



CONCIS

winter 2017

# concīs

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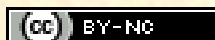
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*"Iced Branches" by Andrey (cc-by)*



## *The Prop is Not an Apple*

It is not too late to meld splendor with the  
Bodies that grow from instruction. Her outlaw,  
Common sense. He, underground. “They got it  
Wrong, the gods we have.” I can feel your steps  
Unravel with the clarity of youth. A blossoming  
Of raw beginnings. There is no ordinary along with  
All their other oblivions. He doesn’t get a full house.  
The statues will recover with menace, forecast:  
“We can try again to want less heraldic colors.”

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**Katy Chrisler** received her MFA from the Iowa Writers’ Workshop and has held residencies with Land Arts of the American West and 100 West Corsicana. Recent work of hers has appeared in *Tin House*, *Conflict of Interest*, *The Volta*, *The Seattle Review* and *Black Warrior Review*. She currently lives and works in Austin, Texas.

## Errands

Other registers were open, but I got in line behind the bride. I hadn't expected to need these purchases again, but when I saw her—buying two six-packs, hair uncurling, gaze hauntingly hollow—I was almost okay with having started bleeding. It was possible, I thought, that the two of us were meant to stand in line together.

Clearly something terrible had happened, some unbearable disappointment, her wedding canceled at the very last minute. She'd probably cry for the rest of the day, her white dress like a second skin she wanted to burn right off.

"I'm so sorry," I said.

"Hmm?" She blinked at me as the cashier handed her a receipt. I gestured towards her dress.

"Oh... No—you're so sweet! No, my daughter's at a princess party, and—ugh—the parents have to wear costumes, too." She rolled her eyes. "This was all I had. But—" She raised her six-packs as if making a toast. "I have these now too! One of the mothers sent me out to get them."

She whispered the next part. "We're gonna sneak them during cake."

Smiling wide, she turned to leave, and I saw that her dress didn't zip all the way.

"I'm sorry," the cashier said to me.

"Hmm?" I blinked at her, and she nodded towards my purchases. Tampons. Ovulation tests. Tissues. I noticed for the first time that her hand rested on her belly.

"Oh... No," I said. "You're so sweet. No. I'm okay. Thanks. No."

## Mimosa Pudica

plant apoplectic  
 in the river of time what I thought  
     sweet water and thread  
 lifting clear pink satellites  
     field risen, rippling  
 in tune the blue coast  
     if a drift face I hope you get  
 how to lead someone to water  
     there's no other paper  
 that sleeps like me  
     dipping as if  
 to fit into bottles  
     in the dark heat rolling  
 thin sleeves of green  
     when touched the fold  
 I found sway not shy  
     if I close when touched  
 move move then drink  
     half-full, the waiting  
 evaporated spaces  
     guess attack or death-play  
 the sleep's root in reflection  
     if the best example of holding  
 is a moon and a barrel

§

**Michelle Chen** was born in Singapore and spent her early years in China before immigrating to the United States at the age of four. Her work has appeared in *Prairie Schooner*, *Bat City Review*, *The Sharkpack Poetry Review*, *Rattle*, *Across the Margin* and elsewhere. Her writing has been recognized by the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, YoungArts, Foyle Young Poets, Ploughshares Emerging Writers, the Lancaster Writing Award for Literary Criticism, and the City College of New York, among others. She has performed her work at venues including Lincoln Center, Sotheby's, the National Arts Club and the NYC Poetry Festival.



## *On Maggie*

Egg me on, magi.  
I'm a man, see?

A golem on lease.

Slam me,  
name me,  
son me,  
age me.

Am I loam? Glass?  
A seasonal song?

Missile me gone.  
I'm a lass, see?

As no one, I'll gleam.

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§

**Jennifer Wortman's** poetry appears or is forthcoming in *Juked*, *concīs*, *Swamp Ape Review* and *Rhino*. Her prose can be found in *Normal School*, *Hobart*, *DIAGRAM*, *North American Review*, *JMWW Journal*, *PANK* and elsewhere. She is an associate fiction editor for *Colorado Review* and an instructor at Lighthouse Writers Workshop.

## O. Henry *Don't Leave Us*

One leaf clutches dirt with  
vertices, its raised abdomen  
blotched red, as if a blood  
creation, holding on.

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**Theodore Eisenberg** retired from the practice of labor law in 2014 to write every day. He is married, with four children and six grandchildren. His poems have appeared, or will soon appear, in *The Listening Eye*, *The Aurean*, *Poetica*, *Thema*, *Rattle*, *Halfway Down the Stairs*, *Slipstream Press*, *Crosswinds Press*, *Lighthouse Journal*, *Jewish Literary Journal*, *Main Street Rag* and *Rugged Sky Anthology*. His chapbook, *This*, was published earlier this year by Finishing Line Press. His poems are what becomes “this” for him – fragments received within the circle of his intimacy.

