

metafore



Issue IV – Spring 2020

Table of Contents

Issue IV – Spring 2020

Our Mission | i

Featured Artist | ii

Ginger Persolus

Poetry

Because He/She/God Loves Us | 1

Larry Schug

Juggler | 2

Gale Acuff

The Paleontology Convention | 4

William Doreski

ART | 6

McKINLEY GROVE | 7

Stephen Barile

There Was Another Funeral Today | 9

Paul Ilchko

Labyrinth | 10

John Lysaght

ART | 12

The Bone I Crushed Underfoot at Galveston Beach | 13

Seven Liu

SANCTUARY | 14

Toti O'Brien

The Storm and the Sorrow of Dewdrops | 16

Peter Kahn

ART | 18

CREATION | 19

Joel Savishinsky

Paper Girl | 21

Caroline Misner

The Translator | 24

Peter Mladinic

ART | 25

Eye, waves | 26

Mathieu Debic

NOTHING AT ALL | 27

Hibah Shabkhez

the decorator | 28

Roddy Williams

ART | 29

Clontarf, low tide, 7am | 30

DS Maolalai

Taraxcum Officinale | 31

R. Gerry Fabian

The Last Complicity | 32

Rae Rozman

ART | 33

Fiction

SUSPENDED | 35

Rosalind Goldsmith

ART | 38

Flash

Rabbits and Coyotes | 40

Don Noel

ART | 43

Ink | 44

James Moran

Pick and Strum | 46

William Lanford

Authors' Biographies | 47

Larry Schug

Gale Acuff

William Doreski

Stephen Barile

Paul Ilechko

John Lysaght

Seven Liu

Toti O'Brien

Peter Kahn

Joel Savishinsky

Caroline Misner

Peter Mladinic

Mathieu Debic

Hibah Shabkhez

Roddy Williams

DS Maolalai

R. Gerry Fabian

Rae Rozman

Rosalind Goldsmith

Don Noel

James Moran

William Lanford

Metafore Magazine Staff | 51

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Our Mission

Maharishi University's founder, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, said: "All successful poets have tracked the path of transcending. They start from what the eyes see, or the hands feel, or the ears hear, & they travel into space & time & direct their focus onto the beyond."

At *Metafore*, we're looking for poetry, fiction, & creative nonfiction that not only reflect the beauty of the superficial experience of the world but that also call forth the profundity — the beyondness — that can be found in all of life, if only we open ourselves to it.

Metafore publishes writing that is progressive, that understands the political nature of personal narrative, & that honors diversity in all its expressions. While we graciously accept work meeting the highest of literary standards from writers of all backgrounds, we particularly yearn for works representing the perspectives of the marginalized. We seek honest experimentalism that expresses each writer's unique consciousness. We encourage rule breaking & genre bending & convention smashing; we're suckers for hybrid & corrupted forms.

Most importantly, bring the eye of the modern-day mystic. Reveal the beauty that exists in unexpected places. Find God in the alley dumpster. Leave our minds dripping with symbolism, metaphor & deep imagery, sensual & seductive detail, & maybe a touch of surrealism... Or ignore all this & do what you want.

Evoke the world in the way only you can.

FEATURED ARTIST

Ginger Persolus



Artist Bio:

Ginger Persolus is a recent MIU graduate residing in Glasgow. When he's not hiking in the highlands he's taking photographs. Sometimes he even posts them to his instagram @gingerpersolus

About the Collection:

All photographs are dishonest.

Even the raw image, untouched by instagram filters and photoshop, couldn't, in good conscience, swear on a bible and declare it possesses the truth. That's why we have captions, placards, and articles. They stand authoritatively next to the image providing context, ensuring the story is laid out, and filling in all the details the picture couldn't

include. There isn't enough room for truth in a photograph.

My photographs aren't honest either. And I don't try to make them honest. That's not what they're good at.

Instead I try to obscure the facts of my subjects. I hide them in the dark, put them far in the distance, shroud their features, anything that will honor the reality that these individuals are complex people who can't be cornered and captured by a camera. They are mysterious and elusive creatures, real people. It's been fun getting to see them up close.

