



Lingerpost

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*We, afflicted by ourselves,
gladly afflicting, gladly
needing to be afflicted.
We, who sleep with our anger
laid beside us like a knife.*

~ Rainier Maria Rilke

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Letter from the Editor:

Dear Readers,

As we tread, sometimes pacing and sometimes dancing our streets, together and alone, creating our own truths, twisting and carving meaning, perhaps we lose sight of what we meant to say and discover what we needed to say.

In *Road-Side Dog*, Czeslaw Milosz gives you the eyes of others, attempting to make the streets the speaker walks suggest the same emotions to you as you retrace those streets. This desire can never be achieved. This search for “one, humanly seen, common-to-us-all truth about things” is our love and our burden, our temptation, our lifelong trial.

And so we write. As always, much gratitude to our wonderful contributors.

Enjoy,

Kara Dorris
Editor-in-Chief, *Lingerpost*

CHRISTINE TIERNEY

Numbering The Gruesome

For Barbara, wherever you are

One. Shut it. We are about to get jiggy in plumblood.

Two. What does blood do when forced from a face?

Three. Does blood have wet dreams?

Four. You drove around in that blue-as-your-eyes, blue-as-your-fist Trans Am. You drove around in a wet dream fizz prowling for plumblood.

Five. And all for a bag of piss warm beer.

Six. And all for a bag of piss warm beer.

Seven. She was 16 and kept to herself.

Eight. She was 16, kept to herself, and drew sunflowers on her jeans with a ballpoint pen.

Nine. You were 16 too.

Ten. You were 16, drove a new Trans Am, and worked those pretty blue eyes on pretty blond girls.

Eleven. She was not blond and she wasn't very pretty.

Twelve. Dank parking lot. Revved up Trans Am. Piss warm beer. Thirsty teenage boy.

Thirteen. "Give me the bag." She said, "No." You asked again. She said, "No."

Fourteen. Gush. With a blow to the face—blood will gush.

Fifteen. Did I mention her nose?

Sixteen. It slid like a yolk down the slope of her cheek.

C.J HEAD
Last Iron Bridge



SARA THOMAS

What Was Left

ended up looking more
like a yoked smile, torn
at the corner. Split and red.

We discussed putting it into a bag and
setting it out on Friday.
But its patient breath and bald side
caught me each time I came in.

I asked once,
“How was your day?”
It didn’t answer.
The quiet between us. Bleeding
on everything.
The light.
The linoleum.
Up the walls.
Through my hair.
Its patient —frayed—breath.

We fought.
Threw books.

Spring came.

Then one morning I came in with berries.

And it caught my hand.

Dipped

deep in my chest,

messed through ribs,

dug under deserted rotting truths

and

asked me, “Why are you gone so slow?”

The berries fell

—a quick red mess—

onto the floor.

I pressed my fingers

into my chest, past

the truths and fascia,

around that ticking slow hum,

past its stretching raw fingers and

pulled, with a gasp,

the picture

taken

when I was a child of us all running

up the hill behind the church

before I had

a name or a car
or a penny to spend
on the faith that you would become enough.

slit in evening normal

we hope for fogless turns or
lights on in some little cabin
near where — near where we break
down

(gravel) dark road
scrape
bridge of a song no one wants us singing
or listening to

lights blinking
sweat under jackets our eyes annoyed
large owl eyes destroying landscape
for a lamp
a window with light
afghan-wrapped families with rockers
or unmatched dishes
but we found something else

slit in evening normal
quiet that doesn't comfort

but begins when someone stops moving because they see us
boots stilled mid-wander

what we find upsets
blinks us into the id

there are things we meant to
do before anything like this happened

we had lists
and our comfortable sleep of *knowing* we—
we were allowed to waste days

MELISSA BURTON

Guilty

The man had a hint of charm in his eyes
but still looked suspicious.
His voice was raspy,
I was taught by an Australian, he said
as if that explained his oddity.
The new owner at Germaine Hostel
had warned me about him, his dark-eyed girls
across the street, the importance of punctuality.
How can you not want to see
the temple where ghosts sleep at dawn
and statues murmur in ecstasy, he said.
I still declined his invitation to the sanctuaries.
Dawn rose like a frustrated manager,
and gave me the pennies I desired.

