

# The Orchards Poetry Journal

Winter 2019





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For submissions: See our website



Inspired by the small plot of apple trees near Cambridge, England,  
where writers have gathered for years with their books and pens,  
we welcome you to pull up a chair and enjoy poetry in the orchard.



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1<sup>ST</sup> Place

## Elegy: One Year in Plymouth

Jean L. Kreiling

She loved the beach, the chowder, and the snow.  
She lived here just one year—an undertow  
of age and illness taking her too soon,  
her hand in mine that last dark afternoon—  
but she loved living here. She watched the waves  
at White Horse Beach, saluted pilgrims' graves,  
savored the homemade chips at East Bay Grille,  
collected new friends with uncommon skill,  
shared with them her delight in books and birds  
and music, and learned their way to say words  
like "lobstah" and "nor'eastah." Far from strong,  
her gait unsteady, she took walks along  
the harbor, where a sunny breeze renewed  
her confidence and fed her gratitude  
for every step, each season by the water,  
each autumn leaf, each tulip. As her daughter,  
I loved that year. I was her local guide,  
her walking partner, and her pal. The tide  
kept rolling, she kept busy, we both found  
new rhythms, and it seemed she'd hold her ground.  
Before her second winter here, we'd planned  
to shop for boots; instead, I held her hand  
and hoped.

When winter storms begin to blow,  
I love to think of how she loved the snow.



Featured Poet Jean Kreiling

## The Flutist Delivers

Jean L. Kreiling

A length of artificial throat  
holds only dormant dreams of tone  
until she gives birth to a note  
by breathing into silver bone.  
Her labors live in sounds that float  
like silk, or stand their ground like stone.  
They weep, or worship the sublime,  
or leap through jigs in six-eight time.

And all the tunes she plays begin  
in blood that hums along her veins,  
in cool cerebrum, in warm skin,  
in lungs that patient practice trains.  
She guards no virtue, hides no sin;  
she exhales self, and so sustains  
the newborn notes along their route  
from singing heart to ringing flute.

(Previously published in Mezzo Cammin.)



## The Salisbury Crags

Jean L. Kreiling

*Edinburgh, Scotland*

Along these crags, near Arthur's Seat,  
you watch your own slow tourist feet  
connect the dots of random stones,  
sidestepping falls and broken bones.  
Then you look up and see—complete—

an epic realm. Green hillsides meet  
a gray stone castle; down the street,  
a palace preens. A Forth wind moans  
along these crags,

chastising those who fear defeat  
by pebbly paths. Small perils greet  
the hiker, while time's rigor hones  
a city's pride: the thistle throne's  
high heather nods, and lost hearts beat  
along these crags.

(Previously published in Frostwriting.)



## Faith

Jean L. Kreiling

Dark robes, bright hopes, and words that live or die  
according to the spirit that may move  
or not move those who pray and don't ask why  
they come each Sunday—all of this may prove  
that faith survives. Or it may prove the force  
of habit, or the galling rule of guilt,  
or good behavior: kids learn not to horse  
around in pews their parents' tithes have built.  
Some people come here out of loneliness,  
while others bow their heads in mortal fear;  
one needs a place to wear a favorite dress;  
another shows up every week to hear  
the anthem. So the preacher does his best—  
not always sure just whom or what he's blessed.

(Previously published in Innisfree Poetry Journal.)



2nd place

## The Last Dandelion

Aline Soules

A rare day in November culls the strength  
of summer's sun to haunt us like rich wine.  
The leaves are gone and grapes torn from the vine,  
but one last symbol braves the shadow's length.  
A dandelion with its yellow hue  
defies the time of year with purpose sure,  
as only weeds can do. Its colors pure  
demand our admiration and their due.  
If it were spring, we never would repent  
but dig it from the ground to toss away.  
Yet now we love its boldness and its sway,  
tenacity, persistence, and intent.  
Priorities are changing with the season  
the wintering of age brings forth new reason.



3rd place

## Alter-Reality

Landon Porter

With sharpened axe last November  
(And since the day was warm and good)  
My task sent me into the timber  
To build a cache of winter wood;  
I claimed a tree well past its prime,  
Its surface smoothed and blanched by time.

My work commenced, then arrested,  
I thought perhaps by hardened knot.  
Another swing, too, contested,  
This time a spark declared the spot  
Concealed a source of metal made  
That flummoxed me and dulled my blade.

Within, a strand of old barbed wire  
Stretched 'cross the circle weather rings,  
Which told of rain and drought and fire  
And myriad forgotten things;  
For fifty years the tree had borne  
In woody flesh this rusty thorn.

Would physicists or fuzzy math  
My theory hear or claim support,  
The line that broke the spiral path  
Disrupted time and did distort  
The very course of history?  
This shall remain a mystery.



