

Window Cat Press

Volume II | Summer 2015

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Poem Against Life in Spring

August Smith

It's the stupid mud season again

and all of your haikus are either

false or boring—

lie-kus or sigh-kus.

It's the time of year when I struggle the most

to give a shit about your weak accomplishments.

I watch an unidentifiable animal—

circular, furry, desperate for love—

gently sink into the gross and viscous earth

without blinking. On the other hand,

I feel strong and have beautiful hair.

My sunglasses are huge as fuck

and awesome, reflecting pricey sushi trays.

They keep all my liquid phantoms in.

Take them off and snowmelt will gush

in massive arcing geysers

and I'll just become a guy on a bench

who already can't wait to retire.

Someday a rich person will pull me out of this mud

with golden ropes wrapped 'round my wrist

and bankroll that one good idea I had
for a lobster restaurant that does delivery.
Then you'll be sorry for trying so hard.



Swing into the sway, the beat, the
street,
on this hot night when trumpet notes
will cling
to crimson hemlines, snapping with
her heat,
and all there is is "It don't mean a
thing"
and polyrhythmic passion takes you
hold□
above you all the West Side stars
burn gold.

Poetry by Margaret Winikates
Photography by Michele Morris

Pond Water Microscope Slide

Valerie Loveland

The water droplet crowded with cilia wiggling,
everyone chasing their tails, restless.

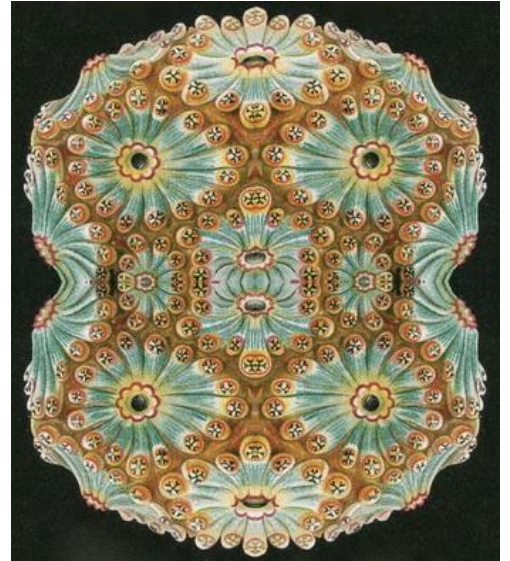
Even the bacteria in the background squirms
constantly like an old cartoon; its background animation loops.

Nobody has secret insides.
They possess only clear, pencil-drawn outlines. The artist
filled their clear bellies with penciled organs.
Someone keeps scribbling.

Clear balloons on strings float away,
then are pulled back in by their own strings.

They tint whatever color they're dyed.

What could a stiff green ringlet do but spiral?
Does this animalcule have pinchers or a split tail? Either way,
its V opens and closes. One monster is a clear pistachio trying to break
out of itself.
A bug flapping its arms contains, inside, a bug flapping its arms.



Sudden Bewilderment, collage by Bill Wolak

Catch of the Day

Andrew Wiedenhofer

He couldn't believe he was here, let alone here this early, but on a day like today, he had to be. The fortified steel gates would open bright and early at six, but Francis knew to be in line no later than five, otherwise waking before sunrise would be for naught. So there he stood, hands wrapped around a Venti Mocha Macchiato, feeling its warmth as an arctic wind roared in from Elliott Bay, cutting straight to his bone marrow. He, and what felt like a hundred other harebrained people, waited for Seattle's famed Pike Place Market to open for their annual "Catch of the Day" competition.

Twelve hours earlier, in the warmth of his apartment, the concept had seemed entirely plausible. Now, Francis wasn't so sure. All he had to do was catch more fish hurled at him in two minutes than everyone else – simple enough. He had lived in Seattle all his life, had been to Pike Place at least a thousand times, and had seen countless tourists step up and try their hand at flinging fish like a pro. Little did they know, they likely wouldn't be among the miniscule 6% of people who could actually toss a ten-pound trout. The rest left the market empty-handed, with their sneakers covered in fish guts. So why was he here then? He didn't even like fish! It was the prize that kept him in line – twenty pounds of fresh Pacific-caught fish a week for the rest of his life.

