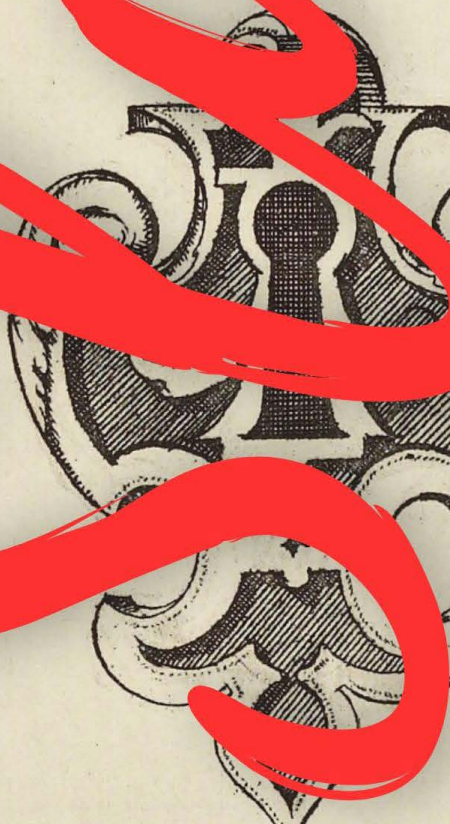




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Issue 2





the engine(idling
Issue 2 : The Slant
Spring 2024

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Mike Ferguson (The Slant and the Sly

Kelly R. Samuels (**What Is Remembered of That Place**

Something
of the road
And the bridge
And the quick way
I had of crossing it
before





Susan Shea (**Out of Sight**)

It was just yesterday
or was it today when
we saw the palm's up hand
in the sky, twisting its
fingers and nails
reaching out to us

seen only after the
phone photo was taken

we were kind of shaken

wondering why and how
we now had a second pair of eyes
that could see serious doings
in the great unseen

it kept us up last night or
was it tonight when fireworks
woke us at midnight to poke
us again to shoot the sky

to wait for our phone to mingle
with a staggering scene
we were entitled to see

it caught the after life of the human's
blast, three lit-up crosses shining
through a borealis green that must
have run away from its northern being

but we kept looking and looking
at the picture in our hands
as though there should be more
and more to fill the huge hole we
carry with us everywhere we go

Anne Lovering Rounds (**Wellness Check**

(for the subject of a lucid dream)

You're okay, right?
In the dream I had,
you'd broken your hand
& at the early lesson
(before nine) you poured
a bourbon neat. Tapering
off Prozac is a bitch. We
never got around to playing it,
the Pathetique, Kalmus
edition, maybe because
I'd also dreamt of what
another teacher said,
a quip remembered
from another life: *it's very scary
when pianists come underprepared.*





Jack B. Bedell (**But Lately I Find a Sliver of Mirror Is Simply to Slice an Eyelid**

—Francesca Woodman, 1979

Light falls in from high windows here,
finds whatever white it can—
porcelain bowl, conch shell, deli
bag, garter, crown molding,
skin—but in every dark space
an angle lies waiting, sharp
edges, of table, of floor boards,
of mirror glass catching the last
clear image of hand reaching out
into space, and no matter how
this afternoon glows, the eye
fixes itself right there, just
a breath before the cut opens.

John Grey (**WONDERFUL LIFE**)

The car sped by,
missed him by inches,
as someone leaned out
the back seat window
and screamed incoherently.

He stumbled
as he tried to step backwards
but instead tottered forward.

He didn't feel like
he'd just avoided death.
In fact,
he didn't feel
much of anything at all.

He was no more
than a swaying body,
loose and clattering
like something spilled from his pockets.

Finally,
he fell face down on asphalt,
smashed his nose,
breathed blood.

A young couple strolled by,
hand in hand,
glancing, every now and then,
at each other
with doleful loving eyes
like Bassett hound puppies.

They're the ones living
the wonderful life
I was talking about.





Scott Ennis (Hamlet Puppet

I bought a puppet at a Shakespeare play
I paid for it because to steal is wrong
But now I wish the thing would go away
Instead it sits and mocks me with its song

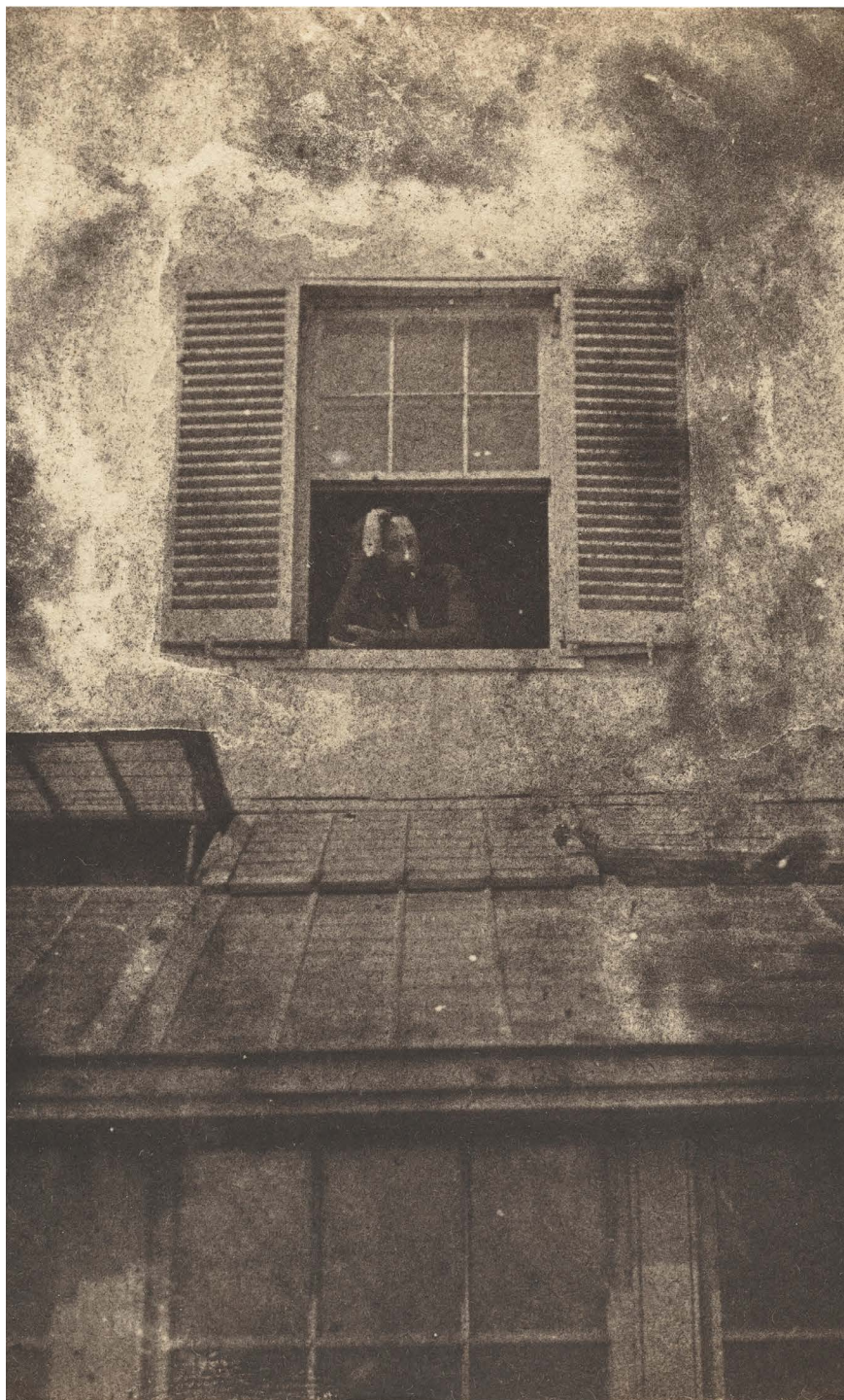
It sings like someone's ghost, or ghostly act
A little song, a sonnet it has learned
It mutters every iamb like some fact
Such ashen thoughts should probably be burned

Then suddenly it turns to watch me write
And suddenly I write in frenzied haste
The puppet is a poem in my sight
A creepy doll of couplets I might waste

The waste of words on puppets sets me free
But still I hear: "To be or not to be?"

BEE LB (to be read in front of a live studio audience

today, rain. it pours & then passes, pours
& then passes. & never once a rainbow.
grey skies from here to there. there
being anywhere the sky ends. today,
chickadees lining the rail, drenched &
drip drip dripping all everywhere. the sky
dripping too, & me along with it. we'll
all drip together; the birds, the sky, & me.
hello, spring! hello, april showers! hello, unsettled
feeling in my chest that won't lift no matter how still
i lay! how are we all doing today? we'll pause
just long enough for you to answer before moving
on. now that i look closer the sky is a dusty
blue. do you blame me for lying? exaggerating?
whatever it is us poets do? listen, i'm only trying
to get by here! it's been raining all day & there's a
conductor between my eyebrows & i'm just waiting
to draw lightning to ground. the chickadees flew past me
just now— i wonder where they're going, where they've
decided must be better than here. the geese are staying
put & i'm stuck along with them but imagine, for a
moment, picking yourself up & just taking off.
today, here. tomorrow, anywhere else.
& in between, a whole world to choose from.





BEE LB (eulogy card

i take a name that was never mine and slot it between my brother's. like the door and the jamb, i am the knife slipped between to jimmy the lock. i do not belong but at times i am the only way to open. this is a sliver of hope i let melt on my tongue, unwashed. i am slipping out of myself but my body remains. his body is ash and he's gone somewhere i can't follow, despite— attempts— intentions— etc. i don't remember when he taught me how to slip a lock. a knife or a card that no longer needs using. not a front door but a bedroom, not sealed only suggested. surely it was when my room was only the suggestion of a room, beams like the start of a cage, bed like the only safe place, dresser like the most beautiful thing, frosted glass like more than i deserved or knew how to keep. burnt toast and crumbs in the butter. the stairs he dragged me up. the stall shower, the cold floor. none of it matters but still feels significant. i took a name that was never mine and offered it like a gift to those that loved him. it will never belong to me and i'll never be free of it and no one asked me to use it but i did, a sacrifice freely given. five days and then nothing— then freedom— then the hint of an end like something new could ever come.

Thomas Rions-Maehren (**CASTLE ROCK**)

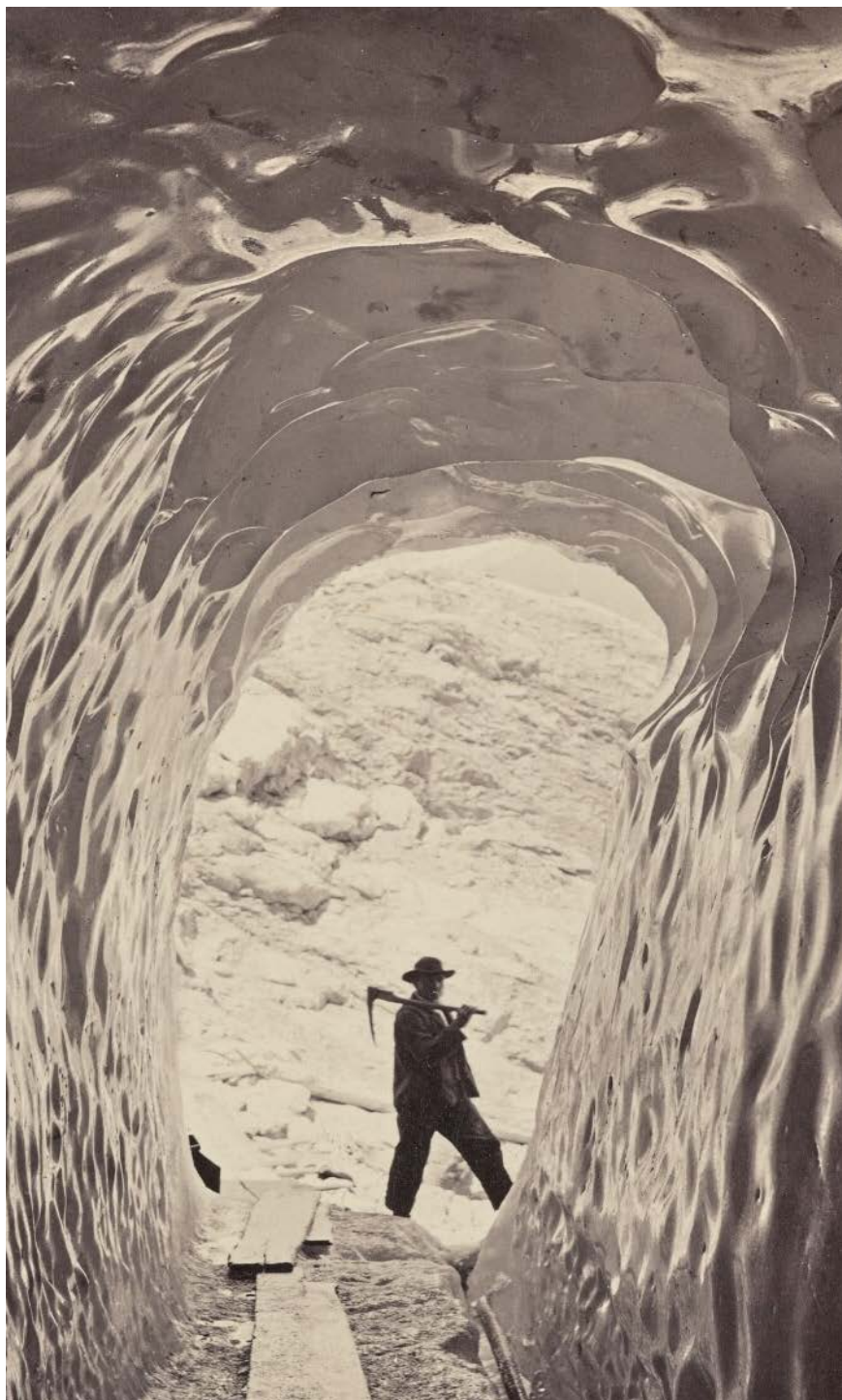
I could disappear
and those snowy peaks sawing away at the horizon,
eroding the line between what is and what is not,
wouldn't even notice. Soon,

I will be home,
hundreds of miles from here,
and those frosty giants could vanish,
simply melt into a prairie, golden with cold flame.
I wouldn't even notice.

Soon, I will be
home
to my own glacial plain.
I mean, I hope so. I caught a break and found a ride,
but how can anyone be certain?

Afterall, plans have a funny way
of changing,
and minds have a funny way of thinking

when you're seeing your life
through the smoke
of a smoldering engine somewhere outside of Castle Rock.





*Brad Rose (**Baby Teeth***

Like a child actor, I've been released on my own recognizance. I'm re-creating a good impression. If I did it once, I can do it again. I realize however, that sometimes I'm sartorially confused, but who doesn't love gothic bondage cyber trousers, especially with an 80s color pallet? Despite my celebrated anonymity, I'm confident I can win next Sunday's sacrilegious popularity contest because I'm both sacred and profane. The human body is made up of about 40 trillion cells. Some think it's a complex mystery, but really, it's so simple, it operates itself. My idea of exercise is watching others run a marathon, but regrettably, if you want something done right, you've got to do it yourself, which is why, after that near-fatal accident at the alligator farm, I'm now the primary bread loser in our family. Who would have thought such devastation could result from the sudden deployment of baby teeth? Truth is, everything happened so fast, the victims hardly knew what bit them.