Honorable Mention

## The Stonechat Listens at the Asylum Window

Charles Southerland

I fear I might mistranslate what you said  
And lose the very essence of your words.  
May I record you as I do the birds:  
The warbler, shrike and wren, red's wild-combed head  
Who can't fly straight because his wings are strained  
By his erratic breaths—the young cock quail  
Who only knows four notes, the nightingale?  
Perhaps the mockingbird who has profaned

The puerile bluebird to his detriment?  
I listen to them all here in the field  
Or from the house, the wood, the swimming pond,  
The deer-stand in the right-of-way, the tent  
I hid in, hunting, while my body healed—  
As you well know, from wreckage and its rent.

You are the bird of paradise; I'm fond  
Of you beyond compare, despite your squawk  
When you were ill with me, the bedroom talk,  
Too colorful for feathers to respond.  
But when you left, it was the hardest thing,  
This separation. Distance has allure,  
It surely does. Migration's not a cure.  
These days, your speech has turned to twittering.

I asked if you were lonely; you said, no.  
I wondered if I heard you nearly right.  
I am the red-winged blackbird's gulping tone,  
The swallow, swift, the collared dove, hoopoe—  
No, not the Merlin, hunting late tonight.  
I am the loon, I am the loon, alone.



Honorable Mention

## The Saving Moon

Catherine Chandler

*In memory of T.F.*

The 5 a.m. dawn chorus and first light  
repudiate my questioning of “use”.  
A wavering pragmatist, today I might  
unsheathe the Henckels, maybe Google *noose*,

or, thinking an ambiguous OD  
would prove less hurtful—that is, if it works—  
I may lay down my new G43  
and take the catastrophic plunge with Percs.

But something holds me back—not Virgil’s voice  
of reason in the gruesome wood, nor threat  
of other hells from other creeds. The choice,  
though binary, is unresolved as yet.

I toss my grimy, twisted, sweat-soaked sheet,  
pull back the blackout curtains, open wide  
my window to the silent, stifling heat  
of noon, and take one final look outside.

A waning children’s moon is riding high,  
and as I monitor its certain climb,  
I am the little boy who scanned the sky  
back in a far-off place and distant time,

gazing through his spyglass telescope,  
wonderstruck at marvels such as this.  
I damn the knife, the gun, the pills, the rope,  
and turn away—for now—from the abyss.



Honorable Mention

## Pileated Woodpecker

Barbara Loots

Seldom I see her, but she can be heard:  
red flamboyant headdress of a bird  
banging her beak with quick intensity  
against the instrument of a hollow tree.

Silence does not exist. Earth's made of sound,  
her origins rumbling underneath the ground,  
her surface an airy dance of blue-green grace  
veiled in vibrations as she whirls in space.

Mornings I sit attempting to achieve  
one-ness with the silence that I disbelieve  
fill with the hum and whir of wind and wings,  
woodpeckers, and other transitory things.



## Star Dust

Taylor Graham

*We are all made of stardust—IOP Institute of Physics*

They chose the forest lookout  
for letting your ashes loose on wind.  
You knew every lift and eddy.

\*

Assured of dark sky so far  
from city lights, an artist photographed  
the lookout site. What iOS, what lens,  
  
what tricks of shutter speed  
it took to capture the old fire-tower  
uncannily illuminated,  
  
night-sky powdered with Milky Way.

The photo titled “Infinity”—  
dust and ashes. Stars.

*for Cindy*



## One Gold-Rush Evening

Taylor Graham

*a Welsh clogyrnach*

This alley's gold-mined into hills  
where spring sun gleams its last light, spills  
golden into twilight,  
periwinkle night.  
By mind's sleight, gold-dust fills

the dark stone hollows delved between  
wishing and getting. Living green  
overgrows silence  
to entwine each sense,  
immanence yet unseen.

And still the sun flecks everything  
with dust – gold dust – till shadows fling  
ghost shapes into dark,  
each a question-mark,  
a small spark glittering.



## River Gathering

Taylor Graham

What secret did he bring back home?  
The clinic closes down; Thanksgiving Eve.  
Oak leaves turn to golden; misty foam  
over Rapids River, waters rush to leave

as clinic closes down. Thanksgiving Eve,  
she's stuffed the turkey, made a centerpiece.  
Over rapids, river waters rush to leave  
down stony falls that tumble without cease.

She's stuffed the turkey, made a centerpiece.  
He parks his car, walks past the door,  
down stony falls that tumble without cease  
out of his life, perhaps, its worn-out core.

He parked his car, walked past the door  
that opens on tomorrow. Unknown day  
out of his life. Perhaps its worn-out core  
is water down the current, ocean's way

that opens on tomorrow's unknown day.  
The secret that he brought back home  
is water down the current, ocean's way.  
Oak leaves turn to golden misty foam.



## Old Age

Sally Nacker

Despite all likely lonelinesses,  
illnesses, and losses,  
my wish is still  
to one day be very old—to sit  
beside the windowsill  
like now, and know  
the birds that come and go—  
to quietly observe the snow  
dissolve into a field of flowers.