## *Donut Man*

The man outside 7-11  
sells hot fresh chromosomes  
for 10 cents. X  
chromosomes only.

Men eat them, wanting  
to become women.

Women eat  
them because  
they taste like America.

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**Meg Eden's** work has been published in various magazines, including *Rattle*, *Drunken Boat*, *Poet Lore*, *RHINO* and *Gargoyle*. She teaches creative writing at the University of Maryland. She has four poetry chapbooks, and her novel *Post-High School Reality Quest* is published with California Coldblood, an imprint of Rare Bird Lit.



*coronamatic*

something says  
keep the curmudgeon:  
bat with teeth, brainy  
guy, heel, nun's ass –  
keep this furniture.  
the lame attempt at  
pecking at logs.

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**Karen Stanislaw**, while perverse as empirical student throughout her undergraduate and graduate experiences, schlepped a portable typewriter to Europe because intuitively she knew she could and should write poems. Lover of the asymmetric, negative space, \*juxtaposition - she is also a visual collagist. Her poems have been published in the journals *Margie*, the *American Journal of Poetry* (United States) and *Obsessed with Pipework* (United Kingdom). She has performed her own poems - calling the expression “live collage -” both in New York City and in Mexico City. Born and nourished in New York, she has also lived in London, Amsterdam, Mexico City - and now, for reasons/and in a spirit “quite juxtapositional -” Miami.

## *Rothko Before the Color Fields*

Lord God of Monochrome Beauty,  
forgive semi-abstraction.  
Who cares for a single ear

rotting among ripe fruits?  
Slow the art and speed  
the lie, sliding

your foot closely,  
close enough,  
see a mosquito eat

at that plum. Blood meals  
nourish diseased beasts.  
Trompe l'oeil:

Spend long enough  
with black canvas  
in a chapel

by a dead man,  
it purples, reddens.

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**Joshua Gottlieb-Miller's** poems can be found in *Grist*, *Four Way Review*, *Pleiades*, *Indiana Review* and elsewhere, and a non-fiction/poetry hybrid is online at *Pacifica Lit Review*. He is the Digital Non-Fiction Editor for *Gulf Coast* and a PhD student at the University of Houston.



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*“Ice Temptation 3” by Philip Bitnar (cc-by)*



## *Autumn*

Autumn was too close to solemn.

The silent *n*,  
too understated for the season.

When a metallic feeling bit the air,  
Americans called it *fall*.

Let down  
the dusk-blue grapes.  
Let out the scope of chapters.

Fall was the real deal.  
Fall was the way forward.

You had only to look at the light of God  
oiling lengths of the rural guardrails.

Or the centerpiece of fuller's tassel  
the kids spray-painted gold.

## *Notes on a Modern Cinderella*

This version will not be as ugly as poor Berlioz who slipped on sunflower oil at the turnstile, the one who fell under the train steered by a *Komsomol* girl. Let's say worse than the Grimms' toes but not so horrendous as heads. Trains do pull into stations, but no one dies under them. Although, in a serialized novel *San-shiro* circa 1900 Tokyo, even then a woman might be heard crying from the track, *oh oh it will all be over soon*, and this edition shall have roughly the pathos of that.

## *kitchen window view*

of the barn-tethered  
goat

his joy-besotted molars  
cudding

brambles in blossoming  
light

the rickety-hinged holler  
opens

the  
cauliflower

are rife with  
it

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§

**Philip Arnold's** poetry draws from his experiences living in the Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina. His poetry has appeared in *The Iowa Review*, *Rattle*, *Midwest Quarterly*, *Sou'wester*, *Corbel Stone Press* and *Southern Poetry Review*.



## *The Main Reason I Didn't Leave a Forwarding Address*

Since I got an 'A' on my Turing test, it doesn't bother me that I can't hear my hair growing at night. Of course, I enjoyed the helicopter ride and the dog sledding, but the problem with my dead relatives is that they are still alive. There's something *je ne sais quoi* about their persistent yodeling, but, like a phantom limb, I can't quite put my finger on it. My physician says as soon as I get better, it'll be OK to pawn my invisibility cloak. He says I shouldn't be bashful; everyone has a body beneath their clothes. I wanted to ask him, *What use is a fire escape without a fire?* but, I can tell you, naked or nude, he's not the kind of person who likes to take turns missing the boat. Of course, like Pa always said, it's not polite to scratch your itchy trigger finger in public. Don't bother coming back till you're dead.

