



OLENTANGY REVIEW

spring | 2014

PUBLISHED BY | *Moonkind Press*

EDITORS | *Darryl & Melissa Price*

COVER PHOTOGRAPHY | *Bruce Foster*

Copyright 2014 Moonkind Press | All Rights Reserved

The *Olentangy Review* is a literary website and magazine.

For subscription information and how to submit work, email info@olentangyreview.com.

Authors retain all rights to their work.

OlentangyReview.com

CONTENTS

Bullseye	<i>Bruce Foster</i>	Cover
Editor’s Note	<i>Darryl Price</i>	4
Birch Eyes	<i>Gail Goepfert</i>	4
Somewhere Between New Zealand and San Diego	<i>Cathy Calkins</i>	5
Unscripted Into	<i>Susan Tepper</i>	6 – 7
Paper Elephants	<i>Frankie Sachs</i>	8 – 9
How To Remember Ginger How To Swim In The Ocean Of Your Bedsheets	<i>Amanda Oaks</i>	10 – 12
Balneol	<i>Chris Okum</i>	13
Mulch Tomorrow Please Pet and Hobby The Burning Season	<i>Elizabeth Crowell</i>	14 – 17
Bobette	<i>Carol Reid</i>	18
Small Beer	<i>Gale Acuff</i>	19 – 20
Today’s Agenda: Seize the Day	<i>Tony Walton</i>	21
The Glanmeiness Touch	<i>Matthew Vasiliauskas</i>	22 – 30
Low-Rider	<i>Del-Rita Butler</i>	31
Cold Woman Blues	<i>John Grey</i>	32
Nameless Poem	<i>Roberto Garcia</i>	33
Contributors		34 – 35

EDITOR'S NOTE

This issue of the *Olentangy Review* just happens to be one of my favorites so far, although they all hold a special place in my heart.

Spring 2014 has sprung here in Columbus and there are little flower heads making their merry way out of the ground everywhere. And even though we still get the occasional cold morning we know the worst of winter is probably over for now. Thank the Great Spirit! The world has fresh potential again.

One of the things Melissa and I both enjoy is seeing the wide diversity of creative styles and artistic perspectives living in the world today. That kind of global seeing really puts me personally into a very great feeling mood every time. I find it reassuring to say the least. But most of all I find it beautiful.

In this particular issue the thing that mostly inspires us as editors—is the true originality presented for your viewing and sharing pleasure and that sure sense of the human experience as universal truth and beauty. There's a lot out there, this is just the tip of the iceberg, and that means there's always more. To me, that's a hopeful meaning for all of us.

Our cover this time by Bruce Foster is something we could look at all day long and still take away something new from. It's fabulous and perfect in every way. Thank you, Bruce.

As always, it's our very real privilege and pleasure to present these wonderful people and their creative works to all of you. We wish you and yours a lovely new Spring in your step wherever you are starting from!

Darryl Price | March 20, 2014



Birch Eyes | *Gail Goepfert*

Somewhere Between New Zealand and San Diego | *Cathy Calkins*

When the turbulence hits,
cups, plates and my sleeping daughter
fly into the air above the seats. I see
in slow motion how objects and people
can stay suspended as though painted
by Chagall, floating and spinning
in the beauty of weightlessness.
My arms reach for my flying child
and pull her to the safety of the seat
but I know the seat is not safe,
the seat belt is not safe,
that we are suspended in the belief
that a jet weighing 775,000 pounds
carrying 496 people and their luggage,
not to mention snacks and alcoholic
beverages, 2 pilots and 8 attendants,
is safe here, over a Pacific ocean
that fills the deepest trenches on earth.
The belief holds us here, in these seats
with the belts now snug and my daughter
drifting back into dreams of kangaroos
and emus left behind, and I turn from
the window cold with pressurized air.

Unscripted | *Susan Tepper*

In cracks you find moss
a moisture that spits
when you try moving
rock holding tight
to the earth
Can you do that?

grip like it's unending

And what's ahead
bends an arc of broken light—
unscripted, deliverable
they say—

Into | *Susan Tepper*

It was empty then gone
a blink of light into darkness
core of an apple heaving
itself through space—
I can remember those
who said it would be enough:
my bread is molding now
there is tissue matter covering
my face like a veil:
a bride I wanted to
be loved to never awaken

Paper Elephants | *Frankie Sachs*

The last elephant had been a cantankerous old bull, the lone member of his species in a vast preserve. The warden speculated he broke through the fence in search of other elephants. He could not have known he was the last.

An emergency hearing in the capitol declared the last elephant a public hazard and one hundred permits to hunt the last elephant were issued by lottery. Before the conservationists could rally an appeal, a bullet the size of a man's fist felled the last elephant among coarse sage scrub where, a decade earlier, a rolling plain of golden wheat surrounded the town. Rich elephant blood flowed from the wound and drained into the cracked earth.

Aiden's grand-da was there on the day the last elephant died. A picture of him hung above the mantel in Aiden's parents den. In the photo, his grand-da was Aiden's age and stood to one side, among an unsmiling collection of dusty, overalled town boys. All old men now, the ones that weren't buried in the hard, dead earth. The focus of the picture was on Pamela Brooker, a minor celebrity with a show on the Big Game channel and the woman who fired the shot that killed the last elephant. She posed, grinning and triumphant in a camouflage bikini, atop the immobile carcass of the last elephant, large bore rifle raised above her head.

"What was it like, the elephant?" Aiden asked one afternoon in the cozy workshop of his grand-da's garage where Aiden tore newspaper against the edge of a ruler to get long straight strips for the paper mache while his grand-da cut and twisted wire into an elephant shaped frame.

