

The Bond Street Review



Winter 2024

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From the editors

Hello all – this is Eric writing. I read an interview with another publisher a while back where they noted how whenever there was some kind of natural disaster like a flood, for example, the next round of submissions would inevitably feature a number of pieces about water and its awesome power. It's an observation that has stuck with me and that I think about every time we begin a new reading period for the next *Bond Street* issue. What's everyone thinking about out there? What are they trying to process and figure out? How will all those words converse with one another side by side? And, sure enough, I thought about it again for this issue – and am happy to note that the writers featured in the following pages have a lot to say about a lot of things. I encourage you to spend a little time with them and discover what they have on their minds.

Thank you for continuing to return (or for joining us for the first time) – it never goes unappreciated. We have every confidence that you'll find something worthy of your attention in this issue. And that you'll share *Bond Street* with those in your respective circles once you've read the final page.

With gratitude,
Eric Evans & Kathy Sochia
Co-editors

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Forward or How to Cope with Rejection

By Jim Babwe

You see a tightrope.

I see a bridge

This difference of perception
should not make us enemies,
but if you choose
fear over courage
do not be surprised
when I take no tentative steps

Enthusiasm
is better fuel
than fear.

Maybe delusion blinds me
to potential consequences.

You see a tightrope.

I see a bridge.

This difference of perception
provides me with opportunities
to meet interesting travelers
who may not know exactly
where they are going
or exactly how
they plan to get there.

I admire those
who refuse to calculate asset ratios
and interest rates
when they buy gum.

Sit and giggle and point.

Exchange whispered snide remarks
among lazy spectators
when I lose balance and fall.

Snicker
while I stand again,
extend strides--
always forward.

You see a tightrope.

I see a bridge.

Etiquette in Society, in Business, in Politics, and at Home

By Robert Beveridge

I guess I must
have squeezed
the wineglass
a bit too hard
since it shattered
in my hand

she wouldn't let me
help clean it up
while her husband
bandaged it
he was only half-
joking when he
poured my second
in a whiskey tumbler

but that broke too
so both palms bled

I felt I needed confession
but at that late hour
we had no priests to call

the rumors had them
all dead at the hand
of some left-wing
junta anyway

so I bled and drank
with a straw
for the rest of the night.

Recital

By Robert Beveridge

We are bound to our flesh.
The ties are strong, but not
unbreakable; the spirit
may alight, coaxed
with the proper ritual.

The trick is to dance close
to the blade, close enough
to fool the skin into the belief
of separation, to whirl,
to sling the blade, court
death. Thus will the valkyries
come, the spirit fly.

She is small, blonde, the perfect
picture of the maiden most popular
for sacrifice. She has curled
both hands around the hilt,
hefted the blade taller
than her body. Her audience
sits quiet, fingernails set
into the soft wood of chairs.

The blade in slow arcs
alight in the glow of bonfire
and lust, the steps
of the dance at first
solemn, safe, the sword
in and out of light between legs,
across the back, overhead,
and the pace quickens,
the blade inches closer
with each pass until light
on shaft strobes against eyes,
the maiden in a hornpipe
with a lethal partner,
stray hairs sheared
float slow

on the fire's breeze.

Singing Yourself to Sleep

By Robert Beveridge

The woman in the lobby asks me
if I'm from the Chinese Rescue
Service. I am not here to deliver
newspapers. I am here neither
to pick up nor to drop off
passengers. I have no classified
status with the United States
government nor 40% off coupons
good this weekend only at Sak's.
I have not come to empty
the garbage nor relieve the security
guard. I have not come to take
your temperature. I have not come
to take your guns. I do not have
your prescriptions, your kitten,
your quotidian mix of angst and ennui.
And no, the Chinese Rescue Service
dismissed me for flat feet.

My Day

By Ed Brickell

In my day

 we drank hot lemonade
 straight from the faucet
and houses were all painted the same color,
 a time of sacrifice and laughter,
 although we did kick some serious ass
 when necessary. Times weren't so much hard
 as horizontal. Televisions were white instead of
black and white, you couldn't adjust the volume
 without a stick shift,
and I never saw such rain in all my life.

Ministers took names during services, made index cards.

 Sometimes they called out the names,
 pointing fingers. It kept people praying,
let me tell you. There was one radio station
in the whole world, it played one song over and over. To this day
 I can't remember what it was, although I do remember
 always waking up to groceries on our doorstep,
 not knowing how they got there.
 We ate like fiends from Hell. There was no sharing,
 it was considered presumptuous. Chemicals fell from the sky,
kept the cars clean. Anger was the default and we loved it.