## Sighting of the Morning

Jane Blanchard

*on the sixth day of Christmas*

Look at that! Not a catbird but a hawk  
Atop the steeple of the Baptist church.  
Across the street we cannot help but gawk  
At such a splendid creature on its perch—  
Head turning north to south, then north again—  
Eyes taking in the scene including us—  
Breast, white though speckled, full, impressive in  
Our view. To spot its tail would be a plus  
But is impossible. This early on  
A Sunday, only people passing by  
Can see what stands where some cross could have gone.  
Arriving later, worshippers will spy  
Each other as they enter, maybe smile,  
But miss the hawk which visited awhile.



## Pentameter

Marc Alan Di Martino

Litter of books and papers on the bed  
pillows and sheets strewn every which way  
my mother's Brookline accent in my head  
instructing me, "Just take it day by day."  
5:35 a.m. Two hours to go  
till the alarm clock drills its silly notes  
into my ear canal. Two weeks ago  
she passed away. For breakfast eggs & toast,  
weak coffee, orange marmalade, the works.  
Quick shower, brush my teeth, get dressed, then off  
to see the sights in Glasgow, rain or shine.  
I'll look for a bookstore among the kirks  
and for a book among the books, a rough  
pentameter to help me walk this line.



## In Edinburgh

Marc Alan Di Martino

Reading MacCaig at a bus stop in Edinburgh,  
windy rainy sunny old Edinburgh.

Suddenly I notice my book  
new just a few hours ago  
has caught the rain  
the corners of it softened, damp  
waterlogged as an old postage stamp  
and grimy. *Perfect*, I think,  
and I think MacCaig would agree  
a little bit of Edinburgh dirt  
can only season a poet like me.



## Arithmetic

Marc Alan Di Martino

How strange that loved ones seem to die in pairs.  
Or is this just our way of noticing,  
piecing together puzzles in the air  
imposing order on chaotic things?  
We lurch from day to day, from stair to stare,  
mourning our losses like medieval kings  
confounded by relics, crouching in our lairs  
of melancholy, imperceptibly burning.  
Today the world seems right, back on its path  
around its lonely parent star. But math  
doesn't lie. One and one is always two  
like hearts are always red and moods are blue.  
How strange to write as if arithmetic  
were something to be questioned by a Bic.



## Uncle Bob

David Spicer

He and I met once, if my memory's correct.  
My mother constantly reminded me he'd haunt  
my life, like most lies about a personality defect,  
one I'd not want to acknowledge or flaunt:  
*You're gonna land in prison like your Uncle Bob.*  
I remembered that prophecy of doom, believed  
it among other salty cruelties she lobbed  
until she and her predictions died. Relieved,  
I saw the man I never knew as an albatross:  
a drunk, a burglar, a brother my mother hated  
because he lived life without anything to lose.  
When I locked eyes with this phantasm she had created,  
I saw a stranger in a gravel-pocked, wrinkle-streaked face  
who haunted me, who never achieved a life of grace.



## Vanessa Stephen Bell

Terese Coe

*Painter, craftsperson, elder sister of Virginia Woolf*

I learned to be elusive with my half-brothers,  
kept it mum and never breathed a word.  
Certainly not to Julia, George's mother,  
and mine and Virginia's too. Though I had heard  
he grubbed my sister as well, we both demurred  
from exposing George's sordid violations.  
That was how one faced it: in isolation.

Clive proposed, and soon the 'Goat' confounded  
us both, imploding in her anguish.  
Virginia's jealousy, once loosed, became unbounded.  
She drove herself against me with a vengeance,  
working her ingenious command of English  
and irony to get to me through Clive.  
Appalled by my froideur, she fled to the hive.

Bloomsbury gathered around us like a tribe,  
painters and writers once and always fraught,  
and each a friend of Thoby. Bathed in the gibe  
and frisson of scholars, Virginia and I still sought  
an education that could not be bought  
by women. Soon we reserved Friday nights  
for Socratic dialogues, cerebral Cambridge fights.

We cultivated Charleston and let it be.  
With Roger Fry, I had nothing left to hide  
and eventually found a balance, breaking free  
of conventional marriage, orthodox art, and pride.  
He saw me as his mutual muse and guide  
and shifted from painter-critic-theoretician  
to devising the Post-Impressionist Exhibition.



Silence is a temple, and gives me rest;  
quiet is neither alien nor extreme.  
I'd always held my words close to the breast,  
seen openness to love as a source of dream,  
and welcomed visions as a lucid stream.  
Cassis and Charleston made a quietist spread  
for artists not quite done with the mad and dead.

And who could not see the light and play of love  
in Duncan Grant? Gentle, graceful, kind,  
the androgynous painter held me hand in glove,  
talking, painting, designing, never blind  
to the comical. We repudiated the mind  
that trades in constraints on gender. That was the past.  
We could not be demeaned, nor much outclassed.

And if and when it's possible, and one  
makes love and has a child, no one can say  
how difficult it is, how overdone  
the envy and bigotry, the cant and fray  
of those who cannot understand the way  
love has no limits, never has, and never  
will. With or without the bed, it can be forever.



## Happy Hour

Leslie Schultz

Each evening, on the very stroke of six,  
My favorite man and I withdraw to mix  
A reliable elixir to repair  
The daily slings, and ward off bleak despair.

