot ovens, and other toothy mouths. Tastebuds decrease by 30% in flight, numbed by altitude; you check my tongue and add salt, whispering about airspeed and thrust-to-weight ratios for ascent.

# Seen

Alyson Miller

Witches are said to curse the eyes: punishment for sin, a celestial blinding. The milky white sclera grows, sky-large and unstoppable, before collapsing in a gush of lost things: hot coals; a broken pin; an autumn pear. A friend whose vision snuck away into the dark places never wished it back, hoped only for the shadows to soften hard corners and the whispers that plagued the night. If an eyelid twitches at 4am, there will be joy, but at noon it will bring imminent disaster and so you spend every lunchtime with fingertips pressed to the delicate membrane, counting to 60 and thinking of Saint Christopher. A pinkie drag along the corneal film grazes the grape-dense surface, lash curled beneath the blush lip of the conjunctiva. One of your students is hospitalised for chronic masturbation, jelly blisters pop-sucking along the angry shaft; cock-broken, he said, but still not blind. A Native American lore tells how different coloured irises give the possessor, mostly dogs, sight into heaven and earth, a split-view confusion of space and entombment. Blue is a genetic mutation shared by a common ancestor, a 10,000-year-old mystery of oceans and history and light. During the plunge of a dream, in which river creatures grasp at the toes and knees of swimmers, you blink madly for dawn, a furious tremoring of brain, eyes, and lungs. The cortex overwhelms with visual and tactile data: a kiss is unsighted, the secret territory of slick teeth, hearts, and tongues.



# One More Thing

Diana Donovan

Our catamaran is sailing around  
the Cape of Considerable Regrets  
heading for open water

and I'm seasick—  
sick of circular logic  
sick of texting until the sun comes up

and the dog needs walking.  
Weren't we done long ago?  
Someone must go out for paper towels

or ground beef; there are bills to pay.  
*Don't leave—say one more thing*, you plead,  
as if words on a screen could change our course.

*What else is there to say*, I say,  
just a speck on the horizon now,  
having sailed so far past one more thing.

# California

Diana Donovan

Day breaks on the mesa and I'm remembering  
the nicknames you made up for me back then—  
*Mouse* and *Miss D* and *Cupcake*.

The sculpture garden outside the museum feels haunted—  
cobwebbed windchimes made of old spoons, a skeleton riding a bicycle  
even the seagulls like ghosts of their former selves.

The ocean air is thick with the smell of marijuana  
and it's that summer all over again, your voice in my ear  
reading aloud the story of Saint Barbara

whose own father ordered her to be beheaded, who was  
banished from the canon in 1969, the year you were born  
and it's been four months since my last drink

longer than you ever lasted during Lent  
and either we'll find our way back or we won't—  
there are worse ways to be broken.

# To All the Dead Raccoons

Diana Donovan

To all the dead raccoons  
on the shoulder of the Merritt Parkway  
whose lifeless bodies, blood-specked  
tails and whiskers remind me  
how everything can change in an instant.

On the drive to Heritage House  
forests of crimson and gold set fire  
to a sky as gray as the chilly Atlantic  
where Becky, Ruth, and I swam yesterday  
braved the October temperatures.

A TV in the lobby of the memory care unit  
broadcasts a Japanese game show  
to an audience half-asleep  
as an old woman pushes a doll  
in a baby stroller.

I hand Mum paper cups of Coca-Cola  
show her postcards of Martha's Vineyard  
and the loop begins—she sees my wedding ring  
and asks, *When did you get married?*  
and I answer, *Twenty-two years ago*

a blink or an eternity or both—as if  
she could still get to know her grandchild  
the daughter I drove to college last week  
the one I was afraid to leave with her  
for five minutes though I survived a lifetime.

There's nothing quite like fall in New England  
how bitterness can sink into its briny salt marshes  
as the Hunter moon rises over the Saugatuck  
pale egrets and slender rushes silent witnesses  
to an open door, an invitation to let go.

# Pinky Promise

Diana Donovan

I hear crickets, the slam of the screen door  
and it's that summer at Dad's again—a steady diet  
of *Frosted Flakes* and *Hogan's Heroes*.

