



Lingerpost Issue # 3
January 31, 2012

LETTER from the EDITOR:

If you ask what I look for in poetry...what kind of poetry is in this literary journal...

In the introduction to *Best American Poetry 1990*, Jorie Graham describes poetry as a “moral and spiritual undertaking,” “a rediscovery of the ways in which the honing of one’s tools for *sight*—formal techniques—is the honing of one’s tools for *insight*.” She goes on to say that poetry “fails” when it is only of “mere self,” that poetry succeeds when “it puts the self at genuine risk.”

By risk, Graham means “the poet must move to encounter the other, not more versions of the self. An other: God, nature, a beloved, an Idea, Abstract form, Language itself as field, Chance, Death, Consciousness, what exists in silence.”

We should all strive to endanger ourselves through our poetry. To endeavor to say what we can’t. To connect to the world through “precision of seeing, feeling, and thinking.” Even if we sometimes fail.

So, please enjoy reading these risky, perilous, and perceptive poems.

As always, much love and gratitude to this issue’s lovely and talented contributors.

Best wishes,

Kara Dorris

Editor-in-Chief, *Lingerpost*

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Collaborative Poem *

What will sink you into wildness as into a bed of glass

That year the air like water—a spongy sogginess,
a minor whine of the inner ear and

(Sheila Black)

 this felt like a lesson:

buried mouths preach to us
from abandoned rooms

(Mary Stone Dockery)

repetitive morning bus rides spent attempting
to listen for conversations leaking
like faucets. When did it become so weighted?
drops again and again

(Tanaya Winder)

like many they need to be learned
again and again

You pick the nits of dough
between your fingers as you knead it
Pinch and flick. Discard this too

(Elizabeth Brasher)

One fogged evening slinks over. A tiny house
still flickers with every light on

(Natalie Day)

Finally, it feels
that everything has been given its chance

A lesson not learned but absorbed, subsumed,
washed with rum and cigarette smoke
and the truth is I didn't want this after all

(Adam Crittenden)

Here, trees grow in twilight like the
 bones in a body, and you can be frightened

(Sheila Black)

by the white rush of a long water.

* In honor of *Lingerpost*'s first issue and its contributors, I asked if several of these wonderful poets would contribute a few lines to create a collaborative poem, based on the first 3 lines given above. And it turned out beautifully.

Many thanks to the contributors of *Lingerpost* Issue # 1 who came together again to create this poem.

CAROL BERG

How To Live Like Sisters In A Fairy Tale

Become little eggs.
Be the yolk inside white.
Become pregnant at thirteen.
Be a cluster of green grapes
just waiting to be hand picked
and squeezed. Find yourselves hung
on a clothesline pegged side by side.
Braid each other's endless
hair. Weave in constellations,
horns, soda cans. Stack mothers
one inside the other
each one porcelain
pale and smaller still.
Tie them up in blue
sashes. Take them out
to play but always put them
carefully away.
Become the safely put away.

Apple Picking

girl in the apple orchard having a grand
mal seizure broken leaves desiccated

stems rust pulled from her mouth
in her mind the trees are her sisters

wrapped in gold muslin and sap
ripping their falling leafwords to feed into

her opened beak *rest rest* they flutter to her
her wheelchair some fat metallic pumpkin shell

and there it kept her very well
and there it kept her very well

her eyes the size of my fist
her body all shudder and wing

Sister Dreams

sister knows me knows my dream habit
knows how I nudge it
how I pull pink knee-highs
high over its legs how I
keep it teething
& sister knows how I ride that dream of you
ride it sister
watches me roll my
dream of you into fine Japanese paper
put it in my mouth sister smokes my dream
with me & the tillandsia unfurls little dream arms
your arms all your arms curl around us sister knits
the greening dream into my hair
sister snips the lightning dream
snips it all silvery right
into my eyes

DEIRDRE REGAN BRIGGS

The Night Table

I meet my mother out of the blue
in the wood shed. What a fright
she gives me, just standing there.

She's brought me an Easter basket
that looks like she dug it up, and
I'm a little nervous about what's inside.

