



**Cathexis Northwest Press**  
Jan - Feb 2024

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# Spring Cleaning

By: Lucia Huang

In the corners pile dust and cobwebs  
and bones of innocence  
waiting for amends; they rest  
and remember the fruits of last summer  
rotten and buried deep in graves.  
They reek of expired joys, departed friends,  
even as winter steals into the house  
as tomorrows rush through the door.

I find fragments of old sunshine,  
worn down and graying. And  
an ache in me wishes to cling and beg  
leave the dust in the corners  
let it build up forever,  
let me believe the lie that June never died  
and nobody's love ever slipped from me;  
an ache searches blindly  
for summer's swift return  
with kinder days and hands of warmth,

but no new summer will arise  
out of stagnant waters, this suffocating  
dwelling on corpses;  
and I will not see the reborn light  
with my head turned the other way  
—so I sweep out of the corners  
dust and cobwebs and bones,  
I scrub the floors, clear the shelves,

then I welcome spring.



# On service (my mother's illness)

By: Lina Buividavičiūtė

Now it's time to forget what you didn't give me.  
All of the unanswered phone calls,  
Cancelled visits and toys you didn't buy.  
Our childhood, the biggest trophy, dries  
Hanging above the bonfire of time. It's time for me to grow up –  
Traumas – I know I talk about them often –  
They're just a little different – that child  
Is still shaken when I see Your dull, thinning  
Hair, how you wheeze after taking just a few steps.

Are we united by that poison  
Dripping into our veins? – make an appointment, you say,  
Preventative, let them examine you. I change your  
Diapers, stroke your back, whisper words of  
Consolation, boil the dietetic broth, clean up the regurgitated.  
That child still wants to change roles –  
It will likely never happen.

Now it's time to forget what you didn't give me.  
And sometimes it's so hard – after you've sighed  
I want to pick out all the specks, line up all the logs,  
and finally settle old scores –  
It's hard to choose service when it seems you don't recognize love.

And your gentle request is so late, and  
My fatigue is so great, that it looks like we might explode.

Now I should consider what my own child will choose,  
What will he think and how will he feel, but I know only that  
I'd ask for absolution, which can't be granted yet.

To love is to serve, little one, and one day you will learn.





# when we sacrifice our small selves

By: ash good

*at ocean edge, Neakahnie-Manzanita*

i am in the waist-high seagrass of my ancestors cleaving  
together two beings. i have stolen nothing to braid the silk  
at clasped wrists in resurrected meaning. wind cyclones our  
bodies ringed shoulder-to-shoulder in quiet, open nucleus.  
this is mother magic. hold it up to the sky. have you ever  
staked claim against future, heady in your own bravado  
& been certain the universe was cheering you on in some  
dark corner of a small town bar? i'll hold you up like that.  
it won't matter if we're fools or brave as long as we're certain  
as far as surf stretches we've built a universe of sand castles.  
our bodies huddle in close on sturdy driftwood. wait for the  
green flash & watch what returns again to savor our efforts



# on Being Wanting

By: Corbin Allardice

an Elul chill has entered and the wheel is set to turn,  
a wild bowing takes us hold, now, in this season of supplication.

to mourn aloud without a syllable of praise.  
is this permitted, save the keener as she plies her trade?

the weeping woman answers *no*,  
*I enjoy this ancient melodrama; or if I do not, it pays my wage.*

the speaking woman counters *weep, weep, with bitterness*  
*and flattery for praise, for all tears will have been joyous upon the end of days.*

the practiced widow laughs, *why squander salt in vain?*  
the market women spit, curse their sons and husbands *you should complain?*

a wild bowing takes us hold, now, in this season of supplication,  
hips cantilever our lusty stomachs down.

we take it. leaves into the river,  
writing watery atonements in small crowds along the shore.

a soft-still voice might itself still be too loud  
to discern this birdtalk of inkless reeds on unbaked clay.

cut an almond in each member, love, that I may see the lord.  
cut each member from the thicket, love, that I may yet yearn.

an Elul chill has entered, the wheel must turn.



# Kerouac's French Toast

By: Joe Martyn Ricke

I mock those who measure

laugh at those locked down by lines of recipes  
into just this, or exactly that, or so, so,  
so.