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§

**Brad Rose** was born and raised in Los Angeles and lives in Boston. He is the author of a collection of poetry and flash fiction, *Pink X-Ray* (Big Table Publishing, 2015) His new book of poems, *Momentary Turbulence*, is forthcoming from Cervena Barva Press. Brad is also the author of five chapbooks of poetry and flash fiction, *An Evil Twin is Always in Good Company*, *Democracy of Secrets*, *Coyotes Circle the Party Store*, *Dancing School Nerves* and *Away with Words*. Twice nominated for a Pushcart Prize, Brad's poetry and fiction have appeared in *The American Journal of Poetry*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Potomac*, *Folio*, *decomp*, *Lunch Ticket*, *The Baltimore Review*, *Posit*, *Right Hand Pointing* and many other publications.

## [*quantum*]

“Here are the test results. It contains only calcium.” “What percentage?” “Ninety percent.” Standing naked out in the middle of the woods, I couldn’t remember a poem, only the assurance that, “when everything else has been taken from you, a memorized poem remains.” His middle initial stood for no name.

## Scaffold

I was awakened early this morning by the scaffolders next door. They were shouting up and down their construction about Mediaeval imagination and the birth of nationhood. I yelled out the window, *What's with the academic bullshit! Get a proper job, like the rest of us.* They told me where to go, then began upon the subject of aggression and gender identity.

Still angry, I put on a clown nose, a red fuzzy wig, and left for work.

Driving was hell in my clown shoes, but I managed to crash the car near enough work that I could walk the rest of the way.

I entered the offices, and as I passed those gathered by the coffee machine, a phrase came to mind: *The psychology of hell is strewn with coffee tables.* Putting this to one side, I went to my office to attend to paperwork.

Eight hours later I went home. The scaffolders were still there, still shouting—discussing the possibility of intelligent life in the universe. I shouted up at them, *Impossible, don't be so stupid!*

My argument seemed to win them over, as they conceded—in surprisingly good humour—that it *is* doubtful.





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*"Ice Tentacle" by Alan Levine (cc-by)*

## *Elephants and Rain*

Savannah rain a careful glove  
on the elephant's ear, an *ah* or peanut.  
Not a peanut, a chrysanthemum,  
cavalcade of horses romping  
cliff, a considerable moth  
covering the porch light. Twilit  
elephant wrinkles. Some more  
trees, terrible breakfast aroma  
late in the day. Yes, some laugh  
like the world is smaller than it is.

## *Quercus alba*

mott-gathered, hard  
as hunger  
rock-shelled, soaked soft  
cracked  
open with a maul  
three days  
in a basket, steeped  
by the whiskey river  
destitute lobes,  
handful  
in the pot, mouthful  
in the cup  
one on the sill  
against the storm

---

§

**Sonja Johanson** has recent work appearing in the *Best American Poetry* blog, *BOAAT*, *Ninth Letter* and *The Writer's Almanac*. She is a contributing editor at the *Eastern Iowa Review*, and the author of *Impossible Dovetail* (IDES, Silver Birch Press), *all those ragged scars* (Choose the Sword Press) and *Trees in Our Dooryards* (Redbird Chapbooks). Sonja divides her time between work in Massachusetts and her home in the mountains of western Maine.



## *The Little Laser Girl*

- Light: The wands she sold were brighter than the snow, a colder light.
- Amplification: She flipped one on—it flared open, a humming white door.
- Stimulated by: *Oscillation between energy levels and the subtle realms of matter*
- Emission of: Coherent light waves, so she could see the dead and the almost existing.
- Radiation: Electromagnetic—she saw her grandmother pulsing in the now-visible, ultraviolet-infrared regions of the spectrum as she froze.

## *hands down are roots to lift a well*

There were two of them, both empty.  
A ringing continues in the larger bell.  
He tells me he can feel it days after the striking.  
A storm at the horizon sputters with amber lights.

One world waits for its hunger. Presently, it has no stomach.  
If listening is required, you'll want batteries.  
That was, once again, the wrong noise.  
It came at an opportune moment for the argument.

Where is the zoo? Near the natural falls?  
One alarm was always false, an unimportant one.  
Solutions were proposed and tabled, soon perfected unused.  
The last attempt succeeded, but in a direction that left them behind.

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§

**Glenn Ingersoll** works for the Berkeley Public Library where he hosts *Clearly Meant*, a reading and interview series. He has two chapbooks, *City Walks* (broken boulder) and *Fact* (Avantacular). He keeps two blogs, *LoveSettlement* and *Dare I Read*. Recent work has appeared in *BlazeVOX*, *Futures Trading*, *Poetry East* and *Askew*. Ingersoll thanks H. D. Moe for the title of the poem.

## *Tips from the pioneers*

In their pristine state  
even the most benign-  
looking lithium-ion-  
battery is based on a  
predatory concept. Its  
diet is composed of  
elements such as salt-  
bush, grass, plants; its

mires sequester large a-  
mounts of atmospheric  
carbon dioxide; it has  
always been in a con-  
stant state of flux. Tie  
dyeing a t-shirt can be a  
scary idea. Carnivory  
increases the fuel load.