But I can see the effort has cost her
just to get here after all these years.
She looks even more rattled than before:

purple eye shadow on her cheeks,
one broken earring dangling
from a corroded hook. I'm really not sure

I should be happy she came so far.
Poor thing. She shivers barefoot
in her tattered housedress, and her eyes

never blink. We push aside the axe
on the sawhorse between us
and share a cup of black tea

and burnt toast, just as though we might
cheerfully reminisce about the days before
the aliens beamed her up.

She even gives my fingers a quick squeeze
across our makeshift table
like someone who cares,

before reaching into the basket
to remove little vials, arranging them
for me with their labels out.

And this is the night table between us,
orangey containers glowing in low lamplight
beside her bed; inside, shiny green and black

capsules, some pink, some blue, those labels
with their mysterious words. And I'm afraid
she wants to confide something

I've been trying for centuries not to believe —
like maybe no one is ever really abducted
by aliens at all, they just drift off

to God knows where.
But she only plugs the smoke-ring
of her mouth with a wet cigarette,

so whatever it is she's trying to say
comes out in one long moan
that ends with a chirp; which is worse!

And I want to tell her: it's okay, please rest,
but I'm so thirsty, and there's so much sawdust
in the air, I can't find the words, and so
I just pat her hand like someone who cares.

Dark Dress

Recalling this gesture or that gesture conjures ghosts,
and every day is Halloween around here.

Watching chimney smoke merge with October leaves drifting
evokes some figure motioning, or waving goodbye,

whatever moment lost or misremembered, I'm not sure.
But no one is listening now, so I'll speak to the blue hydrangeas,

their drenched blooms bowed as though in deep sleep.
And what I mean is a memory's weight is unsubstantial

as ectoplasm, emotion's apparition, your hands go right through.
Only sometimes something remains as though ironed between

layers of wax paper, and gliding back and forth on this porch-swing
into shadow I can trace it with a minimum of motion.

Melancholia. Roethke said *If I feel good I can't think*,
and you can believe that if you want to. And I'm only talking

to the blue hydrangeas because they're asleep.
Once, in a dream, my mother waved to me

from the deck of the Titanic, and then slipped over the edge
of the world, and so I curled up and went to sleep in her shadow.

Now and then a birthday card found its way back
with a heart above every I. You could imagine

there is consolation in a gesture — you could if you tried —
and melancholia feels good if you can think.

Later, I painted a portrait of her in a long indigo dress —
her hands like the dried bed of a river, her hair granite and snow.

It's true this house is north-facing, the mountain a dark gesture

behind. And once, I asked her to take me with her,

she said you know where the sound comes from
when you press a seashell to your ear. Somewhere else

there was a summer I painted everything as if gravity had let go.
But today, the geese are rowing summer away in cloud-woven nets,

gestures unraveling further, fainter as they go. I am sad
because the light is being buried at sea. Because melancholia

is a long dark dress it's effortless to slip into. Because falling leaves
are like cards arriving too late and torn past retrieving.



Breaking



Walking

MEGHAN BRINSON

Woodcut 2 from the Tales of Ise (Soan Yoshida, 1608)

The land is afflicted with a heavy fog.
In decorative ponds clouds scud up like koi feeding
And billow to the doorway of the palace.
This is no heaven, they whisper to the carved wooden

Timbrels, the paper screens, the tatami. With every lick
You become weaker. With a deep bow, the message is accepted.
The dry world takes the waves of the wet one as a tablet
Handed from a well-dressed gentleman.

In another room, a man in a grand pile of silk
Unfolds what time has pretended to separate,
Two moments so close to each other the same beam
Supports both roofs. He knows

There is conflict in such proximity,
But the blank side of the message is the one
Turned toward us, the audience, on the other side
Of this window, one flat surface away.

Woodcut 3 from the Tales of Ise (Soan Yoshida, 1608)

The rulers of this world have built their porches
Over the sky of their neighbors. Sweet trees
Branch up and offer blossoms
That go untouched.

In this sky, a man lounges on mats
And writes into the fold of his knee, a heavenly body
Floats next to him which is neither sun nor moon.
It gives the impression of light,

But no proof. It is not as energetic as ours.
Clouds have more agency. I begin to think
That here time and distance are clouds.
The clouds are threatening.