As day fades into night, to change the channel,  
We pour some tea, slip into something flannel.



## Aware of My Beauty

Wendy Patrice Williams

I am still as the cottonwood in breezeless air, calm  
as the smooth blue stones piled on the hill.

The skin of my hands crisscrossed, dry, ridged;  
legs carrying me less far, but look how beautiful I am—  
deep-reaching like the river, complex as the swirling

eddies I no longer wish to disappear beneath.  
I float as a gull waiting. When ready, I cry out.

I belong here among the blue stones, the people  
searching for outstretched hands.  
A quiet calm sends down roots, steadily

I walk on, my legs bent  
at the knees, aware of the coming changes. I fall  
into my step and the path is there.



## Not a Danger to Himself

Peter Venable

Well over 90°. He sweltered in tree shade.  
Nearby, old fries and strewn cheese marred his parking lot glade.

“I sleep in the woods over there behind the Food Lion.”  
A cap covered matted hair. “You can call me Bryan.”

His walker leaned on a tree. “Bum leg. I’m disabled.  
I go to the store to pee. They might give me a bagel.”

He grabbed a quart and drank deep. “Been homeless for four months.”  
His clothes were piled in a heap. “Was even married once.”

“I live how I want—I’m free.” I sighed. He took a sip.  
Heat waves broke on asphalt seas. He munched on a corn chip.

Efforts to commit him failed—Some doctor found no cause.  
No crime, no cuffs, and no jail. Didn’t break any laws.

Next day, back under his tree, I gave him a suitcase,  
And a large cup of sweet tea—a gesture to say grace.



## My River

Ace Boggess

I've been cheating on you  
with another younger, less mysterious.  
In your absence, what have I but this  
impostor? I always come back to you,  
Ohio, finding you in distant cities  
as though our destiny lies in all directions.  
The same barges crease your center,  
house lights brighten at night  
like a nest of stars. I am yours.

Penitent, weary—I walk arm in arm  
with you. How I crave your morning kiss  
of milk, & bloated fury  
of basketballs & broken lumber  
after a storm when you open  
treacherous arms that embrace the flood.



## Visitation

Andrea Potos

I thought I was alone, then  
a gentle motor sounded  
from a foot away; I turned  
to watch her dip into the  
heart of the columbine,

before swiftly she changed direction,  
bobbing in air  
just inches from my face.  
I swear she tried to stare me down.

I could not look away, held  
my breath, as if to discern  
her hushed message--was it something about  
the eternal whirring, something about  
how the miraculous is true.



## Worship Strange and Dangerous

Greg Huteson

Most curious, I thought. The man  
who wore a black silk robe now slouched  
behind a lectern and began  
to speak, a cursory lecture couched  
in hard imperatives and stories  
excerpted from an ancient text,  
a Middle East anthology.  
The auguries this cult professed  
and referenced as holy signs  
were first observed within the book  
and then explained in simple lines  
to listeners. But were they rooked?  
What proof this faith won't end in blight?  
What Word assures the augur's right?



## Lady Caroline Lamb Writes to Lord Byron after the Break-up

Wendy Howe

Take Note Sir;

I've pruned my hair, flung its intimate curl  
to the breeze and arbor's flowering vine  
where we often lay. The scissors traveled  
much too close and blood spilled like wine

staining this paper that bears my script.  
A few lines to reveal what I feel inside  
along with these spared clippings that shape  
quotation marks of sorrow and pride.

Though you've shed me like a Spanish moth  
sheds the frail silk of its cocoon  
and flies with wings cloaked in wanton fire  
to other fields lit by the moon,

I still love nature and the way she loans  
you words to frame her infinite breath.  
They turn a woman's gown to the night sky  
and bid stars to burn away death

as a cross and swan guide Winter  
into the Southern Hemisphere.  
I feel the scent of loam rising  
as rain stirs the earth and birds build near

the garden window, their spring nests wrought  
with mud, grass and dew off the morning's tongue.  
Though I've adored you as a maiden would  
with a garland of naivety hung



around my head, my own intellect  
laid as shadow before your scribbling plume;  
I've come to perceive that a wren's throat  
sings more fair than the lord in his lady's room.



## When Juliet

Neil Kennedy

When Juliet, still dozing in the dark,  
hears Romeo suggesting, standing stark,  
the song outside the window is the lark,

she throws off all her blankets, moves her pale  
soft body against his, so he can't fail  
to hear her when she whispers "nightingale."



## What You See Is What I Got

John Grey

Please don't be surprised by the wretched scars.  
They're very well earned. Hurt personified.  
Here's Anna. There is the last time I cried.  
Evidence that love that's sought in dive bars  
Is a fool's errand. This is one that jars  
My memory into takedown of pride.  
And look at bitterness, near suicide.  
My face is not so difficult to parse.

More than I could tell you, these grim tattoos.  
Beleaguered, cynical smiles, even bags  
Underlining the eyes, all bring the news  
From past relationships: unwitting sags  
To deep incisions, clues to deepest blues.  
Yes, a lived-in face flies such honest flags.