Poetry

Because He/She/God Loves Us

Larry Schug

About four or five billion years ago
He/She/God
Said let there be light
He/She/God
Made us out of that light
Then invented sunglasses and wide-brimmed hats
Which protected us from the light
And also made us look cool
He/She/God
Always with a caveat
Then made night and said
Don't wear the shades while you're driving

Juggler

Gale Acuff

I love God, but don't get me wrong. I don't want to die just to see Him. Let Him come here and visit me, make Himself known. I don't want to die to live forever, but that's the way it seems to be with Him; that's how it is in church and Sunday School and I'd be all right with it except for the dying part. Most dying hurts, I hear. I don't want the pain of it and I mean the pain to my body. Who cares about the soul, dead up in Heaven, they say. But that's still not enough. I have to be judged by God Almighty, and if I'm found lacking in goodness, then I get cast into Hell and that's a long way down and I'm afraid of heights as it is. I don't want to die, even if death means eternal life and the only satisfaction I'm getting out of all this is that I get to live forever, even in the Bad Place. Or maybe that's not so satisfying, could be that it's cruel is what it is and I have to live now with knowing that I won't much longer, even a long lifetime's not long compared to all the time that God gets all to Himself and He can take me out at any time, sooner or later but it's a given that I'll have to go. Why would He want me in Heaven, even Hell, when I could do so much down here on Earth and the place is just made for me and those of my kind. Eternal life up there in Heaven had better be pretty good to beat the best of what we've got here;

spare ribs and comic books and cartoons and
tacos and pizza and box-kites and skates
and baseball and women's midget wrestling
and old cars with real chrome and lots of it,
and throwing up when you're sick, then falling
asleep and waking up feeling so much
better you think that you've gone to Heaven
anyway and passing a pop quiz at
regular school and learning to juggle
even only three balls or apples or
oranges or going to the zoo
and the tiger stops pacing long enough
to make it known that he knows you're there and
damn lucky not to be inside with him
because if there ever was an Eden
It's gone with the wind. Maybe in Heaven
that lion lies down with the lamb but that
doesn't seem square for either one and it's
no wonder that God came down as Jesus
but opted out after thirty-three years.
I'm surprised that He lasted even
that long. He made a world which wasn't made for
Him. He must be in pain, too, or if He
isn't He should be. And when I see Him,
I'll give Him Hell about that. Believe me.

The Paleontology Convention

William Doreski

Once I had scattered my ashes,
I thought I was done.
Yet I found myself whole again
and walked to the convention center,
where ogling paleontologists
told me you'd gone for coffee
with a finely textured gentleman.
The entire city felt aroused.
Storefronts glittered like glaciers.
In a steamy café, Larry hailed me
with a lanky skein of gossip.
Not about you but our colleague,
who like me, had died of shame.
Larry was pleased I'd resurrected,
if just for secular reasons,
but wondered why my office mate
refused to refute his demise
in similar terms when everyone
had forgotten or forgiven words
lavished in wasteful colors.
"No one had listened anyway,"
Larry confided through his beard.
He left to meet a woman shaped
like a nineteen-fifties jukebox.
Then you gestured at the window,
having satisfied your lover
by smacking him with a textbook
heavy with coated paper
reeking of multiple-choice exams.
You were almost glad I'd risen
from my remains, but groused
that my red tie clashed with my shirt.
"That's not a tie but an open wound,"
I responded. You tasted the blood

and pronounced it cheap Merlot.
Maybe the next time I recur,
I will nurse on a richer vintage
and leave the fossil-self behind.



McKINLEY GROVE

Stephen Barile

The Paiutes called them woh-who-nah,
An imitation of a Hoot Owl call.
Monarchs of the forest, virgin
Sequoia trees stand

Guardians of spirits and deities,
God-like embodiments without death.
Saplings in the time of Moses,
216 Giants of silence and awe,

Surrounded by Hall Mountain
And Muley Hole, on a flat ridge
Above a creek from Patterson Mountain.

At peace among sylvan terrors
And wandering spirits of the dead,
Singular species of statuesque-form,
Straight, with a tapering red column,

Rounded, spreading crowns of Golden Fleece,
A sunlight bath in the outpouring
Of cosmic affairs. Pillars holding up
Heaven, stand heedless of sacred matters.

