



Coe Review

Volume 40, Number 1

Poetry Issue

Fall 2009

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Coe Review

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Tim Staley

Cracker Ceremony

Repeat after me:

I do not want to remain a child forever.
Today is the day I become an adult.

I understand once I graduate I will no longer
receive Special Education services

for my Behavior and/or Emotional Disorder.
I promise to act like an adult in Mr. Staley's class.

Mr. Staley will help me become an adult
as one day I may be his neighbor.

The cracker I hold in my hand
is a symbol for my life.

Break the cracker in half

Silently, in your head, repeat after me:

In breaking the cracker in half
I am breaking from my childhood.

I am an adult so I can tell the crumbs
on the desk and floor will have to be vacuumed.

If Cracker Ceremony makes my eyes water,
Mr. Staley won't count it as crying.

Dead pigeons and living weeds are just as
pressing when they happen on your property.

The primary ingredient, unleavened flour,
rose from the dust like everyone else.

I pledge allegiance to the mindset of cut grass
completely through with who wounded who.

Name _____ Date _____

Charles Springer

Breaking the News

Chet's on Ativan
for everyday he knows today
could be the one,
tonight right after Letterman,
beer number seven.
It's not so good to mix elixirs — lager and lorazepam, then both hands
always full or always empty's not good either
as he slowly gets the feeling
back in his toes, jumps up
off the couch to join
the pigtailed Prozac popper
polkaing down the country lane of commercial breaks,
clover and Holsteins on both sides feeding each other,
Chet, clueless
why nothing out here smells like shit
or ever has to.

Cat Dixon

Bearded Swimmer

Helge Meeuw at the 2008 German Swimming Championships in Berlin made a new European record in the 100 meter backstroke. At the men's relay in the 2008 Olympics in Beijing he placed last in a race. The commentators said of his bearded face:

Commentator 1: *Why wouldn't he shave that?*

Commentator 2: *Why risk it?*

Commentator 1: *That's crazy.*

Maybe he wanted to be different:
every competitor hairless,
tiny goggles suctioned to their faces,
flattened, indented chests,
long bodies, speedy eels,
all identical fighting upstream
to the undeniable.

Maybe his sweetheart, Helene, told
him the beard improved
his strength, a Samsonite athlete.
Suddenly his razor and shaving
gel vanished. She swore on
her father's grave she hadn't
done it; convinced him
of her reasoning.

Or he'd been swallowed by that
great, gray whale. Inside the hollow
mouth, he swam from its teeth
to its tongue, back and forth
for years, a bowled goldfish,
and he now knew
escape was unattainable.

Jason Bradford

Analyzing Throat Sensations

Occasionally, on hot, humid days like today, except, not today, I feel like I have a rubber cork lodged in the opening of my lungs, which is ironic because lungs do resemble wine bottles, only slimy and squishy. You think it would hurt too, but no. It's more like a feather tickling the throat, but that's not it, either. It's that sensation after eating extra crispy bacon, or oatmeal cookies, or sometimes dry hamburger and forget to wash it down with an ice-cold Pepsi Product. Except, it's gentler than that, though just as annoying. Why the fuck do they say tickling anyway? No, this is like having a damp cotton ball lodged behind your Adam's apple, on one side, left or right depending on perspective. It's like having a perception without the correct terminology to express the notion. Like realizing you locked your keys in the car at home immediately after doing so. You're not going anywhere, but you feel like you should have your car keys available for some MacGyver maneuver, like opening the mail. Only for me, a person with a weak immune system and degenerating muscles, keys are useless and a rubber cork in the esophagus is terrifying, potentially signaling an oncoming respiratory infection, the leading cause of death for Muscular Dystrophy patients... That or it could be a frog I swallowed earlier.

Suzanne Scarfone

Box of Disquiet

truth be told
part of me has lived
in this box of disquiet
for years and years
let's see
one still summer's day
two of my teeth came out
baby teeth
plop plop
ripe pears
falling from my mouth
I gasped and flushed
and poked my finger in the
wet
gum
and knew I wanted
to plant them
in the backyard garden
behind the wild raspberries
under the clumps
of bee balm
and scary weeds
I had on a pale yellow organza
dress with buttons up the back
and sprigs of apple blossoms
pink and green
sprinkled on my chest
and a pine velvet ribbon
tied at my waist
and my feet were
round and bare
I pushed
and pushed on the
heavy porch door
until it opened
my arms and legs
falling into the air

rushing through prickly grass
and cat's pee and
other bits of
smelly life
I flopped on the ground
digging
with my knuckles
a dirt home
for my teeth
and then shoved them
in a walnut
cracked open and
painted gold
and pressed it into the dirt
and quickly covered it up
soon I was called in to a
lunch of milk
and beef and
beans
the house was quiet
and strange
I washed my hands and
my feet
and sat at the table
lighter and sadder
and
thought
outside that window
in a tiny
treasure house
there's a
a part of me
stuck
in the ground

Teresa Breeden

Elevator Music

After Bosselaar

I hate political correctness. Hate it with the bright
passion one feels when finally and comprehensively

driven round the bend, when blood, tongue, teeth
and throat throb at once in the perfect madness of hating.

There's pleasure in this, a sort of ecstasy. My husband
tries to convince me my rant is evasive—

a passive-aggressive response to societal deceit,
expectations I can neither control nor achieve.

He hates my hatred, which I secretly enjoy
as I press my body deeper into the wallow.

I detest onions, lawnmowers, manufactured floral scents —
I like hating them. I abhor inspirational-quote books, existentialism,

lace curtains. I derive serenity from loathing, from the easy passion of looking
away. There is no war, no recession, no treacherous

bank or politician, no neighbors or friends falling
from the edge into whatever lies below. Foreclosure is not

on the high school vocabulary list. The long tunnel of hatred becomes my tree-
lined boulevard, my white picket fence (which I also hate)—

Enchanted with hating, I can sleep through the night, manage affection, keep a
straight face from canting towards sorrow.

Ann Struthers

Vivian in Vino Veritas

A pariah to his neighbors,
Uncle Ken loved dandelions, cultivated them
in his yard in Iowa Falls, plucked the blossoms
at midday when their rays had spread fully open.
Then after his alchemy turned gold into wine,
he poured it into old bottles he had scrubbed,
then laid them lovingly on their sides in his cellar.
A friend gave him an antique key
that said “in vino veritas,” and he asked me
what it meant. He always wanted to give me
several bottles, although I tried to decline the syrupy brew.
But he insisted, so there was no way to leave them behind.
I was going to empty them down the drain,
but Vivian, who was 84, was more practical.
“We’ll cut it with sour lemon,”
she said, and we sat on her patio
under the oak tree where the wrens had a nest
and talked about all the relatives.

Ann Struthers

Against Ornamentation

Notice how the old poets go for the jugular,
direct to the major artery, no ornamenting around
the obvious or making it prettier. Blake says,
“O rose, thou art sick!” And Shakespeare declares,
“Love is not love /Which alters when it alteration finds...”
Milton is adamant, “Hell, her numbers full,
Thenceforth shall be forever shut.” They don’t mince
or qualify.

