

# OLENTANGY REVIEW

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

In the 1960s when the young artists of that day decided to paint everyday objects, such as soup cans, with as much passion as others painted landscapes or nudes the current academic establishment responded by calling them many unflattering rude names, and saying that real art must always have its specific and iron-clad rules and only certain agreed upon objects could or should ever be used for its high minded subjects. The young artists smiled and said, "We don't think so."

It's this kind of feeling that we're looking for here in these pages, that freedom of expression that tells you you're looking at the work of an individual. We share their love of using words as the medium for their art. It's an honor to share them with you.

All of our contributors are out there right now living their lives and making their art. We're here to fill your cups on their behalf. The artists in this issue are varied in their approach to writing and presenting their vision to us. That's what makes it fun. Fun to read, fun to share, fun to explore. It makes you think. It makes you feel. It inspires you. It moves you to action. And, for me, it's entertaining as all get out.

There are always going to be really interesting folks who choose to express themselves for who they are today, and what they are feeling right now. This magazine is one way of being in celebration with those wonderfully creative ones among us.

And so a great big thank you to all those whose time and talents went into making this issue the beautiful thing it is. We couldn't do it without you.

**Darryl Price** | September 23, 2015  
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## **Not Creative** | *Bud Smith*

when a house explodes  
you can walk for miles  
finding the debris

each wildfire is named  
for the place where it is fought  
I heard about one  
yesterday on the radio  
fire fighters so exhausted  
and so worn out  
they just named this one  
'Not Creative'

here, look at this  
here's a hunk of silver shiny  
I believe this was either  
a kitchen sink  
or the guts of a toilet

here look at this  
it was either a poem  
or instructions to  
construct a bomb

here look at this  
it's 7 billion people  
not sure who is wrong

when the dispatcher  
was reached via walkie talkie  
the dispatcher said  
'Water is on the way'.

## **Paddling Lincoln Lake at Dawn** | *Tamer Mostafa*

Most houselights are off, sleeping in a steam fog  
that blankets the lake, shaped like a palm  
and five finger extensions. A striper splashes a clan  
of mallards dipping their beaks in the water for algae.

In elementary school, our class took a field trip here,  
an end of the year retreat on the beach  
until a student drowned near the island dock,  
and one of the teachers cusped both hands together,  
as if taking a mallet to a high striker machine at a carnival.

Us kids stood, wading in the water, waiting  
for an adult to cover our eyes, but I like to think  
they were giving us our first test, training children  
to understand that the lake water wouldn't  
climb out of the child's mouth like a spring loaded lever  
that rings the bell at the top of the tower.

Reaching to the backseat of the paddleboat,  
I unwrap the sawed off shotgun from the checkered blanket,  
drop it in the water, stock first at what I hope,  
is the deepest point.

## **Purging** | *Tamer Mostafa*

On a summer day in the park  
there's a 10 man lineup of us  
with shirts off and varied in complexion,  
disclosing our marks of identity.

We stand on the basketball court  
arguing over a non-call,  
the question of who hit who,  
which squad the ball belongs to.

A boombox behind the hoop's post  
embraces the modern shift in music  
until the shuffle playback clutches NWA,  
toe to toe and g-funk under the ghost of a palm tree.

The red and blue sliding across the lightbar.  
Why is everyone running, I asked?  
at which point, the officers bull-charged over  
and strapped flexicuffs on our wrists.

## **To the Passerby | *Tamer Mostafa***

Across the town, far from the hot tar dropping  
towards the Little Manila district, shallow lake tides  
soften and soak the dock's wooden planks  
the pintails use to line in regularity  
like the first wave of soldiers in battle.

The blue-gray bill expelling the inedible in each mouthful  
and I awoke under the agricultural patterns of their flights,  
fearing an impending migration,  
then screamed what felt like the last life I had left,  
the way a captive rebels before learning to endure.

I knew the stay would be short, as if the next destination  
promised to provide better sustenance and safety  
enveloped in the flounces of a swift softness.