Controlling the night-sky black,
The gray-sky day, the quiet hush,
The occasional star on the horizon.
Redwoods as old as 3,000 years,

Trees of Knowledge, scarred lovers
Of fire, seeds freed like rain at night
In waves of lightning-fires over centuries
Imagining end-of-the-world scenarios.

To the Native of the Sierra Nevada forest,
It was bad luck to fell a giant redwood tree,
Or to mock it, or to shoot an owl.

There Was Another Funeral Today

Paul Ilichko

She rubs her wound with soil
to hide its violence to hide the eyes
of the girl who watches from beyond
the flame a girl with dead eyes
and mushroom skin who used
to be the color of honey who used to
swim through the wings of summer

through the cracked dry earth
of the back yard before the rains came
and re-greened the world before
the unpredictable evening sky when
a man with a gun walked into a house
all smile and badge all metal objects
fastened to his belt of leather

do you understand the words
that they are singing? this is a funeral
this is a desolation in time a factory
of familiar dreams crushed beneath
a rolling carriage piled high with pig
iron or Pig Latin piled high with
the voices of children born or still
unborn taking the deep black soil
and scattering it like ashes in memory
of a life that was still to be lived

Labyrinth

John Lysaght

A peacefulness
Transfuses my
Wounded spirit—
Monastic stillness
Encases me,
As a hint of incense
Blesses this space.

Beneath the prayerful,
Forgiving gaze
Of stained glass saints
Among a procession
Of red oak pews
Within this hymnal setting
At this cross entrance,
With bowed reflection
And supplicant palms,
I choose a pilgrimage
Of purgation, insight
And purification,
A spiral, spiritual traverse
From emptiness to fulfillment
From despair to enlightenment.

Lighted candles circumscribe,
Like illuminated sentries,
This unicursal pathway
Toward healing.
Stepping with reverence,
I enjoin this transformative journey,
Meditation in motion,
A revival, a rebirth,
A chance to revise my story.

The warmth of renewal
Has kindled
My mind and body,
And,
Although I have ended where I began,
My entrance and exit being the same.
I am no longer how I began,
No longer who I was.



The Bone I Crushed Underfoot at Galveston Beach

Seven Liu

the open window of your hands lifts my hair,
breeze tunneled with language, wrinkled by understatement
pressure of weeks buoys
the shine of all the terrible selves upon the water,
the space we once occupied sputters,
moored to the arch of my heel

i wish i could unravel the drip of my navel
and still be loved,
i wish for someone to service the catastrophe of my self,
the impoverished applause of my breath

the waterlogged ache
of the femur i toed when i was eight
sucks the marrow from the hollow of my knee,
that briney membrane, shelled in oyster
guttled by seawater

cartilage splinters between my eyelids,
when there was still enough language to go around,
you loved me until my body ceased
to be a body,
but the shape of a leg tossed beneath pages of water
beneath the bruised ear of a cockle,
in that waltz of an open sea

i fish your name from a eulogy,
from the barely-there shape of that painful consolation
sugar-urchin, immaculate love, make a habitat of my heart,
grant me the spoils of your absence
this too, is a gift

SANCTUARY

Toti O'Brien

Missing sign of unnamed street
un-located transient
free to erase itself from the map

Phony architecture
of unoccupied mall
plaster peeling off
candy-colored walls
fading like nylon underwear
forgotten on clotheslines

This is where I like hiding
my step mesmerized
by crevices
thin fault-lines
where reality slips
below surface

Beach resort in winter
Walled window
Terrain vague
After hours

Where the emphasis slants
toward eerily sketched
past and future
falling on not-here not-now
I rest from omnivorous
tangible overexposure

My step
pulls out of gravity
a slight dizziness
a suspension of breath

then I hear the quasi-imperceptible hum
secret tocsin
endless revolutions
of music-box-ballerinas
light clicks
of old mechanic toys