They never just say "pinch" (it's always a pinch of *thisorthat*)  
or never "throw in your entire soul"

or "don't hold anything back this time"

or "forget your teaspoons, you idiot . . . you think G\*d measured anything when he ripped his  
heart out and called you to the feast?"

or "put everything together . . . no, *everything*, like I did when I made goulash that time when  
my parents were away and I was eight or nine and I just threw in everything in the kitchen and  
the mess was inedible I guess but lovelier to create and see than any Jackson Pollock painting  
ever except for maybe *Greyed Rainbow*"

or "why are you measuring, dear, dear angelic animal?  
for, lo, I say unto thee:  
this is good,  
and this is good,  
and this is good,  
and, in addition, this too is good."

# *Jahannam-e Abki*

جهنم آبکی

به بهار مهرگان

By: Benjamin Rose

In the last hour before daybreak, the sky  
Was painted indigo. Flies, murmurous  
In the rain-soaked air, buzzed incessantly  
Beneath the awning of the tower, while  
Far off, beyond the trees that overhang  
The parking lot, a melody of birds  
Rehearsed their morning lay haphazardly  
In the stop-start cadence of amateur  
Flautists.

A silent flash of blue-white fire  
Scorched the horizon, but the thunder that  
One would have thought to follow it was gone;  
Storm clouds, rolling in absentmindedly  
Across the river to enfold the dawn  
Beneath a veil of grey, had hurled their spears  
Blindly before them, and the deep war drums  
Of Summer had not kept pace.

Still, it's no matter;  
The rain will come to drown us soon enough,  
And then the pompous clouds will boom like Stentor.  
I meant to take a walk this morning, but  
Now it's impossible; my Southern blood  
Reminds me that when lightning flashes from  
The giddy heaven, that malignant whore  
Called Fortune smiles, and then the man she strikes  
Becomes a talisman to warn the rest of us

That all our lives are ephemeral, as when  
Last night an oak tree toppled on a car,  
And another, so I saw, impaled a house  
Right through the open second story window.  
The roof caved-in, but nobody was killed.

So Chance's strange arithmetic decides  
Between us. I will tell Bahar these things,  
The girl from Iran, where it never rains,  
Just as in Washington it never snows  
Anymore, and old photos of my dog,  
Whose face was once crusted with ice in winter,  
Now seem as far from here as Esfahan.





# ELEMENTS

By: Julie Benesh

Every so often I plunge into the cold pool  
of memory. Nerves vibrate like iced lightning;  
hands and feet recall hot concrete, palate  
charred and scarred from fiery food.

Toenails trail the bottom; I wince;  
flinch at the twinge of my knee  
that bumps the ladder, weighted by water.

The sun rains down a mild nausea:  
a helpless crush, fierce submission  
to some chimerical, pleasure-tinted pain.

In that liminal world, hope defies its opposite,  
familiar as a cat shape-shifting to repel a coyote:  
all is neither lost nor found where baked air  
meets chill and slippery mineral.

How I got here is the same as anyone,  
our mind-body instruments imperfect  
in ways we need not, will not, ever know.



# Lessons from a Shale Stream

By: Rosalie Hendon

Take the softness in you  
Curl around it with  
everything heavy,  
everything iron-flecked  
everything impossible to carry

Slowly, form a perfect sphere  
Let it fall from the bank  
wash downstream  
tumbling slowly with the  
inexorable pressure of the water

Erode, it all erodes  
All of you once again  
all of everything  
even if it takes millenia

Even if the softness goes first



# Watching gum leaves fall

By: Wendy Blaxland

Each performs a brief dance solo:

one in tight neat spirals,

another free-swooping with a whoop,

a third sashaying slowly in a

smouldering tarantella.

And then there are those leaves

caught by an invisible

thread of spider silk,

dizzy-spinning endlessly,

suspended in mid-air.

And if you could choose your way

to leave the mother-tree of life?

# Burn and die

By: Sarah Kaarina

If I am steel set me alight  
that I may mold into a better thing  
to bend with passing time.

Here is the ash from which I rise;  
*you* must be careful when I burn:  
only this ash will keep me alive.

I am the bear that wanders in spring  
with teeth around your neck,  
to hide away when winter comes -  
you cannot find me.

I am a problem when you need me to be water,  
stone, or earth,  
but I burn and die and burn and die.

Dance with me, slice your liver in two,  
follow me down this street, here, this cobbled road  
bleed your feet through rubber soles.

Burn and die, catch smoke in your lungs,  
forget me, use me, consume me:  
I was raised to be your meal.

Drive me home in the soberness of morning;  
no - I'll walk home, alone, at darker hours.

Hunt me down when you realize loneliness is freedom.

Cry that you're a saint in knighted armor:  
*only you can save me.*

But you come to eat me, naked in your bed,  
and I burn and die and burn and die;

I'm safer on this street than at your side.