GEORGE BISHOP

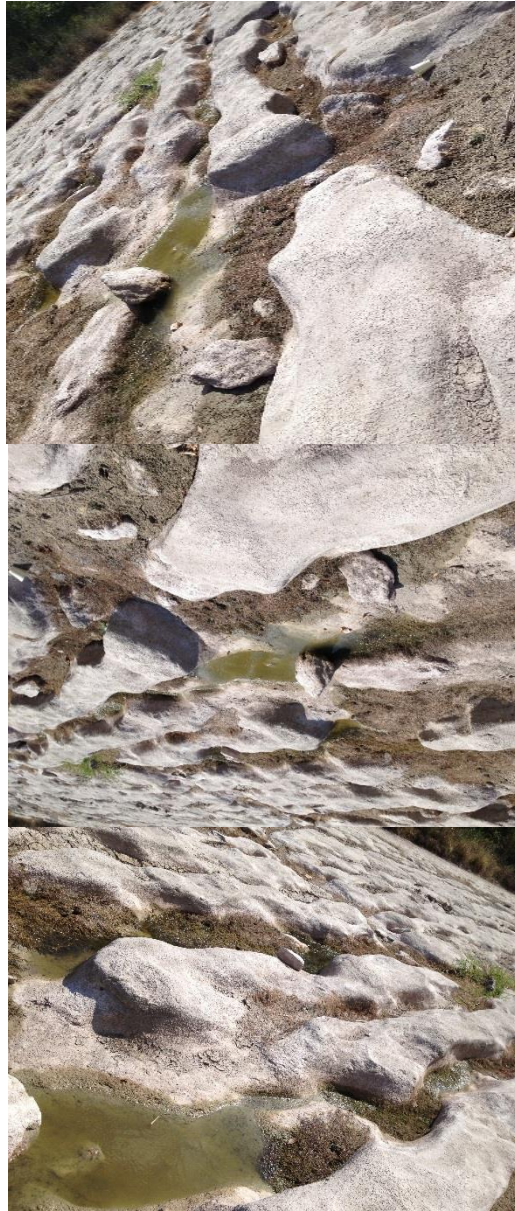
Almost Straight

at a fountain no one named

The too-far-from-home form
at a fountain each morning,
gathering like blind pigeons
and once again it's straight up
and straight down. Well—almost.
Like blood, water goes its own way,
pulls itself apart if it's necessary
to survive. Straight is hard rain,
maybe mixed with Jack, iced
in an idea that quickly dissolves
in the heat of homelessness like
a familiar face. Someone says,

The drunk's never finished with you!

They laugh, think of a new name
for the fountain, usually stripped
from a relative that's been dead
too long in a dry mouth. One of them
pisses over the edge. They laugh.
A layer of never-going-back goes by
as they lose themselves spiraling
down the drain. Every window
has been shot out of their eyes.
It's easy to look in, see yourself
from a fountain's point of view—
breaking apart after each breath.



ALEXANDRA DALEY

The Destructors

It's happening again: hungry aphids are tearing holes in the flowers' skin –
sunlight leaks through, fades into sluggish dirt. It's only
flushed petals with turned up lips they crave, burrowing
straw jaws into tender pores. I hear them chomping barrenness
into the garden, but I cannot see them – the waxy creatures weakening
what took months to build, my fingers still raw from raking away
bent twigs and cobwebbed flies.

The aphids don't know
doubt,
unlike my static hands, the autumnal fear resonating
out of the past when the flowers thinned into suicides – too brittle to endure
the chomping. I found their bodies
cross-hatched against grass blades, a trail narrowing off the Earth
dusk settling
beneath my ribcage.

I could not save them. The flowers
should be wrapped in clay and
heated into armored statues that
breathe but don't soften –
always tilted toward the blissing sun,

But how can I harden them into colorless stagnants? They would no longer be able to
nourish
love's flutterings, its breezy touch.
For now the destruction will continue until my hands regain motion
and the aphids defeat into dirt.

