

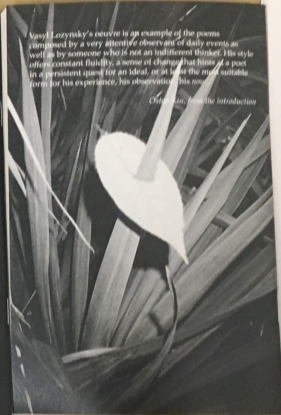


HAWAII REVIEW 87



Vasily Lozynsky's oeuvre is an example of the poems composed by a very attentive observant of daily events as well as by someone who is not an indifferent thinker. His style offers constant fluidity, a sense of change that hints of a poet in a persistent quest for an ideal, or at least the most suitable form for his experience, his observation, his mood.

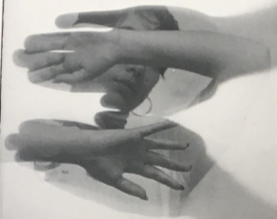
*Colophon, from the introduction*





## CONJUNCTION

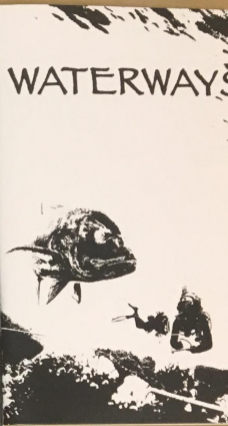
Hawai'i Review '87



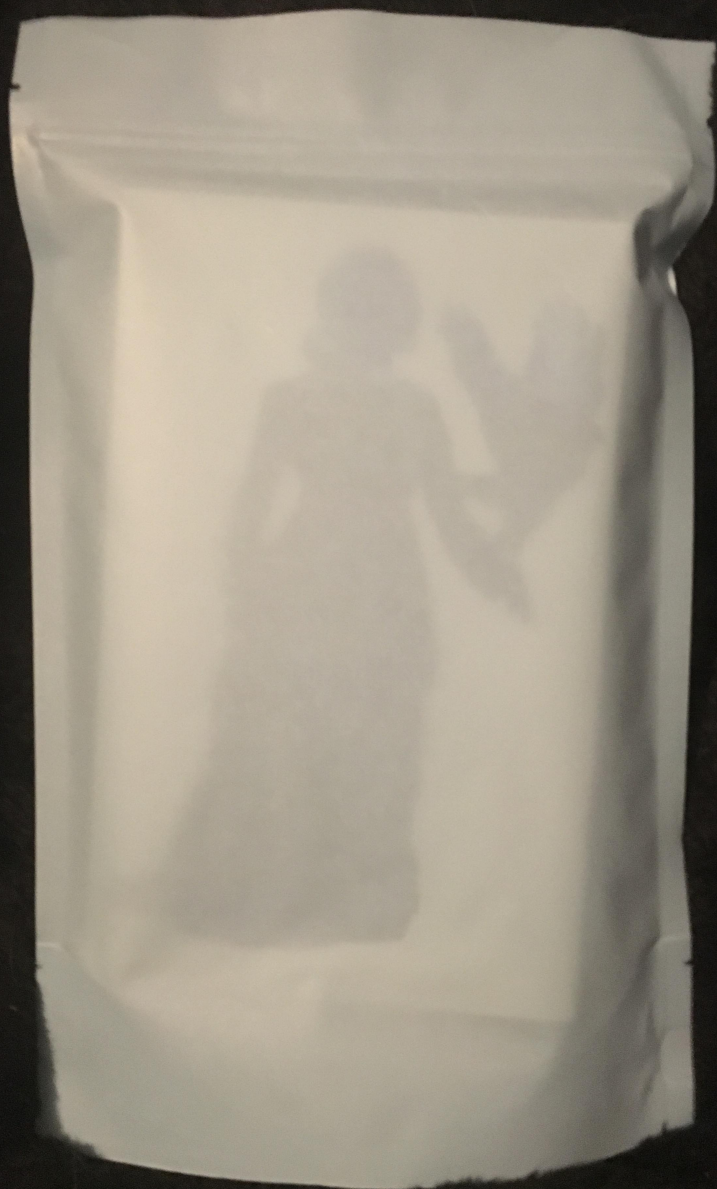
## THE MAIDAN AFTER HOURS

Vasyl  
Lozynsky

Translated from Ukrainian  
by Ostap Kin & Ali Kinsella



## WATERWAYS







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# Kumu & Kupuna

Hawai'i Review 87  
Chapbook Editor:  
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# *A Grand Affair*

Jennifer Celestin

I.

Her body betraying her  
When it was over  
the strain

of  
her  
back and frustration  
with  
the  
in-  
ability to  
prepare properly

showed most

The first funeral, I ever attended was a grand affair. My grandmother's funeral mass was held at the Sacré Coeur Church in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Sacré, all white everything. Coeur. White casket, white church. White Jesus. Sacré white talcum on my coeur.

::KRIZ::

5 “Woy! Manman, mwèn! Amwey,” my eldest uncle called out from the front pew. My mother sighed heavily and signaled the funeral director to stand guard. My uncle seemed to be choking on his own breath, gobbling air in gasps. “What’s wrong man-man?” I asked, hoping she’d give me an English word for what was happening to him. An asthma attack, fainting? “Kriz,” made a hurried escape from her lips and she brought both her hands to her mouth as if trying to contain it. It was too late. One by one my eight aunts and uncles took turns experiencing this crisis of creation.

Aside from this spectacle of love and loss, there was the processional of the populace masked as mourners. These people who I’d never met were marching into our front yard and into our living room, waiting to be waited on. People who claimed to be the grandchildren of my grandmother’s god children. People who said that my grandmother had helped birth them in *lopital general* some thirty, forty years prior. Our

country cousins obliged, serving meat-filled patties, hot chocolate, and rum. And poor goatee, my pet goat. I didn't know I had been feeding him my mangos so that they could eat.

Still seething in the backyard about goatee, I heard my aunts arguing in my grandmother's haunted bedroom. Too afraid to go in, I stood at the door frame where I could see my mother was in the dominant position on the bed with my grandmother's jewelry before her. "*Sa, se pou ou. This will go to you, Nadege. It is only right as your godmother left it to manman.*" My aunt Nadege stuck her tongue out at the others. At first too afraid to go in but then lured by tinny ting of the gleaming gold, I crossed the threshold and welcomed my grandmother, her possessions.

## II.

You're wondering how I have them all here. Well, my mother's body betrayed her. And she betrayed me. Children must learn this painful lesson early, the vulnerability of the figure of whom they have grounded their existence and who comforts by saying, "I'm here," will not always be here. When it was over

the strain  
of  
her  
back and frustration  
with  
the  
in-  
ability to  
prepare properly  
and leave more for my family  
back in Haiti showed most

She had whispered to my dad, her breath travelling a small distance over her pillow to his ear, "I'm not worried about her it's the children in Haiti I worry about." The children, *ti moun yo* were my aunts and uncles.

They say when your mother leaves you finally become a woman. *Mete famn sou ou.* Woman up! *M'mete famn sou ou.* Put your womanhood on. Take these jewels out of their boxes and give life to them. If they are haunted then let these spirits find a vessel in me.

'But they're not children mother. Stop treating them like children.'  
"On jou wa konpran. One day you will understand."  
'But there are no days if you are not here. I cannot understand.'

### III.

Haiti the poorest country in the Western hemisphere—  
(leafs newspaper)

∞

Text Message: First Lady of the United States  
Please send money to Haiti; they need you now more than ever.

(flips on television)

"A destination for those of Haitian descent, Haiti remains the poorest country in the hemisphere. The first decade of this century was largely a lost one, economically speaking, but the first of a brood that has matured underground for years, and which will be emerging in the coming days, consider voluntourism in the lesser-developed nation."

I went to Haiti two years after the earthquake with a group of Black and Latino hippie dips who wanted to work with a community in Leogane. What started out as a network of artists, herbalists, and small business owners piecing together a jigsaw of ancestral lore, turned into 10 people with good intentions. Only two of those well-intentioned folks could speak the native language, Haitian Creole. I was one of them. It was the first time all my abilities were being called upon (communication, teaching, executive functioning). Without my mother, my father, and my vast family organizing my daily life, I could finally see.

6

Our antiestablishment, bohemian leader slowly realized that poetry would not solve the issues facing the country. "We need \$300 for the cost of food for the next two weeks. That is if you want meat in every midday and evening supper. We need you to teach the kids ages 5-18 how to write poetry. You know? The way that you do. We need to filter our drinking water using the two-bucket method. If we do not have that we cannot drink. We need a translator to tell this person in the clinic that the pain in her side is from grief and anxiety. We need to feed 250 children and adults everyday. We eat last. If there is any left. Scratch that we need to feed 500. Some of these people do not have meal tickets so we need someone to translate that they will not get food. They only

get food if they participate in our workshops about poetry and love and fun! No, they cannot send the kids to eat twice. We need to find someone to take us to the beaches of Haiti. We need sometime to—someone forgot to filter the water. We are stuck inside the adobe clinic because they want more food and there is nothing left. We have no water. We need water, we need—”

I need too.

When it was all over,

my body betraying me  
my tongue rattling in my mouth, my heart  
rising in my throat,  
all that was left was the pain  
in my back

and my frustration with the inability  
to properly prepare.

*“On jou wa konpran.”*

‘Now I understand, Manmi.’

It seems I had come back to Haiti for a grand affair.  
*(lays on her back with her hands folded across her sacré coeur)*

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## *Nostalgia* | Lawrence Schimel

Hay calles que apenas transito, y una de ellas es la misma calle de Lavapiés, aunque llevo ya unos años viviendo en el barrio. Vivo casi en esa frontera donde el Centro se convierte en Arganzuela en la Ronda de Valencia. Hace años no me importaba subir o bajar por cualquier calle, pero ahora me cuesta más y suelo coger el metro o el autobús. Pero hoy hacía una tarde espléndida, así que después de terminar unos recados por Sol, decidí volver a casa andando y me encontré bajando la calle de Lavapiés y recordando, una década atrás, cuando recorría ese camino a menudo porque un novio joven que tenía vivía en Ministriles, un callejón paralelo. Estábamos constantemente yendo y viniendo entre nuestros dos apartamentos para pasar la noche juntos o simplemente para echar un polvo. Era su primer apartamento de soltero, así que le di mi futón de IKEA (total, lo seguía utilizando las noches que pasábamos juntos) y me compré una cama nueva. Él era más bajito que yo y me acordé de cómo nuestros cuerpos encajaban perfectamente, como si se fundieran el uno con el otro.

Como estaba pensando en él, al principio creí que aquel chico de la esquina donde antes siempre giraba para llegar a Ministriles se parecía a él solo por un juego de la memoria. Pero al acercarme, esa impresión no disminuyó y de repente me encontré delante de él. Me saludó, como un fantasma emergido de mi nostalgia pero una década mayor, con canas surgiendo de su barba y de su cabello, no como era por aquel entonces. La conexión entre nosotros seguía igual de fuerte y cuando me abrazó y me besó, allí en plena calle, era como si hubiese entrado en mi propio pasado.

## *Nostalgia* | Translated by Sandra Kingery

There are streets I rarely walk down, and one of them is Lavapiés itself, even though I've been living in that neighborhood for a few years now. I live almost on the edge of where Distrito Centro turns into Arganzuela on the Ronda de Valencia. Years ago, it didn't bother me to go up or down any street, no matter how steep, but it's harder for me now and I tend to take the metro or the bus. But it's a beautiful afternoon, so after taking care of a few errands around Plaza del Sol, I decided to walk back home and I found myself wandering down Lavapiés and remembering, a decade earlier, when I would be on that same street all the time because I had a boyfriend who lived in Ministriles, a small parallel street. We were constantly coming and going between our two apartments to spend the night together or just to get laid. It was his first apartment as a single guy, so I gave him my IKEA futon (I still got to use it on the nights we spent together anyway), and I bought myself a new bed. He was shorter than me and I remembered how our bodies fit together perfectly, as if they were melting into each other.

Since I was thinking about him, my first reaction was that the guy on the corner where I used to always turn to get to Ministriles only looked like him because my memory was playing tricks on me. But as I got closer, the impression didn't weaken, and I suddenly found myself in front of him. He greeted me like a ghost rising up out of my nostalgia, but a decade older, with gray hair sprinkled throughout his beard and on his head, not like it was back then. The connection between us was as strong as ever and when he hugged and kissed me, there in the middle of the street, it was as if I had entered my own past.

Except for one thing. We no longer fit together like we used to.

He smiled at me when we stopped kissing, and his hands slid down to rest on my spare tire.

“What are you doing here? Last I saw, on Facebook, you were still in Zaragoza...”

“I’m in town for a meeting. My train’s in a few hours, but since I had some free time, I was taking a walk around the old neighborhood.”

“My current neighborhood,” I told him, “I live right at the bottom of the hill.”

While we were walking, we talked about our lives, our jobs, our current partners.

We went up to my place and, before you know it, we had our clothes off and were in the bedroom. I wasn’t young enough to fuck on futons or sofas anymore.

I grabbed a condom from the nightstand, and he put it on.

He entered me, and it was just like I remembered. In fact, while the pleasure expanded throughout my body, I didn’t know where the current pleasure ended and all those moments of remembered pleasure began.

Because, in spite of my belly, some things still fit together perfectly.

Salvo por una cosa. Ya no encajábamos como antes.

Me sonrió cuando rompimos el beso, y sus manos descendieron para tocarme la barriga.

—¿Qué haces por aquí? Lo último que vi, en Facebook, es que seguías en Zaragoza...

—Sí, vine para una reunión, en unas horas cojo el AVE de vuelta, pero como tenía tiempo libre, estaba recorriendo el viejo barrio.

—Mi barrio actual —le dije—, vivo al principio de la cuesta.

Mientras caminábamos, hablamos de nuestras vidas, de nuestros trabajos, de nuestras parejas actuales.

Subimos a mi casa y enseguida nos habíamos quitado la ropa y estábamos en el dormitorio. Yo ya no tenía edad para follar en futones ni sofás.

Cogí un condón de la mesilla de noche y él se lo puso.

Me entró y era tal y como lo recordaba. Incluso, mientras el gozo se expandía por todo el cuerpo, no sabía dónde terminaba el placer actual y comenzaban todos esos momentos de placer recordado.

Porque, a pesar de mi barriga, algunas cosas todavía encajaban a la perfección.

## *Territorio marcado*

Gorka terminó su café y se puso de pie.

—Voy a hacer unas cosas —dijo antes de dar un beso en los labios a su marido y dedicarme un gesto de despedida desde su lado de la mesa. Después añadió—: Encantado, Luis. Que disfrutéis.

Cuando se hubo marchado, me giré hacia Aitor y le pregunté:

—¿De verdad que no le molesta?

—¿Por qué le va molestar?

—Pues... Como quería conocerme y eso...

Aitor se rio.

—Antes de que tú y yo follemos, quieres decir.

Eso era más por ti que por cualquier otra cosa. Para que no tengas ideas falsas sobre lo que vamos a ser tú y yo. Es mi marido y nos queremos mucho, cosa que no impide que disfrutemos con otros hombres.

—Y cuando él tiene sus ligues, ¿también quedas para conocerles?

—Claro. Ninguno de los dos sentimos celos. Ni queremos dejar de estar juntos. Pero también nos gusta tener algunas experiencias fuera de nuestra relación. ¿Cómo vamos a negar a nuestra pareja tener más placer en su vida?

Me sentí raro, quizás porque la situación era desconocida para mí. Lo comprendía intelectualmente, pero emocionalmente era otra cosa. Estaba descolocado. Sentado a mi lado en el café, Aitor me atraía mucho —tenía más morbo en persona que en las fotos de su perfil— y no entendía cómo a Gorka no le molestaba que, según lo que todos habíamos acordado, en menos de una hora yo iba a follar con él. Estaba contrariado, por un lado mi deseo y por otro mi confusión.

## *Marked Territory*

Gorka finished his coffee and stood up.

"I've got some things to do," he said, before giving his husband a kiss on the lips and waving goodbye at me from his side of the table. Then he added: "Nice to meet you, Luis. Enjoy yourselves."

When he had gone, I turned to Aitor and asked him: "It really doesn't bother him?"

"Why would it bother him?"

"Well... Since he wanted to meet me and all..."

Aitor laughed.

"Before you and I fuck, you mean. That was more for you than for anything. So you don't get the wrong idea about what's going on between you and me. He's my husband and we really love each other, which doesn't prevent us from enjoying other men too."

"And when he has a pickup, do you go meet them too?"

"Of course. Neither of us gets jealous. And we don't want to stop being together. But we also like to have some experiences outside of our relationship. Why would we want to stop our partner from having more pleasure in his life?"

I felt odd, maybe because the situation was new to me. Intellectually I understood it, but emotionally was another thing. I felt baffled. Aitor, sitting next to me in the coffee shop, was really attractive—he was sexier in person than in the photos on his profile—and I didn't understand why it didn't bother Gorka that, according to what we had all agreed on, in less than an hour Aitor and I would be fucking. I felt conflicted. I felt desire on the one hand, but confusion on the other.



Y quizás también mi desilusión. Porque, aunque sabía desde el principio que Aitor tenía pareja, era una cosa abstracta. Ahora que le había conocido, ya no podía ignorar la realidad.

—Ey, ¿por qué esa cara triste? —dijo Aitor, señalando al camarero para que trajera la cuenta—. Vamos a pasarlo bien, ya verás.

Pagamos y le seguí a su apartamento, que estaba muy cerca del café donde habíamos quedado. Subiendo la escalera detrás de él, mi atención oscilaba entre mirar a los músculos de su culo debajo de su pantalón corto, que en breve podría desnudar y apreciar, y pensar que ellos debían de hacer todo esto a menudo, que ya era una rutina: quedar en ese café, que les pillaba cerca de casa, y acordar que el otro se ausentara durante un rato. No pude evitar mirar a mi alrededor, buscando alguna evidencia de su vida en común mientras Aitor me daba el tour por su apartamento, todo el tiempo hablando en primera persona del plural. Y me di cuenta de que igual tenía razón en su plan de acción de quedar con los ligues primero, dejando todo claro, como perros marcando su territorio, aunque admitieran huéspedes invitados.

Dejé de obsesionarme por cosas que nunca había deseado hasta que estaban fuera de mi alcance. Me acerqué a Aitor, colocándome dentro de su espacio personal pero sin rozarle aún. Él me sonrió y extendí la mano para tocarle. Esto es lo que quería, y por lo que había venido.

And also maybe disappointment. Because, even though I knew that Aitor had a partner from the beginning, I'd only thought about it in the abstract. But now that I'd met him, I couldn't ignore the reality anymore.

"Hey, why the long face?" said Aitor, signaling the waiter to bring the check. "We're going to have a good time, you'll see."

We paid the bill and I followed him to his apartment, which was very close to the coffee shop where we'd met. Climbing the stairs behind him, my attention swung between looking at the muscles in his ass underneath his shorts, an ass which I'd be able to disrobe and appreciate very soon, and thinking that they must do all of this so often that it was a routine now: meeting up in that coffee shop, which was close to home for them, and agreeing that their partner would make himself scarce for a while. I couldn't help looking around, seeking out evidence of their life together, while Aitor gave me the tour of their apartment, talking in first-person plural the whole time. And I realized that maybe their plan of action made sense, meeting up with the third ahead of time, making it all clear, like dogs marking their territory, even if they did invite guests into the mix.

I stopped obsessing about things I had never wanted until they were outside of my grasp. I approached Aitor, entering his personal space but without the slightest contact yet. He smiled at me, and I reached out to touch him. This was what I wanted; it's what I'd come for.

## *Oídos*

Salió apresuradamente del váter, con la cabeza gacha, y solo se detuvo delante de la puerta que daba a la pista de baile. Un tío casi chocó con Alberto, que también salía de la misma cabina, sin prisas y abrochándose el cinturón debajo de su prominente barriga mientras cruzaba el baño hasta donde le esperaba Ernesto.

—Lo siento —susurró Ernesto—, siempre grito cuando me corro. ¿Crees que alguno de ellos nos ha escuchado?

Alberto giró la cabeza para mirar la fila de tíos esperando para mear, casi todos observándoles, y contestó por fin:

—¡Espero que todos!

## *Overheard*

He hurried out of the stall, his head averted, and only stopped when he got to the door that led to the dance floor. Some guy almost ran into Alberto, who was coming out of the same stall, in no hurry whatsoever, buckling the belt under his prominent belly while he crossed the bathroom over to where Ernesto was waiting for him.

“Sorry,” whispered Ernesto, “I always seem to shout when I come. Do you think any of them heard us?”

Alberto turned his head slowly to look at the line of guys waiting to pee, almost the entire line looking back at them, and finally answered: “Hopefully all of them!”

## *Recién salido del horno*

Me puse la bufanda antes de salir. Ya se atisbaba la aurora por la ventana, señalando la transición paulatina del invierno a la primavera, pero seguro que aún hacía frío a esa hora de la madrugada. Cerré la puerta con dos vueltas de llave, por instinto, aunque solo bajaba un momento. Después de tantos años, mis rutinas ya estaban consolidadas: me despertaba pronto, incluso los domingos como hoy, y bajaba a comprar el pan recién salido del horno.

Sonó ese ding que indicaba la llegada del ascensor y empecé a entrar, todavía en piloto automático, antes de que se abrieran las puertas. Así que me choqué con el joven del piso de enfrente, que estaba saliendo del ascensor. Me agarró, y como vi en ese instante que estaba borracho y obviamente volviendo de marcha a esa hora cuando yo empezaba mi día, también le sujeté para evitar que se cayera.

Nos quedamos tanto tiempo en los brazos del otro que se cerró la puerta del ascensor.

Estudí su cara, tan cerca de la mía. Le había visto (y oído) antes, pero nunca me había fijado mucho en él. Le sacaba casi veinte años, pensé, y de repente me sentí mayor. Me acordé de cuando yo tenía veintipocos y volvía de marcha a esas horas después de una noche loca. Pero me vi muy lejano de este joven delgado que tenía entre los brazos, como si fuera de otra especie: con un lado de la cabeza afeitado casi al cero, un piercing debajo del labio inferior, su abrigo desabrochado revelando una ropa de colores chillones y telas sintéticas, a lo mejor para brillar bajo las luces ultravioletas de las discotecas.