Richelle Lee Slota (Macy's)

I shopped for gifts poetic in Lingerie.
Aisles of bras began to fill with breasts,
Rows of gowns with taut silk nipples.

Cosmetics dumped aphrodisiacs
In the air conditioning. I loved and
Lusted in Bridal.

Bells rang. Women burst from fitting rooms.
Those men observed in Foundations,
Were caught and subdued. Mannequins mouthed O's.

Security cavorted buck naked in Furniture.
The store manager uncorked in Liquor.





Francis de Lima (Fairytale

Before the taxi drives off the bridge
an Irish socialist organizer turns
into a musician & shouts technofeudalism
at the top of his lungs! We all cheer and ring out
our pints and speak about Belfast,
about the god of paper being an immigrant
& oranges thrown over the wall of winter.
A woman made of iron falls in love
again, at a bar in Helsinki on Christmas eve.
We're all down-and-out & we're all
artists like political lesbians make activism
out of a ribbon of determination to this
good, ditched earth, hiding high
beneath the sheen of sugared powder.
A boy runs outside the bar stripping off his shirt, drunk
as fog, rolls around in the snow & I fall in love with an ampersand,
shout into the crowd *can someone who*
knows this man help me and we all cheer and ring out
our pints & walk him to sleep in someone's
elevator shaft where it's warm but
before that a man stops to ask if all is okay &
I give him all my spare change & we're
all bums and punks like the busy-bodies in
London are trying to make it big & *be someone*
& I could have been anyone but I was
here instead and I kissed you on the cheek
and didn't particularly want to be anyone but
as we carried him like a wise-cracking stonewall,
like the end of a sentence, like a heavy melody,
I noticed that this might be a little bit fucked up, but
look at all this still-hovering love, a snap of
the suspenders, a smack of the bum on
the seat like an asterisk, a cravat tucked in for someone
else with birch-white, unorthodox hands, & after
we all went back to the bar & rang out our
pints and said *you were handsome, you*
were pretty, queen of Helsinki, so Happy
Christmas, I love you, baby & Sinatra is still swinging &
when the taxi drives off the bridge you do not die because
this is a fairytale & so is real life & you didn't die there
either so why should you here?

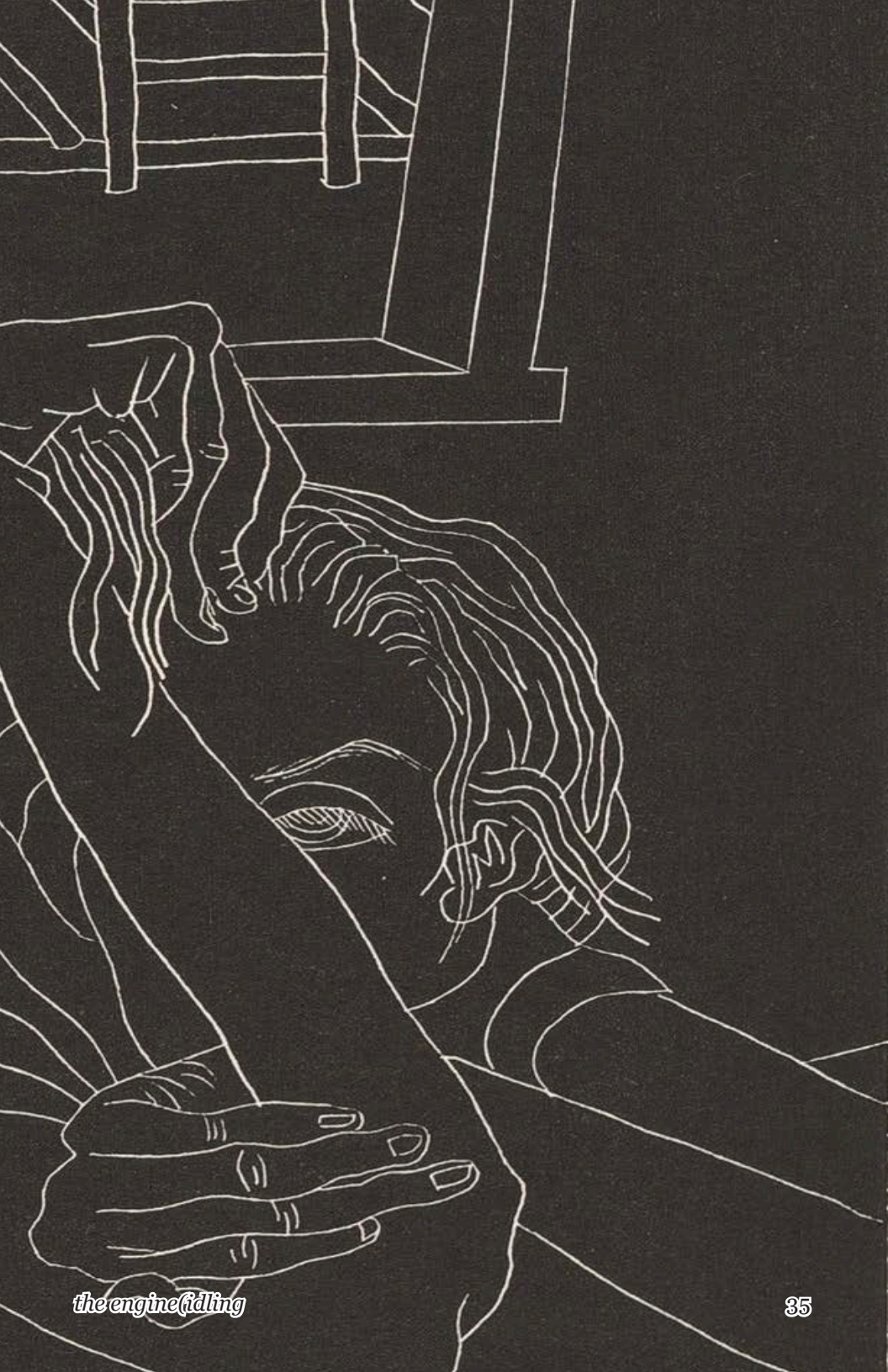
Francis de Lima (**This is a frame**)

to Maddy Pope

To love you like an avalanche
I canonise you
frying halloumi with flakes of honey
and sometimes only silence can
be an open palm, be smooth like a craving
of fried egg and something green
a trapeze-swing into a redacted eternity and
the lion of time is circling the dinner table
watching the egg bubble, waiting for the inevitable
goodbye but I
promise I will never get bored of you

In a photo my father rises behind a row of kids in Rio -78
him too a kid, kidding, pinning rabbit ears on some
poet called *Georginho* and you are a poet too but
sometimes the word stands in the middle of the room and
neither of us understands it
It took me perhaps some twenty-odd
lifetimes to finally get the bit, to finally be on-board
the madness of what is a wave and
the thing is my father was always the
gaggle of laughter, not an in-depth gander, much like me
The problem is in trying to maintain the same grin through
differing decades, converging aesthetics from
brutal function to a songbook future and a
smile is just a cut through the fabric of loneliness which is another word
for time

and the word in the middle of the room spent all this time trying to hold
us
when all we did was try to understand it, name it all the way into
oblivion, into a mine
digging traps into the self but
the thing is, my father still plays guitar like some body who forgot how to
breathe and
you still mail me poems like mysteries in a rosary which
they also call decades because they only happen every ten years and
because
to believe is only to observe the passage of time and love it.





*Brandon Shane (**Ogimi Village***

My mother considered me a dog,
and so she left me outside,
while villagers worked fields
of bitter melon
& my disgraceful father
was deployed on a destroyer
to nowhere.

I'd wander by the forest, the locals
were deathly afraid of mountain boar,
and their tusks will gore thighs
an ease of warm butter
they will dig until there is no blood left
and perhaps they will begin
to eat

Some of the old women, mean
but there was love in their toughness
would grab my ear and pull
bring me into their paper homes
where I would pound mochi
and do their chores.

I look back in the bilge
of a metropolis & think
I had something good there.

Clara Burghelea (**Mother**

This one at the Harry Reid Airport,
her hand grazing the daughter's midback,
fumbling with her readers hanging
from her neck on a rhinestone-string
chain, a book on her lap, next the daughter
jutting her sharp chin over the shoulder,
those other mothers out there, teaching us to hold
frail things in our mouths or at arm's length,
welding themselves to our skins across time,
all these daughters learn to manage loss like a migraine.





Ariadne Alexis Macquarie (Portrait of my Lover in Situ

in the trees, honey //
if you look closely
the bark splits itself gracelessly open
in scabbed ridges // like a river

slicing deep
into the earth // like sinners
stricken solemn
by whip-carved crimson //

wounds weeping like a river
& this, honey
is our God-given language // spliced
& violent // deep

& sacred, beauty
& punishment // run your work-weary
hands along the trunk, here //
feel its jagged edges

bite— a dog tugging impatiently
at its owner //
this right here is all of us
& is none of us //

is the language
& the river // is the sinner
& the devil //
we are whip-carved & violent

in the image of our creator
& Lord, so is nature //
from the bloodbath we've made of this planet
to the subatomic // motherfucking particle

I. Crow on the Ground

The tag of my bathing suit
bottom is hanging out and I am lowkey
cursing my husband Ric for not
tucking it in before snapping the shot.
Insta-worthy crow poses are hard
enough to hold without checking
for wardrobe malfunctions, too.
Though in all fairness,
this one is a reshoot I demanded
showcasing my badass mermaid tattoo.
Guess you can't expect a guy
to catch everything, should
probably be enough that he's
willing to step behind the camera at all.

II. Crow on a Wire

I took up yoga as a means
of negotiating a peace treaty
between me and my body,
but the number on that tag
is chiseled on my brain in
78 POINT FONT,
eclipses the image itself, obliterates
the muscles in my back, arms, thighs.
5 pounds for every inch over 5 feet,
my Grandma's voice echoes between my ears.
I skip dessert that night.
She called them my birthing hips—
what a fucking misnomer for a body
that has never given life to anyone.
I struggle to find lightness, to soar despite
the weight in my heart
which always feels heavier than
the weight on the scale.

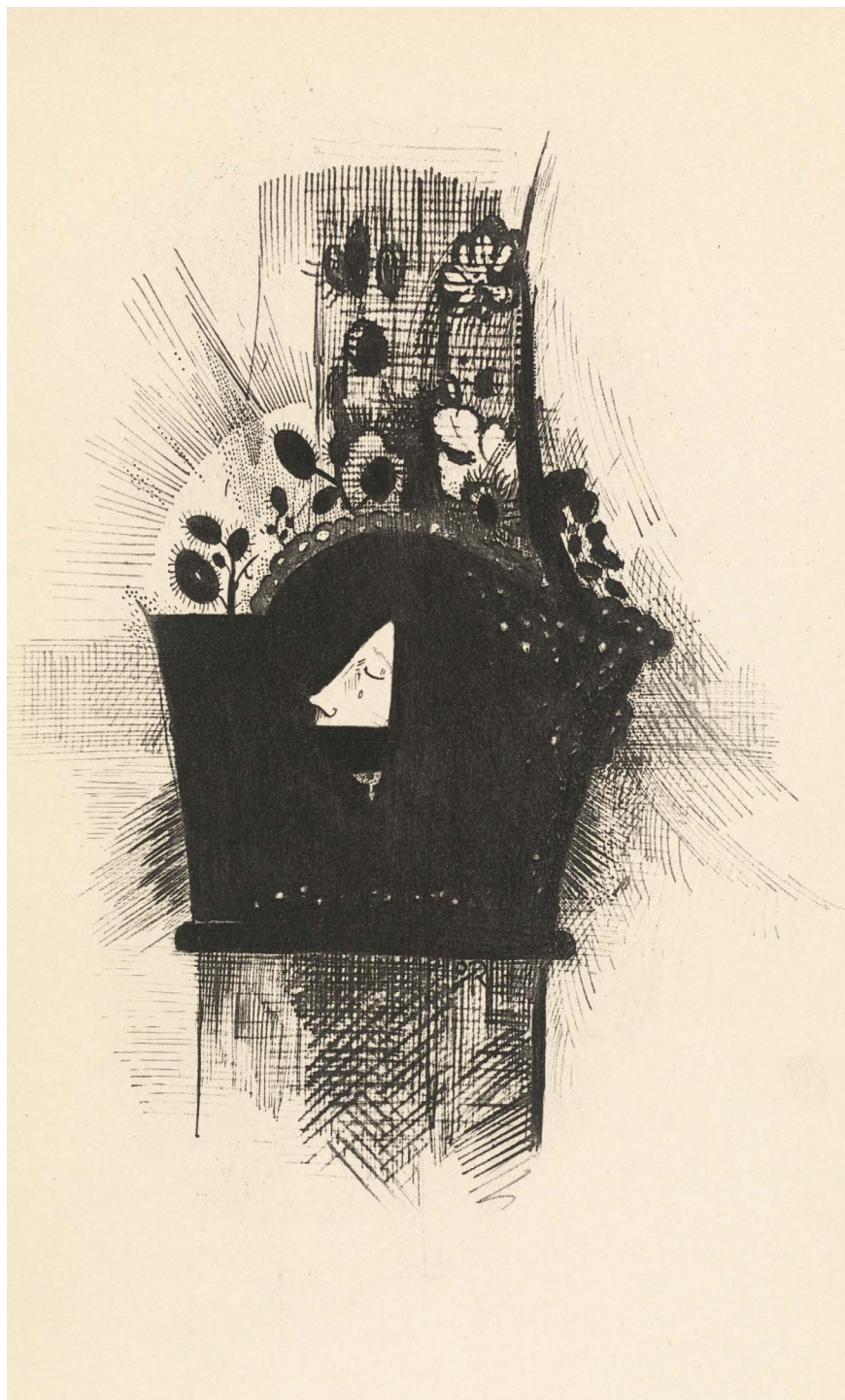
III. As The Crow Flies

My sisters and I play tag
in our backyard outside of Wilson,



wet cotton heat of August,
tobacco fields stretching here
to horizon, limbs darting
in and out of dappled sunlight
ducking behind pines
bobbing and juking
laughter like bells
echoing through the garden heavy
with late summer harvest, wild with overgrowth;
we are lighter than earth, than air, even—
you can't catch us,
bodies, vehicles for travel at
lightning speed equals distance
over time
we flew,
we fly.





Angela Arnold (**The Thing in the Belly of the Plum**)

On the face of it, the run of juice
meets the impatience of fingers,
answers them,
like for like for like.

Inside, though, this dead thing,
this joke of a wooden thing; to look at,
you wouldn't give it
much credence.

Right there in the belly of it,
right down beyond
the runny, plummy centre of it:
a stony question mark.

Waste, you think, now
to be casually flung
with a last thrown look of
so what. But see

how it shares its own shaky future
with yours, in so many
unsaid words? Look.
Beyond² plummy.

