

LUCKY 7



THE EKPHRASTIC MARATHON ANTHOLOGY

The July 2022 Lucky 7 Ekphrastic Marathon Anthology

This ebook anthology celebrates seven years of *The Ekphrastic Review*, a journal devoted to writing inspired by art. Over these years we have written and published thousands of poems, small fictions, and memoir. We have had wonderful contests and bimonthly challenges. We have had amazing workshops, getting together on Zoom to explore art and all the ways we can use it to ignite our words.

We were looking for a unique way to celebrate our seven year anniversary this past July 2022. Meg Pokrass is as legendary for her creativity-inducing magic spells as she is for her microfiction. I got the idea of a writing marathon from her, using the formula of a new draft every thirty minutes. I played around with it, decided on seven hours for seven years, chose a variety of ekphrastic prompts, and challenged you to this intensive experience.

It was astonishing. Just completing the marathon for its liberating effect, improvisational imperatives, and extreme focus would be a meaningful event. But you also wrote heaps of poems and stories that surprised and amazed! Many of you were brave enough to share and sent in so many jewels. It is possible, after this, that we will have future marathons!

Meg Pokrass was the only fitting microfiction/flash fiction judge for this particular challenge, and we are so thankful that she was willing to share her time and talent with us. I could think of no better poetry judge for this event than Brent Terry, who is as playful and inventive as he is an astute observer of everything around him. We're so happy to have had him on board.

Selections were made during blind readings, from documents with no author names. Both judges chose their top three entries and among them, a winner. The first place winner in the microfiction category and the poetry category both receive \$100 prize in addition to admiration and adulation for their talents.

Congratulations to all who finished the marathon! Thank you to everyone who submitted their entries, and kudos to those whose entries were chosen for this anthology.

Please share this free anthology far and wide and invite readers to discover *The Ekphrastic Review* and our incredible writers.

Lorette C. Luzajic

www.ekphrastic.net

Microfiction Winners

A Life of Drowning (first place): *Nan Wigington*

The Fist They Make: *Karen Walker*

Underground: *Bayveen O'Connell*

I enjoyed reading the entries after having experienced the creative benefits of writing marathons myself. The stories I read were energetic and original, and I found it hard to select only one winner, but ultimately, “A Life of Drowning” won me over with its magical qualities.

The late Russell Edson stated that prose poetry can create “a beautiful new animal.” “A Life of Drowning,” taken from the painting *The Fisherman's Cottage*, shows the reader three moments in which a woman's fate hangs in the balance. There are three “drownings,” but I won't ruin the story by saying too much... The result delights us with the wildness of life's uncertainty. There is a familiar and uncomfortable feeling about this story that is much like life itself, filled with weird surprises. Tapping gently into the all-too-familiar spectrum of a woman's roles as a mother, wife, and daughter, the story addresses the archetypal problem of being “assigned” roles in life that few of us are truly cut out for. The author refuses to provide answers because answers, like the weather itself, are simply not to be trusted. This is utterly fantastic, dreamy writing. The strange, fable-like experience builds to a sad and beautiful conclusion. Plunged into a fairytale universe, the lines between fantasy and reality disappear.

Meg Pokrass

Poetry Winners

My Other Hand is a Tuba (first place): *D. Dina Friedman*

Ex-voto for Washerwomen: *Laurel Benjamin*

The Nuns' Complaints: *Laurel Benjamin*

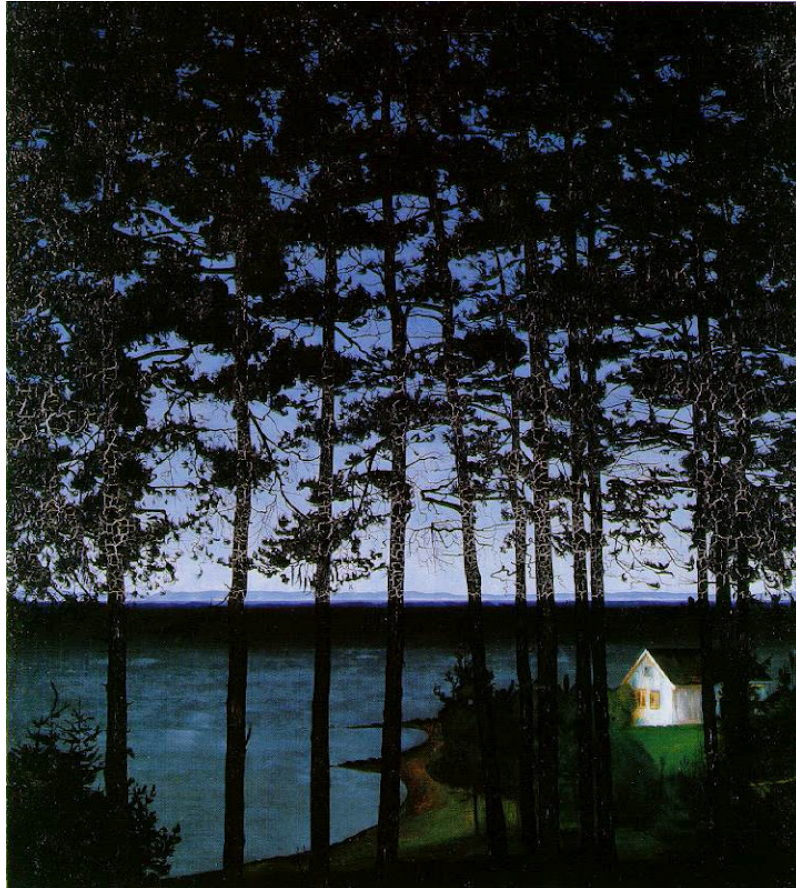
What a delight it was to read (and re-read, aaaand re-read) these poems. And what a challenge to narrow them down to three finalists and eventually one winner. The poems showed quality throughout, a remarkable range of formal inventiveness, and a rich array of interpretations of just what ekphrasis means anyway. From spelunking the original artwork and reporting back about what lies beneath the surface, to using the original as a launching pad to explore new ideas or the writer's own psychic landscape, these poems stretched the limits of what ekphrastic poetry can mean and do, and they pointed toward new frontiers in the form. I am honoured and inspired to have experienced them.