## Smoke on the Wind

Robin Helweg-Larsen

Smoke on the wind  
And ice on the glass,  
Leaves off the trees  
And green off the grass;  
Deer in the yard  
And wood in the shed;  
The end of the old  
And a new year ahead.



## Winter Night Roads

Robin Helweg-Larsen

Full midnight moon on fields that yield but snows,  
Air apple-clean, crisp, sweet  
In lungs and nose,  
The only sound your feet  
Past silent woods—  
Inhaling moods and modes  
Of midnight roads.

In twenty minutes, you hear only this:  
A dog bark twice. An owl hoot once.  
A horse snort by a fence.  
Some heavy breath behind a hedge: a cow.  
A mile away a car's lights show, then go.  
You walk unknown, alone, towards some place  
With light and life, perhaps a warm cafe  
To make a break in travelling towards day.



## The Weight

Diane Elayne Dees

The unforgiven hang around my heart  
like a charm bracelet fashioned out of lead.  
They weigh me down—the living and the dead—  
and though I often will them to depart,  
they always find their way back. Father, mother,  
the husband who embodied sins of both,  
surround me with their brutal weight of truth  
about myself. And there are also others  
I believe that I've forgiven, and yet still,  
I feel them pressing hard against my soul.  
This isn't something that I can control  
through intention or desire or sheer will.  
What will it take to tear apart this chain,  
to melt the weight, obliterate the pain?



## Sonnet with a Final Supper

Caroliena Cabada

If the summer blaze persists until my  
Judgement Day, I won't pray for another  
winter. I'll spread my body out on fry  
pan cast iron, then roll to the other  
side and cook even. Already golden,  
the skin can still be browner, more toothsome.  
I hunger for char and am emboldened  
to hold my barbecue for a ransom.  
No one should feast on my body but me.  
I shouldn't sacrifice my first life for  
nonbelievers. Forgiveness isn't free.  
When given a taste, the greedy ask more  
of me. With hope, I try to rescue, yet  
refusing, they sink in the watershed.



## 1960's Soap Operas

Cynthia Erlandson

“Soap operas,” they called them. Housewives watched  
Them while they sewed or cooked or ironed clothes.  
At two o’clock each afternoon began  
The sleazy saga to which mom attached  
Attention, sympathizing with the woes  
Of characters unlike her, who would plan  
Adultery or revenge. Mom sat and stitched  
A hem, or stood and ironed, while the themes  
Of selfish human nature crossed the screen  
In tangled threads of hate. Malicious schemes  
Were interwoven; each distressing scene  
Changed suddenly when it was at its peak.  
The one mom watched was called “The Secret Storm.”  
It featured gales of anger, squalls and gusts  
Of squalid murder plots. Five days a week  
The vengeful envy thundered on while mom—  
Engrossed in drama based on brutal lusts,  
Vindictive pride, and winds of violent greed—  
Was drawn into this sordid world. Her iron  
Appeared to move itself, her mind absorbed.  
I was bewildered by her curious need  
To follow these warped lives. What might she learn  
About the world from people so disturbed?  
“It shows me that my problems aren’t so bad,”  
She said. I wondered after that, instead,  
About her private world: what secret storm  
Might haunt this normal woman I called Mom?

This stormy world is full of secret sins.  
“Adam is in this earth. So it begins.” \*

\*James Agee, Sonnet I



## I Don't Like Christmas

Jean Syed

I don't like Christmas, it's a scandal,  
It's just so much commercialism,  
I do like "Messiah" by Handel.

Santa, presents, all the caboodle,  
I don't like the consumerism,  
Cut off Christmas trees, a scandal.

Yule-log, holly, are not biblical,  
In fact, they are paganism,  
Not like "Messiah" by Handel.

Christmas dinner is that so special,  
When forgotten folk eat pessimism.  
I don't like Christmas. Am I the scoundrel?

The singers sounding in the cathedral,  
Do they vent forth with cynicism?  
Or do they believe "Messiah" by Handel?

Overture to the amen, a marvel  
I say this with strong atheism,  
I don't like Christmas, it's a scandal,  
I do like "Messiah" by Handel



## Luis de Camões leaving Macau

Robin MacKenzie

Tomorrow we sail for home, skirting the shores  
of dripping mangroves where the Mekong pours  
into a slimy sea. We'll navigate  
the sluggish waters of the Sunda Strait,  
then head over the ocean, tempest-tossed,  
to Madagascar's lemur-haunted coast.  
We'll round that headland where a giant looms  
out of a heaving sea – the Cape of Storms,  
that one day will be blessed with a kinder name;  
a day when Lusitanian sailors' fame  
will echo round the world and I will lie  
a sun-scorched corpse beneath the African sky,  
a pile of whitened bones on the sea floor  
or buried on that windy headland where  
Prince Henry mapped oceans he'd never see  
and smiling Vasco dreamed of the distant Indies.