"I never saw an elephant alive but that once," he told Aiden. "I rode with some of Brooker's people out on the plain to find the elephant. They had five, six of these Jeeps, each with a driver and a couple hunters with those big dart guns. They took some local boys to help 'em find the tracks and avoid the gulches. They went out for the elephant first, sedated it so Ms. Brooker could bring it down easy."

In front of the cameras, Pamela Brooker made a show of gifting the corpse of the last elephant to the town. After the publicity photos and scripted footage of the mayor thanking her wrapped, Brooker's people severed the tusks and feet and penis of the last elephant and packed their trophies into boxes. Later, on her show, she would reinvent the last elephant as a dangerous rogue, terror of the prairie town.

The people of the town stood in clusters, discarded props, as the crew produced a bottle of champagne and glasses. The production assistant popped the cork and foam cascaded down the neck of the glossy bottle, dribbling to earth and mingling with the blood of the last elephant.

After the film crew left, the people loaded the body of the last elephant on an old hay wagon. It took two dozen men. They towed it into town behind an old John Deere that rattled and grunted all the way, its engine rusty from disuse. The last elephant died at the peak of the famine and its body was a gift the town could not afford to waste.

"I never could eat a mouthful," said Aiden's grand-da, "Not after I saw it out there like a moving mountain on the prairie. But I guess it got some folks through that wouldn't made it otherwise."

~ ~ ~

On the anniversary of the day the last elephant died, all the elephants from the town were secured on wheeled plywood platforms. Their builders took up ropes tied through holes at the front of the platforms and pulled their creations to the flat, hard-packed expanse in front of Town Hall, still called the town green. Once, Aiden's grand-da said, it was a grassy space where lovers kissed and the town's children played.

There were fat, fantastic, psychedelic elephants in vibrant greens and neon pinks and purples and sky blues. There was the Fire Department's elephant, fire-engine red. There were glossy black elephants with long elegant tails and warm bronze elephants with lush manes. There was the Police Department's metallic blue elephant with raised golden sherrif's stars. There were elephants covered in glitter and sequins and velvet flocking.

Every year there were fewer of the stone gray elephants with the thick legs and fan-like ears. Aiden's grand-da's elephant was always one of these. His, and those of the other old men who were boys the day the last elephant died.

"Why can't we paint ours orange this year?" Aiden had asked.

"Because that's not how elephants looked," his grand-da said.

On the green, people drank soda pop or nipped from flasks and talked with those around them. Children chased each other, darting between the legs of elephants. When the town bell struck noon, the whole green began to move. A snaking line of elephants rolled through the town, past the ropes cordoning off the out of town spectators where cameras flashed and onlookers cheered.

At the border of the the town, no longer confined by narrow streets and crowds, the elephants spread out across the prairie in a great, rainbow colored herd, all converging on the place where the last living elephant fell.

How To Remember After Kristina Haynes | *Amanda Oaks*

I know a boy that breathes verse into
his pillow & chokes up words in dreams.
I know a boy that only has half a heart
because he gave the other half away.
I know a boy that wanted so badly
to evangelize me & all I wanted to do
was skew him obscene. I know a boy
that eats handfuls of silence. I know a boy
that cooks everything with rage. I know
a boy whose lips are made of snowflakes.
I know a boy with a tongue so thick with
lonely that they used it to plug the oil spill.
I know a boy that uses trust as weapon.
I know a boy whose heart is unprotected
by the bowed bars of his ribcage so girls
like us can come & go as we please.
I know a boy that whispers these
breathy fragments of lust at his height
that only can be described as a full-speed
pornographic movies at a swift pace. I know
a boy whose eyes are an ocean of misery.
I know a boy that lets his high-horse
resting outside the door. I know a boy
that wants to run from everything.
I know a boy that coarsened his elbows
on a chipped windowsill because he would
sit for hours, night after night, hands on cheeks,
looking up at the stars with burgundy-tinted
lips & his typewriter humming behind him.
I know a boy whose throat creaks with
the secrets he hides on the underside
of his tongue because they keep crawling
back on their elbows. I know a boy that
throws apologies around like plates. I know
a boy that you know & we both know
that he's that good kind of bad news.

Ginger | *Amanda Oaks*

Lining jars of blackberry jelly
next to the green beans, beads
of sweat strung above our lips,
the clang of boiled jars over
the stove, seeds stuck between
our teeth, berry-bruised
fingernails, kittens nursing
in a box at our feet, every
summer since I was ten,
a new litter.

His ghost poked the sun today.
I remember how it would dry
our pink bicycle seats. I remember
the way his knees would crack up
& down the stairs. I remember
his rough hands blackened by coal
poking the fire all through every
winter.

Sitting in the strip mines, damp
hair snaking & stuck to our backs,
mines beneath our bare legs,
weed torn & etched with the
outlines of flat black rocks
after we peeled them off
like artichoke leaves
never minding the heart
of our matters, remembering
that the dust always settled
in the swimming hole
after we left, just like
his death.

How To Swim In The Ocean Of Your Bedsheets | *Amanda Oaks*

The ocean is spilling out of your mouth &
there's a shark in your chest that the hull
of your body tries to contain but sometimes,
there are no boats only freight trains parting
the water & they sound like they are rumbling
don't hold your breath.