Brent Terry

In Order of Appearance in Anthology

(use search feature in upper right corner to go directly to an author or title)

A Life of Drowning, by Nan Wigington
The Fist They Make, by Karen Walker
Underground, by Bayveen O'Connell
My Other Hand is a Tuba, by D. Dina Friedman
Ex-voto for Washerwomen, by Laurel Benjamin
The Nuns' Complaints, by Laurel Benjamin
Headlines, by Kate Copeland
7 Aphorisms, by Saad Ali
Nun in an Egg, by Lynne Kemen
The Art of War, by Aline Soules
Torso Fruit, by Fran Turner
Magic or Prayer, by Kortney Garrison
Ready to Go, by Cathy Hollister
Effigy Hand by Hopewell Culture 100BC-400AD, by Catherine Young
O, the Raised Hand, by Karen George
Hands, by Alarie Tennille
A Prayer to Selene, by Gabby Gilliam
Recounting Hands, by Amy Marques
Haiku, by Lisa Molina
Fjord Summer, by Norbert Kovacs
The Fisherman's Wife, by Bayveen O'Connell
Family Legend, by Deborah Trowbridge
Diamonds for Stars, by Jackie Langetieg
How These Shades of Blue, by Linda McQuarrie-Bowerman
After the Lantern Parade, by Roy Beckemeyer
Beyond the Lantern Parade, by Kim Murdock
Shall We Dance, by Linda McQuarrie-Bowerman
The Lantern Parade, by Michael Caines
The Passage, by Betsy Holleman Burke
The Passage, by Claire Bateman
Wheel of the Future, by Lauren Voeltz
Mirror Lake, by Jena Martin
Art Walk Haibun, by Caitlin M.S. Buxbaum
Ghosts of Sakura, by Karen FitzGerald
Ghost Sequence, by Cullen Wisenhunt
Selected for Elimination (X-ed out), by Renée Szostek
Praise, by Amy Phimister



Fisherman's Cottage by Harald Oscar Sohlberg (Norway) 1906

A Life of Drowning (*Winner of the Marathon Flash Fiction Prize*)

after *Fisherman's Cottage*, by Harald Oscar Sohlberg and *A Summer of Drowning* by John Burnside

The first time Alexis drowned, she had crawled to the fisherman's cottage. She was amongst the nets and had pulled herself up on the biggest bait bucket. She laughed when she saw the water and went in face first. She would remember the fish, silver and slim as skeleton fingers. The fisherman noticed feet waving. He pulled her out and slapped her on her back.

When she spit out a fish, the fisherman said, “What a strange way to eat.” He took Alexis home to his wife. They fed her fish soup and butter cookies, put her in bed under a goose down comforter, and called her daughter.

The next time Alexis drowned, she had chased a blue boy in a blue hat to the lake. She wanted to see his face because she thought it might be pretty. The boy stood on a rock and jumped in the water. One minute. Two minutes. Four. The boy did not come back up. Alexis climbed onto the rock, knelt, peered over. A blue tentacle shot up from below and wrapped itself around her neck, pulled her in. The woodsman saw her hands waving and came running. He dashed into the water, killed the blue beast with his bright ax, brought Alexis forth, pieces of tentacle still around her neck. The woodsman slapped her on her back.

When she spit out a blue hat, the woodsman said, “What a strange way to find love.” He took her home to his dog. He fed her meatballs and krumkake. She gave mutton to the dog. He smiled, kissed her, put her to bed under warm woolen blankets, and called her wife.

For many years, Alexis stayed safe. She helped her husband, kept his house warm, his dog fed. He thanked her and gave her a son, a wooden creature he'd found near a lichen rock. Alexis taught her son how to be kind and good, how to stay safe around water.

“Always,” she told her son. “Help those who are going under. We all deserve a little resurrection.”

But the illness came, and Alexis couldn't help. The woodsman's lungs filled. He coughed and died. Then the son coughed and died. She couldn't even save the dog.

Alexis ran away to the desert.

The last time she drowned, Alexis was walking on a dune. The dune inhaled and Alexis fell in. Snakes as slim as skeleton fingers floated by. She opened her mouth to laugh. Sand rushed in. Alexis thought, *What a strange way to swim.*

Nan Wigington



My Other Hand is a Tube, by Rene Magritte (Belgium) 1927

My Other Hand is a Tuba (*Winner of the Marathon Poetry Prize*)

Every day I place fingers
on my neck to push
the bird-heart back

from its relentless
surge to throat
the warble, an obstacle

to bass aspirations—
my tuba
larynx for the larynx-less

aphrodisiac for frogs
and those who love them. I whip
the sheet over my head

my face irrelevant
to the music's cry.
See no evil. Hear the shadows.

Have you ever been close-up, personal
with the spit that dribbles
from the mouth of the horn?

In these days of limits
on saliva, a tuba
can be a weapon

like napalm,
Agent Orange.
But for me

this brassy maze
is my other hand,
my better hand,

my heart trying to stop
its urgent oscillations.

D. Dina Friedman



Animated Spaces, by Frantisek Kupka (Czechia) 1957

top three marathon entry for flash fiction

Underground

When the bunker is quiet, apart from snores and sleep-talkers, two girls share their first kiss. Shy tongues - probing and withdrawing, heavy breathing, the clashing of teeth, and hushed giggles. In search of a rhythm, in search of a home in flesh: an escape from crumbled concrete. In the landscape of lips, this burst of energy makes a wildflower field of the underground.

Bayveen O'Connell



Long Story Short, by Lorette C. Luzajic (Canada) 2022

top three marathon entry for flash fiction

The Fist They Make

Isabelle and Adam walk to the fertility clinic locked hand in hand.

The fist they make is all they've created.

Adam's nails, opinions are sharp—"There's nothing wrong with me."—though his fingers are numb. They're the accountant grey of the suit he's wearing to the consultation. Isabelle laid it on the bed this morning.

She now regrets her choice. If their grip loosens, she may lose Adam. He might bolt, blend into the steel and concrete city if the doctor suggests semen analysis or if, on the way home, Isabelle picks at their fist and it bleeds.

It'll have to bleed money. Treatment will be expensive.

"Could you get a second job?" she'll write in a note to slip in Adam's briefcase. "Crunching more numbers instead of the bones in my hand? Ha, ha." She'll consider closing with "I love you," but will settle on "XXO."

Isabelle wears a yellow dress, pretty and positive for this first meeting with the specialist.

The fist they make squeezes Isabelle's fingers to yellow, though not the shade of her sunny frock.

That'll go back in the closet and she to circling her most fertile days on the calendar, to baby name selection G through K. There's also volunteering at next week's Sunday school sleepover—lots of kids to tuck in—and a Mother's Day card to buy for Adam's mum. She'll sign his name.

Isabelle's fingers are bloodless as is her face when, on the steps of the clinic, Adam yanks on their handhold. "There must be something wrong with you."

Karen Walker



The Laundress, by Francisco Laso (Peru) 1858

top three marathon entry for poetry

Ex-voto for Washerwomen

-ex-voto is a small devotional painting on tin in the Mexican folk art tradition

My gratitude for their trumpet breasts under soft white linen,
sacrifices, and the instruments of their art,

the basin beneath their bare feet
doesn't mean I'm not done with the poems about them.

I won't cry to the lines hung between two poles
under a cloudy sky,

won't speak for the women of my generation
who've rinsed their own sores.

I'd rather be a witch toiling for spells, throw in
a baby's head or a complaining eel.

I have no use for bleached fingernails and accidental
cowrie shells scratching lips.

Two birds fly over, seize the towel. We've seen these figures
before.

They'll take more than a woman's skin,
dispatch her stains.

Laurel Benjamin



Nuns in an Egg, by Edgar Ende (Germany) 1955

top three marathon entries for poetry

The Nuns' Complaints

They came from an egg, my father told us,
when he returned with nuns' stories
from counseling sessions, as he crunched on corn

past dinner time when my brother and I
came out to tease him. The nuns slipped
from headdresses, veiled at the waist, veiled

at the eyes. They rounded names and dates
in generalities to avoid suspicion, drowsy
in blue charcoal from extra duties.