Dorian Winter (**knees half-bent in the riverbed**)

the celestial vomit of new year's fireworks

dribbles & stains; light-polluted gasps

of Dionysian nightlife.

there's lukewarm champagne

precipitating

from humid balconies: dermal rainstorms

snaked with tight, sequined bodies and laughter,

it is 11.47pm, and i am standing with the swans

flushed knees and wrinkled wings, *praying*,

maybe, that i'll watch the cogs of time

churn and contort in a direction of my choosing.

the caresses of seagrass and discarded feathers

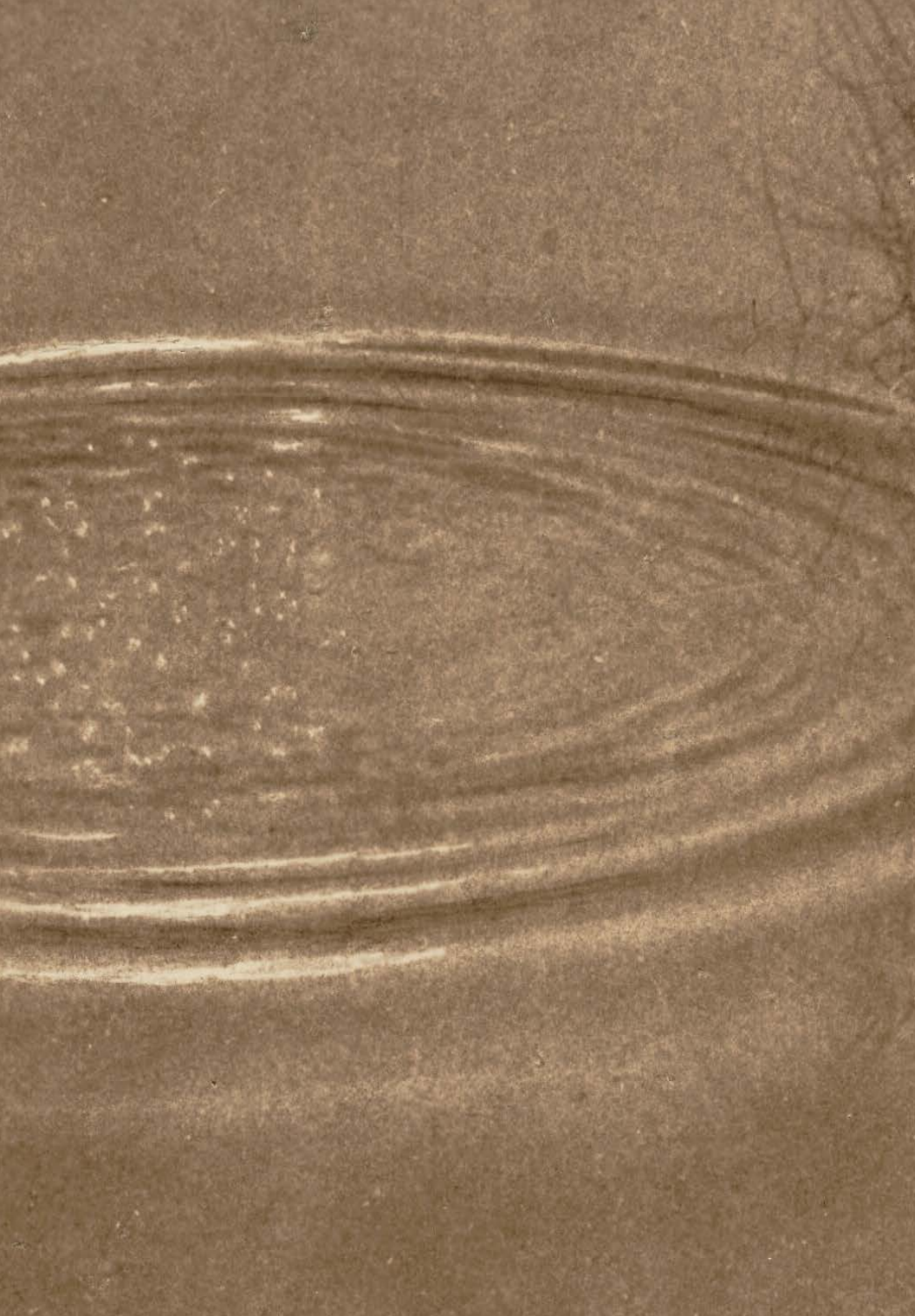
remind me

we will all start again: exhaling

through firecracker ventricles

& phlegm

& a nightgown soaked with saltwater.





Donald Zirilli (**Museum of the House Made From Doormats**)

When I am remembered,
they will locate my homestead
by the well I dug.

They will purchase
an absurd hodgepodge
of antique doormats.

Like me, with no instructions,
they'll create something entirely new,
a hapless caricature of the past.

They won't know
the thresholds I marauded

or feel on their faces
the overly welcome prairie wind.

Donald Zirilli (**Stand Up**)

How's everybody doing tonight?
I just flew in from New York
and boy is the sky tired.

They say comedy is hard
but have you tried standing up?

If you really want to see something funny
watch me try to walk in a straight line.

The other day this guy said to me
something I couldn't hear
because I was in my bedroom in the middle of the day
praying to the blanket on my face.

Speaking of darkness there was this
snake that walked into a doctor's office.
"Doc," he said.

"The grass keeps hitting me in the face.
What should I do?"

And the Doc says

"well what does it feel like?"

and the snake says

"well have you ever looked up to dandelions?

You know what I'm saying?"

and the Doc says "no,"

and the snake says

"okay it's like slapping yourself with a noodle"

and I guess the Doc knows what that feels like

because he sends the snake to a neurologist,

and the snake tells the neurologist

"it's like getting slapped with a noodle."

They do some tests, they don't find anything

and he goes to an ear nose throat guy,

a urologist, a proctologist, a cardiologist,

and each time he says

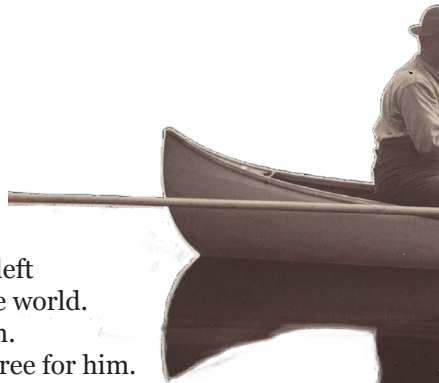
"it's like getting slapped with a noodle."

Finally, he's got almost no health insurance left

and they bring in the leading specialist in the world.

This guy has three hospitals named after him.

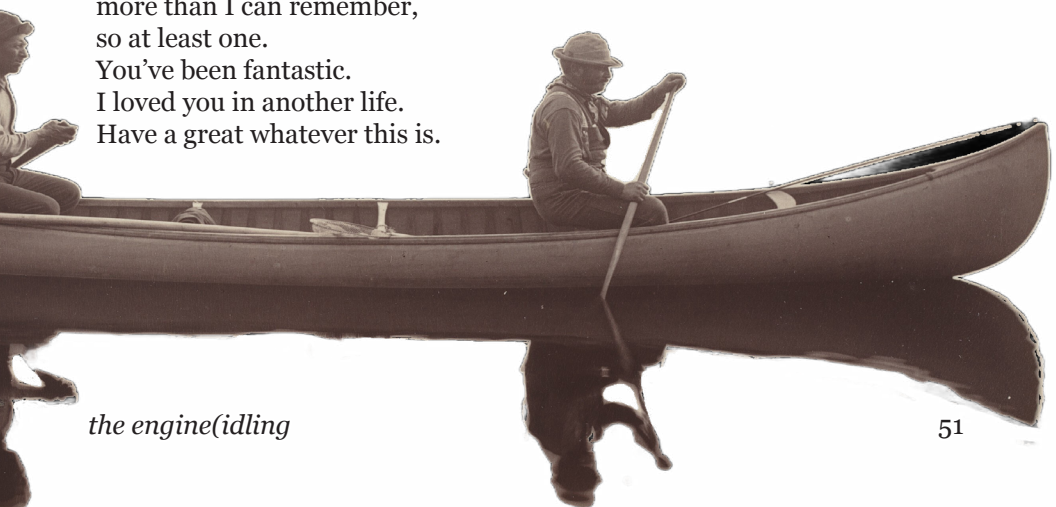
This guy is so smart they had to invent a degree for him.



He examines this snake from every angle,
runs more tests, sorts through the data,
consults with the United Nations, and finally
just stares at the snake, stroking his beard.
“What is it?” asked the snake. “What’s wrong with me?
Is there anything that can be done for this?
Do you finally know what’s going on?”
And the doctor says,
“stay away from pasta. Try potatoes.”

Yeah, we’re all laughing,
having a great time together
and you’re probably wondering
why I’m the only one getting paid for it.
The only way I can make sense out of it
is that those chairs you’re sitting on
must be real special.
I mean there are times I would
give my kingdom for a chair.
Did I tell you about my kingdom?
Well it’s ruled by this reverse castle
where the moat is in the middle
and everybody just kind of lives around it
and wonders why they need to feed the alligators.
And the politics are terrible just like everywhere else.
Half the people want to set the moat on fire
and the other half don’t know where the moat is
and everybody is me
and is this a toilet joke? I don’t get it.

Well, thank you everybody, I have to go.
I have so many things to do,
more than I can remember,
so at least one.
You’ve been fantastic.
I loved you in another life.
Have a great whatever this is.





Phil Vas (**Fall River Girl**)

Lizzy Borden was my girl.
We owned a timeshare
and a Lincoln Continental.

Her mother told me dirty jokes,
and her father borrowed
money every Friday.

Then one day they up and left.

Lizzie said:

“My heart is tethered, satin thread,
Daddy’s slippers beneath the bed.”

That, friends, is when you know it’s over.

Next Sunday after church
I sold the Lincoln and
tip-toed
 across
 a
 moonbeam.

Now, looking out over the fields,
I see Maplecroft in the distance,
pigeons circling overhead.

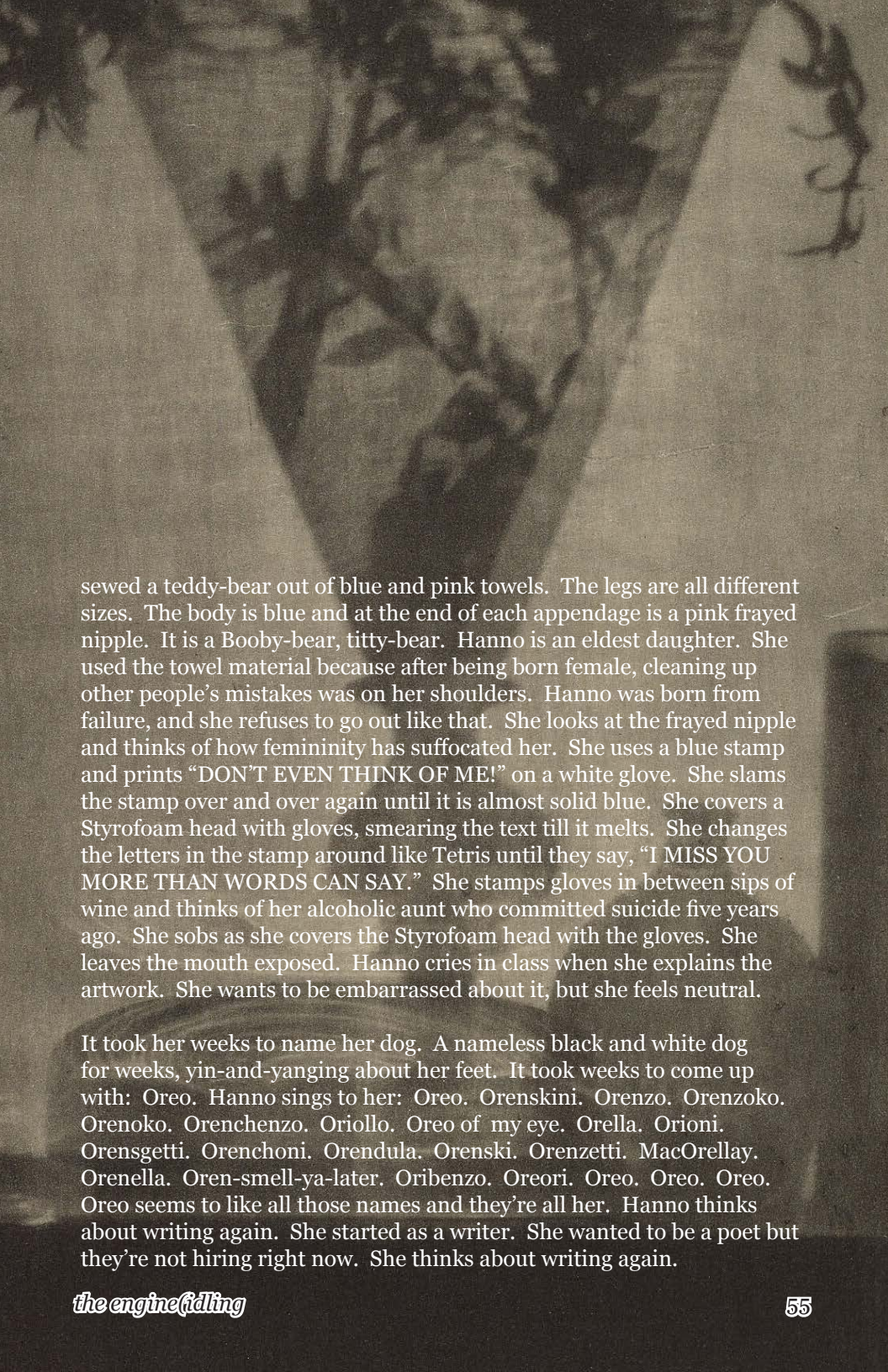
I wonder if Lizzie saved my guitars
and if her father has that twenty
he owes me.

Shannon Wallace (Mythopoetics of Hanno Verde Monet

She has a real name, but she is a post-modernist who knows all language is fake. She wants to be like Duchamp's Rose Selavey but she is more like Carl Andre pushing his wife out of a 34-floor window. She has the face of an Irish peasant that can offer the world nothing but another hole to stuff a variety of potatoes into. She takes no shit. She drinks full-fat coke. She convinces her younger brother to go on walks at two in the morning because passing people on the street makes her nervous. She clenches her jaw and tension burrows in her like worms, no matter how much yoga, qigong, tai chi, medieval sword fighting, fencing, jousting, tennis and badminton she does. She knows she is 5'2 and increasingly insane because the world couldn't handle her full-capacity. She takes baths in the dead afternoon. She thinks she's been in the tub for hours but it was only 15 minutes. She wears dresses that are printed with nudes from renaissance paintings or the American dollar. Her best friend goes to Cocaine Anonymous and she doesn't worry about being a pre-rehab friend. He collects the gaudy chips and stops feeling bugs in his skin. He gets better. The ashtray stays empty for the first time.