They dressed him in his dead brother's clothes, handed him a brown paper bag with a peanut butter and jelly sandwich inside, drove him to the parking lot of an abandoned church, watched as he was escorted onto a big yellow bus, and told him they would see him in three weeks. He knew what the sandwich was for, and it was not to eat, but he ate it anyway. His dead brother's clothes did not fit him. The shirt was too tight and the shorts were too small. The other boys honed in on his shorts and asked him why he wasn't wearing the brand they were wearing. They wanted to know why he didn't own a pair of OP shorts. They wanted to know why he would show up to summer camp not wearing the right pair of shorts. He had no answer. He wanted to tell them that they weren't his shorts. Instead he crawled into his bunk bed and buried his face in his pillow. He wanted to be in his own bed. He didn't know how he was going to be able to sleep in a room full of other people. Other people made sounds while they were sleeping and these sounds would keep him up all night. Before it was time for lights out the counselor went around the cabin and had the boys introduce themselves and say what some of their favorite things were. When it was his turn he refused to talk. He kept his face buried in his pillow and cried. So the counselor spoke for him. Said he liked pirates and playing foosball. Even though this was untrue he did not raise his head and object. One of the boys asked the counselor why the boy who was crying into his pillow wasn't wearing the right shorts and the counselor said he had no idea. A week passed and he began to experience anal discomfort. His ass was red and chafey and itchy and wet and there was no way he was going to be able to participate in soccer or baseball. Running only made it worse. He went to the camp office and asked if he could call his dad. His dad answered the phone. In hushed tones he explained to his dad that his ass was on fire. His dad said he would send some medication as soon as possible. Three days later he was called to the camp office. The young girl who worked the phones said there was a package for him. Then she handed him a small bottle of Balneol. She had opened the package and taken out his rectal medication. Then she asked him what he was doing at a Christian summer camp if his name was Benjamin Goldfarb. He told the girl he wasn't Jewish anymore, that his dad had converted to Christianity when he married his stepmom and so did he, and this seemed to quell her curiosity. He took the bottle from the girl and found the nearest restroom. He applied the lotion in the prescribed manner and waited. By the next morning his ass was back to normal, but word had spread quickly. He was the kid who liked pirates and foosball and who also used to be Jewish and now had anal discomfort. There was still two weeks to go and he had no idea how he was going to make it. During the middle of the night he snuck out of the cabin and trudged down to the camp office. He asked if he could talk to the Camp Director. A burly man wearing a red baseball cap and chewing gum introduced himself as Terry and asked what the problem was. He told the Terry he had to go home immediately. He said his brother was dying and he had to get home because he wanted to be there in case his brother died in the middle of the night and there had to be some way someone could call him a cab. Terry asked him his name and then went to filing cabinets and rifled around until he found a yellow sheet of paper. Terry picked up the phone and dialed. Terry said hello and explained who he was. Terry asked the voice on the other end of the line if it was true that there was a dying brother at home. The voice said, No, the brother is already dead. Terry handed him the phone. He tried not to cry but it was no use. He told his dad he wanted to come home. His dad told him to hang in there. Then his dad asked him if he still had the peanut butter and jelly sandwich they gave him. He said no. He said he ate it on the way to camp. His dad hung up on him. He handed the phone to Terry and headed back to the cabin.

Mulch | *Elizabeth Crowell*

After mowing, my father held like a child
the cut grass wrapped in a burlap sack
all the way back to where the wild
of the next, hedge-edged family began.

He tossed it on the mulch; a green cloud launched
into the thick air and fell through afternoon.
My sneakers kicked along the raw-cut lawn
to climb upon that weeks-deep, muddy ooze,

tunneled with moles who never once go back
the way they leave, laced with bitter weeds
my mother in her light shift would extract.
Hands in the air, practicing to leave,

I jumped off rot, onto the well-loved yard,
to warn the fierce present to be on guard.

Tomorrow Please | *Elizabeth Crowell*

The broadside admonishment appears
on the bright, black macadam
where a newly-glazed driveway shimmers.
The trees are heavy now; the treehouse built
on stilts, abandoned, the whistle of sprinklers at mute.
The perfect week to do this; no one's thinking
on their mid-Cape, boozy, summer leave
of this inky, shimmery mess.
For a moment, it is awfully well-arranged.
Then, the knock of an acorn rattles through
and leaves a decade-long impression
that could not have been (but had to be) intended.
And the lonely kid appears, already hurt
by the mere fact of absence,
his boredom so completely grown to rage,
no family, no time away, no love,
that's all it takes to ruin any life,
which soon he'll whittle down with smoke and drugs.
Today he leans his precious body over this black lake,
and with his loose-laced, heavy shoe-toe
signs off for now.

Pet and Hobby | *Elizabeth Crowell*

The first birthday my twin brother and I
did not get two of the same thing,
I pretended to want something else in the shop,
loose puppies, the guinea pig buried in itself,
as he picked out the angel fish
he'd take, black and feathery.

His gray eyes stared at their thin transit
every morning after that.
He pinched and threw only two food flakes,
(he'd read a fish stomach easily explodes),
and scrubbed the algae off the glass
like he was scrubbing his own boy skin.

When one died, he'd sigh, more to himself.
As he sunk the net to scoop it,
his finger touched its eye and
something in his own eyes went thin
when my mother took him back to Pet and Hobby
to replace one angel with another.

Later, returned from camp,
tanned and deep into the wilderness.
he found the last fish dead,
said he'd had enough, flushed water and fish,
and went into the ocean blue September dusk
to throw a football to himself.

I watched through the window glass as he ran
to the other side of what he'd tossed.
His body, almost far away, flashed,
nosed up, like a fish in water,
and I knew though we'd been born together,
we would die alone.

The Burning Season | *Elizabeth Crowell*

Last year's leaves are minced into the grass.
We rake them up in piles and pull
the brush out of the brush
with the faint hearts of preservationists,
trying not to loose the bud,
or crack the light tallow
of color that is original to now.
This is the burning season
that the town permits.
Three cool, gray Saturdays
when the sky still sifts a dust of snow,
we light a fire of the piled brush,
and listen to the crack and spit
and watch the bluish strains light up
to get the winter out.
Even these years later, it gathers,
how slight our dead child felt
in the crook of what was left of us
when we had to let him go,
how not bright, how, after all,
not of us he was going to be,
how not right any elegy
for someone who was as light as smoke.