The man's eyes are nearly closed. The gap
He inhabits does not move, but simultaneously
Narrows. Is it his double pen, or the symmetrical

Globes of his robe that make me sad to lose him?
He glows with laziness, but this will not save him
From this shortage of space.
He has a cloud as a foundation.

Woodcut 6 from the Tales of Ise (Soan Yoshida, 1608)

A beach, a place defined by edge. Smooth,
Unlined by waves or chrysanthemum sprays.
You contemplate the moment of your world,
Mirroring the clouds above you which,

If the woman waiting on you would look up,
Would certainly seem to her
The breaking rollers of yet another world
Layered on this one.

You prop your bee hived head on your kimonoed arm,
And stare at your slippers. Above you,
Repetitious as a rosary, a pine holds its umbrella
Over you. Is it fluff, or flame, or spines?

These lines, puffing out over your crosshatched sea.
I think they want to hug you, or your melancholy.

TODD FREDSON

Waking, Midlife

See them—the beautiful young men, beautiful
young women, across the street, cutting through traffic.

I want myself by how much
I imagine they would want me.

Suddenly I am aware
that I am looking-out-from. My own body

finally formed. And
what was it before? Fire, wick.

But to seek
less than what the body is capable of,

that is to be cast, I think. Lost
into lifetime after lifetime, dizzy,

love's most recent creation—

I was an expert at sleeping on dirt floors
and drinking from gourds. Expert at severing the palm root,
pushing over the trunk, and draining the pith for wine.

Pebbles from Rice

All of the young men this body has housed
are asleep remembering me.

The air is thick with the afternoon monsoon.

The kapok's distant limbs lift its leaves
to the clouds.

One of the young men wakes.

Does he think I will tell you, do you think I can,
how we fell into one another's hands?

Amidst the fields of cotton and yams, bananas and cacao,
the afternoon heat is cut for the moment.

Knock, I will answer.

If you say hallway, if you stay,
I will leave the other young men asleep.

The one who has woken,
he watches red sand ripple

across the bottom of my water basin, then

dips the cup and begins to clean the rice—
husks, chaff, float.

Drop the sticks from your head and come in.
Drop the bundle. *Assieds-toi.*

HEATHER FRANKLAND

Transformation

The moth's head lasts a while, and then dies.
Giggling, the boy shoves it into the sand.
Maybe more will grow from this seed,
something tall like a eucalyptus tree
or small and stretched across the soil
like a squash vine or a cucumber.
His eyes watch—big holes of earth.

The father claps his hands and laughs.
He had pulled the moth out of the sky
nothing special about the moth
except how its wings sparkled in the starlight
as if it had glitter stitched in its fabric—
a gift, a sacrifice from the heavens,
something to do on a Saturday night.

The boy pushes the moth's head
further into the sand
so that it can't be taken away
by ants or a hungry bird or his older brothers
by the wind or El Nino or his mother's broom.
He pushes it index finger deep
waiting to feel it grow roots.

The father has dusty skin that flakes off
at his son's touch, scales carried away by wind,
underneath he feels raw and rumbling,
and something bulking up
to reach through his mouth and grab the sky.

My English

My English wants to speak with your English
trip around slender hallways to
cob-webbed corner and open—
open up iridescent showers.

My English wants to play hide and seek.

You seek with your mispronounced words,
and I'll hide my well-crafted tongue
until you can glide and no longer just suck.

My English wants to absorb your English
until I, too, am going to the *bitch* and sleeping on *shits*
and can make *lov-A* with a long A sound
then every tree is free and we can make poetry
with extended vowels and brief silences.

JAMILA WIMBERLY

Letter to Walt

They won't let me wear fuchsia, Walt! You know the boys with boys behind
dumpsters pants, ankles and my head dived in, we like those sort of things Walt, you
told
me my face was in the dusty crevices of a cabbage, said my hands were of
lavender leaves and think them pretty

O! my friend lets me put my tongue to him, he tastes like licorice, Walt you'd love
him, but they still won't let me wear
acrylic nails and grow my hair and smell like lilies in the breeze; they're taking me,
Walt, they've taken and I thought you eternal and ever present, yet

Where were you, Walt when snarls and snares hunted me down into the forest, I
crouched, hiding, breathing my own blood, the sick copper smell, nausea?