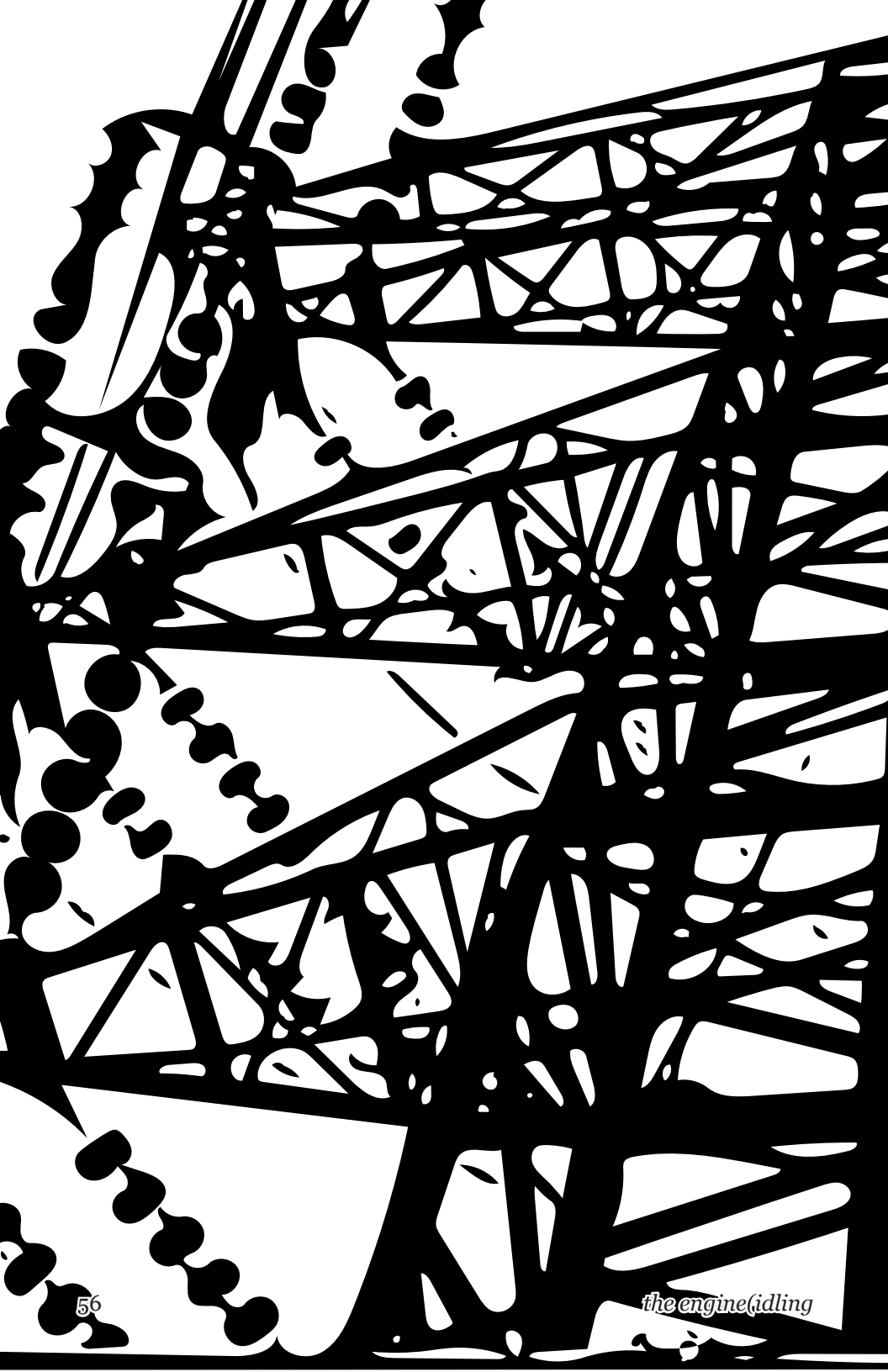
Hanno's literary agent Elenora is hounding her for more material for another book. "A novel, poetry, anything!" Elenora pleads. Hanno hangs up the phone.

Hanno is sculpting now. She used to love writing but now she makes sculptures out of gloves. She made a teddy-bear by twisting a metal base and gluing boxes worth of white-latex gloves wrapped around the wire. It is floppy and soft. It is a piece about a mother that needed sterilized. She



sewed a teddy-bear out of blue and pink towels. The legs are all different sizes. The body is blue and at the end of each appendage is a pink frayed nipple. It is a Booby-bear, titty-bear. Hanno is an eldest daughter. She used the towel material because after being born female, cleaning up other people's mistakes was on her shoulders. Hanno was born from failure, and she refuses to go out like that. She looks at the frayed nipple and thinks of how femininity has suffocated her. She uses a blue stamp and prints "DON'T EVEN THINK OF ME!" on a white glove. She slams the stamp over and over again until it is almost solid blue. She covers a Styrofoam head with gloves, smearing the text till it melts. She changes the letters in the stamp around like Tetris until they say, "I MISS YOU MORE THAN WORDS CAN SAY." She stamps gloves in between sips of wine and thinks of her alcoholic aunt who committed suicide five years ago. She sobs as she covers the Styrofoam head with the gloves. She leaves the mouth exposed. Hanno cries in class when she explains the artwork. She wants to be embarrassed about it, but she feels neutral.

It took her weeks to name her dog. A nameless black and white dog for weeks, yin-and-yanging about her feet. It took weeks to come up with: Oreo. Hanno sings to her: Oreo. Orenskini. Orenzo. Orenzoko. Orenoko. Orenchenzo. Oriollo. Oreo of my eye. Orella. Orioni. Orengetti. Orenchoni. Orendula. Orenski. Orenzetti. MacOrellay. Orenella. Oren-smell-ya-later. Oribenzo. Oreori. Oreo. Oreo. Oreo. Oreo seems to like all those names and they're all her. Hanno thinks about writing again. She started as a writer. She wanted to be a poet but they're not hiring right now. She thinks about writing again.



Sandy Feinstein (**Unspooled**)

I am a thread
pushed to make
a life, needled at the bias
half remembered
as a sequence of loops
at the hem.

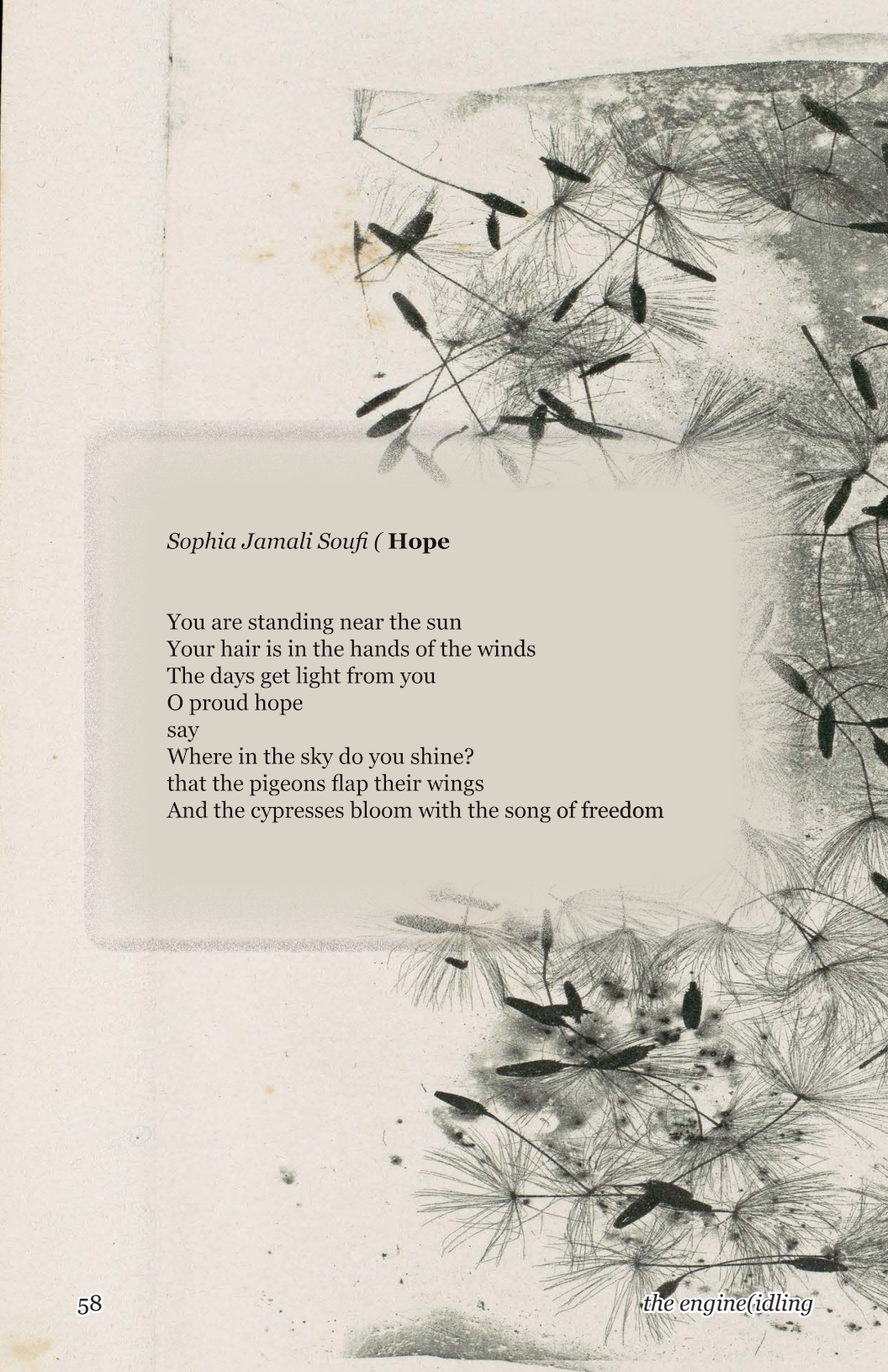
Imagination
did not complete
the dress,
Beth Lazovic did—
a yellow shift
in class passed

From the plane
over pine
to thin its woody sides
held tight in a vice
to cut and file
from an earlier time.

I never learned
to sew whole cloth—
lay a pattern,
cut a form,
draw the strand
into the Singer
for straighter seams
now simply patched.

I'd be undressed
at play with curls
a carpenter piles
as pulpy waste.
Still material forms,
my flesh, take shape
in knots and snags.

Distracted
loss
in other words.



Sophia Jamali Soufi (**Hope**

You are standing near the sun
Your hair is in the hands of the winds
The days get light from you
O proud hope
say
Where in the sky do you shine?
that the pigeons flap their wings
And the cypresses bloom with the song of freedom



Devon Neal (**Wildflowers**)

At home, in the weak sun,
I water the words growing in the garden,
serif stalks growing slow from the dirt.
They came back each year,
the same colors, the same shape,
perennial refrains under the changeless sky.
But when we took our trip to the mountain,
closer to the horizon, carved in hiking trails,
I found a new species of words
growing in the half-shade in a hickory's roots,
blazing with new color on a morning hillside,
crawling with dew-pimples up the deck rails,
brushing at the windows in the midnight wind.
I record their memory here
and take them back home, reading their growth
in the morning, after I come back inside,
the watering pail still dripping,
knowing they're out there, roots spreading,
growing without me.





LindaAnn LoSchiavo (**Insatiable**

We still have weekend brunch, which indicates
Availability. We'll secretly
Keep tabs which lovers stayed the night. I want
You back but nothing in reality
Sustains this force-fed fantasy of mine.

The waitress sets a calla-lilly here
Between us, bandage-white but healthy, leaves
Furled, self-protective. You caress its lip,
Whip out a frothy, half-cooled compliment,
Flip through the menu, smiling carelessly.

If we unwrapped our naked appetite,
Would we be saved? Starched linen shields your lap.

My map, that body, wrinkled me, misled
Direction. Stiffening, you pull away,
The altar I'd sacrificed myself on.

brooklyn baggett (**Centre of Athens**)

in city centre the stench of mid-august Athenian men permeates like
oppression.

i want to say it's unbearable;

to say it covers me like cypress dust– lingering suffocating.

i breathe deep,

sweat slicks my thighs;

straighten my posture, uncross, re-cross my legs,
hope my scent is feminine, that it penetrates them
& one boldly picks me.





brooklyn baggett (**Scarecrow the Philosopher**

i am not the
alpha
or

 omega
this is where our likeness splits

there is another worlds [sic] one
past words like *many & world*

if you
hung in its presence you would call me:
dia Δευς dyeu devi—
 for my shine my gleam—

& experience me
as:
un(devi) trans(devi) omni(devi)

as:
deiv:dvei:dvie:edvi δεϋ:δυεϋ:δυϋε:εδϋ:

& when the possibilities are exhausted
every combination of every language

when you've tossed words into the air
& watched them fall

melted them
into new words & non-words

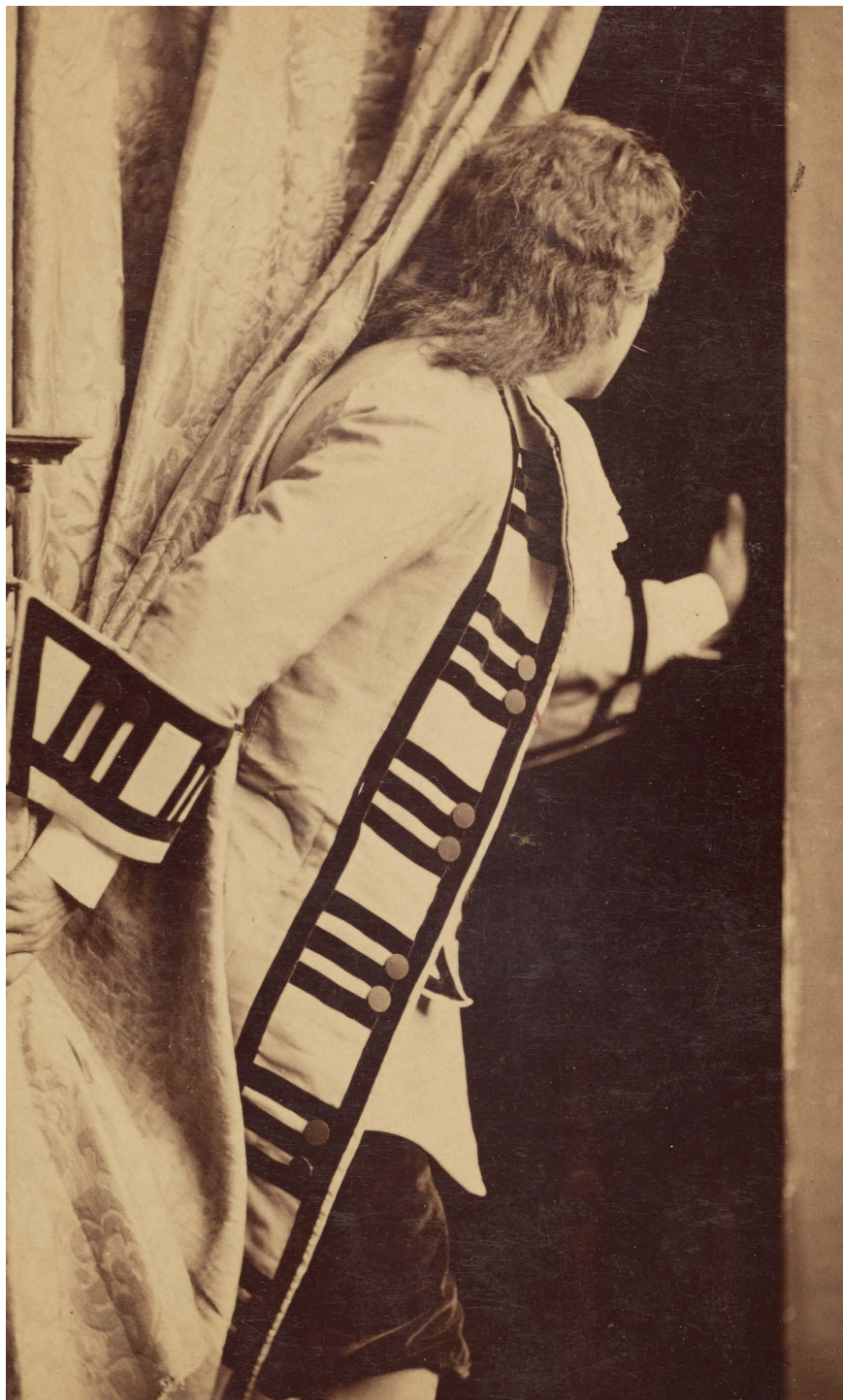
you'll grok there are no words
no languages nO alfa kvo omega

only:
_____ toes

 inches from the ground
& not a crow in the field

Louis Faber (**MEMO TO MEMOIR**)

I will recite
my absurdist life,
and do so without coercion
save my need to tell it.
Imagine a new wave film
in French, perhaps,
directed by Dali and you
may approach my truth.
If this is beyond you, I
don't care, do you?
In the end it is you
the listener who writes
my story, my life,
and I am merely
the pen and paper,
the prompt, so please
help yourself, for I
can't wait to learn
about myself, will I be
Pygmalion or merely
a painted man, a still life
held together by oils, canvas
and your imagination?
Please do hurry though
for things are getting less
complicated and I feel
I am being dragged
offstage in what should be
a theater of the absurd.