## Garden Ruin

Ed Higgins

November. Far past harvest. Sunflower's darkened heads drooping, empty of sun. Canary finches who late-summer fed here vanished into yellow elsewhere. The garden's tilth strewn with cornstalk stubble, grey squash-less vines, the empty pea trellis. Dry birdbath birdless. Hoses drained, coiled, in the pump house remembering summer's fecundity: the nurture of water to soil to peas, to corn, beets, green beans, zucchini, yellow crookneck, zinnias, all beyond picking. Missing now even weeds: obnoxious morning-glory plague, gone. Bare soil now rain-soaked with lament. These and more plaintive sights awaiting distant spring.

another distance

only after  
you slipped away entirely

without any healing words  
possible between us

alone again  
listening to memory

like soft rain  
already halfway to spring

with crocus you planted  
rising in my heart

their emerald spears rooted  
backward without forgiveness

and love at fault once more.



## Nostalgia

Robert Donohue

Beside a tranquil stream there is a tower  
Inside of which, if curious, you'll find  
A library, and if you have the mind  
In there resides both love and wisdom's flower.  
To write these books I have spent all my power  
But to their virtue I am growing blind  
And everything for which I've always pined  
Diminishes, as hour follows hour.

I loiter outside now and watch the stream.  
I watch it be itself; I watch it flowing.  
Where to? I've given up the will of knowing –  
Like it, there was a time I was serene,  
When love and wisdom, new to me as dawn,  
Were mine to have, but in the having, gone.



## Listen

Kitty Jospé

Can you hear it in the undertow  
in the weave of sound, its rhythmic pace  
heel-clicked, toe-tapped time in each echo?

No ordinary telling hinges the stories we row,  
the oars do not erase as they dip, pull, replace.  
Can you hear it in the undertow?

The clown laughs at whatever grief deals its blow—  
and music walks on brushes, intones each key's trace,  
heel-clicked, toe-tapped time in each echo.

Earth does its salsa with the sun, moon in tow  
pulling tides that polish sand, pearls, hidden grace.  
Can you hear it in the undertow?

It pulls here now, there now. In the pause, go  
look at slow habits that dress the years, lace  
heel-clicked, toe-tapped time in each echo.

What music for dreams sliding into two-toned flow  
of tide-turns, seasons of sea spawned embrace.  
Can you hear it in the undertow—  
heel-clicked, toe-tapped time in each echo?



## Green Fugue

Kitty Jospé

Green: If only it could be so simple as this:  
No one judged, no traitor's kiss.  
Green like the ancients embraced  
with wreathes—a fertile case of love winding  
caress in blue-yellow weave of all shades of green.  
Then we wouldn't say *stranger* to a fellow  
whose green is not like ours... or scream  
*You're spinach! You're kale, collard!*  
*You're iceberg lettuce, pale coward!*  
*You're skinny bean, you're fat okra,*  
*bok-choy, garbage-cabbage:* No,  
karaoke of green, let's dance away the blues,  
take bright light, make green the good news.

If only it could be that simple. But I'm white.  
I ache for those mistreated because they're not.  
Give me that dream of equal spirit, not rot  
of dollars. I dream green with no color for spite.

It cannot be as simple as one pronoun: we.  
However you scramble blue/yellow: you/me  
we can start by saying replacing greed with green—  
where *yes* opens the heart, shares in the thrill  
of variation on one theme—  
in a complex, beautiful fugue  
of endless notes of green.



## Biographies

**(1<sup>st</sup> place) Jean L. Kreiling** is a Professor of Music at Bridgewater State University in Massachusetts and the author of two collections of poetry: *Arts & Letters & Love* (2018) and *The Truth in Dissonance* (2014). She is a past winner of the *Able Muse* Write Prize, the Great Lakes Commonwealth of Letters Sonnet Contest, a Laureates' Prize in the Maria W. Faust Sonnet Contest, three New England Poetry Club prizes, and the *String Poet* Prize

**(2<sup>nd</sup> place) Aline Soules'** work has appeared in such publications as *Kenyon Review*, *Houston Literary Review*, *Poetry Midwest*, and *The Galway Review*. Her books include *Meditation on Woman* and *Evening Sun: A Widow's Journey*. She is currently working on a novel, which she plans to finish in 2020. She earned her M.A. in English, her M.S.L.S. in Library Science, and her MFA in Creative Writing, and currently teaches creative writing through the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute scholar program offered through California State University, East Bay. Find her online at [@aline\\_elisabeth, and \[\\*\\*\\(3<sup>rd</sup> place\\) Landon Porter\\*\\* is a business owner and database developer who writes poetry as an extension of his ability to bring together form \\(computer code\\) and function \\(user interface design\\). Writing formal verse is a natural outlet for his love of order and beauty. Much of the inspiration for his poetry comes from growing up on a farm in western Kansas, but he now lives in Kansas City, Missouri with his wife and three children.\]\(https://www.linkedin.com/in/alinesoules/</a></a></p></div><div data-bbox=\)](http://alinesoules.com)

**(Honorable Mention) Charles (Charlie) Southerland** lives quietly on his 240 acre farm in Arkansas. He manages a heap of critters and is teaching his six-year old grandson how to hunt and fish. Charlie's been published in some pretty good journals: *Trinacria*, *The Pennsylvania Review*, *Measure*, *The Road Not Taken*, *First Things*, *The Lyric*, *Blue Unicorn*, *The Rotary Dial*, *Cathexis Northwest*, *Salmon Creek* and others, He was nominated for a Pushcart Prize a few years ago and was a finalist in the Howard Nemerov Sonnet contest. He writes about everything.