Francis owned Moore's, a struggling family restaurant not far from the waterfront. He was always looking for ways to eliminate expenses to help his business stay afloat, and his seafood budget was one of the highest. He had his excuse for being stuck in this cold, but what were the others going to do with so much fish? Jesus Himself didn't even eat twenty pounds of the stuff a week. Surely, everyone had their reasons, or they hadn't thought far enough ahead to know where they'd store nine kilos of carp.

The throng of people behind him began to stir in the way that tells you something's about to happen. The tall walls of steel began to move in unison as the line of people surged forward. A set of ropes was strung from the wide entrance down to a single-file line at the dock, corralling people like heifers on the way to slaughter. Once at the front, everyone received a number and gathered in the market to eye their competition. Francis kept his overcoat snug, hiding the secret weapons he hoped would help him win.

The mob of contestants were registered, numbered, and instructed on the rules in less than twenty minutes. Spectators took their positions in the erected bleachers and the competition was underway. Francis's early arrival had paid off; he was number eleven. The ten people in front of him caught an average of six fish due to cold, numb hands, wet conditions, and lack of experience in the mechanics of catching carcasses.

Francis's number was called and he took his position after allowing the overworked crew to squeegee away as many fish parts as possible. The fish flingers readied their ammo as Francis flung off his overcoat, throwing it aside. The assembled crowd gasped as they saw the two broken-in catcher's mitts tightly fixed to his hands. He smiled and took his defensive position, not knowing if the gloves would help or hurt his chances of success. Before he could consider it, the first fish was arcing above him, and homing in like a laser-guided missile. Francis snatched at the falling fish, the leather gloves providing the

perfect traction to stop it. He felt a mix of shock and surprise, but there was no time to spare, the next one was already coming at him. His muscles blazed as he continued to catch what flew towards him for two minutes, losing count as he focused on the fish missiles.

A bell rang, yanking Francis back to reality. Cheers and applause filled the market as he looked up at the scoreboard: 31 / 0. Surprised, Francis smiled at the spectators and caught a number of dirty gazes from his fellow contestants. His shirt soaked with reeking fish juice, he stepped off the stage wearing a gigantic grin. The idea had been simple enough, but somehow, no one else had thought of it. Francis watched as more contenders tried, and failed, to surpass his record. Some left without trying, deciding it was no use.

“Up next, number seventy-one!” the emcee bellowed to the crowd as a burly, stone-faced man made his way to the front. Francis watched as the oaf grunted, snatching at every fish, but catching only three. He rubbed his clammy hands together as the oaf stormed off the stage, giving Francis a look sharper than the market smelled. His heart raced as the last two competitors walk away defeated.

With a jubilant trot, Francis once again made his way to the makeshift stage, watching as the third place winner accepted a Pike Place trucker hat and keychain, while the second place winner walked away with a t-shirt and a sloshing, family-sized bucket of fish chowder. They both clapped, unconvincingly, as Francis accepted the oversized “Fish For Life” cardboard coupon. Smiling in disbelief, he thrust it triumphantly over his head as the crowd roared with cheers.

The Plants in my Life

Valerie Loveland

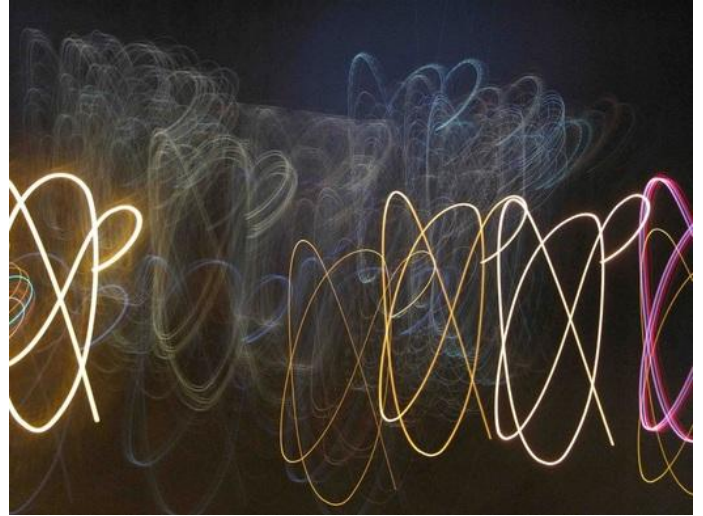
The spider plants need some meat on their bones. I ordered protein shake mix (secret ingredient: steroids) so they can bulk up. My husband swears plants will gulp anything dripped into their soil, but I order the sunshine flavored shake just to be sure they will take their medicine.