They learned, of course, from the old prophets.
Jesus said, “Consider the lilies of the field.”
No glorious, silent trumpets, no heralds of wild, unbound beauty,
no timorous bells wafting in the sweet Palestinian breeze.
only, “Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed as such as these.”

It takes a long time for you
to finally shut the door on baroque embellishments,
to leave the country of adjectives.
It takes a long time to find your way back to the trunk
stripped of all its branches, leaves and bark,
back to the place where you can go no further,
the heartwood.

Kristine Ong Muslim

Falling

You will not see the people gawking
thirty-seven stories down.
But you can watch the flicker
of gentle lights, the church steeple
pointing its sole finger in the opposite
direction of your fall, the hush of curtains
blowing out of the open windows.
You will notice that the side of the building
has been streamlined to keep its insides
from spilling on the sidewalks.
Your whole body is your center of gravity.
You are neither heavy nor light.
A distraction of happiness, a memory perhaps
makes you look away from the ground.
You imagine strolling
on the street below, that ground
where a burned out streetlight stands
between you and the night
and turning your back
only to hear it rustle as you walk away.

Ethan Conner

potatoes

i guess my favorite fruit is kiwi
not because of it's taste
but because when you see something
round and brown
you'd never guess it'd be
green inside

not white or yellow
there is nothing too special
about Idaho anyway

Nebraska has the same problem
minus tornadoes and ditch weed
five minutes in Omaha
i start praying for
a big ol' twister to take me
anywhere

maybe time moves
too slow for me
especially in Iowa
where like corn, i'm
going to detassle the hair
straight out of my head
if I don't get my
annual trip to Indianapolis

Hayley Berkshire

I Love You

I love	you
a simple	text
Wednesday morning	at 7:31
Im half asleep	but
I want	to reply
something	lovingly
my dream	is almost
my reality	impossible
and my fantasy: me	your
in-the-future	wife
next to you. I	will
(one day)	spill
will say out loud	our secret
I love you	too

Paul Hostovsky

God, Dan

God, Dan

I was a junior and Dan was a senior drug addict in the school of arts and sciences. Neil Young was a prolific songwriter with no allegiances, except for the music. I had never done cocaine before, so while he was cutting it on the square mirror on top of the dresser, I put on a record, and asked him what kind of shape I would be in for class at two o'clock. He said it was an aphrodisiac, so go figure. He was cutting class himself and meeting his girlfriend at one-thirty, because all it made him want to do was fuck. I didn't have a girlfriend. I had a comparative religion class at two o'clock, and now I was thinking twice about getting high before God and man. But Dan was in a hurry, and he handed me the rolled-up twenty which I knew enough to stick inside my nose and aim at the nearest cloud-row reflected in the square lake on top of the dresser—and sniff vigorously. Then Dan was saying something about making love as he left the room, and Neil was saying something about needing someone to love him the whole day through, and I was alone with God and no one to talk to about God, when the coke kicked in. Thank God for Dan, who came back looking for his twenty. "I don't think God created the world," I said to him as he scooped up the bill and licked the top of the dresser with his tongue, as an afterthought. "In fact, I doubt He even knows we're here." "Thank God for that," said Dan, "because all I want to do in the world is snort cocaine and rub my cock." I loved his honesty. I told him I would try to weave it into my paper on Abraham. "You need to get laid, man," said Dan. "Old man, take a look at my life," said Neil, as I sat down at the typewriter and began: "Here am I," said Abraham to God." "I'm out of here," said Dan.

Ralph Burns

Flies

They don't see you coming with the TV Guide.
 Their compound eyes scan past the edges.
Makes two, says Candace, whose hair
 corkscrews over her ears. Whosoever
opens the door lets in flies. They sit
 on glass and wait like a self portrait
of the outside — whosoever walks through
 dendritic snow; who calls and calls
from a cell; who flies past people
 on a broom, when a wood floor rocks
the moon, when time clicks heels;
 whosoever holds a word back;
lives life as if it were a death; walks
 through this house, this waiting presence.

Stephen Kessler

In the Barking Park

In the barking park
where the city's dogs
socialize off leash sniffing each other's butts
and tangled strips of toilet paper
fly like flags from lampposts
and children run on summer's next-to-last day,
fat little finches hop and flit
to the rhythm of bicycle bells
and rusty ships float anchored on the river
like tired artifacts of industry
while sporty motorboats speed past celebrating the weekend
whose rain has blown inland
and whose wind shoves fall's first leaves along the paved walks
in a preview of the coming decline.

Mine is more plain,
the weight of what I bear
ever more evident with age
and its ailments I must not mention,
but you can imagine,
just multiply yours by the number of years
and subtract what's left,
a sum equal to the best pleasures
you can remember, thin but fine,
sweet as a girl's face
whose future is all in front
but also fragile, a long story
nobody knows, not even her weeping mom
who grieves with a strange gratitude
for what vanished before she understood what it was.
When someone records such things—
photographers, oral historians, those who wrote letters
in the old days before instantaneity
made everything ephemeral,
all those eccentric sentimentalists
who resisted writing their memoirs yet noted
what passed as it happened—
some trace almost remains,

less than a monument but slightly more
than a twig snapped twice
by the quiet wheels of a bike.

Stephen Kessler

Scratch Pegasus

Scratch Pegasus. Last week in a workout
the exercise boy—a girl from the North Bay
who dropped out of school to ride poetry—
heard under the colt's hoofbeats

a rhythm that didn't scan, that seemed
to lift off the track at odd intervals
and soar into the morning light
for long caesuras

between hitting the turf with a rumbling report
that seemed to sound for its own sake instead of speed—
the horse, she said, was spooked
but in a way she'd never felt before

under her boots, under her floating
butt in the saddle which had the feeling
of flying just as the sun was climbing
the sky behind the backstretch and the scent

of roses out of nowhere
knocked her off center and she fell,
but the horse kept rising—
now she could see him sailing above the stables

as his trainer dropped the stopwatch
and drew his cellphone to dial 911
while the beautiful animal cleared the hills
and banked downtown as if drawn by the smell

of dusty books in some seconhand store
where unpublished poets browse in hopeful despair,
looking for lines that will take flight
out of an otherwise ordinary page

and singe their lips with the grace of revelation
that transcends speed or any race
to succeed. Scratch Pegasus.
He wins by disappearing into the sky.