People sold grenades door to door and no one thought twice about it,
prices were lower that way. We lived with our diseases, gave them rooms
 in our houses and a place at the table. Nothing was left out,
 miracles not unheard of, but space aliens? That was
the government's problem. I mean I can't believe
 what I see in the skies these days,
everyone acting like it's their business.

 The only thing that's really our business is
our hands and feet,
our own hands and feet. That's what Daddy said,
 and Daddy, well, in my day he was Daddy enough
 for you and me both.

Why You Should Put an Envelope in the Freezer

By Ed Brickell

There's a way to remember everything.

It's a matter of envelopes, and freezers,
forgetting what should go where.

Sure, things are made in China,
made in the USA.
But for whom, and why?

That sort of scissors-looking thing
in the kitchen –
you can't recall how to work it,
when you bought it, what it's supposed
to do.

But if you made up something new for it to do,
you wouldn't have to remember

what They wanted you to do with it.
And if you put envelopes in freezers,

sometimes you might remember they are where
they aren't supposed to be,

and before
frost forms on the glue strip,

your geography blows open. But
you have to start small.

Begin with envelopes, with freezers.
Invent new names and places

to liberate what's lost and found,
Until forgetting is all you do.
And when there is only forgetting,

it's not forgetting any more.

Historic Site

By Ed Brickell

Murder hornets mutter in the peeling eaves
Where flags of no known nation hang.
Mom and Dad are never coming home from work,
They've thrown away their burner phones.

"It's heritage, not hate," their son lectures the cops.
"Everything but the furniture is original."
Their daughter watches her own arrest on TV,
The cable dish pings endless conspiracy.

It seems all their dreams turn to virus.
Knees kneel on each bedroom's warped floor,
Faces pray in an Old Testament rictus.
Mongrels mount each other in the driveway.

Just ask the Founding Fathers: it began with gunplay,
Ducked and covered through centuries of phobia
To the post-Truth you can't teach in school:
A car on blocks, guarding a Victorian mansion.

Finishing What We Started

By Kevin Brown

My father died when I was
flossing my teeth,
or that's when my mother
called to tell me, anyway.

And I finished flossing,
as there was much now
that was finished:

my going through golf
scores—who birdied,
who bogied, who blew it—

before the birthday phone
call I would try to
force beyond five minutes,
maybe stretch to seven,

even double digits if
I could use the Masters
to keep conversation going;

the biannual questions about
my car, whichever one I
was driving that summer

or Christmas, about how
it was driving, as if I
had any answer beyond
Same as always or when I

had somebody other than me
change the oil, rotate
the tires, perform some
other service my father

would have understood; hours
spent in recliners in front
of college football or basketball,
depending on the season,

pretending I remembered
enough from a childhood
when I cared about those pasttimes
to contribute one comment

per hour, his normal rate,
keep the conversation moving
from one decade to the next.

In other words, everything
was finished
with one phone call.

On a Monday Morning

By Marietta Calvanico

I watched him in the garden
through the newly-washed kitchen window
clear, clean water spraying
seemingly without end
arcing over and across
heirlooms
plums
cherries
and the multicolored ones I call "littles"

Before I wash the three perfect peaches
he picked yesterday
I smell them
I marvel at the unexpected offering
produced by the adolescent tree he put in
just last year
I taste the warm, sweet fruit—
a testament to life here with him
an embarrassment of riches

The Ice-Skating Children

By Marietta Calvanico

The ice-skating children are fearless
without worry of falling
or even of the tightness or soreness
of muscles tomorrow,
they glide over frozen water
they glide fueled by imagination,
unbridled, untainted

Other children wake each day to hunger
and fear of worm-filled water,
creatures that will bore their way
to the surface,
through bloated bellies
while these children glide on, privileged
to hold onto their innocence a while longer

Tomorrow may be warmer
but that will not stop the children
from coming and skating,
machines will take water
and turn it into ice,
predictable solid surface—
nothing to fear

(NOTE: Thank you Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter for working tirelessly for safe, clean water)

West Sun

By Marietta Calvanico

At the end of a long
summer day
the west sun blazes against
my bathroom window

architects are mindful
of that annoyance
planning glass to welcome
sun of southern exposure

but not that piercing
late-afternoon-into-evening west sun
that boldly announces
the day's end is near

my east is no longer
rising, fresh and young
with years to come
but I am piercing
I am powerful

Yellow

By Marietta Calvanico

When my brother and I
were just kids
he pronounced that yellow
was his favorite color

I couldn't call yellow
because it already belonged
to the one who was older
and always had dibs

So the first bedroom
that was mine alone
was blue with flowered wallpaper
and nothing yellow

Today, my brother has
a shining, clean house
the walls are white, the floors are white
there is nothing yellow

I'm calling yellow
every day, inside and out
my walls are golden
the garden roses—yellow

Extended

By Jennifer Campbell

And so what
if the universe
is laying down tracks
as you go along,
the next footfall
making itself up
and available
just as you need it?