**(Honorable Mention) Catherine Chandler** is the author of *The Frangible Hour*, winner of the Richard Wilbur Award (University of Evansville Press); *Lines of Flight* (Able Muse Press), shortlisted for the Poets' Prize, *Glad and Sorry Seasons* (Biblioasis), *This Sweet Order* (White Violet Press), and *Pointing Home* (Kelsay Books). Winner of the Howard Nemerov Sonnet Award, the Leslie Mellichamp Prize, *The Lyric* Quarterly Award, and a recent finalist in the Able Muse Write Prize, Catherine's complete bio, podcasts, reviews, and other information are available on her poetry blog, The Wonderful Boat, at [www.cathychandler.blogspot.ca](http://www.cathychandler.blogspot.ca).



**(Honorable Mention) Barbara Loots** has published poems for fifty years in literary journals, online magazines, textbooks, and anthologies. Her collections, published by Kelsay Books, are *Road Trip* (2014) and *Windshift* (2018), a finalist for the 2019 Thorpe Menn Award for Literary Excellence. Retired since 2008 from a long career at Hallmark Cards, Barbara volunteers as a docent at the renowned Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Missouri, where she resides with her husband, Bill Dickinson, and Bob the Cat in the historic Hyde Park neighborhood.

**Jane Blanchard** divides her time between Augusta and Saint Simon's Island, Georgia. Her poetry has recently appeared in *Aethlon*, *Lighten Up Online*, *North Carolina Folklore Journal*, *Snakeskin*, and *Valley Voices*. Her third collection, *After Before*, was published by Kelsay Books.

**Ace Boggess** is author of four books of poetry, most recently *I Have Lost the Art of Dreaming It So*, and two novels. His poems have appeared in *Harvard Review*, *River Styx*, *Rhino*, *Tar River Poetry*, and other journals. He lives in Charleston, West Virginia.

**Carolienna Cabada** is an MFA candidate for Creative Writing and Environment at Iowa State University, and holds a BA in Chemistry from New York University. She serves as co-managing editor of *Flyway: Journal of Writing and Environment*. Her poems appear or are forthcoming in *From The Edge* and *Lyrical Iowa*

**Terese Coe's** poems appear in *Agenda*, *Hopkins Review*, *Poetry*, *Poetry Review*, *Threepenny Review*, and the *TLS*. *Shot Silk* was short-listed for the 2017 Poets Prize, and copies of her poem "More" were in the 2012 Olympics Rain of Poems. *Why You Can't Go Home Again* was published by Kelsay Books, 2018.

**Marc Alan Di Martino's** work has appeared in *Rattle*, *the New Yorker*, *Baltimore Review*, *Palette Poetry* and many other places, and is forthcoming in the anthologies *Unsheathed: 24 Contemporary Poets Take Up the Knife* and *What Remains: The Many Ways We Say Goodbye*. His first collection, *Unburial* was published by Kelsay Books. He currently lives in Perugia, Italy with his family where he works as a teacher and translator.

**Robert Donohue** is a poet and playwright. His poetry has appeared in *The Raintown Review*, *2 Bridges Review*, *IthacaLit*, *Better Than Starbucks* and *The Orchards*. The Red Harlem Readers gave his verse play, *In One Piece*, a staged reading in 2014. He lives on Long Island NY



**Diane Elayne Dees's** chapbook, *I Can't Recall Exactly When I Died*, is forthcoming from Clare Songbirds Publishing House; also, forthcoming, from Kelsay Books, is her chapbook, *Coronary Truth*. Diane publishes Women Who Serve, a blog that delivers news and commentary on women's professional tennis throughout the world.

**Cynthia Erlandson's** poems have appeared in *First Things*, *Modern Age, Measure, Touchstone*, and *Anglican Theological Journal*.

**Taylor Graham** is a volunteer search-and-rescue dog handler and served as El Dorado County Poet Laureate (2016-18). Her poems are included in *Villanelles* (Everyman's Library) and *California Poetry: From the Gold Rush to the Present* (Heyday Books). Her latest collection is *Windows of Time and Place* (Cold River Press, 2019).

**John Grey** is an Australian poet, US resident. Recently published in *That, Dunes Review, Poetry East and North Dakota Quarterly* with work upcoming in *Haight-Ashbury Literary Journal, Thin Air, Dalhousie Review* and *failbetter*.

**Ed Higgin's** poems and short fiction have appeared in various print and online journals including recently: *Peacock Journal, Uut Poetry, Triggerfish Critical Review*, and *Tigershark Magazine*, among others. I am Writer-in-Residence at George Fox University, south of Portland, OR, and also Asst. Fiction Editor for Ireland-based Brilliant Flash Fiction.