This is where
mercy
dwells

The Storm and the Sorrow of Dewdrops

Peter Kahn

the hummingbird must dodge the raindrops.
the tiger hides in the bush.
the flower blooms once a year,
just one night, at midnight, clean white
and gone again with the sun.

do you remember when the stars
were born?
the tiger hides below the new moon,
night-vision eyes,
fixed on the open wound.

time moves like a blade of grass,
reaching up, up again,
cut down twice a month,
but resilient, dew-laced.

the hummingbird must dodge its reflection,
falling in love
with last-chance reductions,
ruby-throated, sucking beebalm,
smiling down in diamondbacked directions
under the eye
of the nectar's plumage.

can you tell me what happened
to all our dancing revelations?
we are lost
dodging raindrops

dodging jab after jab after jab
and claws, canines, hateful tongues
drumming through time
with our fingers on our noses—

I watch the blossoming decline
of the silver storm
from inside my own tomb;
lovers lost, friends failing,
beasts, birds, brains, branches, cities and stories
falling down,
getting up,
drowning in the center of the silence.



CREATION

Joel Savishinsky

I.

There is no telling where
it will end, but the prophets
to and through whom the words
travel still claim to know.
So do the sidewalk sandwich-
board seers. Even when prophecy
fails, there is always a back-up.
Whenever it will reach us. Someday.
Coming soon. To a theatre,
television, or temple near you.
The voices dreamed that language
alone once pronounced the word of
the beginning, as if by saying
magic things in the right ears,
the sound would empower others
to be like gods and briefly forget
the pleasure of their anger and impotence.
Maybe this is how creation
was first conceived.

II.

Later, there came huge roundels
in the Hagia Sophia, suspended
from the ceiling, tethered by
wires to the walls, proclaiming
the names of God, the Prophet,
and the Caliphs in golden curls.
Arabic moves like water,
a sign also seen in the far
reaches of conquest, in the
small, smooth, herring-boned
stones that flow on the floor
of the Alhambra. Perhaps

the rains of Moorish Spain
channel the rivers that streamed
out of Eden, where, on another
day, the creation learned to speak
the first question our earthly father
was ever asked. Where are you?

Paper Girl

Caroline Misner

It should have been summer then
but the morning had other plans.
It rained, cold and sightless, grey
as the old trees that upheld
the slick foliage from the ravine
to the quarry on the hill.

The newspapers hunched in bundles,
tied with string so tight
I couldn't slip a finger between
the damp newsprint and its bindings.

In my red rain slicker
and gummy boots,
I hauled my bag; one free hand
clasped my hood in place.
The rain pasted my bangs
to my brow; water sloshed
in puddles beneath each step.

Black ink stained my fingers
and mottled my satchel; my neck
ached from the weight, the cold
dampness that stiffened my hands.

All the little houses
with their battered shingles
leaked warmth from
their windows and doors
and crooked chimneys that stood
hollow and bare above the dripping eaves.

Every door held its own secrets;
muffled voices rose and fell

to the tattoo of the morning.
I dropped the newspapers on each doorstep,
And lightened my burden
one bundle at a time.

Each house looked upon the other,
identical save for the outcroppings
of hedges, willows, beds of bleached roses
with buds squeezed shut
like small balled fists.

I stepped upon a porch of cracked concrete,
pots of geraniums flanked the entrance,
their vermilion laundered to pink.
A screen door barred me
from the house, dark as a cavern
but mild and inviting.

The weather inside was thick
with the scent of brewing coffee,
buttered toast, something
sweet baking in the oven.

The TV was on; three
small children in patterned pyjamas
lolloped on their bellies, chins
propped in small curled hands,
and watched cartoons
oblivious to me.

I dropped the wet newspaper
on the stoop and turned,
exiled back to the streets.

By then the sun had bored
a hole through the clouds
and lit up the fog like a newly
minted copper penny.
A sickly alder drooped by the curb;

bony branches let me know
that it was either dead or dying.