Blair and I braid each other's hair, build a treehouse  
ride our banana seat bikes to Mackey's, no helmets—  
gorge on *Charleston Chews* and *Tiger Beat*.

Late in the afternoon, we race to the bottom of the hill  
lie flat on the hot asphalt, fingers intertwined  
to await the arrival of the *Yankee Clipper*.

We listen for the whistle in the distance  
close our eyes, slow our breathing as the beast  
draws near—rush of air, shriek of metal.

Blood rushing, we rise up, and pedal home for popsicles  
and Kick the Can with the Sullivans and the Dorans  
until the grownups call everyone in for supper.

We don't ask how long we're staying.  
Each day starts with a pinky promise  
to keep our heads above water—stay afloat.

# Postcards From a Dream

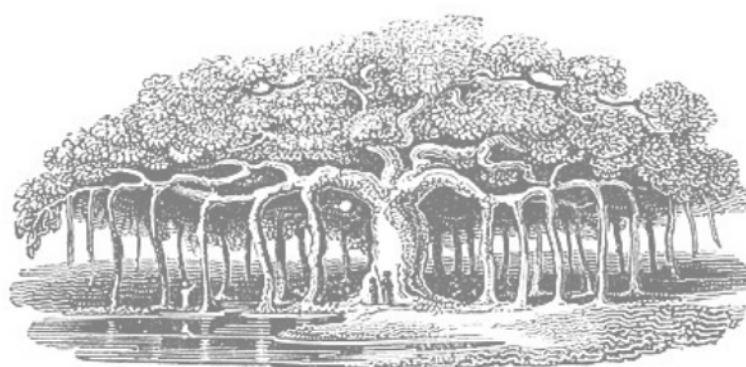
Diana Donovan

Here's a picture from an airplane window  
another from the deck of a sailboat  
a bridge, a church, cormorants in flight  
prairie grasses, patches of purple sky  
places you're passing through  
like postcards from a dream.

Sometimes it's an old one, a black-and-white  
or a Polaroid—all long hair and cigarettes.  
When I try your phone, I get an auto-reply  
*I can't talk right now*  
as if one moment were  
different from any other.

We never admitted our mistakes  
and this doesn't count as conversation  
you feeding me a stream of images  
distant worlds I don't recognize  
oceans too dark to swim through  
the shape of us I'm already forgetting.

If you look too long at something bright  
its afterimage burns in your mind  
an impression as real as memory.  
You can close your eyes and find me  
right where you left me  
in the middle of a dream.



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# ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

**Victoria Anderson** is a Chicago-based writer. Her second book of poetry, *Vorticity*, was published by Mammoth Press in 2013, and she recently published a chapbook entitled *The Hour Box* (Kelsay Books). She has been a three-time recipient of Illinois Art Council individual artist's grants and has published in numerous literary magazines, among them *Gulf Coast*, *New South*, *Agni*, and *Mississippi Review*. She has also had essays and short stories published in literary journals of note.

**Taofeek "Aswagaawy" Ayeyemi** is a Nigerian lawyer, writer and author of the chapbook *Tongueless Secrets* (Ethel Press, 2021) and a collection "aubade at night or serenade in the morning" (Flowersong Press, 2021). A BotN and Pushcart Prize Nominee, his works have appeared in *CV 2*, *Lucent Dreaming*, *Up-the-Staircase Quarterly*, *FERAL*, *ARTmosterrific*, *Banyan Review*, *Conscio*, *Porter House Review*, *the Quills* and elsewhere. He won the 2021 Loft Books Flash Fiction Competition, 2nd Place in 2021 Porter House Review Poetry Contest, and Honorable Mention in 2021 Oku-no-hosomichi Soka Matsubara Haiku Contest and 2020 Stephen A. DiBiase Poetry Prize among others. He is @Aswagaawy on Twitter.

**Mandy Beattie's** poetry appears in *Poets Republic*, *Drawn to The Light*, *WordPeace*, *Crowstep*, *Full House Literary*, *Verse-Virtual*, *Federation of Writers Scotland Anthology*, *5 Words*, *Abridged*, and many more. Winner of *Words with Seagulls* and *City of Poets Competitions*. Shortlisted: *Creative Future Writer's Award*; *10th International Five Words and Black Box Competitions*. *Best of Net* nominee, 2024. Forthcoming publications in *Dreich's* swan-song edition, *Lunares Zine*, *Coin-Operated Press* and *Orphic Review*.