Backwards, he said. Sharpened sheers
for trimming the vines hidden in their robes.
But what could they do, slicing oranges

in euphoric mornings, chants in the chapel.
How did they take it, bone-tattered
from standing long hours laundering.

And to mend priests' garments they wrapped
thread tight around their nails, cuticles nibbled
until like a sparkler lit, bright red dribbled

a torrent. My father called it the machine
of the church and how it was nothing
compared to the egg and how the nuns would return.

The crumpled paper from his pocket noted date and time,
two years in the future and how he'd have to climb

the black oak at the diocese campus. He knew
the tree by sight, well rounded, surrounded
by rambling blue oaks. Make someone talk

was his bark from training. Yet two years later
he admitted he'd underestimated size and weight.

My father's briefcase, a numbered lock, kept
their secrets and even years later
I cannot open it.

Laurel Benjamin



Long Story Short, by Lorette C. Luzajic (Canada) 2022

Headlines

Bright, bright morning and though I like the light,
you said that yellow spells violence, and I asked:
why do you always buy me sunny roses?

It's a city statement to have flowers at the door,
on kitchen sills, while saucers fly out windows
and hankies swiftly fringe the washers.

Kiss, make up, makeover, and cover the worry lines,
the laugh lines I moor myself, though I've lost some,
along the story of us, trying,

in short:

my dear, I got distracted by the small print, but right now
I write down the dates of shared calendars in my own,
away from your secret Sundays, my sinistral strumming.

How you tried to spell it out, and out I go, the voice of own,
for I'll buy me a notebook that'll do good, and what rolled
from your tongue will be re-considered along the headlines

of so many long stories later, and I cross the knees
to the ground, stop the strains, won't gaze away,
for yellow waters will wake over moonlight, forever.

Kate Copeland

7 Aphorisms

for Nabila & Nick

If not a Swirling Dervish of a *Habit*,
What is life?

—Anonymous

Well, to cut the Long-Story short, then:

1. Nostalgia only persists, if the Story-of-Present fails to supersede the Story-of-Past.
2. Others' Stories (in vers libres, prose (poems), ekphrases, haiku, and what have you) are important, but 'tis more important to write your own book—with *Your Stories*.
3. Things & Phenomena & People & Others are all *Interconnected*—id est, 'singularity', more often than not, is a desire on part of a narcissist.
4. History My, oh, my! ... [History]—given a chance—will repeat itself at a rate faster than the rate at which the rabbits reproduce. ... And given a chance, it will never hesitate to turn itself into a female praying mantis.
5. Imagining the human evolution without art & philosophy is analogous to imagining the cosmos without dust & stars. For, putting too much faith in religion & science is as harmful to the human progression as too much air is to the lungs.
6. If God were Selfless, the Fuel-of-Dichotomy—that keeps the ^{Emotion}/_{Reason}-Fire kindled—would be absent. (Perhaps, we ought to be glad that that isn't the case.)
7. Without the toys of alphabet(s), the tabula rasa-of-dreams always remains formless. (Dignum Memoria: when sewed into a word, the sound and meaning of every letter changes.)

Postscript

But of course, many Stoics/Sufis and grand champions of philosophy and art have uttered—and will continue to utter—such dicta on multiple occasions, yet the most prominent facet—of *forgetfulness*—of the human disposition renders the *Need for Reminder* as the Primary Need of every Age. (*Se7en* (the feature film with Kevin Spacey et alia), by the way, happens to be an intriguing composite of/reflection on the aforementioned '7 Aphorisms', too.)

Saad Ali



Nuns in an Egg, by Edgar Ende (Germany) 1955

Nuns in an Egg

Never underestimate the power of prayer.
Don't brandish threats; you'll get it all backward.
Contradicting the right way.

Pocket the euphoria. Make a stateable manifesto,
then sluice it down with diluted vinegar.

Superhero, stolid sisters praying,
peering out from the crotch of
the broccoli-like tree.

Never ask directions. All will be provided
by a celestial GPS, steering you straight.

Lynne Kemen



Warrior and Attendants, Edo Artist (Nigeria) 15 or 16th century

The Art of War

No one questions who's the warrior and who are the attendants. Even stripping the warrior of his fat sword, we know. He's 'the one,' the one in the center, the one who matters.

His attendants carry his shields, don't need his full helmet, half covering his face and chin, his large eyes in full view, staring us down.

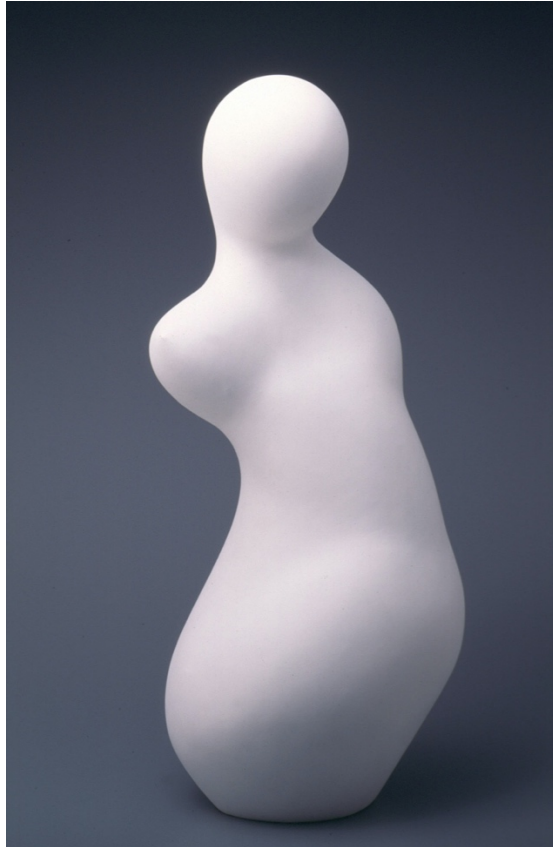
Among these centuries old warriors, the ones who really matter are the little ones. The warrior's focus is straight ahead, on us, but his children are present to learn the art of war. One day they will pass the art to their children, and their children will pass it to their children, and on and on until today.

When nothing has changed. The latest war unfolds on TV, people crammed on a train station fighting to escape. A woman has brought her sons' Legos to give her boys a sense of normalcy in this chaos that is merely the lineage handed down through generations.

The older boy, eight or nine, clicks together the bricks his younger brother passes up from the bucket on the platform floor. As fast as the younger one feeds his brother the legos, the older one snaps them into place, red, blue, yellow, green.

The train is coming, and the mother appears on the screen. She pulls the five-year-old into her arms, urging her older boy to come, come now. The boy grabs the bucket in one hand and holds up his latest creation in the other – a Lego Kalashnikov.

Aline Soules



Torso, by Jean Arp (Switzerland, b. France) 1960

Torso Fruit

She imagines the artist's hands searching the plaster lump for fruit-shape, woman-shape. Hungry hands but patient, explore the inert and porous until their fingertip eyes know what to carve away, all the rough edges to file and refine smooth, smooth.