Remember the scent of sprouting asparagus crowns  
through the cow manure and drying delta water,  
the truth of our city, its origins and intentions.

## Pickled Sea Creature Love Story | *James Claffey*

The man subsists in a one-room tenement above a betting shop on the north side of the city. A black and red banner gives away his love of the Bohemians Football Club and the window ledge that looks out on the narrow street is lined with empty Heineken bottles. His girlfriend arrives after 10 o'clock Mass with a gift; a glass jar with a dozen baby octopi brined in formaldehyde. He takes her in from head to toe, her dark, curly hair, the gold-hooped earrings, the cheesecloth blouse unbuttoned one button below modesty. This morning, sunrise long past, his heart beats faster as he takes the jar of dead sea creatures from her and places it on the mantelpiece above the boarded-up fireplace.

Outside, the rain falls, large drops on the dry concrete pavement. The girlfriend stands at the window outlined against the curtains, her face a murky puzzle, her lashes in stark relief as she softly hums. She is in a hurry, he thinks. The manner in which she stands teetering against the windowpane, the looseness of her shirt and the way her breasts are outlined. He moves to her side, arms about her waist, and the two of them watch the falling rain through the grimy curtains. She has a medicinal smell to her, probably the embalming liquid from the jar. He noticed the rustiness of the lid and how the seal might not be good, but not wanting to hurt her feelings, said nothing.

The rain hammers against the windows, an unorthodox pattern on a sad Sunday morning. The Lord's Day forecloses any possibility of their shedding their clothes and taking to the narrow single bed against the far wall. Instead, he feels the soft heft of her breasts against his folded arms and longs to run his hands down her naked body from neck to sex, but settles for nuzzling his face into her warm neck. The flat is quiet as they stand by the window and witness how the rain on the hot pavement turns to wraiths of vapor. He presses his body up against her and the soft wood of the floorboards creaks in surprise at the boldness of his movement.

## **Night Walk** | *Tharindra Galahena*

City suffers from sleeplessness.  
Neon lights throw away the dark blanket,  
With rainbow hands.  
Cars with bright eyes,  
Confuse me,  
Not as much as your eyes,  
But it's dark,  
And I'm tired.  
Too tired to separate dreams from reality.  
Dreams about you.  
I see you walking in front of me,  
Or standing at a bus-stop smiling at me,  
Like a mirage to thirsty eyes.

## **Morning Rain** | *Tharindra Galahena*

Today, somehow they have decided,  
to give me something I want,  
A slow rain in the morning,  
where I can go out and look up,  
see the raindrops coming down,  
let them touch my face,  
and drip down on my cheeks,  
like tears.

Then pretend that I'm crying,  
Pretend that my sorrows will wash away,  
with the tears,  
Tears which are not even tears.

## Confetti | *Igor Goldkind*

There's an emptiness at the heart of any contained space.  
The air that fills a dome; an unanswered echo in a vacuum.  
There's an emptiness in my heart  
That reminds me that  
All of my ideas are empty.  
They are floating leaves from a fumbled folder  
Flying papers litter the sky.

The sound thoughts make when escaping on the wind.

This emptiness must remind you  
How light and flimsy your desires really are, and  
How gently they fall like rain from the sky to the floor  
A confetti of mercy and good intentions.  
Those shredded emotions that fall at your feet;  
Are in the end, compared to Nothing,  
Merely the fleeting litter of *your mind*.

## Living Momentum | *Igor Goldkind*

This moment is dead.  
But your life is momentum.  
It's the only life you know:  
Everywhere you look  
Is exactly where you'll go.  
Paying attention like a fine,

(Sniffing out the muddied footprints of the divine.)

This ticket that you're riding,  
Fare-less and Free,  
Is merely the impetus of your desire  
Conserved, unaffectedly  
By any other force or sway  
Upon your singular trajectory through time.

## **I Folded My Mother Up** | *Igor Goldkind*

I folded my mother up  
Into a creased peace of paper  
Folding memories into intentions.  
Flattening the dementia of unstructured emotions  
Into a neat, file-able document.