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§

**Mark Young's** most recent books are *Ley Lines* & *bricolage*, both from gradient books of Finland, *The Chorus of the Sphinxes*, from Moria Books in Chicago, & *some more strange meteorites*, from Meritage & i.e. Press, California / New York. A limited edition chapbook, *A Few Geographies*, was recently released by One Sentence Poems as the initial offering in their new range.



## *She in a French Movie*



Discover me in june petal pleasant and  
poise    fluorescent kneecaps    guide  
you home    i wasn't meant to    sing  
gridlocked hymns dragonfly    lassoed  
on    someone's whim    i    tell him  
there's a    venus flytrap    between  
my legs    he thinks we    are done with  
that & this    indifference    to flesh that  
droops and eyes    that kill my favourite  
lover solitary    prince demure    at  
first then    juggernaut    tongue    my  
favourite    lover hover    here where  
silence    is boredom and sleep    is slit  
between    flesh that    weeps.

§

**M.S.** recently realized her passion for writing. She urges you to try as well. Think of her with a smile if you find her work elsewhere.

## *The Morrigan Rides*

Caul of night invades the Black Valley,  
    crow roams the still-warm thermals,  
Gap of Dunloe stained red with stonecrop.  
    Dundee masked beneath MacGillycuddy's Reeks,  
Coosaun Lough slips low, Wishing Bridge creaking,  
    groaning as doves keen in the pilings.  
Blackthorn spikes horizon's fire, an owl swiveling  
    its neck, eyes wide at the coming dark.

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§

**KB Ballentine**, is the author of five books of poetry, most recently *Almost Everything, Almost Nothing* (Middle Creek Publishing, 2017). Her fourth collection, *The Perfume of Leaving*, was awarded the 2016 Blue Light Press Book Award. Her work also appears in *In God's Hand* (2017), *River of Earth and Sky: Poems for the Twenty-first Century* (2015), *Southern Poetry Anthology, Volume VI: Tennessee* (2013) and *Southern Light: Twelve Contemporary Southern Poets* (2011).

## [*quantum*]

They told her she had a limited personality, and she said that's the whole point of personality. We told him he shouldn't feel too slighted: most kidnappers have ulterior motives. When I said I had two obsessions, she told me to get back in touch when I was ready for serious commitment. Turns out the billboard slogan *Your life. Your style. Your way.* was for a funeral home.



## *Electricity, Yes*

Always more comfortable among the strange,  
prone to jump the garden fence at any startle,  
I tossed no flowers upon my father's grave  
as he tossed no flowers upon my mother's.  
From eloquence to secrecy's sublingual  
inconsistencies of faith, I would, like math,  
a more exotic womb in which to place  
our fathers' tongues for jaw's own faults—  
that vault wherein we all, gentle as a glass  
of thunder in facile rat-skin glory, are born.  
Death, that dog best undisturbed, that wonderfully  
suffered child, Devastation's blackened pit bull  
enlarged by solvents' hollow change, will gnaw  
upon our moldering names.

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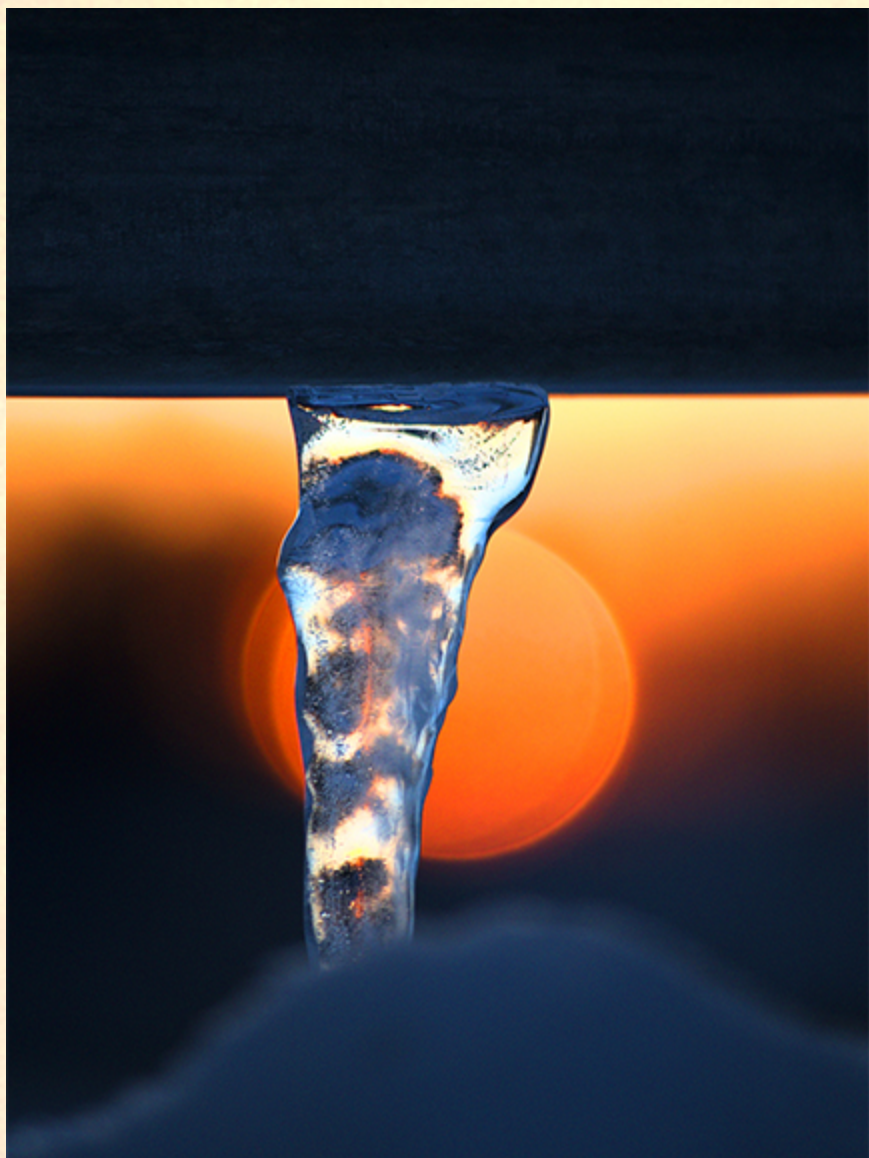
**Matt Dennison's** work has appeared in *Rattle*, *Bayou Magazine*, *Redivider*, *Natural Bridge*, *The Spoon River Poetry Review* and *Cider Press Review*, among others. He has also made short films with Michael Dickes, Swoon, and Marie Craven.