# Fallen

By: Deidre Sullivan

A fallen tree  
blocks the trail

like a woman  
who has taken over  
a king-sized bed:  
sheets tossed,  
flung

ownership  
her bed  
her time

*let me sleep*

*too much wine*

Two thick tree legs  
splay out  
from the trunk

languid

divination rods  
divination thighs

Silken fungus  
hangs off her  
bark knee

like a torn fishnet stocking

*let me sleep*



# Moral Treatment

By: Elizabeth Higgins

(After: "Sewing room at the Oregon State Hospital in Salem, Oregon, ca 1905." Oregon State Archives, Oregon State Hospital, OSH0021)

Black iron Singers  
in four rows of three  
shone at the arms, the silver  
throat plates.

Treadles whirred,  
needles plunged  
and clicked under  
the sound of instructions.

I unknotted the bobbin  
through dust  
in sunlight. Seasoned  
patients ran

rolls of cream canvas  
into shirtsleeves.  
Three straps each  
down the front.

One at the end of the cuff  
on either side.  
Brass buckles  
slid on to cinch them.

*Soon you too will master  
the straightjacket.*  
I'll add my offerings  
to the high pile.

For now I sew silence  
cloths to be pulled  
across the mouth, tied taut  
at the back of the neck.

# First Thaw

By: Elina Kumra

At the grave's  
symbolic lip, you are returned  
to what's undefined—like a letter  
in a storm, a smudge on a shoe, a stain  
on my sleeve. Your concept of me  
like night perfume, and the stars  
as poor as we can see them

through the glass. It's all about objects—  
silent protests  
and your teeth against the cement. I finger  
this vagabond cloth, the past.

My house laughs, rustles  
like a dream in which I know

who I am. Memories  
sharp as a shank  
and salvaged from the earth's

first thaw. Our love had been  
an invention. What can belief do? Every now  
and then, I try it on again—  
love—like a beautiful coat  
I can't afford, my truth.

Ah, the light's retaliation,  
profligate and rich.

Windows imposed riddles: only the lake  
yielded, rippling with my touch.

The phone in the scullery promised  
your voice. But when I answered,  
silence greeted me. The receiver's  
coiled wire bound me—its ringing  
like the ring I lost  
to the deep pond-waters.

One day, I emptied your closet. Another,  
and I saw my face reflected  
in the mirror. I didn't recognize  
its ink. Soft-skinned, blue-eyed—here,

everything is rising: the moon, a balled-up shroud,  
the petrichor of jasmine. Suddenly, you arrive  
within me. I surrender myself to the grave's  
lip to ask what I never could of you:

*Stay.*



# Holding Your Fingers Again

By: Dolonchampa Chakraborty

Come Ma, let us set out, we'll try not to talk until we cross this barren field, you can sing though, or simply hum if you so like, when you get fatigued, we'll sit under the neem tree on the east side of the lake which sits between two villages, we'll dip our feet in its calm water, soothe our nerves, you can take a nap Ma, then we'll walk again, maybe you'll talk then, tell me stories of your childhood burdens until it is dark and we feel the breeze

flowing from the south where Ceylon stands now, on the other side of the Indian ocean, let us cleanse our feet in the ocean and sit here for a while, look Ma, the ships sailing to the south are visible only by their lights, people sit here and listen to the roars of the ocean, while the lights flicker like dragonflies

can you see the watch-tower over there? I like to think, it is looking over Dhanushkodi, the fishermen's town which is now in ruins, destroyed by twenty-five feet high sea-swell, two days before Christmas

the church now looks like a sculpture of Leonardo da Vinci, I did not find Jesus there, but I met Manjunath and his wife who now sell freshly captured raw, fried, and sizzled sea-fish from their small shack which they had set-up near the church, do you think they are blessed by the Holy Spirit? the sea is rough here, I wouldn't want to see the waves at night

see Ma, I've narrated the whole story again because you couldn't walk, couldn't sit, couldn't go out even once when I had brought you here on last October, do you remember us buying fish from Manjunath? they used pinch of cinnamon in seasoning which is pleasantly uncommon in south India, I've been buying Ceylon cinnamons too for a long time now

doesn't it make sense? it is all about the aroma and the color of being or not being, it is important to remember the exact freshness of it all, you know what I mean, don't you Ma? Now that you have become the waves, can you smell freshly ground Ceylon cinnamon in the air around you? can you see people Ma, beyond their ruins?





# Ode to Liminal Spaces (A Villanelle)

By: Alison Jennings

Liminal space is transitional—waiting, and not knowing the future.

A liminal space is an odd thing,  
far outside your comfort zone—  
it's best to let your life just swing.