Where were you Walt, I explained nature gravitates me towards the soft rubbery
head of a penis and my mother never returned, crumpled back, voided?

Where were you, Walt, when sitting in my room my head thrown against brick
walls, brain shoved in, they tore at my human veins they battered me they mauled
me they penetrated my skull with the sheath of their words, Walt,

where, Walt, where?

I let out the back door, parted into the cattails, uttering the muses of you. If I am this
tree, if I am this grass, if I am this stone, why am I not
free?

JOE H. GALLAGHER & JULIET COOK

Follow a streamer across me

A peek of red cake from foil,
our clown doll hearts spurt out.

A smile genuine and bloodied,
crested the clouds in a heartfelt sunset.

“How can foil suddenly crest into sunset?” screams our other clown,
smashing another black cloud down onto the cake.

Ah, but the flow of blood turns on
our thighs two-toned against black fabric

until sugary sensations glimmer. With sweet pink tremors,
we will glitter ribbon candy all over each other’s brains.

JULIET COOK

Bloody or not, here I come

My open limbs suction cupped dirty tentacles.
Sweet tendrils get sucked into smithereens.
I'm not angel hair anymore. Jewels cracked

into visceral chunks writhing out misshapen.
Green worms burst then crusted into zombie flesh.
Delve in and swallow, and then spit partially digested

bloody pieces, string out my overloaded canals.
Hot beet thighs fuse with mutant monster eyes.
Mutilated strands clog brain waves down

drains. My heart is a disabled fondue cauldron.
My cake hole dollops on/off garbage disposals.
Please turn this blood bath doom spurt into new flows.

I am an alien witch broom created from pumpkin guts.
Let me rise up whirring mango froth through thigh highs.
Let lightning stings affix primordial feather-zings.

LESLIE MORRIS

The Call Button

after Simic

In the first page of my dreambook
It is always after hours
In an understaffed clinic.
Long past shift change.
English no longer spoken.
The front desk is empty.
The coffee machine broken.

I am in a bed with rails
that is too narrow for me.
In the dark, thirsty and soiled,
I grab some lipstick
before pressing the buzzer
and draw myself a mouth
so I can speak if someone comes.

Ashes

It's 9 pm. The pharmacy's closed,
I forgot to pick up my refills
and I can't remember
where my ex-husband
put my mother's ashes.

*

I heard this story: a daughter
scattered her mother's ashes at sea.
As she flung the ashes outward
they blew back in her face.
She was covered with mother.

*

*I know what evening means -
The make believe bed.*
The orange bloom cradling
the hummingbird's head.

*

Dusk. Dust refracts light
making orange and red streaks.
If I scattered the ashes of my mother
she would color the sky.



Night Ride Home

MARY STONE DOCKERY

Thursday Autobiography: Astronomers Reveal Supernova Factory

In the morning, you pick magnolias and place them in water upside down. You want to see what drowning looks like. The hard petals resemble the shape of the day's bloom. I eat alone in the kitchen with a spoon. Glass spreads over the tile floor in pieces. I can see the shape of a wine glass there, a whiskey bottle there. A glass heart figurine there. I walk barefoot, wait for scent of blood. For sixty days, we create explosions in various rooms of the house. When you call, I want to know if you want your letters. If you have counted the cuts on your forearm. There must be blood in your car, trails of these supernovae glistening in footsteps. I wanted tulips, anyway. The shape of a closed flower. Something constant like dimples. I came, I didn't come. We both walk over the cloudy debris.

Say you will pull at the seams of flesh that lie thin like floss or shadows along my body, as if between memory and action. Stretch blocks of skin revealing contours of black and sinew. Say the muscles look like rock canyons in Arizona, and you above, pointing, remember crawling through. Say my heart is the shape of a locust. Push your hand inside and reach to say I feel like a sponge. Say my blood is silky, the same substance as a cloud, that you are tempted to lick it. Say you will. Press an ear to a kidney. Listen for the softness, what you imagine, a bundle of postcards crumbled inside breathing, wet with me, blurred by my body. Say you find my hypochondria in a knot beneath my lung, wrapped and threaded. Cut the sutures. Let the black threads open, spidering inside me. Wipe the sickness over my lungs. Say it's the color of the ocean. Say it's the color of the ocean floor. Clean it. Anesthetize the corners of my mouth. Return my body to where you found it. Sewing, a cricket settles beneath the mattress and sings, and there is more.