We arc this abyss; tightening ropes over time.  
We are not our worst intentions,  
but we are the acts that follow.  
Like clobbering footsteps tripping  
Over broken paving stones of Being.

We are not the sum of our categories  
or the crimes that we have witnessed  
But we are the balance  
That keeps us falling forwards, without stumbling  
Over our own shoelace sense of time.

## Arkansas Arcadia | *Marcus Speh*

### Arkansas Abduction

The heat was incredible. It was brutal and reminded him of the existence of higher powers. He locked up his car, and tried the handles twice to make sure it was locked. He shouldered his backpack, pushed his baseball cap ("AREA 51") down and set off in the direction of the UFO's landing site. The scene from the night before still stood clearly and solemnly in his mind like the calm surface of a sacred pond at night. He felt the power of transition, of transgression even, creep up on him. He had led a quiet life so far but who knew what the future would bring? If there even was anything like future on the alien planet. Maybe time was immaterial there. They had invited him into their world. He had accepted immediately without weighing the options. He would have done in any other earthly circumstance. He did not know why. As he was walking he wondered if the car was really properly locked or not. He wondered if he had switched off the burners at home. He thought he had but...it was so easy to zone out, to leave without having taken proper precautions. He stopped, took a deep breath.

Who was he kidding? He was not ready to leave: not with everything back here in such a state of disorder. The possibility of chaos was overwhelming. The aliens did not offer a solution to the chaos, they only offered an escape, an exit to entropy. The hot tongue of the sun licked his back. The cicadas were crying for him. The birds were wisely holding their song. He walked back to his car, focused on getting through the day without going crazy.



## Arkansas Ascension

The priest had noticed the elderly robot who came to every one of his services: he always sat in the back of the church, almost in the dark where the windows were broken and were now boarded up. The robot came in, knelt, bent his head, folded his claws and stayed that way until the concluding rite. The priest imagined that the robot did not want to raise a ruckus by getting up and down - old machines could be noisy.

One day, he decided to approach him. The robot did not seem to notice, so the priest stepped in his way. The robot stopped, looked up. He was indeed very old: oxidization had left deep marks on his cheeks; the glass over his large head lights was almost blind; and the silicone rubber of his body was so smudgy and wrinkled that it almost looked like real skin. The robot could not fully command the braking; the process of slowing down was painfully drawn out and smelled of defeat: the robot's torso bent back, the head thrust forward, his limbs trying to snatch control from the jaws of decay.



“Yes, father?” said the robot when he had managed to come to a standstill. The stench of burnt oil was in the air now. The priest felt sorry for him and guilty for having stopped him.

“Aww...nothing really, I am sorry to bother you, my son...,” said the priest, “I noticed you come to mass regularly and I wanted to make contact.”

“Sure, father,” said the droid, “sure.” He started to shake and splutter. Then he began again: “Sure.”

A cloud of white smoke formed above his head and the light bar that ran around his skull went dark. The priest sighed. It was too late for the viaticum.

## Arkansas Amnesia

At Wal-Mart, Bryston noticed that he had forgotten his glasses. He wouldn't be able to see a bloody thing. He might lose his way if he dared to go more deeply into this new Hyper-Store. It was so large that most people caught a robocart at the entrance. He looked around for help.

A woman approached him and said: "You're looking for aisle 72."

Bryston said: "Am I? I'm looking for shampoo. Is that the aisle for shampoo?"

She shook her head. She had a lot of hair and looked ageless; her face was radiating a high mood: she looked serenely happy. Perhaps she wanted to sell him something. Well, he wasn't going to buy anything but shampoo today, even if she offered him bodily love.

"No it isn't," the woman said. "But you have to trust me, Mr. Boyd, you want to go to aisle 72." She slowly smoothed her hair back with both hands. He noticed how meticulously groomed her nails looked. How delicate her fingers were.

Bryston snorted. There was something very soothing in the woman's voice and in her whole demeanour. He wanted to resist it, he really did. He didn't know how she knew his name but there were probably scanners at the entrance.