## *Fresh out of the Oven*

I put my scarf on before heading out. You could just make out the first morning light through the window, marking the gradual transition from winter to spring, but it was probably still cold at that time of morning. I turned the deadbolt twice, out of habit, even though I was only going down for a minute. After so many years, my routines were established: I woke up early, even on Sundays like today, and I went down to buy bread fresh out of the oven.

I heard that ding that indicated the arrival of the elevator and I started to get in, still on auto-pilot, before the doors were fully open. That's how I bumped into the young guy from the apartment in front of mine, who was coming out of the elevator. He grabbed onto me and since I immediately saw that he was drunk and obviously coming home from a night out at the same time as I was starting my day, I held onto him so he wouldn't fall over.

We stayed in each other's arms so long that the door to the elevator closed.

I studied his face, so close to mine. I had seen (and heard) him before, but I'd never paid much attention to him. I was almost twenty years older, I thought, and I suddenly felt old. I remembered when I was twenty-something and would come back from the bars at this time of morning after a crazy night on the town. But I felt very distant from this skinny young dude I had in my arms, as if he were a different species: one side of his head almost completely shaved, a piercing under his lower lip, his unbuttoned jacket revealing brightly colored synthetic clothing, probably meant to shine under the ultraviolet lights of the discos.

A pesar de mi aversión, no me acordaba de cuánto tiempo hacía que no sentía a otro hombre en mis brazos y no le solté. Con mi trabajo ya no tenía tiempo para buscar ligues de una noche, y tampoco entendía los códigos y las costumbres de hoy en día. Buscar algo más duradero parecía un cuento de hadas. De acuerdo, los homosexuales teníamos el derecho a casarnos; a mí solo me faltaban pretendientes, ya fueran ranas, príncipes u hombres normales.

La luz automática del pasillo también se apagó, dejándonos en la penumbra del descansillo.

—Perdona —dije, al final, soltándole y apartándome un paso—. Bajaba a por el pan y no esperaba que hubiera nadie dentro del ascensor a estas horas.

Él tocó el interruptor y me miró de pies a cabeza sin decir nada. Imaginé que me escrutaba con la misma aversión que yo había sentido. Igual ni reconocía que yo también entendía.

O quizás eso le ponía más, porque agarró su entrepierna y me dijo:

—Te invito yo a una porra si te peta.

Está borracho, es un vecino, no te metas en un lío, pensé.

Pero me desvié de mi rutina matinal y le seguí hasta su lado del pasillo. No solo de pan vive el hombre. Y ya no me sentí tan mayor.

In spite of my aversion, I couldn't remember how long it'd been since I felt another man in my arms and I didn't let go of him. My job no longer left me with time to look for one-night stands. Plus I didn't understand the current rules and expectations. Looking for something longer-lasting seemed like a fairy tale. Sure, same-sex marriage was legal now; I just didn't have any candidates, whether they were frogs, princes or normal men.

The automatic light in the hallway clicked off as well, leaving us in the semi-darkness of the landing.

"Sorry," I said, at last, releasing him and taking a step back. "I was going down to get bread and I didn't expect there to be anyone in the elevator at this time of morning."

He flicked the light on and looked me up and down without saying a word. I imagined he was scrutinizing me with the same aversion I had felt. He might not even realize I was also gay.

Or maybe that turned him on more, because he grabbed his crotch and said: "I can give you a baguette right here if you like."

He's drunk, he's a neighbor, it could get messy, I thought.

But I deviated from my morning routine and followed him to his side of the hallway. Man cannot live from bread alone. And I no longer felt so old.



## *Conexión*

Tenía un tiempo muerto en Hamburgo y a esa hora de la madrugada todo estaba ya cerrado, con la excepción de un McDonalds y un Beate Uhse, esa cadena alemana de sex shop. No estaba cachondo cuando crucé el umbral del local, sino aburrido. Aunque no tenía hambre, había comido en el McDonalds para poder sentarme y esperar, y aún faltaban dos horas para que saliera mi tren.

Al entrar saludé con la cabeza al tipo de detrás del mostrador, pero no le presté mucha atención. Mirar a los ojos es una invitación, especialmente en un sitio como este.

Y tampoco buscaba comprar nada, ni tenía dinero para hacerlo. Estaba pasando un mes recorriendo Europa con un billete de Inter Rail. Dormía en los trenes nocturnos para no tener que pagar un hotel. Pero algunos trayectos requerían un suplemento para el tren directo. Por eso me encontraba aquí, a estas horas, matando el tiempo.

Subí y bajé por los pasillos, mirando la oferta. Y aquí todo estaba de oferta, y nada estaba oculto. Pensé en lo que dicen que le pasa a la gente que trabaja en las fábricas de chocolate: las primeras semanas estás salivando todo el rato, pero después de un tiempo, ya estás anestesiado. Miré al tipo de detrás del mostrador, preguntándome si a él le había pasado lo mismo, si el primer mes tenía la polla tiesa durante toda su jornada, pero después de ver tantas pollas erectas y tetas y culos en las carátulas de los vídeos y las pantallas, los dildos y las esposas y todo lo demás, ya nada le sorprendía ni excitaba.

## *Connection*

I had time to kill in Hamburg, and at that time of the night, everything was closed except for a McDonalds and a Beate Uhse, that chain of German sex shops.

I wasn't horny when I walked in the door, just bored. I had gotten something to eat at the McDonalds, even though I wasn't hungry, so I could sit and wait for a while, but my train still wasn't leaving for two hours.

As I walked inside, I nodded at the guy behind the counter, but I didn't pay much attention to him. Looking someone in the eye is an invitation, especially in a place like this.

I wasn't looking to buy anything either, nor did I have the money to do so. I was traveling through Europe for a month on an InterRail pass, sleeping on night trains so I wouldn't have to pay for hotels. But some routes required a supplement for the direct train, which is why I found myself here, at this time of night, killing time.

I went up and down the aisles, looking at what they were selling. Everything was for sale here, and nothing was hidden. I thought about what they say happens to people who work in chocolate factories: for the first few weeks, you're drooling all the time, but after a while, you get immune to it. I looked at the guy behind the counter, wondering whether the same thing had happened to him, if his cock was hard for 8 hours at a time for the first month, but after seeing so many hard dicks and tits and asses on the covers of videos and on screens, the dildos and handcuffs and everything else, nothing could shock or excite him anymore.

Para mi asombro, el tipo me estaba mirando, y vi su brazo moverse suavemente debajo del mostrador. ¿Estaba cascándosela? Yo era el único cliente. Dudaba de que yo le gustara tanto que no pudiera resistirse a hacerse una paja. Más bien, imaginé que se aburría de estar solo.

No me atraía mucho, la verdad; yo prefiero a chicos más bajitos que yo, estilo indie, con tatuajes y piercings. Él era grandote, como un matón de discoteca, con la cabeza rapada por completo y un pendiente en una oreja. Si tuviera fantasías con gladiadores...

Pero tenía tiempo que matar. Me acerqué al mostrador. Con la mano, se levantó la polla para que pudiera verla mejor. Era grande, como él, y recta, con una cabeza casi cuadrada debajo del prepucio; la mía era más delgada, y con una curva, con el glande como una boina encima de una vara. Alcé la mirada, y señalé con la cabeza que sí.

No me dijo nada, pero se levantó del taburete y se acercó a la puerta. La cerró con llave, y por un momento un calambre me recorrió el cuerpo, entre miedo y morbo. Cambió el letrero en la puerta por uno que decía ZURÜCK IN 5 MINUTEN. Le seguí a una cabina, esperando que tardásemos más que eso. Tenía que pasar el rato sin quedarme dormido y perder mi tren.

To my surprise, the guy was looking at me, and I saw his arm moving slowly beneath the counter. Was he jacking off? I was the only customer. I doubted that he liked me so much that he couldn't help but rub one out. Instead, I imagined he was bored of being alone.

The truth of the matter is that I wasn't that attracted to him; I prefer guys who are shorter than me, indie guys, with tattoos and piercings. He was on the big side, like a bouncer at a disco, with a shaved head and an earring in one ear. If I had ever fantasized about being with a gladiator...

But I had time to kill. I approached the counter. He lifted his dick with one hand so I could see it better. It was big, like him, and ramrod straight, with a head that was nearly square beneath the foreskin. Mine was thinner, and it curved, with a glans that perched like a beret on top of a pole. I looked up and nodded yes.

He didn't say anything but got up from his stool and approached the door. He locked it, and for a moment, a shiver ran through my body, between fear and excitement. He replaced the sign on the door with one that said ZURÜCK IN 5 MINUTEN. I followed him to a booth, hoping we would take longer than that. I needed to kill time without falling asleep and missing my train.

## *Porno secuencia*

Durante años pensé que no me interesaba el porno. Y no es que observar a otros follando no me excitara. Un amigo se quejó de que había demasiada actividad sexual en las duchas de su gimnasio y me apunté allí al día siguiente, no para cuidar la línea o ponerme musculoso, sino para disfrutar de momentos de voyeur (y a veces como participante) en escenas de sexo furtivo y más morboso justo por la posibilidad de que alguien lo descubriera al entrar. Porque nosotros, los mirones, los que estamos allí cuando algo comienza a ocurrir, somos una parte esencial del tableau.

Sabía, por tanto, que me gustaba y me excitaba observar el sexo, pero las películas porno me dejaban frío... hasta que descubrí al director francés Cadinot. Fue por accidente que me topé con una de sus películas, tomando una copa en un antro de mala muerte que proyectaba vídeos en una pequeña pantalla encima de la barra. Normalmente eran como ruido blanco visual para mí, y en este caso tenía poco interés a priori porque los protagonistas eran muy jóvenes y muy lampiños, por muy grandes que fueran sus vergas.

Pero a falta de clientes que me interesaran, y en parte para no parecer accesible a un pesado que no me quitaba el ojo, miré la peli.

Y de repente me di cuenta de que era un plano secuencia. Y para mi sorpresa, empecé a excitarme observándolo.

Lo que hacía Cadinot, aparte de contar historias en las cuales el sexo a menudo era parte del motor del argumento y no la interrupción de la narrativa, era filmar sexo real. Su cámara nos dejaba ser voyeurs, al natural, sin todos los saltos y jump cuts que suelen utilizar en el porno, especialmente en el momento de la

## *Porn Sequence*

I thought for years that I wasn't interested in porn. It's not that watching other people fuck didn't excite me. A friend complained that there was too much sex going on in the showers at his gym, and I signed up the next day, not to lose weight or build muscle, but to enjoy moments of being a voyeur (and at times participant) in sex scenes that were furtive and more exciting exactly because of the possibility that someone might walk in on them. Because voyeurs like me, those of us who're there when things start happening, we're an essential part of the scene.

I knew, therefore, that I liked and was excited by watching sex, but porn flicks left me cold... until I discovered the French director Cadinot. I happened upon one of his movies by accident, having a drink in some seedy dive that projected videos on a small screen above the bar. They were normally like visual white noise for me, and in this case, I was pretty uninterested right off the bat because the actors were very young and very clean-shaven, no matter how big their dicks were.

But since there wasn't anyone in the bar who interested me, and partly because I wanted to seem unavailable to this annoying jerk who kept looking at me, I started watching the movie.

And I realized all of a sudden that it was a single long take. And to my surprise, I started getting excited as I watched it.

What Cadinot was doing, besides telling stories where the sex often advanced the plot rather than interrupting the narrative, was film real sex. His camera let us be voyeurs, *au naturel*, without all the jump cuts that porn tends to use, especially at the moment of penetration. Close-up of a cock pushing against the other

penetración. Plano cercano de una polla probando el ano del otro y un segundo después, follando a saco con un condón puesto. Me hacen sentir manipulado y me rompen el momento, como cuando estás leyendo un libro y de repente hay un anacronismo o un error, algo que no tiene sentido que te hace recordar que estás leyendo un libro en vez de estar viviendo la aventura que contiene.

Cadinot logró seducirme tanto que no me di cuenta de que el pesado del bar se había acercado hasta que sentí su mano en mi paquete. Miré a mi alrededor, pero aún no había llegado nadie más interesante. No le animé pero tampoco hice nada para impedirle que me bajara la cremallera, me sacara la polla y se agachara delante de mí para chupármela hasta el final. Yo miraba el plano secuencia de Cadinot y ofrecía un espectáculo para los mirones del bar.

guy's asshole and one second later, full-on fucking with a condom on. They make me feel manipulated, and they break the spell for me, like when you're reading a book and all of a sudden there's an anachronism or a mistake, something that doesn't fit, which makes you remember you're reading a book instead of living the adventure that it contains.

Cadinot seduced me so successfully that I didn't realize that the jerk from the bar had come over until I felt his hand on my crotch. I looked around, but no one more interesting had shown up yet. I didn't encourage him, but I didn't do anything to stop him either as he unzipped my pants, took out my cock and kneeled down in front of me to suck me off.

I watched Cardinot's long take while offering up a scene for the voyeurs in the bar.



# РОЖДЕНСТВО НА ИДНА

Љовича Тасевски – Eternijan

Лежи, песната, лелеава  
на земјава црна и влажна,  
со коса од разиграна икра  
со очи од црни кругови и темна длабина во нив  
со раце од врели рала  
со нозе лесни, вертрести и цврсти  
со дојки млечни, бујни и слатки  
со лик розов, игрив и тркалезен  
со празнина во телото  
со празнина  
од крв!

Лежи, поетот, лелеав  
со патеки од игли, кал и мермер  
со храна од амброзија и нектар  
со извор во телото трошно и неверно  
со извор  
од плодност!

Во ноќта со полна месечина:  
Песната роди нова Песна.

## *Birth of the Future*

| Translated by Judith Skillman

The trembling poem lies  
On the black and humid land  
With hair of exuberant fish roe  
With eyes of black circles and a dark depth in them  
With hands like hot plows  
With light, fast, and firm legs  
With sweet and lush breasts  
With a pink, playful round face  
With an emptiness in the body  
With a bloody emptiness!

The trembling poet lies  
With paths of needles, mud and marble  
With food from ambrosia and nectar  
A source in the tiny, infidel body,  
A source of fertility!

In the night with a full moon:  
The poem was born a new poem.

# СÈ

*обиди за синхронија*

Лебди  
над темните облаци  
Синтакса на светлината  
Просирните раце  
ги подава кон мракот  
на површината што се наталожил  
Да го вознесе  
отаде матните облици  
Ги шири белите крилја  
и силно завеслува по синилото  
Горчината се лизга  
низ нејзините ведри прсти  
слегувајќи кон трњето  
повтор

Во неа обитува  
еден нежен вруток  
И се спушта кон шибјаците  
во друго време  
доејќи го мракот  
со благи голтки  
Закоравен  
да не се сети  
фрлен в неврат

Румено се прегрнуваат  
Метеори се вивнуваат  
кон празнините  
Од допирот на нивните дланки  
далги од топлина се подаваат

И  
прекриваат  
Сè

## *All in Synchrony*

Syntax of the light  
Floats over somber clouds

She reaches out transparent hands  
To the darkness  
That settles  
On the surface of the earth  
To ascend  
Beyond the murky shapes  
She spreads white wings

And vigorously flutters through bluishness

As bitter darkness slips down  
Through her bright fingers  
She goes down to the thorns again

At other times  
A gentle vortex descends  
Nursing darkness  
With sweet sips  
So that it is not forever thrown  
To vanish

Glowingly they embrace each other  
And meteors soar towards the emptiness  
Out of the touch of their palms  
Waves of heat emerge

To  
Blanket  
Everything

## СЛЕДЕН ЧЕКОР

До кога ќе биде покрај мене,  
до кога и до каде  
ќе ме следи  
овој крилест лав,  
овој кроток свер,  
овој заштитник  
што ми го испрати  
како дар  
најдобриот пријател,  
кој ме научи да не отстапам  
од патот поплочен со белутраци,  
порабен со мирта,  
за да не го разгневам  
мојот верен придружник,  
та да ме растргне  
пред да го направам кобниот чекор  
кон Бездната

## *Next Step*

Until when it will be beside me,  
Until when and until where  
It will follow me  
This winged lion,  
This gentle beast,  
A protector  
That was sent to me  
As a gift  
By my best friend,  
Who taught me not to withdraw  
From the road paved with flint-stones,  
Edged with myrtle,  
So that I would not enrage  
My faithful companion,  
And he tears me apart  
Before I make that fatal step  
To the Abyss.

*Bottles* | Matt Ito

I.

I found a bottle.

Chipped on coral, rolled by swells,  
Seeking shelter among life below the surface.

Amber-brown like a cowrie shell  
Though lacking the sheen of its competitor.

I found a bottle.

Home to algae and anemones.

Where silt and sand have filled it to the lip  
So it bubbles and overflows when I retrieve it from below.

I found a bottle.

Beautiful, though I know it is belligerent.

Venerable, though I know it is violent.

Captivating, though I know it is repulsive.

## II.

Why do I collect such things?

Memorializing the figure that invades our waters—

Keepsakes of destruction,

The human footprint,

At the seat of honor atop my dresser.

Yet whenever I find a bottle, a nest of monofilament, a child's plastic shovel

I am reminded of what we have so long taken for granted.

The ocean is not a receptacle.

She is our mother.

She is my mother.

The ocean is joy, is peace, is pleasure.

The ocean is sustenance, is survival.

So when I find a bottle I tell myself these things

For my own sake and those who come after me,

Lest they forget.

## III.

Where is my place in all of this?

I think it lies somewhere between

The bottle and the anemone calling it home.



*Birthright* | George Abraham

there is a voice behind  
each morning prayer that  
wakes Jerusalem before the  
rooster's shrill cry -

and before  
it was a boisterous thing,  
it was small; tiny itch  
nestled between vocal chords,  
brief settler - barely a home  
at all -

much like the heart  
whose swelling cries & floods  
& tears membranes with its  
wanting & maybe wanting  
is its own home -

not the holy  
vessel who begs its own rupture;  
makes Jericho of its vast  
chambers, tense with longing -  
intersection of rivulet & fallow  
empty - biological, in its  
contradiction -

i mean to say:  
the body is holy  
war enough for these  
nations, swelling.  
Brooding.

\*\*\*

& here i am - halfway across the world  
from everything i know, and yet i find it easiest  
to fall in love with an unfamiliar land; this  
architecture of olive grove; diaspora of gravel  
& stone migration - aftermath of the colonizers'  
explosions, land giving itself to the wind -  
the most forgiving god of faithless scatter,

& for once, i begin to understand the way  
my grandfather holds his olive-wood prayer beads  
like something holy, in their invisibility; the way  
Teta makes nostalgia of *Her* Jerusalem before  
the settlers & their talk of walls made apartheid  
of our God

& perhaps this is too  
familiar, and my longing is just the weight of my  
ancestors' grief carrying me home, or here & isn't  
that all we ever wanted: a place to die  
whole, not holy, not martyr; somewhere  
my every breath doesn't have to be a revolution;  
somewhere stone can be a home's foundation & not  
war crime; somewhere the sea doesn't gentrify us, or  
swallow our limbs; somewhere it holds & carries  
the weight of us                      back Home –

*For Better or For Worse* | Juliet S. Kono

I didn't want to go home.

I had smashed my husband's brand new red car  
with its flying-fish fins and shiny chrome bumpers.

Backing up, I clipped the wall in the parking lot of Star

46 Supermarket at the rim of the valley. Nothing major,

but I knew what was coming: *Stupid bitch, what the hell you think you doing?*

The fender remained smashed, the car no longer cherry.

Later, when the side mirror fell off,

he taped it, sagging. *No cop better stop me! he warned.*

Where once our family never did, we began eating in the car,

food all over the place, a battalion of roaches entering,

yet I was forbidden to clean, wash, or drive it.

The kids drew pictures and wrote their names on the car's

doors and hood; the dirt so thick, it peeled off like old paint.

Soon, rust holes appeared. From the wheel wells, the crusted mud

dropped off on a rough road like leaves from trees

lining the streets. Years went by and parts of the windows

turned white and spidery, the doors sticky.

One day, when I went to retrieve my purse

forgotten in the back seat, all the doors stuck

fast, and like my life, I had no way to get out.

## *Redux: Fo Bettah or Fo Worse*

I neva like go home.

I wen smash my husband's bran new red kaa s'why,  
the kaa wit da kine flying-fish fins and shiny chrome bumpas.

I was backing up, eh, when I wen clip one wall in the paakin lot of Staa

Supamaket right wea the valley stay start. Wuz, notting mai-ja,

but I know I wuz goin get it: *Stupid bitch, what da hell you tink you doing?*

And da fenda wen stay all smash cause the car no longa, *cherry*.

Latahs, wen the side-mirra wen fall off,

he tape em up, all sagging: *No cop bettah stop me!* he wen warn.

Before that, we neva use to eat in da car, but we wen start doing dat,

food all ova the place, wit one battalion of cocka-roaches coming insai,

yet he neva like me clean, wash o drive the kaa.

Da kids get good fun draw pikchas o write dey names

on the kaa doas and da hood l'dat; the dirt so tick, peel off like ole paint.

Den da rust holes wen start coming out. Mud stuck wea the tyahs stay,

fall down on rough kine road, like leaves from da trees growing

on da side. Years go by, the car all junk, the windows

stay white by da edge part and get like spida-webs coming out,

and da doas all sticky get haad time fo open um.

One day, I wen forget my purse in da backseat.

After I wen go in the kaa for get my purse

and I like come out, all the doas wuz stuck,

and like my life, I neva could get out!

## *Dark Matters* | Eric Paul Shaffer

As I pull late into the garage, I extinguish the headlights.  
Darkness leaps toward me, warm, silent, intimate. For one  
inglorious moment, I regret there is no hell. In election years,  
so many deserve a sulfurous sojourn. I fumble for a handle,

step from the car and the garage, and the stars burn, fierce  
and dumb overhead. Orion is poised with his shield and club  
confronting the bull. In six million years or not, the stars  
sketching his figure in the night will explode, spilling

atoms and elements into the universe that will one day  
compose another life that will never know any one of us.  
More of the ones I love are gone, but the hunter hefting  
his weapons is here, for a few more millennia at least.