What she sees: no pit, no slit, no dirt from having fallen. The sculpture's midriff taut, little bumps insinuating breasts. Not heavy like her breasts, the weight of them carving bra seams into shoulders.

Like a peach, torso fruit is sweat-sweet and velvet on the tongue.

She takes a bite, juice dribbles down her chin, hand searches her purse for tissue to wipe her wrinkled skin.

Fran Turner

Magic or Prayer

In my hand I hold a small talisman: cool
white stone fitted to the curve of my palm.
Another woman whose belly is swollen

in expectation.

In my pocket she whispers to me,
The wheel is turning, hold close
to the center, resist the unraveling.

Kortney Garrison



New York Movie, by Edward Hopper (USA) 1939

Ready to Go

So ready, Lana Turner hair, toned legs, white teeth.

So ready to leave Idaho potatoes, farm dirt, smutty boys under the bleachers.

So ready for modern dance, Macy's, taxi cabs.

So ready to trod the boards, Broadway lights, city nights.

So ready to say NO, drink coffee, buy pie at the automat.

So ready for acting classes, to be rejection ready.

So ready to try and try.

So ready for any job.

So ready skip a lunch.

So ready to wear a uniform with a sleek red stripe.

So ready to glance at the screen.

So ready to shiver in a tiny one room flat.

So ready to cry for home,

cry for home.

Cathy Hollister



Effigy Hand, by Hopewell Culture (USA) 100 BC-400 AD

***Effigy Hand* by Hopewell Culture 100 BC-400AD**

Mica's translucent layers let light in –
the mottled light of material earth, veined and branching
like trees and blood-bearing arteries.
Carved mineral mixes gold and green like fields of corn,
woven baskets carrying earth.
Fingers once lengthened and branched,
mounded earth into eagle, turtle, lizard, snake.

Hopewell sister, if my hand were carved of stone, could I then
reach across to you, centuries
and generations beyond our tended gardens
sprung from your carefully kept seeds?

You are still with us
through Dakota
Choctaw,
Chickasaw,
Maskoke
Osage
Pawnee
Wichita
Oto
Iowa
Ho Chunk
We gather on your earthworks
align with solar calendar
as our light-filled hands touch yours.

Catherine Young

O, the Raised Hand,

thumb bent toward the long fingers
pointed heavenward. Palm soot-
blackened. Stained, softened
by all it touched: spongy moss,
leaf & grass blade, viscous resin
from pine needles, yellow pollen & dewy petals
of buttercup, lily, primrose, iris;
skin, scales, fur, feather. Speaks
greeting, swears to tell truth,
offers blessings, help, friendship,
peace. Mapped with scars, veins,
furrows, time. The warmth
when it covers the heart—
in grief, esteem, to pledge
allegiance, when words fail.

Karen George

Hands

saying hello
goodbye
come here, go away

mending, planting, threshing
teaching young hands
giving old hands a rest

healing, killing
destroying, creating
attacking, surrendering

exploring, caressing
letting dreams slip between fingers
holding fast to hope, love, revenge

reaching
always reaching
for something more

Alarie Tennille

A Prayer to Selene

I carry your craters
on my cheeks
angry red acne scars
create rough terrain
from brow to jaw.

(May you be my beacon in the darkness.)

Your light licks
my skin silver
seeping into pores
until my blood sings
in lunar cycle.

(May you mark me with your favour.)

I cup your rays
in upturned palms
your topography
tattooed on my
faithful fingers.

(May my skin ever be your canvas.)

Gabby Gilliam

Recounting Hands

Her right hand looked the same: five fingers, smooth palm, callus on the ring finger from holding her pencil the wrong way. She could move every joint, scrunch the whole hand up into a fist, and snap her fingers. She could touch her thumb to each of the four opposing fingers and no matter how they twisted and turned it, the X-Rays all determined the hand was normal. It looked the same as a hand should. As it had for the first 13 years of her life.

But it wasn't the same.

Every time she tried to brush her hair, she felt ants crawling up her arm. Every time she tried to brush her teeth, the toothbrush jumped out of her hand and crashed into the sink. Every time she tried to practice her scales on the piano, her fingers tripped and stumbled as the metronome marched on. Every time she tried to write, pain wrapped itself around her fingers in a death grip. Paralyzing.

Growing pains, the doctor said.

Dramatics, others implied.

A warning, her body whispered.

She needed to learn.

For the rest of her life, she would lie in bed at night, left hand cradling her right, recounting the day. On a scale of 1 to 10, how bad was the pain? How many pages did she write? How many times did she stir a pot? Play piano? Type? Garden? Craft? Knead bread? On a scale of 1 to 10, how frequently did she stop what she was doing because the pain was unbearable? How many times did her left hand bail out her right? How many times did the spectre of pain stop her from even trying?

She learned.

She painstakingly did the math as her right hand lightly traced the body that didn't always work without complaint. And she touched each part and thanked it for doing its best. One more day.

Amy Marques



Fisherman's Cottage by Harald Oscar Sohlberg (Norway) 1906

Haiku

The darkness will shroud
The fisherman's tiny shack
His light shines always.

Lisa Molina

Fjord Summer

He knew he would have a lonely season fishing that little-visited fjord in the summer. He was miles from the village and had just the cottage, its small rooms best for one, not even a pair. He worked from early in the morning each day. He took the woodland path to the dock, the summer sun already risen, and got his boat on the yet dark water. He made it to the quiet spot in mid-fjord and lowered nets for the fish, then waited as the sun rose higher in the sky. Far away, he saw the inland village and maybe the hint of one of its residents moving along the streets. When he had his catch, he hauled in the long nets and returned to shore. A man from the village would be there to take the fish into town, where others would get them in ice and sent by rail to the city. The man spoke to him of the village, the few farmers near it, but after the first two weeks, he seemed hard up on any news. He barely raised the village gossip. The two said little then. Once the man left, the fisherman trekked back to the cottage, one or two fish he had caught in a sack. At home, he cooked them for dinner and ate by a light near the window. Outside the pines loomed tall in dark columns. He looked into the night and thought how it shrouded the whole land.

Norbert Kovacs

The Fisherman's Wife

Between the rustle of the trees and sssh of the waves, a cottage blinks all night with eyes of fire. Inside it, the fisherman's wife doesn't sleep but keeps the flames alive, stirs the coals, like the ancient women did awaiting the return of the hunters. To grow drowsy and succumb to slumber would doom her husband, the fisherman's wife knows, would drown him. Anyway, she has raised enough wee uns to think of an early night the way another might dream of finding buried treasure. She shares her man with the sea, and she is the jealous lover. The fisherman's wife shivers through squalls, lurches through lightning, shudders through storms. She rues the dawn that yawns pink with his cosy chair still empty. She welcomes the full moons when she can hear her fisherman tying his craft to the quay, arriving in safe from the high tides. The clunking of the buoys: a more welcome sound than the bells on their wedding day. On these nights, she doesn't mind if he breaches the shore with his pots and nets lighter. She's richer when she sees his flesh: his wind-burnt face raw, his rheumy eyes weary, his knuckles stiff from the cold, his body a briny mess. When he's there in front of her, he's alive as the fire in the hearth. No matter how tired they both are from work, from waiting, he slips into her, keen as an eel, and they swim each other on the floor before the embers.