**William Binzen** has always loved words. As an English major at Middlebury College, he was only the second student permitted to do creative poetry for his senior thesis. Since then, he spent most of his adult life as a fine art photographer with an eclectic portfolio of themes, styles and cameras ranging from Brownie Hawkeye to 8x10 film to dSLR to iPhone (seriously). His writing is similarly eclectic; he revels in the interplay of sound and meaning dancing on



the tongue, sculpting the different forms words may take on a page, and always looking to tell a good story.

**Shelley Chesley** has published poetry in three editions of the literary journal *Nostos*, and in two anthologies of the Marin Poetry Center as well as in the online poetry journal, *Canary*. Her first collection of poems, *Come Back Behind Your Eyes* (Longship Press, 2023), was released last autumn. She has recent work in the June 2024 issue of *The Portland Review* and in Vol V, Issue III of *The Raven Review*, July 2024. Her work will appear in *The Free State Review*'s upcoming Fall issue. Making poetry, as a way to converse with self, others and place has been a late arriving and welcome grace. She adds it to her life's list of explorations as actor, theology student and liturgist, storyteller, MD and multi-faith hospital chaplain. Her second poetry collection, *Everything Full of Gods*, is now available for publication.

**Herbert Colston** is an Edmonton Canada-based scholar, poet, and artist whose work focuses on the nature of meaning-making from both creative and academic perspectives. His picture poetry has appeared in *Door = Jar*, and *The Banyan Review*. His scholarly works include *How Language Makes Meaning: Embodiment and Conjoined Antonymy* (2019), for which he also provided the cover art, and *Using Figurative Language* (2015), both by Cambridge University Press. His scholarly and poetic works explore the embodied, social, and other roots of meaning and all our varied ways of crafting, kneading, and leveraging it, from expository prose through figurative talk to multi-modal poetics. He serves as Editor of the Taylor & Francis journal, *Metaphor & Symbol*.

**Kat Crawford** is a native San Franciscan and currently lives in Tiburon, California with her husband. She received her MFA in poetry from Dominican University in 2019. Her work has been published by *Creative Woman*, *Nomad's Choir*, *Spillway*, *Marin Poetry Center Anthology* and *Tuxedo* at Dominican University. Kat's books are *A Particular Heaven* and *All of It* (Finishing Line Press, 2021).

**Diana Donovan** is a writer based in Northern California. Her poetry has recently appeared in *Pioneertown*, *Chestnut Review*, *Tar River Poetry*, and *Off the Coast*. In 2021, she was nominated for a Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net.

**Jan Fraser** lives in both Oregon and on an island in British Columbia. She writes mostly these days about family intertwined with bark and berries, fallen trees, laughing ravens, and the smallest wildflowers.

**LC Gutierrez** is a product of many places in the South and the Caribbean. He now writes, teaches and plays trombone in Madrid, Spain. His work is published or forthcoming in *Autofocus*, *Notre Dame Review*, *Sweet*, *Hobart*, *Peauxdunque Review* and other wonderful journals.

**Michael Jemal** was raised in Brooklyn, New York and now lives in the southern part of Rhode Island with his wife and son. He has studied with Stephen Dunn and B.J. Ward. He has been published in *Rattle*, *New Delta Review*, *Hiram Poetry Review* and his chapbook, *It Began*, was the winner of the 2023 Blue Light Poetry Award.

**Terry Lucas**, editor of the fall 2024 issue of *The Banyan Review*, is the author of two prize-winning chapbooks, *If They Have Ears to Hear* (Southeast Missouri State University Press, 2012) and *Altar Call* (San Gabriel Valley Literary Festival, 2013), in addition to two full-length collections: *In This Room* and *Dharma Rain*. A book of new and selected poems with photographs by Gary Topper, *The Thing Itself*, was published by Longship Press in 2020. His poetry has appeared in numerous national journals, including *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *Best New Poets*, and *The Sun*, among others. Terry is Poet Laureate Emeritus of Marin County California and a freelance poetry coach at [www.terrylucas.com](http://www.terrylucas.com).