The Translator

Peter Mladinic

His sister, you would know: talk after burials
(baseball scores, football quarterbacks)
touches on anything but the departed.
Though some may tell
themselves they'll never see him again
except in photos, home movies, and memory.
Few think of the hospital
where, late in the night,
when they were home sleeping, he took a deep breath
and his heart stopped forever. In memories
he walks in through a screen door, carrying...
what would he have carried—a fishing pole
a football? He's nineteen,
ten years before the fatal cancer.
He greets you and walks briskly
into his room. And what did you talk about
after he was in the ground?
Not the hillside burial.
Not the tent-shaded mourners,
a few stepping up to speak of his life.
One perplexing the others by saying that
when a person dies young even God must weep.
Afterwards, in your parents' house
you're not talking about his life or death.
A black cloth covers his photo.
On a table are cold cuts,
salads, pies. You fix a plate
for your daughter. People are coming through
the front door, and the sun is shining.
He knew the word for sun in five languages.



Eye, waves

Mathieu Debic

Waves, heartbeat-steady,
sun still warming my back as it velvets
fingers of indigo, plum, apricot, sour cherry;
ahead, ocean water wandering further than eye;
something calls me in a language of gulls;
wind sighs through dune grass.
Eye turns and leaves, it drinks the smooth ink, now—first stars
prick the glowing darkpurple. Saltgrass diligently silicates.
Moon gibbouses quietly to herself, waning—
rocking back and forth on limpid lapping water.

NOTHING AT ALL

Hibah Shabkhez

Silk feels blood-soft, like the winds in the fall
The grain of wood is rough neath the finger;
But when the long summer twilight lingers
On the porch, and you feel 'nothing at all',

Is it unfelt by brain, finger or soul,
This nothing? Or is this nothing just hung
Like the velvet of ice-cream on the tongue,
Stuttering for sense-ways to be told whole?

I feel nothing. Nothing pounds at my brain,
Ripples wool-sensations through cotton-flesh;
Feeds stray thoughts and words like wheat to the thresh,
Or clean rain-water swirled down a street drain.

the decorator

Roddy Williams

cargo pants boast
irregular patches
ghost paint haunting your legs

face stubbled with wear
a leather bag left too long
in a summer rain

stare into your phone
to your polarised reflection

you see your hands instead
olive smooth
a bright gold band highlighted

a beacon against
the stormy backdrop



Clontarf, low tide, 7am

DS Maolalai

sea needs a shave
this morning. green stubble
peaking on the sandshore
lines. and beneath it
crabs pick among animals
and birds hop about, seabirds
and city birds, lost on tides
and curious about sea life.

this is the wonderful
thing about dublin
and low tides
rubbing clontarf—this stirring,
this scratching of lines
out of paper
which say "this
is where crows
should be sometimes". a little
like looking
from a window. like turning the pages
in books about birds.

even pigeons
brook passage
over buildings into dockland. even foxes
might sniff about for fish. it's early—nobody
walks their dog yet. water
drawn out by the moonlight
and doubling back. hurrying
to burrows
as the sun begins rising.
hiding like an animal
which doesn't like
the sun.

Taraxcum Officinale

R. Gerry Fabian

On a crisp Tuesday morning in May
of no particular importance to me,
I kneel in the side yard.
The wet grass soothes
my arthritic aching knees.

With the long wooden tool,
I thrust into the dirt next to a green spined herb.
The gouge blade is an utter failure.
Guaranteed to plunge deep below the plant
And extract the entire tuber,
It tears the top leaves leaving the root below.

I have come to admire the dandelion.

It spreads with no particular pattern,
requires no attention and holds with tenacity.
The tightly formed rosette explodes
into a bold yellow flower; then turns to seed
and is whisked away with the breezes.

We should all be so fortunate.

The Last Complicity

Rae Rozman

entropy is the act of pushing away
order

symmetry

declining

predictability

certainty

stability

possible ex(im)plosions

and you are unraveled but i am too something beyond comprehension beyond structure
beyond logic and in a way it makes sense that everything moves
from center



Fiction

SUSPENDED

Rosalind Goldsmith

His mother opens the door and peeks in. He's lying on his bed, still as death—arms folded, eyes closed, breathing shallow. She waits.