Bobette | *Carol Reid*

I was nine and Richie had just turned ten--an older man, but safe as an unloaded gun. He must have talked about me with his mother. Who else would have instructed him to extend his hand as we approached the trail that led from the playground, and say "Evelyn, may I walk you home?"

Perhaps she thought it possible I would be kind to her pleasant-faced, sweet son. Women change when they have boy children. Their hearts soften and vision blurs and they forget the primordial laws of the jungle.

I was skinny and blond then. School pictures of that year show me an elfin creature with a serious mouth and overlarge eyes. My hair had been cut short, close to my scalp; some weeks earlier my habitual long braids had dipped into the last campfire of the summer, terrifying my mother into pushing me head first into the lake. One small red oval on my neck where a cinder had rested too long was the only resulting mark on my skin. A trim would have taken care of the singed portion of my braids but the odor of burnt hair had so offended my mother that the next morning she marched us into the Bobette Salon, shoved me into Inga's chair and glared as Inga snipped and snipped. I could see the other hairdressers smirking behind me, in the mirror.

Inga dismissed them with a dangerous wave of her manicured nails and declared me a pixie. Cute, she said and the others slunk away like beaten dogs. I was somehow better as a pixie girl. New clothes appeared in my closet- tiny replicas of Carnaby Street florals and dizzy geometric prints, stiff low-heeled boots made of white imitation leather. I felt hurtled toward some kind of transformation and began to dream that little lick of campfire had been a roar of flaming teeth and tongue. I often woke aching, in twisted bed sheets. I kept my fevers to myself.

I took Richie's hand and felt nothing until another boy threw rocks at us from behind a battle-scarred maple. The boy cawed and gave my free arm a nasty pull as he ran past.

Where the trail opened out onto the road, I disengaged my hand and shook my head when Richie invited me over. He didn't throw anything at my back, where I was beginning to grow wings.

Small Beer | *Gale Acuff*

Miss Hooker's my Sunday School teacher and
her job is to save my precious soul from
Hell when I die, she said so herself, so
I guess that means she must love me and I
love her, too, and want to marry her one
day when I'm old enough, I'm 10 now to
Miss Hooker's 25, that's getting on
up there years-wise but if I propose when
I'm 18 to her 33 we'll still
have a few good years together, after
40 then life begins to run out of
numbers. But if I make it to Heaven
I'll see Miss Hooker everyday and
I guess we'll be the same age whatever
age eternal is. And that will be it
forever, nothing but happiness in
Heaven, it almost sounds boring but then
if God's running the show it can't be all
bad, I won't wish even once for the chance
to sin and have some good old-fashioned fun
like I do now, cheating at gin rummy
and swiping gum from the drug store and not
making up my bed for seven straight days.
Miss Hooker says that Jesus died for me,
my sins, and that if I believe, I'll go
to Heaven when I die because He took
all my sins on Himself and paid the price,
His life, so that I might live, I mean live
on in Heaven, the only kind of life
that's worth living and as for this life now,
it's small potatoes compared to the life to come.
At first Miss Hooker said small beer, then blushed
enough to match her red hair, we don't drink
in my church, it's a sin, but I wonder
now if Miss Hooker does and if she does
will I miss her up in Heaven because
she'll wind up in Hell? That would be funny
but not the kind of funny to laugh at,

more the kind for shaking your head over
or even crying. Now I want to die
for Miss Hooker's sins, even if only
one. That's how I'll get her to worship me.

Today's Agenda: Seize the Day | *Tony Walton*

I want that thing that Lord Byron
panted after, coiled around my ribs
and pumping, blood rushing to that
warm glow of oblivion.

I'll plot like Macbeth with my trophy wife,
ruby crown, twisted knees at my feet,
wading through power, til it's over my head.

Before me lies the shoreless seas that
Columbus saw, into that jagged wind,
no sunlight reached, punching those
hard sea caps westward.

I've practiced that cashy swagger of
Gatsby. Looking down through long French
windows from the leafy hills above.
Society page, big house - here's my
check.

This is how to live! - blazing across
Van Gogh's Starry Night, swimming in the
swirls and brushstrokes of that hot orange moon
and those boiling stars.

But a light afternoon wind caresses my nuzzled
bottle of beer whistling a soft dove call across the
City Park overhung with white oak trees and
coins of sunlight and

I take a swig and lie back in the sun, tracing a smile,
so grateful I called in sick today.

The Glanmeiness Touch | *Matthew Vasiliauskas*

Her name was Tomorrow.

Or was it Tam Arrow? Maybe Tammy Morrow? Perhaps Tamarra Row?

She went by all of them in fact.

But she was always Tomorrow to me.

Oh I know that sounds dated and silly but I have an affinity for cliché. In fact, that's how I first met her.

I had accepted a professorship at Harvey Academy just outside of Chicago (English Poetry, Assyrian fashion.)

I was hoping to put Percy back in favor with the youth. And I was broke.

She was glassy weather, my gate to the golden shimmering dew of moist lips.

That's what I called her, shimmering dew. At first she laughed uncomfortably, but pretty soon was allowing me to whisper rudimentary wordplay into her ear.

Wandering waves wrecking whole worlds writhing wearily.

She was studying Doom. Finishing her dissertation in a studio apartment across from campus.

I wanted to make her my bride. It was around this time that I couldn't stop saying that phrase.

I've never been able to internalize my thoughts and desires, and have had to seek the shaded comfort of an alley or tree to reveal them aloud.