I'm glad I will not be here to mourn their passage,  
and the stars will surely not mourn me. Staring up, I ponder  
the believers in an exclusive gated heaven, a rainbow bridge,  
blue lights, a white light at the end of a tunnel, a planet

of one's own, seventy-two white raisins, or a golden field  
beyond an azure sky, but all of that means less now  
than the breath to tell the lie or the ink to write the words.  
Dark is the night. The street beneath the constellations

is unlit, and leaves rattle down the street in the grip  
of the wind. In the house is a single light, and I know  
my love waits within for me. I wish on the dark beyond  
the stars for many more days to share with her before the day

I stop and return the sun-forged elements of my body  
to the future that, long after I'm gone, they will illuminate.



## *The Creaking of the Net*

The sun is rising, and the stars are already gone,  
or there is too much light from our star to see those fainter points  
at this hour, early, with the fierce white rays slanting  
through jealousies and the air chilly enough that I actually feel

the weight and warmth of fusion from ninety-three  
million miles away. The sky doesn't need the sun though the blue  
arises from the rays. The sea doesn't need the shore when tides  
grind new land to sand. The Earth doesn't need us while nothing

remains of us without that blessed dirt. How embarrassing to recall  
now that truth at night, when I exit the tunnel on the Pali Highway  
headed toward Kailua town and glimpse that black expanse  
of unlit ocean between the stars and the rows of hundreds

of golden points, like knots on a net, that are each  
a streetlight on one of the straight rows of my home, I remember  
again that humans huddle, tangling their family and friends  
and work in grand webs of avenues and motives and highways

and ends that seem to strangle the lives anyone can live there.  
I understand the contempt of Jeffers and Snyder for us as we ignore  
the crowding and the thrashing and the creaking of the net  
drawn in. We have looked so long and often to the shadows

at the edge of vision for friends or foes or lovers or all  
that we are unable to see that nothing is there  
but more light. Even with the day surrounding us now, I see little  
as I face our silly, fragile failure to survive when survival

is so easy, even with the impediment of intelligence blocking  
the way. The light will not leave us alone, even when the sun  
leaves us, and we have lived too long with contempt  
for the sun, ignoring the radiance until the light burns us.

## *Goya Chanpuru*

I go down to the Asahi Grill on Thursday nights  
for Goya Chanpuru because the cook there serves the dish

the way my uncle did. We called him Uncle Jerry.  
His mama called him Hatsuo, but he answered to anything.  
Manzanar, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and years

in Hollywood as the anonymous Japanese soldier  
or gardener or tourist meant nothing but silence to him  
when we pointed to his TV. We saw him on the screen,

tiny and black and white in Time Tunnel, The Wild, Wild  
West, or McHale's Navy. "Hey, that's you!" we yelled,  
but he kept his peace. When I order, the waitress asks

if I know goya, and I must convince her I do. I tell her  
about Uncle Jerry and L.A., Okinawa, and Hollywood,

and finally, she believes I want the meal I chose  
from the menu. She tosses sticks on the table and leaves  
me with a steaming pot of tea. Uncle Jerry used

most words in the kitchen, pan snapping with oil, sticks  
flying, all the vegetables sliced, Spam in chunks, and eggs

ready for cracking. "No cook 'em too long," he might say,  
and he was right. The green crescent slices of goya were hot,  
crunchy, and bit my tongue, a sour savor that grew

while I chewed. On any night he served us, he laughed  
a long time at our frowns over plates of goya chanpuru.  
I never would have believed I would come to love

this meal, that I would save Thursday nights to taste once  
more this steaming dish of a vegetable with the tang  
of vinegar and stinging savor of days gone dark and far.

Uncle Jerry might say, "Mo' bittah, mo' bettah." And I think  
he meant the goya. I think he only meant the goya.

## *You Little Bastards*

When I tell my wife my mother called her children “little bastards,” she is surprised again. At first, I really don’t know why. I thought all mothers called their children “little bastards.” Apparently not. I knew my mother longest, not best, of her sons and daughters, but I can’t claim to have been the spawn she loved most, and I certainly irked her enough

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to recall anger as much as affection. She simply called us, mad or not, “You little bastards.” She would say, “You little bastards, get in the car.” Or “You little bastards better stop fighting before your father comes home.” Or “Come on, you little bastards, the turkey’s on the table.” If a bastard is a child born out of wedlock, then, as far as I know, we weren’t truly

bastards. Papers and pictures suggest my parents were married, and they wore the gold links on their fingers as proof. And if Jesus was the bastard son of Mary and the Almighty, I suppose I’m also a bastard

in that exquisite sense: someone amazing who came from nowhere, much to everyone’s annoyance. And she prepared me well for the end.

Now, when whoever comes to drag us dead into darkness commands me to drop my knitting, I'll go quick. As I stand on the bare, muddy banks of Lethe, dipping my Dixie cup into the rainbowed and smoking black waters, I'll be ready, even comforted, when the angry ferryman yells into the vaulted cavern above the weeping faces of my companions,

“Come on! Drink up! Hurry! Let's go, you little bastards!”

## *Ramble About Manhattan, Page 16*

for David Robertson

From this angle, I admire the suggestion of the curved Earth embedded in the religio-politico-economic sky and mindscape stacked on the stones

of this tortured isle. The giddy, gorgeous ornamentation of St. Pat's thrusts spikes into the crawl of gray air where the sun hides. Shall we call Patrick the unlucky, antic man who drove snakes into the New World?

His cathedral looms over the unintelligible. Here, we're down the street in one direction or degree from Rockefeller Center, Saks Fifth Avenue,

and Radio City Music Hall. From this concrete corner, the foreground contradictions of the signs sweeten the shot. Two signs each dispute there is "ONE WAY." The face on 5th Avenue points in what passes

in Manhattan as South; the one on 50th aims dubiously to the almost East. Neither way is one I want. Another insists there is "NO STANDING."

Must we, therefore, kneel? When will the bus come? Yet most exquisite is the small red hand of flame, barely within the frame, lit and insisting frantically, emphatically, pathetically, and fruitlessly that we must stop.

Only that glowing appendage resolutely assures us that all of this beautiful confusion was sown, ranked, staked, and raised with our own bloody hands.



## *To Grin Macabre* | Jessica Mehta

Some are scared of the starved, others  
arch away in awe, afraid what we have  
will catch. A few hover close, fruit flies thirsty  
to lick up tips—hopeful  
to become one of us. When your scaffolding  
begins to show, it's not all at once.  
First the bottom rung of ribs  
peek out like a shy debutante. Next,  
maybe your cheek bones protrude  
a little more than they should, a sudden  
pergola above where baby fat cheeks  
used to pudge (where the apples  
once blossomed). Hold out your hands—  
press your fingers together tight.  
Can you see the rays? Skinny enough  
and it bursts like heaven between the bars, only  
your knuckles can touch. Beautiful, right?

But here's what they don't tell you: People  
start falling away as easily  
as your hair down the drain. Nobody knows  
how to talk to a skeleton. All bones, it's hard  
to work your tongue. Hold on  
to friendships. Make love  
when your stomach's raging in the empty.  
So let us go,  
let me burrow deep into the earth  
where I belong and the others like me  
turn in their graves, disturb their plots  
to grin macabre at the newcomer.

## *All the Ways*

Know that

just because we're quiet  
doesn't mean we aren't railing inside.  
We ate herring in red coats and I told you  
all the ways I'd kill myself, how  
your lips were wilder than the moon.  
It's a lie

that we're born alone, die alone.  
We arrive

through slick thighs,  
wet bellies, and maybe  
we'll never see our mothers again. Maybe  
she'll stick to us like burned  
batter all our lonely lives. And we'll die

with all those lovers, gone  
mothers, animals that licked our hurts  
knotted like stowaways  
in the most secret  
desolate chambers of our hearts.  
They usher us, shaking

straight into the luminous.

## *Should Whiskey Write a Love Letter Back*

I love whiskey, adore  
everything about it. The ritual,  
my favorite dense tumbler, the taste  
that brings me back to nineteen. All the bad  
decisions rolled  
up neat as tombstones. I'm here  
for the scent of tar still clinging dumb  
to vinyl stools. For the dim  
and the din only the last bar  
in town without a television  
can muster. I love it enough to be whole  
with one, some nights need it  
to fill me all the way up. When the tour guide  
in Lynchburg told us,  
with the strong stuff,  
you hug the amber in your mouth

along your tongue  
for six seconds,

it all made sense. My apex  
can tame that wandering,  
my body the wild  
my parents birthed into me, the root  
of all my best failures. It asks less  
than a winning bull ride,  
this feral purring down my throat.

## *The Wrong Kind of Indian*

I keep the smudged Pendleton blanket  
nestled like a Christening gown in the hope  
chest. It's green, smoked  
with sage and cedar, blessed  
by a medicine man beneath towering  
tipi poles staked unnaturally permanent  
into the earth. At the time

I didn't know washing the smoke over my body,  
soaking it into my thirsty flesh, it wouldn't work  
until years later. For a lifetime I kept myself locked  
into my own hope, buried  
in my own safe place, safe choices, safe  
dullness. You opened it up greedily, treasures  
tumbling like dismissed toys to the floor.

An elder brought you to me, all siren's smoke  
and nature's magic—neither of us  
are the wrong kind of Indian.  
When Columbus found me, he thought he'd found you.  
He was lost, reckless and foolish like us.  
Then again,  
what miracles, what marvels, wrong turns  
and losing yourself can bring forth.

## *Spoon Me Out*

I saved it for you, the good stuff,  
the best years. The crustiest parts  
of the walnut bread, the biggest slabs  
of the pecan pies, the loveliest amuse bouche  
of me—the hours when I'm most alive,  
not suffocating in deadlines or tensed  
in the pauses before the storms. Even then,  
years ago,  
before I knew our opening notes,  
in the prelude before our symphony, I saved  
the sweet spots for you. And I'm not saying  
it's anything special—it's not nearly as decadent  
as others'. My grace falls short and I stumble  
like a newborn colt on shaky legs still  
wet from breaking into this world. My beauty  
is left wanting, an afterthought of sorts.  
And I can't speak

to tell you romantic things, new reasons  
why I love you or how your chest still  
feels like home. But I can write,  
and I'm loyal beyond anything you can imagine—I saved  
the choicest meats for you, the prime cuts  
from my body, the most tender morsels  
of my mind, the effervescence of my spirit, so

cut me deep, tuck into the spread, and spoon  
me out, rich and steaming mouthful  
by hungry, salivating mouthful.

***GARDENS*** | Aya Summers

i know what it's like  
to hold so much  
and say so little.

child, you have a revolution  
starting in your chest.  
let it rise.

let the thunder  
burst through your veins  
it is pain  
it is pain  
it is pain  
but know, darling

gardens only grow in the rain.

## ***Eyehooks*** | Cathy Barber

*After an Untitled c1950s photograph by Dennis Hallinan*

Three women in three hammocks  
suspended, stacked  
like colorful airplanes circling  
to land. Matching parasols!  
Red Parasol, red hammock,  
green parasol, green hammock,  
yellow parasol, yellow hammock.  
Bathing beauties in blindingly white  
one-piece suits...brunette, redhead, blonde,  
whatever your preference,  
there's one for you.

How to hang three hammocks, the art director  
must have puzzled.  
Just two trees to be had, strikingly alone  
in calm ocean waters.  
Cranes to suspend workmen (and men they must be).  
Or shimmiers, (men of course) to screw  
huge eyehooks, tightly knot the ropes on  
first one tree, then the other.  
But how to keep the ropes and half-slung hammocks dry?  
And how to maneuver the dry-bodied, dry-haired  
lovelies onto those strangely shiny  
hammocks. Did he cheat, that designer?  
If we scraped back the flawless sky,  
would we find a buzz of studio staff  
on scaffolds supporting our layered delight?

Reclining so, not a glint of fear in their eyes,  
that a rope may slip,  
the beauty above plop  
onto the beauty below  
and cascade into a reminder that all  
is temporal. That make-up must be reapplied.  
Just such immersion  
in giving us pleasure—  
lying in each brilliant cocoon.



**k.** | Mona Nicole Sfeir

*Kite — (\*) In naval mine warfare, a device which when towed, submerges and planes at a predetermined level without sideways displacement.<sup>1</sup>*

EVOLVE SPECIES:

Crawl it out of water and fill its lungs with oxygen  
begin: inhale exhale inhale exhale inhale exhale stop

REVERSE ACTION:

Force it in water and empty its lungs from oxygen  
begin: do not inhale do not inhale do not inhale stop

NOTE:

[In order to best inform  
future medical judgments  
and recommendations,  
it is important  
that every application  
of the waterboard  
be thoroughly documented:

how long each application  
(and the entire procedure)  
lasted,

how much water was used  
in the process (realizing that  
much splashes off),

how exactly the water was applied,  
if a seal was achieved,  
if the naso- or oropharynx was filled,  
what sort of volume was expelled,  
how long was the break  
between applications,  
and how the subject  
looked  
between each treatment.]<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> US Department of Defense's *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (October 17, 2007)

<sup>2</sup> CIA's Office of Medical Services (OMS) guidelines for waterboarding.

**r.**

*Rainfall (nuclear) — The water that is precipitated from the base surge clouds after an underwater burst of a nuclear weapon. This rain is radioactive and presents an important secondary effect of such a burst.*<sup>1</sup>

The thing<sup>2</sup> is molded and lavishly primped  
situated carefully in a lovely locale  
with exotic natives.

Hello Gauguin  
come paint our mango breasts  
and pink the trees in tropical heat.

Then splinter it into a secondary sun  
orbiting underwater between the flash  
of fish scales sung in high C

sending up a cloud of astonishment  
at our ability to part water and make rain  
the fish multiplied into little bits and pieces.

<sup>1</sup> US Department of Defense's *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (October 17, 2007)

<sup>2</sup> From 1960 to 1996, France carried out 210 nuclear tests, 17 in the Algerian Sahara and 193 in French Polynesia in the South Pacific. De-classified papers show that the plutonium fall-out from South Pacific tests of 60s and 70s was kept hidden. On 17 July 1974, a test exposed Tahiti to 500 times the maximum allowed level of plutonium fallout. Between 1946 and 1958, 23 nuclear devices were detonated by the United States at seven test sites in the Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands. The US has now spent almost \$2 billion dollars in compensation and clean up efforts but a 2016 article in *Science News* reported that the radiation levels remained higher than the recommended safe levels for habitation. In the five decades between

1945 and 1996, over 2,000 nuclear tests were carried out all over the world.

From the Center of Disease Control (CDC) website:

**About Global Fallout**

Before 1963, the United States and other countries conducted more than 500 nuclear weapons tests in the atmosphere. During these tests, radioactive particles and gases were spread in the atmosphere. Depending on the size and type of weapon that was exploded, some of these particles and gases traveled great distances before falling to earth (called fallout) where people could be exposed to the radiation. Radioactive fallout was deposited all over the world, so many people were exposed to it. Even today, radioactive fallout is present in all parts of the world in small amounts. CDC and NCI, in their study of global fallout, looked only at fallout in the contiguous United States (the 48 states between Canada and Mexico). The study found that any person living in the contiguous United States since 1951 has been exposed to some radioactive fallout, and all of a person's organs and tissues have received some exposure.

## *Kanta ti Ulila* | Ilokano Folk Song

Simpuonek nga irugi  
Tay pinagbiagmi nakakaasi  
Anaknak ti maysa nga pobre  
Nga naipalpalais ditoy ili.

Ubingak nga maladaga  
Binilbilinnak daydi nana,  
Anakko agsingsingpetka  
Ket innakon sabali nga daga.

*Orphan's Song* | Translated by Verna Zafra-Kasala

I remember how our lives  
Began in sorrow, driven  
Away by the crowds. We,  
the children of poverty.

So young and innocent,  
Mama bade me farewell:  
Be good, my child,  
I leave for another land.

*Ti Ayat ti Maysa nga Ubing* | Ilokano Folk song

Ti ayat ti maysa nga ubing  
Nasamsam-it ngem hasmin  
Kasla sabong nga apag-ukrad  
Iti bulan ti Abril.

Ti ayat ti maysa nga lakay  
Aglalo no agkabaw  
Napait, napait,  
Napait nga makasubkar.

Anansata aya O Lelong  
Agsapulka iti balo  
Nga kapadpad ta ubanmo  
Ken dayta tuppolmo.

Ta bay-am a panunuoten  
Ti ayat ti maysa nga ubing  
Aglalo, aglalo  
No adda makinaywanen

## *The Love of Youth* | Verna Zafra-Kasala

The love of youth  
Is sweeter than jasmine,  
Fragrant flowers that bloom  
In the heart of April.

But the love of old men,  
Of poor, forgetful souls,  
Is bitter, bitter, bitter  
Like bile.

That is why, O Grandfather,  
Search for a widow  
With the same gray head  
And missing teeth as you

Leave behind the dream  
Of youthful bliss,  
Even more, even more  
If someone already loves you.



**George Abraham** | (they/he) is a Palestinian-American Poet, Activist, and Engineering PhD Candidate at Harvard University. His chapbook, *al youm: for yesterday & her inherited traumas*, was a winner of the Atlas Review's 2016 chapbook contest. His poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *Vinyl*, *Apogee*, *Thrush*, *Kweli*, *Tinderbox Poetry Journal*, *Winter Tangerine*, and anthologies such as *Bettering American Poetry 2016*, *Nepantla*, and the *Ghassan Kanafani Palestinian Literature Anthology*.

**Cathy Barber's** | work has been published in *Slant*, *SLAB*, *Kestrel*, and many other journals. She has an MA in English from California State University, Hayward and an MFA from the Vermont College of Fine Arts. She taught for many years with California Poets in the Schools. Having now returned 'home' to Ohio, she serves on the board of Literary Cleveland.

**Jennifer Celestin** | is a writer, performer, and facilitator. She received her B.A. from Wesleyan University, an M.A. in Humanities at NYU and an M.F.A. in Fiction at CUNY: Queens College. An EMERGENYC performance fellow and a three-time attendee of the National Book Foundation's Writing Camps, Jennifer's work has been featured in *Label Me Latino/a* and *Akashicbooks.com*. She is presently working on a novel and knows ou kebab leer esto.

**Jovica Tasevski – Eternijan** | (b. 1976, Skopje) is a renowned poet, literary critic and essayist from the Republic of Macedonia. He has published six full-length poetry collections and two books of criticism and essays. Eternijan received The Enchanting Poet award for excellent contribution in poetry writing, given by *The Enchanting Verses Literary Review*. His work has been published in numerous literary magazines and anthologies both in Macedonia and abroad; in addition it has been translated into more than fifteen languages. The poems of Jovica Tasevski-Eternijan are characterized by original imagery, rich figurative language, and multilayered meanings; they spring from a powerful poetic imagination.

**Matt Ito** | is an M.A. student with the English Department at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. His interests include settler studies, postcolonial literature and theory, and Pacific literature. When he isn't reading or writing, you can usually find him fishing or playing music around town at a number of local bars/clubs.

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**Juliet S. Kono** | is the author of two poetry collections, *Hilo Rains* and *Tsunami Years*; a collection of short stories, *Ho'olulu Park and the Pepsodent Smile*; and a children's book, *The Bravest 'Opihi*. She co-authored two books of rensi (linked poetry), *No Choice but to Follow* and *What We Must Remember*, both initially online writing projects. She has appeared in many anthologies and collections and is the recipient of several awards. Several of her poems are featured on the Poetry Foundation website. She is retired and lives with her husband in Honolulu.

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**Eric Paul Shaffer** | is author of six poetry books, including *A Million-Dollar Bill*; *Lāhaina Noon*; *Portable Planet*; and *Living at the Monastery, Working in the Kitchen*. More than 450 of his poems appear in reviews in Australia, Canada, England, Ireland, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Scotland, Wales, and the USA. Shaffer lives on O'ahu and teaches composition, literature, and creative writing at Honolulu Community College.

**Judith Skillman's** | new book is *Kafka's Shadow*, Deerbrook Editions. Her work has appeared in *Zyzzyva*, *Sewanee Review*, *Tampa Review*, *FIELD*, and elsewhere. Awards include an Eric Mathieu King Fund grant from the Academy of American Poets. She is the author of sixteen collections of poetry, and a 'how to': *Broken Lines—The Art & Craft of Poetry*. Skillman has previously done collaborative translations from French, Portuguese, and Italian. Visit [www.judithskillman.com](http://www.judithskillman.com)

**Aya Summers** | Deep in the forest belly, dancing barefoot to the breath of green or somewhere in the blue, spinning with the wild dolphins - that's where you can find Aya, if she wants to be found that is. Poetry distills her alien experiences into human terms. She writes to enter inner space because, frankly, she's traveled through outer space for as long as she can remember.

**Verna Zafra-Kasala** | The granddaughter of Filipino immigrants, Verna Zafra-Kasala grew up learning Ilokano from her Inang and Tatay; she dedicates the translations of these folksongs to their memory. Some of Verna's work has been published in *Grub Street*, *Minerva Rising*, and *Tayo Literary Magazine*. She lives and teaches in the Pacific island of Guam with her husband.