She took his hand. It was cool and warm both. She walked off with him silently through the store.

After a while, he said: "This is an awfully long way, Ma'am."

She did not reply and Bryston didn't push it. Holding hands with this stranger felt good, there was no need to make a fuss. Just enjoy it while it lasted.

They hadn't met any other shopper or employee for some time.



"Here we are," the woman finally said. Bryston saw the large number '72'. He nodded.

"Now what," he said.

"Now you disappear," she said smiling and flipped a switch right below the sign. Bryston Boyd couldn't read it because he hadn't brought his glasses but the woman wasn't lying: in an instant, he was gone.

And so was his car outside on the parking lot. And his house back on Clinton Drive with everything in it. And his social security record. And the memory anyone had of ever having met Bryston Boyd.

## **Pencil Factory** | *Mary Harrison*

The woods behind my house are shallow and cool  
crazy-quilted with paths trod flat by boys  
Davy Crockett-ing,  
seeking their fortunes the way little boys do –  
eyes peeled for catamounts and secret treasure  
and arrowheads  
harvested long ago by their fathers.

The trees are old and self-important  
with the busy work of making shade  
sheltering mountain lions  
and producing splintery white meat  
enough for a trillion yellow pencils  
for little boys drawing treasure maps  
and writing down their stories  
of wild cats and wicked men.

## Jacques Surveys the Ocean | *Mary Harrison*

Three bags of old school papers went out to the curb this morning.  
As I set them down, one sheet of loose-leaf paper  
worked its way halfway out and fluttered in the breeze.

The boy had written long ago,  
*"Today Jacques surveys the ocean by helicopter."*

Jacques. Like an old friend.

The sorters at the dump  
will be surprised when they discover  
among discarded cereal boxes and broccoli stems  
a cache of crayon drawings,  
phonics papers and arithmetic lessons.

Enchanted, they will shut down their lines,  
call their fellows over, and read together  
the hand-printed story about  
one extraordinary day  
when Jacques Cousteau took to the skies.

## Rehearsal | *Mary Harrison*

The lads are taking a break from the music making  
and heading to the stoop for warm beers,  
a smoke, and lazy exchanges of banter.  
Just listen to them!  
They slap their thighs  
laughing at their own sly jokes.

In the mornings of foggy ruinous autumns  
I conjure them as old  
men not even remembering their breakfasts  
or their feet or the furniture of rooms.

Cannulae will dry their throats to papery sheens,  
setting their tongues a-wriggling like salty garden slugs.  
They will doze off and wander dreaming  
among calendars-full of days  
that were once infinite and noteworthy.

Where are all the tall brown bottles now?  
The thin-walled cans around which  
the comely federations gathered  
and shared their glassine thoughts?

And what of the carrotty cigarette butts  
flicked away to roll into the cracks of parking lots,  
swelling up in some cantankerous rain?

Oh, they've been at this for decades  
but they're no villains  
just boys  
and I remember them all  
as if they  
were  
still.

## **Elusive Feeling** | *Psycho Kanev*

And I sink in the summer as the wind takes hold  
of this sun-shaped box inside  
my rib cage.

The green foliage is green with pain,  
and I'm somewhere else.

Gods of light recline  
in my eyes, but still  
I can't find you  
in the dark.

On through the endless night  
the candle flickers -  
a feeling descends  
from the sky.

This dying--

I already forgot.

## The Collected Noses of Tycho Brahe | *J.R. Salling*

Whenever my wife prepares a meal I know to stay in my library until summoned. Her kitchen is stocked with very expensive cookware that must not be touched by untrained hands. Our territories are both well protected, mine by a barrier of book mold, which she avoids due to allergies, hers by an impressive collection of German and Japanese knives, which I avoid because they're very sharp. Years ago, before my exile, one sliced off the tip of my thumb with very little effort at all.

The loss of body parts has always fascinated me. I run across many such cases in my study of early modern medicine. Tycho Brahe, better known for his astronomical interests, is one of the more famous victims. As a youth of the Danish nobility, he was permitted to carry a sword and had a habit of using it in tavern brawls. In one such incident he failed to parry and paid with his nose, clipped right up to the septum.