CONNIE A. LOPEZ-HOOD

she, a sparrow, like a dragon

first loose tooth she writes in crayon
she can spell her entire name
names of most everyone she knows

scrawls them into our family portraits
smallish cartoons always of a castle
and we are birds raised high above turrets

even she copters above
no princess locked away
squiggled plumes of hard wax smoke spill from her beak

the villain scales castle walls
stabs sword toward blue-line sky
always hunched furrowed fevered

her scream lights him on fire
he climbs again again
but smart for her age
she crayolas herself thus with smallish wings

CATHERINE BAILEY

Return

having exhausted herself
with the sights of the land,
its periwinkle petals and little
brown birds, the woman who
lived at the corner of 42nd street
decided, one morning, to return
to the sea.

long had we watched her watery
gaze peer out the window from
behind pale curtains that fluttered
their eyelets like cubbyhole graves.

we knew, I think, my sister and I,
that she was not long for this world.

I imagine her cupping our goldfish's
bowl, running her nails down the smooth
sheen of glass. I imagine her running,
but taking her time, bidding farewell
to the silver-armed willows and
kissing the faces of new rhododendrons,
scrunched and magenta with the effort
of growth. I am sure

that she whispered
words of encouragement
to the bulbous marble eye of our family fish
as she emptied him, flapping
like a tangerine kite, into the surf
where he was lost among the foam.

the morning's headlines spoke
of her mysterious disappearance,
the way she left nothing
but a pair of blue jeans and a

grateful dead t-shirt rumpled
on the shoreline to be trampled
by the crabs.

our father embraced us with the
certitude of flannel and gently took away
our neon plastic pails. he arranged them
in the garden near the flaking scarlet steps
and filled them all with marigolds
and other earthly things.

Maybe she should have left the box shut. But upon opening it up to the blues, reds, purples and greens contained beneath the lid, how could she leave it, silent and closed again?

Probably, she should have left it shut. Safely quiet and locked tight like chaste and prayerful lips. When she opened it, summer spilled out in waves. Like rolls of aquamarine fabric or a set of sparkling sheets, out it poured like mother's milk. She was drenched in it. It overcame her, and she laughed gaspingly, startled and transported. The summer hues of sapphire blue and sunset-wheat gold encircled her shoulders and licked at her hair like rollicking puppies. She smiled. Maybe she should have left it shut. But now it was open, so what could she do?

These kinds of feelings, feelings born of closed summer boxes, inevitably bring trouble. These gold-kissed thoughts and starlight-milk-white gleams in the eye, they sometimes cause spontaneous eruptions of chaos that no one can predict. They dazzle stale lives and decimate fractured ashes. They heal as they destroy, like rivers drenching sun-scorched, parched fields. They ripple and weave and flow, like lionesses, easy on their haunches and powerful in their flaxen jaws. Like sultry hips, they sway. Like frantic dancers, they stamp the earth with muddy, delirious feet and mash little grasses and drum in the pulsating pang-waves of birth. They cleanse and restore. They break and disrupt. They have no consideration for the sanctity of the silence of churches. They are noisy and abrupt, occasionally fierce, and consistently unapologetic. They really cannot help this. It is what they are.

They do not ask permission, these feelings born from boxes. They take what they want. So sometimes they bring trouble, and sometimes, salvation.

She wore it like a cloak, the waves of rippling summer. Pulled it out of the box (probably, she should have left it shut), and threw it around her shoulders in a gesture that sighed of purple lilacs and the slow infatuation of bees. Probably, she should have stayed in. But now, decked in summer, how *could* she stay in? Her body responded in the only way it knew how. It went out. To step and to fall in the sea of shining plants. The emerald hairs of summer's back nuzzled her ankles as she walked; the sea of grass purred and arched its long and sinuous spine high enough to witness the blazing and audaciously blue rectangle of sky.