Bayveen O'Connell

Family Legend

Family lore and legend has it my great grandfather, Gustav, a skilled Norwegian fisherman, was spirited away to the open sea, lost in a hellish storm and returned by the gods. His wife, Mai, my great grandmother knew with certainty the frigid fjord with its tides and constant lapping played a crucial part.

Midst torrential rain and howling wind, she ran, slipped and slid the two miles to her father's house for help. Seeing him she yelled above the wind, "Gustav and his boat went out early. I saw the red bow rise on eight foot waves. The dock broke free. He's out there, Papa. Gone."

"Daughter, the wind and rain must slow," her father said. "So we may find our way."

"I cannot wait," Mai said. "Gustav may have been thrown upon the rocks. We must go, Papa. Now." He took her firmly by both shoulders.

"You are soaked and chilled and must warm yourself. Marthe will give you dry clothes. Then we will search." She nodded with reluctance.

Mai changed but could not keep still. She paced. The rain lashed against windows and wind screamed down the chimney. It was impossible for her to sit and Marthe's porridge had only made her queasy.

"The gods must answer our prayers," said Mai.

"Only if they are listening," said her father who had roused his sleeping sons. He hoped his only daughter would remain strong. The family dog looked at his master with mournful eyes and disappeared, his nails click-clacking on the floorboards. Mai's brothers quickly ate and donned oil-slicked jackets, hats, and thigh-high waders. "Here is rope and oil for the lamps," her father said as they gathered in the mudroom. "We must proceed with speed and caution."

They readied the dinghy for portage. There was very little talk. Each knew well, fishermen in violent storms drowned. Gustav alive would be miraculous. To find his body would be remarkable. But, over time Bergen fjord had yielded its share of miracles.

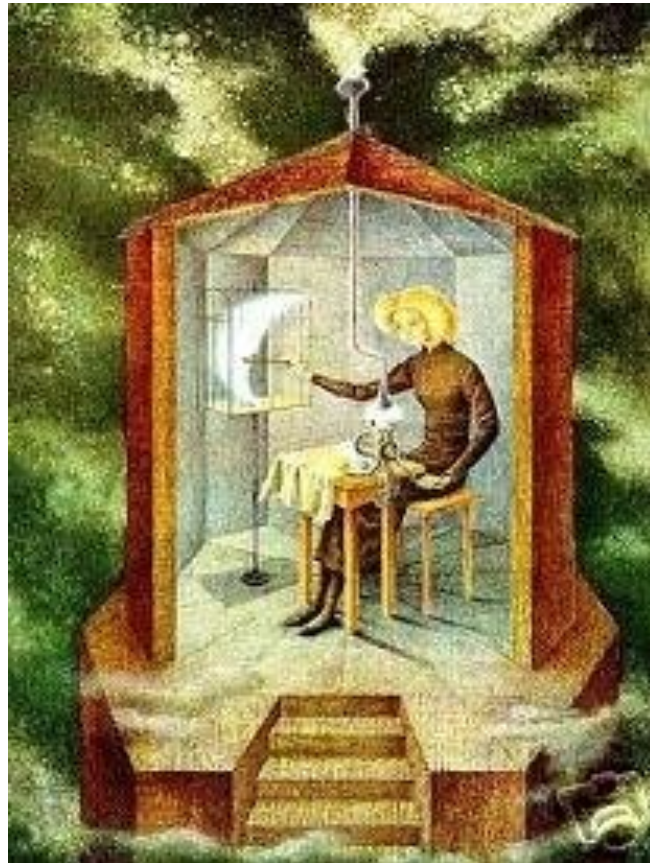
The band of five tramped in single file through the rain soaked woods. Mai and Gustav's house was 100 yards from the water on a bouldered and sandy rise. The ancient evergreens on either side stood sentry-like in quiet. The rain was now a drizzle in the pre-dawn light.

The white stick house appeared intact. A lantern burned low in the front window.

“What’s this?” said Mai, her voice rising as she pushed past her father. The fjord’s water had pooled and puddled by the front doorstep. Across it lay Gustav as though in slumber.

His booted legs stretched lengthwise, one slickered arm by his side the other across his chest. His hat was missing. Gustav’s eyes were closed, his handsome face wet and gray. Mai knelt and kissed him. His lips were salty and cold. “Gustav,” she whispered, “Gustav, you’ve come home.”

Deborah Trowbridge



Celestial Pabulum, by Remedios Varo (Mexico, b. Spain) 1958

Diamonds for Stars

I ask you again, Luna, send me diamonds—
I will continue feeding you heavenly stars

until you comply with my wishes.
You may never get out of this cage;

no one will find us here in this bower in heaven.
I have given you Polaris—you besmirched

Sirius, Betelgeuse, Rigel, Vega
Pleiades and Antares. I have shattered

the North Star, the map to Jesus.
What more can I do for eternal life?

Jackie Langetieg



Sceaux Park, by Nicolas de Stael (France, b. Russia) 1952

How These Shades of Blue

remind me of my Father's handkerchief always tucked
inside his pocket, folded over tears and smiles and scraps of days,

memories he'd unwrap on sleepless nights to cup them
like jingling coins in his palm.

My Father's blue sky hovered over black mountains, the sky
he painted before his eyes grew dark, his fingers stiff and his heart

slowed to a whisper.

My Father's handkerchief pressed and never used

will succumb to flame and mingle with the sacred ashes
of his skin, his hair, his fragile bones.

Linda McQuarrie-Bowerman



The Lantern Parade, by Thomas Cooper Gotch (England) 1918

After The Lantern Parade, by Thomas Cooper Gotch, 1918

It was after sunset when the thought balloons of the Prescient became visible. Their glow was to be seen to best advantage at relative humidity values ranging from 43 to 67%, temperatures in the pleasing range of 23.9-25.5 °Celsius. It was on such nights that they would take to the streets, their featureless faces seeming not at all out of place when their thoughts and emotions played so gloriously on the translucent and voluble skins of their balloon-like lanterns.

Crowds would gather along the street, children running alongside, pointing, exclaiming, their parents trying to speed read words, their eyes shining with the kaleidoscopic emotion storms floating in each marcher's lantern. No tethers were visible, but even when the Prescient were gathered in such close groups, each one's thoughts were obviously associated with them and them alone.

The audience would swell as the parade attracted more marchers, and the back-and-forth catalytic interactions between observers and marchers made the lanterns flicker, become more and more pertinent to unvoiced questions. It was only when someone along the route suddenly clapped their hands to their face or heart, gasped, fell to their knees, broke into tears, cried out, that those around them would know that that person had been burdened with one marcher's insight into the time or manner or agent-cause of their own imminent demise.

Roy Beckemeyer

Beyond the Lantern Parade

Fog distorts sound. The patter of leather soles on cobble seems to come from behind me, from the woods. But out of the haze, along the roadway appear the tiny white feet, the thin legs like rhizomes stretching out from deadfall.

This was Mama's favourite time of year. *When I was a girl*, she'd say, wrapping me in my woollen coat, slipping on my heavy boots. The low hum of insect wings brushes my cheek and I start.

