

# HIRAM POETRY REVIEW

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Issue #70

Spring 2009





# THE HIRAM POETRY REVIEW

THE HIRAM POETRY REVIEW

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**Submission Guidelines:**

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**poetryreview@hiram.edu**

**English.hiram.edu/hpr/**

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# THE HIRAM POETRY REVIEW

Issue No. 70

Spring 2009

*Editor:* Willard Greenwood

*Associate Editor:* Mary Quade

*Editorial Assistants:* Dom Blanc, Collin Dunbar, Dan Scott, Ryan King,  
Aurelia Nugroho

*Cover Photo:* Dan Scott

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## Jordan Amadio

### Autopsy of my first semester at medical school

“Rush me forceps and blade  
as I expose what Galen or Aristotle  
never saw well,  
these nude spleens and hearts  
laid fresh  
on our table,”  
said the pathologist in his toil,  
quite clearly  
for my benefit.

If the Body is the original prosthesis  
then it told a few good jokes  
when we peered inside the dead  
and saw gleaming chrome  
knees among the mess,  
artifice amid the carnival of nerves and fat  
housing many more things—  
heart, unremarkable and unbecoming of eulogy,  
sodden lungs,  
stone liver,  
anaconda bowel,  
and a gelatinous brain that when evicted from its cranium  
left a craggy fossa,  
pockmarked and cavernous  
as the rind of a depleted pomegranate.

My mentors chuckled  
as they split the dead man’s ribs into a shipwrecked hull  
and tore his organs interconnected in one jiggling block,  
dropping it analytically into a cold-steel pan  
to which it perfectly conformed.  
(I called it the Rectangular Man.)

If medical school is the temple of man  
where the gods have been driven from every nook  
and chased to the brain’s wrinkled hideaways  
then I have served under the tyranny of praxis,  
the tough love I’m told makes healers  
of boys like me—

we who recite histopathology by day  
then coil in beds under institutional lights  
foregoing sleep  
to read modern poems and ancient philosophy, half-comprehending,  
to hold stare contests with human skull #503 on loan from our anatomy  
professors  
which gawks from the nightstand with empty orbits  
as we make breakfast, love, and careers—

we who remain astonished by the obscure possibility of mind,  
who know the garbage we'd buy  
at an alchemist's garage sale,  
who shrug at well-intentioned piety  
about honoring the lifeless  
and instead worry ourselves lonely over  
the question of significance  
the plausibility of genotype and phenotype  
the improbable machinery of us.

## George Such

### Life Buoy

I had forgotten you.  
It's been decades since  
those few weeks we worked together.  
I don't even remember your name,  
only your flinty eyes,  
the stiff-arm of your stony voice,  
and the way your skin shined  
like obsidian in that hot kitchen  
where we cooked greasy food.

But today  
when a twenty-year-old cook  
came to see me  
complaining of back pain,  
during the exam I felt  
the enlarged uterus  
she hadn't noticed,  
a buoy in the belly  
that brought you to mind,

how you told me,  
when I walked you home,  
about your rocky high  
school years,  
how you were so deep  
in the quarry of crack,  
how you once went  
to the toilet  
with hard, hard cramps,  
and how you freaked  
when you saw the head  
of your unnoticed son  
come out.

## Rick McKenzie

### Orange City

All I can tell you is  
You keep struggling to apply  
The science of what's wrong  
To politics and trailer parks  
And all the damn fool things you did,  
Not knowing it till later.  
And where's it getting you?  
Still here in this same town,  
With us, with life to deal with  
And all the sins of auto parts.  
And if you "get it" or you don't...  
Well, it doesn't really matter,  
'Cause the pieces that you lost  
Are lost. That's it; they're gone.  
You might as well go fishing.  
We don't get over anyway.  
We just keep going. And that's it.  
No guru's gonna show up  
With a six-pack of the Buddha  
And the sacred heart of Jesus  
And Bong! we'll see the light,  
'Cause we won't or we can't  
Or it's not or whatever.  
So go on, have a drink or watch the TV,  
And remember the person that you used to be  
When there's smoke over Lake Rosalie.

## Laura McCullough

### Like a Virus

The twenty-five or so people  
that she would call real friends  
were not the first to respond

when she texted them, and many  
didn't even live in the same town  
or even the state, but said the same

things, That's so sad, OMG, really,  
that's like awful, and when the "real"  
ones, most of whom she had met

in "real life," found out, it was like  
that old game of telephone, and what  
began as a boy drowned at the pool

my boyfriend is a guard at became  
a kid was trying to drown another kid  
at the pool, and her boyfriend had to

punch him in the head, but only saved  
the one; the other died until it became  
her boyfriend was drinking while working

and this little kid drowned, and the mom's  
got a lawyer and the guy's in jail with like  
a million dollars bond and her friends'

texting became a long error message  
that often ended the same way, and like  
how are you feeling? Are you breaking

up with him or something? And all she  
could do, finally, was turn off the thing  
and put it under her pillow, the moonlight

slipping through her blinds like a virus  
making her skin feel suddenly as if might  
slip off and simultaneously as if she might

suffocate in it if it didn't, while the image  
of his failure blinked bright like a picture  
someone had sent over their phone, him

standing there doing nothing, a body  
splayed like a waiting frog, the water  
blue-white like a screen empty of text.

## Ted Jonathan

### Letter to Lori Waterhouse

The tip off: When, outside your ventilator- and sole daughter-dependent, old mother's hospital room, you cast unblinking, glazed, rainbow-green eyes on yours truly and your longtime friend Judith (don't call me Judy) Pizzutti, and said, "I probably shouldn't say this, but you two look good together." And so, I became a burnt offering. But really, Judith Pizzutti?! Joyce Starr . . . maybe. Yeah, Miss Starr. Star . . . like the star-saturated, boundless, black sky we marveled at that late August night in Ogunquit as we lay supine in chaise lounges on the back lawn side by side. Falling meteoroids turned into trails of blazing light in our atmosphere. Thirty-three murky years since I had last seen even a single star, until that night we shared. Rebirthed, beneath the four-and-a-half-billion-year-old night light of Cassiopeia, Hank Williams, and you--my aurora Lori. Last night I dreamt I awoke and saw your doll face with my one open (left) eye--and felt warm inside, knowing you were replenishing yourself sleeping safely by my side. But I must confess, I long ago discarded my fleece-lined, ear-flapped, green camouflage L.L. Bean hunting cap we got to match. But hope I've held on to a few of the IQ points I gained from the forehead-to-forehead osmosis. And still have your (no longer state of the art) video camera that you never asked me to return. And the *whys* of my immortal love could roll easily on off my fat tongue, but the prevalent reason for this epistle is to *tell you* something I may otherwise *never* get the chance to. That is, in retrospect, how quietly clear it is that I was the compact and rather suave Gomez to your wonderfully aloof and statuesque Morticia. John Astin and Carolyn Jones, the original TV version of course. And like Gomez, I would have planted kisses from your fingertips to your shoulder on your most accessible arm several times each and every day. So I'm telling you *now*.

## Holly Welker

### Portrait of a Bedtime Storyteller

I would like to introduce myself by subtle and artful means.  
I would like to insinuate myself into this conversation.  
I'll be your hostess tonight.  
It's years since I've been in either a quandary or a choir.  
I'm a drain on society. I'm a flanneuse. I'm a bedtime storyteller,  
and boy can I dance, having lived a long time as a contortionist,  
which granted me dexterity and a certain suppleness of limb.