Recently, while my wife worked on some veal chops with asparagus and potatoes, I dove into the new biography of Brahe by John Robert Christianson, eagerly anticipating more of the gruesome details. To my disappointment, the author makes short work of his subject's early days, relegating the disfiguring incident to a mere footnote.

"How can the loss of the man's nose be a footnote?" I complained aloud, but I don't think she could hear me over the oven timer. After all, I might have continued, lose an ear and you can grow your hair down over the scar. Lose an eye and you can wear a simple patch over the hole like Lord Nelson or Moshe Dyan. Everyone will think you're a war hero. The loss of a nose, however, is more difficult to conceal and a much more fundamental blow to one's vanity. Think of what it did to Lon Chaney in *The Phantom of the Opera* - such a terrific organ player lost to the world for the lack of a qualified plastic surgeon. The nose, the phantom well knew, is the focal point of the face, the anchor that keeps the rest of the parts from rearranging themselves into a cubist montage. It may work in oil on canvas. But in the flesh, you are a monster.

Today people willingly give up pieces of their face in an effort to improve its overall symmetry, or consent to have their buttocks tissue grafted onto their physiognomy to replace something missing, often to good results. I know this from peeking into my wife's *People* magazine, which helps celebrities keep score. Early reconstructive surgery, by contrast, seldom fared so well. If Brahe ever underwent any such procedure, it must have failed. His wound never healed properly and was treated for the rest of his life with salves. In public he wore a prosthesis.

While dependent upon the generosity of his patrons for most of his adult life, Brahe was no peasant, nor did he ever think like one. I suspect he owned a nose for every occasion, which he glued into place with a temporary adhesive that he always carried with him. He made one himself of gold and silver but I have trouble imagining that he wore it often. Considering the weight, he must have feared it would pop off any time he laughed or sneezed, an especially embarrassing event at the table or at court. I doubt that I would ever have been allowed to invite him over for dinner, not the way we use pepper.

Like anyone with a chronic affliction, the injury must have been a constant irritation for him. But I will argue that he

owes his place in the annals of science to his artificial noses. On the basis of his cosmology, an unhappy compromise between Ptolemy and Copernicus, he would have been long forgotten. However, we still celebrate Brahe today and for good reason. He created the first complete catalog of the visible stars, all plotted over many years of careful observation. One has to ask what would possess a man to gaze upward for the better part of his waking life, without the aid of a telescope, if there wasn't an immediate benefit to keeping his head back.

I remember explaining all of this to my wife across the dinner table instead of eating. "The data he collected," I continued, "provided Kepler with the basis for his three laws of planetary motion, paving the way for ... um"

I noticed that she had stopped chewing the lamb and put her fork down. But not the steak knife.

"Is there something wrong with it?" she asked.

"No!" I stuffed another slice into my mouth and put my jaw into overdrive. "Tastes great, honey," I mumbled, the scientific revolution to remain incomplete.

I had already lost a thumb.

*First published in Word Riot, 2011.*

## CONTRIBUTORS

**James Claffey** hails from County Westmeath, Ireland, and lives on an avocado ranch in Carpinteria, CA. He is fiction editor at Literary Orphans, and the author of the short fiction collection, "Blood a Cold Blue." His work appears in the W.W. Norton Anthology, "Flash Fiction International," and Queen's Ferry Press's "Best Small Fictions 2015."