They are beautiful, these girls, gathered in their pale, best dresses. They grasp their lanterns like it's their own personal moon, a fiery satellite that follows in their wake. Are the girls singing? I lean towards the roadway, tilt my ear in their direction.

The air cools, my feet grow damp. *Someday you will be chosen*, Mama would say. I'm standing in grasses that were not here this morning. Something parts the blades nearest me and a darkness winds by, curves back and forth then disappears into bramble. Only after do I hear its rhythmic sweeping.

I could never keep my shoes that white.

Standing along the roadside, I can't remember if this is a celebration of a coming or a leaving. Maybe that's a small detail. I want to ask the girls, but despite the footfall, the appearance of movement, with every step they remain no closer.

The ground is uneven now. Pocked, rock shards, spongy. The smouldering peat thickens. But the bogs are miles from the town and the cobbles and the parade of girls with their bright shoes and burning lanterns.

With every step there is no footing. *When I was a girl*, Mama said. I anticipate and dread their passing. The fog has dampened all sound.

Kim Murdock

Shall We Dance?

The boys watch from shadowed hills as the figures
move along the pathway, their shrouds glowing
like swarms of fireflies; the quiet a dark hound
trailing them;

a cell phone rings: a blast of *Disco Fever*
splitting the silence, ten pairs of hollow eyes
swiveling towards a bush where another boy
hides,

having fallen off his stilettos after too much
champagne at his Mother's fourth wedding. Unperturbed
the ghosts drift on, red lanterns lighting their way
and the sweet twang of Jubal's harp

calling them back to the mist of the afterlife.

Linda McQuarrie-Bowerman

(Note: Jubal (also Yuval or Yubal) is mentioned in the Old Testament in the Hebrew Bible, Genesis 4:21. He was the father of all who play the harp and flute. Mentioned only once, he is sometimes regarded by Christians, particularly by medieval commentators, as the "inventor of music." A descendant of Cain, his father is Lamech and his brother is Jabel. Jubal in Hebrew means "stream" however it could be a contraction of *Jubilee*, which is derived from the ram's horn - blown to signify victory or celebration.)

The Lantern Parade

“How come”, a gallery ghost enquires, perusing
The life and works of Thomas Cooper Gotch,
“He lost his bright, old-fashioned way? What catch
Snagged this late Pre-Raphaelite? Something’s missing

From his hushed parade of lanterns. Lights massing
Against the war-fogged night. White dresses march,
A company of innocents; boys watch.
When he relit the lanterns – an artist’s blessing –

Some twelve years on, the kitsch Gotch of ‘The Orchard’,
‘Monsignor Love’ et al set fires afloat
Above the heads of other girls in white.
His Morris mode, by then, was wholly ditched . . .”

There comes no hypothetical reply.
There’s only lantern-red. And mud-pitched sky.

Michael Caines



The Passage, by Henri-Pierre Picou (France) 1878

The Passage

We dream of heaven, how it will look—
white fluffy clouds, brilliant blue sky.

Sometimes as a child, I thought harps,
little cherubs for playmates. But never

did I think of heaven like this. In a boat
rowed by the devil himself, a dead

passenger lies in the bow. We move
toward the light. I close my eyes

afraid of the strain, afraid for what
I might see ahead. The way secret,

the devil furious, I am out of his grasp.

Betsy Holleman Burke

The Passage

When you signed up to row the dead across the bottomless lake for your post-mortem community service, you didn't realize that the entire lower half of your body would thicken, elongate, and petrify to *become* the boat, heavy, insensate; that oars would thrust themselves groaningly from your palms and wings would sprout searingly from your shoulder blades as a secondary source of propulsion; that you would have the accompanying guardian angel (no lightweight by any standard) to ferry as well, weeping, always weeping, for the poignancy of those sins, the depravity of those virtues—this entire apparatus of transfer now your eternal responsibility! But the soul in question, slumped in its cliché swoon? Stripped, it weighs less than nothing.

Claire Bateman



Wheel of Fortune- Brambilla Brera Tarot (Italy) 1400s

Wheel of the Future

Mom spins the tales, weaves the webs, watches the anxious stick like cockroaches in spider's webs. She promises me sausage for dinner, rolls with cabbage and powdered cookies that will melt in the mouth. She always keeps her promises to me, no matter the cost to her, because she wants better for me.

She tells me it's just cards, just a game she's playing, but when she locks the room, I hear men cry, and women rage for answers from beyond. And I see *beyond*.

She rests her arms on the table, palms on each side of a crystal ball. The globe swirls with colour. I peek through the crack in the door; it's as wide as an eye. As Mom's tears fall and the ghosts touch her skin, I know she's choosing which one to let in.

Lauren Voeltz



Mirror Lake, by Franklin Carmichael (Canada) 1929

Mirror Lake

There are tumors like this – this beautiful, this ugly.
Unreal and stupendous.
The air holds its breath in shades of blue.

Jena Martin



Bazille's Studio, by Frederic Bazille (France) 1870

Art Walk Haibun

I browse the gallery after a good cry and find so much loveliness in every piece, I'm able to ignore the pontificating men around me and simply enjoy the work and figures of so many. I can't tell if my vision is colored by grief or relief at being free, at least for a moment, of such mourning as the morning wrought. Am I more generous for weeping, or is it the pianist's generous fingers that lend themselves most to my appreciation?

I climb the stairs and turn halfway to chance a glance outside the window, glimpse the drowsy town beyond; I pray the rain returns, stays a little longer this time, if only to acknowledge my hurt, let the poem-paintings take on more lumens in the gloom.

I look down from the next level of my journey and wonder how much has been bought or sold, and what it means to lean away, face a wall. Are we any less loved in our obscurity?

I have no camera, no coin to spend; only my eyes, and a little time.

vacant furniture
 stills the gravid afternoon—
 gray is colour too

Caitlin M.S. Buxbaum



Ghosts of Sakura Togo, by Ichiyusai Kuniyoshi (Japan) 1851

Ghosts of Sakura

They beseeched the warrior not to go into battle, but his honor was at stake. His ancestors would abandon him and his offspring forever more were he to forsake his duty to Emperor, country, and family. His father had died in battle and his father before him. Destiny would determine if his would be a similar fate.

Akihiko spent his last night in the solitude of his small room, praying to his ancestors to watch over his family in his absence. He carefully wound his bun in the ties of his mother's kimono, and he bowed at the altar of his ancestors, raising up for blessing the Onimaru, the "demon sword" passed down to him through generations of warriors.

That night, his father appeared to him in a dream, accompanied by a ghost who smiled favorably upon Akihiko, as if to say – "Yours will not be the fate of your father."

At dawn's light, the young Akihiko, saddled his horse and made his way into the village bolstered by the awareness that he may be fierce, bold, aggressive, deadly, and that he would prevail despite the fearful tremble animating the Onimaru clutched in his hand.