His parents try everything—give him all the latest games and screens. Day and night they jab at him, quiz him, peck at him. They take him to six different psychiatrists, who also peck and jab. At school, when he does attend, he sits woeful at his desk, stuffs cotton in his ears and closes his eyes. Teachers cajole, scold, complain, write letters. It makes no difference. Now he's been sent home for refusing to enter the classroom.

His parents drag him out to the car and take him on trips to the Caledon Hills. He sleeps in the back seat, refuses to get out of the car when they arrive. Movies, music, tv—it's all no good. He stuffs his ears with clumps of cotton, closes his eyes, curls himself into a small thing.

They tell him whatever is wrong, they love him and will always love him. His mother says things will get better. His father says, "Come on, come on," and tugs his arm. When the boy listens to them, which is not often, he hears a nervous flaw in their questions, a fake, eye-bright enthusiasm in their scraps of advice. He rejects all of it, prefers his seclusion, his thoughts, his thuggish breath.

The more they try to rouse him to his feet, the more rigid he becomes, coma-sunk, adamantine still, a sad whelp given up to a trinitude of: himself, the constant drilling of his thought, his down-struck dreams.

No amount of threat or hand-wringing will move him. They ask him again and again "Why?" But he won't answer. Turns his face to the wall, closes his eyes. Tries not to see.

But still he sees—everything—inside and out, and what he sees twists into his mind, wrenches his spine-broken spirit, and turtle-backs his will.

He sees the sallow, face-hiding thing his life has become. He sees his father, wish-scalped, and his mother, crazed to the gut with caring, both of them rolled up together

in grief, their shouting given over now to a weary silence. He sees his own self, folded in and folded in, at times hiding small inside a writhing fear that winds itself around him.

He sees entropy at work inside himself, a branching system within all forms and connected to all forms, a thriving dark web of destruction. Words like endurance, ambition, goals, achievement, make him laugh—he knows these words were invented to cheat entropy. But entropy won't be cheated. He rejects the words and the attempt; instead, he lies still and watches the inner workings of decay: of shift and wreckage: of landslide and metamorphosis.

Forms appear, distort and become other forms. His pillow is a hat is a swamp is a mountain. He looks at his desk and sees, by the merest shift of his gaze, the blur of its false edge, the burrowing molecules, the spin and flux of atoms, the galaxies of space it contains. The desk hazes into the wall and the wall steps itself apart, pixelates into nothing. He sees his own fear is an imploding star with immense gravity—and his thought—a plane—becomes ink blot, solar storm or pebble. No one thing is different from any other thing—star or pebble, desk or inkblot—it is all the same: empty space meaning nothing. Meaning itself is mirage, false construct, a human mode of perception imposed on empty matter.

Every word spins in air and points at nothing. And this nothing is all he can be sure of— all his ideas and visions ricochet inside a tiny prison of perception inside a tinier prison of language. He pounds his head against the walls of his limitation, cowering in shame and in fear.

In the rush hour of his mind, random images skim and scuttle and bounce, crab-walk their way through his waking hours, his sleep—he can't stop them—he sees throbbing hearts, broken-wing birds, white sheets floating in air, flaming ice, gangs of hooligans ranting at blood-dawn on beaches of tar. Fish gasping as black snow falls, children scratching green hearts on sidewalks, silver-toed dancers spinning and spinning, clogged arteries, math quizzes, sundowning bats, swarms of fireflies, bitcoin transactions, intricate webbings of fibre optics, soft and silvery, revolving crystals, veins of fool's gold, spelling bees, harmonic sevenths and slaughtered cows, all, all in bright detail, all rolled up and