Lyn Lifshin

Sleeping With Lorca

It's not true, he never chose women.
I ought to know. It was Grenada and
the sun falling behind the Alhambra was
flaming lava. I could say I was
too but some things should be left unsaid.
But I remember his fingers on the buttons
at the back of my neck, my skin burned
as he fumbled with rhinestones and pearls.
I want you breathed into my neck though
perhaps he was whispering *Green,*
green I want you green. How little he
needed to impress me with his poems.
One English term paper with them and I
was naked, taken. It wouldn't matter if
he had a pot belly or stank of garlic.
My jeans were a puddle around my knees.
I was the gored bull, hypnotized
by moves I'd only imagined but never
believed would enter me. There's
more you might coax me to say but
for enough I can still smell the
green wind, that 5 o'clock in the afternoon
that would never be another time

Linda Back McKay

How to Approach Visual Poetry

Somebody hunkers
in front of a fireplace.
Somebody else
is knitting a sweater.
Nobody is listening.
Not to the sheep bells,
not to the blaring
angle of geese.
Not even to the fire's
crick and crackle.
Certainly not
to each other.
In the book somebody
is reading, the letters
line up on the page
until it is shaken
and the words fall
into puddles of consonants
and vowels.
No trowel is handed
over to mop up
the mess. I guess
it is acceptable,
the letters
congealed on the floor.
Then somebody throws
a bucket of paint
into the mix
and walks through it.
Footprints in text
and texture. Stay
with me and follow
this through.
Patience is required,
as is appetite,
generosity and a great
deal of vision.

Darrell Epp

Attention Historians!

attention tenured historians,
the public wearies of your
improbable power fantasies
and dreary morality plays.

skip the mongol invasions
and hutterite geneologies
and find room in your
textbooks for the following:

the first cigarette, the last
hotel room, dorothee's
footprints in the snow,
her favourite pyjamas,

the lost toys of kindergarten,
the ideal that begat the real,
the things that don't change,
and the words for them.

R. D. Drexler

Cytology

I wonder if in the end
We are simply talked to death -
Our minds filled like septic tanks
With comments about our lawn,
Our neighbors, life on TV,

Our new snow tires, our I-pod,
How much a Caribbean
Cruise costs, whether to buy brats
Or ribs for the tailgater,
& what about the weather?

It is as if our cells can't
Process the shit they take in.
They fill until synapses
Seize up & our systems
Shut down. We poison ourselves.

If our minds were gated
& the security guard
We retained as gatekeeper
Did not doze off when night fell
& stood up to the banshees,

The lawn service always did
Its job, the automatic
Sprinkler system popped out of
The grass at three am sharp,
Someone came to kill the coons,

Then we could lean back against
Our cerebral lobes & watch
The football game we'd tivo'd
Last week & drink Budweiser
Lime, eat micro-waved pizza

Until it was as if we'd
Security cam'd ourselves -
Our life repeated again
& again like a looped
Video on a blurred screen.

Amorak Huey

Ringo

Ed Sullivan Theater, 1964

I wanted to be a singing cowboy, you know.
Got chills when Gene Autry threw his leg over the saddle horn
and sang: *South of the border, down Mexico way...*
I walked tough, talked tougher, carried a razor blade

behind the lapel of my Teddyboy suit in case I got grabbed.
That was before drums. Before I fell in love.
Before anyone chanted *Ringo never, Pete forever*
but they kept me anyhow, before America, before New York City

reached up its tentacles to pull us in and dropped me here,
sticks like hammers in my hand, mates shadowy
ahead, ready for the lights. From this platform
I see everything: where we are, where we're going,

even that someday it will end. It's their band, but they need me
to keep alive the time: the perfect imperfect cadence of blood.

Brian Daldorph

The Good Life

I lit another cigarette.
Couldn't think of anything else to do.
Juliet stopped eating carrots to say,
"That stuff will kill you."
It was tough trying to live
with a woman that good.

Last I heard she was saving India
and Africa was next.
I wrote her a letter that said
I'd changed my ways,
that I'd like to join her and save
some continent too,
how about Australia?
Didn't send it.
Didn't do much of anything after she left.
Smoked some cigarettes.
Smoking, I was good at that.

William O. Burns

My Father's Voice

My father's voice sounds
Like a car without a muffler.
He is reading me poems,
Poems about me.

I think about when I was ten years old,
When at 11:00 one night,
I stood at the edge of our diving board,
Waiting for him to request a dive.
The air was chilly,
And the board was clammy
From the night's rain.

My father lifted his balled fists
And rolled them together
Above his head,
Signaling that I should do a back flip.

Bob and Betty,
Our backyard bats
Never touched water.
They swooped
In their own echo.

Oak pollen drooped from telephone wire,
Hiding a cocoon.
A cocoon is a sack full of question marks,
I thought as my father's voice urged
Me to jump.

William O. Burns

Aardvark

I remember my grandfather
With his red robe,
Creased pajamas underneath,
Budweiser in a Texas cooler.

He would ask me to spell aardvark
Even when he wasn't remembering things so well.

"How the hell did you know
How to spell aardvark?"

"You told me!"
We were in the kitchen.
It was hot.
Grandma was baking
Pecan pie.

The air conditioner purred,
And the air smelled like Cameron, Texas,
Like a hot attic. You could see
Particles of light
In the window—
Fugitive dust floating around his head
As he asked me to spell
Aardvark.

Round
The bee buzzed
At his funeral,
Round the preacher's head,
Distracted him as he tried
To change the subject.

But what was the subject?
Maybe my grandfather's passion
For Polka dancing,
Maybe the first Word

In the lexicon,
Maybe froth
From riptides and whitecaps
Of Galveston—Night sky
Flipped upside down with stars
As suds and moon as a casket
Drifting away from eulogy.

Kacie Svoboda

change

I wish that my favorite cousin
had not grown from a kid whose gap-toothed grin
even Ritalin could not tame
into a teenager who toughly hides his smile in pictures.

I wish my friend did not let boys (or men) control her life
in back rooms of drunken parties,
on blanket-laid football fields,
or in rotten, darkened houses,
while plans with me become her alibis.

I wish that my grandpa could still remember my name,
hold my small hand in his big, calloused one
and sing “Que sera sera” as we rock together
on the old porch swing.

But most of all...

I wish I was not the cautious adult I’ve learned to be,
but the child I was—
fearless and headlong into everything,
scraped and bruised
and smiling.

Andrea Bates

The Precision Haircut

He tells his barber to cut his hair like Steve McQueen:
A little off the top, longer on the sides. It's been
one close shave after another —the jungles of Nicaragua
and a scar the length of his forearm. Some
Sandinista machete, he said, but the USMC medic stitched him.
Then the six incher vertical snake scarring his abdomen.
A claim of hypoglycemia and blackouts, not remembering
where he'd been, who he'd seen, even who he'd slept with.
How inconvenient it all was, he said, not knowing
if what he had was a pancreatic tumor and an early death.
But he scraped by again, and the slice of flesh
biopsied benign. The gouge above the right eye? Tomcat
or Tomahawk depending on who's listening, or Jaguar
or Slim Jim. You gotta give it to him: like any good spy,
he tailored his lies to fit his audience. He cut his hair
in homage to his hero, it gave him courage, he said,
to pretend he was Bandito, the King of Cool, Bullitt,
the last of the magnificent seven, a butterfly narrowly
eluding impalement on barbed wire.

I could take scissors to his hair myself, but he doesn't
trust me. After what he's done he knows his neck
is vulnerable. I am not that girl who believes love
means never having to say you're sorry.
He'd better worry. When he comes home
this time he'll find that the pillow he sleeps
on is really a knife, blade unsheathed, and ready to slice.