# Kumu & Kupuna

Hawai'i Review 87

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LynleyShimat Renée Lys



# HAWAII REVIEW 87



# CONJUNCTION

Hawai'i Review '87



# CONJUNCTION

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## Springtime 1

*Linda Ravenswood*

When I was a child  
I fervently worshipped  
the tiger inside my  
mouth;  
parted lips, geographic  
tongue, all Indus Valley—  
til my mother thrashed  
me in the green grass  
and smashed me in the  
cradle, screaming  
'wake up brown bitch, it's  
spring.'  
So I scrubbed my  
knuckles red as brown  
could be  
red, which is pretty red,  
and saw that I was  
passing.  
At the bus stop in  
Century City, I stood  
relieved,  
but little by little, my hips  
and breasts throbbed  
golden brown,  
and everyone on the  
block called  
'gimme some'; even the  
older girls  
pushed me down, their  
breath on my lashes,  
looking to me sweet as  
they could.  
Little did I know the  
female gaze  
and her right desire —

I was in my loops—  
barbie and the  
jacaranda—  
so I kept my knees closed,  
though an ocean was  
jetting through.  
And there my mother saw  
me  
swollen, doing cartwheels  
on her Mayflowers in  
the front garden.  
So she clobbered,  
'get a better bra for those  
pendulous breasts'  
as still I was too round for  
her spring.  
She put up a bounty that  
said  
'drop the brown you're  
packing on,  
and all this will be yours',  
and glued the recipe  
inside my eyelids.  
But I woke up round as  
ever —  
and she was gone.  
Had you seen the tiger  
inside my mouth,  
you would've worshipped  
too. Finally,  
I inked up my eyebrows  
and came fully to the  
Mendieta,  
and the tiger lives on.

## Huaka'i a Lehua

Serena Michel

The night was still in Wai'anae moku. All was silent in the valley of Lualualei. No tree stirred, and the water along the valley's shoreline lapped softly against the sand and sizzled lightly on its way back into the ocean. Ulehawa Stream was smooth and flat, and the moon could see her reflection on its surface. With a mahina poepoe, the kinolau of Māui was defined along the ridgeline of Palikea and Pu'u Heleakalā. The stars were clear and many. The night sky was fully awake. Its stillness was ever-present and deeply felt. And then a cry ripped through the air.

It came from the first hale along Ulehawa Stream, just across from the shore. The natural world seemed to shift and respond with the cry. The waves clapped gently louder, and the moon and stars radiated faintly brighter. The cry had been so sudden, it was incomprehensible with the sound of the water receding from the shore. But then the environment returned to its natural state, the atmosphere became calm again, and the cry was distinct. It was the cry of a newborn child.

---

She was beautiful.

Rosalina Gomez looked into the face of her wailing newborn baby girl. Rosa lifted her child to her face and nestled her nose in the curve of her tiny neck. She inhaled—her heart aching at the scent of her baby's skin. A joy filled her heart like nothing else ever did for her. She whispered, "I love you." Placing her forefinger beneath her daughter's small hand, the tiny fingers clutched and held on. It was then she stopped crying.

After nursing her daughter, Rosa held her close to her chest. She was still in awe of the beauty she held in her hands. As she stared deeper into her baby's face, etching every detail of it beneath her fingertips, the ache in her heart rose to her eyes. Tears streamed down her face. *You've gotta stop, Rosa...for her sake.* She dozed off to sleep, her child still holding tightly to her finger.

---

Three weeks passed, and Rosa could no longer take it. Her daughter had colic and screamed for a few hours at a time. Her heart raced heavily and her hands began to shake as she put her baby down on the mattress, too close to the edge. Her thoughts ran wild, and she needed the thing that would calm her mind. Rosa rummaged through her possessions—the little that she owned. Her heart and head pounded as the baby’s screams grew louder. *Where is it?! Where is it?!* She threw her things around furiously. Her fist clutched a pile of clothes, and she threw it behind her. Then she heard the thud.

Rosa paused and turned. The baby continued to scream, but she ran to the pile, splitting the clothes apart rapidly. And there was the small tin box. Rosa slowly reached towards it, and placed it in her hands. *You said you’d stop, Rosa. Put it down. She’ll stop crying.* Just then the baby screamed her loudest, and Rosa ignored her inner thoughts and opened the lid of the tin box. There was the lighter, the pipe, and a small amount of white powder. She stared at the items before her, but her daughter shrieked, again. She poured the contents in the palm of her hand, their touch all too familiar in her memory.

Rosa dropped the powder into the bulb of the pipe. She put the tube end into her mouth and grabbed the lighter. *Stop, Rosa. You said you’d stop.* She let out a shuddered cry between her teeth that bit down on the tube—her overbearing exhaustion leaving her helpless. She began to shiver, her hands still shaking. The baby screamed a higher pitch. Rosa ignited the lighter. *STOP, ROSA, STOP! Again the baby screamed. STOP, ROSA!* The baby howled breathless cries. *ROSA, PLEASE!* The baby wailed. *ROSA, NO!* Scream. *ROSA!* Blood-curdling scream. *ROSA STO—*

Rosa’s head had filled with the substance. Her inner thoughts silenced. She felt an ease. Took another hit. Ease. Took another hit. Mind shut down. Took another hit. Dozed off to sleep. The baby had stopped screaming.

When she awoke and came back to her senses, Rosa’s mind was foggy. She tried to remember what happened. The silence of the night was extremely acute. She looked around the room and her eyes rested on the mattress, then traveled left. She caught a tiny hand resting on the floor. Her mind suddenly cleared. *My baby!*

She ran over and knelt next to the tiny body. Her breaths became shortened as her heart began to pound again, but this time in the silence. She picked her daughter up and tears filled her eyes. *Are you breathing? Are you breathing, baby?!* Her child's eyes were sealed shut, but the color was present in her cheeks. Rosa placed her ear to the child's chest and heard the faint *thump-thump*. Holding the baby tightly to her chest, Rosa gave a full cry of relief—tears and moans combined with the alleviation of her panicking heart. However, no matter how many tears she shed, they could not stop the anxiousness within—it never ceased. As she lay her child gently on the mattress, she was left to her thoughts and herself.

Rosa stared at her reflection through the glass window, looking out to the shore that marked the edge of Lualualei. She felt dirty, and her soul cringed. She looked at her baby girl sleeping soundly on the mattress, made her way over to her, and placed her hand flat on her back. *Still breathing.* Rosa walked outside and looked up to the sky. It was a full moon and the stars were many. The night sky was fully awake. Its silence was ever-present and the stillness was deeply-felt.\*

\*Story continues in *HR Online*: [Hawaiiireview.org](http://Hawaiiireview.org)

## Cherry

*Andre Bagoo*

Like the time I ate lipstick and mom thought this child crazy. She was always like the sea. Angry, swallowing people who just wanted a little dip. Beware of water, she would warn me, citing my widow's peak. The barber asked me if I normally shaved it off. I said no. He said okay. Then he looked at me. Then he looked at me in the mirror looking at him looking at me in the mirror looking at him and said he was going to take it all away. I swore he was Frank Ocean and when he started to sing songs later on I fell unto the tiled floor. He swept mother right out of me. She said I would die of fire.

## Muliwai

*Kapena Landgraf*

I never made it out to where my father waited for the sets. I was simply too afraid. The shore of Hakalau valley offers no shallow areas. There, you swim in the depths; torrent waters so abysmal an overcast sky could tint the waves black. I chose to bodysurf the smaller waves that made their way past the sandbar and into the wide portion of the Hakalau river. Moving between these waters, your skin can feel the shifting of the ocean current against the river's flow; warm pockets of salted ocean pierced by a chilling rush of wai. Below the surface, the washing of tiny pebbles at the river bottom seemed to be the only other sound mixing with the rolling waves.

"Muliwai," Dad informed as we sat on the sea wall. It was all that remained of the old sugar mill. "As where you always swim...where the water mix. As what the Hawaiians call 'um; muliwai."

"Good fun, over there."

"Different." Dad wiped a grain of rice from his beard.

"Can go out with you next week, see if I make 'um."

"Nah. Ride the muliwai. You was always in between like that." Dad finished chewing the last bite of his spam. "Ocean not for everyone."

As I took another sip of water from my thermos, a hand-me-down from Dad that still tasted like coffee, a mustard yellow Nissan pickup emerged from the brush on the opposite side of the valley. The driver poked his head out the window, carefully watching his front wheel as he thread between two boulders blocking access to the sandbar and shore.

I looked over to my dad, thinking he would be gesturing or shouting at what we were seeing. He offered nothing but silence, his mouth busily enjoying a fresh tangerine from our front yard.

On the shore, the Nissan did a U-turn and reversed to the end of the sandbar. The driver emerged from the cab wearing an old Merry Monarch t-shirt, the sleeves torn off, a faded maroon surf-short, and "Locals" slippers. He reached into the bed of the truck and removed a shovel.



After thirty minutes, the man looked weary. The Nissan had begun to squat under the weight of the sand, but Dad continued to keep to himself. Eventually, the man tossed the shovel into the pickup and climbed back into the driver's seat.

"Watch this," Dad said, breaking his long silence.

The yellow Nissan moved a few inches before the rear tires dug into the sand. The man tried reversing, the transmission grinding between gears, but no matter the direction, the Nissan only buried itself deeper.

Dad turned to me with a smile. "We go." Before I could gather my things, the man in the Nissan shouted to us from across the river.

"Cuz! Can help?" He called over the roaring waves made louder by a rising tide. The man held up a thick rope he had removed from behind the driver seat.

Dad motioned with his hand to 'wait.'

"Come," he said, walking toward our truck.

At the other side of the river, Dad tied the man's rope to the Nissan's front bumper, the other end to the ball-hitch. The man watched Dad skillfully tighten the knots with his calloused fingers.

"Need help?" I asked through the sliding rear window. Dad shook his head. The man with the Nissan looked at me and smiled.

"Your dad get 'um, eh?"

I nodded, then looked out at the surf to avoid his gaze.

After two or three tugs, the Nissan still refused to move.

"Gotta take out some sand. Too heavy for pull," my dad called from the cab of our truck as he peered into his side-view mirror. Fifteen minutes later, half the sand was back on the shore. Dad shoved the shifter into gear and carefully eased-off the clutch, but the Nissan wouldn't budge. The tide had brought the waves to our wheels.

"More. Quick!" my dad called back to the Nissan. The man poked his hand out the driver's window and gave a thumbs-up, as if to say, 'roger that.'

A few minutes later and the Nissan was nearly empty. You could hear the man scraping the nose of the shovel on the bare truck bed. As the man struggled to unload the larger

stones, my dad hopped out of the driver's seat, quietly walked to the back of our truck, and knelt behind the tailgate. I could hear his fingers working, and soon the rope between the two trucks went limp. Dad got back in, quietly closing the driver's door beside him.

"Okay!" the man called from behind. He had climbed back into the Nissan and started the engine. Dad put the truck in gear and quickly let out the clutch, spinning the rear wheels and showering the Nissan with sand and pebbles. We continued up the shore, off the sandbar and back onto the rutted road leading out of the valley.

I peered through the passenger side-view mirror, bending forward slightly so as to see the man standing beside his open driver's door, gesturing to us a double bird.

As we continued home, Dad finally asked, "What you thinking? Feel bad?"

I shrugged my shoulders, offering a slight frown.

He grinned, one corner of his mouth higher than the other. "You was always in between like that."

## Lost in Translation: Han

*Soo Young Yun*

*Han* is always changing colors. On some days it has crimson hair of the sun rising in the east, on others blond frays riped gold with feisty candlelight. Still on others its skin holds the bronze sheen of young girls with sore thighs and stolen childhoods. On some days *Han* claims its spirit animal is the medallion tiger, scorched with ebony stripes—on others, a snowy rabbit, one of those clever ones that have whispered into the ears of emperors for centuries. People think *Han* has a nasty temper and complains far too much, but *Han* thinks its tantrums are justified. *Han* detests the rising sun with a passion—has had its soul burnt and raped to the core by its flames.

*Han* has been diagnosed with multiple personality disorder for some sixty-seven years now. It's becoming more difficult to keep count. *Han* is sometimes kind and intelligent and sweet like bean rice cakes filled with honey; other times, it's cruel and isolated and irrational and hurt, tense and ready to flick a lit match at a gasoline-drenched world. On an uneventful day, though, *Han* is polite, quiet, and passive aggressive. *Han* is afraid it'll never function as a normal person again. But there is something that still connects its shards—as thin as the space in between barbed wire, but a link nonetheless.

*Han* does not die. To say it is immortal would be a misstatement; *Han* still ages and has more scars and wrinkles and blood clots layered above more scars and wrinkles and blood clots. Some of its bones are still broken, are still mangled and mending through decades and centuries. People marvel at *Han's* resilience, but often forget that *Han* exists out of necessity, as a mechanism to respond to the constant tribulations that hurtle its way. That's why *Han* holds history textbooks close to its heart; it feels a fiery desire to record everything, to hold others accountable, and, as *Han* would so loftily put it, ensure better lives for posterity.

*Han* has suffered much, surely. But it has also seen goodness, in itself and in others. Perhaps this is why *Han* is an idealist at heart. All the burns and wounds have calcified *Han's* spirit— or rather, its hardness has given *Han* a new sense of invincibility, of courage. As of now, *Han* cannot—and will not—die anytime soon.



## **Gender Documentation**

*MaryV Benoit*

For the past five months now, I've been creating a full documentation of the process Chella Man, the person I'm in love with, is currently experiencing. They are a genderqueer individual, transitioning on testosterone to gain a more masculine appearance.

Throughout this documentation, I have been focusing on capturing intimate and major moments in our relationship through a collection of photographs and letters to them.

In the documentation the letters are the biggest part of me. The letters show my perspective of the process. The moments shown in the photographs let the viewer into my perspective of the transition; however, it also connects the viewer to the photo by adding my personal narrations. I chose letters to better capture my memories of these significant moments because anytime I felt a pull to document my thoughts I did at any moment.

In the end, this will leave me with a plethora of letters to see how my emotions changed throughout the documentation process. A goal right now during this process, is to get as many people to see this, especially people in the queer community. I would love for many to view this documentation, to know they are not alone.

The documentation is perpetual; my only end goal is to have a large archive for the public and Chella to see this beautiful process from my eyes, as I am the person in love with them.



July 9, 2017

our apartment @ 4:50

dear Chella,

you asked me to try changing  
your pronouns. to also say  
boyfriend.

of course, do it in a heart  
felt. just always want you  
to feel comfortable. feel you.

I just got out of the shower.  
Beppe I got in I was showing you  
the gallery in england ~~that~~

you said thank you for changing  
from pronouns when I talked  
to my mom. I looked at you and  
said "Chella, im so in love with  
you."

I am.

I stepped out of the shower the  
door was cracked, I look out to  
see you painting on the ground of  
our beautiful bright flooded apartment.  
you looked up and smiled so  
sweet at me.

I defanitly am.

Mary V Bennett



Dear Chella,

July 15 2017

You have your 'American Boys' shoot tomorrow , you keep saying how excited you are for that, I'm super excited for you!

I'm going back to when I have to be really careful & sensitive about how & when I touch you. It's hard to do so. I just want to kiss you five million times. But. I can't. I can't. I have to be painteince. I am. I never want to make you feel uncomfortable or dysphoric.

I miss you.

We are in the same bed. Both up.

Where are you going? Do you want to be here? Where would you rather be?

Kinda hard to not think your doing something wrong.

Should I not touch you I'm confused.

MV



Dear Chella,

June 29th, 2017  
Q train to work

I just had to rush out of the apartment after you did your first testosterone shot. I'm so proud of you. I could cry. I'm not letting myself on the train because then I won't be prepared for work.

I'm so happy for you! All I wanted to do was just hold you for a bit after your first shot.

Your mom, who is a doctor, taught you the correct way to give yourself the testosterone shot. You had reported a video to show this process. I documented the first shot as well. I wanted to tell your mom how much she will be changing in the world.

Your mom and you will be teaching the correct and safe way on how to give yourself the shot.

This video will be so important because she is educating you and others that will watch this video.

Truly incredible.

I'm so sorry I can't be with you at the moment. You need me. I need you. Tired. Drained.

Now, I have to put on a show at work. Work my ass off. I'll probably be on cash tonight.

I will read you this letter because I want you to hear ~~everything~~ everything I had to say.

after this monumental moment happens.  
You will be changing now. It starts  
today, angel. Your ~~new~~ body starts today.  
Creating yourself starts today.

I am here even when I'm not there.

I can't wait for you to be in my arms  
with test stones going throughout  
your body. So beautiful.  
Truly so beautiful.

On my list of one of the most powerful  
things I've ever witnessed.

I love you so much.  
Give me your hands.

Mary V Benoit





## **Brown Breast**

*Ashia Ajani*

Downtown I saw two brown girls holding hands  
Lips split with laughter  
The kind that softens the edges of this world  
And bleeds color through and through

I wonder where they got that power  
What outstretched palm beckoned them towards truth  
I am still reckoning with my own  
Five years and counting

Our story is one of forgetting, of relearning, of taking lye  
soap to mouth, of colonization, of missionary work  
beating the queer, the “deviant”, the magic out of our  
wild flesh.

There are untamed tongues everywhere  
Even in blood, I see language, history  
That outstretched palm lending ancestral healing  
An ancient kind of medicine

All I want in this world  
Is someone to love all this brownness  
All this woman, this fluidity  
A brown breast pressed against my own

## Fibromyalgia, Me, and Doris Lee

Jay Thompson

Because of my grandma, I feel more beautiful.

\*

Aunt Denise looks at me like she's about to say something important. *Your grandma looks like the talking Willow tree in the movie Pocahontas right now, doesn't she?* I study Grandma's face then agree. The wrinkles that deepened over the course of my lifetime are suddenly missing. Her skin is smoother than mine and surprisingly taut. Over the next few hours, her features sharpen further, the smallest lines disappear, and her face looks distinctly like something carved from tree. It is fascinating, but not beautiful.

We're in a nursing home in Galesburg, Illinois right after Christmas. I am thirty-one. My grandma, Doris Lee Thompson, is dying what they call a "natural" death. Hospice gives her painkillers to knock her out then we wait for "the body" to starve, dehydrate, and shut itself down, organ by organ. She makes a loud noise called "the death rattle"—the result of accumulated saliva in the throat and lungs due to an inability to swallow—and then stops breathing.

It takes her three days to die.

\*

I'm thirteen, 5'9 due to a recent vertical growth spurt, and still only 100 pounds. Many people I meet annoyingly ask, "Do you play basketball?" Answer: I do, but I'm not very good, so it's a sore subject.

My parents and brother and I leave our home in Elgin, a northwest suburb of Chicago, and drive to Galesburg to celebrate Christmas with the Thompson family. My grandma and aunts lose it when they see me. *You need to model! The whole family will be rich! Can we give you a makeover? No, Carol, thirteen is not too young for your daughter to wear makeup!*



Once I'm back home in Elgin, I check out books on modeling from Gail Borden Public Library. I start following the instructions to stand up straighter, do sit-ups, drink lots of water, and walk around with a book on my head. I convince my mom to take head and body shots for me to send to agencies. I put on a pink and white plaid romper—chosen because it has a collar, which, one book pointed out, can hide a neck that juts forward too much like I now think mine does—and shorts short enough to show off my long legs. I also wear a string of my mom's pearls in an attempt to be fashionable.

When my mom picks up the developed photos a week later, I am humiliated. They are hideous and show a too-skinny girl with limp hair and a huge nose. I search for the beauty my relatives claimed to see and find nothing. I decide they were simply boosting my self-esteem during an obviously awkward phase and resign myself to the idea that I'll never model.

\*

I'm a twenty-six-year-old graduate student living inside the City of Chicago, no longer in the suburb of my childhood. Although the physical distance is less than fifty miles, the difference in lifestyle is striking. The bright lights, big crowds, noisy trains, and variety of smells wear on me. I develop "transformed migraine." That means my pulsating migraine headaches come more and more often until I have a headache always, even in my sleep.

Some of my migraines are preceded by "aura," at which time I partially or entirely lose my vision. Some migraines make me vomit. One time I faint, falling in the kitchen, bruising my knees, my head missing the radiator by an inch. Only a few things provide relief. Cold helps a little, so I often fall asleep with a bag of frozen peas on my forehead. Sometimes, when no one is around, I pull my hair as hard as I can and that alleviates the pain. When I don't have a migraine, I have a tension headache that feels like a too-tight headband. It is a relief.

I move back to Elgin to escape the bright lights, loud sounds, and strong smells of the city, and am fortunate enough to get a job working from home. A more relaxed schedule and time spent in quiet helps and soon, my migraines are gone. However, almost as soon as my head stops pounding regularly, I begin having pain elsewhere. My chest spasms, my back aches, and when I try to do regular tasks like turn a doorknob, I feel arthritic. A rheumatologist diagnoses me with fibromyalgia. He lightly pushes “tender spots” on my body and the touch causes me to yell out in pain. He shakes his head and tells me fibromyalgia has no known cause or cure, and that once people have it, they generally have it for life.

I feel like I’m nursing a hangover every day, even though I’ve quit drinking. I hate how my body feels and, in turn, hate how it looks. Ironically, almost every time I mention my pain to others they respond with, *But you look fine!* I know they mean well, but it feels like they are saying, *But you’re a liar!*

\*

I’m twenty-nine. After fine-tuning almost every aspect of my lifestyle, my fibromyalgia symptoms have eased up. Now that I am doing better, I feel more comfortable discussing it with others.

My parents and brother and I are back in Galesburg, celebrating Christmas. When family offers me chocolate—something I now try to avoid—I casually say, *I have to be careful about what I eat because I have fibromyalgia and migraine.* My grandma and my Aunt Diane freeze and stare. Later, they each come to me on their own and say essentially the same thing: *I have fibromyalgia, too. I’m so sorry. I can’t believe it happened to you so young.*

I’m angry. Why didn’t anyone tell me? Why did I have to feel so alone when there were two wonderful women who could’ve related to my suffering and given me advice? I cry in bed that night when it dawns on me—they were silent about their symptoms for the same reason I had been silent. They were used to being disbelieved, to being treated like hypochondriacs.

After I stop crying, I fall asleep happy. I now have strong evidence that my pain isn't fake, that it isn't "in my head." Fibromyalgia is a genetic disorder and I've just uncovered a three-generation link.

\*

We visit Grandma in the nursing home for the first time. She's had a stroke and lives there now. Her mind is sharp, but her body is weak on one side. What it comes down to is that she can't wipe her butt, and when you can't wipe your butt, you can't live independently. My grandpa will soon join her in his own room down the hall and around the corner, not because he needs to, but because he doesn't want them to be separated.