It wasn't long ago
they thought the earth
was flat. Maybe
it has improved
on its speed,
creating the winding
countryside in Ireland,
and each time you arrive
at a roundabout sign,
a new town is laid out
before you?

No different
than a video game
dreamed into being
or a retention pond
saturated with fish.
You notice it,
and then it exists.
One jazz note
stitched to the next
and then the next
and the peach creep
of daybreak
is revealing itself.

Dead and Cold

By Alex Carrigan

After Robert Allen's "The Running"

It was dead and cold in the hospital.
Even the sound of dust falling on the floor was too loud.

It was too loud for the woman staring at the vending machine,
her eyes drawn in by the spirals that held the snacks.

The snacks wouldn't make her feel full or satisfied right now. She had
sworn most of the items off for her diet, but she was close to breaking it now.

Breaking it now would be accepted by anyone who saw her holding
vigil at the rows of candy bars. Some might offer her change if she's short.

She's short of desire to return to the room. She was sent out with a list
of requests from the others holding vigil at the woman lying in bed.

The woman lying in bed didn't have any requests. The doctors had
said she wasn't even likely aware anyone was in the room with her.

The room with her missing guest, stuck endlessly staring at the vending machine.
It was dead and cold in the hospital.

Former Mother

By Matthew Dawkins

Grief is a mother

She teaches us every thing we know about what to do with death,
who should and should not cry at funerals
when to set the doves free and when to
cage them.

Grief is a mother

She is not the aftermath of the long-suffering
but she has birthed it into the shape of a child who cries all night
that bites the nipple which feeds it
that will grow into a man steeped in tradition
taller than most things,
faster than the rest of us,
teeth too familiar with tear.

Grief is my mother

and I try not think about what that makes me
as I watch another car go over the long-dead body of someone's pet.
All good things come before the eulogy. The mangled animal will
be remembered smiling

but it's owner is owner no longer
and my grief would be a former mother
and suddenly the final asphalt end of a busy highway is beginning to rhyme with
Freedom.

Virginia, Monsters Aren't Real

By Su-Ling Dickinson

there was never a monster
under my childhood bed
“Virginia, monsters are not real”
nor the ghosts in the closet
longing for life and playing dress-up
“Virginia, who would wear your old, tattered clothes?”
UFOs never appeared outside my bedroom window
to take me away for a lobotomy
and fix me in my dreams
“Virginia, you are imagining things”
the scratching in the walls wasn't a coven
raining hell down on the patriarchy
“Dear Virginia, it is all in your head”
I sit crossed-legged with a bowl of Frosted Flakes
in front of the mirror with a childlike stupor
as all of the monsters appeared
in their human masks, insidious and hungry.

In the Goldilocks Zone

By Ceri Eagling

Lenses in green or pink
or gray, you could get in an hour.
Amber took longer, had to be ordered.
I said okay.

Because green smacks of naïveté,
and rose of a wish to deny what's true,
and who wants to stare through *gray*-tinted
sunglasses -- each time the sun disappears
see gray on gray –

when you can allay
the gloom with a lightly-curated view:
gilded skies in January,
snow with a mellow glow,
firethorn berries afizz with intensity.

And in July, why not
Magnify the pop of daylilies rocking the interstate,
ruby rays igniting the cordyline?

It's true, a pristine cloud may appear
a tiny bit sulphurous, white impatiens
imperceptibly drab, sunflowers suffer
a minuscule drop in pizzazz.

But see how a just-right amber glaze
will even the scales: soften the eye-abrading
purple of bougainvillea; temper
the blood-red rage that dogs our days.

The Tribe

By John Grey

They're a small tribe whose customs, whose beliefs,
whose actions, have no effect, for good or bad,
on the rest of the globe. Their name is unpronounceable
and untranslatable but it could well mean 'inoffensive'

in the local dialect. They are self-sufficient and
harmless to one another. They're even friendly to
newcomers though that's been their undoing.
There is no word in their language for 'blame' or 'revenge.'

So they have suffered greatly from the intrusion
of others but there's been no anger on their part,
no retaliation. It's unlikely they'll be around in
another hundred years. Maybe not even fifty.

One just caught a sickness he's not built up
a resistance to. Given time, it will spread alarmingly.
And another has traded in his useless diamond
for a powerful rifle. No one is jealous of the man

but they all do want one of their own. They are
uncivilized and civilization cannot let that continue.
So the women wear lipstick and the men drink alcohol.
Innocence is motiveless. Extinction has its reasons.