John Azrak

At the Strand

A small crowd was gathered at the entrance of the Strand the night I went to sell my books. Word circulated that the store was closed so that Michael Jackson could shop alone for children's books adding to the buzz. It began to drizzle but people stayed on their toes to peer over the window displays to get a glimpse of the King of Pop. How cool, I thought, to have the place to yourself, to wander the eighteen miles of books, a bibliophile's dream of neverland. He didn't even have to wait in line, I laughed. But then I pictured Michael heading straight for the children's section, back then buried in the corner of the musky basement (I'd taken my daughter), focused intently within the cubbyhole of shelves, so enchanted by the eclectic selection of titles and vibrant covers the rest of the store would fall so completely away that it would never occur to him to cover his tracks. I imagined the Page Six story in the *Post* the next morning (it was) which was about the last thing he needed. I wondered if he cared or if some part of him even wanted this exposure. I put down my grocery bag of hard covers, the bottom starting to tear open. I decided that I would leave them there on the pavement, the pittance I would receive in exchange hardly worth a return trip, somebody bound to pick them up, maybe even leaf through a couple, current fiction from the eighth of a mile on my walls, besides these were gifts inscribed by an old friend whose love had turned into something more which I no longer could keep in the open.

Gwen Monohan

Cattle Guard

Double-wide strips
with space between
held back the straining herd.
By strength of bunched lines
they shoved. Snorting, stomping,
chewing wads of pink
cud with lips ajar.
Swaying with complaints.
Haggling to be
first, or next.
Anywhere at least,
in front of last.

Swollen packs
strayed by the trail.
A few lame books.
Then the leaders ahead
spied a yellow hauler,
and bawling prevailed,
(louder and longer),
as the bus sighed to a halt
and doors steered wide,
driving rows of teens,
the controlled
stampede, inside.

Jesse Dunstan

Hades Tailgating

A friend of mine died
singing Sinatra's "My Way".

Didn't look so autonomous to me;
tubes exiting every orifice; more like a
marionette, tangled up in his own strings.

We work after midnight, my partner and I,
when most debtors are asleep and unsuspecting.

We get-around in a pale Ford Mustang,
'PLEASE WASH ME' written in dirt on the rear window.
Most of the time it's *me* talking, *him* swerving to hit rabbits:

*Hindus say Death rides a black buffalo,
uses a lasso to round up his victims...*

*Then Death's a cowboy, he realizes,
his massive arm sailing out the window, like you and me.*

People reckon us thieves,
as though what we're stealing
were rightfully theirs in the first place.

Others aim to kill us, like that old lady
with the shank taped to the end of her cane,
stabbing at me through the passenger side window
as I struggled to rig her car with my screwdriver.

I could hear my partner laughing clear across the street.

We go out drinking and he shows the gals
the stretch marks on his lower back.
Says he was attacked by a mountain lion.

Meanwhile, I'm slumped over the bar
like a wet coat, always watching the clock.

Realists like me take their whiskey straight.

Morning comes and I visit the church
where I was baptized as a kid,
only now it's a 99¢ store.

There's a section in back
where you can find switchblades
and lighters with naked ladies on them.

I set myself down on a curb out front,
asphalt hotter than a seat in hell.

A little girl passes, tugging on her Mother's dress.
Mommy, she asks, *what's wrong with that man?*
And I almost wish *Mommy* had answered,

because I *too* would like to know.

But If there be any angels
eavesdropping over those amorphous
balconies of clouds, I'll have them know:

when the 'Repo-Man' comes for me—
that intrepid specter of death—
whether with slim-jim or scythe—

he can have what he came for.

I won't fuss or fight
or bite off a piece of his forearm
like that cannibalistic mother-of-three did to me.

I only aim to ask, before I turn up my toes,
if I may pause and take a moment

to say I'm sorry for a few things.

Richard Dinges, Jr.

Sign of Spring.

Robins have no red
breasts, pale orange
iron-poor blood,
powerful perhaps
when romance dawned
and poets place robins
in phallic phrases,
pumped hormone full
of summer's heat,
slowly drained
through centuries into
springs diluted behind
closed doors and drawn
drapes, when everyone
sits inside and watches
sunrise on TV screens.

Kiely Prouty

Winter

When I see you, I'm going to wish you a merry Christmas.
I'm going to show you my hands
and tell you how they used to shake.

I'm going to shake
when I tell you.

The snow blows sideways in Cleveland. Our cat
keeps track of a single flake and follows it with his eyes.
I make us rice. I buy you lottery tickets.

And you
never win.

Merry Christmas. It's been a real bitch. Today I slid
the truck into a curb and the dog bumped his head
against the window. I bought champagne.

I guess
I'm celebrating.

There's nothing to it. You move out.
I move in. Fit my things inside the corners—move
entire rooms.

I used to mop these floors, you know
I used to bathe these corners. Used to check on you
in the shower—your wine
slipping gently down the drain.

I have to remember
because I want to forget.

Merry Christmas. The snow falls slowly in Boise.
It falls the way it falls in your memory—a Christmas
with grandma. A dog by the fireplace.

This winter I am naked against the heater.
I am a tired person, who works a lot.
I eat sweet potato fries. I chase a beautiful girl.

And I
always win

John McKernan

A Sundial

Can pick
Any lock

This is not
A test
Of Feeling

At noon
My shadow
Seeps into the ground
Like a wound

The last time I looked
I was still there Drunk
Asleep on the porch in Omaha
Each eye wrapped tight
Bulging with imitation midnight

Andy Johnson

sunday matinee

growing pale and bloated
they sip fast food coffee
and share stories
both glorious and deprecating

in overalls
and mesh baseball caps
faded from Saturday games
at midway stadium
peanut oil thumbprints on the brim
where they lifted them off their heads
for the national anthem

all but one
who is smiling in his
black slacks and white oxford
creases slightly off-center
but crisp

he bends down
and retrieves
a penny

Bruce McRae

His Early Promise Unfulfilled

God spat an ocean, shat the Alps,
pissed torrents and waterfalls.
God wasn't beautiful and frightened
the curly-headed kiddies and nuns.
God drove by in a beat-up rust-bucket,
whistling and shouting and waving a gun.
God played the spoons and bummed quarters
by the entrance to the liquor store.
He planted timebombs in the hearts and minds
of orthodontists and city officials.
What a character! A right barrel of laughs.
Like the time he threw up all over Jupiter.
And the practical jokes; you've seen his platypus.
And the plagues of his miserable temper.

Bruce McRae

Stop the Clock

I remember,
you were pointing a stick
at the moon,
It was the day before
the wolf bit you.
Near to that incident
with the toothpick.
You were with a girl
who rubbed brass for a living.
I remember,
you had a signed edition
of a box of bags
and were dating an ex-nun.
Around the time
of the break-out.
Sure, and as I recall,
you were studying wych elm,
or was it moonwort?
Either way,
that was the same summer
they moved the graveyard
into the secret forest.
Remember?
You had that awful sunburn
and my lung collapsed;
the very same day
as the mudslide...
Makes you wonder, doesn't it?
Makes you think
real hard.