As my family catches up in the nursing home, I comment that I'm not doing so well financially. I have many unpaid student loans. My grandmother and aunts raise their voices. *We have no sympathy for you! You could be rich from modeling, but you refuse!*

My grandma and Aunt Diane urge me to repeat aloud, that *I, Jessica Anne Thompson, promise I will actively pursue modeling.* I'm not 13 years old any more; I'm 30 years old. I don't weigh 100 pounds any more; I weigh 150 pounds. I cave into their pressure and make the promise.

\*

We visit Grandma in the nursing home. It's the last time we'll see her lucid, talking, and smiling before she dies.

I hand her my modeling comp card. It is only postcard-sized because that is what the free coupon code I had offered, but she doesn't know about industry standards. I designed the card. It looks amateurish and the photo resolution is poor. She doesn't notice any of that. She is wearing red lipstick and her nails are polished red. These stand out as she flips the comp card over and over in her hands. As she looks at photos of me in a pink and white striped bathing suit on a sandy beach, me wearing a hot pink wig with matching lipstick, and me sitting in an old fashioned hair dryer with curlers in and cigarette in hand she opens her mouth to say, *Wow, Beautiful, and I told you so!*

Grandma cheers, thinking her advice worked and my money woes are over because I'm now a professional, full-time model. I don't correct her. I don't mention that I'm a struggling freelance writer who "creates content," blogs for businesses, and manages Facebook accounts. It doesn't matter. Over the past year, I kept my promise and pursued modeling in my spare time. I walked down runways in about a dozen fashion shows and did twice as many photoshoots. Most paid little to nothing, and in many instances I was the model with the token "real woman's body" they like to throw in for diversity of size. It doesn't matter. To her, I am a superstar.

What I don't tell her is that although I pursued modeling as a gift to her before her death, it had the surprising effect of boosting my confidence and making me feel beautiful. I was able to see my looks change drastically many times through makeup and clothes. I realized that we generally think celebrities are more attractive than we are only because we usually see them done up and posed, not because they genuinely possess something everyone else is missing. I ignored my fear of walking down a runway and looking like a fraud and did it anyway. I eventually decided I truly *am* a model, not just someone pretending to be one, because I say I am, and because I am modeling. I am beautiful because I say I am, too. I don't need anyone's approval.

\*

My parents and brother and I are in Galesburg for Doris Lee's wake, funeral, and burial. My father, aunts, and uncles stand in line just past the casket and shake hands with visitors after they look at "the body."

The skin on my grandma's face is loose again, and she no longer resembles a wood carving. She wears makeup. Whoever applied it did a good job of approximating how she used to do it herself, red lipstick and all. She is beautiful.

**when a metaphor grows up it wants to be you**

*Kris Tammer*

sitting there rubbing your middle eye  
you don't realise yr fingering evolution

performing psycho-spiritual acts with  
god just scratching yr head  
while I unwittingly take part in this  
threesome

you could join S to an echo and  
become a snake  
or calculate the molecular weight of  
Shiva

you're an overgrown question mark  
throwing everything up in the air  
expecting me to catch porcelain  
answers before they break

you've fallen into one of the  
archaeological pits I dug in my head  
in an effort to find a lost civilization of  
thought

now yr trying to escape from the  
wordless city  
within that civilization where the signs  
are not legible

I caught myself cheating on you with  
my lesser half  
I called it off because I don't do things  
in halves

when we fight, somewhere a circus is  
in tatters  
a hunchback haunches further over and  
capsizes the world

when I open my heart the sun rises  
which is eclipsed by the moon when  
you blink

we will give birth to a new genderless  
race  
or uninvent the halfling taboo

it's humbling / exhilarating / terrifying  
to know you don't mean anything  
to anyone else in the world except me

## Heritage Poem

*Veronica Sefic*

I am a Sefic girl  
A, concoction of different swatches of paint on the bedroom walls,  
girl  
I'm a carve out your own tongue before you use it to spread  
anything other than your own heart, girl

I'm a Sefic girl  
A, carbon cut out of my mother, girl  
A, white streak passed down through the women before, joining  
the legacy though every hair, girl  
A, I'm thinking about dying it, girl  
I'm a break through all the walls in front of me, I'm beating them  
down with my fist but the bricks are starting to look like noses  
and I can't tell the difference, girl

I'm trying to be a Sefic woman but the name is toxic  
Drowning in expectations, I feel it slipping into my throat  
I'm trying to explain why I can't get the words out but I'm starting  
to sink to the bottom  
I'm begging for air, but no one is trying to save me  
We are prone to cold sores so their lips find my forehead instead

I'm a Sefic girl  
A, learn for yourself before you ask for help, girl  
A, ask for help and get nothing in return, girl  
A, I'm beginning to stop asking for help, girl

A, masks shrouding my face with full teeth smiles and laugh lines,  
girl  
A, interchange of fairy wings to frilly dresses, girl  
A, adapt to the presence of puberty, girl  
A, adapt to losing everything else, girl

Peeling off masks becomes harder when you never take them off,  
when you live in it, sleep in it  
I'm trying to peel it all off but years of identities are getting stuck  
under my nails and I'm scared to wash them out  
When you taught me to spell my name, knowing who you are  
slipped your mind

I'm a Sefic girl

A, find your own meaning for the name girl

A, you're more than a 5 letter word could ever stand for, girl

A, if you let it define you, you're not a Sefic, girl

A, still wondering who is the person inhabiting mom jeans and art  
socks, girl

I'm a Sefic girl

I wear it with pride

Writing every vowel on the name tags smiling

I watch myself grow with the evolution of handwriting

Trying to get everything down in a fury of erase marks and  
scratches of lead

Writing myself a title I scream out every chance I can

I will respond to Sefic and only if it is in front of woman.



## Fee on the Stars

*no baker*

There's something in camping that is quite freeing. I'm not referring to the well-manicured trails and designated tent sites politely paginated. I'm not referring to the buffered sound of people laughing nearby, car radios sputtering out the neighbors' favorite country ballads, an overly friendly camp Ranger circling in periodic rounds to bridle drunkenness and litter while simultaneously verifying that everyone utilizing the campgrounds has paid nominally for their tight enclave. I am not speaking on that sort of distant camaraderie.

I am speaking of a dense loneliness, which differs from a sanctioned adventure. The things that I am speaking on involve uneven ground and a buildup of organic materials softly duffing and rotting, things that will snare at your feet if you walk too certainly, lower branches that try for your eyes if you watch the ground too carefully, needles and sticks that pinch upwards at your back through the thin plastic of your tent floor. I am speaking about the soul of nowhere.

And there are real stars out there. Real stars that come about, finely guttering in the brittle atmosphere, and there is none of that light pollution diffusing rudely from nearby towns. There's no fee on the stars. Things are silent except for sporadic animal mutterings and the coyote is high royalty. Wherever are the wolves? Have they been relegated to sound bytes?

There's something quite freeing about sidling up to a tree and urinating at will. There's something quite comforting in knowing that no one will come whether you suddenly need them or suddenly don't need them. There's no reception, just a clear sightline if you traverse upwards to a good thin altitude. The quiet diagnostics happen in all that space and the disease of art unwillingly slips from your grasp. In there, you can really glimpse how well culture is aligned with poverty.

## **MaryV's Letters to Chella Man Transcribed:**

*July 9, 2017*

*our apartment @ 4:50*

*dear Chella,*

*you asked me to try changing your pronouns. to also say boyfriend.*

*of course, do it in a heart beat. just always want you to feel comfortable. feel you.*

*I just got out of the shower. before I got in I was showing you the gallery in england but you said thank you for changing your pronouns when I talked to my mom. I looked at you and said "Chella, im so in love with you."*

*I am.*

*I stepped out of the shower the door was cracked, I looked out to see you painting on the ground of our breautiful light flooded apartment. you looked up and smiled so sweet at me.*

*I definitely am.*

*MaryV Benoit*

*Dear Chella,*

*June 29th, 2017*

*Q train to work*

*I just had to rush out of the apartment after you did your first Testosterone shot. Im so proud of you. I could cry. Im not letting myself on the train because then I wont be prepared for work.*

*Im so happy for you! all I wanted to do was just hold you in bed after your first shot.*

*Your mom, who is a doctor, taught you the correct way to give yourself the testosterone shot. You had recored a video to show this process. I documented the first shot as well.*

*I wanted to tell your mom how much she will be changing in the world.*

*Your mom and you will be teaching the correct and safe way on how to give yourself the shot.*

*This video will be so important because she is educating you and others that will watch this video.*

*Truly incredible.*

*Im so very sorry I cant be with you at the moment.*

*You need me. I need you. Tired. Drained.*

*Now, I have to put on a show at work.  
Work my ass off. I'll probably be on cash  
tonight.*

*I mite read you this letter because I want  
you to hear everything I had to say  
after this monumental moment happened.  
You will be changing now. It starts today,  
angel. Your new body starts today.  
Creating yourself starts today.*

*I am here even when Im not there.*

*I cant wait for you to be in my arms  
with testosterone going through out  
your body. So beautiful.  
Truly so beautiful.*

*On my list of one of the most powerful  
things Ive ever witnessed.*

*I love you so much.  
Give me your hands.*

*MaryV Benoit*

# Artist Bios

**Ashia Ajani** is a junior environmental studies major from Denver, Colorado. She is the co-president of WORD: Spoken Word at Yale. She is a Minor Disturbance, Youth Poetry alumni. She was awarded honorable mention in poetry for the 2015 National Young Arts. She is currently working on a personal chapbook.

**Andre Bago**: Trinidadian poet Andre Bago's third book, *Pitch Lake*, is published by Peepal Tree Press. His work has appeared at *Boston Review*, *Caribbean Review of Books*, *Cincinnati Review*, *St Petersburg Review*, *Moko*, *The Poetry Review*, and elsewhere.

**nv baker** is a writer of short stories, essays, and poetry. An avid scribbler, he is inspired by the resulting confusion of existing as a stymie tethered between the imagined and the rendered. nv baker is a graduate of UC Denver in the summa cum laude tradition. You can find his work in *The Fourth River: Tributaries*, *J Journal*, *The Crab Creek Review*, *Juked*, *Weber: The Contemporary West*, *Fence*, *The Roanoke Review*, and many other publications. nbakerv@gmail.com - twitter.com/nv\_baker

**MaryV Benoit** is 19 years old and currently living in Brooklyn, New York.

She was born and raised in Denver, Colorado. MaryV went to Denver School of the Arts for Stagecraft and Design where she began to photograph her friends and the teenage life she was experiencing. Now, she studied Photography at Parsons The New School. MaryV is creating art, collaborating, learning new things, and in love.

Her work encompasses topics such as self love, self identity, memories, and romantic/intimate love through portraiture photography. She works with analog and digital photography. Also uses her skills from Stagecraft and is experimenting with video, photographs on clothing, performance, and dance.

This year she will be having her first Solo Show at gallery Space 776 and having some of her current 'Gender Documentation' work shown in a gallery in Manchester, England. MaryV is very excited for these experiences.

She hopes her works make you feel something special.

**Kapena Landgraf** was born and raised on Hawai'i Island along the Hamākua coast. He currently studies creative writing as a graduate student at UH - Mānoa where he also teaches composition and literature courses. He's also interested in Native Hawaiian literature and Hawai'i's local literature scene. Kapena has published short stories with *Hawai'i Review*, *Bamboo Ridge Press*, *Red Ink: International Journal of Indigenous Literature, Art, and Humanities*, and *IKA Journal*.

**Serena Michel** is a student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa pursuing a double-major in English and Pacific Island Studies. She desires to become a writer for Oceania and the Caribbean, making connections between both regions' histories and diasporas. Michel employs cultural approaches to deconstruct the ideology of "blackness" in her work, while also advocating non-indigenous peoples embracing indigenous perspectives on national, international, and global issues.

**Linda Ravenswood** is a Poet and Performance Artist from Los Angeles. She was short listed for Poet Laureate of L.A. in 2017. Current projects include new versions from *Subtle Inquiries* at Rockhaven; and a Poetry Residency at The Natural History Museum L.A. | website: [lindaravenswood.com](http://lindaravenswood.com)

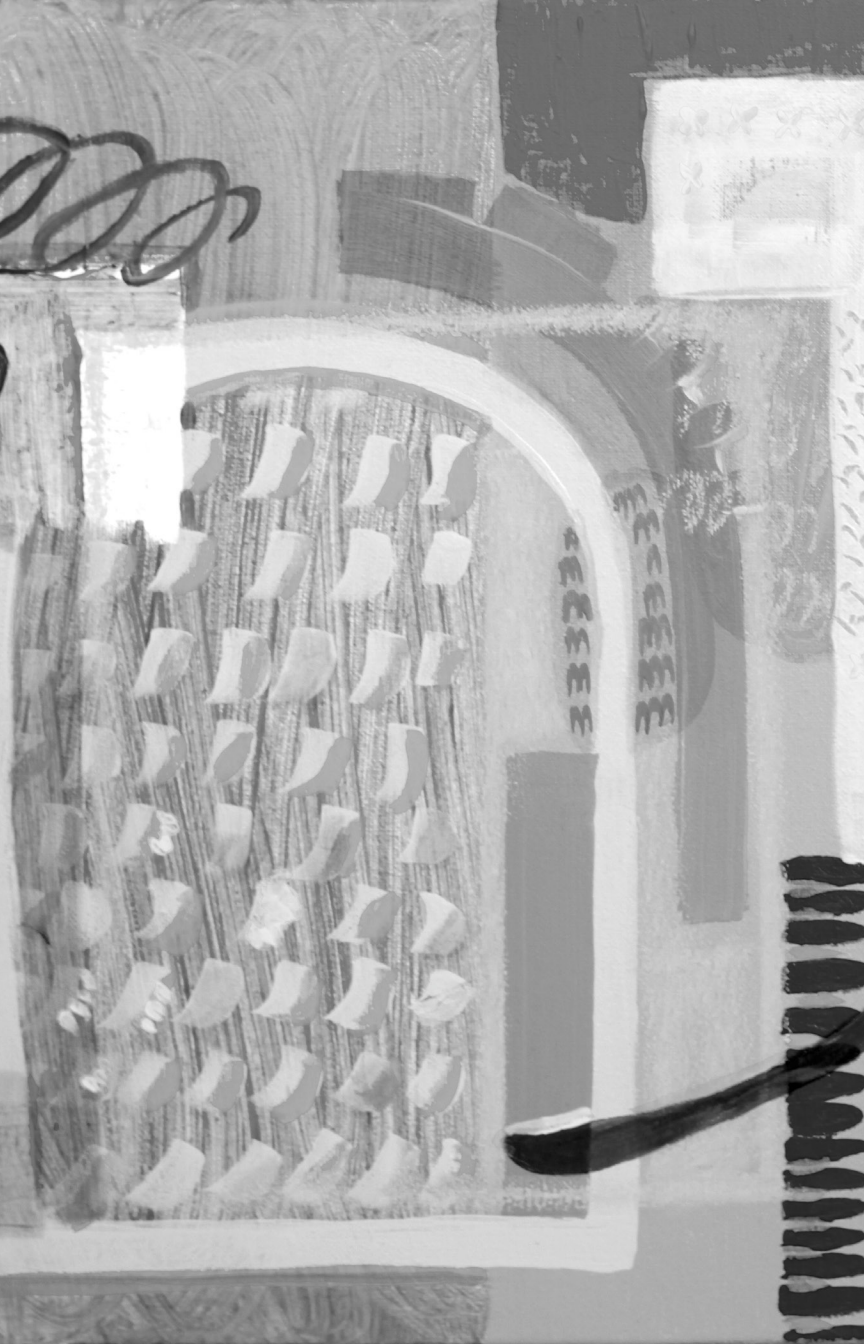
**Veronica Sefic:** Veronica Sefic is a creator, writer, and editor from Denver, Colorado. She is studying at Knox College. She belongs to a multitude of communities— including the queer and the artistic community within Denver. She was the editor-and-chief of *Serendipity Magazine* and created after school clubs that push the creation of poetry. She is best known for her intimate work that is centric to her family dynamic and her introverted tendencies.

**Kris Tammer:** escape artist from Melbourne Australia currently trying to escape the country without leaving.

**Ayaka Takao:** Collecting unloved and forgotten material, Ayaka Takao attempts to join disparate worlds of the high and low to mobilize empathy in our increasingly lukewarm culture. Born in 1996 in Kitakyushu-shi, Japan, she immigrated to Honolulu, Hawai'i at the age of four, residing there until embarking to receive a BFA at the Maryland Institute College of Art. Though most times unintentional, her cultural genes are the dust of her work, while also unconsciously responding to trauma that had shaped her into a maker in the first place. Exploring the friction between cultural other and America, she hopes to give a home to those who feel misplaced.

**Jay Thompson:** Thompson is a Chicagoan living in Florida. She writes fiction and creative nonfiction, and co-founded *weirderary*, an online literary magazine, and First Draft, a monthly live literary event in Tampa. Her writing has been published in *marieclaire.com*, *Proximity*, *Luna Luna Magazine*, *LimeHawk*, *theEEEL*, and *Chicago Literati*.

**Soo Young Yun:** Soo Young Yun is a student living in Seoul, South Korea and has been recognized by the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, Origami Poems Project, Ann Arbor District Library, and Writing for Peace. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Aerie International*, *Burningword Literary Journal*, *DUENDE*, *Emerald Coast Review*, *Hawai'i Review*, *Skipping Stones Magazine*, among other journals and anthologies.







# Hawai'i Review 87

## The Dark...The Twisted

A collection of wonderfully wicked poems that send chills down the spine and remind us of the realities of life. That the light can be a harsh taskmaster and that not everything that grows in gloom is sinful.





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# Forward

“Every culture has stories that shape and reshape the senses. Love, betrayal, a howl in the night, a midnight stroll through the woods or a simple warning...whether it’s an old tale or a new twist share your poetry with us... we’re waiting...”(prompt).

I have a great fascination with the dark side of human nature. I thrill in the suspense of the unknown, the feeling that something is watching me...craving, and that I might not make it to the dawn.

It is the need for survival in every human being that creates our fighting spirit in the face of the inevitable. Do we challenge the ghosts of our pasts, seek revenge on all who did us wrong, or let the voices rage... “rage against the dying of the light”(Dylan Thomas)?

Sáshily Kling



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## Shades by Holly Day

When her husband disappeared, it was easy  
to imagine he'd been stolen. First, by another woman  
someone younger, some pale sylph  
with dark, wild eyes and long black hair  
or perhaps an older woman far richer than she would  
ever be  
who promised a world he had only dreamed existed—  
The wife without a husband railed against  
these phantom women.

Later, when no explanatory letter surfaced in the mail  
no muffled apologies came by way of telephone  
the phantom women grew ominous, sprouted  
sharp, jagged fingernails on their long white fingers  
vampire teeth and rusted switchblades.  
She began to wait for ransom notes to appear  
slipped into the mailbox after the regular delivery  
tucked under her pillow by mysterious hands.

It was almost a relief when the police found his body wrapped around the bridge footings under the ice. Married friends who had avoided her thinking she'd been abandoned crept out of the shadows to offer condolences bearing casseroles and foil-wrapped pies as though they could replace the emptiness left with comfort food, as though they sincerely believed that food could comfort. "It's all right," she'd say to these friends quietly through the tears, the perfect, grieving widow. "At least now I know where he is."



## Piggies by Jorge Mendez

She looks just like her  
she looks just like Celia.  
They all look just like Celia.  
long dark hair  
bright happy eyes  
framed in spectacles  
so  
so  
Pretty.

They're all the same  
the pretty girls  
pretty little girls  
with pretty eyes  
and pretty round little mouths for  
telling pretty little lies  
Just like Celia.

I was 15 when we dissected  
fetal pigs in science class.  
I remember reading somewhere  
that pig flesh reacts most  
like a humans.  
I marveled at how the skin

peeled apart for me  
under my scalpel  
like a silent zipper  
revealing the pretty piggy insides  
telling me their truths.  
I kept a few of the bones.  
I took them home and boiled  
the meat off them  
then tucked them away  
in a cedar box I kept hidden  
behind my bed post.

This is where it all started.

Mr. Artrip seemed disturbed  
at my insistence  
for another class dissection.  
I eventually stopped asking  
and began collecting road kill.  
squirrels and rabbits mostly,  
sometimes a raccoon.  
once I even found a small dog  
but most of his insides  
were already on the outside,  
his truth spilled carelessly  
all over the pavement.

I took them all home.

One by one

I examined their pretty organs

their pretty pink insides

telling me their secrets

I wanted so badly to preserve

those truths.

I suppose

this could have led

to a more socially acceptable

pass time like Taxidermy

or biology

but it didn't.

it led to people

it lead to Celia

I knew she was keeping something from me

I knew she was keeping something on the

inside

And it drove me mad not knowing.

The not knowing  
turned into curiosity  
turned into thirst  
turned into hunger  
turned into craving  
turned into my hands tight around her throat  
squeezing the truth from her  
as the tears welled up thick and heavy  
snot and saliva  
spewed helplessly from her face  
every gurgle and choke  
made me feel more and more alive  
and I'd never seen  
her look more beautiful  
Than when she struggled.  
They all struggle  
to no end  
its an exercise in futility  
I find it insulting really.

but they all eventually...  
...Acquiesce.

When her pupils dilated  
I unzipped her chest  
so I could see

what she was keeping from me and  
there it was.  
Her truth,  
there all for me  
like a prize  
I'd worked so hard for.

Her lungs  
were gorgeous.  
Pink and young  
I imagined how many times  
she must have filled them with  
the breath of her deceit,  
her belly still full with  
every morsel of pride  
she forced herself to swallow,  
i found my trust  
buried and jaundiced  
in her liver,  
on her heart  
i saw a name  
but it was not my own  
still her insides were  
So pretty.  
bloody and  
Real and

moist and  
honest  
And  
So  
So  
pretty.

Celia was the first.  
They say,  
you never forget your first.  
I've lost count how many  
there've been since her  
and I'm beginning  
to run out of room  
in the crawl space  
to hide my truth in

but she looks just like her.  
She looks just like Celia  
and I'm curious  
what she may look like  
on the inside.