Once the blurry Atlantic hinged to the continent I stood on  
reminded me of Viking ships: the spines curved up and ribbed  
with tight, close planks, the jaws and teeth of the figureheads,  
long necks endlessly intertwining along the hulls, a fleet  
that hiked the rim of the world without offering an excuse,  
nervy the way talented amateurs often are,  
people with all ten fingers and restless fingers  
at that, fingers that switch on the light  
at five a.m. and make sure SOMEONE wakes up—

I know what you want to ask.  
“What about that salacious hagiographer? The one who lived  
among the damned though most of his relatives were saints?  
What about that refractory renegade sorceress, the umpteenth  
ingénue seduced by a tangle of rose bushes and a goldfish pond?”

But I didn't go out looking for this profession; I fell into it, victim  
of an excellent memory and a horror of boredom. I can sit up straight  
and pay attention on both a barstool and a church pew, but I'm lousy  
at flirting and lousier at saying *amen*. If you want to be  
amused or sanctified, I learned long ago, you've got to be willing  
to do it yourself, and most people forget not only  
their mother's birthday but what happened next.

This is where it gets complicated. Like everyone else, I inherited  
lies that weren't meant to be lies, mistakes nobody fixed,  
naughtiness and power, and I gave my heart to know wisdom,  
to know madness and folly. I have humility to spare  
but not enough arrogance, and I say that sincerely.  
I want to rove in search of plunder, or at least a decent view.  
I don't believe getting your heart broken is something you *need*

to be afraid of, as opposed to wild dogs or dark foreign alleys teeming with weirdos. It's like stage fright: you get up and recite some monologue of Blanche Dubois' or you play your saxophone or whatever, even if you're scared shitless. And no matter how you prepare, you might still blow it. There's never a Temple of Music and Art where it's a sure thing a torrent of blue boredom and disbelief won't roll off the audience and quash you like a yawn.

A good retort can be used for distillation, sublimation, or decomposition by heat. I've rebelled against those nights when, yawning and brushing my teeth, I muttered to myself about hooligans I got stuck with in the past. As soon as I wake up now I start planning the next night's dreams, inchoate schedules of possibility. I tell stories so I can conjure up a few dozen guardian angels to flit about my basement and keep cobwebs away. How long has the hollow of my thigh been out of joint? I know my soul has a watermark, a translucent stamp you can see only when you hold me up to the light. Still, for a soothsayer I can be pretty darn dense. For a sorceress I can be awfully plain. But there's nothing I want to impose on another by coercion or trickery and anyway, spells aren't straightforward: *cast* doesn't just mean *to throw*; it also means to *contrive*, *devise*, to *warp*, to *twist*, while *conspesific* means *of the same species* and when will I ever use that? I'm undismayed by everything but insomnia and what I hate most is being disinterred from sleep. Someone will save the elephants. Someone else will watch football. I leave those tasks alone. In the meantime, I can say anything I want. Anything. As in "Any life is worth at least a stone" or "We would all do well to love the word *shameless*."

Conspesific: things rub off when you stick them together, like pain and snowmen. It's a countryside decorated with heart-shaped gardens and the torsos of willowy women. What I can tell you is that signs ought to give you an option, a chance to ignore them if you like, a moment to push back your hair and mutter, "maybe." If there's no choice about signs then there's nothing special about *grace*, the irresistible force that carves a notice on the heart announcing in barely legible letters long, long after he's gone and the details of his visit are even less distinct than the reasons for it that *God was here*, God, that curious restless tourist who always thinks he needs to leave a mark.

I'm out of here. Fled. Here are my hands.  
They decorate themselves with silver and amber and lapis,  
they horde solitude as if it were chocolate or polished stones.  
They fold themselves in attitudes of prayer, and they  
are disconsolate, pious liars. *Listen*, I say,  
and everyone in my dream listens, imagining a child asleep,  
bare red trees and the moon rising over dirty snow:  
and they wait for silence or for someone to say  
*It's going to be all right.*

## Sara Tracey

### A Place She Should Stay

Harper smoked Reds, had three tattoos, and insisted his first name, Eugene, must never be spoken. In his first letter, he said what he missed most about Ohio was the scent of dead leaves, the sharp spark of a wooden match against his father's thumbnail. Stella wrote of red earth, the needle throb of scorpion tails, not mothballs and cedar chips, snow tires and rock salt residue. I couldn't convince her that Ohio was a place she should stay, but Harper made her believe in one star-dark night. Home for two days, he kept her at his side each hour, held her hand until both palms were sweat slick. Six months and fifty letters had passed before their first kiss. Now, naked except his dog tags, he spoke of Japan, holidays half-way across the universe, letters traveling too slow to keep warm. He said she would forget him. She said *kiss me so I won't*. That night, she slept on soft grass and woke up damp, never knew a place where water came from nothing.

## Emily Borgmann

### Better

when I wake, I am hungry  
each morning

boil the oats grind the coffee sit  
down to watch the news

always worse  
than the day before  
always more death

lack of singing  
more open arms  
and no one to fill

I wish I lived  
in Detroit and could scrape by  
on a metal worker's salary or feel

the draft of toil and briny arms from lifting

but I am on the plains from a family  
that doesn't want  
doesn't vote  
doesn't recognize the earthly need

to fight this morning news  
with newscasters in their blue power ties

the breath is worse than the beating  
I sometimes think I should be brave  
in some jungle in Brazil hunting my nourishment

there is a man at my office  
an accountant who breathes heavily  
wears green suspenders with houndstooth

he often greets me with deep booms  
of chuckle and his replay of the state of the states

*It's much worse out there  
than in here, so cover your head*

my mother once told me

that I should not expect to be an important man  
only to try to be good and loyal

I have not climbed a mountain, I have not  
won a war even a stupid war  
I have not

I have nothing  
I have it all on the plains  
because I am still beating and raging

morning red  
vivid in sticky summer  
blue in winter so cold it gives  
your eyes tears a spontaneous reminder  
*you aren't in control*

I wish I had a slant  
some accent  
some birthmark on my forehead

to mark me  
for what I am I don't know

what engine am I to roil up a hill

I could always go forward with aplomb  
declare my superior drunkenness to the gutter-men  
mount up like a king and forget

because in the forgetting is the saving  
to learn to stand in the cold  
like a Buddhist monk painted with snow  
holy as a bad winter portrait on someone's mantle

it may be worse to ask so much  
from this

tiny kettle of boiling life  
but I have waited long enough  
for callused hands and wings of gold

better yes it's always better to ride on air  
than bury a stake between the contract of two people

I have held many women worshipped none

sex and god and labor

I am familiar with little  
but the species that is want

I do not build

I wake hungry

## Jonathan Highfield

### To the Liffey

O piss grey river, mother of the wine-dark snotgreen sea,  
continually renewed by the waters of Lough Tay, Lough Owell,  
Ennel, Derravaragh, Dan, and Lee,  
and the rain that fills you with new sorrows,  
do you miss the wise salmon swimming through your body  
or have you long longed to settle into imbecility?  
Today your banks are plastered with posters of a missing face  
and you could say where Trevor Deeley's gone,  
spirited away by misadventure or deliberate malice.  
Were I hero or saint I would plunge into your chalky greyness,  
pull forth his whereabouts, along with the ages' treasures –  
rusted bicycle frame, ceramic porter bottle, eyeless cow skull –  
sucking in the bitter wisdom of your dark brown watervoices,  
but being neither I'll console myself with another pint.