A depressed flower droops: we all can recognize our expressions exhibited in plants. I try not to be cruel. I endeavor to be a kind person. I regret what I said about them when I realized they worry about their appearances, just like us. Plants are drawn, nosy, to the window. I agree: light has always seemed delicious. Unlike me, plants stop eating when they're full.

I don't tell my plants that my college boyfriend's dad killed each tree in their yard: his retirement hobby. He slit a ring around each tree's throat, their sap bled out. I actually asked: is it possible to bandage a tree's slit throat? My college boyfriend retorted something. Retorted. I don't tell my plants.

I only took care of a flowering plant once—one of my cats bit off the solitary flower three hours after it bloomed. I checked their mouths to see if I could figure out who was the culprit, but the flower was the exact same pink as their predator tongues. It claimed to be a cactus but it never taught the cats a prickly lesson. Now my husband suspends all the plants from ceiling pots.

After he feeds all of them water, he catches the overflow in various bowls and pitchers, vases, the roasting pan. The sound of our house is the sound rain makes on metal awnings. I suspect our apartment may have secretly turned itself inside out.



How may I learn to sit like a lotus?
to fold tight and still,
hold the promise of explosive beauty
floating above the slough of the world?
How might I among my fellows
in the shade of the moment
beckon in the sun to my clasped hands,
my pond-cooled heart?

Poetry by Margaret Winikates
Photography by Michele Morris

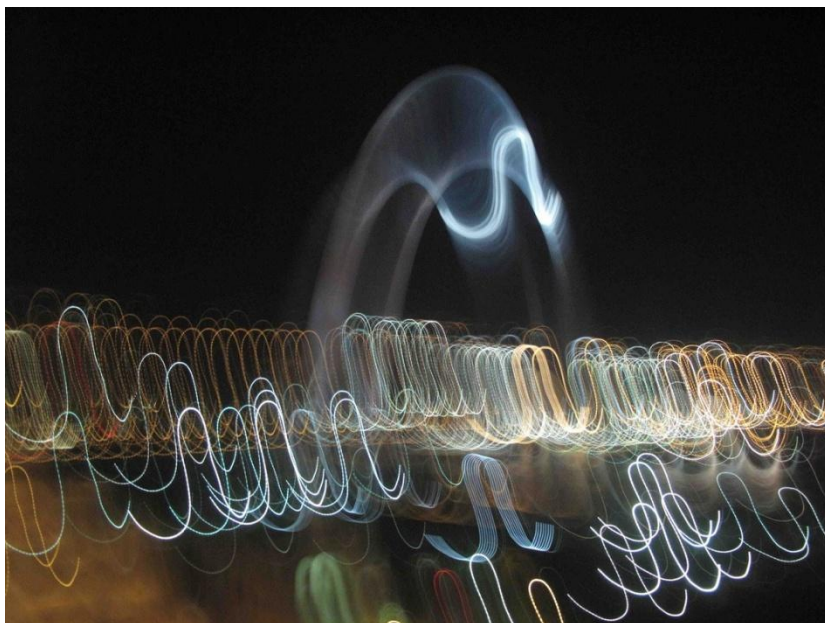


Photograph by Michele Morris

The Bees Know

Margaret Winikates

Late summer sunlight on a cooling afternoon
And my heart warms like
The bare skin on my arms, my toes, my cheeks.
No burn left, just a kiss.
The buzzy bees are dizzy now, feeling
And fearing the end of their season,
Bumping off my shoulder,
Drunk with gold and dreaming.



Punk rock beauty headbangs in the desert,
dares you to find its spikes and carapaces
as poetical as stars,
as if a drunk and rebel Spring
had left its traces
snapping in the wind like scrappy flags.