Stephen Mead (After S.P.

Nothing was the same:

Little death heads bubbled through my coffee & giggled in my eggs.
I ate. I drank. I learned to mutter nothing of this, giddy with panic
as if awareness was courage:

Have a knowledge of the earth, some grave staking claim
while words in blurs were the worlds of eloquence enough
to suffer the hints & translate my prize, its sarcophagus script,
initials, hieroglyphic, reading: me, me, *mine*.

At last death was in everything, a comfort for the graceless days
& nights of long swords. I swallowed each fearlessly
while others whined & brayed. They were devastating
in their desperations afraid of living but more scared of death.
I listened with reassurance, an overexposed porn king
smiling, miming enjoyment in the shell-shocking rituals
of every blazing flash bulb.

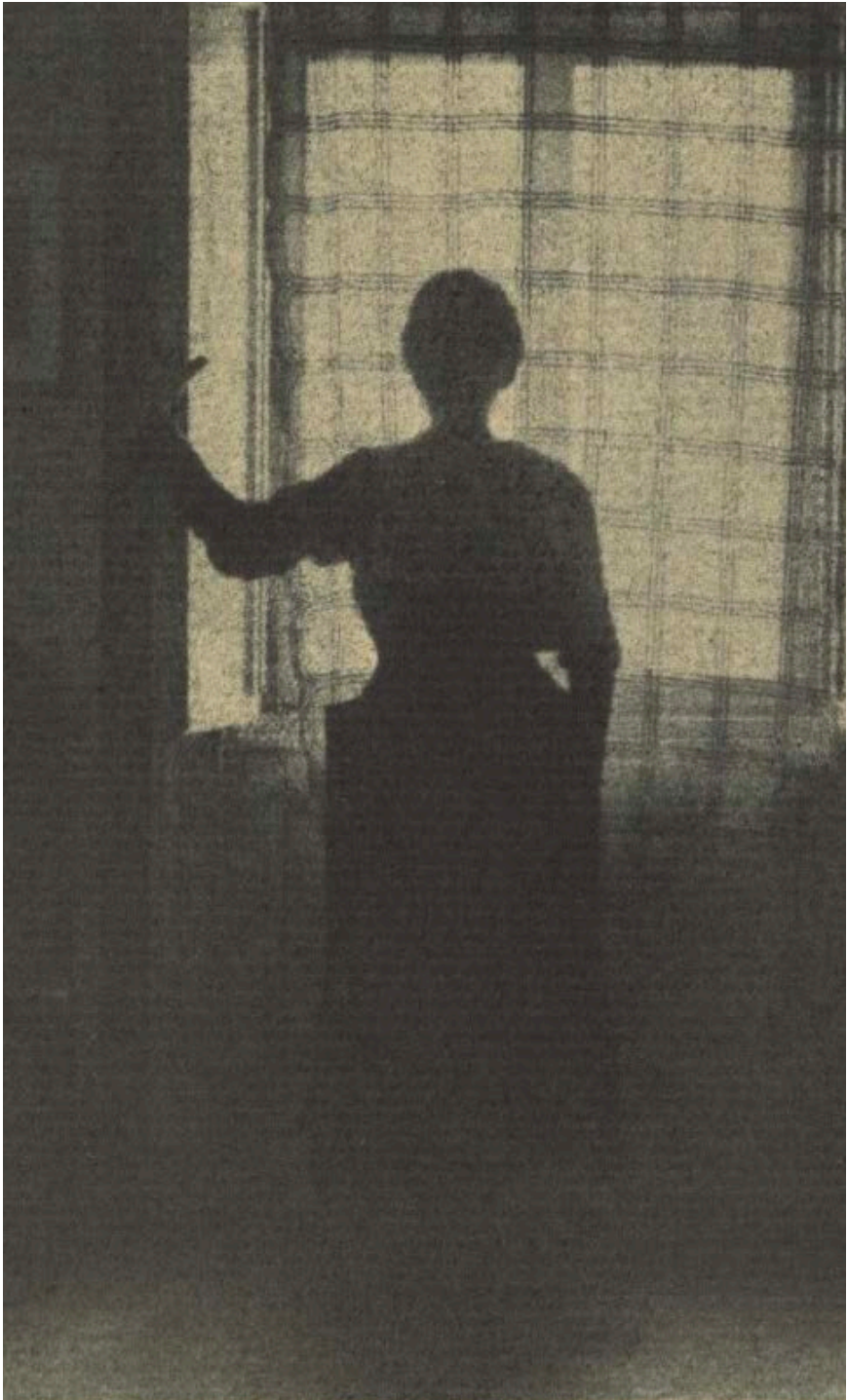
They thought my flesh impervious. They thought my mind
vulnerable to no madness, but my heart sliced off pages,
shed gold leaf by the turning thumb, index,
the mortal speed of blanks.

How the ink was in a hurry to reach the last stanza
& leave you all breathless as I shall leave one day,
stone-clean with everything the voice ever said to me.

Jason Visconti (I Wish I Were Shakespeare

And Romeo and Juliet were like my arm and my leg,
and Hamlet's soliloquy words mumbled in a dream,
to lay King Lear's insanity across my study's rug,
a sonnet to stir the casuals of my kitchen,
to rhyme and rhyme again because my balcony begs.





Jason Visconti (**Reading A Poem To A Stranger**

Excuse me for my metaphor and have a safe day,
yes, we have these closing lines in common,
you look just like the mistress of my page,
I agree this is how harmony can happen,
thank you I think I've found the poem's way.

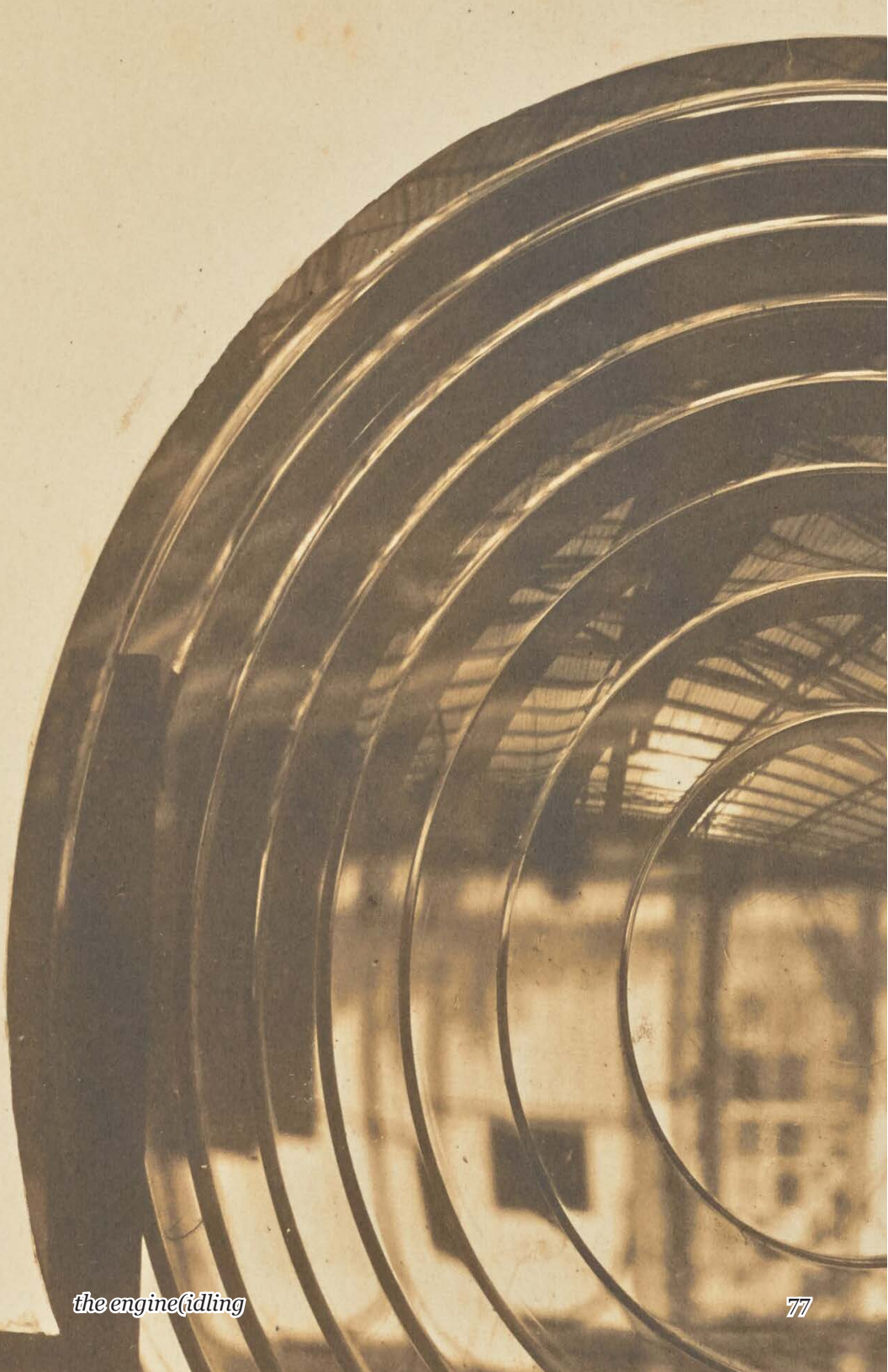
Thom Eichelberger-Young (Q & A

(from Ointment Weather)

—for Samantha Hunter

Do you hear the bell ring? / Will you drink your glass of water? / Have you really been misrepresented? / What would the world be like if grass were a color other than green? / Why are you so loud? / What can you cut? / What did you think of the cat's vomit? / Do you have a public library card? / Where will they go? / Do you know? / Is it your fault? / Is it my fault? / Is he dead? / Can you smile? / What do the keys feel like? / Was it wasted? / Was there a body? / Will they ask anyone the question? / What did you hide? / Where were you? / —upon what? / —godly? / —stripped? / Has it changed? / —what time? / —what time?

(I do) / (It is plastic) / (Only in and of/by myself) / (It would be green) / (—to hear myself—lying monster) / (—everything and nothing) / (What if someone ate it?) / (I never use it) / (I have already decided) / (Yes) / (Always) / (Yes) / (Perhaps, to me—) / (I never learned how) / (They leave nice marks) / (I do not know yet) / (Clearly!) / (I did not know what I had done) / (You will see the definition) / (—the pronoun) / (—above, and residing) / (glass, wood, metal) / (Myself) / (They said they were a moderate) / (It will not be the same again) / (10:30 PM) / (10:30 PM)





David Capps (At the Café

the old man
leaning in close to his friend
spoke of sperm
as though they were the tiny men
of old men, how once degraded
they could lead to birth
defects such as autism...

as he trailed off
and the moody noonday light
filtered through his
glass of iced tea,
as the light pounced on the ice
or as the ice battered
the delightful
chunks in rose water, perhaps

the ghosts of his forebearers watched
over him,
their micropenises still riding heavenly bikes, stalled,
but proud of their little teapot, short and stout
with gnarled hands
and an expression
permanently quizzical

this now

nearly out of ideas, I struggle to recall a line
from Cavafy

the one where it was right to say no
and you would do so again.

Joshua Beatty (**Sun Sick**)

[Stretching my too-tanned arms as far
as they could go around the rubber ring,
the warm pool imposed the lesson on me
that even after death, the wasp can sting.]

Do the wasps sting more alive or after they die?

They sting when threatened.
They'll go for you if they're provoked.

(provoked was a new word for me. It
sounded angry.)

Only when provoked?

No. Just more so, I think.
I've never been stung.

Does that mean you've never provoked one?

No. Unless I'm just not a provocative man.
(last April his face had ballooned to the
size of a boot.)

I didn't mean to provoked the wasp in the pool.

I thought it was dead.

It was.

Then how could you have provoked it?

It got into my ring I was in right close to my chest.

You can't provoke dead things.

I didn't know that.

You should. You're a clever lad.

What else can't you provoke?

Lots of things. Rocks. Sunbeds. The wind.

Does that mean the wind is a dead thing?

No. I don't know. Don't ask those questions.

What questions can I ask?

Don't answer back.
(this confused me.)

Don't be a know-it-all.
(I did want to know it all. I didn't like the furrow of his brow when he didn't know a thing. The creases looked heaviest when he felt he should.)

I didn't mean to.

You're alright.

It would be easy if there was a list of what you can provoke and a list of what you can't provoke. Then wasps wouldn't sting so much and their stings would hurt less and people would hurt less and

There's no lists like that. Things don't happen like that.

How do things happen?

I told you about those questions.

I'm sorry again.

Go let your mum put some aftersun on you.

It stings.

It doesn't. Stings sting. It'll soothe them.

(it made them sting more. For the first time I could remember, I cried in a different country.)

I wish there was lists of things that wouldn't sting and I wish there was list of questions that were safe to ask.

What do you mean safe? Why'd you say safe?

Safe like the metal ladder in the pool when we play the tag game in there.

(safe like not getting caught, not being dunked, not being sure when or if he'd let you come up for air.)

Most kids wish for ice cream.

Ice cream doesn't sting. And ice cream doesn't ask questions.