Translation

We lie awake reading poetry. Drawn to familiar surfaces, you want
Shel Silverstein's riddles. But I want you to read what I see:

how silent the unbecoming is
that someone can be *a pulse that wanes*

and what it means to *thrust all that life under your tongue*. I want you to know
why the explanation of tattoos has no punctuation – each worded image part of the next, the
writings composed on the speaker's *slate of skin*. And though the words crack beneath your
understanding, you accept the unknowing. Like the elliptic sickness caged inside me,
I translate it all to you.

C.J. HEAD

Water



AMY SCHREIBMAN WALTER

Alchemy

1.

Now that you are in my life again
I shop for fresh fruit.

I buy orange, yellow and red shapes,
collect them in my basket.

The shapes curve into each other
like Miro's floating objects,
a kind of 60's abstract painting.

This greengrocer has always been here
on this corner that I never visited;
I used to buy fruit wrapped in plastic.

2.

Spring jolts me from a bad dream,
brings you back, coincides
with pink magnolia falling into my hair.

You teach me how to cut into these fruits,
show me how to hold the knife.

Your palm over my fingers,
the familiar waft of your aftershave.

You explain that there is a certain way
to cut each one
and they have to be ripe.

3.

I bite my lip at the sight of you
standing in my kitchen

after the longest winter.

Sun streams through the cracks in the blinds.

C.J HEAD

Abandoned



ALLISON THORPE

Chiaroscuro

(Photo on the Nightstand)

There is art to how my arm lies along your shoulder, the invisible arc between bodies, how the still hand curves neck with such ease. A cigarette forever burns, the smoke more real than life as it stuffs the room with shadowy scent. Our bright faces chime the hour of cruel and beautiful. Awake, my sun-blind fingers search the hollow bed seeking weight, composition, a place of rest.

one story

No one heard the noise.
Mother was fantasizing dresses
in a shop window;
we were flirting with boys
down at the lakeshore.

Mr. Henry, a neighbor,
came to borrow a tool
and found him in the basement,
blood and matter
decorating the dusty tabletop
like a Pollock masterpiece.

Gossip spread the leafy street
like winter flu,
Mr. Henry sharing details
as if he were a generous farmer
dealing the produce
of his arable fortune
until the world could draw
the sad rumpled body,
the empty bottles,
the sizzling gun,
the wounded workroom,
the flocking police.

We never did hear what tool
he came to borrow.

Mother shuttered the space,
but father had left our family
nights and ages ago,
his body finally catching up,
the air afterward

a faded headline
on yellowing newsprint.

JIM RICHARDS

Egg in a Bottle

All she wants to do
is get a hardboiled egg
sucked whole
into a glass soda bottle
using a single match.
Science is the badge
they are working on,
her little boy scouts.

Prolapse. That's the word
the doctor used yesterday
to describe the fact:
her bladder and rectum
low and lowering. Feels
like a baby crowning.

Little kings, these scouts,
their regal blue and yellow
uniforms too baggy or
too tight, laden with badges.
Science. She lights another
match. Another lungful
of fumes. What is

a boy? she thinks, all
their eyes on the bottle.
She drops in the match,
places the peeled egg
over the small opening.
The egg quivers, is
sucked slowly through

the narrow neck of glass,

then plops. The boys
cheer, jump, bang fists
on the table. Why, one
boy asks—her boy—why,
Mom, are you crying?