Poetry by Margaret Winikates
Photography by Michele Morris

Skeletons

August Smith

Ten year-old me
playing Gameboy Pocket
in the back seat
of our family suburban.

Ten year-old me
knowing cemeteries
are nothing like
the graveyards
of video games.

No bedraggled crows
hollering from clock towers.
No purple sky,
no snarling crucifixes
struck by lightning.
No ghostly enemies
gliding down the gentle curve
of a pixelated hill,
translucent blue,
arms outstretched
in escapable love.
No pressing B
to heal again.
No revival potions,
or coming back,
no smiling no kicking.
There are no heroes in a cemetery.
Likewise, there are no villains.

Only crying parents.
Only baby brothers
playing with fresh dirt clods.
Only a mid-noon sun
that hovers above like something
terribly real.
Only alarming amounts of names
and alarmingly withered bushes.
Only short sequences of numbers,

more than ones and zeroes but
easy enough to subtract for a ten year-old.

Bayou, River City, Beantown

Joshua Jones

We drove until our backs curled into barbed wire
and our butts sank their forms in the leather seats.
Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama,
Georgia, North and South Carolina, and Virginia.

And our butts, their forms sunk in the leather seats,
thanked us when we fell face down in bed,
Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama
all behind us. My mom, our sometime hostess,

thanked us when we fell face down in bed
for getting out of her already ruffled hair.
All behind us, my mom, our sometime hostess,
wished we'd never made it quite this far.

To get out of her already ruffled hair, next day
we drove until our backs curled into barbed wire²
wished we'd never made it quite this far and stopped
in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, or Alabama.