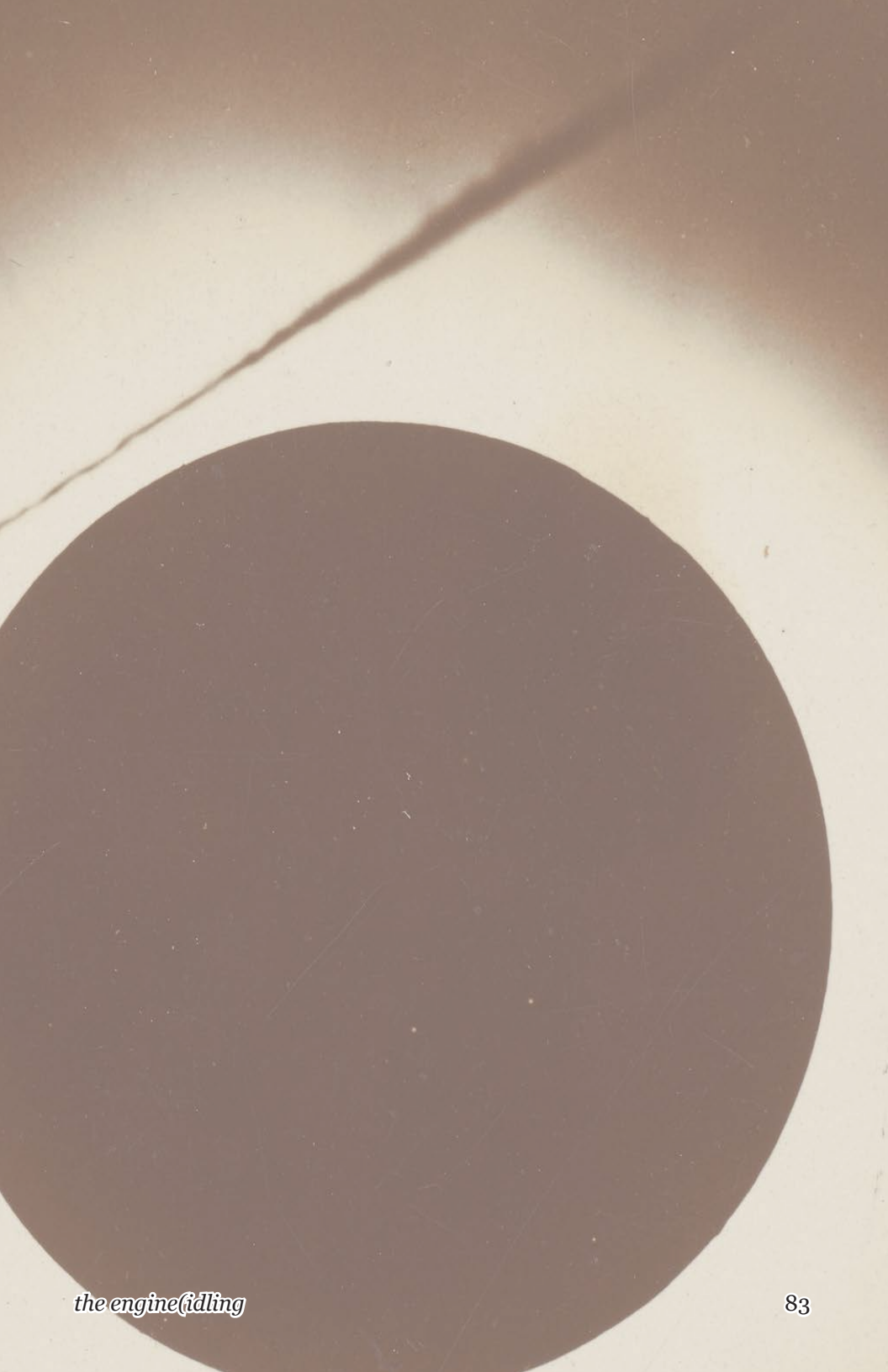
Add it to the lists.

[That night was the first for us to see the bats fly out from between the stones that made up the outside wall and we ate burgers out on the still-hot patio and broke off bits of stale bread to mix into the salad.]

[I shared a room that had no windows with my older brother who was discovering heavy drinking and the room joined onto mum and dad's room which had a really small window.]

[I wondered whether me and my older brother were unlucky to not have a window or whether mum and dad were lucky to have a really small window or whether they were unlucky to not have a bigger window or whether we were all lucky to be in this house that was called a villa and was much bigger than our real house or whether we were all unlucky to be so far away from our real house's windows.]

[I read my comic by trying to work out the different kinds of darkness each colour made in the pitch black and wondered whether the walls shook because of dad's big voice or whether mum's back had hit the wall we shared or whether the bats were coming home to their cracks in the stones with bellies full of fireflies which I'd seen for the first time over the dead vineyard and asked dad a million questions about.]





Salvatore Divalco (**Blanket Problem**

Is it insurmountable?
We're talking about the same thing, right?
You opened your mouth
and it was like a harsh wind blowing.
All the people wearing hats
leaned in, holding them,
scrunching up their faces,
and wondering what it all meant.

Me, I'm guilty of the same thing:
listening without thinking.
It happens when individuals
who sound like ocean liners
barge into my space. Fear of open
water makes this all the more
uncomfortable for me—
why I drag this blanket around.

It keeps me warm, indeed,
and has so since I can remember.
But the memories embedded over
many years are difficult
to shake. No, I'd never
wash it, are you kidding me.
It's been my safety skin
since I was wearing napkins.

Faces convulse in passing,
eyes fixed on one thing.
Who said a big man can't depend?
We all depend, all need something
to backslap our way through
the bosks and swamps of life.
But leave me alone if you can't wrap
your head around a beautiful blanket.

Milton (**once the choirs have run out**

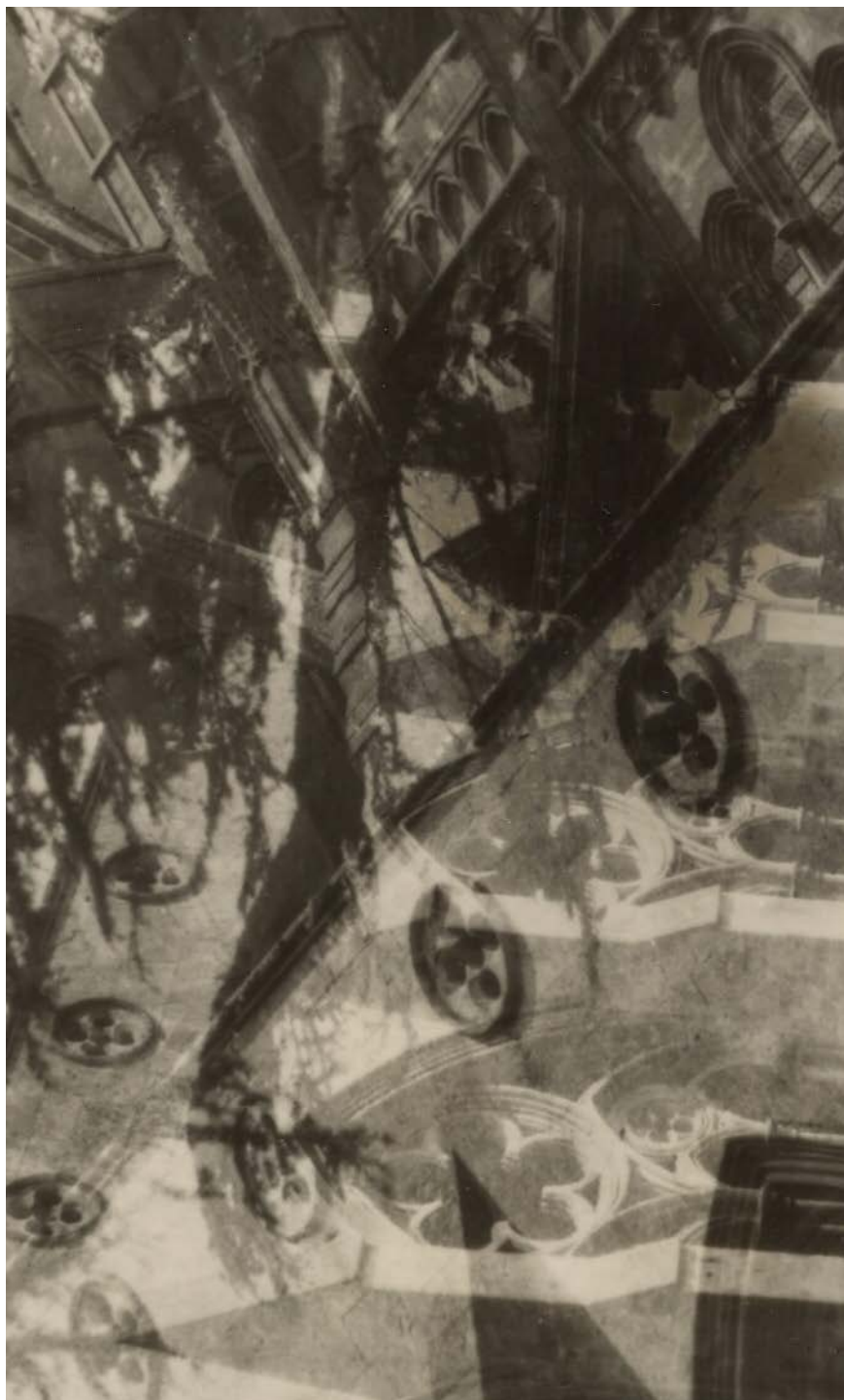
scene: a failure of brightness
stuck on cold walls, and we get in
in hope to come out. to all we ever
wanted - my head is ringing as it screams,
watch miles of road get run over, watch
chants get swallowed, watch the fires,
watch the billboard by the sidewalk
saying OUR GOD IS EVERYWHERE.

we're stuck underground.
we're stuck underwater.
put me down like a bad dog
- us, the dead end filling with rain,
baring teeth to their batons,
running empty, biting nothing,
il nostro amore e libertà, and i beg you:
i'm dead, this is a prayer, this is love, this is
mercy. repetition helps belief. i'm harmless.
i'm harmless.

watch me struggling with breath, watch me
struggling with motion, watch me go back
kneeling to the hole that spit me out, watch me
cry on the bedside in my father's wedding suit,
watch me wish i was lonelier, watch me plan
for disease, watch me watch the blockade,
watch the cops, charging, their helmets shine
like bruises, and everyone screams, everyone
wants to go, wants to stay, wants to burn the
world, to burn, they're burning.

my shoes, glued to asphalt. the billboard
now says GOD IS EVERYWHERE. GOD CAN
FORGIVE YOU. GOD DOES NOT CARE
WHAT YOU TASTE LIKE. GOD WILL EAT
YOU. GOD WILL EAT YOU.

(*cantava, ciascuna, tutto cantava*)
watch it all get devoured by the horizon.





Ivan de Monbrison (**the photograph is blurred**)

something has been slowly dying away
something is wrong inside

like reality rolled into a ball

the excoriation of leisure

I. dupont circle

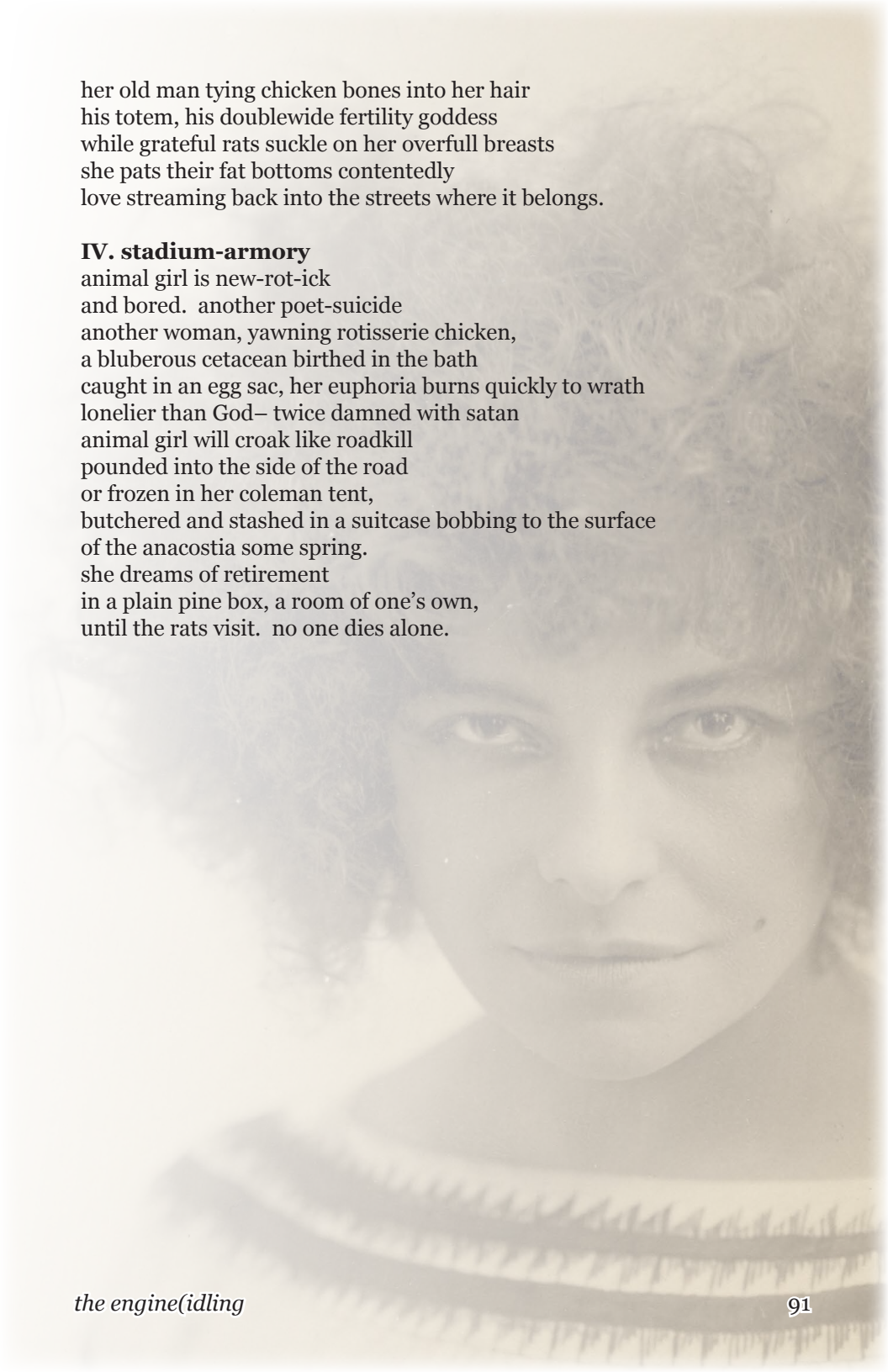
animal girl might live in a demon's head
she doesn't mind being a machination
so much as the endless epistemological dread
tearing through her boyfriend's mind. station-
airy, stuck, plucked, he doesn't have much to give
every thought can be untaught by doubt.
renounce this leaky pipe, his will to live,
renounce cartesian chains and get her out!
animal girl paints her nails blue as a bruise
soaks in a hot tub, shivers on ice,
checks passenger pigeon and palm pilot for news,
scrounges for company in the sewers,
ignores her churning stomach – I love you –
downs a shot and mumbles – if he only knew.

II. capitol south

animal girl confesses each week
others blab to a therapist or a priest
she screams at metro center or potomac yard,
chasing bankers and their credit cards
she confesses to her brother rat and sister crow,
receives absolution from a broken window
animal girl will eat shit if you ask her
die if you tell her. she'll gargle with nails,
mosaic her toes with broken glass
dancing barefoot in the alleyways.
animal girl worships the golden gods
worships the sewers, the bike lanes and bus stops
she slurps at the fountains, swims naked through the reflection pool
she bows to the obelisk penetrating the sky.

III. columbia heights

animal girl is a domestic goddess
she'll castrate you on her kitchen table
simmer your children into a stew and feed it to you.
sure, she can't peel a potato or burp a baby,
but she pops out puppies between train stops,
squirting afterbirth in the storm drain
to feed the dolphins, dripping fluids down the drain
an alley sleeper drenched in acid rain.
Papier-mâché'd in yesterdays post



her old man tying chicken bones into her hair
his totem, his doublewide fertility goddess
while grateful rats suckle on her overfull breasts
she pats their fat bottoms contentedly
love streaming back into the streets where it belongs.