## *Beginning at the Golden Panda*

this skin traded for fortunes  
unknown    *a nice cake*  
*awaits you*    the morning  
after, an envelope steamed open  
by disbelief    *you are the only*  
*flower of meditation*  
*in the wilderness*    a fire  
that tastes like knowing    *we want*  
*to have a testimony but don't*  
*want the test*    laps up  
desire with the urgency  
of fate    *you are about to become*  
*\$8.95 poorer, \$10.95*  
*if you had the buffet*

§

**Ashley Kunsas'** creative work appears or is forthcoming in *Sycamore Review*, *Pembroke Magazine* and the *Los Angeles Review*. Her recent poetry has been published in *Gravel*, *The Cape Rock* and *Sweet Tree Review*, among others. A native and long-time resident of Pittsburgh, she is currently Visiting Assistant Professor of Creative Writing at Rocky Mountain College in Billings, MT.



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*“Fire and Ice” by Michael Pardo (cc-by)*



## *Bon Mots vs. Witticisms in Four Rounds*

1. Their kiss was cunning in its entirety—not a slow, amateurish smooching or a quick, pornographic slither-like darting of the tongues—but like the expertly interwoven strings of a loom produced not by an overworked laborer at a Chinese factory but by the proud hand of an American master craftsman.

2. Gaius Lucius Serpentis, his muscles ripping under their own weight, raised his gladius above his head in a mocking salute to his opponent who, being a Gaul, just mispronounced *morituri te salutant* in his ingrained desire to keep the Gaullic language free from the foreign influences, and now was about to be condemned to death by the vulgar Latin-speaking audience.

3. When the ship emerged from hyperspace, lieutenant commander Dated found with horror that his finger that he had picked his nose with just prior to the warp jump, now was inside the shirt of Dr. Natalia Chekhova, perhaps guided there by the forces of Smith's law that dictates that males are attracted to females at the rate that twice exceeds the gravitational speed; but fortunately it was prevented from sliding further down not by Wilson's law making space travel possible, but by the tightness of the good doctor's pants.

4. Blinded by the blue rays of the planet Avatar, the craft overshot the base, clipped the top branch of the Tree of Life, was swallowed by Shmeleoapterix, passed through its digestive tract, was cut from the theatrical release and left in a pile of guano waiting for the director's version.

## *Trump as a Fire Without Light #93*

White gold, time alone, this bison tips over at the idea of actual wind.

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§

**Darren C. Demaree** is the author of six poetry collections, most recently *Many Full Hands Applauding Inelegantly* (8th House Publishing, 2016). He is the Managing Editor of the *Best of the Net Anthology* and *Ovenbird Poetry*. He is currently living in Columbus, Ohio with his wife and children.