What to do now, if anything?  
Meditate, make it your own.  
A liminal space is an odd thing.

Be positive, be joyful, sing!  
Get a good mental health tone;  
it's best to let your life just swing.

Be okay with not really knowing;  
ask for help; don't face it all alone.  
A liminal space is an odd thing;

see what benefits it can bring.  
Be resilient, accept: this bird has flown,  
but you can do this hard thing.

Avoid dramatic catastrophizing.  
Go deep, way deep, down to the bone.  
A liminal space is an odd thing;  
it's best to let your life just swing.



# photograph 53

By: Lydia Trethewey

the contract  
thin with pond-scum  
is lit transparent yellow, almost grey

it doesn't float but superimposes  
the suburban open drain

I crouch, line up a shot.

skimmed by mosquito breeding  
this document won't sink

is suspended

in eternity, fleeting

if you slide your eyes along  
this barbed wire  
image, remember  
not to blink.

a train passes in red, ferruginous bursts  
its oxide aftertaste on my tongue  
a slow flank and a stagnant hoping

I watch through a camera  
through a fence,

how many lenses flip and re-orient  
this trajectory,

I've been engaged for three years  
and the invitations have been sent.



# My Grandmother Finds Sharks Teeth

By: Hattie Stubsten

*For Dana*

My grandmother finds sharks teeth  
conjures them from the surf like Venus from foam  
cradles them in her palm as if they are not  
instruments of destruction

I find only the shattered edges of scallops angel wings empty olives  
I find conches spiraled and whole saved from the crush by hermit crabs  
seaweed driftwood bleached bits of coral a jellyfish splayed and pulsing

I am too timid to touch.

My grandmother married a naval officer, raised two boys on the shifting shores  
of white sand black sand pebbles  
slept alone by the ocean found sharks teeth kept them as tokens  
against the pacific shelf and the blue abyss and the bodies swallowed  
by shipside burial and the blind creatures that depend on debris  
falling like snow to the deep  
to feed their babies

I raise daughters nestled in the roots of mountains older than the vertebrates  
that ever traversed them older still than the bones that cage our organs  
I dig red clay from their fingernails wade barefoot through the algae of some sanguine  
creek drag bullfrogs from the mud chew the sweet stems of honeysuckle brush  
the dust from gravestones of five generations on their father's side.

I have no need for sharks teeth.



# Rhizomes

By: Richard Stimac

The more I dig, the more I find.  
The ground that I live upon is full  
Of junk: coins, wires, screws, a key,  
Shards of glass, a swatch of cloth,  
A jaundice scrap of cardboard  
With smudged handwriting.  
With each step, we press upon  
buried histories, forgotten lives.

But that's not why I dig  
Hard Missouri clay  
That masquerades as my lawn.  
I probe for rootstalks,  
Confused stems that do not stretch  
Downward, to water, or upward,  
to the sun, but side to side,  
each in search of the other.

Maybe that's been my mistake,  
Seeing movement only  
Up, to the heavens, to the light,  
Or down, to darkness,  
And the core of molten earth.  
I never learned to look,  
Like the cross, left or right,  
Always blind to others

Beside me. Tribulations and trials  
Shared, if never spoken,  
Weave networks between us.  
No one can find them all,  
I conclude, as I rip a cord of root  
From one node to another.  
Unearthing connections is endless.  
I leave my work for another day.





# *Outer Bands*

By: Sebastian Koga

Yesterday it rained like  
in the prints of Hiroshige,  
where everyone is cold  
in their blue kimonos.

Sharp as the wires  
of an egg slicer, lines  
of rain dissecting and dividing,  
each frame into the river bottom.

I held you down  
against the forest floor  
like a wrestling nymph,  
and the flood waters  
filled the creek bed.

Today the bright sun and  
traffic noise softened  
the edge of former lives,  
Your storytelling tinged blue  
in the green iris of remembrance.

The outer bands of the storm  
sweep away the wash water  
of old cargo ships,  
and of strange honeymoons.

I hold you up  
to a large window like fine print  
I see your heart beating,  
Thin, translucent, sweet  
as the fruit of hope.

# The Lady of Doorways and Windows

By: Dick Altman

Curious, deeply curious, you were as a child,  
you remind me decades later.  
You who, in fall, would pick out a tree,  
wait with a patience belying your age,  
wait to watch the last leaf tumble into the wind,  
and disappear.  
From your bedroom window,  
from your front door slightly ajar,  
you'd spy on autumn's moment of ritual finality.