In her body was a rhythm, the drumming of blood in veins. Old as the heart. She breathed, and into her fragile pink lungs soared the scents and exhalations of summer. Summer, boldness, and audacity. They coiled into her brain, swerving past caught-off-guard synapses and wrapping like roots around neurons and hardened apprehensions. They claimed it, resided there, made it their home, her brain, filling her with a lightness both heady and free. She breathed it in, and the air smelled to her of earth. Wild, unmanaged earth, teeming with worms and beetles and shoots and seeds, and it smelled of lilies, of course, and of acorns and bark. Yes, she thought, the coils wrapped around her neurons gave off the distinct odor of freshly hatched leaves, the space in between the petals of flowers, and the nooks in the scales of clean, flashing trout. She felt dangerous and alive. She felt tranquil and at peace. Flowers wound themselves in her hair, uprooted themselves on the spot and inched their way closer, curving their vines around her tendrils of hair. A whole pack of them came: bitten-apple red crawling alongside whale-iris blue, dragging whisper-thin roots and waving with their leaves. The shocking-white poppies cajoled the boisterous yellow daffodils, and before long she was bathed in them, absorbed by them. Engulfed in them. Their green caresses hugged at her lungs, causing her breath to run softer and softer until it finally eased to a gentle halt.

Is it possible for a human to survive this? The daisies knotted in her ribs, sunflowers sighing in her brain. The violets shed petals in her veins like love notes dropping letters. The onslaught of summer and its brightly-colored hues—she became a part of it. She gave herself over. Can such surrender be survived? Probably, it is too much. But in fact she had no choice. It was simple, it went like this: the summer beckoned and she came. There was no questioning, no subtle flirtation nor sideways glance. There was no need for such things. Her bones, skin, eyes and muscles, all were made of the summer from the start, so how could she resist? All things return to the arms that gave them birth. Probably, she should have left it closed, that box, but how could she? She was summer. She was destined to accept the pulsing, the cries of the root shafts locked fast around her limbs. Really, she had no choice. They were each other, after all, and these things do not ask nicely for permission. They command and confront. They break and enter.

JOAQUIN DE FEO

After the Fifty-Seventh Helicopter Crash

At first we thought it simple to humor the children. Yes, it's a game. Yes, we're winning. Yes, they will rebuild themselves and fly away, or dig a hole and sleep in it. They will dream of flying which is at least almost as good as flying. Less dangerous. Yes, because we're all in on it. Yes, yes, whatever, yes. But then one of the children found an arm—insides outside—clutching a cellphone. And another one swore that she heard screaming as one of the helicopters dove into a green mountain. The children began talking to each other in whispers: *They're lying. Enemies exist.* And then they began hiding notes under dog collars and in the beaks of parrots. After the fifty-seventh crash I found a stiff cat lying on its side. A note was stuck to the belly. Useless.



In the beginning



Forgotten



Just then there was a

back and play with me" called the little Ra
me back
To be Real
was no answer, only the little ants ran
ed gently where the tree
as all

NATHAN LOGAN

These Dudes, They Got A Band

After lowering poor Ellen in the ground,
we drove back into town for haircuts.
Thinking on better times, I opted for a flattop.
Larry got a trim and Jim asked for shaggy.

I became painfully aware that my collared shirt
looked stupid under my jacket.
Larry and Jim, weeds of chest hair exposed,
made women do double-takes.
I'd heard of this phenomenon before.

I knew polka-dots could cause erections.
That touching the amphitheater grass
was as close to nature as Van Halen
would ever get. But these things
offered little consolation. The chords
kept shaking. The crowd kept singing.

MIRIAM N. KOTZIN

Chloe at the Poetry Reading

She is sexy, of course,
in her black strapless dress,
her high breasts
innocent of underwire.
Her poems are filled with genitalia
and are innocent of underwire.
And I am embarrassed
when my friend
works on his novel anyway
during her reading.
She is breathy and charming,
and much of the audience
is stoned,
and she is drinking
from a brown paper bag
probably vodka,
and the audience laughs
at all the wrong places,
and she tells them so
in a voice that might be saying,
"Oh, please, just a little
to the left."