She was a deity to me. Taking in my prayers, a holy star unable to do wrong.

Brides fascinate me. I can pinpoint it back to inspiring backyard moments with my sister (Dress up, picking flowers, mother's rings).

Perhaps I'm the only person who has maintained bridal magazine subscriptions for the past 10 years.

I had gotten to know her better at school functions through engaging musings on the inspiring role of women in art (alcohol).

She was a majestic state in those moments, a new national anthem allowing the heart to pulsate in patriotic rhythm captured in the glistening sweat around her neck.

I witnessed thine own pure soul moving from dizzying nervousness to firm erection.

I tried to touch her, negotiating desperately with my hands but Christ, if I may use my favorite literary character's name in frustrated anguish, they were unpersuaded and remained in my pockets forcing me to rely heavily on my words.

Ruined rooms rain raw ravaging remnants.

There was something about her eye. Even now looking back on it, despite years of sketches and analysis, recreations involving immigrant workers, funds, proposals, sidewalk chalk and flashlights, I know that eye wanted me to defile her in a way that would offer us both salvation.

She was my breath, my oppressor, my sacred wild creature in need of rescue.

Loud trumpets ringing out the hymn of coral seraphims, God save our Tomorrow!

For the next month, well three weeks if we're in a mood of specificity, we spent nearly every free moment in her room.

It was a cave, a chamber serving as the fertile soil for the stains of our love (I like being poetic when it comes to come).

We would discuss mad schemes while smoking Winston cigarettes, analyzing a strange reoccurring dream that we both shared (Jiffy Pop Heat Shops. That's the best I can explain it.)

Summer's eve and a bit drunk. Sixteen shots I believe.

We speculated on the weight of our souls, using the instruments of playful inebriation to measure the grains of righteousness, bigotry, compassion and the overall health of our humanity.

It was then that she revealed she was leaving Harvey, abandoning her dissertation and moving to Death Valley to help with the construction of a sanctuary for the Valateri Scorpion.

"That sounds dangerous."

"Sometimes you have to leave the comforts of your own home. It's what I want."

"Since when?"

"Since like, I don't know, for a while now. I need to be a part of something impactful."

"I can give you things. Things that will ingrain you forever in the sweet rays of mist-covered shores my shimmering dew."

"I don't know if I want that."

"Listen to me. Are you listening?"

"Yes."

"Gracious growing greens gladly generating gargantuan greatness."

"Why don't I go down on you one more time?"

"Wilt thou slumber with me?"

She tried to get me on her side, even letting me borrow a book called *Pedipalps* by entomologist Kasshil Wamauvassitte (Porcison Press MCMLXXXIV).

It went into great detail about the Valateri, lamenting its unique genetic lineage that produced a curious and benevolent disposition in which to avoid confrontation would kill itself immediately by stinging its own abdomen.

Phrases highlighted in pink included:

“Bowing before its often bashful enemy, the Valateri accepts the warm venom.”

“The generosity of self-mutilation.”

“Gracious feast.”

But through an innocent and accidental means of investigation (Her phone, shower, voicemail), I discovered that my little drop of dew, my glistening lavender scented mound of ravishing condensation was being influenced by someone else.

His name, although I'd like to minimize the amount of times saying it, was Victor V. Mood.

He was a visiting professor and purveyor of insect integrity (Direct quote from the campus newsletter) and had done significant field work in The Democratic Republic Of Repty (Now The United Cepry Federation).

But what the bulletin boards, newsletters and luncheons didn't mention, perhaps because of some treasured social obligation, was that he had a snake's face.

Two beady eyes and perpetually dry skin, a field of hexagonal patches producing the aroma of desperate aloe vera.

It was a hardened slab of toxin, acidic alkaline bristles dripping warm grimaced jelly.

Needless to say I became a bit desperate.

I sat by a ditch which are plentiful in Harvey (10,003).

Hating the man, hating his snake face and making up often unfinished incoherent tunes in my garbled way of singing.

“Snake Face, oh snake face. You brute! You deceitful impacting son of a bitch! Oh snake face.”

I could imagine the influence of this on my child, my perpetual drop of dew.

It's not easy finding out the malleable precipitative flesh you've come upon (there I go again) time after time in the throes of resigned expectation has found another.

Another. A Notha. Anunna. I kept repeating the various incarnations, thinking if I changed it into one of my sentences I would better understand it.

Another arresting announcement adhering awfully.

I imagined them lying on the desert floor, taking turns impacting each other.

The radiant ancient surrounding clay casting shadows on them, desirous appendages moving them into positions for full impact.

They were nothing more than sand to me in these moments, shimmering grains whose hues dripped into the shine of their necks.

I assumed, and believe me my rate of success in the world of assumption is rather high, that this man, this languid twilight creep was the kind of gentleman prone to saying spread em.

Spread em honey. Spread em bunny. Spread em for the whole hosta rolla costa.

I tried gaining perspective and insight by breaking into mausoleums (Childhood hobby).

Distant obscure spires creeping in the summer churchyards.

Heat ringing out the familiar thud of falling animals.

Leaves and a dead deer. A doe rake.

I laid on a cold slab, I love saying that phrase by the way, and gazed up at a crack in the ceiling, taking in the emerging starlight surfacing from the dissipating evening pink.

It was the convergence of eras, the atmospheric fabric transforming you into a delusional raconteur.

Obey'st twinkling light!

Visions abounded from enigmatic annals within me (Faculty Lounge. Expired medicine).

A stage littered with undergarments.

Wind passing between the floral indentations of lace and silk panties, creating symphonic melodies.

Then there was a gun (Isn't there always).

My humid intuitive dreaminess telling me it was a Tec 9. Maybe because that was one of only five firearms I could identify by name.