## Two Dublin Elegies

for George Dancha (1935-2000) and Frank Voytas (1932-2002)

I

Salmon-like I have returned to the place  
where I was when he died,  
the bar I left to take the call and returned,  
shaken, drinking far too much that night in praise of him.  
Appropriate, after all he and I bonded  
over beer and bourbon in the cramped kitchen,  
smokestench fogging the room,  
he raging maudlin or playing  
the sun shines bright on  
the harmonica as a tribute to my home.  
He was my wife's uncle, fallen on hard times,  
they all said, shaking their heads in disapproval,  
lost his wife and home, was a great musician,  
could have been something  
yet retreated to Vintondale and back  
into his dead mother's shadow and fury of family.  
Thick cokebottle glasses and arms the size of Hedy Lamarr's thighs,  
mouth full of laughter and stories about the world he had traveled.  
Firefighter, sailor, barber, shoe salesman,  
he'd rounded the world twice but never could shake the coaldust  
that pulled him back to Pennsylvania and sorrow,  
deaths and dissolutions in his stories  
ordained by the mine and mill owners  
who broke his father and left his mother  
cursing the Johnny Bulls until the day she died.  
But I don't want it to sound sad because  
I remember the times with George as always happy.  
We laughed and swapped stories and the leaving came always too soon.  
He wanted to cut my hair, his barber's chair at the ready,  
and I backed him off with a jibe and laugh,  
not yet ready to part with ten year's worth of locks.  
This effluvial life too often leaves the living no chance  
to catch the dying and tell one more joke, have one more drink,  
show an old polka player the newly learned C chord.  
When I cut twelve inches off to head to Africa  
I wished he were alive to wield the scissors.

## II

Too much of Ghana is scarred by saw and bulldozer  
massive trees on backs of trucks headed to Japanese kitchens, Palo Alto  
boardrooms.

Looking across the clearcut, I could shut my eyes,  
imagine the closed canopy forests running to the beach,  
paths carved through as trading trails,  
then open-eyed see the destruction one hundred years had caused,  
and still the lumbertrucks rumbling, the big trees falling.  
Standing in Kakum, in the midst of unslaughtered green,  
I wished you could come and see this beautiful forest,  
walk along the treetops with the wonder your eyes always held  
but also see the scars, and past them to the potential  
then with your excited, thoughtful voice, help me see  
more than apocalypse.

## Harry Johnson

### To Mr. Greenlight After Our Pitch Meeting

May your next door neighbor sell his mansion to a punk metal band.  
May the only gas station in your neighborhood turn into a homeless shelter.

May your Cialis kick in during your all male sweat lodge weekend.  
May your wife's Botox treatments cause her lips to swell so much that sugar-crazed kids at your daughter's Mexican-themed birthday party start whacking her face with sticks.

May the gamma rays from your 102-inch wide screen TV incinerate your brain cells.

May your spoiled, wannabe thug son's over-amped car sound system cause him to go deaf the instant he decides to grow up and get a job.  
May one of your wife's silicone breasts explode at a Laker game and drench Jack in the front row.

May the speed bump you fought for on your street come to life and swallow your lap dog.

May your next rude remark cause the onset of a lifetime of incurable diarrhea.

May the CHP divert your Hummer off the freeway into South Central where a platoon of Crips carjack it and cruise around their neighborhood all night with you strapped to the hood like a deer.

May your cell phone begin screaming everyone else's boring private business in your ear.

May your thoracic surgeon sneeze into your chest cavity during bypass surgery and cause you to have a permanent runny nose.

May your young trophy wife make a crooked motorcycle cop so jealous that he finds enough misdemeanors on your car to put you away forever, then he kidnaps your wife, takes her to his secret meth lab in Riverside and makes her a sex slave for all his drugged out buddies.

May your next project go so far over budget that the studio has no other choice but to indebt itself to the Mob and have you whacked.

## Lindsay Wilson

### I Own an Early Memory of Him

I enter it like driving  
into a covered country bridge  
in a Midwest summer,  
and once inside  
the sudden darkness takes away my feet  
and I begin to forget  
my body, or what I had begun to consider  
my body, and I'm left  
with the darkness pierced by the holes  
the sunlight ate through wood.  
And if we, my grandfather and I,  
had stopped there,  
maybe some thing  
could have surfaced  
while we sat staring  
at that curtain of sky in front of us,  
but instead it parted without words  
and opened to the bank of a slow, dirty river.

There I learned to tie a hook  
and believed, if we fished long enough,  
our red and white bobbers  
would prove that something  
existed under our shared surface,  
but all we shared was crickets for bait  
and the sound of moving water  
by the river's edge.

The day my mother called with his final news  
I stared, while she cried,  
out my second floor walk up  
onto the back alleys of Idaho  
and built a wooden bridge  
back to that memory.

I felt the sorry suspension  
of my grandfather's Datsun,  
and thought the river sounded like  
listening to rain through glass.  
*I'm telling you this now, she said, I*

*did not hate him.*

And the car jerked to a stop.  
In the driver's seat, I mistook  
my grandfather's profile  
for hers, and what I believed  
a parting curtain was just a sky  
the color of his skin.  
When we came out  
the other side into humid, gray air,  
I saw some green splashes  
of maples, and what  
I mistook for the river's sound  
was simply locusts  
eating the edges  
from a summer that owned a wind so slow  
not even his ashes would have stirred.

Mark Wisniewski

Apartment 401

because studios for auditions  
& rehearsals lined  
the halls of the building  
where I lived

every day I'd see  
scores of the most  
attractive  
 uninhibited  
sexually active  
women on the continent

& for that matter in

the universe

still those were  
the years when I  
behaved most like  
a monk

rarely speaking

spending loneliness awake  
until 4 a.m.

& otherwise mourning loss  
of love

I have since learned there will  
always be

rare wellsprings of beauty

they just tend to exist  
distantly & one just

happened to coexist when I lacked  
interest & there's nothing

in a man's  
hindsight that breaks  
his heart more than his

own  
early  
lack

of interest

## Honeymoon

to begin you must be  
uncommonly scared of flight

& with that established  
I can report that turning  
50 feels like  
entering a 747 whose door  
will close soon

you might leave for Paris

which is where I  
last flew

the Valium failed  
on the return flight also but  
the point is we honeymooned  
& again boarded a jet  
& thus returned

to the airspace  
above JFK

only to learn popped  
up thunderstorms would keep us  
airborne longer

around & around those square  
feet above the boroughs we went

Lady Liberty seemingly  
taunting only me

& after we landed & stopped we took

a shuttle to Grand Central

then Metro North & a cab &

in each of those last 3  
modes I felt calmer but as soon  
as we were home

the CNN left on to scare  
burglars replayed us the United

flight hitting the second tower

which would always mean an earth  
pocked just after we landed

which leaves only  
before

& what happened before  
as I sometimes  
can't say enough is we went  
around & around in all

that space up there

my eyes trying to sift

thunderclouds for the safety  
looming beneath us

## Jessica Moll

### Hawks' Aerie

That March day at Sunol—  
you could have been one  
of my cousins—your paleness  
and sweat, something male  
in the gesture  
of your hands resting on your thighs,  
blue veins visible  
as you sat on the bank, pant legs rolled up,  
watching me dunk in the creek.  
With the blood-rush cold  
water gives, I gasped at the sycamores'  
exposed roots, brilliant bark,  
then stood naked before you,  
dripping dry on the stone.  
It was a Wednesday, the place  
was empty, we should have seen  
no one—but of course  
we saw her, descending the trail  
as we hiked up.  
Even though I'd met her only once,  
I recognized her rough  
boots, black hat, dark arms. I saw  
in her low stride the lost comfort  
of your old life. The deep claw-foot tub,  
oiled skillet on the stove,  
Saturday mornings, catching  
her eye in the mirror.  
We each spoke one sentence  
as we passed, and I almost wanted  
to send you back,  
your sweat evaporating  
from my hands, the familiar smell  
of fear and lust  
I used to wrestle from those boys,  
hiding in the sand dunes  
before they were grown.