**Alyson Miller** is a prize-winning prose poet and academic who teaches writing and literature at Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia. Her critical and creative work, which focuses on a literature of extremities, has appeared in both national and international publications, and includes three books of prose poetry, *Dream Animals*, *Pika-Don* and *Strange Creatures* as well as a critical monograph, *Haunted by Words: Scandalous Texts*, and an edited collection, *The Unfinished Atomic Bomb: Shadows and Reflections*.

**Damian Montoya** lives in Las Cruces, New Mexico where he is an MFA candidate in the creative writing program at NMSU. He is a husband and father and writes fiction and poetry from this perspective. He enjoys thinking and writing about family relationships, trauma, class and faith as themes for his work. He also makes a mediocre salsa.

**Elliot Pearson** is a writer and poet from the UK. His work has previously appeared in *Star\*Line* and in various anthologies. Find him on Instagram @\_\_epearson. He lives in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

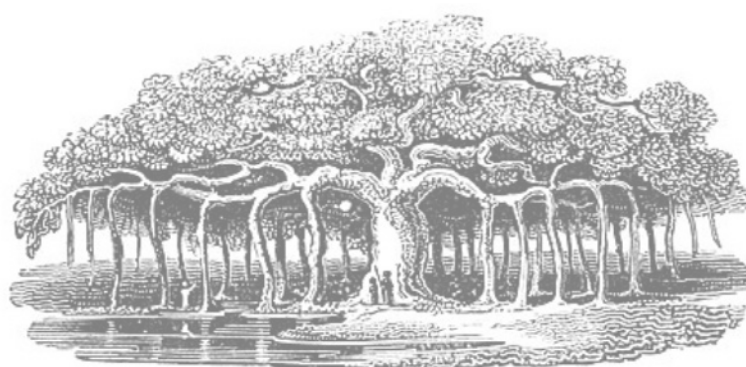
**Oran Ryan** is a writer from Ireland. His novels include: *The Death of Finn* (2006), *Ten Short Novels by Arthur Kruger* (2007), *One Inch Punch* (2012), and *Life During Wartime* (2022). He is working steadily on his new novel. Ryan has also written chapbooks and plays for the stage, and for radio, the prose poem / play: *Preliminary Design: a Universe Circling Spacecraft*, among other projects. Ryan occasionally gives talks and teaches writing.

**M. E. Silverman** published *The Floating Door* (Glass Lyre Press) and co-edited *Bloomsbury's Anthology of Contemporary Jewish American Poetry*, *New Voices: Contemporary Writers Confronting the Holocaust*, and *101 Jewish Poems for the Third Millennium*. @4ME2Silver

**Paul Vermeersch** is a poet, multimedia artist, literary editor and creative writing professor who lives in Toronto, Canada. He is the author of seven poetry collections, most recently *Shared Universe: New and Selected Poems 1995-2020*. He teaches in the Honours Bachelor of Creative Writing & Publishing program at Sheridan College where he is the editor-in-chief of *The Ampersand Review of Writing & Publishing*. He is also the senior editor of Wolsak and Wynn Publishers where he created the poetry and fiction imprint Buckrider Books. His next collection of poems is scheduled to be published in fall 2025.

**Christian Ward** is a UK-based poet with recent work in *Acumen*, *Dreich*, *Dream Catcher*, *The Westchester Review*, *London Grip*, and *The Shore*. He was longlisted for the 2023 Aurora Prize for Writing, shortlisted for the 2023 Ironbridge Poetry Competition and 2023 Aesthetica Creative Writing Award, and won the 2023 Cathalbui Poetry Competition.

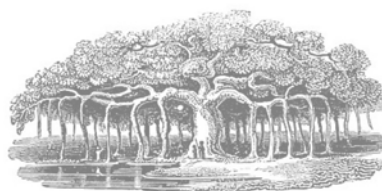




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# ABOUT THE MAGAZINE

*The Banyan Review* is an online, international journal promoting poetry, art, and the natural world. Our issues also include short-fiction, essays and interviews. We publish quarterly. Contributors range from poets and artists, to thinkers, and essayists. Our issues embrace work from new, emerging, and established creators. We look forward to sharing your work.



THE BANYAN REVIEW