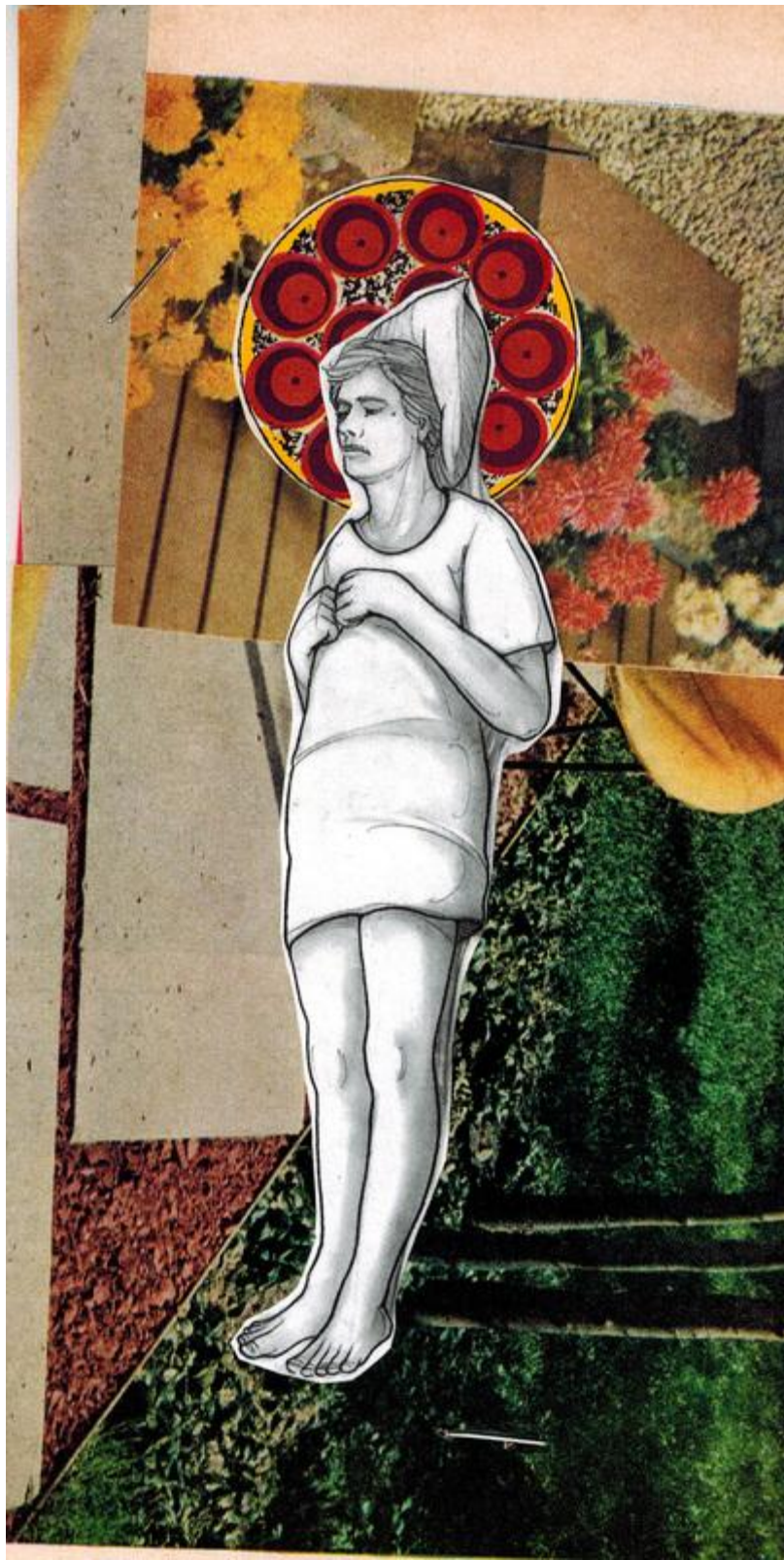
Caffe Villa Jovis

Joshua Jones

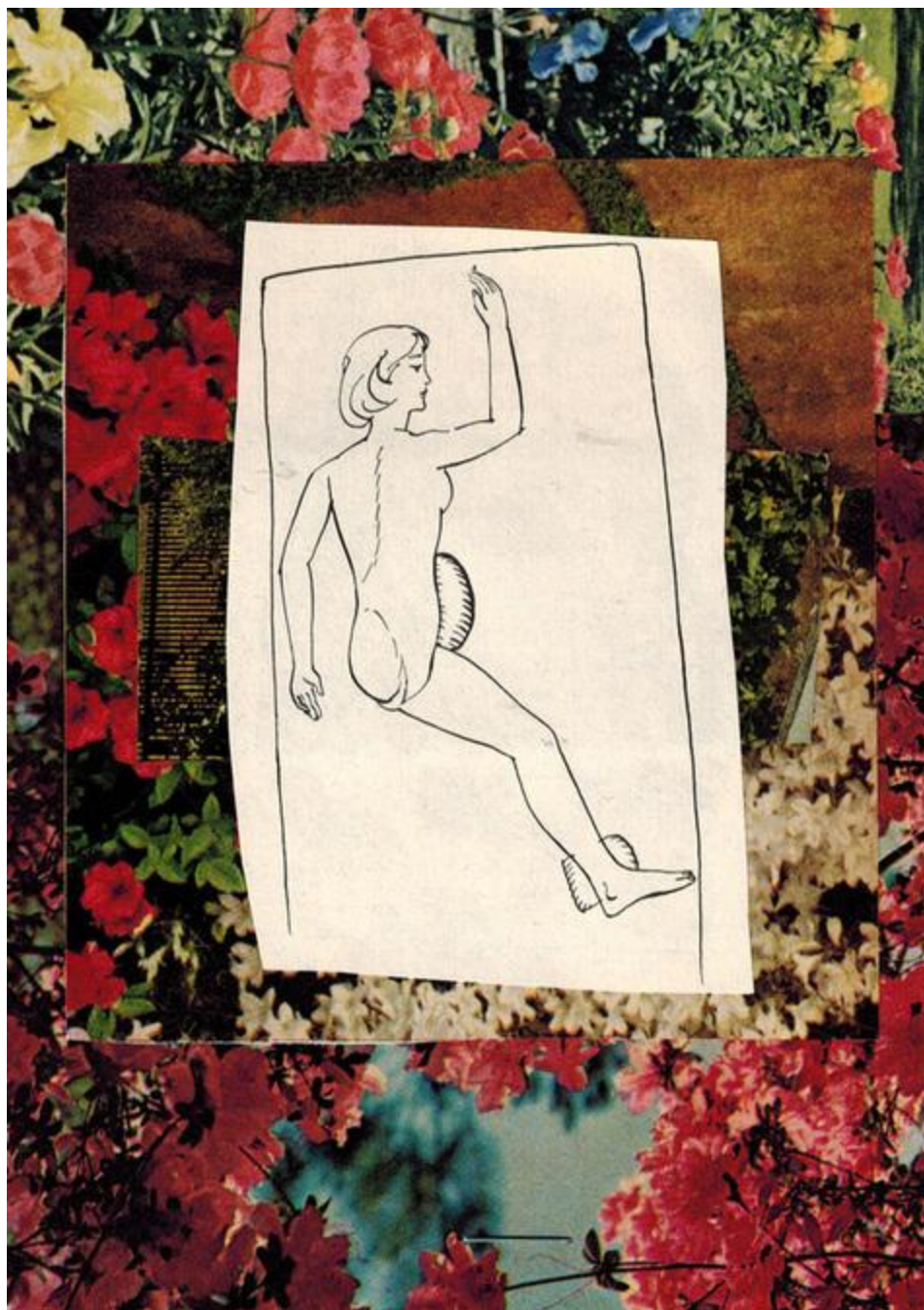
Our table splits a carafe of red
and waits on the sandwiches
we wish were steaks. Caprese
on toast is not enough
after a two hour hike past
homes even God can't afford.