\*

Sunrise—and your curiosity reaches back  
to the Middle Ages,  
as we climb, stumble over Old West's remnants  
of Native America.  
Of walls chiseled of sandstone,  
conjured from blocks the size of bricks,  
wedges slender as my little finger.

\*

Instead of standing, as most do,  
to capture themselves in front of history's  
monumentality,  
your curiosity seeks to return  
to what Native eyes saw as they aligned  
windows with nearby cliffs—  
now-and-then rush-filled streams,  
high desert's fiery horizons at dusk,  
even the stars themselves.

\*

You then draw your view  
to the doorways,  
many only up to your shoulders,  
that enter, one after another,  
into rooms of a sprawling maze,

once covered, now roofless,  
beams that held them up, now dust.  
You stand me, as inhabitants once stood,  
in the openings,  
curious with your camera's lens,  
if you can infuse them with new life.

\*

Something in the portals,  
squared off as though picture frames,  
framing the comings and goings  
of spirits long gone, calls to you,  
as the last Aspen leaf once called.  
While others see memorials to the past,  
you share in the cobbled doorways  
and windows  
voices of breezes that enveloped  
the breath of all who,  
distantly, came before.  
And in your deeply curious mind,  
remain.

# Ladybug Season

By: Ellie Laabs

When the dust has cleared from the sky,  
I can almost decipher the outlines  
of my childhood in the blue—the way  
I believed that clouds and leaf piles  
would be soft, could hold me.

I do not know by what pulse  
a line becomes a circle, which is  
to say, I do not know how long the heart  
must beat before it becomes whole.

I can only watch, as Love wakes late,  
with sleep upon his freckled face,  
and wonders how to make a constellation  
of his dreams. After all, no one needs  
to say anymore that Love abides from sorrow—  
that Love is the wake. That Love is cherry wine  
and paperbacks and the sound of a tree falling—  
as though Love is just the salons in *Midnight in Paris*,  
as though Love is just another name for Nostalgia.

There are blocks of streets and crosswalks  
between this and wherever it is I might have been.  
I see the possibilities dance in ballrooms  
with champagne glasses, and royal laughter,  
and toasts which say both more and less than what they mean.  
I want to know how to keep time like this,  
how to perform the careful dance of suspense  
and impatience, how to greet Sorrow when he shows up,  
empty-handed, at the door.

Autumn is coming and I cannot seem to shake  
a certain shiver. All the damp, apologetic evenings,  
all the solitudes yet to be born out. The geese  
have scattered across the map like snow  
and all that remains is sound on sound.  
If it is darkest before dawn, so too is it brightest  
before dusk.

There is so much carnage in the cacophony  
of each day. Not all deaths can be memorialized,  
or thought of. As a child I watched  
the ladybugs, dead, or dying, in the windowsill.  
How we all continued, still,  
to make our coffee, and go about our work,  
how we all forgot to learn what to say.

# What whites see in my family story when I tell them I'm a post-colonial poet

By: Eleanor Neveah Mei Payne

你看不懂吧? 这并不奇怪  
你永远 Jinshanzhui Village  
不会理解我 尽管你  
对其他文化“感兴趣”你的  
a poor fisherman's son  
“包容性”巴巴刚搬来的时候

你就没把他包括进来 对吧 他  
给了你那么多 1957 你却因此惩罚他  
你可能觉得这首诗很“异国情调”  
很“时髦”immigrated 去你妈的 去你妈的 去

你妈的 \$0.70 你读不懂, in 对吧? 这并不奇怪  
你永远 pocket 远不会理解我 尽管  
你对其他文化“感兴趣”你的  
“包容性”San Francisco 巴巴刚搬来的时候

你就 Chinatown 没把他包括进来 对吧 他给  
Manual 了你那么多 你却因 labour 此惩罚他 你  
可能觉得这首诗很“异国情调”很  
“时髦”long 去你妈的 hours 去你妈的

hard work 去你妈的 你读不懂, 对吧?  
这并不奇怪 你永远不会理解我

尽管你对其 bad white people 他文化  
“感兴趣”你(买我的小册子吧 贱人)  
的“包容性”巴巴刚搬  
来的时候 discrimination

你就没把他包括进来 perseverance 对吧 他  
给了(白幽灵! 死!) 你那么多 你却因此惩罚他  
你可能觉得 eighteen children 这首诗很“异国情调”  
很“时髦”去你妈的 去你妈的 去你妈的

你看 stoic silence 不懂吧? 这并不奇怪 can't  
你永远不会 fully express  
理解我 尽管你对其他文化  
my “感兴趣” appreciation 你的

“包容性” my hero 巴巴刚搬来 as your  
的时候 granddaughter  
fighting prejudice 你就没把他包括进来 injustice  
对吧 他给 understanding了你那么多 change

你却 following  
因此 your example  
惩罚他 blah blah 你可能觉得 blah 这首诗很  
I love you “异国情调”很“时髦”  
去你妈的 去你妈的  
去你妈的 baba.