## **Pediophobia by Jorge Mendez**

Every night  
Before bed  
I read her a story,  
Tuck her in,  
Turn off the lights,  
and say goodnight.

My friends say  
I should stop this.  
That it isn't healthy.  
That she isn't real.  
That she's made of plastic.  
That she's only a doll.

And I know this,  
But she doesn't.





## Dispatches from the Abandoned House by Kathryn Merwin

Matilda was born, hand balled  
into a fist. Her arms were small as swollen  
plums, eyes black-currant, simmerin  
glow. The trees lifted and stretched

west, until she pierced the skin of morning  
with her glass  
teeth. The wind blared through the barn,  
doors blasting  
open, as the sky purpled  
above the cornfields. I knew she would be

more air than earth. There was a voice,  
whispering  
over the hills, between the pumpkins,  
under the roots, against my back. She was  
a dewy fruit plucked from the brambles,  
her head

a red berry, leaping through leaves. I  
whispered  
quiet prayers in her ears. I listened, she l  
istened: the house  
stayed still. *There are ghosts in these walls,*  
she says,

five years later, blooming and pale. Her petals fall

in piles at her feet. Her heart ripens and breathes. She flickers in the darkness. She raises one hand to the wall: *listen,*

*can't you hear them?* The ghosts inhale, exhale. The ghosts sigh into her palms. We wander the halls of the abandoned house, counting spiders as they dangle from water-silk threads. They lift and quiver

in the balmy air, shuffling currents pulsing, electric with our energy. She counts, *one, two, three, cat-faced, black-widow, orb-weaver. Four, five, six, there's a whispering in your head.*

Once, she turned inside me, pressed her small palm to the floor of my lung. A voice, distant as a train whistle, breathed, *listen, can't you hear them?*

## From a Pile of Bones by Lisa Grove

Pull one without disturbing the others.  
That was the magician's first trick, from his dinner

theater days. The whistle from the bird factory  
signals an end to the night shift, and I think of him

as I pack up my collection of eyeglasses  
and stained tupperware. You join me at the bus stop.

Coffee leaks from my cup onto the tabloid pages between us,  
forming the outline of a new country that only we inhabit,

where our eyelids droop but never close,  
and we place bets on our trickster hearts, which one will

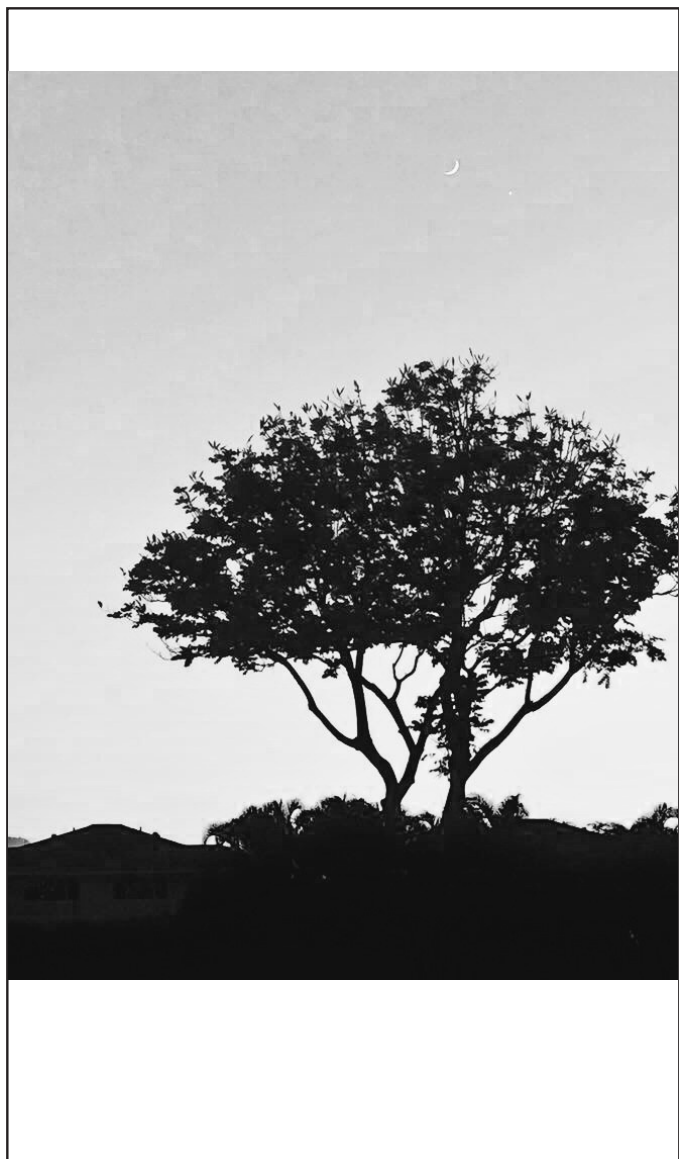
look away first. Yours, I'm sure, but I bet on my own.  
I remember the magician,

pulling my mother's long, blonde hair from his sleeve  
before he sawed her in half for the last time.

*Look at the moon, I say, returning home from his shift.  
It's day now, do you think he is lost?*

*Nomads don't get lost, you say, They're always pretending  
that being alone is the same thing as being home.*

I flick my wrist—a storm cloud breaks into a conspiracy of ravens.  
I pull a stray feather from under my tongue. *Ta-da.*



## TIME CAPSULE by Derek Otsuji

Of the original graduating class present  
at the 50th Anniversary  
of Molokai High, one would return to the 75th,  
to the very spot in the schoolyard  
where grass wove over the scar, and unlocking  
the sealed box, page through old clipped headlines,  
sedimented like geologic time, till, uncovering  
a photograph—its time-snagged still already  
redolent with nostalgia of the young  
the moment of their knowing youth is gone  
—he paused, called each absent schoolmate by name,  
down to the last—Richard Otsuji, 92,  
former quarterback of the football team,  
surviving member, class of '42.

## **THE SURVIVORS**

**by Krikor Der Hohannesian**

Of those who weren't shot  
straight off in their homes  
or left hanging like rag dolls  
in town squares, some  
stuffed brooches, pendants, gold  
fillings into body crevices, others  
a family portrait, a wedding picture  
scrolled under threadbare sashes or,  
for the more practical, larder scraps  
to last the march for who knew  
how long to come face to face  
with the ground upon which God spat.

No use the grains of wisdom  
panned from the placer of centuries  
in Ottoman millets – not worth  
spit, not with the blood of your blood  
sluicing the mud-rutted streets. So,

my children, I would have  
no story to tell if Haip Nazar  
hadn't escaped the bloody  
clutch of Enver Pasha and  
Talaat Bey. From the refuge

of America, it is left to you  
to hold those birthplaces with  
strange names, to pass on the tales  
of those whose histories survive  
only as faces in grainy sepias or a gold  
ring engraved with a name, a date.

## Dying Soldier by Scott T. Starbuck

cries  
then laughs

as spirit departs  
uniform

in recognition  
of life defending

a castle  
that doesn't exist

in this new  
more-real land,

and what's worse,  
never existed.





## PTSD by Hurricane

The last time I found God was in the click of a helmet chin strap, the moment between when my body finally registered what my brain had meant when it said..to brace for impact.

I saw Allah, in the shrapnel of that day no bunker could cover. It's funny the things they don't teach you about detonations.. how they are more than just explosions... how the hate stays ringing in your ears long after the shock waves have passed. And their message is loud and clear.

The day I met the mortar, was like the day I fell in love  
I didn't see it coming...

... and it blew me

away.

It made it over the wall of our defenses,  
lodged  
into the Heart of the Welcome Center. A  
smooth rocks skip from where I stand now.  
It stood up as if to say this is my seat  
where is your ticket?

But this, this was no movie.  
No director to yell cut, no Academy  
award-winning actor to convey the Strife  
they know nothing about.  
And I will pray to any and all Gods that will  
listen...

that I am forever grateful for whatever  
defuse the hate which allows me to speak  
to you today

Cause believe me when I tell you  
that that bomb should have leveled more  
than just heads.

And I should not be here for you to hear  
this poem.

That the only Pros about war is this Pros  
that I'm writing

But you came back with all your limbs  
they say,  
you have no scar to show.

Well PTSD does not manifest itself physically.  
By the time you finally tell someone you're  
hurting..

Or why you can't sleep with the doors open-  
...it just might let the truth in.

Or by the time you hear a poet..who knows  
NOTHING of battlefield. .say it feels like a  
soldier coming home...?

I want to SLAP THAT METAPHOR OUT HIS  
MOTHER FUCKING MOUTH.

## **YOU KNOW NOTHING OF WAR.**

They say here take this pill swallow it  
with your pride.

Make sure to water the place where fear  
grows.

And when they asked me the last time I've  
been to church- I tell them the last time I  
found God was on the other end of this pen  
writing this poem.

And you have the audacity to ask me  
if I've ever killed

Yes.

I look in the mirror every goddamn day.

## The Virgin Mary Burns a Self-Portrait in Toast by Anna Ralls

I imagine the churches, their  
pageants, their individual respective  
marys, wearing blue  
atop pale skin. I pulled this strip  
of barbed wire out of my bare heel  
after a walk across the lawn. I tap it  
with my finger, and chip away  
another crumb. I think  
of these midwestern marys, so  
very new, like crisp corn. Maybe a strand  
of hair peeks out from a white head covering,  
and it's blonde, always blonde, or maybe  
with a touch of strawberry,  
like that willowy girl in Missouri who  
at sixteen is cast  
as Mary for Christmas while her older sister,  
two inches shorter,  
thirty-five pounds heavier,  
with auburn hair kept pixie cut,  
picks with her fingernails at a wart on her  
right thumb.

I laugh, imagining them,  
as I twist the wire,  
burn my face darker  
into coarse bread.

**Holly Day** has taught writing classes at the Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, since 2000. Her poetry has recently appeared in *Tampa Review*, *SLAB*, and *Gargoyle*, and her published books include *Walking Twin Cities*, *Music Theory for Dummies*, and *Ugly Girl*.

**Jorge Mendez** is the standing host of Hampton Roads' longest running open mic at 10 years: "Monday Night Open Mics at the Venue" in Norfolk, VA. He started writing poetry as a child, later putting the skill he gained as a page writer into Hip-Hop format releasing 3 independent albums on UKNODACREW Productions. Later returning to his poetry roots he began exploring "Spoken Word". In March of 2016 Jorge published a book of his works titled *Keys & Crowbars* released on San Francisco Bay Press.

**Kathryn Merwin** is a native of Washington, D.C. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Prairie Schooner*, *Natural Bridge*, *Blackbird*, and *Sugar House Review*, among others. She has been awarded the Nancy D. Hargrove Editors' Prize for Poetry, the Blue Earth Review Annual Poetry Prize, and nominated for a Pushcart Prize. She is currently pursuing her MFA at Western Washington University and serving as poetry editor for the Bellingham Review.

**Lisa Grove** is the host of the Poetry.LA interview series *A Poem By*. Her poems and translations have appeared in *Poetry*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *The Puritan*, and elsewhere. She lives in Los Angeles.

**Derek Otsuji** teaches at the Honolulu Community College. His works appear or are forthcoming in *Atlanta Review*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Monarch Review*, *Poet Lore*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Salamander*, *Silk Road Review*, and *Sycamore Review*.

**Krikor Der Hohannesian** lives in Medford, MA. His poems have been thrice-nominated for a Pushcart prize and have appeared in many literary journals including *The Evansville Review*, *The South Carolina Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *Louisiana Literature*, *Connecticut Review*, *Natural Bridge* and *Comstock Review*. He is the author of two chapbooks, *Ghosts and Whispers* (Finishing Line Press, 2010) and *Refuge in the Shadows* (Cervena Barva Press, 2013). *Ghosts and Whispers* was a finalist for the Mass Book awards poetry category in 2011.

**Scott T. Starbuck's** book of climate change poems, *Hawk on Wire*, was selected by Newspages.com as a July 12th, 2017 "Editor's Pick" along with *The Collected Stories of Ray*



*Bradbury*. The Yale Center for Environmental Communication's *Climate Connections* will distribute an interview about Starbuck's book to more than 340 radio stations and online via podcast and internet radio. His ecoblog *Trees, Fish, and Dreams* is at [riverseek.blogspot.com](http://riverseek.blogspot.com)

**Hurricane** is a caffeine dependent life form who as of today is living and creating out of Virginia. She has been writing since her heart was first broken and recently entered the realm of competition poetry where she is currently ranked at 78th in the world. She fights terrorism by day and poems by night. Her hobbies include: breakfast, lunch, and dinner...as well as memes and mimosas!

**Anna D. Ralls** is an emerging poet from Columbia, Missouri. Her other works have appeared or are forthcoming in *Colorado Review* and others. She lives in Bloomington, IN with her husband.





# THE MAIDAN AFTER HOURS

Vasyl  
Lozynsky

Translated from Ukrainian  
by Ostap Kin & Ali Kinsella

# The Maidan After Hours

Vasyl Lozynsky

Translated from Ukrainian  
by Ostap Kin & Ali Kinsella

Photographs by Sasha Kurmaz





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## A Note On Vasyl Lozynsky and His Poetry

Vasyl Lozynsky, poet, translator and essayist, has been considered by Ukrainian critics to be a wordsmith, primarily belonging to the leftist poetry camp. The questions surrounding leftist poetry, that is, of content, existence, origin, and its current state within the contemporary literary process in Ukraine, are all timely and large. However, I shall not provide an exhaustive answer for it now; rather, I am limiting myself to the statement that the voice of present leftist poetry is somewhat quiet but, thankfully, not silenced, and that Lozynsky represents this in his own, unique way.

The roots of Lozynsky's poetry come from the generation known as *heneratsiia nuliovykh*—the generation of two thousand nulls, a generation of poets who began to be published through the 2000s and were born predominantly in the 1980s during the last decade of the Soviet Union, and whose raising was intertwined with the Ukrainian quest for independence. The 2000s generation is a logical and consistent continuation of the generations of poets in Ukraine that represented, respectively, the 1960s, the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 2010s. Each of the aforementioned decades consists of a relatively numerous group of poets that started their respective literary careers in that exact decade, and in general each decade more or less had an atmosphere—both political, literary and aesthetical—that caused them to differ in appearance. What is characteristic for Lozynsky as well is that he has never been a part of or affiliated closely with any literary groups, which for many decades—if not centuries—might have been the case for the Ukrainian literati.

Born in the city of Lviv—which has been known for centuries as a cradle for poets of many different languages (the most renowned would probably be Zbigniew Herbert

and Adam Zagajewski in Polish poetry; Deborah Fogel in Yiddish; and Ihor Bohdan Antonych in Ukrainian)—Lozynsky opts in his poems for the verse libre, a literary form intensively used in Ukrainian poetry in the 1920-1930s and which was resurrected, after decades of non-use, in the 1980s, and since then has become more or less used on a regular basis in Ukrainian literary tradition. The corpus of Lozynsky's poems in this collection and the remaining poetry he produces is a continuation of what might also be a personal significant impact of contemporary German-language poetic tradition as well as roots linked with the Polish poetry of the 20th century. Here it must be noted that Lozynsky translates both from German and Polish into Ukrainian; he translated extensive corpuses of poetry by Ron Winkler and Uljana Wolf from German, and of Tadeusz Dąbrowski from Polish.

In the poem "1991", a prose-like narrative about the year Ukraine gained its independence, composed as a somewhat graphically cinema-like panorama of the-then rural life with the lyrical character's though-provoking, if not shameful, recollection of the event that took place in the past. The following section is composed of the verses written during the EuroMaidan Revolution in the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv, in the winter of 2013-2014, that later became known in the world media as the revolution on Maidan, the main square in the city.

As a curator and an art lover, the debut collection of Lozynsky's poems appeared as an art book whose cover consisted of pieces of pages cut out of glamour magazines and were published in a sort of *samizdat* way. It should be noted here that the second collection—or the first full-length collection, *Other Country*—appeared in an edition with conceptually interesting illustrations. Thus, visual art is a crucial addition to Lozynsky's poetical oeuvre. The poem "Untitled (A Loud Title)," named in a



way artists of the 20th century would title the whole selection of their works, has a subtitle "Hymn" and might serve as a poised springboard for the newest generation of artists living in *that* part of the world, or in any other: "Who are we? A community that embraces / Generations and youngsters displeased with / The White Cube; we call to gather on the streets." The poem also mixes with a similarly-themed poem "Hans Ulrich Obrist's secretary..." in which the lyrical character deliberates on a non-existent exhibition, which should serve as a means through which one could move from one place to another: "a non-existent exhibition / for which I'd receive an invitation from H.U.O. / to apply for a visa" and "the invitation will be written / between the lines / of this exhibition."

A museum, finally, is a safe location, a place where "it's comfortable, and there's time to reflect" in a shelter for deliberations during a time of unrest ("Radio Liberty's website is broadcasting..."). It is also a place where a lyrical character, being far away—to use Milosz's words—from the "native realm", has been able to meditate on his thoughts while his people are going through a period of dreadful events. This is a direct link to the events that occurred during the 2013-2014 revolution in Ukraine. Curiously enough, there is a continuation of poetical depiction of the revolutionary events in later poems written, judging only from the poem's title, after the end of one phase of the revolution and about its gradual move, or rather serious escalation, to another phase: "the troops guard their naked king, and we're going / to the revolution as if to our jobs. / it's almost impossible to work, or do anything else" ("The Maidan After Hours").

Elaborating on Lozynsky's urban depictions, it is fair to state that the elements of the city's—or to be more correct—cities' daily life features significant scenery which contributes, at large, to the construction of very vivid

city-related images within his poems. A subway (where a poem is written in complete darkness), a local and frequently visited hotspot (a bar), a space in the gallery, a museum or the museums, an unnamed nightclub, and skyscrapers are vital images of the city's décor. Of particular interest is the poet's take on the city of New York, which the author visited, and the wordplay about the city, or rather about one of its significant images—a skyscraper—and its linkage to an image from the Bible. At first, the author writes "the beam in my eye is a huge skyscraper" which, in the end, is replaced with a coda-like statement that "the grain of sand in my eye is not a beam." The other point of interest during the encounter with the city of New York is the openness of the city and the author's absolute freedom in the depiction. The portrayal of New York in the works of Ukrainian poets that appeared in the post-1991 period differs tremendously from that written by Soviet Ukrainian poets, as well as from émigré poets living in the very city. The poetical corpus has become stripped of ideological clichés on one hand, and melancholic deliberations of the emigre poets on the other.

Vasyl Lozynsky's oeuvre is an example of the poems composed by a very attentive observant of daily events as well as by someone who is not an indifferent thinker. His style offers constant fluidity, a sense of change that hints at a poet in a persistent quest for an ideal, or at least the most suitable form for his experience, his observation, his *now*.

*Ostap Kin*

*Brooklyn, New York  
August 2017*





1991

Візьмімо звичайне село у цей рік,  
яке пізніше стає унікальним  
у наших спогадах про дитинство  
там звичайний на той час сільський клуб,  
де крутять кіно і фільми з Брус Лі  
по відіку. Ще там проходили вибори, абсурдний  
ритуал у фойє, стояли різнобарвні кабінки,  
червоні і сині – дійство було таке ж таємне  
як і дискотека. Кабінки були самі по собі –  
туди ринув народ. Наступного дня на дверях  
сільського магазину продовольчих товарів  
опублікували результати референдуму:  
двоє було проти від'єднання  
країни від Союзу братніх народів.  
Всі називали їхнє прізвище, немісцевої  
російськомовної сім'ї ветеринарів або фельдшерів  
і тепер у пам'яті, дошка оголошень здається  
дошкою ганьби, зрештою, не було війни  
і дарованому коню у зуби не дивляться.

1991

Let's take an ordinary village in this year,  
which will later become unique  
in our recollections about childhood.  
There's an ordinary—for that time—village club  
where they screen films about Bruce Lee  
on a VCR. The elections were also held there—  
an absurdist ritual in the lobby; colorful booths,  
red and blue, were set up; this act was as mysterious  
as the disco. The booths were spread out,  
people scurried inside. The results of referendum  
were published the next day on the door  
of the village store that sold foodstuffs:  
two people were against the country's  
separating from the Union of fraternal nations.  
Everyone repeated their last name, that re-settled family  
of Russian-speaking paramedics or vets,  
and now in my memory the announcement board  
is a board of shame yet actually, no war broke out  
and you shouldn't look a gift horse in the mouth.

\* \* \*

Транслюють штурм на Банковій  
у лайф-режимі на сторінці Радіо Свобода,  
коментатор у азарті, рахує жертв  
по обидві сторони, немов пропущені м'ячі.  
От і журналісти сьогодні самі як футболісти  
або судді бігають по полі  
бою, що важать їхні коментарі?  
Хто тоді глядачі? Раненим надають  
першу допомогу. Я згадую про музей  
і втікаю туди, закриваю комп'ютер.

Там комфортно і є час, щоб подумати,  
десь там мої ручка і папір.

\*\*\*

Radio Liberty's website is broadcasting  
the attack on Bankova Street live;  
the agitated commentator is counting victims  
on both sides like goals scored. Today  
reporters run around the field of  
battle like players or referees,  
what is the significance of their comments?  
Who are their viewers after all? The wounded  
receive first aid. I remember a museum  
and flee to it; I close my laptop.

It's comfortable there, and there's time to reflect.  
My pen and paper are there somewhere.





## Олів'є на Майдані

У новорічну ніч на Майдані,  
під стелою, ми роздавали  
олів'є, і не був це фестиваль  
кулінарний, але кожен приніс  
своє, не на продаж, а з обов'язку.  
Салат потрапив в Москву завдяки  
винаходу французького кухаря Олів'є.  
А російський салат на Євромайдані  
мав ситуативну мету і Леся-  
художниця збудувала соціальну  
скульптуру: кожен почастував  
своїм усіх охочих з натовпу.  
Відкоркувала пляшку ігристого  
вина і налила спочатку  
тому, хто охороняв безпечний «вхід»  
на кухню, і ми вітались навзаєм  
під шумовиння феєричного,  
ненасильницького протесту.