A plate of fried prawns
and squid a table away
makes me regret the kitsch
from Rome; Rich insists
he can't have any, then does.
I try not to watch, staring down
the mountain I've imagined
killing us all, what the report
would say. "Students choked
with ash as they talked
Pliny and Fiorelli."

All this way to beat the bounds
of a dead mans house,
to stand at Tiberius' cliff
envying the ones he lofted
into the blue. And then, chair
legs skip across the pavers
there's Rich, his hands at his red
throat, about to erupt.



Asleep with Landscaping, collage by Chris Drew



Asleep with Flowers, collage by Chris Drew

Fiumicino

Joshua Jones

The heads lined up down either side
of the aisle—some wreathed with thinning
hair, some resting on impatient hands,
and some bobbing excitedly in conversation—
aren't listening to the flight attendants. Neither
am I, “Mezzogiorno” on full blast. The bust
of one mother dangles over her armrest
as she wipes the drool off her little boy's cheek;
her cone earrings hug her neck like the ones
we saw on Agrippina, returned to her glass
case after years in a dentist's closet looking
none too amused, still sour about her son.
But we hardly saw that manic artist's likeness
anywhere, most of them picked away
into Domitian's, Apollo's, or any number
of petty local heroes' whose name never
outlived their borrowed face. The burly
attendant catches my eye, scowls,
and pretends to tear my ears off.

MBTA Chorale

Lori Zimmermann

She's asking for a slap upside the head —
You didn't call last night — Yeah but I sent
a text — No sir! That isn't what I said —
— The dialectic of the one percent
Against the proletariat — Aw, dude,
Don't be ridiculous — Oh, fucking fuck!
I think I lost my phone — Should we get food?
— You know I care about you but not — SUCK
MY BALLS! — *The outbound train to Wonderland*
is now arriving — Jesus, that was fast —
What — Oh my shitting God — Hold Mommy's hand!
The driver pulls the brake, and then, at last —

The subway's bubbling many-throated speech
Resolves into a lone soprano shriek.

I'm dragging my feet...