# The Ancient

By: SD Stalzer

Give me the waxy green leaves,  
give me the willowy stems, hemp  
hanging chilis like laundry in the sun, flowers  
tiny white undergarments living into peppers,  
as hot as your hands on my chest.

Give me ragged holes cut in foliage,  
give me voracious beetles, copper  
backs bent over sweet, sweaty skin,  
furtive tastes swallowed before  
hurried oils can sting their precious mouths.

I'll gladly take the grandmother's soil  
ground into my knees as I mulch weeds,  
silver mica, leaf shards, worm casings  
proud medallions worn all day,  
badges familiar as my own dust.

Last year, about this time, the drought  
had already destroyed the grass,  
dead cracklings patching the ground with straw,  
the meager rain so reluctant that even  
hot peppers wailed in the relentless scald.

Today, this ancient in me, I hear her pounding:  
crushed bones, eggshells, coffee grounds  
collected into compost, the endosperm surviving,  
humming as she bends over pepper plants, now my song,  
warm beneath visceral fat, cracked ribs.



# Minnows

By: Ariana Kramer

You must still be a boy, somewhere  
in the characters cast firmly by your ancestors'

hands in straight lines dropping down the page,  
and now in your own hand leading across

are a man, casting your own shadow even as you slip  
nets into the waters of your mother's body,

fine nets woven from your father's hair.  
And, as evenly as your breath sinks—two bamboo poles

one before the other, in and out of waves—  
I can neither see you, nor remember fully

the fullness of your face. You have entered  
the world of those I see only in dream

names sunk into cold clay and mud  
who awoken by chimes and clapping hands

to surface in strange images at strange times  
from the long sleep of centuries,

minnows darting from pond to shallow pond  
struggling with how to live in water.

I come here only to gather them in baskets  
take them to the wide river, set them drifting home.



# Poem<sup>123</sup>

By: Olga Maslova

The ICU in New York-Presbyterian Allen Hospital  
is open 24/7, abuzz with exx-inn-exx-inn-exx-inn  
in the room on the second floor with the view of the river  
I saw my papa every day the last week of November

In the village named Milky on the Black Sea in Crimea  
where papa took me when I was eleven  
there was a long shallow stretch of water  
without waves, rocks, or seaweed,  
verdigris pool safe for small children

I remember how we wildly giggled, dashing  
from that somnolent village like wolves from hunters  
a few years later IKEA has changed the chair's name  
from *Poem* to *Poang*, "punchline" in Swedish

The deepest place in the Black Sea is located  
near the Turkish town Sinop, and somewhere  
in the middle of the drop of two thousand and two  
hundred meters my papa is laughing  
and swimming with dolphins

there "in-", "ex-" and "-hale" are forever  
converging, there all the IKEA 's *Poang* test chairs  
are deposited after finally snapping  
in their plexiglass capsules. Lost forever

among the underwater pile of chairs  
I weave myself through the bentwood shards  
of every color, finally able to read Scythian inscriptions  
my father studied till he went blind

1 Created in 1933 by the Finnish architect Alvar Aalto, stolen in 1976 by Noboru Nakamura for the Swedish furniture company abbreviated from Ingvar, Kamprad, Elmtaryd and Agunnaryd

2 since 1978 in every IKEA store a pneumatic press tests this chair 20 times per minute at 1000 newton for a standard 50,000 times sometimes longer

3 its durability measured by the exx-inn-exx-inn-exx-inn: one can hear the chair's breathing during the store's business hours



# In Order of Appearance

Lucia Huang is a human being who enjoys writing whenever the time permits her. She hopes you are having a great day.

Lina Buividavičiūtė is a poet and literary critic. This poem is translated from Lithuanian by Ada Valaitis.

ash good is the author of *us clumsy gods* (What Books Press, 2022) & four previous poetry collections. They are cofounding editor of First Matter Press, a nonprofit writer collective based in Portland, OR. Their poetry has been nominated for Best of the Net & appears in *Faultline*, *Cimarron Review*, *45th Parallel*, *Cathexis Northwest*, *Chautauqua*, *Bird Coat Quarterly*, *Voicemail Poems* & others. [www.ashgood.com](http://www.ashgood.com)

Corbin Allardice is a poet and Yiddish translator. At present, they are based in Baltimore.