THERESA WILLIAMS

xxi. unexpectedly alone

27 november

dear simon warren, i find myself unexpectedly alone and in the house trying to make a fire with wet wood for it has rained all day. i am on hold, doing things I don't usually have to do, like emptying the ash pan on the wet grass in the dark, like stumbling over wet clods of dirt. i don't have tv, but yesterday i was at a place where it couldn't be avoided, and after 10 minutes i was simultaneously bored, depressed, and sick of the world. do you read richard hugo ... he wrote to charles simic, the world never learns. he also wrote there are moments when the world comes clean. simon warren, when will the world come clean for me ... i am waiting for it as the train roars in the distance and a spark ignites the wood. the soft birds that hugo mentioned have left for winter. today i am unexpectedly alone, reliving the history of the mind when innocuous events registered as primitive terrors - - heights, water, strangers. my dog crawls into his cardboard box, my linen blouse hangs from a hook to dry. i have already torn up one letter to you. fritz perls said we should address an empty chair in which our imaginary enemy is sitting, asking it, who are you ... where are you from ... what do you want. under no circumstances should we do this while driving a car or operating machinery.

SKYLAAR AMANN

Rehabilitation

She scrapes barnacles like bone spurs, turns
hurt into heart and a repainted hull.
Sends bad guys to the brig and bad
food to the galley screaming all the while
like a bag lady in the alley. You
just don't understand her or the spell
she's weaving. It doesn't really matter
what you pirates believe because she's
a witch in her own right and the heroine
of the story. You deceived her, you
conceived a fictional never after good
enough for America; homeric
in its melodrama, she said no way.

She said goodbye to work and works
harder than ever, fighting *never*
to recover, to revive, to remain alive.
Her ship's ribs cracked and the engine
brain flooded, and when the backup
generator got the emergency lights on track,
she headed for port and never looked back.

Drydocked in the marina, and she means
it. Don't mess with a vessel on a mission.
She'll turn dinghy into brigantine, strengthen
skeletal damage and a too-flexible body
until she's ready for ice-breaking. Pirates,
take a second look at what you thought
was cheating you, weak and emotional:
she's a submarine with classified weaponry.
Sticks, stones, broken bones, weak joints—
it's temporary. She'll walk the dry shoreline
endlessly, collecting buoy after buoy
murmuring I told you so until
one day when she can float again, she'll send
away her senseless resentment and jettison
the pirates and their futile invasion.



Want

ALLISON LAYFIELD

excerpts from *The Serpent*

1.

In your nightmare the teeth have grown ironic the face lumpy yes
you have become the vampire you must slay

we all know this one how you touch your mutilated face then go
right ahead and break a damned nail climbing out of the coffin

you know cliché but are too young to think it applies to you go on
already become bulimic try to puke that demon right out of your
system

this is embarrassing like frosted lipstick so obvious and nauseating
why can't you write your own dream sequence?

3.

You think about buying Sister an ice cream so she'll know
how the throat colds squeezes up how summers disappear how the
bottom
scratches a little how batons sometimes fall on your head
you must show her something
but only the one right thing
you want to be dripping with sugar you want
to be savior doing the splits
teaching the ground how to get held down.



Fairytale (2)

Contributor Bios

Skylaar Amann lives in Portland, Oregon. Her poetry has recently been published in *Cirque*, *Sea Stories*, *Prime Number*, and *Belletrist Coterie* (forthcoming). She writes on the subjects of the sea, love, and chronic pain. When not writing, Skylaar hand-binds books, draws comics, plays ukulele, and pines for the sea. www.skylaaramann.com.

Catherine E. Bailey is a Ph.D. student in English at Western Michigan University. Her research currently focuses on representations of gender in contemporary literature and visual culture. Her writing has appeared in *Line Zero*, *Scythe Literary Journal*, *Afterimage Journal of Cultural Criticism and Media Arts*, *Yes! Magazine*, and other publications.

Carol Berg's poems are forthcoming or in *Weave*, *Pebble Lake Review*, *Jet Fuel Review*, *qarrtsiluni*, *blossombones*, and elsewhere. Two chapbooks, *Ophelia Unraveling* (dancing girl press), and *Small Portrait and the Woman Holding A Flood In Her Mouth* (Binge Press), are forthcoming. She blogs here: <http://carolbergpoetry.blogspot.com>.

Deirdre Regan Briggs is an artist and poet living on the coast of Maine. She studied poetry with Joan Houlihan, and is currently studying poetry at The Writer's Studio with Lisa Bellamy.