Dan Pette

Halfway Between

Halfway between Chicago and the coast,
somewhere west of Laramie,
I splayed an animal beneath the wheels
at eighty miles per hour early on a starless August night.
There was the *thunk* of it, the *splat* —
and still the highway unwound through the blackened west.
The gospelers from radio Del Rio scarcely paused
in paving their high way to the heavens,
the odometer clicked away the hours and miles...
A rabbit? Coyote? Abandoned cat?
Impossible to tell. I cursed silently, needlessly...

and stopped, an hour later, in Green River —
hard by the steamy railroad yards:
\$10 for a room, communal John just down the hall;
found a dive around the corner, nursed a drink or two,
struck up a conversation, like a spurting match,
with a woman slipping down the dark side of adolescent dreams;
returned to my room where,
in the neon-washed gloom, she bared
her baby's body and took me, kneeling, twixt her thighs,
and the iron bedstead rattled blankly
toward the close. The silence was complete.
Rewarded, she quickly took her leave...

I stood at the window, smoked a cigarette,
watched the tufts of smoke and steam
rise like incense from the yards,
felt the shudder of the engines through the wafer-thin walls,
felt drained, empty, rootless; and that sonorous music of the wheels
stayed fast in my reckless mind throughout the gravid night.
But...oh...that animal beam& a bobcat
in my dreams, and with unleavened joy I watched
the sunrise peel the walls clean and burn the curtains through.
Utah was next...

Anne Higgins

Sonnet on a Line from Elizabeth Bishop

If you taste tears too often, inquisitive tongue,
you'll crave more salt on everything you eat,
taste blandness even in the rarest meat.
Tears tear, obscure the vision of the young,
too many elders leave their loss unsung,
often deny the pain they daily meet.
Inquisitive neighbors murmur and entreat;
tongue locks the secret grief away among
long stored up packets far back in the deep freeze.
Avoid the frequent tongue touch to your grief;
instead, taste food whose sweetness pain will ease
if you would seek a gossamer relief.
The tongue will savor sweetness more than salt;
with icing more than cheese your pain will halt.

Ayla Crosswhite

check out them clouds:

tea's a brewin'
blow the dust out of the mug
and don't be so coy this time
lay down and get what you came for

storm's a comin'
gather your sheets from the line
but don't make the bed this time
let it lie open like a sore

Ayla Crosswhite

fades to yellow:

today the color of bruises is beautiful
green like tornado skies
fade fast like good days
eight ball in the side pocket
beer foamy in the pitcher
everybody knew

today the rips are fresh
in flesh frayed like denim knees
fade fast like sun downs
bicycle frame in the back seat
water cold in the cup
nobody slept

Ayla Crosswhite

someone's gonna die:

revelry in the woods
magpie on the gallows
ropeless and unsteady
impossible angles

they creep up the path
a mass like fire ants
dancing near a cross
washing sin downstream
to the mill wheel
to pound out piety

the rocking horse rig
leached history from our core
dinosaur bones and ore
dragons in the castle crags
rocks eaten by water
cut by glaciers
follow me to the sea
steal me a new country

twisted tree like genes
choke under coal cloud skies
stone homes feel cold like guilt
winter near the alps
fireplace quilts and wet wool
swiss fantasies
cobblestones and cheese
didn't translate

our ancestors are dead
and they all came from dirt

Robert J. Tillett

My Astrophysicist Brother Takes a Nap

Sometimes you sleep on your stomach,
An elbow's crook consuming your left cheek.
Perhaps, then, you're tunneling toward creation—
The way *you* tell it—that violent instant
Frozen, captured in the pressure of an eyelash
On an arm.

But today you're on your back,
Sprawled out on the floor, a universe
In repose. This is the only time
You listen.

Cosmic strings ride your bones—
Pulsars and quarks know their place
In you—your toes are peopled planets
Praying to their gods as the chest waxes,
Wanes. Those hands laced behind your head,
That drifting smile and nod—your belly
Full of stars.

D M Gordon

Ceremony

It's finally possible to microwave
the perfect egg. I take a shallow bowl
with Mandarin carp hand-painted on the bottom,
puncture the yolk, before
my daughters wake, before the peace
of night is gone. I grate pecorino
to Eine Kleine Nachtmusik;
Oolong tea in raku, on teak
beneath a spray of roses.
The crossword in the paper begs eight letters
for what of innocence is drowned.
I check the news as far away, a plane,
a drone. A helicopter skims by rooftops.
Under beating blades young gods
drop shards of paper into air.
One takes Polaroids of geraniums
blown off balconies. Through air
that swims with scarlet petals,
paper drifts, a test of wind, a non-parade.
More helicopters come, now
ordered bees from unforgiving hives.
I wake the children, take them to the cellar.
Musicians rush from the house next door,
and school girls from upstairs arrive half-dressed
as bombs start falling to the east. The air
grows strange with scents of strawberries
and solvent; the cockateel drops noiseless
from its perch with tightened wings.
Outside, fine powder dusts the windshields
of the silent cars as a mender rams his head
against a blinking light. Inside, my eyes
begin to bleed. It's morning, don't ask where,
as if it's someplace else.

Michael Malan

Close the Door

Running or thinking. Another phone booth disappears.
Abridge between two ideas, an empty room, the bed
unmade. The room smaller than he remembered, half pink,
stationary, the word bark on the dog's mouth. Headlights
circling in the sky. They woke him up. Time to go. Down
to the station. The hospital. Bail him out. Run around town.
Language is another expression. Light snow falling. Heavy
wet snow in the nature of voice. Healing is normal and natural.
Get the fear out of the way. Close the door, iron your pants.
The earth is humming. Breathing in, breathing out.

Douglas Collurd

The Myth of Washington's Wooden Dentures

Give me bleeding statues.

His tall forehead is touched by a descending finger of light, his torso bulges the picture frame like an oak. He bears no smile lines or drooping nostrils or jowls of despair. But it was said that something jealous in the hollow of a tree put a curse on his infant mouth.

Cracking pine nuts with each bite down to the last tooth, he grew too big for words to travel though.

A child counted the legs of the horses going by, his eyes tilted all the way up. "Look, Mother. A fence floating in the sky!" A glimpse of a giant's fleeting smile.

His head that fits on the quarter, the dollar, the side of a mountain, fit especially well on his neck. He was a rock of silence before freezing men in boats as rickety as wooden dentures.

When he recalled the one Founding Father who followed women in the Philadelphia night confiding to him that accessibility was a greater pleasure than perfection, his mouth would clench like an oak door that the wind had slammed shut.

In his dream, he was meeting with his cabinet. His lieutenant shuffled a stack of gold coins. The redhead clung to an edge and brooded. He never trusted brooders. The water in the room reached his chest. He said, "Gentleman." But his teeth weren't riding well in his mouth and it came out, "General gems."

President twice, he declined a third, spitting out power like a broken tooth. He traveled home to his mountain, his wife, and the humans he owned who couldn't afford even wooden dentures.