excerpt from Waste

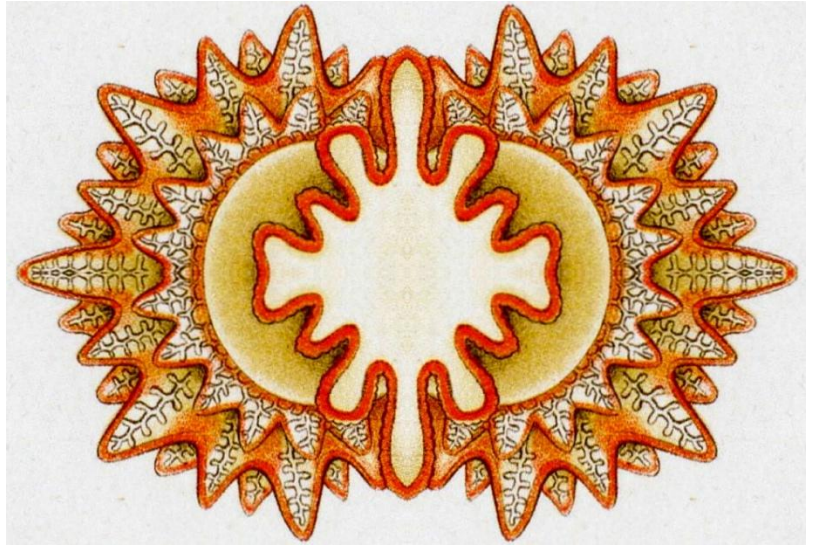
Levi Rubeck

I'm dragging my feet
through space. This cold sea
has been cleaned out
of summer jams and rest stops.

I'm thirsty for the stars
that never really get close.
Dead light and deaf ghosts
and gaps between atoms.

Broken bodies pile up
between my open legs.
I want to be buried
in the navel of space,

where the graffiti is golden
and an infidel like me
can book passage with
those celestial smugglers
we read about as children.



Maybe Tomorrow, collage by Bill Wolak

Contributors

Maria S. Picone is a writer, painter, and photographer who lives in Boulder, Colorado. She studies fiction writing at Goddard College. She loves to volunteer and travel, most recently having done both in a rural village in Cambodia. Her website is mariaspicone.com, or you can follow her on Twitter @mspicone.

August Smith is powercube triumvirate. He lives in Somerville, MA. Read his other published work, including four chapbooks, here: <http://august.mostlymidwest.com/>. He runs Cool Skull Press.

Huge vistas, endless skies and evidence of people by their marks left upon this world, **Michele Morris** has developed an eye for capturing the world sans people. Inspired by light, nature and a quirky sense of observation, Michele's photographs use color, texture, and graphic compositions to explore the wonders of this world. Michele has two books coming out with poet, Margaret Winikates – *Palettes of Light* and *Sky Writing*. Michele Morris' photographs can be found at themichelemorris.com.

Margaret Winikates is a freelance writer and museum educator from Boston, MA. She writes poetry and fiction, and can be found online at *Sea Dreams and Time Machines* (mwinikates.com) as well as at *Brain Popcorn* (brainpopcorn.com), a blog on interdisciplinary education. Meg majored in English Literature and Language at Harvard University and studied poetry and composition with Peter Sacks, Douglas Powell, and the ghost of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (during her stint as a National Park Service ranger). Meg is especially pleased that her poems appearing in this issue are part of a collaborative ekphrastic project with talented photographer, cousin, and friend, Michele Morris.

Two of Michele's photographs are represented by the Duncan Miller Gallery and can be found at <http://www.yourdailyphotograph.com>. Michele's photograph "Blooming Cactus Top" from her series "Architect of Flowers" received Honorable Mention in the Women in Photography International Juried Competition. Open Show LA chose her series "Big Sky" for exhibition. Photograph "Untitled #10" from her series "Lustrous Incandescence" was chosen for the Art by Creatives Exhibition in Culver City. Michele was one of fourteen artists featured in the Venice Arts Twentieth Anniversary Spectacular, her photograph Street View #4 was chosen for the exhibit. Her triptych featuring a floral, an abstract and one of Meg's poems written specifically to the photographs from their book, *Palettes of Light*, was selected to be in the Venice Arts 21st Anniversary Gala Gallery Show.

Valerie Loveland is the author of *Reanimated, Somehow* (Scrambler Books) and the forthcoming *Female Animal* (Dancing Girl Press). Her poetry has been featured in Dzanc Book's Anthology Best of the Web and the Massachusetts Poetry Festival. She enjoys running, audio poetry, and silent movies.

Bill Wolak is a poet, photographer, and collage artist. He has just published his twelfth book of poetry entitled *Love Opens the Hands* with Nirala Press. Recently, he was a featured poet at The Hyderabad Literary Festival. Mr. Wolak teaches Creative Writing at William Paterson University in New Jersey.