Joe Martyn Ricke is a scholar, actor, poet, singer/songwriter who lived in Seguin, a little Texas town near San Antonio. His poetry has previously appeared in *The Wisconsin Review*, *Relief Journal*, *Presence*, *Ruminate*, *Cresset*, *Assissi Journal*, *Sehnsucht*, *The Other Journal*, *An Unexpected Journal*, *Rolling Coulter*, *Eudaimona Poetry Review*, *Ekstasis*, and the eight poems in the anthology *New Crops from Old Fields: Eight Medievalist Poets*. He is the organizer and director of *Inkling Folk Fellowship*, an online literary community. His most recent album, *Little Clarissa and Other Stories* is available on Spotify and other platforms, as well as on a CD from Chapel Lane Music.

Benjamin Rose is a poet from Washington D.C. and the author of *Elegy For My Youth and Dust Is Over All*. He studies English at the Catholic University of America and is the winner of the 2023 O'Hagan Poetry Prize.

Julie Benesh is author of the chapbook *ABOUT TIME* published by Cathexis Northwest Press. Her poetry collection *INITIAL CONDITIONS* is forthcoming in 2024. She has been published in *Tin House*, *Another Chicago Magazine*, *Florida Review*, and many other places. She earned an MFA from The Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College, and received an Illinois Arts Council Grant. She teaches writing craft workshops at the Newberry Library and has day jobs as a professor, department chair, and management consultant.

Rosalie Hendon (she/her) is an environmental planner living in Columbus, Ohio. Her work is published in *Ravens Perch*, *Quibble Lit*, *Sad Girls Club*, *Pollux*, *Blue Bottle*, and *Willawaw*, among others. Rosalie is inspired by ecology, relationships, and stories passed down through generations.

Wendy Blaxland has published poetry in Australia, England, the United States and Norway in journals such as *Meniscus*, *Griffel* and *Canary*. She has also published over 110 books, mainly for children and non-fiction, with publishers including Cambridge University Press, Penguin and Walker Books.

She is also a playwright with over 25 plays produced. Wendy founded a family theatre company with her daughter to produce some of her historical plays.

Wendy lives surrounded by bush near Sydney. Much of her poetry is inspired by the environment in which she lives. But she is a citizen of the world and is passionate about how poetry can vibrate the heartstrings of its people. Find out more at <https://wendyblaxlandwriter.com/> or on Facebook at Wendy Blaxland writer.

Sarah Kaarina was born in the United States, raised in Italy and the United Kingdom, and now currently lives in Italy where she is a post-doctoral researcher. Her writing has appeared in *Hypaethral Magazine*, the *Varsity Arts* section,

Cathexis Northwest Press and Prometheus Dreaming. She recently completed a PhD in Theoretical and Applied Linguistics at Trinity College, University of Cambridge. Her achievements have yet to fill the bottomless void that lives in her chest; therapy was equally as unsuccessful. Her parents have told her they're proud. She doesn't believe them.

Deidre Sullivan is a senior vice president at Verve, a global insights agency based in London. She leads Verve's North American practice out of New York. Deidre's focus is on multi-method research leaning heavily into semiotics. Deidre is the author of *What Do We Mean When We Say God?* (Doubleday), a book of quotes and thoughts from discussions with hundreds of Americans about God. She also put together *The Ultimate College Shoppers' Guide* (Addison-Wesley), a book of 327 lists about college life. Deidre is a graduate of Brown University and holds an advanced training certificate in Applied Mythology from the Pacific Graduate Institute.

Elizabeth Higgins is a writer and academic coach with an MFA in creative writing from Oregon State University–Cascades.

Elina Kumra is a high school student from San Jose, California. Summit Tahoma High School. As a young writer, she enjoys poetry, creative and innovative fiction. Her poems and fiction have been published on Up North Lit, Typishly Lit, Writers Digest, StreetLit, Coffin Bell, Polyphony Lit and an Honorable Mention with the Peauxdunque Review.

Dolonchampa Chakraborty, an alumna of Cornell University is a bilingual poet and translator. She has published two books of poetry in Bengali. She also translated selected poems of Kashmiri-American poet Agha Shahid Ali which has received a place in the library of Hamilton College, New York. In her professional capacity, she works as a consultant translator for the political asylum seekers and victims of religious extremism.