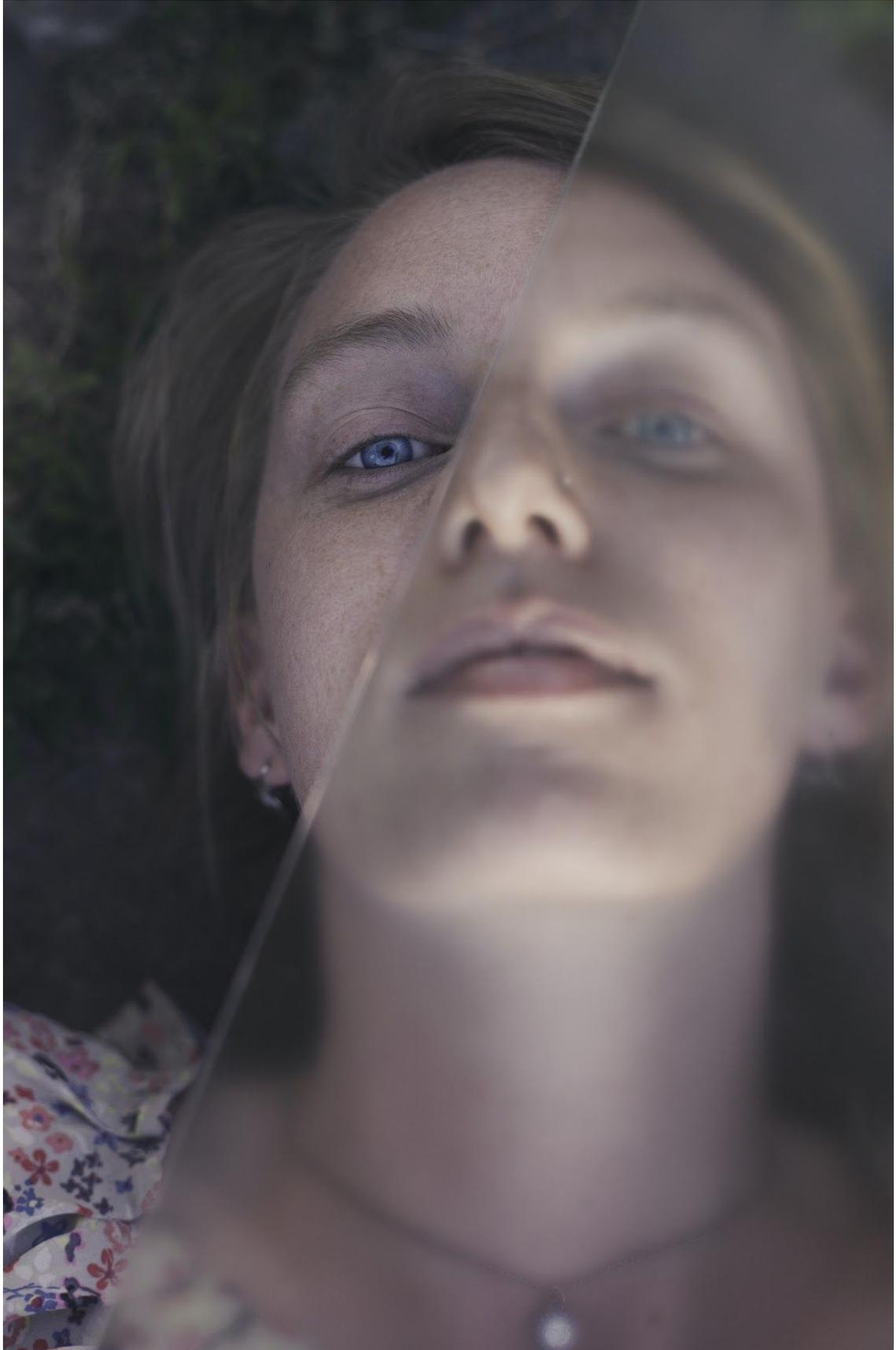
bound together, discrete and implicate, integral and scattershot—univariou. If only he could stop his mind just once and for a moment —but he can't, he can't—and the overwhelm lies heavy on him.

He sees, too, the pain on every human face, the slumbering catastrophe of it and the withering soul that will endure it. He sees when and how this pain will reveal itself in the human as another being with its own breath and life and how it will take them over. The pain appears just behind the face, a hideous inner mask that rises grinning to the surface, and it is terrifying.

Everything he sees is continually moving and morphing in his mind in liquid lightning, all of it spinning so fast and hectic, it stops his breath.