Life History Of A Living Boy

By John Grey

Decided to end it all.

Failed.

Sent to the psychiatric ward.

Locked in.

Watched carefully.

Plastic knives only.

No belts.

Padded walls.

Tough to be self-destructive
when the self has no way
to destruct.

No visitors.

Felt worthless.

Everything, everyone on staff
blocking the path to death.

Doctors looked in
from time to time.

That's the worst thing about existence.
The constant proof.

Hell.

So what.

Heaven.

Pastor came by.

Left in a hurry
along with his roughed-up god.

Continued to live.

Made it to another birthday.

No cake.

No candles.

Just breaths.

Phoenix AZ, 3 AM

by Scott Holstad

Walking down to the corner 7-Eleven there in Phoenix, sidling in for an early morning newspaper and a need for the spring training box scores, I didn't look up until I reached the counter and saw not one but two people staring at me, one with a scarred red bandana wrapped around his face, the other, eyes watering, whimpering, dirty auto in mouth. It took me about one second to realize I was three feet from death. I made a sudden dash and leapt for the door, hearing the gun roar and amidst bits of brain and gristle now littering the place, I fled down the pitch-dark street only to have five staccato shots fired at me from a shadowed amped up sedan.

My black lab, Babe, bought one in her side out in front of the house, and she flopped over, panting final breaths. I couldn't get to her then, but cut behind a neighbor's house, bent over, sides heaving, waiting.

When I was robbed at gunpoint down the street one month later, I moved to L.A. to escape the violence.

Racist Bone

By Zeke Jarvis

Ferguson found out that he did, in fact, have exactly one racist bone in his body. The doctors found that it was his left femur. Ferguson's initial reaction was denial. Like in the stages of grief. He told the doctors that it just didn't make any sense, he got along with all of his coworkers of color. The doctors assured Ferguson that he could have the bone painlessly removed via surgery, letting him recover and avoid the infection that would come. The doctor also told him that Ferguson might not be as inclusive and empathetic as he thought.

Ferguson declined the doctors' offer, assuring them that he would be able to right himself, to move through life without having to use his left leg at all. The doctors tried explaining that it wouldn't matter, because the infection would spread and that he would come to hate anyone who wasn't white. But Ferguson would not listen. He tried to lean and hop and crawl his way through life. The doctors had been right, of course, and the infection from the bone radiated out, spreading throughout his body.

It was subtle at first, Ferguson would only watch *Friends* over and over again instead of shows with diverse casts. Then it was Ferguson wanting to put ranch or mayo on everything. But it didn't take long for things to escalate. Ferguson couldn't help leaning on his left leg (his hip and back were hurting, and he told himself that occasionally using his leg was just a small moral compromise), and, as he used it more, he started to believe that "they're taking our jobs" and "I just don't know why they have to change how history is taught."

Another issue was that people would try to explain it to Ferguson, but Ferguson could only double down. The infection was spreading, and he had begun to use his leg constantly. He told himself that it was okay, that he wasn't the problem. He told himself that amputating his whole leg would be traumatic. That it wasn't fair that he'd have to start over just to help other people out. People he didn't even know and who didn't love America.

By the end, Ferguson was almost totally alone. The people who had thought he was a good guy could no longer tolerate what he was saying. What he put out into the world. And so the only people he could connect to were the other ones who were also deeply infected. Who felt like they couldn't remove the worst parts from themselves. And plenty of others looked on. And they shook their heads. But nothing changed.

Faded Blue Carpet

By Lon Kauffman

Two islands.
Hers with a nightstand
rich with memories.
His with a rail.

It's dark, he screams
the rail responds.
He remains asleep.
She, awake
a wreck on her island.

Parkinson's allows him
to act out his dreams.
The now violent episodes
were once endearing.
She remembers the night he strummed
an invisible guitar
and sang her love songs.

Mornings she swims
through their ocean of faded blue carpet
to the sandbar
where their bed once floated.
She curls, eyes closed.
as the waves drown her thoughts.

Last night he prayed
on his beach.
She knelt on her bed
and crossed herself.
He passed, a castaway of his disease.
She drifts alone in an ocean
of faded blue carpet.

A Perfect Day

By Eric Lande

It was early November and there had been a hard frost the night before. The sun was rising in the east, shining through his bedroom window. The forecast said there was a 30% chance for snow.

It would be a perfect day.

He looked outside. A fine day for a walk in the woods surrounding his lake.

He would take the trail bordering his lake, leading to the upper trails where he could survey his lake below with his home in the distance.

The air was invigorating. It might be his last opportunity to walk the trails before the first real snowfall that marked the start of winter.

He crossed the wooden bridge under which flowed a stream from the dam that retained the water in his lake.

He climbed the incline and entered his forest.

His walk would be challenging. He hadn't walked more than one of the trails during the summer months. Today he intended to walk them all.

At the top of the incline, he stopped and looked around, marveling at the stillness of the forest that was all around him.

He continued, walking along the trail that bordered his lake.

At the end of his lake, the beavers lived in mounded huts. When he created his lake, he left the beavers their habitat, for beavers were the indigenous inhabitants of the area.

At a juncture, he bore right and began his ascent to the upper trails.

He was finding it tiring.

Soon he was walking through a patch of raspberry canes, devoid of their fruit, eaten by the bears.

A little farther on he came to an area of dead trees where, two years before, he had seen, in the distance, two bear cubs climbing. Today there were no bear cubs, just the remains of dead trees.

He continued along the trail which, at times, was steep. He found he had to make a greater effort to reach the plateau where there would be a view of the other side of his mountain.

It was almost 1:00 and he wasn't yet halfway.

He looked up. Overhead, the sky was a deep blue but streaked with white clouds. The air was now warmed by the sun.

He decided to rest. He gathered some of the dried leaves that matted the trail, and laying on this mat, he shut his eyes.

Soon he was asleep.

The white streaks in the blue sky came together forming a mass, covering what had remained of the sun, hiding it and its warmth from the earth below.

Snow began to fall.

The man continued sleeping for he was tired from his excursion. As he slept, he dreamt he was in his coops and it was time to feed the chickens.

Snow continued to fall. Thick flakes covered the man's prone body with a white blanket.

Time passed.

The man lay still.

It was a perfect day.

mi apá

by Marissa Martinez

my dad is mexican

well, no he's not

he is, but it's the most complicated simple answer i can give you

mi papá es mexicano, es chicano

pero tampoco es la verdad

mi papá — apá when i'm feeling real ethnic — is my daddy

he's ty martinez, born tyrone robert black

he changed his ID, took out the Black in his name

but not in practice

so now i'm marissa martinez, an unearned jane doe

not marissa black, whose memory of a family tree stops at ronald black

a grandfather whose name she once forgot, so great was his distance from her life

now i'm marissa martinez, who pronounces her name with dull "uhs" and not "ahs"

muh-rih-suh

who learned Spanish in school

who sticks out at a family reunion when her dad

sorry, her papá,

is momentarily in the bathroom

who wears a black outline that grows larger outside of the house

whose great-grandmother, who isn't even the one who immigrated that's how long we've fucking
been here, rubbed her hands in the back of the car to recite

mi niña preciosa, bonita, inteligente

willing it into existence

my dad is mexican

but not really

Adaptations

By Marissa Matrinez

my salvi friend asks me to heat the tortillas for her party on the stove
back there, the tortillas are fresh

they can put them in the microwave
but that would give our american ones a sour taste
she doesn't know how to flip them, slightly charred
without burning her fingers

i once asked if she ever ate the classic mexican american snack
where you wrap butter, sugar, cinnamon in a flour tortilla
a makeshift cinnamon roll

key word being "american," she emphasized, dismissive of this bastardization
can struggle meals still be traditional, generational, if they're passed down
in america?

every trip, before i return to dc, i go to at least three stores
hoping to find the exact brand of tortillas i need to make it through
the next few months without home

El Milagro, they're called
and a miracle they are
the problem is, everyone else knows it too
and i usually come back to dc empty-handed
on the off-chance i find them, i grab three packets to stuff in the freezer
i've created a new science
defrost a chunk of tortillas in the microwave
reheat the now-soppy flatbread on the stovetop
leave pieces stuck to the grates where there shouldn't be any

the closest h-mart is 10 miles away
there is an online delivery service but it's not the same
nothing can be
the fluorescent aisles
the self-imposed panopticon of "you don't belong here"
the correct snacks-to-essentials ratio you buy to
assure everyone you aren't as foreign to this cuisine as you look

grandma asks to send you some ingredients
even though it would be far more expensive to do that
than suck up the uber ride to east falls church (the best one) and back
you ask for black garlic, something you can't find in the store or online
she laughs

it take two weeks to make, she says
you know she will forget by then

The Almost Game

By Mark Mitchell

Unfold your board.
It looks nothing like
that picture on its box.

Unpack counter.
They seem almost human
but hold no face.

Your fingertips will
teach rules in their own
time, if you need to know.

Don't bother seeking
an opponent. They will come
and go if it pleases them.

Go ahead. Start now.
Roll the blank dice
then follow invisible lines.

Bipolar Gaslight

By Lydia Nightingale

When dreams
Are delusions
To be happy
Is mania
To be sad
Is a hole to
Beige walls hung
With framed blooms
The smell of cleaner
Decaf coffee
One pill in a cup
Electrode and gel
Counting down
100, 99, 98, 97
Seven years and
Three pills now
Cautious joy
Sad's lost its teeth
But dreams still
Seem hollow
And the gaslight
Still burns.

A-fib

By Tim Pilgrim

I cannot tell the doctor's lie
from heart flutter,
vow to do more squats
so blood won't pool
in an atrium, clot. My fake self
believes I passed all tests,
sneaks me past surgery theaters
to a movie set. We cower
on a cliff above a plywood town,
keep a sharp lookout
for the sheriff said to have catheters
in each holster. Fake me offers
a noosed rope, says *belay*
to the general store, bring back brie,
ice cream, chocolate, wine.
Hunger drives me to the edge.
I strap both ventricles down.

Storm Over Little Lake St. Germain

By Kenneth Pobo

Pink and lavender gaywings,
a small rainbow
flag just unfurled.

We go to bed in
the sweet darkness
of the woods. Thunder
over the lake. Lightning.

We get up to watch
water light
up for maybe
a half an hour.
In the morning,

a smell of wet
pines. The sun
on geese
drifting off shore.

The Last Three Dahlias

By Kenneth Pobo

My friend counts up
losses each autumn:
her mother, father,

and this year a sick brother.
A season like a narrowing
tunnel, darkness

leading into darkness
despite thousands of lit
matches disguised as leaves

dropping. Her three
dahlias, vital, filly open,
refuse to enter

the tunnel. She won't
pick them for a bouquet,
lets them thrive even

as nights slip
into the forties. Three
temporary stays against

a wither than must come,
frost on petals, the sun
too weak to save them.

When She Drinks

By Laura Shell

And so, she drinks because she has a problem. Because she has *problems*. So, she will drive the 0.56 miles to the general store with a buzz to purchase two \$7 bottles of white, rot-gut wine, which she will drink that day, leaving just a couple of swallows for when she wakes the next morning, and she will repeat this day after day. And when she drinks this white, rot-gut wine, she thinks of the past and she cries and she sleeps and she wakes and she cries and she sleeps because this is what her mother has taught her.

Japanese Hornets Fly Blind

By Gene Stevenson

Like the lawn turning brown in
summer sun, mid-heat wave,
like leaves turning red in August
weeks after rain tiptoed away,
our halting words evaporate in
heavy air, unsettled evening.

Around us, cicadas sound dizzy,
Japanese hornets fly blind, bump
window glass with an unsteady
dint, dint. From across the creek
comes the maul & wedge of a car
with faulty exhaust, faulty driver.

The hesitation & wavering are
too much, our overweight limbs
too much, the noise of squirrels
tearing through leaves too much.
Bring sleep, bring yet more sleep,
bring a long, uninterrupted sleep.

Doors close, stairs creak, water
running through pipes grows
distant as if from the next building
or another county. We are left with
the *click, click* of the old clock, so
many sheep over a split-rail fence.

The coming winter will be longer,
colder than most, likely devoid of
snow. We will carry the dry spell on
our backs into the new year ahead,
our mouths dusty as if we had been
eating the ashes of last year's grass.

CONTRIBUTORS

Jim Babwe is a semi-retired, grizzled veteran of 30 years as a public school teacher. In addition to his work as an educator, he has worked as a professional photographer, digital designer, restaurant waiter, grocery clerk, taxi cab driver, contracts broker (with the US Government Agency), college radio broadcaster, journalist, non-profit corporation co-founder, assessment editor (with McGraw Hill Publishers), and writer. He also has a reputation in the formerly sleepy little surf mecca of Encinitas CA as a general goof-off who has no malicious intent. He believes that poetry as a competitive endeavor is fundamentally silly, but he still refuses to pass up an open mike or a poetry slam. He is never bored.

Robert Beveridge (he/him) makes noise (xterminal.bandcamp.com) and writes poetry on unceded Mingo land (Akron, OH). Recent/upcoming appearances in *Pulsebeat*, *La Presa*, and *The Penmen Review*, among others.

Ed Brickell's poetry has most recently been shared in *Hiram Poetry Review*, *Bowery Gothic*, *Modern Haiku*, *Loch Raven Review*, *Susurrus*, *Alternate Route*, and others. He is among a group of international poets included in the recent haiku anthology *To Live Here*, focused on the idea of home and published by UK-based Wee Sparrow Press. He has also been twice featured by Hidden Peak Press as part of their weekly Artist Spotlight. He lives in Dallas, Texas and is a mildly anxious supporter of Liverpool FC.

Kevin Brown (he/him) teaches high school English in Nashville. He has published three books of poetry: *Liturgical Calendar: Poems* (Wipf and Stock); *A Lexicon of Lost Words* (winner of the Violet Reed Haas Prize for Poetry, Snake Nation Press); and *Exit Lines* (Plain View Press). He also has a memoir, *Another Way: Finding Faith, Then Finding It Again*, and a book of scholarship, *They Love to Tell the Stories: Five Contemporary Novelists Take on the Gospels*. You can find out more about him and his work on Twitter at [@kevinbrownwrite](https://twitter.com/kevinbrownwrite) or at <http://kevinbrownwrites.weebly.com/>.

Marietta Calvanico built a career in advertising/marketing, worked with her architect husband in client relations and doing agency work, raised a daughter who is a teacher, and played bass in dive bars. She has shared her homes with many cats. Her poetry, fiction and memoir pieces have appeared online and in print.

Jennifer Campbell (she/her/hers) is a writing professor in Buffalo, NY, and a co-editor of *Earth's Daughters*. She has two poetry collections, *Supposed to Love* and *Driving Straight Through*, and a chapbook of reconstituted fairytale poems called *What Came First*. Jennifer's work has recently appeared in *The Healing Muse* and *Paterson Review* and is forthcoming in *Slipstream* and *ArLiJo*.

Alex Carrigan (he/him) is a Pushcart-nominated editor, poet, and critic from Alexandria, VA. He is the author of *Now Let's Get Brunch: A Collection of RuPaul's Drag Race Twitter Poetry* (Querencia Press, 2023) and *May All Our Pain Be Champagne: A Collection of Real Housewives Twitter Poetry* (Alien Buddha Press, 2022). He has appeared in *The Broadkill Review*, *Sage Cigarettes*, *Barrelhouse*, *Fifth Wheel Press*, *Cutbow Quarterly*, and more. Visit carriganak.wordpress.com or follow him on Twitter [@carriganak](https://twitter.com/carriganak) for more info.

Matthew Dawkins is a Jamaican award-winning author and poet. Matthew's work explores subject matters including adolescence, race, nationhood, and mental health. His work has been featured in *Westwind Poetry*, *Indolent Books*, *Pinhole Poetry*, and more. Matthew was the 2022-2023 Student Writer in Residence at Western University where he graduated with a B.A. in Arts and Humanities and English Literature.

Steven Deutsch spent many years as a professor at Penn State University studying the fluid dynamics of heart assist pumps, mechanical heart valves, and drag reduction. Since retirement, he has concentrated, with the help of his critique group, on writing poetry. He has published in dozens of print and online literary journals. He was nominated for the Pushcart Prize in 2017, 2018, and 2021. He is poetry editor of *Centered Magazine* and was the first Poet-in-Residence at the Bellefonte Art Museum. His chapbook and full collections *Perhaps You Can*, *Persistence of Memory*, *Going, Going, Gone*, and *Slipping Away* were published by Kelsay Books. In 2022, his collection *Brooklyn* was awarded the Sinclair Poetry Prize from Evening Street Press.

Su-Ling Dickinson is a 36-year-old writer and artist based out of Portland, Oregon. She is originally from Newark, New Jersey and a former 2nd grade teacher. Su-Ling enjoys being a total cinephile, photography, and "a damn fine cup of coffee". Her writing is inspired by raw emotion, cultural collision, and latent content.

Ceri Eagling grew up in Wales but has lived in the US for many years. Her poetry has been published in *Antiphon*, *Allegro Poetry*, *Verse-Virtual*, *Riggwelter*, *The Wild Word*, *Songs of Eretz*, and in the anthology, *Up Your Ars Poetica*.

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

Scott C. Holstad has authored 50+ books & his work has appeared in the *Minnesota Review*, *Exquisite Corpse*, *Caffeine*, *Pacific Review*, *Santa Clara Review*, *the TODAY Show*, Yahoo!, AOL, MSN, *Long Shot*, *Wormwood Review*, *Chiron Review*, *Misfit*, *Southern Review*, *Palo Alto Review*, *Main Street Rag*, *Processed World*, *Word Riot*, *The Big Windows Review*, *Ginosko Literary Journal* and *Poetry Ireland Review*. He's moved 35+ times & now lives near Gettysburg with his family. He loves geopolitics, books, vinyl & hockey & his website can be found at <https://hankrules2011.com>.

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Lon Kauffman retired and began writing poetry in Winter 2021. A Professor of Molecular Biology, he served as Vice Chancellor & Provost at the U. of Illinois at Chicago and subsequently, Hunter College (CUNY). Lon's first published poem appeared last year in *The American Journal of Poetry*. More recently he was featured as a Poet of the Week by the *Poetry Super Highway*.

E.P. Lande was born in Montreal, but has lived most of his life in the south of France and Vermont, where he now lives with his partner, writing and caring for more than 100 animals, many of which are rescues. Previously, he taught at l'Université d'Ottawa where he served as Vice-Dean of his faculty, and he has owned and managed country inns and free-standing restaurants. Recently, his stories have been accepted by more than twenty journals including *Bewildering Stories*, *Archtype* and *Literally Stories*.

Marissa Martinez is a journalist from Chicago. She enjoys writing about race and identity. In her free time, she enjoys cooking and watching *Real Housewives* like the comedians they are.

Mark Mitchell studied writing and medieval literature at the University of California at Santa Cruz with Raymond Carver, George Hitchcock, Barbara Hull and Robert M. Durling. He has published over one thousand poems in various periodicals over the years, including in the anthologies *Good Poems*, *American Places* (Viking/Penguin), *Line Drives* (Southern Illinois University Press), *Sport Literate* (Aethlon Press) *Hunger Enough* (Puddinghouse Press) *Retail Woes* (Local Gems Press) and *Zeus Seduces the Wicked Stepmother in the Saloon of the Gingerbread House* (Winterhawk Press). Several full-length collections of my poems have been published including, *Lent* 1999 by Leaf Garden Press collection, *Starting from Tu Fu* by Encircle Publications and recently, *Roshi*, *San Francisco* from Norfolk Press. His chapbooks include *Three Visitors* (which won the 2010 Negative Capability Press International Chapbook competition), *Artifacts and Relics*, and *Fishing in the Knife Drawer*. He has published two novels, *Knight Prisoner* (Vagabondage Press) and *The Magic War* (Loose Leaves Publishing). His poems have also appeared in many magazines over the last thirty years, including *The Comstock Review*, *J Journal*, *kayak*, *Blue Unicorn*, *Black Bough*, *Santa Barbara Review*, *Pearl*, *Lilliput Review*, *Runes*, *Buddhist Poetry Review*, *Plainsongs*, *Snakeskin*, *Matchbook Poetry*, *HeyDay Magazine*, *Indigo Rising*, *Mas Tequila*, *The Lyric* and *Poem*. Recently he has been nominated for both a Best of the Web Award and two Pushcart Prizes.

Lydia J. Nightingale is a writer, actor, and public historian originally from Troy, NY. She holds a BA in Theatre Arts from SUNY New Paltz and an MA in Public History from the State University at Albany. Her play *Adele in Berlin* showed in the Rochester Fringe Festival in September 2023 to two sold-out audiences and she is currently working on a queer romance novel set in the 1950s titled *Drawn*. Follow her adventures at lydiajnightingale.com or on Instagram: @ljnightingale

Pacific Northwest poet **Timothy Pilgrim**, a 76-year old Montanan and emeritus university professor, has over 600 published poems accepted at publications like *Seattle Review*, *Santa Ana River Review*, *Red Coyote*, *The Bond Street Review* and *Sierra Nevada Review* in the U.S., and *Windsor Review* in Canada, *Otoliths* in Australia and *Prole Press* in the United Kingdom. Pilgrim is author of *Mapping water* and *Seduced by metaphor*. See timothypilgrim.org for more.

Kenneth Pobo (he/him) is the author of twenty-one chapbooks and nine full-length collections. Recent books include *Bend of Quiet* (Blue Light Press), *Loplop in a Red City* (Circling Rivers), *Lilac And Sawdust* (Meadowlark Press) and *Gold Bracelet in a Cave: Aunt*

Stokesia (Ethel Press). His work has appeared in *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Asheville Literary Review*, *Nimrod*, *Mudfish*, *Hawaii Review*, and elsewhere. @KenPobo

Laura Shell will be published in *Calliope*, *Chiron Review*, and a few ezines in 2024. She lives in South Carolina with her husband of 35 years and her dog, Groot.

Eugene Stevenson, son of immigrants, father of expatriates, is author of *Heart's Code* (Kelsay Books, 2024) and *The Population of Dreams* (Finishing Line Press, 2022). His poems appear in *Atlanta Review*, *Burningword*, *Delta Poetry Review*, *Door is a Jar*, *Red Ogre Review*, *San Antonio Review*, *Tipton Poetry Journal*, among others, and have been nominated for the Pushcart Prize. More at eugenestevenson.com

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