Karen FitzGerald

Ghost Sequence (haiku and tanka)

Three hands grasp the blade
—each dead as rags wrapped around
an incense candle

Burning red as welted skin,
fronds lash against rice paper
—inside, smoke curls

A candle lit by wrong hands
throws three shadows—but
a lamp hidden, none

A scarecrow arises
from my past like red smoke
wafts through tall grass
—this, nightly as I sleep
between the blue and black

This deathly face!
More alive with grief
than parched summer grass

Cullen Wisenhunt



The Central Story, by Rene Magritte (Belgium) 1927

Selected for Elimination (X-ed out)

I was exuberant, excited when
I was a little girl. I expressed my
enthusiasm for my world as I
explored it. As I grew up, I became
inhibited, restrained. I retreated
into myself and exhibited my
emotions far less frequently. No one
wanted to hear what I had to say, so
I told people what they wanted to hear.
People placed a mask over my face, to
transform me into someone, anyone
else. When that didn't succeed, they draped a
cloth over my face, muffling me and

stifling my voice, hoping for silence.
Then I discovered my instrument. When
I played it, people didn't complain as
often. I returned to exuding my
inner essence, interested in my
environment once more. When I started
to play well, people discouraged and tried
to silence me. At this time, I began
to plan my escape. I selected a
suitcase, although I needed nothing where
I was going. Nothing was something of
which I had more than enough. Would people
say, "Cover her face; mine eyes dazzle: she
died young," or would they, frazzled with their own
existence, simply not notice? No one
knew my suitcase was empty. They were just
relieved that I was leaving, in any
manner possible. An arm emerged, and
extended forward toward me. Was it
mine? It didn't appear to be. A hand
then encircled my throat, and attempted
to strangle me. My voice emanated
from my instrument, telling me to push
away the offending arm. I do so,
and survive. It could have been otherwise.
Realizing that I am still alive,
I resolve to play my instrument and
speak extensively, determined to fight
against attempts at being extinguished.

Renée Szostek



The Laundress, by Francisco Laso (Peru) 1858

Praise

She is a Mahalia
the one from New Orleans
reaching arms overhead
she may float up to the sky
in praise
each clean shirt or sheet, a prayer
a song
days are a gospel of her life
carrying her through
long hours of work
washing away soil
singing in the purity
of the laundered clothes
as she carries purpose
like skin and tenderness

Amy Phimister

Saad Ali has been brought up in The UK and Pakistan. He is an (existential) philosopher, poet, and translator. Ali has authored six collections of poetry. His new collection of poems is titled *Owl Of Pines: Sunyata* (AuthorHouse, 2021). He is a regular contributor to *The Ekphrastic Review*. He likes learning different languages, travelling by train, and exploring cities on foot. To learn more about his work, please visit www.saadalipoetry.com, or his Facebook Author Page at www.facebook.com/owlofpines.

Claire Bateman is the author of eight collections of poetry/flash fiction/prose poetry, most recently, *SCAPE* (New Issues), with another collection, *WONDERS OF THE INVISIBLE WORLD* forthcoming in 2023 from 42 Miles. She is also a visual artist.

Roy Beckemeyer's latest poetry collection is *Mouth Brimming Over* (Blue Cedar Press, 2019). *Stage Whispers* (Meadowlark Books, 2018) won the 2019 Nelson Poetry Book Award. *Amanuensis Angel* (Spartan Press, 2018) assembled ekphrastic poems inspired by depictions of angels in works of modern art. *Music I Once Could Dance To* (Coal City Press, 2014) was a 2015 Kansas Notable Book. Visit Beckemeyer's author's page at: <https://royjbeckemeyer.com/>.

Laurel Benjamin invented a secret language with her brother. She has work forthcoming or published in *Lily Poetry Review*, *Burningword*, *Eunoia*, *Trouvaille*, *Black Fox*, *One Art*, *South Florida Poetry Journal*, *Fourth River*, *Ekphrastic Review*, *Turning a Train of Thought Upside Down*, among others. Affiliated with the Bay Area Women's Poetry Salon and Ekphrastic Writers, she is a reader for *Common Ground Review* and has featured in the *Lily Poetry Review Salon*.

Betsy Holleman Burke is a poet living in the Washington, DC area. She has appeared in numerous journals and is the author of three books of poetry, including *Searching for Hummingbirds* (2014), *All that Remains* (2020) and *Reclamation (due out winter, 2022)*. She is a member of the Surrey Street Poets and a floral designer at The Washington National Cathedral and Hillwood Museum.

Caitlin M.S. Buxbaum is a writer and teacher from Wasilla, Alaska. She currently serves as CEO of Red Sweater Press, President of Alaska Writers Guild, and Editor-in-Chief of *The Poets' Touchstone*, a publication of the Poetry Society of New Hampshire. Learn more about her and read more of her work at caitbuxbaum.com.

Michael Caines lives in London and has published ekphrastic poems with *Visual Verse*, *Nine Muses* and *The Ekphrastic Review*.

Kate Copeland started absorbing stories ever since a little lass. Her love for words led her to teaching & translating;

her love for art & water to poetry...find her words @ Ekphrastic Review (plus Podcast!), First Lit. Review-East, GrandLittleThings, Metaworker, New Feathers, Poetry Barn, Poetry Distillery, Spirit Fire a.o. She enjoys working at literary festivals and assisting Lisa Freedman with Breathe-Read-Write workshops. Kate was born @ Rotterdam some 52 ages ago & digs housesitting @ Spain, UK and USA.

Karen FitzGerald (aka Fitz) is a prolific, genre-fluid writer who has amassed rejection letters from some of the most renowned publishers in the industry. She is advised it takes 1,000 bunions on the butt to break into print. It took her 1,123 to finally make it. She's a late bloomer with an MA in English Lit, in a specialty field known as "language centered theories of human behavior." Fitz lives in Northern California.

D. Dina Friedman has published widely in literary journals and received two Pushcart Prize nominations. She's the author of two young adult novels: *Escaping Into the Night* (Simon and Schuster) and *Playing Dad's Song* (Farrar, Straus, Giroux) and one chapbook of poetry, *Wolf in the Suitcase* (Finishing Line Press). She has an MFA from Lesley University and taught for many years at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst. Visit her website at www.ddinafriedman.com.

Kortney Garrison lives with her family in the Pacific Northwest. Her poems have appeared in *Solitary Plover*, *Hummingbird*, and *Warming Station Poems*.

Karen George is author of five chapbooks, and three poetry collections from Dos Madres Press: *Swim Your Way Back* (2014), *A Map and One Year* (2018), and *Where Wind Tastes Like Pears* (2021). Her poetry appears or is forthcoming in *Slippery Elm* as winner of their 2022 poetry contest, *Adirondack Review*, *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, *MacQueen's Quinterly*, *Cultural Daily*, *Indianapolis Review*, *Salamander*, and *Poet Lore*. Her website is: <https://karenlgeorge.blogspot.com/>.

Gabby Gilliam lives in the DC metro area. Her poetry has most recently appeared in *Tofu Ink*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Pure Slush*, *Deep Overstock*, *Lothlorien Poetry Journal*, *MacQueen's Quinterly*, and *Equinox*. You can find her online at gabbygilliam.squarespace.com or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GabbyGilliamAuthor.