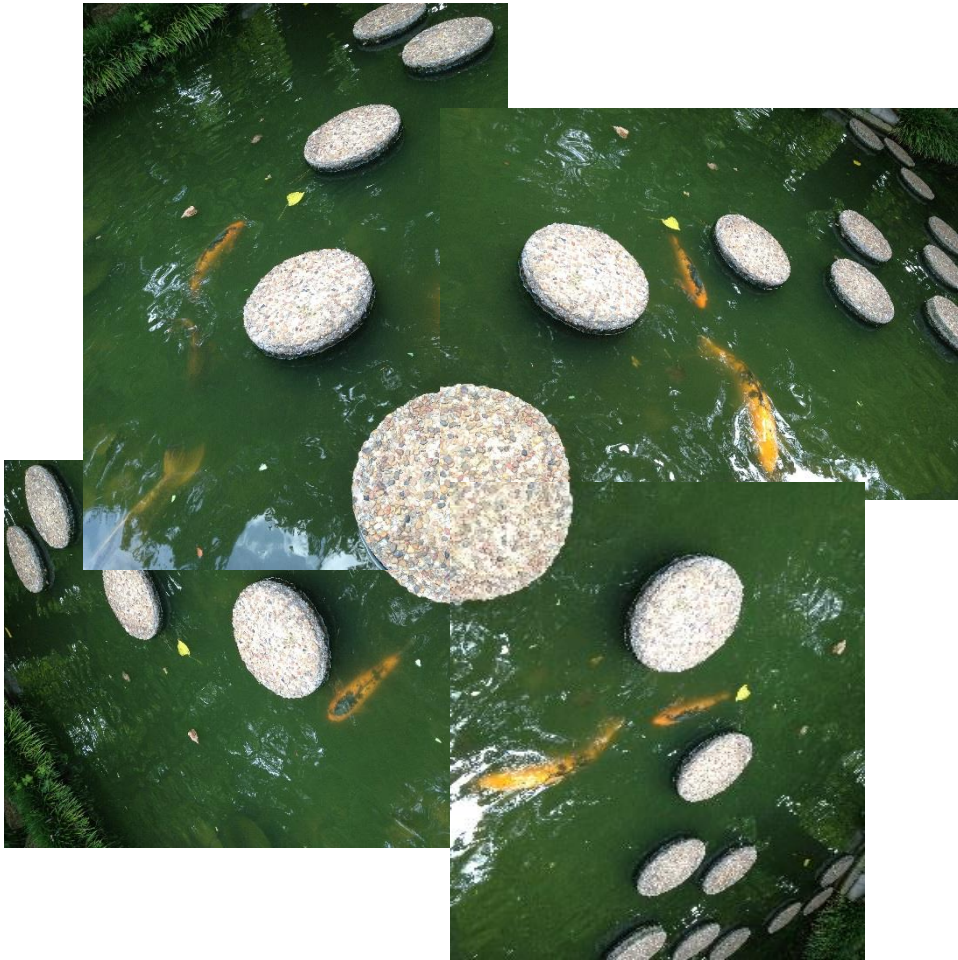
APRIL SALZANO

It's an Autism Thing

There are more variations than I can count.
In the dreams, you are taken, lost, left.
I wake panting, crying, sweating, and tired
from repeating the phrase *you don't understand*,
he can't be without me. It hurts to be needed this much,
to beg the closest person to start the search,
to have him sit, dream-still and let time slip
while I feel you getting further away
Last night it was a bus full of kids on a field
trip, kidnapped by the driver who took their toes
and sent them back in plastic bags, the skin
collected in the bottom like ash.
There was not a mother who could not
recognize her child's toe. They picked them
out, specific pebbles in a field of rock.
That one, that is his big toe, or, I would know
his pinky toe anywhere, they said, triumphant,
like this meant something other than the worst.
A sign, a clue. For me it meant nothing.
The real pain, in the vacuum that had become
the place my heart used to be, was that
no one would be able to understand you
once you had escaped. Or worse, that you
would just keep waiting for your captor
to bring you to me and wouldn't try to run,
even with all your toes intact.

C.J. HEAD

Windmill



***Morph and Bloom* by Wendy Wisner** (CW Book, 2013)

Review by Kara Dorris

Wendy Wisner's collection of poems, *Morph and Bloom*, is deep and dirty, full of the earth, blood, and anxious longing that connects us. From birth to decay, Wisner charts the love and worry that cannot be separated, as well as the inevitable loss of anything we love.

This love and loss spans generations, centers around growing up and parenthood. From the loss of mother and father by assuming those roles to the potential loss of a child every parent fears. In "Weaning Burial" the speaker thinks "I am the mother of a son who will one day die." This thought is spurred by a funeral that jarred the routine of nursing and sleep cycles and diapers. A routine that will fall into place once more pushing the fear of death into the subconscious again.

Loss is crucial in these poems, so many small elegies for the moments we forget to anticipate losing—only after these moments are gone do we truly understand what has been taken, given away, or simply timed-out. In her poem "Fresh Snow," the speaker contemplates the helplessness and hope of young girls, how that same helplessness and hope is the beginning of motherhood. The poem reads

Each time I tried to save my sister
from our life, I failed.