Nights. By his bed in a cup of water. Floating.

After surveying his fields in snow, he took dinner soaked to a chill. Adamant, straight-backed, he refused to be cold. But later one of the servants swore he heard soggy latches clicking.

With the good doctor bleeding him into oblivion, and Martha hovering near, a part of his mind feverishly reached for Sally's dress, and out from parted wooden dentures, came longing's last unsatisfied breath.

Carol Scott-Conner

Trauma Patient #25

Your blood has forgotten your name. It seeps through hidden channels towards the abyss. Ebbs out in heavy dark torrents.

I don't know your name. Not yet. Somewhere, a clerk, seeking your driver's license, rifles through your bloody clothes. Meanwhile...

Your blood drips onto the floor where I stand, and someone puts down a blanket so I will not slip. I hold your pulse under my fingers and wait for clarity.

The whole team swirls around me, orderly but fast. We catalogue your injuries and staunch the flow. Pour a stranger's blood into your flaccid veins. But...

Your blood knows the forgotten secrets of your birth. Dreams, in this long night, of forgetfulness. Catches wind in its arms and lifts you to rapture.

THE END

Eric Paul Shaffer

Cotton: A Sort of Sestina

Cotton is my life, and T-shirts are the clothes the moment wears,
soft stuff of familiar fabric worn into shape
as we make lives from the material.

A favorite may last years, but washing reveals
what becomes of cloth. As the color fades, the fit fits better.

Stitches loosen and seams relax, and the shape of the body
of the facts life learns show through—
the stance of the shoulders, the arch of the neck,
the rounding of the belly.
Holes wear through, threads wear out, and the shirt wears well.

It's the cotton. Tagless, china-white with a grand design,
the strength of the weaving is in the wearing,
and there's wonder in the way the fabric fits
the warp and weft of weeks,
as days of dirt and sweat work to wear it all away.

Trace the tight weave to the source,
through flat channels in the rusty river of industry,
to the blooming white heart of the material,
and find there what we always find in the beginning, a seed
with the future folded within, as neatly as a new T-shirt.

We change our lives as we change our clothes,
daily, with the seasons, folding, packing,
wearing, tearing some into tatters and rags for other reasons,
and finding flashing stacks of a bright, unwrinkled fold we seek
when we shop for T-shirts together.

We wear them in, we wear them out, and the material lasts only
long enough for us to change into something new.

Eric Paul Shaffer

A Small Gathering of Light

The sun has yet to rise, but the silver sky has extinguished
the stars. Haleakalā is black against the rising light.

Maybe someone should say the mountain before dawn
is darker than the mountain at midnight under starlight. It is.
Last night, stars hovered at my fingertips. If there is fire,

it is beyond me. On one side of the sky, Venus blazed
near Castor and Pollux. On the other, Jupiter brooded
over the volcano. If light creates distance,

then darkness draws us together. On nights when Venus
is on my right hand, and Jupiter on my left, I can't imagine
the world going on without me, but I am confident. It will.

With three nights yet to fill, the bold moon displays the face
of change to us, journeying between the light
and its reflection. This morning, a single star shone to mark

our direction. There is only a small gathering of light,
but with the mountain as a guide, any road through day will do.

Jane Medved

Animal Dreams

The world with its cause and effect is repeating
itself like a large cat measuring the hours
of its cage. The watermelons are back. The elephants
use them as bowling balls on their way to the zoo.

Their tails burn my fingers like cheap string.
Trees crash behind them, then sink and blow away.
Their tusks have the bitter taste of a pale aphrodisiac.
Their ears fill my eyes like great white sails

that wander the desert as they follow the smell of mud
from last winter's rain. One day they will bury me
then whisper with their feet. Babe Ruth never knew
he'd end up as a candy bar in Cincinnati,

and an elephant's tail doesn't really burn my fingers.
Actually, I've never touched one, but other people have.
They've filled up boxes with blue parrots and taught
them how to speak. "Oooh la, la. Is this the Madam?"

Parrots like to talk dirty because it makes us laugh.
"Voulez-vous coucher avec moi, ce soir?"
I lie down next to the panther and stroke his soft
night ears. "Shana klana kepala. Go shluffy now."

Tomorrow we will walk through the smoking city
where the buildings rustle and break like leaves.
We have no pockets to put our change, so we will walk
all the way to Africa. "Voulez-vous coucher

avec moi, ce soir?" Even as the continent swallows
itself into a tight little ball. Even as the path
grows old and dies and the elephants sweep it
underground with their long, trembling trunks.

Justina Cline

Crows

“why have you gathered?”
I yell, and the crows scream back as one,
Harsh cries from above me,
Dark birds are calling.

They call some more—
And more of their kind come,
One missing black wingfeathers,
He alights, and flies off into
The dark of the coming night.

The murder of crows
Takes flight-
Away from the sky’s blood,
Away from the setting sun.

The split-wing first.

I follow—
They perch above a sad gray house,
They look down,
Call as one.
What is coming?

What has passed?

Alison Hornbeck

Art Appreciation

I love nothing quite like I love your hands
when you've just returned from drawing class,
the pads of your thumbs smudged dark,
charcoal dust settled in the lines of your knuckles,
a few dark and careless storm clouds obscuring
the otherwise sunny maps of your palms.

There is mystery to these impermanent markings,
these artists' tattoos,
like the brand of some secret society to which
I could never belong.
I picture you meeting your fellow members in dark alleys,
all of you silently presenting your stained palms
as proof of your legitimacy, then dispersing
with your pencils and your sketchbooks
to perch on overturned trash cans and document the world.

I wonder,
is that what you would be doing now
if you weren't here with me instead,
pressing faint carbon fingerprints
into the bare paper skin of my back?

Jeanette I. Winthrop

Autumn Furlough 1943

Uncle Dave is home from the war to take
my brother and me to Revere beach

where we claim our childhood in happy
wandering. We search for shells

in the crusted sand, count our footprints
until we find, half-buried, a lobster trap

we want to dig up and lug through the subway.
Uncle Dave says *No*, standing between the ocean

and the boulevard, *Lobsters always find
themselves in traps they can't escape.*

Next summer, from across the world,
he'll send a letter from his new ship

and a snapshot of himself on deck, in uniform,
a dark haired stranger in khaki standing beside

and a white and black terrier by their feet.
He'll tell us just enough without telling

us anything. In the blank space
around them he's printed :