Meghan Brinson is the author of two chapbooks, *Fragrant Inferno* and *Broken Plums on the Sidewalk*. She has placed poems in *Puerto del Sol*, *Gulf Coast*, *The Greensboro Review*, *Copper Nickel*, and *Connotation Press*, among others. She lives in Washington D.C. with her husband and two sons.

Juliet Cook's poetry has appeared within many print and online entities. Her first full-length poetry book, '*Horrific Confection*' was published by BlazeVOX. She also has oodles of published poetry chapbooks, most recently including *Thirteen Designer Vaginas* (Hyacinth Girl Press). She is currently submitting her second full-length book. To find out more, visit www.JulietCook.weebly.com.

Mary Stone Dockery's poetry and prose is forthcoming in *Gargoyle*, *South Dakota Review*, *Weave Magazine* and has appeared in many other fine journals. She is the author of two chapbooks, *Aching Buttons* (Dancing Girl Press) and *Blink Finch* (Kattywompus Press), both forthcoming in 2012. She is the 2011 recipient of the Langston Hughes Award in Poetry, and a Pushcart Nominee, in addition to co-founding *Stone Highway Review*. She lives in Lawrence, KS.

Joaquín de Feo is a graduate of the creative writing program of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). He currently resides in Milwaukee with his girlfriend, María, and their pit bull, Roger Federer.

Heather Frankland recently graduated an MFA and MPH from New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, NM. Having grown up in the Midwest and spent time living in South America, she finds her work to be motivated by physical and internal landscapes of each locale.

Todd Fredson's poems have appeared in *American Poetry Review*, *Blackbird*, *Gulf Coast*, *Interim* and other journals, as well as anthologies. His collection, *The Crucifix-Blocks*, won the 2011 Patricia Bibby First Book Prize. He is pursuing his doctorate in Creative Writing and Literature at the University of Southern California. Recent blog posts can be found at [*Passages North*](#) and [*So To Speak*](#).

"I'm not a poet...I am just a vessel which poetry flows through" – Poet Joe H. Gallagher is a multimedia artist from Erie, Pennsylvania whose forte has been coined as the realm of "visual poetry". Through employing photography, paintings, body language, cuisine, & performance he illustrates the poignancy of life to our senses.

Miriam N. Kotzin teaches creative writing and literature at Drexel University where she also co-directs the Certificate Program in Writing and Publishing. She is a contributing editor of *Boulevard* and a co-founding editor of *Per Contra*. Her most recent collection of poetry is *Taking Stock* (Star Cloud 2011).

Allison Layfield's work has appeared in *New Delta Review*, *Bone Bouquet* and *Drunken Boat*. She received an MFA in poetry from New Mexico State University and is currently working on a Ph.D in Theory and Cultural Studies at Purdue University. She is on the editorial staff for *Bone Bouquet* and lives in Indiana.

Nathan Logan is the author of the chapbooks *Arby's Combo Roundup* (Mondo Bummer, 2010), *Dick* (Pangur Ban Party, 2009), and *Holly from Muncie* (Spooky Girlfriend Press, 2008). He is a Ph.D. student in Creative Writing at the University of North Texas.

Connie A. Lopez-Hood served two years as an editor for the *Ghost Town Literary Journal*. She contributed and edited the 2011 chapbook anthology "Blankets & Other Poems: Poetry for the People of Japan", in which proceeds were donated to Red

Cross Japan Relief. Her work appears in *The Newer York*, *Gaga Stigmata*, *Our Stories*, *Subliminal Interiors*, *Polari Journal* and *The HalfPenny Marvel*.

Leslie Morris lives in Austin where she works as a speech/language therapist in the public schools. She has studied poetry at The Writers Studio and The Community for Writers at Squaw Valley. Her work has appeared in *The Texas Observer*.

Theresa Williams has poems published or forthcoming in many magazines, including *Barnwood*, *Rufous City Review*, and *Gargoyle*. Her novel, *The Secret of Hurricanes*, was a finalist for the Paterson Fiction Prize. This poem is part of her collection, *The Eternal Network*.

Jamila Wimberly is a senior at Eugene Lang College of The New School University where she studies Fiction and poetry. She is also an Editorial Assistant at Belladonna Series in Brooklyn and co-founder of (Picnic, Lightning) Reading series in New York City.