**Wendy Howe** is an English teacher and free-lance writer. Her poetry reflects her interest in myth, diverse landscapes and ancient cultures. Over the years, she has been published in an assortment of journals both on-line and in print. Among them: *Gingerbread House Lit Magazine, Ariadne's Thread, The Tower Journal, Stirring, A Literary Collection, The Linnet's Wings* and others.

For the past twenty years, **Greg Huteson** has lived in China and Taiwan. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Better Than Starbucks, The Road Not Taken, the Saint Katherine Review, SOFTBLOW, A New Ulster*, and other journals.

**Robin Helweg-Larsen's** poetry has been published in *The Orchards, Ambit, Snakeskin, Lighten-up Online, etc* in the UK, plus in the US, Canada, Netherlands, India and Australia. He is Series Editor for Sampson Low's "Potcake Chapbooks—Form in Formless Times" and lives in his hometown of Governor's Harbour in the Bahamas.



**Kitty Jospé**, MA French Literature, NY University; MFA Poetry Pacific University, OR. (2009); Art Docent since 1998 at the Memorial Art Gallery, Rochester, NY. Since 2008, she moderates weekly poetry sessions. Her work has appeared in many journals and published in five books of her poems as well as other anthologies.

**Neil Kennedy** holds a BA in English and an MFA in Creative Writing. He is currently earning his MS in Library Science while working as a librarian. His work has appeared in *Origami Poetry Project* and *The Road Not Taken*.

**Robin MacKenzie** lives and works in Scotland. He has had poems published in various magazines, including *Iota* and *Obsessed with Pipework* (in the UK) and *The Pennsylvania Review* (in the US). One of his poems appears on the Poetry Map of Scotland, commissioned by StAnza Poetry Festival: <http://stanzapoetry.org/blog/poetry-map-scotland-poem-no-94-glenrothes>

**Sally Nacker** resides in Connecticut with her husband and their two cats, and works at the library. She has her MFA in Poetry from Fairfield University (2013). Her two collections—*Vireo* (2015), and *Night Snow* (2017)—were both published by Kelsay Books. Journal publications include *Mezzo Cammin*, *The Orchards*, *The Fourth River*, *Grey Sparrow Journal*, *Red Wheelbarrow Literary Magazine*, and *The Wayfarer*. Amherst, MA may well be her most favorite place on earth. <http://www.sallynacker.com>

**Leslie Schultz** (Northfield, Minnesota) has three collections: *Still Life with Poppies: Elegies* (Kelsay Books, 2016); *Cloud Song* (Kelsay Books, 2018); and *Concertina* (Kelsay Books, 2019). Her poetry has appeared in *Able Muse*, *Blue Unicorn*, *Light*, *Mezzo Cammin*, *Third Wednesday*, *The Madison Review*, *The Midwest Quarterly*, *The Orchards*, and *The Wayfarer*.

**Andrea Potos** is the author of nine poetry collections, most recently *Mothershell* (Kelsay Books), *A Stone to Carry Home* (Salmon Poetry, Ireland), and *Arrows of Light* (Iris Press). Her poems can be found widely in print and online. She lives in Madison, Wisconsin.

**Jean Syed** was born in England went to Birmingham University but has been in America for thirty-nine years. She has chapbooks by Dos Madres Press and Kelsay Books and in anthologies: *Footbridge Above The Falls*, editor David D. Horowitz, *The Best of 2004-2015* editor Saad Ghosn. Poems have appeared in *The Lyric*, *Mezzo Cammin*, *The Journal of Formal Poetry*, *The Ghazal Page*, and others.



**David Spicer** has poems in *Santa Clara Review*, *Delta Poetry Review*, *Chiron Review*, *Synaeresis*, *Reed Magazine*, *Synaeresis*, *Alcatraz*, *Flatbush Review*, *CircleShow*, *The Phoenix*, *Ploughshares*, *American Poetry Review*, and elsewhere. He is the author of *Everybody Has a Story* and six chapbooks; his latest chapbook is *Tribe of Two* (Seven CirclePress).

**Peter Venable** has written both free and metric verse for over fifty years. He has been published in *Windhover*, *Third Wednesday*, *The Merton Seasonal*, *American Vendantist*, *The Anglican Theological Review*, and forthcoming in *Spiritus*, *Time of Singing*, *Society of Classical Poetry*, and *The Blue Mountain Review*. He is a member of the Winston Salem Writers and a poetry critique group. His fascination with rhyme and meter began in college, absorbing Donne, Milton, Blake *et al.* In addition, he finds lyrics in anthems and hymns edifying.

**Wendy Patrice Williams** is the author of two chapbooks, *Some New Forgetting* and *Bayley House Bard*, and the book *In Chaparral: Life on the Georgetown Divide, California* (Cold River Press). She is a member of Red Fox Underground Poets of the Sierra Foothills and loves to write about nature's surprises.