When she was cold, and our father refused
to warm her, I tried to lay
my balmy body across her.

I wanted to be a mother.

But each time I fell
hard on her, clumsy as a child—
the way a tree falls on fresh snow,
crushing its own dark shadow.

Daughter, sister, mother—the transformation is both slow and quick, untraceable and inevitable. But even if these small moments of transformation are inevitable, these poems

are determined not to take anything for granted—the poems are a plea to not neglect a second of this spinning world of want. In a world where motherhood is often belittled and taken for granted, Wisner’s poem “Eve” describes the world as a “dark place” where wanting a child may be “too much to ask.” In this dark place, the speaker watches a family of starlings “lumbering up the fire escape” and wonders why God has taken away the gift of flying. This poem is a plea to let us fly, to allow us the freedom to achieve our desires again.

Wisner’s poem “Weaning: God” states “it ends as it began” and that “each year feels the same.” It is a plea to not overlook the million ways we morph and bloom, or cause the morph and bloom of others. A plea to stay open to the connections that ghosts of our past and present provide.

This collection of poems is full of short bursts of love and longing, as well as the anticipation inherent in both—in other words, *Morph and Bloom* is full of love and loss, of the sublime, of beauty and terror. Whether we are ready or not, underneath is the voice within us all inviting this sublime into our beds and wombs, a voice asking for the chance to morph and bloom “again

again

again”

C.J. HEAD

SpiderSkin



Contributor Bios

George Bishop's work has appeared in *The Commonline Journal* and *New Plains*. Forthcoming work will be featured in *FLARE*. Bishop won the 2013 Peter Meinke Prize at YellowJacket Press for his sixth chapbook "Following Myself Home." He attended Rutgers University and now resides in Saint Cloud, Florida.

Melissa Burton, the co-founder and website developer for *LitBridge*, lives in Dallas, TX. She has a M.S. in Human Computer Interaction from Iowa State University (ISU).

Alexandra Daley, a twenty-six-year-old Chicago native, is a freelance writer and editor who lives in Charleston, South Carolina. She is currently writing a book of poetry that she plans to finish in 2014 and has been published by *Dead Flowers: A Poetry Rag*, *Emerge Literary Journal*, and *The Oklahoma Review*.

Jim Richards teaches at Brigham Young University–Idaho. His poems have appeared recently in *Prairie Schooner*, *Poet Lore*, *Comstock Review*, *Texas Review*, and online in *The Fertile Source*, *Contemporary American Voices*, *WORK*, and *Gambling the Aisle*. His work has twice been nominated for a Pushcart Prize, and in 2013 he received a writing fellowship from the Idaho Commission on the Arts.

Recent Pushcart nominee, April Salzano teaches college writing in Pennsylvania where she lives with her husband and two sons. Her work has appeared in *Poetry Salzburg*, *Convergence*, *Ascent Aspirations*, *The Camel Saloon*, *Blue Stem*, and *Rattle*. She serves as co-editor at Kind of a Hurricane Press.

Amy Schreibman Walter is an American poet living in London, England. Her poems have been published in print and online, in publications including *Metazen* and *Elimae*. Her debut chapbook, *Coney Island and Other Places*, was published last year by Lulu Press.

Sara Thomas lives in Virginia, where she works as a digital content developer and obsesses over bikram yoga. Her poems have previously appeared in *The Colorado Review*, *The Tusculum Review*, and in her disorganized drawers, where she hopes they find company in one another.

Allison Thorpe longs to be an international poker player and smoke signal aficionado. Meanwhile she writes poetry in a stone house in the backwoods of

Kentucky. The author of one book of poems and one chapbook, she has work in a wide variety of journals and anthologies.

Christine Tierney's work has been nominated for Best of the Net, a Pushcart Prize, and the Best New Poets anthology, and has appeared in *theNewerYork*, *Fourteen Hills*, *Skidrow Penthouse*, *Sugar House Review*, *Poet Lore*, *Monkeybicycle*, *Weave Magazine*, *Lungfull!*, and others. She is an MFA recipient from the University of Southern Maine's Stonecoast Writing Program.