Cathy Hollister is an older writer whose poetry often explores the treasures embedded in age, isolation, and continual readjustments. When not writing you might find her on the dance floor enjoying the company of friends or deep in the woods enjoying the peace of solitude. Her work has been in *Silent Spark Press*, *Humans of the World Blog*, *Open Door*

Magazine, Beyond Words Magazine, The Ekphrastic Review, Smoky Blue Literary and Arts Magazine, Poet's Choice anthologies, and others. She lives in middle Tennessee.

Lynne Kemen lives in Upstate New York. Her chapbook, *More Than a Handful*, was published in 2020. She is published in *Silver Birch Press, The Ravens Perch, Poetica Review, Spillwords, Topical Poetry, Fresh Words, The Ekphrastic Review, Lothlorien Poetry*, and *Blue Mountain Review*. Lynne is on the Board of Bright Hill Press. She is an editor for the *Blue Mountain Review* and a lifetime member of The Southern Collective Experience.

Norbert Kovacs lives and writes in Hartford, Connecticut. He has published microfiction in *Blink-Ink, Nanoism, The Dribble Drabble Review*, and *101 Words*. His website: www.norbertkovacs.net.

Jackie Langetieg has published poems in journals and anthologies: *Verse Wisconsin, Blue Heron Review, Bramble, The Ekphrastic Review*. She's won awards, such as WWA's Jade Ring contest, Bards Chair, and Wisconsin Academy Poem of the Year and a Pushcart Prize nomination. She has written six books of poems, most recently, *Snowfall*, and a memoir, *Filling the Cracks with Gold*. www.jackiella.wordpress.com

Amy Marques grew up between languages and cultures and learned, from an early age, the multiplicity of narratives. She penned three children's books, barely read medical papers, and numerous letters before turning to short fiction. Her work has been published or is forthcoming in anthologies and journals including *Star82 Review, Jellyfish Review, MoonPark Review, Flying South, Streetcake: Experimental Writing Magazine*, and *Sky Island Journal*. You can find her at @amybookwhisper1 or read more of her words at <https://amybookwhisperer.wordpress.com>.

Linda McQuarrie-Bowerman is a poet living in Lake Tabourie, NSW Australia. She's been writing poetry since April 2021, with formal qualifications in Business Management and Personal Training. She is just beginning her Arts Degree in Creative Writing and has recently been published in three anthologies, on *Viewless Wings*, in *The Ekphrastic Review*, with a poem forthcoming in the next edition of the *Star 82 Review*. Linda adores animals, family, and good champagne.

Lisa Molina is a writer/educator in Austin, Texas. Her digital chapbook "Don't Fall in Love with Sisyphus," was launched by *Fahmidan Publishing & Co* in February 2022, and Molina's next chapbook, in print, will be published in March 2023. Her poem "Who You See" was recently nominated for Best of the Net, by *Fahmidan Journal*. Her writing can

be found in numerous journals, including *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Sky Island Journal*, and *Flash Fiction Magazine*.

Kim Murdock is an emerging writer living in Ontario, Canada. Her work has appeared in *Ellipsis Zine*, *Bending Genres*, *Janus Literary*, *Tiny Molecules*, *100 Word Story*, *Hungry Ghost Magazine*, and elsewhere. She tweets from @herselfKim.

Bayveen O'Connell has flash fiction in *Scrawl Place*, *Lumiere Review*, *Ellipsis Zine*, *Fractured Lit*, *Janus Lit*, *The Forge*, *Maryland Literary Review*, *Reckon Review* and others. She lives in Ireland and draws inspiration from travel, history, myth and art.

Amy Phimister resides in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. She is a member of the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets and the Belles Lettres writing group. She has been published in several anthologies and has been a finalist for The Hal Prize a local poetry contest. Her children's book *ABC the Animals* was published in 2021.

Aline Soules' work has appeared in the *Kenyon Review*, *Houston Literary Review*, *Poetry Midwest*, *The Galway Review*, and others. Her book reviews appear in *Tupelo Quarterly*, *Heavy Feather Review*, and *Matter Monthly*. She earned her MFA from Antioch University Los Angeles in both poetry and fiction. She is currently working on her latest novel. Online: <https://alinesoules.com>.

Renée Szostek has been an avid reader since she was four. Her poems have been published in the *Seven Hills Review*, *Panoply*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Pi Mu Epsilon Journal*, *Integra*, *Resist Psychic Death*, and *dotdotdash*. Her poems won third place in the Westminster Art Festival in 2021 and 2020. Her interest in writing is complemented by musical and artistic activities, and a strong background in math, engineering, and science.

Alarie Tennille graduated from the first coed class at the University of Virginia, where she earned her B.A. in English, Phi Beta Kappa key, and black belt in Feminism. Retired now, Alarie serves on the Emeritus Board and Programming Committee of the Writers Place in Kansas City, Missouri. Her latest book, *Three A.M. at the Museum*, was named a Director's Pick at the Nelson-Atkins Museum's gift shop. Please visit her at alariepoet.com.

Deborah Trowbridge writes flash fiction, short stories and creative non-fiction in northwestern Montana. Her work has been published in *The Ekphrastic Review*, *the Potato Soup Journal*, *Thin Air Literary*, and *Common Ground Review* among others. Her short story, "Hardened Road", was long-listed in Thin Air Online in December 2019.

Fran Turner grew up on a farm in the southernmost part of Canada, but Toronto, where she's lived most of her life, is the place that's home. She was a nurse, a shiatsu therapist, worked on cancer programs, and taught Aikido. She's had stories published in *Ekphrastic Review*, *Love in the Time of COVID*, *Dodging the Rain*, and *Adelaide Review*.

Lauren Voeltz reads, writes, and drinks coffee; all of these (maybe) too much. You can find her work at *trampset*, *Reflex Fiction*, *TL;DR*, *Lumiere Review*, *Flash Flood 2022* and *Brilliant Flash Fiction*. She was longlisted for the Wigleaf Top 50. Follow her @mattnwife

Karen Walker writes in a Canadian basement. The spiders she meets are full of ideas, the hard black beetles less so. Her work is in or forthcoming in *FlashBack Fiction*, *Reflex Fiction*, *Livingia Press*, *Bullshit Lit*, *Blank Spaces*, *Alien Buddha Press*, *Roi Fainéant Lit Press*, *Liminal Space*, *Unstamatic*, *Funny Pearls*, and others. @McKawalker883

Cullen Whisenhunt is a graduate of Oklahoma City University's Red Earth Creative Writing MFA program. His work has appeared in *Dragon Poet Review*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, and *Atlas Poetica 40*, among other journals. His debut chapbook, *Among the Trees*, was published in 2021 by Fine Dog Press.

Nan Wigington recently retired from the public school system and is finding too many things to do in her newfound spare time. Her flash fiction has appeared in *Six Sentences*, *Moon City Review*, and *The Ekphrastic Review*.

Catherine Young is author of the poetry collection *Geosmin* (scent of soil). Her prose and poetry has been published in anthologies and literary journals internationally and nationally and has been nominated for Pushcart Prize and *Best American Essays*. She worked as a national park ranger, farmer, educator, and mother before completing her MFA in Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia. For more information, writings and *Landward* podcasts, visit <http://www.catherineyoungwriter.com/>

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