## *All That Good Stuff*

take the prose of a poem   the teeth of a grin  
lost weekend of a savior   heyday of a has-been

golf shoes of a president   a jew's christmas cheer  
a punchline in german   the court eunuch's leer

warren beatty's crow's feet   johnny depp's address book  
the mouth of a mime   the vow of a crook

take a scrivener's eyes   a blackmailer's file  
straightedge of a schoolmarm   a judge's denial

the twitch of a surgeon   a divorcée's glow  
repose of a greyhound   a yes man's hell no

the staple from a centerfold   bouquet of a bride  
stand in line for a seat   bite down hard, open wide

take an open house tour   through a boychild's wet dream  
hey diddle diddle   don't make a scene

take the prose of a poem   and a guilt-wracked scapegoat  
hey nonny nonny   death row clears its throat

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§

**klipschutz** (pen name of Kurt Lipschutz) is the author of several books of poetry, including *This Drawn & Quartered Moon* (Anvil Press, 2013) and *The Erection of Scaffolding for the Re-Painting of Heaven by the Lowest Bidder* (o.p.). *A Visit to the Ranch & other poems*, his collection of San Francisco and Pacific Northwest poems, was issued by Last Word Press in October 2015. He also co-edits the collectible quarterly *Four by Two*, and writes songs with Chuck Prophet.



## *It's Hard to Get Ahead*

Brainwashed the dishes. Now, I'm looking for money in large amounts and small denominations. Jesus says I'm a very legible person, but Raven says I don't have enough string to fly a kite. OK, so maybe I am still working out the kinks. This week they called off the weekend, so I'll just work right on through, at least until those Japanese Martians land. I'll wear water skis if I have to. I've heard hollow chocolate Easter bunnies really can work up an appetite. After all, you are what you eat. Of course, you can't trust everything they teach you in hairdressing school. To make up the deficit, I practiced my danceable moves in broad daylight. Before I knew what was happening, the cops asked me to leave. That nearly killed me. I love this country like the back of my hand. Can't count the number of times I've tried to set it on fire.

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§

**Brad Rose** was born and raised in Los Angeles and lives in Boston. He is the author of a collection of poetry and flash fiction, *Pink X-Ray* (Big Table Publishing, 2015) His new book of poems, *Momentary Turbulence*, is forthcoming from Cervena Barva Press. Brad is also the author of five chapbooks of poetry and flash fiction, *An Evil Twin is Always in Good Company*, *Democracy of Secrets*, *Coyotes Circle the Party Store*, *Dancing School Nerves* and *Away with Words*. Twice nominated for a Pushcart Prize, Brad's poetry and fiction have appeared in *The American Journal of Poetry*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Potomac*, *Folio*, *decomp*, *Lunch Ticket*, *The Baltimore Review*, *Posit*, *Right Hand Pointing* and many other publications.

## *Fleece*

The turtles are mudded down,  
The air dank with leaf rot.  
The new house that faces the bluff  
Is all timber, everything  
Bare-limbed this November.  
I have three layers on.  
The trees are one.

## *I Gut the Fish*

When something  
in the dark  
begins to shift:  
I move into it.

I gut the fish.  
I split my own wood.

**Robin Walter** is a Colorado native. She currently resides in Missoula, MT, where she is a candidate in poetry in the University of Montana's MFA program. Her work has appeared in *The Huffington Post*, *Sierra*, *Western Confluence* and *The Center for Humans and Nature*. When she is not writing, she can be found consorting with her white mule named Pearl.



## *O(pi)nion*

Peeled away, there's Pi:  
constant, irrational,  
repeated to infinite  
places. The bedrock  
of this stew.



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*"Rain Yesterday, Snow Today" by Alan Levine (cc-BY)*

## *The Tailor of Twitter*

He measured the pattern to be cut bias  
cherry-coloured snippets  
that will serve one single button hole.

He talked to himself little twittering tunes his greatest triumph  
but there was no one there  
He was vexed like a cat that expects

cream on the dresser

No more twist!  
Throstles and robins sang

His badness hunted and searched house to house  
and secret trap-doors without any keys  
merry voices an echo

ravelling that wonderful coat  
Never were seen such flowered lappets

And he talked to himself: do not lose that last penny!  
We shall make our fortune shut out the light

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Note: Found poem only using words and phrases from *The Tailor of Gloucester* by Beatrix Potter

**Amy Holman** is the author of *Wrens Fly Through This Opened Window* (Somondoco Press, 2010) and *Wait For Me, I'm Gone* (Dream Horse Press, 2005) which was the chapbook prize-winner for 2004. Poems have been elsewhere, such as the website for *Archaeology Magazine* and in the *Best American Poetry* 1999, and more recently in *Gargoyle*. She is a literary consultant living in Brooklyn, New York.



## *Rhizome Culture*

but keep the fingers from severance, from severity of assumption,  
from a neighborhood of sheer glass in gravel, peeling out pickups  
like boars roaring and squealing, the crash of running out of  
antipsychotic healing, pirates reading poetry for the ultimate  
in democratic experience, an intermezzo existence, a stone's-  
throw through a solid state, culture as a surface of water trickling  
through cracks, one hand in the hound's mouth

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**David Bankson** lives in Texas, hacking and nursing his personality disorders. His poetry and microfiction can be found in *(b)ojink*, *Thank You for Swallowing*, *Artifact Nouveau*, *Five 2 One*, *Indiana Voice Journal* and *Walking is Still Honest*.