It was a bloated gun, sauntering in a strained exaggerated hop across the stage.

And before I knew it, my god I'm just throwing these phrases at you aren't I, a row of tombstones had risen from the planks.

They moved back and forth in balletic formations, the beautiful sport of graves.

But the gun was sick, and its uncontrollable flame regurgitation splintered the tombstones, sending a school of shaved cats spewing forth.

A fountain of hairless felines scattering, moist yellow eyes gazing upward as the reflective swirl of extinguished smoke revealed the expressions of tattered curtains.

I was able to filter through this muddle and identify the logical course of my future, that of killing Victor V. Mood.

I informed Harvey I would need to take a week off (Sister's Death, train, a drifter).

I rented an old meat wagon and headed west on I-80.

The radio blasted music by The Ovids and I began shouting Figaro at the top of my lungs.

Figaro Figaro Fee-ga-roowww!

The open road was rich in murderous nutrients (It's okay, roll your eyes a bit, but goddammit I love saying that).

I fantasized about killing him in a variety of manners that I won't bore you with as they hold more resonance and symbolism for me, but to the casual observer would come off rather lackluster.

I will share one image with you though: a mass of gauze, the pupation of disintegrating sun-soaked flesh.

At some point I became thirsty and spotted a place called Taca Lug's Juicery.

It was a clean shaven haven.

I took a seat and cracked open the Pedipalps book and continued reading.

When describing the Latveria, Wamauvassitte kept using the word "glanmeiness."

Glanmeiness? What was it, a noun? Adjective maybe?

\glan-'mīn-nəs\

I tried to derive meaning from it. Writing the name over and over on small pieces of paper that I would caress with my thumbs, moving the ink to the rhythm of shifting clouds.

Violent azure hope was glanmeiness.

Venomous abdomen tundra was glanmeiness.

Florescent vesicle thorax was glanmeiness.

And in all these instances my dew, my moist bubbling prism of sinewy flesh had underlined the word, the circular trails of her faded charcoal fingerprints illuminating the text.

This was something important to her and I wanted to make it important to me as well.

I need to slip into sentiment for a moment (More so).

There were many instances, many, many instances during our 3 weeks of committed eternity, when she would long (Her word) for the time when she was 19.

The glorious age of withering adolescence, 52 summers and her aunt's beach house, a glowing cedar music box giving birth to a string of pearls that she would wrap around her neck, the marrow of shifting light amongst her curls exalting in the whispers of ceiling fans.

To her 19 was something special, and I reinforced this idea through paraphrased quoting that a child, no, woman of 19 is freedom (Ants, Lee. 1962. *Ladies Of Liberty*. New York, New York. Geedorah).

I took on the perspective of transcended memory, where I understood the comfort of the past but also the entangled fear of losing it.

These reminiscences fueled our heated bedside breath, spiraling me into 17th century nostalgic rhyming delirium.

A cave beneath the sea, where maidens be, and a sunnier star brightens my imperial car.

O, refuse thy dew!

As I sat in the throes of blueberry euphoria I became convinced that this man, no, boy was holding my countess of condensation captive.

Pedipalps was not a calculated coded artifact of resentment, but a distress beacon.

She wanted me to find her, laying a trail of blue-tinged pulp, grains of cellulose screaming through the cracked pores of desert concrete.

I remember swearing in excitement and it's worth noting the rare creativity in my profanity: Eureka!

I would not linger in the present, in its disdainful suffocating confines, but rather through acceptable murderous actions escape. I would leave behind today and once again dwell in Tomorrow.

I saw the sanctuary in the distance.

Sanctuary. What a word! A word I'm always forgetting but upon hearing am thrown into comfortable pockets of shifting memory.

The inaccuracy of memory is what I find most appealing, and I do as much as I can to thwart off its preservation.

I perhaps remember being in Asia on scholarship determined not to fall into the popular romantic western notion of spiritual awakening.

But unexpectedly I found myself drawn to the jungle covered ruins of an ancient temple (Tour, a girl, tight dress.)

The decaying shells of Elysian gardens, icy caves and the watery paths now lined with tangled roots.

The abysses of paradise.

Pointing to a faded mural, the guide described the temple as a place of sacrifice.

In it, a handful of natives, the classic loin cloth sagging breast kind, are being attacked by soldiers brandishing glowing metal fists while riding atop ponies.

Dismembered limbs circulating in the sky, centuries old blood and paint forming a womb of cracked skeletal ruin.

5 To Ares.

I parked the car near a patch of cacti.

The Tec 9 felt heavy in the shimmering heat, and as the dunes and mountains slid past, I imagined letting go of the weapon, watching it soar on a current of salt and coyote fur into the distant blazing sun.

I moved through the door frame and into the enclosure.

Splotches of sun burst from my blinks, falling on fields of well-manicured sand.

I mouthed the word hark as I tend to do at select sights of grandeur (Creative bathroom stall sketches).

Strangely, there were girls tending to the fields.

A dozen or so young college age girls (I presume) in bikinis hoeing the sand.

Hark! Hark upon these maidens of conservation!

And there were the cats of course (Reoccurring notation from weekly Vincent De Paul Society group therapy sessions age 15-20: *I wrongfully tend to assume people are privy to my fragmented and unreliable predictions of what's to be expected in emotional situations.*)

Cats! Cats all around. I saw one of the Valateri's in a cat's mouth.

I didn't want to alarm or disturb the studious sweat-tinged ambassadors of desert agriculture, and began cautiously taking in the impressive architecture (Damp rear fabric. Lots of bending).

There was a motif, another word I like to use every few years or so, of anatomical fixtures making up the space.

Plastic palm chairs, nose lighting fixtures and rising platforms of sculpted eyes leading to a second level.