## James Proffitt

### Last Call

You look for me  
now that I'm gone along elsewhere.  
In the stars at night  
when you leave the bars,  
& in the neon signs inside  
before last call:  
I'll be trapped inside those  
brittle gaseous tubes,  
watching you, blurry & silent, incandescent,  
getting trashed.  
Look for me in the road signs  
you cannot read, thick black  
symbols that all squiggle together  
as you overshoot curves, riding  
shoulders & clipping mailboxes.

(You haven't had an unbroken passenger  
mirror since I've known you)

You look for me  
since I've stopped pouring your drinks  
& my heart into you,  
in the bottom of each longneck bottle,  
& the cubes rattling cold & empty in each tumbler.  
I'll be in those bottles, soaking wet  
& in those cubes, frozen still & silent.  
Look for me in the sinks & toilets  
where your lunches & dinners escape you  
& your hot, flushed skin takes comfort  
against cool stainless &  
the most understanding porcelain.

I'll be there & everywhere else,  
watching you, waiting for you.  
I'll witness you burning bridges  
like the most competent general  
& losing track of time, money & space.  
I'll witness you blurring the lines  
between right & wrong, good & evil  
& swerving through all the lines between.

Watching & waiting, hoping against hope,  
& all the odds & all the fate  
that you'll give up the mad rush  
straightaway into oblivion  
& its unholy, ungodly nightmare.  
That final early morning last call.  
The one just before dawn,  
just before a new day  
--brighter, cleaner, sober.  
Or the soggy, hops & barley grave.  
I'll look for you.

## Lisa Roney

### The Difference Between Fingers and Toes

I remember a girl with café au lait face and a tiny frame, who never cut her fingernails. One had grown to five or more inches in length, and to protect it from breaking she kept her hand folded against itself, the nail along her wrist, her arm tucked fearfully against her leg, like a helpless beaten animal cringing against the fence of her frail body, protecting its vital organs. Narrow as virgin vulvas, her hands quivered constantly at her sides, afraid to rise into action, hesitant to throw, carve, pot a plant, write a letter, punch numbers into a calculator, or sew a button on a shirt. With the skills of neither independent woman nor housewife, she had rendered herself a princess—or statue. Impossible to imagine her even developing enough passion to risk scratching a line across her lover's back or holding his hand.

How many women have I seen holding back because they don't want to mess up a new manicure? How much time do they take to dial phone numbers with a pencil and wait for a man to open the wine? I don't even want to imagine how they wipe themselves, the paper they must go through to protect their investment in helpless sex appeal.

Toenails, on the other hand, are much more easygoing. No one notices if they are a little chipped or smudged or marred. Painting them celebrates warm weather, the move toward nakedness that comes in the summer months, the sexiness inherent in that. No one ever grows them long, so painted toenails are also democratic: all of them are equally sexy, pink or black.

With my toenails painted, I draw your eyes there so that you might think about kissing them, so far away from your mouth and easily overlooked. They allow my nervous, twinkly toes to call for your attention. They smile like the sunset. But they slow me down not one bit in my choice to shuck off my shoes for a walk through the sand on the beach, where I still use them to nudge over a spiral shell so I can see its underside. Nor do they stop me from pulling on socks and boots to pound through a snowstorm, or from kicking a pebble down a path. They leave my hands strong and wide like Clydesdales, like the broad and busy avenues of Winnipeg, like the powerful Mississippi

that carries ideas back and forth between north and south. Then, too,  
my cinnamon-tipped toes leave my hands free. You might find  
you like what they can do.

## Mike Chasar

### Fellow Travelers

We are quiet boarding,  
quiet as the boat  
which starts its engine softly,  
barely the clearing of a throat

as it bobs smoothly backwards  
into the bay.  
Thigh to thigh and quiet,  
it is a perfect day

for sightseeing,  
a tourist trip to the reef—  
perfect for an uncle and his nephew,

at least, as we've  
done our homework  
on ecosystems  
hanging in the balance,  
the state of Florida's "offshore gems,"

the "true natural treasure,"  
a "final frontier," etc.  
I pick at our tickets.  
Nathaniel holds his camera,

nervous, I think, about the glass walls  
but excited  
for the tour guide reports  
earlier today a shark was sighted.

As the gulf widens,  
and as we rock  
on ever-larger waves  
while losing sight of the dock,

the reef begins,  
stretching shelf after shelf  
along the channel,  
and Nathaniel wonders, half to himself

and half out loud  
to me,  
when we'll start to see the fish and colors  
we've seen in the pictures and on TV.

His nose crawls  
on the glass like a snail,  
when up above,  
bending over the guardrail,

someone sick  
from the motion  
clutches his gut and wrenches  
into the ocean.

And then the cloud,  
like a shot, the rush of fish  
from the coral,  
a dizzying, yellowish,

lawless swarm  
from the branching colonies,  
whips by the side of the boat  
and streaks to the surface to feed.

Nathaniel opens his mouth and stares.  
I feel the boat bobbing  
and try to stifle  
the start of my own stomach throbbing

as some other  
fellow traveler,  
folds her body in half  
as the gulf unravels her.

The school of snapper,  
surfacing, churns  
in rabid competition  
and my stomach burns

as still more fish  
and more passengers  
feed the quarrel.  
Nathaniel has stopped taking pictures

and turns his blue  
boy's eyes toward me,  
confused it doesn't look  
like anything we've seen on PBS or TLC.

But I have all  
I can do, as my stomach grinds,  
to stay on my legs  
and leave my lunch behind.

The boat chugs on  
as planned, of course, until the trip is done.  
This is our treasure, Nathaniel,  
our day in the sun,

and O, my nephew, my friend  
who's related to me,  
if this in the shallows,  
then what in the rest of the sea?

**Writing the Next Great American Poem in Key West**  
—for Peter Meinke

Michael farted.  
Meridith laughed.  
And with the passing of that awful draft  
they got the poem started.

He cried, "Mother!"  
She said, "Father!"  
He said, "Should we really even bother  
to confess this to each other?"

"Perhaps, instead,  
let's put it down  
on some checkered tablecloth in town.  
Papa, after all, is dead."

"That's where we are,"  
she said, annoyed.  
"Close to Cuba with both Bloom and Freud.  
Care for a cigar?"

## Janice Lierz

### Space

You sleep in my bed, hot with fever.

When I rub your back  
in the moonlight and stars dance in your hair,  
I kiss your forehead, and you curl next to me  
tight,  
sighing, as if your breath with mine means we could be saved. I think  
you think  
I will live forever; I think to you  
I am earth and trees  
even though  
my sap is the blood in your veins—  
your tears should not be my dew.

When you hurt, if I could, I would make from my limbs  
a Murphy bed and fold you  
into my walls, where you would stay  
hidden,  
tucked away, as if  
I could keep you,  
safe, buried in my soil.

But I am nothing more than the scientist who watches the sky,  
hoping to discover shooting comets  
20 or 30 years before they hit your Earth  
to fell millions of trees. I will find them  
to nudge them,  
to slow them down just a millimeter per second  
or so, pushing them into the ocean  
or into an empty area where they can  
explode over a desolate region of Siberia.

When together we lay in our dreams,  
we spring as two saplings scratching out time  
in dirt and rings,  
like diamonds in the sky,  
like shooting comets already home.

Lisa Lewis

Flood Sale

Last week, bored from rainy days, I browsed the local garden center. Showers lingered, so each potted clump of blue-eyed grass funneled drops to its wet stems. The sky—a massed cloud—denied refraction, strict as a gravel schoolyard or the gray nun guarding its feints and games: this was no time for rainbows.

I'd left my coat at home. In June you hope for season's promise against all cover, and if distinction crumbles into disappointment, you tough it out, damper than smart or sanguine. I didn't venture far from the roofed zone into the aisles where water sluiced spruce and hosta harbored more than mist. From where I shuffled, splashing the curb with unwise obstinate sandal toe, not a leaf drooped sick, and no plastic bar code tag sold out the spirit of the entrepreneur with ink smear. There even seemed a gladness to the scene—green drenched with clearer green, or so it gleamed.