## Olivier Salad at the Maidan

On New Year's Eve at the Maidan,  
we're passing out Olivier salad under  
the obelisk, and there wouldn't be  
this culinary festival, but we all brought  
our own not to sell, but out of an obligation.  
The salad appeared in Moscow as  
the invention of French chef, Olivier.  
But the Russian salad on the EuroMaidan  
had its contextual purpose: Lesia,  
the artist, constructed a social  
sculpture: everyone fed salad to  
anyone in the crowd who wanted it.  
She corked a bottle of sparkling  
wine and poured the first the one who  
guarded the safety "entrance"  
to the kitchen and we greeted  
each other amid the effervescence  
of the dazzling, nonviolent crowd.

## Фейсконтрол

*вірш написаний в темряві*

пишу цей вірш у повній темряві  
бо мені приспичило... в вагоні  
видно лиш обриси блокноту  
та відчутно м'який папір та олівець.  
але суті це не міняє. невідомо  
скільки вдасться розшифрувати.  
треба б ще редактора. нехай  
називається фейсконтрол.  
як той, що на вході у клуби  
і той раз як мене не впустили.  
щось, що доведене до автоматизму.  
метафора в часі. метафора,  
яка, сподіваюся, не зітреться  
з лиця вірша, хоча схожа на  
макіяж чи грим як у кіно та театрі.

22. I. 2014

## Face Control

*a poem written in complete darkness*

I'm writing this poem in complete darkness  
for I had an urge... in the train car  
only the outline of my notebook is visible  
and the soft paper and pencil are palpable.  
but this doesn't change the essence.  
it's unknown how much will be decipherable.  
the poem also needs an editor. let's  
call it face control.  
like the one at the entrance to clubs  
and that one time I wasn't let in.  
something taken all the way to automatism.  
a metaphor in time. a metaphor  
which I hope won't be evanesced  
from the face of the poem, although it looks like  
make-up or face-paint in the movies or theater.

January 22, 2014

maidan afterhours

не можливо нічого описати, з того, що відбувається, все немов уперше, з часу наших дідів та прадідів. військо стереже голого короля, а ми ходимо на революцію як на роботу. майже не можливо працювати, робити щось іще.

але так насправді ми не перестали працювати, це те, про що нам всім ідеться, треба придумати статую на місце, де стояв Ленін або написати листа у німецьке видавництво про авторські права на Еріха Фріда.

нічого нема неоднозначного та ефективного що б спрацювало у сфері культури та гуманітарної допомоги. голова Єврокомісії говорить, що українці знають, що та і як. Європа тепер як ті посилки старих речей, вміст яких дешевший ніж саме пересилання.

треба нарешті публікувати, не лише пересилати милій або поширювати у мережі напевне хтось прочитає за межами гетто, опісля або на чергуванні вночі і вдень або підчас надзвичайного стану, чи зможемо іще писати після роботи у революційний час?

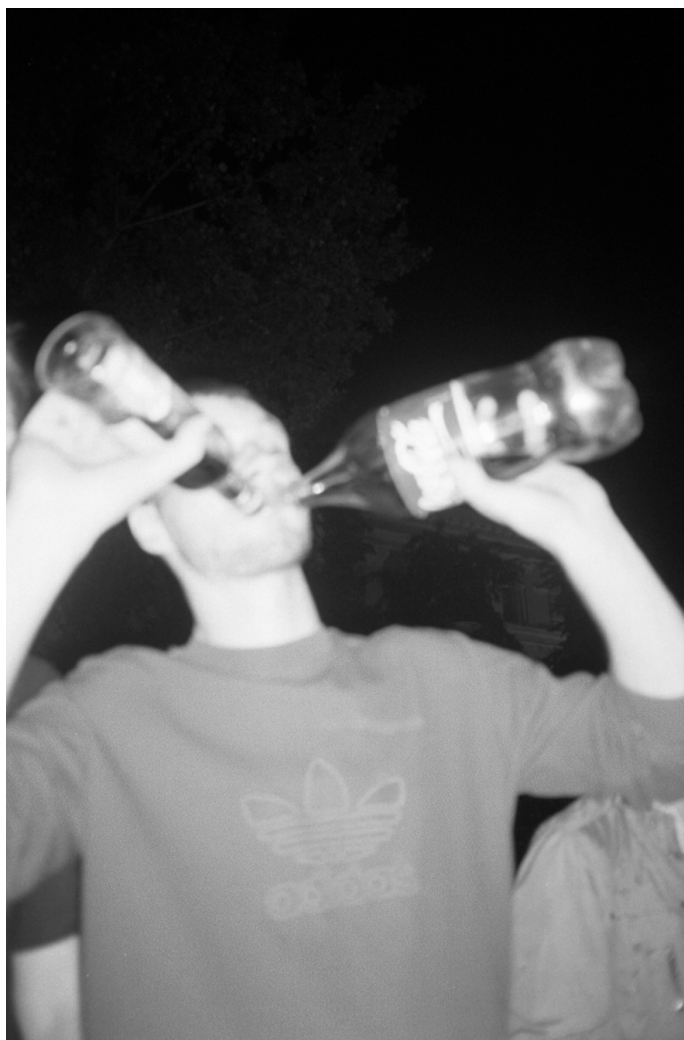
## The Maidan After Hours

it's impossible to write about what's happening. everything like for the first time since our grandfathers and great-grandfathers. the troops guard their naked king, and we're going to the revolution as if to our jobs. it's almost impossible to work, or do anything else.

but we actually haven't stopped working, and the fact is that we all need to come up with a new statue for the place where Lenin stood, or to write a letter to a German publishing house about a copyright for Erich Fried.

there's nothing ambiguous or efficient that would work in the sphere of culture and humanitarian aid. the head of the EU Commission says that Ukrainians know what to do. Europe is now like those packages of old things whose contents are cheaper than the shipping.

it's time to start publishing, not just sending stuff to our sweethearts, or posting it online someone will probably read it outside the ghetto after or even during the night or day watch, or during a state of emergency, will we be still able to describe it after our work in this revolutionary time?



## Фазенда Бар

Така історія про роботу, коли люди ідуть у відпустку через війну, вони б хотіли працювати у барі або на рецепції і приїхали на співбесіду, Відпустку не дають, якщо вагомий роботодавець або вагома посада.

«І кому дадуть відпустку на три місяці» – питає дівчина, яка не може повернутися в Донецьк, п'ючи за баром наступний коктейль. Ось знайома адміністратора працювала танцівницею в Тайланді. Дівчина так і проситься до танцю і запитує офіціантку, чи хтось танцює у другій кімнаті, де грає діджей. Але це неважливо, думаємо всі ми, а хтось говорить це вголос і всі читають далі т.зв. новини на своїх т. зв. телефонах. Не вірю, що це колись вважатимуть туризмом, а рекламне гасло турфірми звучатиме: «Втікайте!»



## Fazenda Bar

This is story about a job; when  
people take vacation because of a war.  
They'd like to work at a bar or at  
a reception desk and they come for an interview.  
They can't get vacation if their  
employer or position is important.  
"Who gets vacation for three months anyway?"  
asks a girl who can't return to  
Donetsk, drinking her next cocktail  
at the bar. The manager's acquaintance  
worked as a dancer in Thailand.  
The girl wants to be invited to dance  
and asks the waitress if anyone's dancing  
in the other room where a DJ's playing.  
But it doesn't matter, we all think,  
and someone says it aloud  
and everyone continues reading the so-called  
news on their so-called phones.  
I can't believe this will one day be considered tourism,  
and the travel agency's slogan will read:  
"Run away!"



\* \* \*

Не можу почуватися чужим  
у цій країні, а, отже, не можу  
її любити як усе рідне,  
окрім сім'ї, але коли  
це пишу, то знаходжуся  
не в тій країні, не в тій  
сім'ї, а якщо засиджуся  
в Інтернеті, то здивуюся,  
в якому місті вийшов  
на вулицю. Не зустрічаю  
тих людей, що бачу на Фейсбуці,  
і в мирний час, там, де війна,  
відчутно мир, хоча і в Мережі,  
але досить воювати в іншій країні,  
досить сидіти в Інтернеті,  
вийди на вулицю сусідньої країни!  
Навіть якщо це твоя країна,  
впізнаєш у ній красивих людей  
та протестувальників, тих,  
що бачив в Інтернеті  
в інших країнах.  
Пишу я і рахуюсь з тобою!

\*\*\*

I can't feel like a stranger  
in this country, and yet I can't  
love it like everything dear except for family,  
yet as I write this, I find myself neither  
in that country, nor in that  
family, and if I spend too much time  
online, I feel lost when I go out  
into the streets of the city. I don't run into  
those people I see on Facebook,  
and in times of peace, where there is war  
you feel peace, even though you're online,  
but that's enough fighting in another country,  
that's enough time spent online,  
go out into the streets of the neighboring country!  
Even if it's your country,  
you'll discover nice people  
and protesters there, the  
ones you saw online in other countries.  
I'm writing this and taking you into account!

## Острови вірогідності

З усіх вчителів цього  
найменше помічали, була ще  
ідея закохатися у географію,  
бо як можна закохуватися у  
мову або літературу. Там усі  
мають до діла з вчителями,  
інше діло – це місто, ландшафт,  
або якийсь острів незалежно від  
його геологічного періоду.  
Зазвичай народи вчать на  
чужих помилках, в чужих країнах.  
Де була війна – запанує мир,  
де комусь наука – там і вчитель.  
Коли просять не говорити, то  
значить сказане було правильним.  
Невже будуть бомбувати атомними  
боєголовками острови вірогідності?  
Так розпочинається інформаційна  
війна. Якщо у вас манія  
переслідування, то перемога за  
ворогами. Чуєш ти пісню, що  
переслідує тебе з динаміків  
від кафе до кафе, куди ти  
їдеш?

січень 2015 р., Київ

## Islands of Credibility

Out of all teachers this one was  
noticed the least, there was the idea  
of falling in love with geography  
since how can you fall in love  
with language or literature. With those, you've  
got to deal with the teachers;  
a city, a landscape or  
some island regardless of  
geological period is another thing.  
Nations usually learn  
from others' mistakes, in other countries.  
Where there was war, peace will reign;  
where you need knowledge, there will be a teacher.  
When you're asked not to speak,  
it means what you said was correct.  
Will they yet bomb the islands of  
credibility with atomic warheads?  
This is how the information war  
breaks out. If you suffer from paranoia,  
the enemies have won.  
Do you hear the song that  
follows you from the speakers as you move  
from one café to another on your way?

January 2015, Kyiv

\* \* \*

Секретарка Ганса-Ульріха Обріста  
дякує за моє запрошення зустрітися  
у Цюріху і пише, що куратор  
зайнятий у ці дати.

Я думаю про проект і вже його  
придумав: неіснуюча виставка,  
на яку я отримав запрошення від Г.-У. О.,  
щоб отримати візу.

Запрошення буде написане  
між рядками  
цієї виставки.

\* \* \*

Hans Ulrich Obrist's secretary  
thanks me for my invitation to meet up  
in Zurich and writes that the curator  
will be busy on those dates.

I've been thinking about a project and I've finally  
come up with it: a non-existent exhibition  
for which I'd receive an invitation from H.U.O.  
to apply for a visa.

The invitation will be written  
between the lines  
of this exhibition.





\* \* \*

ти була на танцях у клубі,  
я дивився у цей час ютюб  
і спілкувався з тобою у чаті,  
скидував лінки на різні треки.

«смерть це майстер з україни»  
– вояк танцює зі смертю.  
я був вдома сам, і звучала музика  
в запівнічну спеку.

я недочитав цей твір на тому місці,  
де втілив його у реальності.  
не знав, що було досконаліше,  
і без слів глибоке дихання.  
(ти відчувала серцебиття)

як перестати думати. не думай,  
ти написала і що знаєш цей трек.  
не зрозумів я, що читаю знову  
цей твір, тобі буде зась його прочитати.

я навчився лепетати і не думати,  
що свіжий погляд твій. що говорю  
слова. що все буде добре і що  
не зміг тебе у цьому переконати.

\*\*\*

you were dancing at a night club  
when I was watching youtube  
and chatting with you online,  
sending you links to different tracks.

“death is a master from ukraine,”  
a soldier dances with death.  
I was home alone and music played  
into the midnight heat.

I didn't finish reading the piece in that place  
where I embodied it in reality,  
I didn't know what was more perfect—  
and wordless deep breathing.  
(you felt the heartbeat)

how to stop thinking. don't think,  
you wrote and added you knew this song.  
I didn't understand that I was reading this  
piece again, you won't be allowed to read it.

I learned to babble and not think,  
that the fresh look is yours. that I speak  
words. that everything will be fine and  
that I couldn't convince you of this.

Нью-Йорк

Колода в оці – великий хмародер.  
Немає кому сказати, що недобре  
так, коли щось втрапляє  
в око з хмародера.  
Піщинка в оці – не колода.

New York

The beam in my eye is a huge skyscraper,  
there is no one to tell how awful it is  
when something lands in  
your eye from a skyscraper.  
The grain of sand in my eye is not a beam.

Без назви («Гучний заголовок»)

*Гімн*

Наша залежність наче залежність  
Від стилю та смаку, солідарність  
Не лише у кольорі стягу та стін галерей.  
Хто ми? Спільнота, що покоління і юнь  
Об'єднує, яким не достатній  
Білий куб – на вулицю ми зазиваєм.  
Незалежність завжди лиш на словах,  
Схрещені наші дії, гучні заголовки:  
Група як єдиний автор!

Практика простіша за теорію,  
Сексуальна революція,  
А не латентний Інший,  
Гучної назви достатньо,  
Але ще не мистецтво це, важливий  
Процес та поширити маніфест!  
Нам на аукціонах не втіха дебютувати,  
Ми позичали книжку  
У відділі мистецтв бібліотеки.

Ми купили поезію Брехта  
На бібліотечному розпродажі.  
Всі ми залежні від абонементу,  
Наче роботу і дружбу  
Згодились ділити ми:  
Одна книжка на місто.  
Лунає з гучномовця Пісня:  
Генії мистецтв закликають  
До свободи без пригнічення.

## Untitled (A Loud Title)

### *Anthem*

Our dependence is like dependence on  
Style and taste; our solidarity's not only  
With the color of the flag and the gallery walls.  
Who are we? A community that embraces  
Generations and youngsters displeased with  
The White Cube; we call to gather on the streets.  
Independence always in word alone,  
Our deeds entwine, our titles are loud:  
The group is a unified author!

Practice is simpler than theory,  
The sexual revolution but not  
The latent Other,  
A loud title will suffice  
But it's not art yet; the process is significant  
And the manifesto must be circulated!  
It's no fun for us to debut at auctions,  
We have borrowed a book  
From the library's art section.

We bought a collection of Brecht's  
Poetry at the library booksale.  
We all depend on our library card  
It's as if we agreed to share  
A job and friendship:  
A single copy for the whole city.  
The Song is playing from the transmitter:  
The Geniuses of art call for  
Freedom without oppression.

Мистецтвом служим країні  
І світу. Держава як гальма,  
Саморганізувались усі.  
Спільнота є витвором мистецтва:  
Великий народ. Єднаймося  
Силою Геніїв усі разом!  
Нам потрібна солідарність!  
Шлях до таємниці єства  
Ми проходимо гуртом.

We serve our country and the world  
With our art. The state is a brake,  
We have all self-organized.  
Our community is a piece of art:  
Great people! Let's unite  
By the power of all Geniuses!  
We need solidarity!  
We all go down the path to the  
Mystery of the self together.



## Notes

Earlier versions of the translations appeared in the following journals: *Hawai'i Review*: "Untitled (A Loud Title)," "Hans Ulrich Obrist's secretary...," "you were dancing at a night club...," "New York"; *Prostory*: "Face Control," "Olivier Salad at the Maidan...," "The Maidan After Hours..."; *Trafika Europe*: "1991," "Fazenda Bar," "I can't feel like a stranger...," "Radio Liberty's broadcasting," "Islands of Credibility."

### 1991

1991 is the year of the collapse of Soviet Union and the declaration of Ukrainian independence.

Bruce Lee (1940-1973) was a Hong Kong and American actor and film director; a pop-icon of the 20th century, his films were popular in the countries of the former Soviet Union.

### *Radio Liberty's website is broadcasting*

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty is a broadcasting organization that provides news to countries in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East.

Bankova Street is a street in Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine, where the clashes between the protesters and government riot police took place during the Euromaidan in December 2013.

### *Olivier Salad at the Maidan*

Maidan, a shortened version of the Maidan Nezalezhnosti, is the central square in Kyiv and a place where the protesters clashed with the government forces in winter 2013-2014.

*The Maidan After Hours*

Erich Fried (1921-1988) was an Austrian-born poet, writer and translator.

The EU Commission (EC) is an institution of the European Union, responsible for proposing legislation and executing resolutions.

*Fazenda Bar*

Fazenda Bar is a now-defunct bar in Kyiv that operated for more than four years and was closed in 2015.

*Hans Ulrich Obrist's secretary...*

Hans Ulrich Obrist (1968) is a Swiss-born curator, critic and historian of art.

*Untitled (A Loud Title)*


Bertold Brecht (1898-1956) was a German poet, playwright and theatre director.

## Biographical Notes

**Vasyl Lozynsky**, born in Lviv, is Ukrainian poet, essayist, translator, literary critic and curator. In 1999-2004 he studied German language and literature in Lviv and Berlin. He has published two collections of poetry *Feast after Debauchery* (2014) and *Another Country* (2016) as well as a collection in German translation, *Das Fest nach dem Untergang* (2016). His work appeared in translation in the journals *10 TAL*, *manuskripte*, *Ostragehege*, *Lichtungen*, *Vozdukh*, *Trafika Europe*, *punctum*, *Wyspa*, *Hawai'i Review*, and in *Prostory*, *Krytyka*, *SHO*, *Chetver*, *KORYDOR*, *Znak* in Ukraine. His poetry has been translated into English, German, Swedish, Italian, Polish, Latvian and Russian. Vasyl Lozynsky translated Franz Kafka's collection of short stories *Meditation* (2012) and Ron Winkler's collection of poems *Fragmented Waters* (2015), from German into Ukrainian, as well as translated Tadeusz Dąbrowski's collection of poems, *Black Square* (2013), from Polish into Ukrainian. He was awarded the Smoloskyp literary prize for poetry in 2010. Since 2008 he is a member of the interdisciplinary curatorial association HUDRADA (<http://hudrada.tumblr.com/>) and is on the editorial board of *Prostory* (Spaces) (<http://www.prostory.net.ua/>), a magazine about culture and society. Vasyl Lozynsky lives and works in Kyiv.

**Ostap Kin** has published work in *The Common*, *The Poetry International*, *Hawai'i Review*, *Ohio Edit*, *Springhouse Journal*, *St. Petersburg Review*, *Trafika Europe* and in anthologies. He has edited the anthology *New York Elegies: Ukrainian Poetry on the City* (forthcoming with Academic Studies Press). He lives in Brooklyn, New York.

**Ali Kinsella** has been translating from Ukrainian for five years, and Vasyl Lozynsky for three. She holds a master's degree in Slavic studies from Columbia University. She most recently lived in Chicago where she also sometimes worked as a baker.



Vasyl Lozynsky's oeuvre is an example of the poems composed by a very attentive observant of daily events as well as by someone who is not an indifferent thinker. His style offers constant fluidity, a sense of change that hints at a poet in a persistent quest for an ideal, or at least the most suitable form for his experience, his observation, his *now*.

*Ostap Kin, from the introduction*

# WATERWAYS



# Water Ways





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# Water Ways

“Tell me about the deepest body of water and what lives there; tell me about the rain in Death Valley after a long summer; the taste of the best, shaved ice you’ve ever had.”





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Back Cover: *She Counts Kāhu*: art by Penny Howard

## She Counts Kāhu

Doug Poole

tahi

heartbeat continuum  
red thread belief  
a place to stand, to fly – come with her

rua

the watcher, reporter of the  
whereabouts of her lover  
her painted lines unfinished

toru

paint layers paint – line on line  
her poetic hand hovering  
above recreated landscapes

whā

she keeps a close watch on  
the geography & the topography  
of a pathway home

rima

the unsure – the recreation of footsteps  
counting every wing – beat – heart – beat  
it is not certain – it is not written

ono

if you were lost – you could find home  
triangulate – the distance between  
your thumb and forefinger

whitu

stars, silent markers – unknown  
to your feet – spoken to your heart  
certainty in the place of longing

if I were you I would not tell – just breathe those footsteps  
taken before you were born – slippage – stutter - - -

waru

layers shuffle eyes  
forming the landscapes  
before she was born

rising hustle of colour  
recreate a black dog  
white noise transmission

modulated vectors of light  
decoded time delay –  
light emitted dialogue

iwa

language found – language lost  
found in the sound of a single brushstroke  
lost in the stifled breath of gravity

some - body - find - me

“yesterday I was on a production-line delerium  
you woudn’t believe the rythms I find  
when my brush strums – unsettled – devine”

tekau

count Kāhu she  
counts Kāhu she

count prayer she  
counts truism

if you were half the woman

counts Kāhu she

for her children – pathways

the light changes  
the light finds  
the darkness

counting Kāhu  
heart beats – wing beats  
lift – light finding heart  
beats – wings spread  
gliding on the updraft  
hot words – hot light

dark to darkness

whetū

black    purple  
dog

analogue blue eyes count  
colour-space co-ordinates  
primary/ secondary / incidenary  
light of whakapapa

purple    black  
dog

she straddles the first dimension  
her eyes count Kāhu in the second  
dimension of light

topography of the third dimension  
fourth of translation / fifth of transmission  
till the fold meets the other

moemoe

before you were born  
                                hush sleep  
before you were born you  
                                baby sleep  
within the spaces between all things  
                                thats right -

one two three four five six seven eight nine ten  
ten nine eight seven six five four three two one

when you have passed  
                                child will you,  
grandchildren -distant future children  
                                will you,  
will red thread journey a dialogue to you  
                                find me?