Alison Jennings is a Seattle-based poet who taught in public schools before returning to her first love, poetry. She has had a mini-chapbook of 10 poems and 80 other poems published internationally in numerous journals, including *Burningword*, *Cathexis Northwest Press*, *Meat for Tea*, *Mslxia*, *Poetic Sun*, *Red Door*, *Sonic Boom*, and *The Raw Art Review*. She has also won 3rd Place/Honorable Mention or been a semi-finalist in several contests. Please visit her website

Lydia Trethewey is a poet and artist based in Boorloo, Australia. Her practice explores experiences of nascent queerness. She is currently undertaking a PhD in poetry at Curtin University (WA, Australia), writing an ekphrastic verse memoir. Her work has appeared in various publications, including *Beyond Queer Words*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, and *Spineless Wonders*. She works in the Department of Art at Curtin University, where she received a PhD in visual art in 2018.

Hattie Stubsten holds a Master of Arts in English from Southern New Hampshire University, loves campy monster movies, and isn't afraid to talk about vaginas.

Richard Stimac has published a poetry book *Bricolage* (Spartan Press), over forty poems in *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *Faultline*, and *December*, and others, nearly two-dozen flash fiction in *Blue Mountain*, *Good Life*, *Typescript*, and several scripts. He is a fiction reader for *The Maine Review*.

Sebastian Koga is a Romanian neurosurgeon and poet currently living in New Orleans. After specializing in neurosurgery at the University of Virginia he continued a lifelong interest in lyric poetry and completed a Masters in Creative Writing at the University of Oxford. He is a fellow of many scholarly societies including the Royal Society of Arts and the Royal Society of Literature.

Dick Altman writes in the high, thin, magical air of Santa Fe, NM, where, at 7,000 feet, reality and imagination often blur. He is published in *Santa Fe Literary Review*, *American Journal of Poetry*, *Fredericksburg Literary Review*, *Foliage Oak*, *Blue Line*, *Landing Zone*, *Cathexis Northwest Press*, *Humana Obscura*, *Haunted Waters Press*, *Split Rock Review*, *The Ravens Perch*, *Beyond Words*, *New Verse News*, *Wingless Dreamer*, *Blueline*, *Sky Island Journal* and others here and abroad. His work also appears in the first volume of *The New*



Mexico Anthology of Poetry, published this year by the New Mexico Museum Press. Pushcart Prize nominee and poetry winner of Santa Fe New Mexican's annual literary competition, he has in progress two collections of some 150 published poems.

Ellie Laabs is a Boston-born poet, currently residing in Mount Vernon, NY. She received her B.A. from St. John's College and is currently pursuing her MFA in poetry at Sarah Lawrence. Her work can be found in Lighthouse Weekly, Beyond Words, Poets Choice, Fatal Flaw and more. In her writing, she enjoys inhabiting—and toying with—the intersection between the ordinary and the philosophical. She is drawn to the vivid, the unexpected, and the oxford comma. When she (frequently) is not writing, she spends her time listening to Simon & Garfunkel, collecting leaves, and winning board games.

Eleanor Neveah Mei Payne (fae/faer) is a quadriracial dinosaur sent to this earth to gobble down fascists. Just kidding! (Mostly.)

SD Stalzer is an emerging writer and the author of the recent collection, *Enchantment: Poems of Awe*. His poetry has appeared online in several publications, including *Beyond Words Literary Magazine*, *Scribe*, *Move Me Poetry*, and the print anthology, *We Are the Waves*. A trained composer and photographer, SD's poetry intersects human and natural experiences through the lenses of rhythm, sound, and form.

Ariana Kramer's poetry is inspired by the natural world and the inner landscape, and has been published by *The Poetry Box*, *Taos Journal of International Poetry and Art*, *Cathexis Northwest*, *Cirque*, and others. In 2017, Kramer was awarded an Aldo & Estella Leopold Writers Residency in partnership with composer Andrea Clearfield, to create "Transformed by Fire," a poetic-musical collaboration exploring Aldo Leopold's changing perceptions of wolves and their importance in maintaining the balance of ecosystems. As a curator, Kramer has organized poetry readings and projects for the Society of the Muse of the Southwest and others.

Olga Maslova is a Ukrainian-American writer and theatre designer. She is the librettist for several major vocal productions: the opera *Black Square*, the oratorio *Last Day of an Eternal City*, and *Venetian Cycle*, an art song cycle for baritone, soprano, and string quartet, all with music by composer Ilya Demutsky. Olga is a 2021/2022 Fulbright Fellow for a musical libretto *Russian Draughts*. Olga's poetry has been published in *Plume Poetry*, *ONE ART*, *Beyond Queer Words* and *Passengers*. Olga teaches in the Department of Theatre at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign.