

# The Bond Street Review



Summer 2015

### From the editors

Yes, this is a summer issue but nowhere is it written that all summer issues of any publication must feature sun and sand and popsicles. And so, we have our cover image. We've had this in the "images" folder for some time now, just waiting for the right time to unveil it. For the woman on the cover to call to us with her nicotine-scarred voice and say, "Christ, put me on the damn cover, already." So, we listened because one look at her tells you that she is not to be messed with or screwed over.

Unintentionally, we accepted several pieces about relationships this time out – maybe we had all of that summer love nonsense on our minds – who knows? All the same, this issue hits on new love, fading love, enduring love and unrequited love plus some others in-between. And we're hoping that you love some (all??) of the pieces in this issue. And that you'll share the love by forwarding it to any and all who you think will be interested. As we all know, it's the little things that show how much you really care.

Until next time,  
Eric Evans &  
Kathy Sochia,  
Editors

Cover photo: Corbis Images

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## Past obligation

By Allison Grayhurst

Perched and listening,  
a point of war.  
Several days I lived in a hole,  
shoulder shot by the blast  
of a rubber hammer coming down.  
Clear as pacing, counting  
the clock ties, permits overdue,  
you stayed like a waning moon, unobtrusive  
in a cloud-cloaked sky -  
the only light left to have. Somewhere in  
that shady disaster I bought a dream,  
almost new, with you, carefully walking  
the wet rocks. I fell asleep and you stayed, documenting  
my close-to-death dawn. Fishing me out of the fishtank,  
releasing me into wide open waters.  
Middle age is best, sea-worn but still pursuing.  
You stayed – an island never claimed by reptiles,  
a freight train, moving slow enough to chase and board.  
Thank you for staying, for your fervent destiny  
choke-collar-chain and your eyes  
of tender extremes. I lay it down.  
The lizard with the leaf.  
The primal mysticism I built my struggle on.  
I lay beside you, knowing you climbed many stairs  
to find me, and you stayed.

**If, for some reason**

By Audrey El-Osta

If, for some reason,  
you were to end it all with me  
tomorrow morning;  
I go to bed tonight  
nestled in your arms  
                    so happy  
to have known you  
and would not trade  
any of it for peace  
of mind or mended  
heart.

If, for some reason,  
I had to end it all with you  
tomorrow morning;  
fall asleep my darling,  
know that I have loved you  
with purest and deepest heart  
and clear intentions  
and I know you love me  
as we rub noses  
                    and share breath  
for this, our last night.

If, for some reason,  
the universe found cause  
to separate us;  
stay strong and know that  
our time together  
was a gift and should we find one  
another again, then  
it is truly meant to be.

If, for some reason,  
everything goes according to plan  
and we lay in each others arms  
    day after day  
remaining in the truest love together,  
know that I have pondered  
every alternate universe,  
and in even the darkest timeline  
I have always returned to you  
and you have always found me.

## It's Not My Place

By Jennifer Campbell

Because no one ever ate  
a powdered donut  
with dignity

Because those sneakers on the highway  
must have come  
from somewhere

Because alcohol, isolation,  
addiction, rehab  
and repeat

Because sun-dappled water  
is a universal balm

Because the church sign  
says Jesus was the first  
Undercover Boss

Because the interns opening doors  
to your pain  
have no idea what to expect

Because pumpkins in the rain  
are holy to someone

Because the body runs  
with or without intention

Because vinca vines  
are beautiful and invasive

Because heartburn keeps you awake,  
sitting in a panel of full-moon light  
like being in the Confessional

Because someone at the garage sale  
will offer a handful of change  
for your treasures

*Because because,*  
says a three year-old

Because your cut glass gaze  
is an ode  
to my influence



## Codependent

By Jennifer Campbell

After a few exciting months, our relationship  
has cooled somewhat. No longer romantic,  
those slaps of soles on your dark back,  
shock of bone in socket.

We're not a perfect fit, comfy couple  
spooning in their sixteenth year,  
nor a codependent nightmare, each blaming  
the other for jealous outbursts,

rain and tears dropping in pace.  
We're more of an awkward third date.  
True, I do flush with pride,  
each mile a notch on my headboard.

And you know how to tease me;  
each base I get to makes me desire  
to reach the very next. We barter—  
me for time's eraser, skin supple

and firm again, you coaxing me forward  
like a toddler, a few little steps,  
and a few more, your fingertips just,  
eternally, out of my grasp.

## On Tolerance

By Jennifer Campbell

On a scale of one to ten,  
her arm pain ranks a twelve,  
yet she sorts through photos  
of the kids, her father after the prison riots,  
a second story of survival to tell.

The yellow carpet below the maple  
cycles back to beautiful  
after so many years of being *work*.

A man in a tiny town drinks  
a half case of beer each night.  
He never slams doors, raises his voice.  
His eyes grow filmy like a cat's second eyelid.

A book sits on the shelf  
for six years until it can be received,  
its flagged pages a misplaced gift.

It wasn't morals or faith  
that made a young man sign  
the papers, turn off life support.  
He decided to let the living live.

And somehow my old contractor  
can still smile when luring  
a foot-long hair clog out of the pipe,  
remarking *It's those beautiful red curls.*  
*Should be all set now.*

## Tacks

By Jim Babwe

5 o'clock summer afternoon Interstate Highway 405  
slows Los Angeles life, stretches into wasted time  
on the way home from work. Stop and go.

The drop from 101 to 94 makes little difference  
and you know better than to run the air conditioning  
but you run the air conditioning anyway  
so the engine overheats and fails leaving you to block traffic  
in lane three so now almost everyone who passes  
your tiny underpowered disabled beige subcompact  
believes you are responsible for the entire afternoon's traffic jam.

They pass your steaming heap--stop and go, stop and go--  
cursing, sniping with disdainful glances.  
A woman spits and a man screams, "What do you call a Fiat at the top of a hill?"  
"A miracle," he answers.

You decide against abandoning your car  
and stay until the tow truck arrives--  
an hour later than promised. Stop and go.

Meanwhile, staying means listening to angrier commuters  
who heard the most recent radio traffic report  
delivered by the vitriolic pilot who rejected journalism's  
most fundamental rule--to tell the truth--  
when he described you, the stalled car's driver,  
as a "seemingly oblivious lout standing beside his car,  
leaning against the front fender like an impatient husband  
waiting for his wife to finish loading groceries (by herself) into the trunk."

"I'm seated in the car! I would have helped  
with the groceries, and I'm not even married!"  
you shout at the radio and raise your fist  
to the polluted sky where the helicopter circles.

Wishing briefly for a drone and missiles  
and a violent scattering of metal and glass,  
you settle for a more available form of revenge.

You know it's misguided. You know it's wrong.  
But you don't care so you reach into a metal toolbox  
on the floor behind the driver's seat and you grab  
exactly 156 long black carpet tacks.

You hurl them over the roof and onto the freeway  
where they settle between concrete grooves then flatten 31 tires in 15 minutes  
and you hope the pilot is exhausted when he leaves the airport  
at the end of his shift and has to drive home over this part of the road.

## Conversion

By Jim Babwe

His faith in science  
seldom wavers  
so he prays  
into the microphone  
which collects all modulations  
sends them swiftly  
through the cable  
and conversion into waves  
for a ride on the outside  
into air  
where thought races  
invisible toward the heavens.

He used to claim to be an atheist  
but found himself more faithful  
than he was willing to admit  
at first.

He used to say  
belief in things not seen  
was foolish superstition  
silly magic  
wasted intellect  
flawed logic  
unsound reason  
but particles of contradiction  
returned like meteors  
or other satellites  
and as every orbiting object  
bends and slows  
to gravity  
eventually  
everything tends to descend  
toward a center of sorts.

Certainty,  
a place where always overpowers never  
and should be able to erase seldom  
has never successfully  
erased every easy doubt or mysterious detail,  
never forged real confidence for me  
and when I hear someone  
say their faith in science never wavers  
because science represents perfection,  
I talk about a friend who prays  
into a microphone and trusts the radio  
to send his modulations  
swiftly into air  
while his conscience works  
to balance seldom and never  
but never really finds  
the perfect spot and permanence.

## **Canoeing at Night**

By Kevin Casey

Ribbons of bur-reed lap the keel  
as I draw alongside a knot  
of sleeping ducks, bills sheathed  
in wings, unmoved by the whirl  
of the circlets that chase  
my paddle's blade, untouched  
by the stars that shudder  
in my wake. And I could  
almost stay here with them,  
forgo the shore, gliding  
to stillness, head bowed,  
tucked into the pickerel weed  
beneath the weight of all this sky.

### **Common Church Poem**

By Michael Lee Johnson

Sitting here in this pew  
splinters in my butt  
I spend hours in silent prayer.  
I beg Jesus for a quiet life.  
Breathing here is so serene.  
Sounds of vespers, so beautiful  
dagger, so alone, unnoticed.  
You can hear Saints  
clear their eardrums  
Q-Tips cleanse mine.  
I hear their scandals  
I review mine.



## My Ministry Begins

By Mitchell Krockmalnik Grabois

1.

Painted white with blue stripes  
Stars of David on its sides  
the bus left Tel Aviv

I was already asleep  
my serotonin-deprived brain  
anaesthetized with hashish  
and codeine

Time/miles passed  
The bus hit a pothole large enough  
for a child to hide in  
and my lolling head hit the chrome bar  
of the seat ahead  
I startled awake  
disoriented, itchy, nauseous, dry-mouthed

Not yet realizing that I was a holy man  
I'd been looking for a mentor  
and settled on Morris Mordes  
His dated New York hipsterism appealed to me

2.

Morris Mordes and I  
stayed on a kibbutz  
I worked hard  
When I stopped to wipe my brow  
I looked out at the summit  
where Jesus had given his Sermon on the Mount

I don't know why the State of Israel admitted Mordes  
other than the notion that hard work in the Holy Land  
would redeem *any* Jew

Mordes didn't work hard  
He'd always been a slacker and malingerer  
and the proximity to Jesus' mount  
David's tomb Mary's well  
meant nothing to him

For Mordes, the return to the Promised Land  
was just another ineffective rehab

On days off  
we hitchhiked to Afula  
the nearest Arab village  
sat in a restaurant with high cement walls  
and a slowly rotating ceiling fan  
dragged scraps of pita across  
a muddy sludge of hummus and tehini  
and sipped licorice Arak  
until the room swirled around us

whirled us out  
across the road to a pharmacy where they dispensed  
cough syrup heavy with codeine  
no prescription needed

Mordes grinned, revealing yellow teeth  
We wove our way out of that dusty town  
passing the cough syrup bottle between us

I was always aware  
somewhere down in my heart  
that if my father had inhabited his life  
I would never have considered  
spending time with Morris Mordes

3.

All the windows of the bus were open  
I cursed myself  
for forgetting my water bottle in the station  
Dazzling sunshine illuminated the window rivets  
which were the eyes of intrusive bugs

I was sitting on the broad back seat  
rubbing shoulders with an Arab workman  
with a bristly moustache  
(I could feel his muscles hard against my soft shoulder)  
and a middle-aged woman who wore a flowered blouse  
and held a green plastic shopping bag on her lap

The workman ignored me  
I wondered if he hated Jews  
for taking his homeland  
and superimposing theirs

but the woman saw something in me  
I knew it when she laid her hand on my arm  
and I turned to her

Her eyes were sparkling, filled with tears  
She was the very first of those who appealed to me  
for spiritual help

## **An Acre of Sheep**

By A.J. Huffman

have jumped over my bed  
in a motion I now see  
as sickness. Mine  
is the worst kind of emptiness,  
echoing with possibilities. I missed  
hitting my head on their hooves—  
the depressing lack  
of inches that might have been  
salvation. I wish I could follow  
their ghostly galloping  
past midnight and slumber,  
past silence and grazing.  
I want to be their partner,  
their aproned innocent, trailing  
listlessly, not really caring  
where we are.

## **Touching Keys**

By A.J. Huffman

In the middle of work, an impromptu  
storm stirs. A flash of extraneous light  
barely registers as I am focused  
on the blank screen, waiting to receive  
my words. The sky answers  
in guttural growls. My stomach recognizes  
their demand. A muse is hovering  
in the background, chuckling. My dilemma  
is her amusement. Is another potential  
publication worth the risk of electrocution?  
I narrow my eyes, ignore rationale, and continue  
to connect my fingers to electronic device.  
The clicking of the board more calming  
than the rain that finally decided to fall.

## Conditioning

By Scott Thomas Outlar

If you're going to survive  
this shit storm of chaos  
called life,  
you'd better learn to smile  
when your flesh is on fire,  
and laugh when the knife  
gets stabbed in your side,  
and love those that hate you,  
and hate those who have no hatred;  
and learn to rake yourself  
over the coals when no one else will,  
and take your ten lashes  
when petty confession isn't good enough,  
and howl even when there is no moon,  
and sing when there is no music,  
and die again and again  
each night as you fall asleep,  
and wake each morning  
ready to go through the whole  
brutal process again;  
and learn to lie  
when the truth is needed,  
and tell the truth  
as if it were a lie,  
and spit in the wind,  
and tug on the cape of false idols,  
and march to the beat  
of a broken drum,  
and push limits and envelopes and boundaries  
out to the furthest extremes,  
and survive falls from the heights,  
and scale the mountain over and over,  
and not be upset when the time comes  
that you can no longer reach the top.

## The Big Puzzle

By Scott Thomas Outlar

The neon purple haze  
of my pineal gland  
once captured signals  
from the cosmic rays  
as they poured forth  
from the solar sun source,  
and it felt like God  
in my heart  
all the time,  
but then I learned about death,  
up close and personal,  
right in front of my face,  
as I watched the final breath  
of my Father  
whimper forth from his lungs;  
after that,  
the Holy Spirit  
and the New Age  
and Atlantis Reborn  
all seemed a bit too stale,  
too full of cotton candy fluff,  
too adolescent, too primitive,  
and having a full belly of food  
and a full liver of wine  
became more important aspects of life.  
But I haven't forgotten those spiritual ideals –  
the power of synchronicity,  
the awesomeness of higher consciousness.  
No, they are not forgotten,  
but I just needed a little time  
to pick up all the pieces  
and put my heart back together.

## A Different Crow

By John Grey

You can't be the crow with the bullet in its skull.  
You're flying. Your black wings spread wide.

You land on the thin branch with barely a shudder.  
That other crow was curled up on the ground,

a small black heap with blood trickling from its glossy neck.  
And a boy was standing off in the distance,

against the fence, rifle in hand, triumphant.  
You're not that crow. You're the bird that survives

this brief encounter, me walking through the forest,  
you atop the tallest spruce, cawing my presence

but more as reflex action than any warning to the world.  
And I'm not that boy, otherwise you'd be target practice.

A slap on the shoulder, a reassuring, "Good shot son"  
You never knew that crow apparently, otherwise

there'd be more alarm in your voice, more urgency.  
The trees, the brush, would shake with your dark dread.

You're nothing but the crow who sounds the false alarm.  
The real alarm can't learn a thing from you.



## The Age Of Technology

By John Grey

Their ancestors figured  
the sun and the moons were gods  
and now they're fine with cell phones.

A thousand years ago,  
men and women just like them  
gazed up at the sky in awe, in fear.  
Everything was primal.  
Nothing was digital.

If the rains didn't come,  
they knew where  
to go for help.  
They sank to their knees,  
prayed fervently to  
whichever superior being  
was in the immediate heavens.  
When the phones die,  
they recharge or get new ones.

They can live without their spirits  
but, technology-less,  
they'd be wandering in the wilderness.  
No one else to talk to,  
they'd blather to the sun and moon.  
And then the rains would come.

## Contributors

**Jim Babwe** was born and grew taller in Los Angeles and escaped to Encinitas CA, where he takes long walks on the beach several times a week. Unlike most other people, he reduces his chances of getting lost by taking these walks in circles. This also shortens the distance back to the car. He is not an angry man, but (on occasion) he can seem slightly annoyed. He is never bored. He has worked as a grocery clerk, waiter (nice place, too), public school teacher (20+ years) photographer, writer, cab driver, contracts broker (Federal contracts for manufacturers in the specialty metals industry), grant writer--there are a few more and he will probably remember them immediately after he stops writing. Feel free to view his most recent short video, "The Glass Chickens." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ioBcwYQgsbU>

**Jennifer Campbell** is an English professor in Buffalo, NY and a co-editor of *Earth's Daughters*. Her second book of poetry, *Supposed to Love*, was published by Saddle Road Press in 2013. Recent work appears in *Comstock Review*, *The Prompt*, *Oyez Review*, *Common Ground Review*, *Sow's Ear*, *Saranac Review*, *Fugue*, *The Healing Muse*, and *Seems*.