IV. stadium-armory

animal girl is new-rot-ick
and bored. another poet-suicide
another woman, yawning rotisserie chicken,
a bluberous cetacean birthed in the bath
caught in an egg sac, her euphoria burns quickly to wrath
lonelier than God— twice damned with satan
animal girl will croak like roadkill
pounded into the side of the road
or frozen in her coleman tent,
butchered and stashed in a suitcase bobbing to the surface
of the anacostia some spring.
she dreams of retirement
in a plain pine box, a room of one's own,
until the rats visit. no one dies alone.



*Hanan Akbari (**Domination***

Let's play dodgeball. You stand in the middle.
My team will be behind
and in front. Let's have you
turning in circles while we pass it
between ourselves. Find yourself in the ball
you're avoiding. Consider its hollowness,
its opaque yet thin skin,
how the sun reflects on the same spot
as the ball spins toward you,
perfect in its symmetry. Remember
how it will deflate.
It wasn't carefully made or handled,
and you'll want to inject it
to give back its inherent beauty.
Stop moving. Try to catch it,
will you be able to knock out
all my team. Will it be easier
to keep the sphere for yourself,
and protect it from our hold.

Hanan Akbari (**Internal Gaze**

Let me wear a hat though I did my hair this morning.
Can I try again? There will be new air next morning.

I'll skip work again to look in the mirror,
Making different poses to compare in the morning.

There's a mother crying over her daughter's death,
Kneeling on her prayer mat before morning.

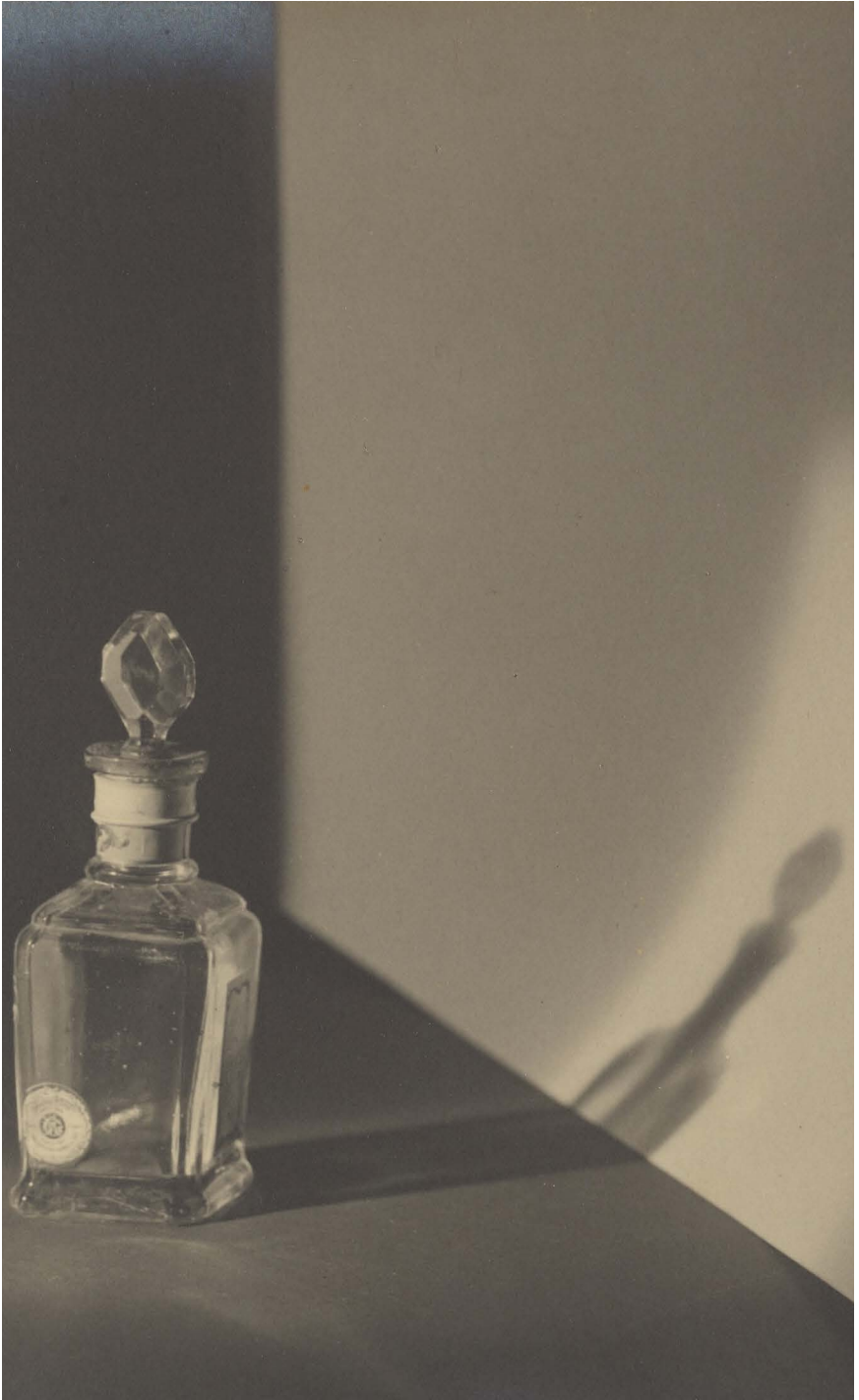
At midnight on a call with a friend I'll listen closely to
The rhythm of my snared speech, unrecognizable as mourning.

I will look at old pictures of myself, trying not to
Stare at the faces I don't know. It's morning:

The claw clip I bought last week will break in two
And I will care today. But in the morning

I'll have used up my nights staring at the ceiling,
Aware it is the future where I am mourning.





*Damon Hubbs (**Sleeping with Weapons***

after the Master Letters

I am a bloom in Amherst
& if you saw a bullet hit a bird
you'd know the bird is my heart
don't doubt my word I am shot

I am shot.
Oh did we offend your father
all day in spring & summer pressing flowers
leather-bound in our herbarium I am shot

with your slender spouts & the way you
put the belt around my life. You are so fond of violets
& their unsuspected splendors I am sleeping

with weapons
under a spare meter of Massachusetts sky
under slants of light stubbing the Day's Eye.

We disguise ourselves with littleness
our breath no time to straighten,
our sheets like ghost pipes, white as bones
elliptical with littleness we shoot

our sorest need we stick the bud
& tuck the feather
dropping down a bloom with weapons.

*Damon Hubbs (Self Portrait as That Weird Theater Girl Crying
at EPCOT*

My whole life is a dark room
-Lydia Deetz

I cry in eleven countries, patter songs and full showstoppers.
I cry havoc like a Florida sunset, a bleeding piece of earth.
I trip the dogs of war, one little spark and I am crying

my mother hides underground as I terror bomb Dresden.
My father counts the castles on his stoneware steins.
Life isn't a dark room, my brother says three times.

I solo Spaceship Earth in standard sad girl verse—chorus—verse.
On the coast of utopia the sharks and jets dress up to rumble.
I can't tell if that's Florence or Florence on the Elbe

dark reprise or sarcastic echo. 'I Want' (to give revenge her due)
every time I think of you in the lighting booth —I cry havoc
I cry "out, vile jelly." I cry in eleven countries, patter songs

and full showstoppers. In the toy playhouse anything goes
I think of you like dumbshow, under the arc lamps of a film
projector, sunbathing and sprocket holed.





Matt Thomas (**Tasseography**)

My old man would say, “knock on wood”
and I’d scoff, “age and superstition”
but now, rolled apart,
propped on an elbow
reading the streaks of brunette
in the drained cup of your hair, well,

no one tells you about the twilight
how important it is to seeing
the softness of being
between one thing and another, how

luck floats the dregs, penumbra,
light begged and teased
from the murk of promises and expectations;
cycling opaque bodies shadowing
our lover’s clarity now

affecting carelessness, gesturing,
catching the ash
in tea callused hands.

Matt Thomas (**A Romantic Poem**)

I braid myself into you every day,
flutter with you
in the loose hand of the wind,
in the cavalier hand of the wind,
the loop of us uncoiling
faster and faster until the crack
and that footfall fades
to where our love will go
when there's no one left to keep it
but the rope remembering
the lay of our habit
even while chaffing at the twist
reaching forever
toward the sonic boom.





Psycho Kanev (I am

I am the man lying comfortably in these lines

I am the one picking spider webs off the clockwork of the Universe

I am a person in front of the mirror smoking his pipe

clenched fist with dirty fingernails, that is who am I

snapping mouth singing soft lullabies that's who am I

I am a roaring lion playing with a ball of black yarn

broken beads dancing in the fairy tale, that is me

I am all

without it I am nothing.

he was a dear man.
as dear as any could get. glass tears
which shattered into the vase we kept under
his broken nose, shaped like half a heart. fast forward
forty days and he's still there, lying under the dangling chandelier
held by a taut string. mouth open, any sense of hope snuffed out.
whiskers
curl into his nostrils, where he breathed mechanically for twelve weeks
before the
final croak. he relinquished his body, one he used too mechanically for
his penetrable
age.
ineligible scribbles splayed out on the parchment at his cool desk. myths
of severity we
will never understand,
glued all over his crystalline chambers only for the dumb, for
he wrote ever-so-dearly.
much too dearly.
too dear for this world.





*Jason O'Toole (***Junkman***)*

Lack the knack
for creating aesthetic displays,
were I a shopkeeper
you'd not get the spa experience
nor describe my wares as adorable.

Might manage a junk shop
well enough.
In the market for a shoehorn,
gotta box full of em round here somewhere,
straight back past the airplane propeller.

Watch your head.

what we rant
on the slant
/ we lie on
the sly /
what we rant
on the slant
/ we lie on
the sly /
what we rant
on the slant
/ we lie on
the sly /
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on the slant
/ we lie on
the sly /
what we rant
on the slant

Contributors

Hanan Akbari is a poet and neuroscientist at Johns Hopkins University. She enjoys poetry that pushes reflection and spending calm days with her kitty Nuke.

Angela Arnold lives in Wales and is also an artist, a creative gardener and an environmental campaigner. Her poems have appeared in print magazines, anthologies and online, in the UK and elsewhere. First collection *In Between: 'inner landscapes' and relationships* (Stairwell Books, 2023). She enjoys her synaesthesia and language/s and is currently learning Welsh. Twitter @AngelaArnold777.

Kelly White Arnold is a mom, writer, teacher, and lover of yoga. Her work recently appeared in *Walter* and *Ink and Marrow*. When she's not scribbling in notebooks or wrangling teenagers, she's planning her next tattoo and daydreaming about traveling the world. Find her on social media @KArnoldTeaches.

brooklyn baggett (she/her) is a trans poet & artist living in New York City. she holds an MFA from Goddard College. her work has appeared in *Yellow Arrow Press*, *Samfiftyfour*, *Impossible Archetype*, *The Pitkin Review*, *Big Muddy*, *River Styx*, and *inbetween*. brooklyn's chapbook, *we cast shadows & other true stories*, is available from Bottlecap Press. she is founder and managing editor of *new words {press}* - a trans and gender-expansive poetry press.

Joshua Beatty is from the Wirral in North-West England. He completed an English Literature degree at Newcastle University, focusing on writing poetry, and is currently undertaking an MA in Poetry at Queen's University, Belfast. He is an editor of *The Apiary*, a student-led magazine at Queen's.

Jack B. Bedell is Professor of English and Coordinator of Creative Writing at Southeastern Louisiana University where he also edits *Louisiana Literature* and directs the *Louisiana Literature Press*. Jack's work has appeared in *HAD*, *Heavy Feather*, *Pidgeonholes*, *The Shore*, *Moist*, *Autofocus*, *EcoTheo*, *The Hopper*, *Terrain*, and other journals.

He's also had pieces included in *Best Microfiction* and *Best Spiritual Literature*. His latest collection is *Ghost Forest* (Mercer University Press, 2024). He served as Louisiana Poet Laureate 2017-2019.

Clara Burghlea is a Romanian-born poet and translator with an MFA in Poetry from Adelphi University, NY. Recipient of the Robert Muroff Poetry Award, her poems and translations appeared in *Ambit*, *Waxwing*, *The Cortland Review* and elsewhere. Her second poetry collection *Praise the Unburied* was published in 2021 with Chaffinch Press. She is the Review Editor of *Ezra*, *An Online Journal of Translation*.

David Capps is a philosophy professor and poet who lives in New Haven, CT. He is the author of four chapbooks: *Poems from the First Voyage* (The Nasiona Press, 2019), *A Non-Grecian Non-Urn* (Yavanika Press, 2019), *Colossi* (Kelsay Books, 2020), and *Wheatfield with a Reaper* (Akinoga Press, forthcoming). His latest work, *On the Great Duration of Life*, a riff on Seneca's *On the Shortness of Life*, is available from Schism Neuronics.

Francis de Lima is a Finnish-Brazilian poet and translator. They currently live in the UK, where they study Creative Writing and American Literature at Royal Holloway. They are interested in the intersections between class, ecology, mobility, and poetry.

Ivan de Monbrison is a bipolar French poet and artist living in Paris; born in 1969.

Salvatore Difalco writes from Toronto, Canada.

Thom Eichelberger-Young is an artist and caregiver living in Kansas City, Missouri. They founded *Blue Bag Press*, and will begin a PhD in Poetics this fall. Their first book, *BESPOKE* (published by Saint Andrews UP, 2019) can be ordered directly through Thom at thomyoung96@gmail.com. New work is available in the catalog to BRAHM's *Ars Poetica* exhibit, as well as *In Parentheses*, and forthcoming in *Mantis* and *Canary*.

Scott Ennis is a published poet/lyricist who has written more sonnets
the engine(idling)

than Shakespeare. Scott earned his BA in English Literature from Weber State University, Ogden, Utah. Scott was a paratrooper in the U.S. Army, and an endurance athlete who has completed the Boston Marathon and the Ironman Triathlon. Scott lives (and writes) with the effects of a TBI from a bicycle accident. Sonnettics (@sonnettics) is an anagram of Scott Ennis.

Louis Faber is a poet living with his wife and cat (who claims to be his editor) in Florida. His work has appeared widely in the U.S., Europe and Asia, including *Arena Magazine* (Australia), *Glimpse*, *South Carolina Review*, *Rattle*, *Pearl*, *Dreich* (Scotland), *EKL Review* (India), *Alchemy Stone* (U.K.), and *Flora Fiction*, *Defenestration*, *Constellations*, *Jimson Weed* and *Atlanta Review*, and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. You can find him at <https://anoldwriter.com>.

One of **Sandy Feinstein**'s earliest poems appeared in the journal *Slant* (1992). More recently, 30 years later, her poetry appears in *Willows Wept*, *Pivot*, *Seems*, *The Humanities Review*, among others. Her chapbook, *Swimming to Syria*, was published by Penumbra Press in 2021.

Mike Ferguson is an American permanently residing in the UK. Recent poetry publications are *Drawing on Previous Learning* (Wrecking Ball Press, 2021), *Drinking Watermelon Whiskey* (Red Ceilings Press, 2023) and *concrete in the parallelogram* (Gazebo Gravy Press, 2023).

John Grey is an Australian poet, US resident, recently published in *New World Writing*, *North Dakota Quarterly* and *Lost Pilots*. Latest books: *Between Two Fires*, *Covert* and *Memory Outside The Head* are available through Amazon. Work upcoming in *California Quarterly*, *Seventh Quarry*, *La Presa* and *Doubly Mad*.