Stranded in weather quarantine, I surveyed the order of too much  
downpour in the one place it belonged  
or could be made by hired help's art to look to. Home, though, my last  
stop of the afternoon,  
had not withstood the blast of storm on storm on storm on storm so  
well, for being real.

I'd have to buckle down to bail it out, pacify my melted will and buy  
new growth  
still thirsting from a dry week's trip in a transport truck. *Start over,*  
I thought. *Dig deep, reseed, and, if nothing else, the compost pile will swell for fall.*  
That was my way of shirking sadness for drowned cuttings that  
bloomed so hard they blackened  
in humid deeps the Weather Channel's prophets swore would never  
gather here until, pushed up from the boiling Gulf and stoppered by a  
slow Atlantic high,  
they did, and wouldn't quit.

*Bobbi Lurie*

sunflower 7

under his shirt his bones were clearly visible  
no fear or feeling about death  
sickness suffering doom constant companions  
death everywhere  
they let the hopeless cases die alone  
i pray for hopelessness

## James Magorian

### Burying a Nun

At the cemetery of the Ursuline convent  
eight Sisters and a priest stand  
in stacked light, spring being here—

blossoms and looting robins. Piety seems  
a vestige of winter, bidden in a drafty room,  
dim corridor, places spirit and body truce—

water-stained ceiling and scabbed knee. No  
other mourners attend. These are  
the attesters, tangled in this vast change,

this ordinary moment. They have, like penitents  
in *The Fight between Carnival and Lent*,  
faces of kept sorrow, the common sennit

of silence, a need to grow stronger  
against the accusation of dug earth,  
the bell's tantrum, ragbag cedars.

And something else is here, and there  
in Bruegel's antithetic village: the wind  
like a song a small girl would sing.

The ceremony ends. They turn,  
warty stones bobbing around them,  
and in a jiffy are gone.

## Giorgio Mobili

### Until Next Summer

This untimely tonsillitis has prevented me  
from honoring your cordial invitations—

To make but one example: the weather's  
drastic plunge yesterday morning,  
and surfing is no longer what it used to be,  
both waves and natives with their moods  
and curt demeanor, no wonder tourists, starred  
and striped as they may be, are making gradual,  
unmistakable retreat, not to mention the grey aircraft  
since this morning stationed opposite the embassy  
probably on some kind of topographical  
reconnaissance—no need to fret or brood,  
Ismelda, why don't you fetch me a cigar,  
no *deo gratias* here, point taken,  
but please save your *de profundis*,  
it's just some bureaucratic shakeup, let me tell you,  
or a changing of the guard, or else  
a circus act or folk commemoration,  
do you recall those snotty brats all cocky and brash,  
waving their arms like spaniels, not scullions  
but amigos, real paragons of the demotic harmony  
that clearly rules this paradise on earth—and yet  
the radio beacon's out of synch, and I've many  
a time requested to speak with the decurion:  
back of the boarded-up posada there hangs  
his motorboat for sale, no doubt a tax-evasion subterfuge,  
and next to it, that fissure in the ground,  
perhaps an ancient quake, or a radioactive cleft,  
but curious how the sky is getting low,  
now almost grazing the deserted waterfront,  
while flags and banners flap away in their foreign tongue,  
which I could never understand: on his way up  
out of the chasm a copper-skinned pariah stared me down—

Not to detain you any longer, these and other  
things observed have led me to conclude  
I might not enjoy the pleasure of your company,  
perhaps, until next summer rolls around.

## Laura Gularte

### Putting My Shadows Away for the New Year

This is the season of icons and false pregnancies.  
At midnight I wake to moaning eaves,  
the neighbor's barking dog.  
The north wind snipes at my window,  
dead relatives in black-and-white photographs  
stare at me from the walls.  
On my nightstand,  
last night's glass of curdled eggnog,  
a dead poinsettia wrapped in green foil.

I gather last year's shadows,  
pictures of friends who died,  
unpaid bills,  
and my lost cat's collar.  
I find pieces of broken jewelry,  
missing buttons from a coat I never liked,  
the registration from a car I no longer own.  
I put everything in a cardboard box,  
bury it all under old clothes and shoes.

At the bottom of the cedar chest  
I find my 35 mm camera  
with unused film,  
travel brochures to Brazil,  
and journals with blank pages.  
Buried under my grandmother's lace tablecloth,  
letters from a man I tried to forget,  
\$100 stuffed in a wool sock.

On New Year's Day  
I bless the last bottle of brandy,  
the turkey soup on the stove,  
and the dog next door,  
who has stopped barking.

## Linda Caldwell

### Honeymoon Photos

He stands beside a two-tone 1955 Buick, wicked grin on his face,  
her shadow's backlit in the black-and-white frame.

She faces the camera, her hand touches the top button  
of one of those skirts with shorts underneath,  
left foot before the right taking the step toward him,  
woman beyond her first blush, wanton yet shy.

Alone, she returns to the girl raised Baptist in the 1930s,  
close to her mother and old hymns,  
never remembers owning a bathing suit.  
She only mentions him with plaintive,  
"I can't leave the things he bought me,"  
when a move closer to family comes up.

Later, when hip gives way to a fall,  
there is no choice but nursing home.  
While preparing for auction, I find the pictures  
in the bottom drawer of her vanity  
underneath see-through, baby doll pajamas.

*William C. Duckworth, Jr.*

**Queen Victoria's Lament**

"There's no one left to call me Victoria," the queen lamented. The prince and friends who'd been so dear in happier moments of many a bygone year are now in only fleeting visions seen.

The hateful loneliness whose sting has no peer is chief of all tormentors time will bring, and she unarmed must bear its bitter sting with resolute endurance. As those held dear are becoming dust, forlornly she must cling to cherished dreams, for shades of darkest night shroud her prince. Though she may often hear "God save the queen" from loyal voices ring, she feels no release, for relentless time bars flight of queen or subject from lonely grief severe.

## Daniel Morris

### I am SO GLAD I'm Not Married To a Model

Gosh, I was stressed, so self-conscious, strolling Mass Ave,  
A model on each arm, dropping a dime in the cup of the homeless  
Harvard drop out chess master in the straw Bermuda hat in front of Au  
Bon Pain across the street from The Yard.

"Who does he think he is?" "Sure doesn't look like much." "Must have a  
fat Wallet." "Sometimes these little guys can be  
Hiding French bread."

Relax, fellas, I wasn't. And to top it all off, I was broke!

Looking back, I must ask myself: What *did* the models see in me?

In fact, their former boyfriends were equally  
Perplexed. "You left *me* for Danny Morris?  
You've got to be kidding!" "I don't know, there's  
Something about him," the models would say, shutting  
Front doors, hanging up.

At a Halloween party decked out in a skimpy  
One piece with Polka Dots -- The Model did me up as  
Zippy -- some dudes lifted moi off the dance floor trying  
To pull down my undies to stare at my basket. Ashamed,  
I squirmed away. (I was hot dog bun, not French bread.)

Maybe the models bought "creative" -- I implied that,  
Like Frank O'Hara, unpublished verse lay under  
My futon, waiting to be collected posthumously by  
A bud like Kenneth Koch.

Remember, they were models, So it wasn't like  
They feared not making ends meet.

(Don't get me wrong. By saying I dated models, I'm not claiming  
*Super* models. I'm talking clean creamy complexions, delicate feet, nice  
Nails. They appeared in family rags and department store ads, not  
Household names like Tyra or Christie.)