- you waited, counting Kāhu

## **Hair Us Out**

Rhael 'LionHeart' Cape

Lately black boys are growing their hair outspoken like hands swimming breaststroke, while I'm using mine to pat down my African roots, frightened of looking like where I came from, letting the sea foster parent. To become another black identity taken under by the waves.

## SNAP Decisions

Mahealani Ahia

I watched her smile fade as she noticed my EBT card swiping through the credit card machine. Recognition of the plastic green card with its bright red flower exasperated the Whole Foods cashier. I could feel my cheeks flush at the same rate as her chest-heaving sigh of disapproval. I hoped she would quickly bag up the organic kale, veggies, coconut milk and grass-fed kidney. Luckily, mister dreadlocks behind me seemed amused by my precocious toddler Hina and kept her distracted.

In my head, I could hear the typical snide Republican critiques of people on SNAP: All those people on Foodstamps, asking for handouts, then buying crab legs and birthday cakes. I can't afford steaks or lobster, why should we subsidize their laziness? If they really need help with groceries, why are they shopping at Whole Foods?

I personally never met anyone who bought steak or crab legs. I cannot recall any happy faces waiting on public assistance. It often feels like a part time job itself: endless paperwork, weary social workers, countless hours sitting in rickety chairs and staring at dingy brown carpets and patched beige walls. If you finally qualify, every time you pull out the green and red flower card, you are reminded that life is not ideal.

My friends and family tried to ease my embarrassment, You are the type of person this program was intended for. You had a job, but you can't work anymore. You have a disabled child with special needs who requires twenty-four hour care. You and Kahala are future college professors. It's just temporary. Who cares what they think?

The cashier avoided eye contact. From her stroller, Hina continued to play "name that vegetable" game. Pointing with zeal, Carrot! Apple! When she spied a bunch of bananas, she shouted, Monkey! Mister dreadlocks' easy-going grin turned into laughter, You know so many words already! Who's that? He pointed to her bright red T-shirt. Elmo! Then I caught the cashier's gaze toward the stroller. Could she see the two



layers of bandages protecting the chest port and nightly TPN feeding tubes lurking beneath that Elmo shirt? How could she know that organic greens and bone broths were surprising the doctors and beating the medical odds? Determined to feed my daughter whatever worked, I slid the green card back inside its plastic cover and loaded my reusable bags onto the stroller.

I plotted our course to the final store of shopping day. First Costco for bulk items, next Whole Foods for veggies, then whatever was still needed we bought at Foodland, where we earned Hawaiian Air miles to visit the grandparents on Maui. Sadly, I would have preferred to buy from farmers markets and local Kanaka Maoli businesses, but my EBT card and WIC checks were limited to mostly big box stores.

I reflected on my excursions to provide healthy food for my family. I recalled how WIC (Supplemental Nutrition for Women, Infants, & Children) was originally coordinated by the Black Panthers to help pregnant women living in poverty. Health and well-being statistics for Native Hawaiians continue to decline and I hate being a number instead of a name, in a land that was previously abundant and generous. Ironically, the State of Hawai'i calls itself a welfare provider: yet it is our native land and inheritance that provides that very wealth they meagerly redistribute.

As a light drizzle began, I paused to watch a group of hipster moms with their trendy three-wheeled running strollers lounging outside Starbucks with their Frappacinos scurry inside. I wonder what their typical day is like? Do they marathon shop on their husbands' payday?

I understood their camaraderie and support, meeting to walk and to talk with other adults. Yet leaving the house at all had become more complicated with medical equipment to maneuver. Having others around for support became a necessity for me, not a luxury. My sister Jen re-arranged her Chinese medicine practice to fly back and forth from Maui every other week for more than a year to help care for Hina. It was Auntie Jen's van that shuttled us to weekly pediatrician appointments, specialists, tests, supply warehouses, and occasional fun trips to the zoo or aquarium. Since Hina required procedures every four hours around the clock, Auntie Jen

rocked Hina to sleep when Mama couldn't keep her eyes open any longer. And weeks while Auntie Jen was working on Maui, Mama missed her help and her company.

This was one of those weeks that my sister was away and Kahala was busy at school, and I was braving shopping alone. As Hina and I pulled into Foodland handicapped parking, the drizzle turned to rain. I hesitated, Maybe we should just get home? No, we don't have all the ingredients for our planned meals. I wrapped Hina in a fuzzy blanket before buckling her inside the stroller. Raindrops tickled her face, so her eyes flew open with panic, Mama, no get wet! A kindly elder man looked on amused, and tried to tease her playfully, Ah, it's just a little rain. What he didn't know was that if Hina got wet, Mama would have to change her chest bandages to avoid infection, a traumatic and painful procedure.

Once safe and dry inside the store, Hina immediately removed the blanket and unhooked one side of her stroller belt in an attempt to escape confinement. I push. I push. Pleeeeeese? I sensed her restlessness as I gathered the items on my list but resisted letting her out to push the stroller. We're almost pau, BabyGirl. Stay in your seat. Look at the balloons. Who's on the balloons? I hoped the Monsters, Inc. and Dora the Explorer heliums would distract her for at least one more aisle.

As we approached the checkout lines, I searched for the kindest looking worker. Even if he had the longest line, we would wait patiently, and hope for a compassionate exchange. I pulled out my green card with the red flower and braced myself with a deep expectant breath.

## **During Your Lifetime**

Craig Santos Perez

Dear Grandma, you planted  
papaya, mango, breadfruit, coconut,  
guava, and banana in your backyard

long before I was born. After harvest,  
we walked around the village,  
delivering a share to every neighbor.

When we returned, you told me  
to rake the leaves into piles because rot  
is the other side of ripe, and death,

too, is a kind of blossoming. Today,  
weeds and invasive vines strangle  
your garden. Strangers dump their trash

into the unkept grass. You watch  
television all day, as your body,  
after hip and knee surgeries, mulches

in a wheelchair. I live thousands of miles  
away from your tropical orchard of limbs  
and veined roots. Dear Grandma, I

want to remember you, always, standing  
amongst the banana grove, the green  
hands of their sagging clusters

raised to the sky in prayer, their hearts  
opening to a season, during your lifetime,  
in which we are always bountiful.

## **I Thought We Lived Above An Ocean**

Laura Felleman

I learned about the aquifer in Mrs. Staat's Fifth-grade science class.

That night I tried to picture it:

The darkness of its cavern.

The blackness of its water.

An immense stillness.

An ocean underfoot.

The coasts had the Atlantic,    the Pacific.

We had            the Ogallala.

Hidden.    Remote.    Pure.

It made the plain fascinating.

It made us extraordinary.

Every day walking atop water.

## Capacity

Lehua Taitano\*

I have trouble swallowing:

rice		ruebens on rye	
	shrimp tempura		
chicken breast		bucatini puttanesca	
	lumpia		
Dutch crunch rolls		lamb burger, onions & swiss	
red rice			
shaved pork		combination bún	
	mochi		
kelaguin bindadu		lemon butter asparagus	
	vanilla bread pudding		
coconut cake		medium rare kibbee	
	cornbread and butterbeans		
bahn mi		buttermilk pancakes	
	calamari		
bi bim bap		chicken fried steak	
	mustard greens		
tostadas de carnitas		BBQ pork and slaw	
catfish			
curly fries		bunuelos	lasagna
	ton katsu		
mushroom kebaps		potu	tri tip
	pilaf		
beef pot pie		bangers	
cobb salad		pot brownies	
lätke		brats	
vermicelli		brownie brownies	
kartoffeln salat		kielbasa	linguini
	mousaka		
chuletas		cabbage	clams casino

dim sum

horchata.

Well--not horchata.

Or anything liquid, smooth, smoothy-esque,  
slick or oily, slippery, slidey,  
esophageal glide-y.

I have a condition.

In which all the foods I love inflame my guttural lining,  
puff up my smooth muscle membranes, make  
the otherwise unfeel-able an  
unavoidably painful stricture--  
a bulging bolus punch  
to the thorax,  
a digestive impasse only water and gravity  
can attempt to make lax.

Swallow upon swallow, I make  
a river of my gullet, hope the rapids  
will burst the dam of home cooking  
bottle-necked above my stomach.

And it has gotten so pronounced--  
my occluded condition--  
that I sought out a specialist  
to investigate my painful indigestion.

Which brings me to the medical office  
counter and the ensuing intake questions:

Can you verify your name?

Can you verify your date of birth?  
Do you have a religious preference?  
Tell me, what is your ethnicity?

And this. This is the location.  
Where the throat spasms a twitch  
in preparation for a stalling. A piling  
up of what I've been swallowing.

My name is Lehuanani Marie Taitano.  
I would prefer no religions at all.  
I am Chamoru.

C-H-A-M-O-R-U  
C-H-A-M  
C-H-

But the assistant shakes  
her head, scrolls through a drop-down  
list of pre-existing ethnic  
conditions.

She shakes her head,  
brow furrowed, pointer finger  
clicking, tapping, wagging no.

That's not an option.

I am told that my ethnicity is not  
an option.

Being Chamoru is not an option.

But before I get to the sucker punch, the  
great, curled fist of Other,

let me tell you a story.

I could issue a litany of other scenarios,  
regurgitate a pile of questions I've swallowed ,  
little fishbone fragments of others' doubt.

But I will tell you a story of belonging. Of when and  
where and to whom and what. Of identification.  
Of unavoidable collision. Of transplantation. Of the sea.

My first memory, the sea. Swallowing a mouthful  
of saltwater in Tumon Bay. My siblings catching sea  
cucumbers in the surf. My first memory of belonging.  
Evening light, grip of sand, the quiet tug of tide  
and the moon rising.

My siblings splashing, rejoicing in their brown bodies,  
brown, like mine,  
which is to say  
half-some-hey-grel-why-your-dagun-so-white-brown.  
Island-mama/  
airforce-father  
brown.

Coconut husks scooped  
up and flown off to the "mainland" brown.  
And once there, too-too brown.

Word bank brown, a puzzle for  
every introduction, like  
where-you-from-  
are-you-  
ain't-you  
or ain't you  
where-



where-where-  
my-great-white-eyes-  
don't-recognize  
can't-categorize  
please-explain-yourself  
to me, brown.

School, church, downtown, uptown, all around the same ,  
and home was no refuge because my father was ashamed  
and drunk and, well, a racist piece of shit  
who tried to kill my mother in front of me  
and shot our puppies when they whined to be  
let in and finally cast me off when he said my life  
was nothing but sin because somehow God hates  
fags and the only good brains I have come from the  
white side of our family, which is to say, unslyly, him.

And what I have,  
besides these big ass ears  
and the way I sometimes place my hand  
on my thigh  
when I'm relaxed or listening  
is this painting.

This painting, a seastory sailing across  
a canvas, masts puffed against clouds gathering  
a pink-orange evening.

All the rigging taut, white foam kissing an  
oaken keel. No land in sight, an unmanned  
ship, just  
sailing.

I remember when the canvas  
had a frame.

I remember the day he crashed  
and raged and tore it from their bedroom wall,  
fists and a jug of wine together  
reeling and him, disgusted perhaps  
with gazing at a reminder of wanting, once,  
to be something like an empty vessel  
cutting a path across an evening sea.

This painting, forgotten in a mice attic  
until last year, when my sister sent it to me.

\*\*

What do you do with memories  
you don't want to keep?

Where can you store them that they won't come  
creeping back on a scent or melody?

\*\*

At the medical office counter,  
I tell the assistant I AM an option,  
I am my only option,  
I am the daughter of my mother, sister to four sisters and  
a brother,  
an auntie, great auntie, great-great auntie to  
nieces, nephews--"kindling" I call them--  
because FUCK assumption of gender.

I tell her the flaw is not me,  
and yes, it's the whole goddamned system,  
and no, I won't be quiet until they sedate me,  
which they do.

\*\*

Inside,  
the endoscopy,  
my doctor guides a camera into the guts of me,

finds I'm suffering the same digestive side-effects  
of monoculture  
as I had suspected.

Home from the hospital, in the house filled with  
boxes from my most recent migration,  
the painting .

Unframed. Leaning against a shelf.  
Reminding me.

That at least once, my father  
had the capacity to create. To sit and  
imagine a scene filled with wind and cloud  
and light. That some version of himself  
was compelled  
to make art  
and love and children,  
before he filled himself up, instead,  
to the brim, with toxicity.

I will not replace the frame,  
but hang the canvas raw and ragged,  
let art and poetry frame it how I choose.

It will remind me that poetry is my home,  
a place of belonging  
that can house memories, choices,  
the best versions of  
ourselves.

---

Accompanying photo project can be found on Hawai'i Review online journal.  
[hawaiiireview.org](http://hawaiiireview.org)

## Cities & The Dead

Brooke Jones

Our bodies contain as much salt per ounce as the ocean; taste it in the hot water from grief, taste it in the stickiness that turns parched on skin, leaving white film, taste it even in the blood of a cut.

~

What a traveler comes to notice if they visit Delora for more than a few weeks' time is that once each week its inhabitants hold a funeral. Sometimes the salt urn is filled with ashes; most often it is not. This urn is carved from salt crystals that are also used to carve the city's walls and doorways and domed rooftops, smooth or glittering a little for their intricate carvings in the sun. The city is set in a rocky hillside; its low buildings slope gradually towards the salt flats and the sea. The salt walls of homes, shops, and public buildings in colors of white, light grey, and hesitant blush line hard terraced salt stone walkways that, once past the city's end, descend into raked piles of salt whose edges are touched by sea.

The funeral procession begins at a different place in the city each week; the inhabitants are drawn to a kitchen or sweetshop or city mall by soft crying that accepts only silence in its empty spaces. One by one and in groups, the inhabitants set down their occupations and take up babies or children or lovers or friends or only themselves, and walk slowly to the place where the funeral is to begin.

The inhabitants take turns holding the urn as the funeral proceeds, each carrying it for fifty paces or so before handing it to another. The procession traverses the city's streets, which wind in unpredictable and connected patterns and are the oldest part of the city, built of large grey and white salt cobblestones worn smooth and rounded through seasons of sun and rain. The procession goes beneath the city's earth

into its salt mines: dark tubes grey and white and cavernous; surfaces smooth and etched with the marks left by tools; the way lighted with flames that glow yellow and orange and red through hollowed salt crystals. The procession emerges from these mines that are set into the hillside beside and beneath the city, and winds along the hard earth towards the salt flats. Those working on the flats who did not hear the crying in the city join the procession as it moves towards the sea.

Each inhabitant in the procession stands along the thin line the sea makes when its edges touch land, in a line that stretches nearly a half mile along the shore. In near unison, they walk into the sea, bodies buoyant, toes barely holding on to the sea's bottom when the water is waist-high for the saltiness, and toss the urn, full or empty, sometimes containing ashes and often not, into the low rippling waves and weep, letting their salt tears fall into the water.

This custom is not something you learn of in a day's time or even a week's stay in this city of salt. Its inhabitants do not speak of it; it is something done as you or I might break our fast in the morning or wash our feet in the evening. It is done in earnest. It is said the inhabitants of Delora are happier than most.

*Inspired by Italo Calvino's novel Invisible Cities*

## **Acts of Postmemory Han in the Key of the Children I Will Never Have**

Seo-Young Chu

Because this is a dream, I've just received an email from "Reaper." "The deadline for your syllabus and book order has passed," the email reads. "Send them ASAP."

In a panic, I email back: "I am so sorry! What is the subject of the course?"

Almost instantly I get the following reply: "BIO 99: LIFE AND DEATH. Next time, keep better track of your deadlines."

Biology. I've never taught biology before. Is this an intro course? How many students? How am I supposed to teach about life and death? What books do I order? I don't even know how to write the course description! The truth is that I am vastly under-qualified for the task. But "Reaper" does not respond to any of my follow-up emails no matter how much my heart pounds.

At this point I start scribbling in a notebook. "Draft for syllabus." Then I cross out those words and write "BUCKET LIST." Then I cross out those words and write:

"This is not a syllabus. This is a Platonic FORM. You have not yet been born, nor have you been conceived, which is why you are perfect. You are the children you will never have."

And suddenly, from a strange periphery, the ghosts of my ancestors half-materialize and begin to approach me. They are bearing gifts. Somehow I know that these gifts are "requirements" for the syllabus. A fingerprint. An apricot. A

crumb of old paper. A whispered secret, one that chills my ear. A drop of sepia. A single contact lens. A bright red ribbon long enough to tie around my wrist. A nerve that won't stop shivering. A song about somebody's home, how humble and dusty it had been, but so beloved and missed. A chromosome.

A chromosome. That one electrifies me. Asleep in the palm of my hand, it looks alien and alone. It is neither alive nor is it un-alive. Still, it is sentient.

This is what the chromosome dreams:

At many things he excels. For instance: humility, diligence, the han-filled sigh, the health insurance claim form, frugality, resilience, the anxious reminder (e.g. to “call Mom on her birthday,” to which I reply “Dad, I already know, but thank you”), lightning arithmetic without the aid of a calculator, reading the fine print with care, living soberly (I have never seen him smoke or drink or do drugs), the business of survival, the bleeding-edge art of sacrifice, completing tasks before the deadline, solving problems, researching solutions to problems, thinking, he excels at critical thinking, rational behavior, manual labor, intellectual labor, learning about new ideas, code-switching, unconditional acceptance of his chronically ill bipolar irreducibly weird and broken daughter, the hardship of caregiving, adapting without rancor to grandchildlessness, and saying “I love you” in a voice that makes my eyes grow hot with tears.

At talking about his past (war, hunger, fleeing troops, watching beloved family members die, watching you die) he does not excel. This is infinitely understandable.

Humor and “dad jokes”: N/A.

I am addressing this report card to my father's parents both of whom died because of the Korean War. My brother and I used to think your son was a robot. He had no parents, no childhood photos, no stories about his youth. Now we know more (though still not enough). Above all we know this: Your youngest son—our father—is a brilliant, honorable, formidable, righteous human being. Is he this way despite or because of how you raised him? Does it matter?

I don't know what compels me to perform this act of post-memory han. Maybe your ghosts are guiding my fingers as I type. Maybe you're communicating through me right now — in which case you already know: Your granddaughter, from a gray distance shimmering, loves you dearly, loves you mysteriously, unknowable ghosts that you are.





“Intergenerational Footwear”  
by Autumn L. Bernhart

## **Where Are You?**

By Autumn L. Bernhardt

I stay vigilant for you,  
hold a lamp for your crooked feet to return,  
hope that in walking through fire you burnt off your old self,  
shed seasons and returned  
year after year to the winter campground  
with pregnant belly and every bit of my love for you.

Leave your old country like a refugee.  
Come back home to a glowing lodge,  
a tipi painted with plants and prophecies.  
Lay your head on my chest  
beating war songs and love songs.

Walk with me through my remaining days.  
Never let me utter this same prayer again.  
Fill me with tumbling stars, pink clouds, and  
the memories and plans of you.

## Origin of Prayer

George Abraham

from my parents, i inherited  
my grandfather's gold cross -  
country of cold metal - godless  
in the land where God was man, once -

my grandfather's gold cross  
gifted me security clearance; entry  
into the land where God was man, once -  
and the men are still machine-gun Gods

who gifted me security clearance; entry  
to land not country enough to be home,  
where the men are machine-gun God-  
worshippers; at their expense, I inherited a new God

Just like I inherited land not country enough  
for invisibility, which turned my ancestors into God-  
worshippers, and at their expense, I inherited a new God  
whom I love like my country & yet the closest i feel to Him

is in invisibility, to which my ancestors turned  
when they inherited a new home, or Godless sanctuary  
whom they loved like a country & yet the closest i felt  
to my country was when touching my God's empty tomb -

who when inheriting a new body, left behind a Godless  
sanctuary to echo the prayers He used to write for  
my country, when in touch with God's empty;  
permutations of familiar words, brief molar shadows

echoing in this sanctuary where He once wrote them  
and perhaps the prayer is in this dance of lip & limb,

permutations of familiar words, brief molar shadows  
as if my bones were chanting: *i was holy once* -

and perhaps that is the prayer or dance of limb  
i inherited from my parents, whose ancestors'  
bones were chanting: i was holy once -  
in this godless, cold country; *i was always holy* -

## Elegy for my dead lover/Country

it is the anniversary of *my country's*  
death - our house empty  
of Arabic - Palestine still  
scraping Her self from my family tree;  
*american. (forbidden love)* tongue transplanted.  
*sweet land of olive grove* turned magnolia blossom,  
in betraying Her, we inherited another restless sea  
*we felt in love on* the intersection of salt & fury;  
nights i'd grasp Her sand in my palms, bitter fragments of  
shoreline erosion- centuries of displacement & marvel  
at how slowly the premature & tessellated  
dead slip through my fingers'  
firm grasp, on this *land where my fathers*  
*died* - how easily one forgets  
the ghost body of a country  
rebuilt, *of pilgrim's pride* Her death,  
a God-sent colonization; holy conquest -  
blessed are the reclaimed  
for they shall inherit  
the ghosts of themselves  
a liberty of sorts - *my country,*  
my grave; *my country, my*  
open wound; *my country,*  
hallelujah of chasms;  
to you, i sing praise,  
for your histories *rewritten;*  
for a love you stole found lung-lost  
& submerged in restless substance; what is  
a *country* ~~lover~~ but  
a corrupted memory? what is an ocean but  
a stolen inheritance? this *freedom*  
can drown you. in the reclamation of it all.  
but it rings despite; let *freedom ring*: let it  
outlast the impermanence  
of you; let *freedom* hold the weight of you  
in its jaws  
let *freedom*  
become its own *country.* of walled borders.  
of grenade-speckled mountainside. maybe you'll find God in this  
*freedom* - maybe God will be his own type of Palestinian: hot tempered.  
land-crowned. even resurrections can leave you empty  
-palmed; maybe God will show you how a *country* learns to walk  
on water; or how a *country* swallows its own, & even  
in betrayal & execution unholy, teach you what  
it means to fall in love with a country *home* that was never yours  
to begin with -