Damon Hubbs writes poems about Thulsa Doom, Italo disco & girls who cry at airports. He's the author of two chapbooks (most recently *Coin Doors & Empires*, from Alien Buddha Press). Recent work appears/is forthcoming in *Midsummer Dream House*, *Red Ogre Review*, *Broken Antler Magazine*, *Dreich*, *Voidspace*, & elsewhere. Twitter: @damon_hubbs.

Peycho Kanev is the author of 12 poetry collections and three chapbooks, published in the USA and Europe. His poems have appeared in many literary magazines, such as: *Rattle*, *Poetry Quarterly*, *Evergreen Review*, *Front Porch Review*, *Hawaii Review*, *Barrow Street*, *Sheepshead Review*, *Off the Coast*, *The Adirondack Review*, *Sierra Nevada Review*, *The Cleveland Review* and many others. His new book of poetry titled *A Fake Memoir* was published in 2022 by Cyberwit press.

BEE LB is an array of letters, bound to impulse; a writer creating delicate connections. they have called any number of places home; currently, a single yellow wall in Michigan. they have been published in *FOLIO*, *Figure 1*, *The Offing*, and *Harpur Palate*, among others. their portfolio can be found at <http://twinbrights.carrd.co> and they can be found on ig @twinbrights.

Native New Yorker **LindaAnn LoSchiavo**, a four time nominee for The Pushcart Prize, was also nominated for Best of the Net, Balcones Poetry Prize, an Ippy, a Firecracker Award, the Rhysling Award, and Dwarf Stars. She is a member of British Fantasy Society, HWA, SFPA, and The Dramatists Guild. Titles for 2022: *Women Who Were Warned* (Cerasus Poetry) and *Messengers of the Macabre: Hallowe'en Poems* (Audience Askew). 2023: *Apprenticed to the Night* (UniVerse Press), *Felones de Se: Poems about Suicide* (Ukiyoto Publishing), and *Vampire Ventures* (Alien Buddha Press). Forthcoming in 2024: *Cancer Courts My Mother* (Penumbra / Stanislaus State College) and *Always Haunted: Hallowe'en Poems* (Wild Ink Publishing).

Ariadne Alexis Macquarie (pronouns: They/She) is a self-described “Appalachian expat” from Western North Carolina living in Flagstaff, Arizona. While not writing, you can find her backpacking, bouldering, or drinking frightening amounts of espresso. They are a 2023 graduate of Roanoke College. She is the founder and editor-in-chief of *On Gaia Literary Magazine*, and holds the position of Social Media Manager for the *American Youth Literary Journal*. Her poetry can be found in *Black Fox Literary Magazine*, *The Bitchin' Kitsch*, and elsewhere. You can find them on Instagram @ari.macquarie and on YouTube @fancyfauninc.

Stephen Mead is a retired Civil Servant, having worked two decades for three state agencies. Before that his more personally fulfilling career was fifteen years in healthcare. Throughout all these day jobs he was able *the engine(idling)*

to find time for writing poetry/essays and creating art. Occasionally he even got paid for this work. Currently he is resident artist/curator for *The Chroma Museum*, artistic renderings of LGBTQI historical figures, organizations and allies predominantly before Stonewall (<https://thestephenmeadchromamuseum.weebly.com/>).

Milton is an Italian poet and storyteller. He's currently a student as well as deeply involved in her city's queer and transfeminist radical movements. In his poems, he likes to explore gender, queerness and the feeling of shame, and greatly enjoys using arson as a metaphor.

Deborah Y. Moon is Korean-American high school student and writer residing in Los Angeles, California. Her writing explores themes of culture, society, emotions, and history, taking inspiration from authors such as Yi Sang and R.F. Kuang. During her leisure hours, you'll most likely find her reading comfortably at a library or ordering a large Americano at a local coffee shop.

Devon Neal (he/him) is a Kentucky-based poet whose work has appeared in many publications, including *HAD*, *Livina Press*, *The Storms*, and *The Bombay Lit Mag*, and has been nominated for Best of the Net. He currently lives in Bardstown, KY with his wife and three children.

Jason O'Toole is the Poet Laureate of North Andover, the co-founder of the Anne Bradstreet Poetry Contest, and the author of two collections and one chapbook of poetry, with a new collection, *The Strange Misgivings of the Sadly Gifted*, coming out in 2024 from DiWulf Publishing House. He is a hospital risk manager north of Boston and Treasurer of Independent Living Resource Center – San Francisco, CA.

Thomas Rions-Maehren is a bilingual poet, novelist, and chemist who explores the dark places of human experience with humor, science, and (at times) tranquility and wisdom. His scientific research has been published in *ACS Nano*, and examples of his Spanish-language prose can be found in his published short stories and in his novel *En las Manos de Satanás* (Ápeiron Ediciones, 2022). More of his poetry in both languages can be found in a number of journals, such as *The Elevation* and *Pensive*, at his blog (tommaehrenpoetry.blogspot.com), and at his website (thomasrionsmaehren.com). He is on X and Instagram @MaehrenTom.

Brad Rose was born and raised in Los Angeles, and lives in Boston. He is the author of five collections of poetry and flash fiction: *Lucky Animals*; *No. Wait. I Can Explain*; *Pink X-Ray*; *de/tonations*; and *Momentary Turbulence*. His poetry collection *WordInEdgeWise*, is forthcoming. Eight times nominated for a Pushcart Prize, and three times nominated for the Best of the Net Anthology, Brad's poetry and fiction have appeared in, *The American Journal of Poetry*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Baltimore Review*, *New York Quarterly*, *Lunch Ticket*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Clockhouse*, *Folio*, *Best Microfiction* (2019), *Right Hand Pointing*, and other journals and anthologies. His website is www.bradrosepoetry.com. His blog is <https://bradrosepoetry.com/blog/>.

Anne Lovering Rounds is an associate professor of English at Hostos Community College, a campus of the City University of New York located in the South Bronx. She is the author of three books of poetry: a debut collection, *Variations in an Emergency*, which received Ravenna Press' Cathlamet Prize for Poetry in 2014; *Little Double Elegy for All of You* (Ravenna, 2021); and *Clearing the Stage* (Bottlecap, 2023). Her work has appeared in the *College English Association Critic*, *Soundings*, and *Journal of Beat Studies*, among other journals.

Kelly R. Samuels is the author of the full-length collection *All the Time in the World* (Kelsay Books) and four chapbooks: *To Marie Antoinette, from*; *Words Some of Us Rarely Use*; *Talking to Alice*; and *Zeena/Zenobia Speaks*. Her second full-length collection, *Oblivescence*, is forthcoming from Red Sweater Press in 2024. She is a Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net nominee with work appearing in *The Massachusetts Review*, *Sixth Finch* and *RHINO*.

Brandon Shane is a poet, born in Yokosuka, Japan. You can see his work in the *Berlin Literary Review*, *Acropolis Journal*, *Grim & Gilded*, *Sophon Lit*, *Marbled Sigh*, *Verdant Journal*, *Heimat Review*, among others. He would later graduate from Cal State Long Beach. Find him on Twitter @Ruishanewrites.

Susan Shea is a retired school psychologist who was raised in New York City, and now lives in a forest in Pennsylvania. Since third grade, she has been a poet. In the mid 1990's, she wrote poetry in her spare time, and had some poems accepted in *Pudding*, *Plainsongs*, *The Pegasus Review*, *the engine(idling)*

and others. While working with challenged children and families, Susan's hobbies had to be easy on her mind and heart, so she made quilts, jewelry, and rock sculptures, and stayed away from writing. Now, she is all in as a poet, and thrilled to wake up every morning knowing she can write about anything the world offers. Since returning to writing poetry this year, her poems have been accepted in a more than forty publications, including *Across the Margin*, *Feminine Collective*, *Ekstasis*, *Persimmon Tree Literary Magazine*, *Military Experience and the Arts*, *Vita Poetica*, *The Avalon Literary Review*, and others, as well as three anthologies.

Richelle Lee Slota (formerly known as Richard) writes poetry, novels, and plays. Her poetry chapbook is *Famous Michael*; her novel, *Stray Son*. She lives in San Francisco. Her poems have appeared in *Yellow Silk*, *Caveat Lector*, *Quercus*, *Rogue Agent*, *Pratik*, *Blue Bird Anthology*, and *Blue Buildings*. She serves as a Meter Keeper, teaching meter to other women in Annie Finch's online *Poetry Witch Community*.

Sophia Jamali Soufi was born in Rasht, Iran. She is 22 years old, a student of architecture. Since childhood, she was very interested in writing poetry and reading books. Her first book titled *Sophia's memoirs* was published last year and her second book will be published this year. Her poems have been translated into English, Portuguese, French, Spanish, Turkish, German and published in many literary magazines and websites.

Matt Thomas is a smallholder farmer, engineer, and Pushcart nominated poet. His work has appeared recently in *Avalon Literary Review*, *Hiram Review*, and *Bear Paw Arts Journal*. *Disappearing by the Math*, a full-length collection, will be published by Silver Bow in February of 2024. He lives with his family in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia.

Phil Vas' work has appeared or is forthcoming in such places as *Ludlow Street*, *Somewhat*, *Zygote*, *Letter X*, *Cherry Bleeds* and *Ginosko Literary Journal*. He has published two books: *Parish* and *The Body of the Father: Art, Stories, Poems*. Phil Vas is from Brooklyn, New York.

Jason Visconti has attended both group and private poetry workshops. He first discovered his love for poetry after losing his mother at a young

age and needing a way to express himself. His work has appeared in various journals, including *Blazevox*, *Valley Voices*, and *The American Journal of Poetry*.

Shannon Wallace is an artist, writer and independent scholar. She is an American-Canadian with roots on the East Coast. She received a BA in English and Art from the University of Toronto in 2022. She has recently had her poetry/art published online in *The 5-7-5 Journal*, *#Ranger*, *The TypeScript Journal*, *Slate*, *Bombuss Press*, *Technophilia: A Transhumanist Zine*, *STATIC ZINE*, and in *Curated by Covid: A Digital Gallery*. She has had poems featured in *Florida Roots Press's* recent anthology *Coming of Age in Florida*. Her artwork has been shown at Rochester Contemporary Art Center, University of Western, Visual Arts Mississauga, Joshua Creek Heritage Art Centre, and Gallery 1313.

Jessica Wills weaves writing in the margins of her 9-to-5 grind. Her poems appear in *Ekstasis* and *Free the Verse Magazine*. Follow her writing on X and Substack @stressicawills.

Dorian Winter is an artist, writer, and modern-day dandy. His art & poetry have been published in *Pelican Magazine*, *The Malu Zine*, *Echo Literary Magazine* (and others), with forthcoming work in *Outlander Magazine*. He is the founder and editor-in-chief of *Antler Velvet Arts Magazine*. You can find him sipping on an Old Fashioned at a jazz bar, or more conveniently at dorianwinter.com.

Donald Zirilli (zirealism.com) is the Poetry Adjudicator for the New Jersey Teen Arts Festival. He edited the *Rutherford Red Wheelbarrow* and *Now Culture* (nowculture.com). His poetry has been published in over 40 periodicals and anthologies and was nominated for a Pushcart, a Forward Prize and Best of the Net, and he was a finalist for the James Tate Prize. His chapbook, *Heaven's Not for You*, was published in 2018 by Kelsay Books.

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Anonymous, Design for Three Chairs with Slanted Backs, Green, Yellow and Blue Upholstery, early 19th century.

Eugène Atget, Boulevard de Strasbourg, Corsets, c. 1912.

Eugène Atget, St. Étienne du Mont, rue de la Montagne Sainte Geneviève (St. Etienne du Mont, Montagne Sainte Geneviève Street), 1898.

Charles Aubry, Untitled (A Study of Leaves), 1864.

Edouard Baldus, [Design by Étienne Delaune], 1866.

Edouard Baldus, [Design for Key Holes by Androuet du Cerceau], 1866.

Fred Becker, Portrait, 1935-43.

Adolphe Braun, Floral and Berry Wreath, 1855.

Rodolphe Bresdin, Branches, 1800s.

Francis Bruguière, [English Cathedral Abstraction], 1931.

Luigi Conconi, The Contemplative Life (Vita contemplativa), c. 1883.

Louis Darget, Le Po[illeg] des Baigneurs, July 6, 1897.

Baron Adolf de Meyer, Glass and Shadows, 1912.

Walker Evans, Window Display, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 1935.

Claude-Marie Ferrier (Attributed to), Disc of Flint Glass, 1851.

Louis Fleckenstein, [Couple Walking with Dog], 1907-43.

Charnaux Frères & Cie., Grindelwald. Grotte de Glace, about 1880-1890.

Jaromir Funke, [Abstract Composition with Egg Beaters], about 1928-1929.

Jaromir Funke [Composition with Perfume Bottles], about 1923.

Jaromir Funke, [Still Life], about 1929-1930.

Jaromír Funke, [Still Life with Starfish and Conch Shell (Zátisí s hvezdici)], about 1928-1929.

Arnold Genthe, Window and Stairway of the Old Ursuline Convent, New Orleans, about 1920-1926.

Walter Gramatté, Eavesdropping, 1919-1920.

Walter Gramatté, Gloomy Face, Self-portrait (Dunkles Gesicht, Selbstporträt), 1922.

Walter Gramatté, The Fall into Infinity, 1918.

Charles-Victor Hugo with Auguste Vacquerie, Auguste Vacquerie at a Window, Marine Terrace, c. 1853.

Arthur F. Kales, The Urn, about 1917.

Fernand Khnopff, Femme accoudé à une table, les mains devant le visage, about 1902.

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Fanny Wocke, 1916.

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Seehorn, 1919.

Günther Krampf, [Woman in front of window], 1919.

H. A. Lawrence and C. Ray Woods, [Solar Eclipse from Caroline Island], May 6, 1883.

Alphonse Legros, Rope-yards, 1923.

James McNeill Whistler, The Kitchen, 1858.

Tina Modotti, Open Doors, Mexico City, 1925.

R. Moreau, Sitter Louie Fuller, 1900s.

Paul Nadar, [Mile Polaire], about 1910.

Alfredo Noack, Vico del Duca, Genova, about 1861–1895.

Kumezu Ota, The Ripple, about 1933.

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Odilon Redon, Lumiere (Light), 1893.

Odilon Redon, Couverture-Frontispice, 1890.

Alfred Stieglitz, Dorothy True, 1919.

Alfred Stieglitz, Rebecca Strand, 1922.

Thomas Sutton, Tower Struck by Lightning, Saint-Ouen Bay, 1854.

William Henry Fox Talbot, [Dandelion Seeds], 1858 or later.

Stephen Thompson, Gorge and Source of the Hot Springs, 1866.

Doris Ulmann, [Fisherman in Doorway of Dock-House], 1916.

Doris Ulmann, Ruth Page Performing with Masks, about 1920-1930.

Unknown, Hexagonal Prism of Emerald from Peru, 1850s.

Unknown, Lover's Eyes, ca. 1840.

Unknown, [Unidentified man in costume with back to camera, going through side of a curtain], 1870-1875.

Unknown, Worth Going For, Maine, 1880s.

Paul Wolff, [Power lines], 1927-1940.

Shibata Zeshin, Egrets and Crows, late 19th century.