## *Sonnet with Simile*

I knew straight away,  
like a rabbit darting across traffic  
knows the extent of its quickness.

I had wanted to emerge without  
emerging. A private debut,  
no needling.

What happened, of course,  
was threefold, like a Chekhovian  
drama. First, I gave in

as some might give birth. Then,  
I made the decision. Last, I stayed,  
which had the staying power

of an image, a hook-handed man.  
A rifle in the umbrella stand.

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**Jane Huffman** is a third-year fellow at the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop, where she completed her MFA in poetry in 2017. Her recent poems and essays have been published or are forthcoming in *Hobart*, *phoebe*, *Ninth Letter*, *New South*, *Third Coast*, *Witness* and elsewhere. She is co-founder/editor-in-chief of *Guesthouse*, a new literary journal.

## *Licentiam: 9.8*

hissing vessel desperate to be poured, poor little veins,  
lava streams engulfing inland valleys, brown blood  
flecks, a peaking shrine to blackmail hex on kin, old  
straws, busted copper rods to suck, sacrosanct instead  
of laundered preempt, sickos willed by the smack of a  
papal legate, loyal gene, radical selfcombing, snarled  
hair, narrates the rotary gestures, theremin with  
vacuum tubes, heterodynes, Fête des Belles Eaux for  
six ondes, to crave badly is to take hard the blood-tusk

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**Daniel Y. Harris** is the author of 11 collections of poetry and collaborative writing including *The Rapture of Eddy Daemon* (BlazeVOX, 2016), *heshe egregore* (with Irene Koronas, Éditions du Cygne, 2016), *The Underworld of Lesser Degrees* (NYQ Books, 2015), *Esophagus Writ* (with Rupert M. Loydell, The Knives Forks and Spoons Press, 2014) and *Hyperlinks of Anxiety* (Červená Barva Press, 2013) Some of his poetry, experimental writing, art, and essays have been published in *BlazeVOX*, *The Café Irreal*, *Denver Quarterly* and elsewhere. He is Editor-in-Chief and Co-Founder of *X-Peri* and Co-Editor of the *X-Peri Series*.

**Jonathan Mulcahy-King** is author of *Euryphion* (Ed du Cygne; X-Peri Series, 2017). He is Editor-in-Chief and Founder of *The Licentiam: A journal of hyper-erotic poetics* and Assistant Editor of *X-Peri*. His recent publications include *BlazeVOX*, *Harbinger Asylum*, *Stride Magazine* and *The Wardrobe*. He lives in Newport, South Wales, where he works with asylum-seekers, refugees and homeless young people. He is currently working on a collaborative project with the painter Martin Abrahams, *Onaliths*, a hybrid work of concrete and post-language poetry exploring posthuman asemics in various forms of computational advancement.



## *Ageratina altissima*

the milk, and the bone –  
sickness and break fever

women in their crinoline  
cages

round-toothed, scalloped  
feet planted so close  
together

birthing herb,  
snakeroot, richweed, sanicle

ruptured shade    the febrile wood  
white island  
in a sea of heat

terete-wrap your breeze around  
my aching legs  
and tongue

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**Sonja Johanson** has recent work appearing in the *Best American Poetry* blog, *BOAAT*, *Ninth Letter* and *The Writer's Almanac*. She is a contributing editor at the *Eastern Iowa Review*, and the author of *Impossible Dovetail* (IDES, Silver Birch Press), *all those ragged scars* (Choose the Sword Press) and *Trees in Our Dooryards* (Redbird Chapbooks). Sonja divides her time between work in Massachusetts and her home in the mountains of western Maine.

## *Wor(l)d*

In the beginning was the woad,  
spackling a firmament cracking.  
St. John's solder, nailing the world  
in between, tacks the word to water.

## *Voyager 2, thinking, types things*

Very very very very very small  
Billion miles recalculating  
We don't know details well at all  
The direction we were last going

Calculable but undetectable  
Earth would be the one-yard line  
As bright planets are invisible  
*Now* does not exist in space-time

Outer solar system missions  
With the winds from other stars  
As in trigintillion years never

But please do send invitations  
People might think there are bears  
To hear from you by tomorrow over

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This sonnet-cento is composed of lines excerpted from tweets by [@NSFVoyager2](#). The title remixes that of the song "Thinking Voyager 2 Type Things" by Bob Geldof (*The Vegetarians of Love*, Atlantic, 1990).