Could they have been closet queers who dug  
A Joycean womanly man?

I think I know the secret to my success: around  
Me they felt not like models. They were *supermodels*.

Take Pam. We pulled up to my crappy  
Waltham flop house after our first date – her pink  
Honda Civic purred. (I had no car.) Opening  
Her blouse for me in the parking lot I said  
“Wow, Pam, your nipples are so perky I could hang  
My beret on them.” It worked.

Of course it worked. It worked  
Because I was being honest with my  
Feelings. Pam could tell I wasn't into  
Lines. Instead of dropping me off with a peck  
On the cheek, she came inside my pad and stayed  
Six months. Until I told her she wasn't  
Really Anorexic, and she left in tears.

I could get them, not keep them. The problem was  
Once they were into me, I freaked. Deep  
Down, I didn't really think I belonged  
In the Bigs. As a creative writing teacher once  
Said, my ambiguous body of work didn't “measure up.”

Pam said I looked three months pregnant.

I reflected the models' fears, left behind the muffin crown.  
We'd starve those first few months when all we did was  
Screw, go smoke at Casablanca, then feel our feet go  
To sleep sitting Indian style on the linoleum of my “reading room” –  
Bare except for a futon, illegal milk crates,  
And the Collected Poems of Luis Bunuel I'd found  
Discounted downstairs at Harvard Book Store.

Staring at the radiator as if it were a subterranean  
Animal, we'd gorge cinnamon apple rice cakes with chunky  
Peanut butter when the other went to pee. After  
The first few months, we'd let our guards down and start  
Eating in front of each other. Creamy linguini, pancakes with real  
Syrup and real butter, dark beer for breakfast. Very full, I'd make  
Weak attempts to read a little Bunuel out loud in Spanish (a language  
I don't have) to salvage the evening. We'd end up dozing.

Pretty soon, I longed for when The Model left for

Jazzercise or to smoke some hash with her posse. I was glad  
To grab a bag of bagels and The Sunday Globe on Saturday night  
(By now we were schmeering our bagels). I started smoking  
Camels to fill long silences between the little left to say:  
"Pass the chive cream cheese" or "Did you lose the lighter again?"  
Or, "This coffee seems especially weak," or, "To be honest I'm just not  
In the mood to translate Bunuel out loud for you today," Or, "I was  
going  
To draft a sestina, but now I've lost the repeated word," Or, "My stom-  
ach  
Hurts a little more than it did after lunch," Or, "Do you think I'm  
Pregnant or getting fat?" Or, "God, I'm so sleepy and I just  
Woke up. Maybe I have a brain tumor."

Sure, we'd still walk arm in arm to Au Bon Pain in Harvard Square –  
now  
Tempted by brioche – but it didn't get me up like before. Still, it meant  
I must be something special even if I didn't look like much. Who knew  
Better than me I wasn't hiding anything? You might say I was "outer  
directed," but  
That would imply an inner self. But, as a creative writing professor once  
said  
About my work: sometimes shallowness is the ultimate form of depth.

An email arrives out of the blue: "You will always hold  
A special place in my heart, because you said I had the most  
Beautiful brown nipples in the world. And by the way, you were  
Right about the anorexia. Now I eat like a pig. And everyone  
Loves the more of me. Ciao Pam."

## You Will Be Dead So Fast Your Heads Will Spin

For Lester Goran

### I.

Even then – it was spring, the University of Miami, 1981-- you were bitter, Schmaltzy, neglected, declaring “I’m a professor so I must profess!” -- and far from young.

Lester, you are in fact now 80, born in 1930 a year after My father (Big Ernie Of Brooklyn, dead at 45), Ten novelsthreestorycollections under your belt plus *The Bright Streets of Surfside* memoir on Singer (whom You’d translated from the Yiddish for a decade.)

I can’t be 45!

Myself now Full Professor of Modern Literature teaching Prufrock, Witty post punks say, “Let us go, You and I” for brew To Harry’s Chocolate Shop after class (“Hey, Prof Morris, You know it’s never too late to start early”). Begging Off, having exchanged booze since 1999 for prescribed medications, I recall a perfect pentameter line -- presumably in regard To Prufrock -- from your lecture on “The Age of Anxiety”:

“You will be dead so fast your heads will spin.”

### II.

Dubbed “a born novelist” by the *New York Times* in 1960 (Two years before I was born!) you remain what *The Miami Herald* calls The “Dean of writers at the University of Miami.”

A little online research reveals “*She Loved Me Once and Other Stories*” (Kent State University Press, 1997) was awarded second place in the small press Best Fiction Award and in 2001 you were designated the subject of an essay in the Millennial Edition on American Short Story Writers since World War II in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* (Gale).”

Kudos on these admittedly not exactly mind blowing accomplishments, But tell me, Lester, who besides me would even consider Convening a panel “Goran at 80” at MLA or imagine guest Editing a special issue of *Modern Fiction Studies* contending That you, Lester Goran, represent the missing link between

Singer, Malamud and Nathan Englander and Jonathan Safer Foer?

The problem is I'm no longer a green assistant prof hungry  
For the comfort food of associate. Frankly, I'm whipped.  
Weary having spent my thirties saving myself from "seed time,"  
Weary reserving the names of other teachers from  
Oblivion, which, as Jung would say, merely shadows my fear --  
They have already forgotten me.

III.

Let me let my field lie fallow on this  
Sabbatical to begin to tell my own story by  
Remembering my memory of you.

But how can I even toy with analyzing you? The truth is I can't  
Make my way through The Demon in the Sun Parlor I discovered  
Remaindered at a Tippecanoe County library sale (at least you once  
Waited for me on the lonely shelves of Northwest Indiana)  
And your latest, Bing Crosby's Last Song, virgin  
Paperback a buck a book.

There must be another line to remember, an anecdote?  
An image? Ah, here's one, if not exactly lifted out of the *spiritus mundi*:  
At 51 calmly pedaling your black 3 speed Schwinn at dawn  
A Bob Seger and the Silver Bullet Band Tour jacket proudly  
Puffing in the wind to show you were no snob.

Of all your windy words why do I recall you claimed not  
To bike through campus each morning for your health or to gaze at  
Blond co-eds of Sun Tan U, but merely to watch the cockatoos?

And what else? You were a Jew who grew poor next door  
To Pinsker's on Pittsburgh's Yiddishkite Squirrel Hill. That you'd  
Reviewed for *Playboy* impressed, tried Westerns to make a buck  
Embarrassed, will be recalled, if at all, as a footnote in a Singer bio, scares.

IV.

What a heart-breaking pain in the ass  
Paranoid Singer was, how he demanded  
A limo from Surfside to Coral Gables to  
"Teach" his creative writing class, ungrateful  
For the six-figure gig: newly minted 74-year old  
Distinguished Assistant Professor six weeks before

Nobel phoned for work in a dying tongue.

You let me

Sit in on one of Singer's grad workshops. The last  
Yiddish master had clearly never touched the stories  
In advance. Pale frightened students slowly read their work aloud  
As Singer, hunched over his legendary black coffee from a Styrofoam cup,  
Picked at a hard roll on a paper plate, hid out in his fedora, fat tie, and baggy  
Seersucker, half trying to stay awake. After each reading he'd  
Quip in Yinglish lilt: "Your story shows promise, now  
Let us see if you can keep your promise."

The only other thing Singer noticed was when  
A student mentioned a brand of jeans, for this was the 80s, the period  
Of Gloria Vanderbilt and Versace. "Who will remember  
Names of a pair of pants?" he chided. "Chekhov, Turgenov,  
Dostoyevsky, they last because they never mention  
A brand of anything, let alone knickers."