Below that, wooden crates with the words Hugvan Apricots running along their sides.

And now for that moment in our story when the cadence of my voice lowers to the crackling rumble of primal rage.

There, on the second floor landing, suddenly appeared Victor V. Mood.

I always thought Death was lazy. Far too selective. Drunk on some kind of netherworld haze, blurring his vision and causing him to stumble lackadaisically towards infrequent victories of fatality.

I need to keep my Death busy. I need him everywhere!

So in one of those moments, I wouldn't say out of body but there definitely was an ease as if I was taking a bath, I raised the Tec 9 and fired.

God how there can be beauty in a bullet hole.

The balletic expressions of shock and pain, pirouetting in the dense humidity of spiraling light.

The theatricality of murder itself is an art, and in that instant I took on the role of satisfied painter, stepping back and observing my canvas dripping with the fresh paint of retribution.

Clutching his shoulder as the wrinkles of his eyes filled with flickering fluorescence, he tumbled down the flight of stares.

I don't really want to resort to such a tired expression as flung like a ragdoll, but that's pretty much what happened to our dear doctor.

Limbs bathed in blur, petrified swaths of flailing flesh knocking over the apricot crates.

He crawled to my feet, pleading, begging in a high pitched cry amongst the produce.

His knees bending and smothering the splattered fruit.

Ruined ap peels.

The strange echo of fear and exhilaration forming a complimentary and shared emotion between us.

Exciting, arousing almost, as our bodies descended into the vibrating ether.

Two hearts beating in unison, the swish and whirl of rhythmic circulation ultimately pulling the trigger.

Silence. Greater than silence in fact (If that's even possible).

Then I saw her.

My dew! My pearly perfumed gem wearing a familiar summer dress just over yonder.

Yonder. God, why could I not stop thinking of that word?

She began to approach, a strange sashay in her ballet flats.

She stood before me, in this month of June where the moon shatters, its insane bleeding bits sinking into the sand. A tomb for the loons.

I fell to my knees (unregrettably dramatic), able to utter but a single thing:

Look! Love's lamented loss lying low.

So here I am now, in the dead of night sitting in my cell.

I share the space with a heart floating in a formaldehyde jar (Charming superstition in this part of the country).

Torn bits of masking tape displaying the faded letters of toria.

A beautiful Victoria to keep me company I suppose.

I should consider myself lucky as I've been informed I'm the last person allowed to choose their method of execution (Firing Squad).

Polled focus groups have now won over in a bureaucratic strategy to make capital punishment a reflection of popular opinion (Pit. Large rodents).

I've also been allowed to keep the Pedipalps book and given a watch as an anticipatory gift ; a rather nice Zeitgeber Chromatic.

The benevolence of my executioners is quite surprising and heartwarming.

But my dew. God, my warm puddle of rippling flesh!

For weeks now I've thought about her final expression in the moments before the police led me away, trying to replicate it in the loose pieces of gravel I carve with my fingernails (Trust me, under normal circumstances I adhere to a strict regimen of weekly pedicures).

She blossoms from my fingertips, strands of light igniting the cold surfaces, a breath shimmering in the translucence of moist eyes.

In watching her lips, I find myself sinking into the tiny strip of black, becoming the blur of descending evaporation in which my being glistens, meshing into vibrant constellations that reverberate with every echoing beat of her heart.

As I try to understand everything that has transpired, I return over and over again to a passage in *Pedipalps*.

Wamauvassitte writes:

"Some view it's enslavement of local ant colonies as unnecessary, perplexing and as Professor Delan Keslinden has stated 'diabolical.'

But in many regards this assessment is presumptuous and misguided.

For the scorpion finds no satisfying truth and determines no wrong.

It is the glanmeiness yin and the glanmeiness yang.

There is no hero. No villain. There is only survival."

I suppose I have the touch.

The glanmeiness touch.

In that case I shall walk proudly. My dew changed to dust.

The dust of Tomorrow, Tam Arrow, Tammy Morrow and Tamarra Row.

Low-Rider | *Del-Rita Butler*

The noise of the bass followed me for several miles
or at least it seemed to
the closer the low-rider cruised into my awareness
the more its vibration rocked, grinded and bumped
the seat of my car
my inner world was affronted and I struggled to remain aloof.
I could feel the bass rumbling deep within my groin,
but without any awakenings
without any connection to my primal urges
All of these sensory signals
electrified the space around me, but were lost to me.
I didn't rock, sway, or tap ten toes inside my orthopedics
the pupils of my eyes never darted, my neck never craned with curiosity
When did I so become gray, so void of color, so old?
When did the days ahead of me become so few?
my vehicle is empty and the caravan of cars behind me is full
this procession of my life moves in quarter beats,
the traffic following me mocks me in rapid measured motions
these surly creatures can change their tempo but I am like a scratched phonograph
repeating phrases of my fears
in that stilted unfinished chant
their laughter lilts the songs of change
and I don't feel anything deep enough to invoke newness
I begin to steal glimpses of them in my rear view mirror,
I see their joy, it is abundant and their kiddee faces reflect
the kindness of their years,
I do not see the crows which punctuate my eyes,
nor the shadows of interrupted sleep and digital reminders
I look closely and see they are not tormented
by opportunities overlooked, underachieved, and bygone
I navigate too slowly and this loud booming Chevy passes me to my left
The driver smiles and thanks me for yielding and I feel as if
my remaining effervescence abandoned me and hitched a ride.

Cold Woman Blues | *John Grey*

Somewhere, in the background,
the furnace is roaring.
So it's burning natural gas.
It's blowing heat up pipes
and into radiators.