**Tharindra Galahena** lives & writes in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Currently he works as an instructor at University of Colombo School of Computing. He has written poems in his mother tongue (Sinhalese) since childhood, but started writing in English recently. (<https://strollingunderthestormclouds.wordpress.com/>)

**Igor Goldkind** was born in Michigan and raised in San Diego, California. He is a poet, author and lecturer in the areas of Computational Narrative and Speculative Realism. After studying philosophy at UCSC, in 1983 Goldkind moved to Paris to work as a radio journalist and study with Michel Foucault, the French Post-Structuralist scholar. Upon receiving a graduate degree from the Sorbonne, Goldkind moved to London where he worked first for Titan Books in the late 1980s as a marketing consultant and PR spokesperson. Here, Goldkind developed and promoted the term "graphic novel" as a way to sell the new comics being published at the time, like Watchmen, Maus and Dark Knight into the book trade. Goldkind has taught and lectured at Liverpool University, St. Martins School of Design, and the London College of Printing. Igor Goldkind's most recent work , IS SHE AVAILABLE?, incorporates poetry, art, music, and animation; a collaboration with over 25 artists from the comic, fantasy and fine art (as well as the jazz composer Gilad Atzmon) and is published by Chameleon Publishing. <http://is-she-available.com> Igor Goldkind continues to write with a forthcoming collection of short stories set in and around a computer environment as well as his first novel PLAGUE; about a mass dementia epidemic. He continue to be the creative mind behind projects that link computational technologies with art, education, and storytelling.

**Mary Harrison** is an artist, poet, and certified purchasing professional residing in Medina, Ohio. Although she is a raging introvert, she has read her poems at several venues in the NEO area, and managed to enjoy the socializing afterward. She is currently obsessed with writing poetry and flashy little stories of 100 words each. She is the creator of *Waxworks Inhabited by Gramophones*, a handmade boxed edition of chapbooks of her art and writing. She received an Honorable Mention in the Akron New Words 2009 Poetry Contest, and has been published in *Breakwall*, *Common Threads*, *100WordStory.org*, *Mimi Vanderhaven*, *It Was a Dark and Stormy Night: The Best of the Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest*, and *Dark and Stormy Rides Again*.

**Peycho Kanev** is the author of 4 poetry collections and two chapbooks, published in USA and Bulgaria. He has won several European awards for his poetry and he's nominated for the Pushcart Award and Best of the Net. His poems have appeared in many literary magazines, such as: *Poetry Quarterly*, *Evergreen Review*, *Hawaii Review*, *Cordite Poetry Review*, *Sheepshead Review*, *Off the Coast*, *The Adirondack Review*, *Two Thirds North*, *Sierra Nevada Review*, *The Cleveland Review* and many others.

**Sarah Katharina Kayß** is winner of the manuscript-award of the German Writers Association for her poetry and essay collection *Ich Mag Die Welt So Wie Sie Ist* (Allitera, Germany 2014). She edits the bilingual literature magazine *The*

*Transnational* ([www.the-transnational.com](http://www.the-transnational.com)) and works on her doctorate in military sociology at King's College London. Her artwork, essays and poetry have appeared in literary magazines, journals and anthologies in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, the United Kingdom, Italy, Canada, New Zealand and the United States.

**Tamer Mostafa** is a Stockton, California native whose writing has been influenced by many, but directly affected by the teachings of Joshua McKinney, Alan Williamson, and Joe Wenderoth. He has published over 30 literary works in various journals and magazines such as *Confrontation*, *The Rag*, *Poets Espresso Review*, *Stone Highway Review*, and *Phantom Kangaroo*.

**J.R. Salling** is a professional housesitter who often forgets to water the plants but doesn't eat much. Most of his stories have been hidden in a sock in the bottom drawer of the bureau. Don't tell anyone.

**Bud Smith** works heavy construction in New Jersey as a welder and rigger in industrial power plants and refineries. His new novel is called *F-250*. Previous books are the novel *Tollbooth*, the short story collection, *Or Something Like That* and the poetry collection, *Everything Neon*. Recent writings have appeared at *Smokelong*, *decomp*, *Word Riot* and *Vol. 1 Brooklyn*. He lives in NYC with his wife, a textile artist who just hung a jackolope on the wall.  
[www.budsmithwrites.com](http://www.budsmithwrites.com)

**Marcus Speh** is a German writer and author of *Thank You For Your Sperm* (MadHat Press, 2013). He lives in Berlin, blogs at [marcuspeh.com](http://marcuspeh.com) and tweets as [@marcus\\_speh](https://twitter.com/marcus_speh).