Lester leaped in

For the kill. His face sour with contempt  
For the author's pretense. One woman  
Depicted a man crying on the side of the bed  
After the couple had made love. "Why would  
A man cry in such a situation? Was he impotent?  
He should be singing. Believe me. Men don't cry  
At the side of a bed when they get it up."

I, the virgin, took note.

"You will be dead so fast your heads will spin." How could  
I know after 40 the weeks would start to spin like days, the days  
Hours, semesters years until I wonder when  
I'll retire a TIAA-Cref millionaire.

(Inside I feel a rookie learning his trade in The Department  
Where almost none are now more senior.)

In the ads in AWP I see Lester's name remains  
Listed on the MFA faculty at Miami. Like Gregor  
Samsa, the students and recent staff can't wait to brush  
Him off with a broom in favor of a newer avatar from Iowa,

And one obscure student, still recovering from  
A breakdown 25 years ago, whom you all but never

Knew and so could never remember, debates  
Lighting the midnight oil in Indiana. Does he have time  
And strength to treat your work as if it were recoverable --  
Something serious that once happened?

Do I dare check Wikipedia to see if there is  
An entry on you by me? I almost recall drafting one, but I'm  
So busy repaying imaginary debts to old Jewish  
Authors whom I have known on the off chance they  
Will remember me -- even as I learn at least one is losing  
His memory and will die soon --, perhaps in my panic  
I've already knocked off 500 words on you. (I don't always read  
Every word of what I review).

Were you a worthy father? A lonely courage teacher? Or  
Merely, like Ernie, whose singing was faint, true,  
But bloated, not beautiful.

Brent Newsom

**Book Review: *Things are Disappearing Here*. Kate Northrop. Persea Books. 2007.**

Poetry is not often the topic of Kate Northrop's poems, at least not in a straightforward sense. Her recurring themes are infidelity, loss, memory, isolation, absence, and transgression. Yet tucked inside the first section of *Things are Disappearing Here*, Northrop's second book, is a lovely, wry *ars poetica* titled "Lines." Wistful and ironic in tone, the poem begins, "The unluckiest among us fall in love / with such a thing as a line, // and from the beginning, it goes badly." While the poem playfully evokes the compulsions, obsessions, and frustrations of writing poetry, it also tips Northrop's hand. Near the end of that poem, she writes:

I myself was once in love with a line.

I took it to a field  
and lay down next to it

whispering *Relax, we're alone*  
but the line would have none of it.

Don't be fooled. You can be certain that Northrop, eventually, charmed that line into submission.

A flair for startling and effective lineation is in fact one of Northrop's great assets. The poems in *Things are Disappearing Here* are full of surprising, jagged, breathlessly enjambed lines that propel readers from one stark and haunting image to the next. For example, in the poem "The Baby," a shadowy couple slips from a field at night, leaving behind "a white box, white / as a box // for a birthday cake. Inside, / the baby." The child's plight is unresolved by the poem's end, but his prospects appear grim: "Overhead, through trees // a sound approaches, like wings, / or this time, scissors." Other poems similarly end in some image of absence or ghostly presence: a ragged scarecrow presiding over a garden, an empty swing-set, the memory of a burglar in the next room, lovers outside the frame of a painting. Hung on the skeleton of Northrop's finely wrought free verse, such images sparkle darkly with an awareness of human frailty and fear.

That frailty finds its antithesis—and fear its apex—in "The Countess," a macabre exploration of the life of Elizabeth Báthory, a seventeenth-century serial killer who targeted young girls and, legend has it, bathed in the blood of virgins in order to retain her beauty. Northrop's portrayal is generous, if (understandably) not entirely sympathetic:

... There's the possibility

of reason: a servant girl, combing the Countess's hair,  
pulled too tight. She was slapped until her blood fell  
and when wiped from the Countess's hand, it left the skin

luminous. Or there's a stretch of woods—tamaracks & birches—  
through which Báthory rides with suitors. There's an old hag

looking up from a path the wind has swept with leaves

who speaks: "Take care. Listen, soon you will look like me,  
then what will you do?"

With such a complex and dark topic, it should come as no surprise that "The Countess" is the book's longest poem. To Northrop's credit, it is also one of its best. The poem's speaker, despite her horror at Báthory's atrocities ("Over six hundred / and fifty. All those girls."), models a most human process, the attempt to make sense of the inexplicable, to construct a narrative frame through which we can understand unimaginable cruelty.

The book missteps, however, in the final section's "The Place Above the River," a villanelle whose lines lack the movement and verve of the other poems. Confined to the left margin of the page and to the strictures of the form, the poem's images become conventional and vague ("The house is empty. Girls go in. / Across the river, music begins."). Fortunately, this poem is the exception that proves the rule: Northrop is at her best when breaking lines mid-sentence and scattering them across the page, which is not to suggest randomness. She frequently writes in loose, unobtrusive iambs and crafts sound patterns—most notably assonance and subtle internal rhymes—that beg to be read aloud.

Northrop's first book, *Back Through Interruption*, was a highly praised prize winner. *Things are Disappearing Here* is certainly no sophomore slump. Rather, it is a fine collection of well-crafted poems that promises great things to come from one of our excellent emerging poets.

## Contributor's Notes

**Jordan Amadio** is a fourth-year medical student at Harvard Medical School, in conjunction with the physician-scientist training curriculum at the Harvard-MIT division of Health Sciences and Technology. Currently, he is also taking time to pursue an MBA at Harvard Business School. In 2008, he was among the winners of the William Carlos Williams Poetry Prize.

**Emily Borgmann** lives in Omaha, Nebraska, with her partner, Valerie, and their two dogs. Her work has appeared in *Salamander* and in a previous issue of *Hiram Poetry Review*, and is forthcoming in *Skidrow Penthouse*.

**Linda Caldwell** has been published in *Prairie Schools*, *Augustes*, *Euphony*, and other journals and in several anthologies. She has upcoming publications in *Pearl* and in the anthology *Motif: Writing by Ear*, edited by Marianne Worthington. Her sterling achievement (in her opinion) is receiving in 2008 a Kentucky Foundation for Women grant, Sage Women Speak, to work with women in assisted living communities.

**Mike Chasar** is a Visiting Assistant Professor of English at the University of Iowa and a regular contributor of verse commentary to "Poetic License," an Op-Ed page feature of the Iowa City daily newspaper, *The Press-Citizen*. His other poetry has appeared in magazines and journals such as *Poetry*, *The Antioch Review*, and *The Alaska Quarterly Review*, and he coordinates the blog "Poetry & Popular Culture" at <http://mike-chasar.blogspot.com>.

**Lara Gularte** lives in a forest area of northern California. Her poetry has appeared in such journals as *Bitter Oleander*, *Windfall*, *The Earth River*, *Santa Clara Review*, *Watershed*, and *Kaleidoscope*. Her work was presented at an international conference on storytelling and cultural identity in June of 2005. She is an assistant editor for *Narrative Magazine*. <http://www.laragularte.com>

**Jonathan Highfield** is Associate Professor of English at Rhode Island School of Design, where he teaches classes in postcolonial studies. He lives in North Scituate, Rhode Island, and likes to cook with vegetables from his garden.

**Ted Jonathan** is a poet and short story writer. His work has appeared in the *New York Quarterly*, *Web Del Sol*, *Slant*, and a number of other literary magazines. His chapbook *Spiked Libido* was published by Neukeia Press. A full-length collection tentatively titled *10,000 Keys to Nowhere* published by Athanata Arts, LTD. is forthcoming.

**Lisa Lewis's** books are *The Unbeliever* (Brittingham Prize), *Silent Treatment* (National Poetry Series), and *Burned House with Swimming Pool*, forthcoming from Dream Horse Press. A chapbook, *Story Box*, is also forthcoming from Poetry West. She directs the creative writing program at Oklahoma State University.