ME RADIOMAN DOG

C B Follett

Fleda Brown Removes 'the parade' From Her Poem

no fife, no drums, no merry piccolo, no crepe paper wound thru bike wheels, no anal drum majorettes, no lemonade in a silvery thermos with flaky green torso, no glittering trombones, no yappy dogs, no nasty smelling snake bombs, no pinwheels of spinning stars, no cap pistols with the delicious scent of cordite, no lady fingers spluttering and dancing like a kite's tail, no little boys running their sticks along the newly whitewashed fences, no whistles to strut the band maneuvers, no horses, no steaming bum trinkets, no pom pom girls to march bravely thru the bum trinkets (still steaming), no crowds to groan, and no industrious little man with broom and bucket, no Model T with the mayor stuffed into a rumble seat, no mayor's wife with huge and festooned bonnet, no rickety floats sponsored by Jack's Hardware or Gus' Gas & Repair, no boys on elm branches hanging over the marchers, no boys lobbing horse chestnuts down the open throats of the tubas, no American flags jammed in a beiter cup, flapping gloriously in the breeze, no tired arms on the boy scout carrying the flag, no cub scout scratching his crotch to the horror of his mother, no fringe, no sparkle, no silver batons twirling into the morning sun, no tails braided with ribbons, no pigtailed braided with ribbons, no oiled saddles, no straw boaters, no grandmothers tittering, no mothers proudly pointing, no chairs on the sidewalk, no kids sitting on the curb, no cotton candy, no whizzers shooting sparks, no fathers snapping salutes, no tin cans tied to the backs of little brothers' tricycles, no dogs with bonnets, no vets with scrawny necks and loose uniforms, no red poppies, no proud hauling of tired bodies into a salute, no unchecked tear, no corn dogs on a stick, no cats hiding from the noise, no 4-H calf, no sashes with badges, no cymbals, no crisp turns from Grove onto Forest, no playing cards snapping on spokes, no tiny princesses holding the train of the teen age Queen, no Mad Eddie slipping into line with his prodigious proportions and his dancing frock with frills and deeeep décolletage, and no sound of the final band growing fainter and fainter down Main Street, as boys and bicycles fall in behind showing off their wheelies and ragged formations.

C B Follett

My Mother's Bones

Inside her skin my mother's bones
are crumbling into shards.
Only taut skin seems to hold
her skeleton together.
In her tenth decade
the body is in retreat.
In June, she fell
first one way, then the other
banging everything she had
against everything she owned
landing on a hip porous as pumice.
No one could open her door.
After a longer-than-daylight hour
firemen broke it down.
It scared her, all of us, and although
the hip didn't break, it broke her spirit,
resigned her into the health center,
loss of dignity, privacy - a life sentence.
We watch Jeopardy together,
she knows the answers, could
be a TV millionaire,
but her body can't keep up.
Yesterday, she fell backward
over a giving-way leg,
hit her head and somewhere
along the calcified hip bone
something finally cracked.
I feel her traitorous bone
in my innards, gnawing like
a fox in a leg-trap.
I am once again, far away
across the Continental Divide
just trying to do what's right

Ellie Grossman

Dali's Dream

Find me in the morning, in sun and heat;
know me in midday by hunger,
in nighttime my moon and yawn.

You can hold a piece of me
in your palm, or feel my presence
in your chest.

I will let you paint my portrait
and hang me out to dry
beside the Pyrenees' golden cliffs.

I will melt for you on a branch
with the sun sinking behind me
and your own eyes submerged in a dream.

Raul Clement

Afflicted

Doxycycline, Ciprofloxacin, Ranitidine —
the names remind me
of distant stars whose light
I will never see
or else just what they are,
wishes instead of cures.

The doctor sticks a gloved finger
up my ass with one quick
motion. Not quick enough.
It is cold with jelly,
like the finger of an alien,
an inhabitant of Ranitidine.

No blood in my stool.
Bilirubin normal, no jaundice.
No hypoglycemia, lime tater negative.
Chest X-rays, brain MRIs, EKGs.
Blood pressure good, temperature 96.8,
Nothing to worry about.

No AIDS, no syphilis, no clap.

I drink the contrast dye.
It tastes like something I can't remember,
something from elementary school,
the smell of new blacktop against
my bloody face
and the laughter of Leah German,
or any other girl I hoped
would love me.

I lie still until the machine beeps —
nothing like a tolling bell
so I do not ask
for whom? —
and then I turn on my side.
Ten more minutes and I'm done,
the nurse says.

I feel like something cooking.

Contributor's Notes

John Azark poems were recently published in this year's *Poetry East*, *Santa Fe Review*, *Paddlefish*, *Santa Clara Review*, *Eclipse*, *Oyez* and last year's *Coe Review*. I was never a major fan of the wildly talented Michael Jackson so I was completely surprised when a memory surfaced in the form of a poem, and then somewhat spooked to hear of his death just as I finished it.

Andrea Bates has a Masters in Writing from Manhattanville College and currently teaches writing and literature at a community college. Her recent publication credits include poetry in *Steam Ticket*, *The Aurorean*, *Natural Bridge*, *Cutthroat*, and *HeartLodge*, with poems forthcoming in *Main Street Rag*, *The Common Ground Review* and *Bloodroot*.

Hayley Berkshire is a recent graduate of the University of Michigan where she studied creative writing and French literature. She hopes to one day pursue her MFA in poetry. This poem first appeared in in the Summer 2009 issue of *Two Hawks Quarterly*.

Jason Bradford would like you know that he has evicted the frog from his throat. These are hard times. It had to be done.

Teresa Breeden lives in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, where she teaches drafting by day and plays mama by night. She is a member of Ash Canyon Poets, loves the smell of sagebrush after a rain, never gets tired of home, and is very very grateful.

Ralph Burns has published six books, most recently *Ghost Notes*, which won the Field Poetry Prize. He's had recent poems in *The Southern Review*, *Field*, and *Iron Horse Quarterly*; and he is circulating a new manuscript titled *Sway*.

William O. Burns is from Little Rock Arkansas, and he graduated from the University of Arkansas in the summer of 2009. He writes mostly short stories. He likes playing pool, chess, and listening to jazz in his spare time.

Raul Clement lives in Greensboro, NC. His fiction, nonfiction, and poetry have been published in *Mayday*, *Chaffey Review*, *Troika Moonshine 300* and *Main Street Rag*. A short story of his will appear in the upcoming *Surreal South '09*.

Justina Cline is a first-year student at Coe, and has been writing poetry for several years, although this is her first time being published.

Douglas Collura is the author of the book, *Things I Can Fit My Whole Head Into*, which was a finalist for the 2007 Paterson Poetry Prize. More recently, he was the 2008 First Prize Winner of the Missouri Review Audio/Video Competition in Poetry. He has been published in *Dislocate*, *Paterson Literary Review*, *Lips Magazine* and other periodicals.

Ethan Conner is from Fairbank, IA. One of his role models is his High School English teacher; he always encouraged his creative writing. Ehtan is looking forward to taking poetry three some time in the future with the lovely Ann Struthers.

Ayla Crosswhite comes from many places. She likes the outdoors and aspires to never have a normal job.

Brian Daldorph teaches at the University of Kansas and Douglas County Jail. He has also taught in England, Japan, Zambia and Senegal. His most recent book of poetry is *Jail Time* (Original Plus P, 2009).

Richard Dinges, Jr. has an MA in literary studies from University of Iowa and manages business systems at an insurance company. *GW Review*, *Free Lunch*, *Fox Cry Review*, *Illya's Honey*, and *Timber Creek Review* have most recently accepted his poems for their publications.