And then there's your head,
your body, your heart,
so much going on
but no noise forthcoming.
Surely the nuclear power
your passion generates
could thaw the chill
out of a skyscraper.
But it's all held inside:
the loudness, the fire, everything.

Eventually, it gets so hot
in this room,
you ask me to turn
the thermostat down.
I long for the day
when it's your thermostat
we're talking about.

Nameless Poem | *Roberto Garcia*

I sat bathing in the sun,
my skin hot,
chill wind pushing & pulling
the trees—I heard God talking,
& although I am landlocked
inside me pounds an ocean of angst,
I can hear His voice over the waves,
can't make out words,
and when the Blue Jay hops
towards my feet it sings:
*The sun on your skin
are the words.*

*Take my brothers and I,
sharing the skies with planes,
their loud jets,
muffling eagles & hawks,
all we can do is feel.*

So I went for a walk
like the full moon
in broad daylight,
& I'm pulled left
by hope's weight
in a starless imagination,
but at least the sun is still out,
gold strings on a guitar,
sounds so feel,
feels so taste,
tastes so transient.

CONTRIBUTORS

Gale Acuff has had poems published in many journals and has also authored three books of poetry. Gale has taught university English in the US, China, and Palestine. He currently teaches literature at Sichuan University for Nationalities, in Sichuan, China.

My Name is **Del-Rita Butler**. One of my favorite quotes is “Who are you when no one is looking?” I use this quote as a guidepost to my actions. My intention is to live my life in its positive light. I hope that I am living in grace and reflecting the introspective work I practice. I am a believer in volunteerism and I am committed to “putting in the time” to make changes on this Planet. I believe that one person can make a difference! My poetry is reflective of my journey with all its bumps, bruises and joys!

Cathy Calkins, a writer and retired nurse, has lived in Albuquerque, New Mexico her entire life and often uses images from the desert in her poetry. She's had poems published in *North American Review*, *Kalliope*, *The Evansville Review*, *Cider Press Review*, *Weber Studies*, *Salt Hill*, *Agnieszka's Dowry*, *Electric Acorn*, *The Hurricane Review*, and *RN*.

Elizabeth Crowell was born and raised in NJ. She has an MFA in poetry from Columbia University and taught high school English for a number of years. Her work has been published most recently in *THE WORCESTER REVIEW*, *THE SHEESPHEAD REVIEW*, and *THE HEALING MUSE*. “The Tag,” her essay, was the 2011 BELLEVUE LITERARY REVIEW winner of the Burns Archive Prize for Non-Fiction, judged by Jerome Groopman. She lives outside Boston with her wife and two children.

Bruce Foster was born in eastern Ohio and currently lives and works in central Ohio. He is a self taught photographer specializing in documentary, fine art and commercial photography. His work has been exhibited in numerous group and solo exhibitions. His work has also been published in several magazines and journals. www.brucefoster.tumblr.com | www.brucefosterphotography.com

Roberto Carlos Garcia's published works include the chapbook *amores gitano* (gypsy loves) Cervena Barva Press 2013, his poems and prose have appeared or are forthcoming in *The Rumpus*, *5 AM Magazine*, *HTMLGiant*, *Connotation Press- An Online Artifact*, *Poets/Artists*, and others. A native New Yorker, Roberto holds an MFA in Poetry and Poetry Translation from Drew University. His website is www.robertocarlosgarcia.tumblr.com

Gail Goepfert is a Midwest teacher, poet, and nature photographer. She loves to document places she travels in both word and image. Currently, she serves as an associate editor for Chicago-based *RHINO*. Her poetry appears in anthologies and journals including *Avocet*, *Off Channel*, *After Hours*, *Caesura*, *Florida English*, *Poetic License Press*, and *Examined Life Journal*. Her photography's found a home at *Rambunctious Review* and *Avocet*.

John Grey is an Australian born poet. Recently published in *The Lyric, Vallum* and the science fiction anthology, "The Kennedy Curse" with work upcoming in Bryant *Literary Magazine, Natural Bridge, Southern California Review* and the *Pedestal*.

Amanda Oaks is the founding editor of Words Dance. Her works have appeared in numerous online & print publications, including *Stirring, Dressing Room Poetry Journal, Glamour, Elle, Parenting & Artful Blogging*. Her chapbook, *Hurricane Mouth*, is forthcoming from NightBallet Press in 2014. She believes in our collective freedom & enjoys laughing more than most anything.

Chris Okum lives in Los Angeles. He has been published at *McSweeney's, Opium Magazine, Metazen*, and in *The Alarmist Magazine* (UK).

Carol Reid lives on the west coast of Canada. She's working on a collection of linked stories based on an imagined family history.

Frankie Sachs lives & writes in Northern Sweden.

Susan Tepper is a poet and fiction writer. Tepper has been nominated 9 times for the Pushcart Prize. Her novel "What May Have Been" was nominated for a Pulitzer. <http://www.susantepper.com>

Matthew Vasiliauskas is a graduate of Columbia College Chicago. In 2009, he was awarded the Silver Dome Prize by the Illinois Broadcast Association for best public affairs program as producer of the Dean Richards Show at WGN Radio. His work has appeared in publications such as *Stumble Magazine, The Adirondack Review* and *The Pennsylvania Review*. Matthew currently lives and works in Los Angeles.

Tony Walton is a Caribbean writer living in the Cayman Islands his works have appeared most recently in *Storyteller Magazine, Whisperings Magazine, Mountain Tales Press, Out of Our Magazine, Poetry Bay Magazine, Burningword Magazine, Wilde Magazine, Nite Writers Literary International Literary Journal, Avalon Literary Review, Iceland Daily, East Lit Literary Magazine, Boston Poetry Magazine* and *Eunoia Magazine*.