**Janice Lierz** is the CEO of a business consulting company and chairperson for a nonprofit arts organization. Her poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *Tar River Poetry*, *Eclipse*, and *Asheville Poetry Review*, among other journals.

**Bobbi Lurie's** third poetry collection, *Grief Suite*, is forthcoming from Custom Words. Her other two books are *Letter from the Lawn* and *the Book I Never Read*. Her work has appeared in numerous print and online journals including *American Poetry Review*, *New American Writing*, *Shampoo*, and *diode*.

**James Magorian** has recently had poems published in *Denver Quarterly*, *The Louisiana Review*, *the North American Review*, and *the Texas Review*. His latest novel is *Hearts of Gold*, and his most recent poetry book is *Geographia*.

**Laura McCullough's** third collection of poems, *SPEECH ACTS*, is forthcoming from Black Lawrence Press (2010). Her second collection of poems, *WHAT MEN WANT*, is forthcoming from XOXOX Press (Nov. 2008). Her first, *THE DANCING BEAR*, debuted in 06 and in 07, Mudlark published her chapbook of prose poems, *ELEPHANT ANGER*. She's been awarded two NJ State Arts Council Fellowships and has an MFA in fiction from Goddard College. Her work has appeared recently or is forthcoming in *The American Poetry Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Guernica*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Tusculum Review*, *Hanging Loose*, *Pebble Lake Review*, *The Hiram Poetry Review*, *Gargoyle*, *Iron Horse Quarterly*, *The Hiss Quarterly*, *The Pedestal*, *The Potomac*, *Nimrod*, *Boulevard*, *Tattoo Highway*, *Gulf Coast*, *Guernica*, *Hotel Amerika*, *Poetry East*, *The Portland Review*, and others. Her book reviews have appeared in such places as *Webdelsol Review of Books*, *The Potomac*, and *Small Spiral Notebook*. Laura is a doctoral candidate in poetry at the University of Essex.

**Rick McKenzie** lives in Florida with his wife Barbara. Their frequent camping and canoe trips often take them through rural Florida and the small towns that inspired "Orange City."

**Giorgio Mobili** was born and raised in Milan, and came to the US in 1999 as a graduate student at Washington University in St. Louis, from

which he graduated in 2005. He currently lives in Fresno, CA, where he teaches Humanities and Italian Art at California State University.

**Jessica Moll** was born and raised in Oakland, California. She earned a BA from UC Berkeley and an MFA from Eastern Washington University. Her work is forthcoming in *Rhino* and *Knockout*.

**James Proffitt** is a freelance writer and photographer in Marblehead, Ohio. He lives in a little trailer on Lake Erie with his Apricot dog, Nikon. Some of his work has appeared in *Rattle*, *Red Rock Review*, *Avocet*, and *Notre Dame Review*. He's currently working on writing longer lines in an effort to write a novel, which isn't working out well.

**Lisa Roney** has published poems and short prose in journals such as the *Healing Muse*, *Ruminate*, *Sycamore Review*, and *Harper's*, as well as a memoir, *Sweet Invisible Body* (Holt). She teaches creative writing at the University of Central Florida in the jungles of Orlando.

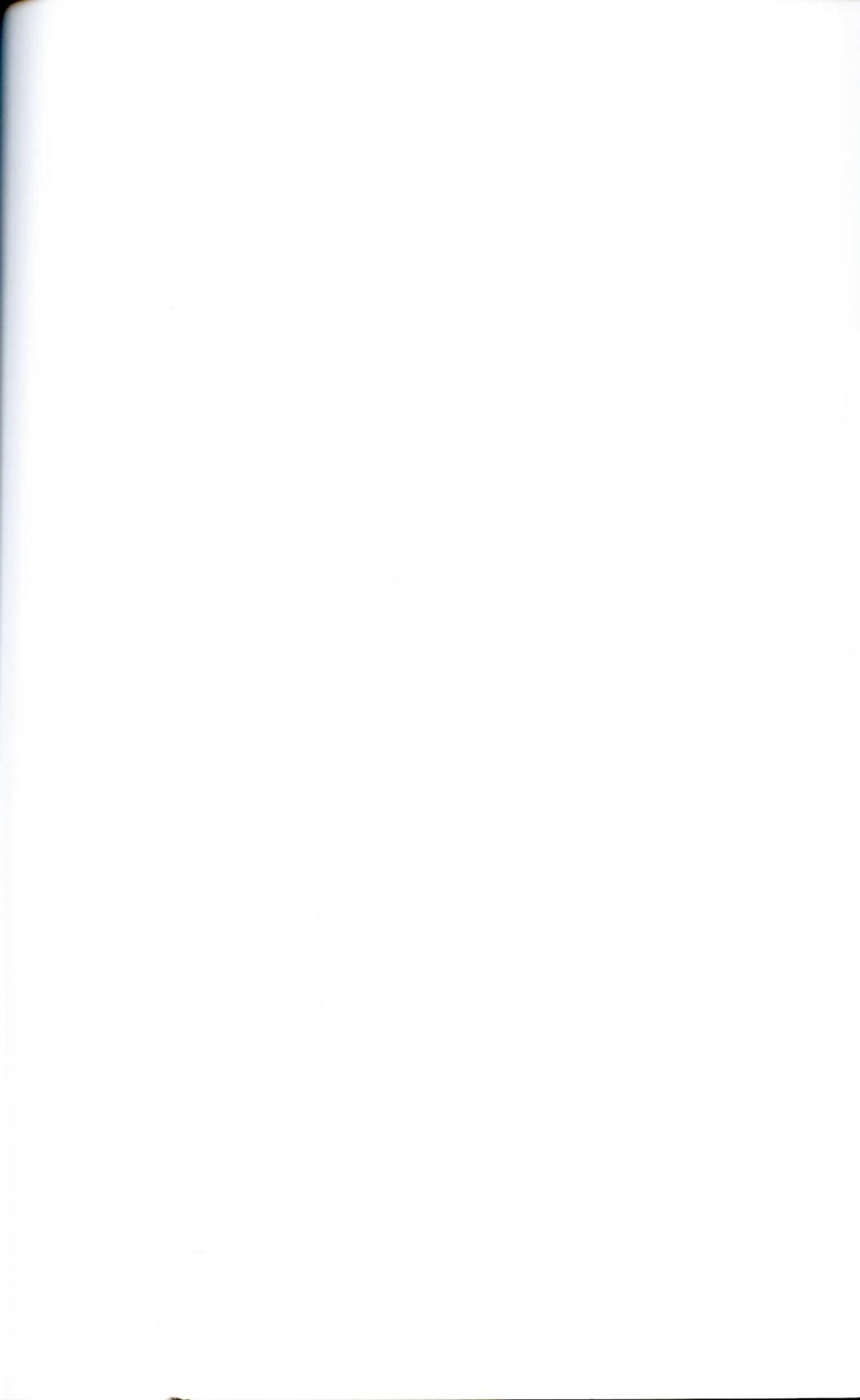
**George Such** has had a chiropractic practice for over 25 years in Richland, Washington. This spring he will complete an English degree at Washington State University, which he has been working toward the past four years. His poems have been published in the *MacGuffin*, *Lullwater Review*, and several other journals.

**Sara Tracey's** work has recently appeared in *Keep Going*, *Harpur Palate*, *Wicked Alice*, and *Hobble Creek Review*. She is a poetry editor of *Barn Owl Review* and lives in Chicago, IL, where she is a PhD student at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

**Mark Wisniewski** is the author of *One of Us One Night*, *Confessions of a Polish Used Car Salesman*, and *All Weekend with the Lights On*. His poems have appeared in many arenas, and he's won a Pushcart Prize.







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