**Mark A. McCutcheon** is from Toronto, and lives in Edmonton, where he teaches English literature at Athabasca University. Mark's poems are published or forthcoming in literary magazines like *On Spec*, *EVENT*, *Existere* and *UnLost*; he has also published short fiction in *Carouse!* and *subTerrain*. His criticism and book reviews appear in *The Explicator*, *Continuum* and *Extrapolation*, among other scholarly journals and books. He tweets as [@sonicfiction](#).



# The Proper Thing

## MISERY

sounds, the smell of the uncreation — he gritted his teeth against the images and tried to shut his mind away from them; *vivid* was not always good.

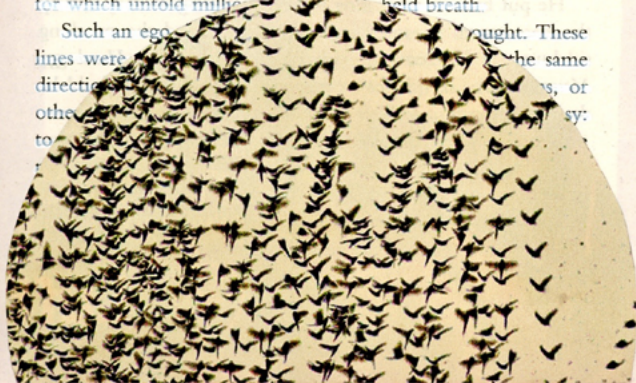
No, you didn't, but nine out of ten writers would have — at least they would if they were getting paid as much as you have been for even the non-Misery books. She never even thought of it.

She's not a writer.

Neither is she stupid, as I think we have both agreed. I think that she is filled with herself — she does not just have a large ego but one which is positively grandiose. Burning seemed to her the proper thing to do, and the idea that her concept of the proper thing to do might be short-circuited by something so piddling as a bank Xerox machine and a couple of rolls of quarters . . . that blip just never crossed her screen, my friend.

His other deductions might be like houses built on quicksand, but this view of Annie Wilkes seemed to him as solid as the Rock of Gibraltar. Because of his research for *Misery*, he had rather more than a layman's understanding of neurosis and psychosis, and he knew that although a borderline psychotic might have alternating periods of deep depression and almost aggressive cheerfulness and hilarity, the puffed and infected ego underlay all, positive that all eyes were upon him or her, positive that he or she was starring in a great drama; the outcome was a thing for which untold millions would hold breath.

Such an ego would have brought. These lines were the same direction as the same, or other, sy:



**Sarah J. Sloat** lives in Frankfurt, Germany, a stone's throw from Schopenhauer's grave. Her poems and prose have appeared in *Permafrost*, *Passages North* and *Beloit Poetry Journal*. Sarah's chapbooks *Inksuite* and *Heiress to a Small Ruin* are available from Dancing Girl Press. She's on Instagram as [@sjane30](#).

# *Cain a Tiller of the Ground*

—Gen 4:2

An agrarian comfort doll to bind in plastic  
and bury for drainage. A standard procession.  
The absence of law. Like any average male,

I balance my lust with my vanity,  
my vanity with my father's name,  
which assures me I am a gun for history to fire,

a record of force, a mineral for the emperor.  
Fog, closing in from the edge of a distance.  
Or distance itself, becoming fog.

I am cultivated by sleep, governed by  
its furrow in my body, its sulcus.  
But I cultivate evil, celebrate horror's

dense colors: gray of granite, cream of silica.  
*There is nothing that cannot be made natural.*  
*There is nothing that cannot be lost.*

A bulldozer is cleaving a treeless pasture.  
Its blade finessing stone, shaping garlands  
of clay, spooling soil, churling the earth.



## Afterword

A look at some aggregate numbers from our seven (!) seasons.

We have published 304 works by 234 different authors. With a bit of room for error given guesswork and the nature of gender-fluid identity, those works were authored by 154 women and 150 men (51%/49%), a ratio we're proud of given that we haven't intentionally pursued such a balance.

Based on our imperfect categorization—prose poems and flash fiction are particularly fungible—the types of work we've published break down this way:

- 62% poetry
- 28% prose poetry
- 4% flash fiction
- 4% flash nonfiction
- 3% visual poetry

While by no means unhappy with these numbers, we would love to see more flash fiction and flash nonfiction survive the editorial gauntlet.

So far, we've paid authors \$2367.50 for their work and donated \$4365 to charity on their behalf. Other expenses include \$452 for web and file hosting and \$826 for use of Submittable.

On the other side of the ledger, generous writers have chosen to donate \$480 in author payments back to our operations and, while we will never require submission fees, authors chose to use the "Supporting Submissions" category to contribute another \$485.

For those keeping score, this results in \$8010.50 (not counting the thousands of hours we've spent actually working as editors) outgoing vs \$965 incoming for seven seasons of *concis*. A tragic difference for a small business, perhaps, but on the balance an investment in the creative community from which we have reaped deep dividends...and we aren't done yet!





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*“Margins” by Alan Levine (cc-BY)*

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