Andrew Wiedenhofer grew up in the littlest state of Rhode Island. With scant entertaining offerings in such a small state, he spent most of his time reading books about knights in far off kingdoms, kids detectives solving the latest neighborhood mystery, and galaxies in the need of a space warrior. When he

wasn't reading he built forts and pretended the refrigerator box was a spaceship. As he grew his stories only slightly matured to books about the history of King Arthur's Reign, the latest Stephen King thriller, and the adventures of Doctor Who and his companions. Now living north of Boston, Andrew spends most of his time writing business documents, press releases, and HTML code as the Communications and Public Relations Director of a non-profit agency supporting individuals with disabilities.

Joshua Jones originally from the Shenandoah Valley, is a third year candidate for the MFA in creative writing at UMass Boston. He has poems published in or forthcoming from Fourteen Hills, Coldnoon: Travel Poetics, and The Sow's Ear Poetry Review among others. He lives in Dorchester with his wonderfully nerdy wife Lesleigh and their miniature dachshund Guinivere.

Chris Drew lives in Springfield Mo., co-publishes zines and online content as Rasasvada(.net), and co-operates Springfield community zine "The Thread" Find his art here: proliferate-propagate.tumblr.com/.

Lori Zimmermann is working toward her MFA in Creative Writing at the University of Massachusetts Boston. She is also the Tumblr Editor for Broadsided Press. Previous publication credits include poems in Write on the Dot, Writers Tribe Review, and Broad!. She can recite all the stops on the MBTA's Red Line from memory.

Levi Ruback is a poet and critic from Wyoming, though his day job is at MIT Press in Cambridge, MA. A slightly longer bio can be found here: <http://www.dangerhazzard.com/a-short-biography>

The Editors

Kim Dela Cruz is a pun-loving poet, freelance editor & tinkerer. Her latest work can be found in *Broad!* and is forthcoming in *Eunoia Review*. She is now writing a collection of pieces that explores transformative potential through intimacy, identity, and the body, among other things.

Elana Friedland is a Boston-based poet and theatre practitioner. Her poems have won a scholarship from Grub Street and a fellowship from Summer Literary Seminars. She is originally from the Midwest and currently resides in Brighton, where she discovered the original Window Cat while on her way to work.

Emily Jaeger is a poet, returned peace corps volunteer, and MFA student at UMASS Boston. After living for two years as an agricultural extensionist in rural Paraguay, she returned to the Boston-area and is currently re-discovering the joys of public libraries and the internet.

Editor's Corner

Dear Internet,

We've been busy Window Cats, leading our first Internet poetics workshop IRL at MassPoetry's 2015 Festival. (& even saw a reprise of the class as part of MassPoetry's Student Day of Poetry!) Our initial workshop attracted wide range of attendees, from high school students fluent in txt-speak to seniors who had to ask how to hashtag. After that fun, generative session we realized we wanted to change our mission to reflect the fact that people can come to art at any age. We are thrilled to now include emerging artists of all ages in our issues.

This issue features bits of all the things we love most about the season. Let our breezy summer reading surprise you with bursts of color: remember fireworks and outdoor concerts, anecdotes from family trips, and the observations we make when we engage with the world and people around us. Travel with us across genres: collage, poetry, fiction, photography, and collaborative works all share space here. We're excited to introduce new uses of multimedia to our magazine while continuing to highlight works that playfully push the boundaries of established forms. Be sure to listen to the audio readings accompanying two of these poems for an opportunity to engage with writing on the page as well as in performance. This issue has the truly visceral feel of capturing real people at work and at play in the real world while also reaching for something beyond the here & now.

In these last few months, we've grown as a publication and as publishers.

Thank you to all our supporters for seeing us through our growing pains and sticking with us! Contributors, thanks again for sharing your work with us! We always look forward to sharing it with the world.

We hope you've enjoyed reading this issue, and can't wait to bring you our next.

The Editors

Kim, Elana, Emily

P.S. We're interested in growing, still! If you'd like to get involved in WCP behind the scenes, email us @ [windowcatpress_at_gmail.com](mailto>windowcatpress_at_gmail.com)



Back Cover: Sydney Coastline Shimmer, photography by Maria S. Picone