**Kevin Casey** is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and received his graduate degree at the University of Connecticut. His work has appeared recently in *Grasslimb*, *Frostwriting*, *Words Dance*, *Canary*, *decomp*, and others. A new chapbook was published this spring by *Flutter Press*, and another is due out later this year from *Red Dashboard*. He currently teaches literature at a small university in Maine, where he enjoys fishing, snowshoeing and hiking.

**Audrey El-Osta** is a Melbourne writer, studying Linguistics and Literature at Monash University. She lives with four cats, and three humans that don't quite measure up. Her work explores themes of femininity, sexuality and mental illness, has won competitions and been published internationally.

**Mitchell Krockmalnik Grabois** has had over eight hundred of his poems and fictions appear in literary magazines in the U.S. and abroad, including *The Bond Street Review*. He has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize for work published in 2012, 2013, and 2014. His novel, *Two-Headed Dog*, based on his work as a clinical psychologist in a state hospital, is available for Kindle and Nook, or as a print edition. He lives in Denver.

**Allison Grayhurst** is a full member of the League of Canadian Poets. She has over 450 poems published in more than 225 international journals and anthologies. Her book *Somewhere Falling* was published by Beach Holme Publishers in 1995. Since then she has published eleven other books of poetry and six collections with Edge Unlimited

Publishing. Prior to the publication of *Somewhere Falling* she had a poetry book published, *Common Dream*, and four chapbooks published by The Plowman. Her poetry chapbook *The River is Blind* was published by Ottawa publisher above/ground press in December 2012. More recently, her chapbook *Surrogate Dharma* was published by Kind of a Hurricane Press, Barometric Pressures Author Series in October 2014. She lives in Toronto with her family. She also sculpts, working with clay; [www.allisongrayhurst.com](http://www.allisongrayhurst.com)

**John Grey** is an Australian poet, US resident. Recently published in *New Plains Review*, *Perceptions* and *Sanskrit* with work upcoming in *South Carolina Review*, *Gargoyle*, *Owen Wister Review* and *Louisiana Literature*.

**A.J. Huffman** has published eleven solo chapbooks and one joint chapbook through various small presses. Her new poetry collections, *Another Blood Jet* (Eldritch Press) and *A Few Bullets Short of Home* (mgv2>publishing) are now available from their respective publishers. She has two additional poetry collections forthcoming: *Degeneration* from Pink Girl Ink, and *A Bizarre Burning of Bees* from Transcendent Zero Press. She is a three-time Pushcart Prize nominee, and has published over 2200 poems in various national and international journals, including *Labletter*, *The James Dickey Review*, *Bone Orchard*, *EgoPHobia*, and *Kritya*. She is also the founding editor of Kind of a Hurricane Press. [www.kindofahurricaneypress.com](http://www.kindofahurricaneypress.com)

**Michael Lee Johnson** lived ten years in Canada during the Vietnam era: now known as the Illinois poet, from Itasca, IL. Today he is a poet, freelance writer, photographer who experiments with poetography (blending poetry with photography), and small business owner in Itasca, Illinois, who has been published in more than 875 small press magazines in 27 countries, he edits 9 poetry sites. Michael is the author of *The Lost American: From Exile to Freedom*, several chapbooks of poetry, including *From Which Place the Morning Rises*, *Challenge of Night and Day*, and *Chicago Poems*. He also has over 71 poetry videos on YouTube.

**Scott Thomas Outlar** survived both the fire and the flood - now he dances in celebration while waiting on the next round of chaos to commence. Otherwise, he keeps things fairly chill, spending the days fluxing and flowing with the Tao River, laughing at life's existential nature, and writing prose-fusion poetry dedicated to the Phoenix Generation. His words have appeared recently in venues such as *Dissident Voice*, *Dead Snakes*, *W.I.S.H.*, *Underground Books*, *Medusa's Kitchen*, *Corner Club Press*, *The Chaffey Review*, and *Section 8 Magazine*. More about Scott's writing can be found at [17numa.wordpress.com](http://17numa.wordpress.com).

**Books from  
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by Eric Evans

*The Anatomy of a Cratedigger*  
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