Cat Dixon earned her MFA from the University of Nebraska, Omaha and is now an adjunct instructor at the university. She is the volunteer Marketing Director for The Backwaters Press out of Omaha, Nebraska and a mother of two. Her work has appeared in *Temenos*, *Poetryfish*, *Eclectica* and is forthcoming from *Sugar House Review*.

R D Drexler writes poetry in airports, coffee shops, and while he is just walking dully along.

Jesse Dunstan lives with his wife in Costa Mesa, CA.

Darrell Epp has been published in dozens of magazines including *Tulane Review* and *Poetry Ireland*. A collection of his poetry entitled *Imaginary Maps* will be published later this year by Signature Editions.

C.B. Follet is the winner of the 2001 National Poetry Book Award from Salmon Run Press. She has four collections of poetry, the most recent *And Freddie Was My Darling*, 2009. She is the publisher/editor of *Arctos Press*; publisher and co-editor of *Runes*, *A Review of Poetry*, 2001-to 2008.

D M Gordon is a Writer in Residence at Forbes Library in Northampton, MA and runs a number of programs for poets and reader of poetry, including a dynamic weekly public forum on contemporary poetry. His poems have been published or will soon appear in a wide variety of journals such as *The Portland Review*

Elizabeth Grossman's passion for psychology, poetry and singing/songwriting has lead her to develop her creativity while also gaining new insights into the world around her.

Anne Higgins has had about ninety poems published in magazines, and four books: *At the Year's Elbow*, Mellen Poetry Press 2000; *Scattered Showers in a Clear Sky*, Plain View Press 2007; *Pick It Up and Read*, Finishing Line Press 2008, and *How the Hand Behaves*, Finishing Line Press 2009.

Alison Hornbeck is an English major about to finish her sophomore year at the College of Wooster, and has had two poems and a short story published in *The Goliard*.

Paul Hostovsky's latest book of poems, *Dear Truth* (2009), is available from Main Street Rag. To read more of his work, visit his website at www.paulhostovsky.com.

Amorak Huey recently left the newspaper business after 15 years as an editor and reporter. He teaches writing at Grand Valley State University in Michigan. His poetry has appeared recently or is forthcoming in *Crab Orchard Review*, *Subtropics*, *Nimrod* and other journals.

Andy Johnson is a senior at Coe College, originally from St. Paul, Minnesota. He'd like to thank Thomas the Tank Engine for showing him the way.

Stephen Kessler is a poet, translator, essayist and editor. He is the author of eight books and chapbooks of original poetry, most recently *Burning Daylight*; fourteen books of literary translation, most recently *Desolation of the Chimera: Last Poems* by Luis Cernuda; a book of essays, *Moving Targets: On Poets, Poetry & Translation*; and a novel, *The Mental Traveler*.

Lyn Lifshin is the author of *The Licorice Daughter: My Year With Ruffian, Another Woman Who Looks Like Me from Black Sparrow at Godine., Desire and 92 Rapple, Nutley Pond*, and *Persephone* among others. Her web site is www.lynlifshin.com. Author of 120 books and 4 anthologies.

Michael Malan is the editor of *Cloudbank*, a literary magazine published in Corvallis, Oregon (cloudbankbooks.com). His poems have been published in numerous publications, including *Epoch*, *Hawaii Review*, *Midwest Quarterly*, *Wisconsin Review*, *Oregon Literary Review*, and *The Christian Science Monitor*. He was a finalist in the New Letters 2008 Literary Awards for Writers.

Linda Back McKay is a Minneapolis, MN poet, writer and teaching artist. Her work has received a variety of honors and awards including two residency fellowships at the Anderson Center for Interdisciplinary Studies.

John McKernan is a recently retired comma herder. He lives -- mostly -- in West Virginia. His most recent book of poems is *Resurrection of the Dust*.

Bruce McRae enjoys talking about himself in the third person and would ask you to visit his website for more poems and music: <http://www.bpmcrae.com>.

Jane Medved was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois and is the poetry editor of the on-line journal *Ilanot*. Her poems have been published in *The Mid-America Poetry Review*, *Voices - Israel Anthology*, *Poetry LA*, *The Sculpture Garden Review* and a bunch of others. She has four children and two dogs.

Gwen Monohan is a former teacher living in Virginia. She has had poems published in several journals, including among others: *American Poets & Poetry*, *Big Muddy*, *The Blueline Anthology*, *Cold Water Review*, and *California Quarterly*.

Kristine Ong Muslim has been published in numerous publications worldwide, including *Beeswax Magazine*, *Boxcar Poetry Review*, *Fifth Wednesday*, *GlassFire Magazine*, *Grasslimb*, *Iodine Poetry Journal*, *Narrative Magazine*, *Ottawa Arts Review*, *Pank*, *Riddle Fence*, *The Pedestal Magazine*, and *T-Zero*.

Dan Pettee is a native New Englander; he currently operates a freelance writing business in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He has had poems published in a wide range of publications, including the *Chicago Review*, *Texas Review*, *Descant*, *Amherst Review*, *Poem*, and the *Evansville Review*.

Kiely Prouty lives in Boise, ID, with her partner and a hand full of animals. She works as an assistant stage manager in theater. She loves LeBron James.

Carol Scott-Conner's fiction has been published in literary journals ranging from *North Dakota Quarterly* through *The Healing Muse*. "Trauma Patient #25" describes the moment when a patient seems suspended between life and death, when the medical team has done all that it can, when there is a collective brief moment of peace - a space for hope.

Eric Paul Shaffer is the author of five books of poetry and has appeared in *Slate*, *American Scholar*, *North American Review*, *Threepenny Review*, *Poetry Ireland Review*. She received the 2002 Elliot Cades Award for Literature, an endowed literary prize given yearly to an established local writer in Hawaii and a 2006 Ka Palapala Po'okela Book Award.

Charles Springer is an award-winning artist currently living in the mountains of northcentral Pennsylvania where he earns a living in advertising. Charles has enjoyed publishing in *The Cincinnati Review*, *Faultline*, *Heliotrope*, *Oxford Magazine* and *Salt River Review*, among others.

Tim Staley teaches high school in Las Cruces, NM. He earned a MFA in creative writing from New Mexico State University in 2004. Publications include: *Beatlick News*, *Border Senses*, *Chiron Review*, *Circumference*, *Lummox Journal*, and *Lunarosity*.

Ann Struthers is a writer whose poetry has been published widely. She also publishes short stories, academic articles, and reviews. She was born, grew up, and still lives in Iowa, but she has been to Chicago (and lived in Syria and Sri Lanka).

Kacie Svoboda is a junior Creative Writing and Asian Studies major at Coe College. She has always been addicted to the written word.

Robert Tillett currently writes and teaches in Rochester, NY.

Jeanette I. Winthrop is a retired primary school teacher and a longtime member of the Writing Workshop for Publishing Poets in Brooklyn, MA. She has had poems in *Phoebe*, *The Sun*, *The Antigoniish Review*, and UrbanArts placed a poem of mine on the Orange Line of the Boston subway system. The past year my writing appeared in the *Rockhurst Review* and *White Pelican Review*.