Now his mother steps into his room and tells him breakfast is ready and waiting for him in the kitchen. His breakfast waiting in its bowl, his mind turning over, his mother pausing by the door, the sun lifting and sinking and glowing red outside his window, the borealis rising green over Norway; a black colt trots on a dusty road, a car spins frantic, a tree cracks, wind-flogged; a fox hurtles through air; a lecturer speaks of a holographic future and an old woman weeps at her kitchen table; stones sink in the grim downslide into a slow-turning vortex of mud. And now white smoke rises within the walls of his room and his fear begins to drift up and drift out and beyond into fine cirrus threads, each strand spiraling gold. He holds fast to this single emergent moment, echoing out and out—not a single ripple lost. Taken down into the still centre of it, he sees his own cowering self shatter into a million bits and then dissolve.

His mother speaks his name. Quiet. Eyes still closed, he smiles. Maybe he'll be alright today, she thinks. She goes downstairs to put the coffee on.



Flash

Rabbits and Coyotes

Don Noel

The rabbits didn't wake anyone; Joanie's Fifi did, chasing them. Then the coyotes in the forest kept some neighbors awake even after the dog went back to sleep.

Fifi was an apricot-colored, well-groomed six-year-old toy poodle, a prancing contrast to her mistress' mouse-gray hair and stooped posture. The dog was not much bigger than a rabbit—and well-matched in speed.

When Joanie moved into Harmony Acres after Fred's death, she introduced the dog to her neighbors, one at a time, to be sure they appreciated how well-behaved Fifi was—except, of course, for the barking, a phenomenon that was yet to appear. There were six other apartments at ground level in their little quadrangle, and seven on the second floor. None of the others—all retired widows—had dogs, although there were several strictly-indoor cats that would also prove restive after nocturnal commotions.

The quad was enclosed on three sides by apartments; on the fourth side was a decorative fence and a gazebo arbor that led to the carpark and the state park beyond. The fence was lushly lined with shrubs and flower beds that had become decidedly ragged, thanks to rabbits that came to forage. Copious pea-sized droppings confirmed the predators' identity.

Joanie's Fred had bought Fifi as a young puppy and had done most of the training. He found a clever electronic "fence" that sent an audible signal to the dog's collar when she neared the invisible outer boundary, and then an arresting electric shock if she went a few feet farther.

When Joanie came to Harmony Acres, she had the maintenance people re-install and fine-tune the electronic gadget so Fifi could go only as far as the gazebo. They also installed a doggie door out to the patio and quad so the dog could come and go most of the time on her own. Joanie was usually in bed and asleep when the rabbits arrived. So was Fifi. By whatever intuitive sense dogs have, though, she sensed them in the courtyard and dashed

out at full yelp. Since the electronic minder wouldn't let her go beyond the gazebo, she stopped there and barked at her disappearing prey. And barked. And barked.

She came in when Joanie called her, but that entailed Joanie's getting out of bed on arthritic knees and hobbling to the patio door – by which time everyone else was awake, too. Not surprisingly, the subject came up at their regular Monday afternoon tea in the second-floor parlor. Almost everyone wanted Fifi kept inside at night. Joanie, far from an assertive person, was hesitant to defend her dog.

Not Agnes. A large woman, who must have been a flaming redhead in her prime and still sported a mane touched with auburn, Agnes had made herself the quad's chief resident gardener, and everyone admired what she added to the caretakers' institutional plantings.

"Those rabbits," she insisted, "had been decapitating everything I planted, bolting down the buds. Even pepper spray didn't keep them at bay. Since Joanie and Fifi moved in, our flowers are blossoming again. I say let that poodle bark. She's a blessing."

"That's easy for you to say," snapped Harriet. "You're deaf. She wakes me in the middle of the night, and makes the coyotes howl out in the park."

Joanie, who was a bit deaf herself, hadn't noticed the coyotes, but most others had.

"Their caterwauling goes on after you've gotten the dog back inside," complained Barbara.

There was a chorus of agreement from the other widows who shared the courtyard: "Lock her in at night!" "Yes!" "Inside!"

"Poor little dog," Joanie said to the bundle of blondish fur at her feet. Sensing sympathy, Fifi jumped into her mistress' lap, stretching up to offer a chin-lick of appreciation. "Even if I lock her doggie door, she'll still sense the rabbits, and drive us all crazy, barking indoors. You'll still hear her."

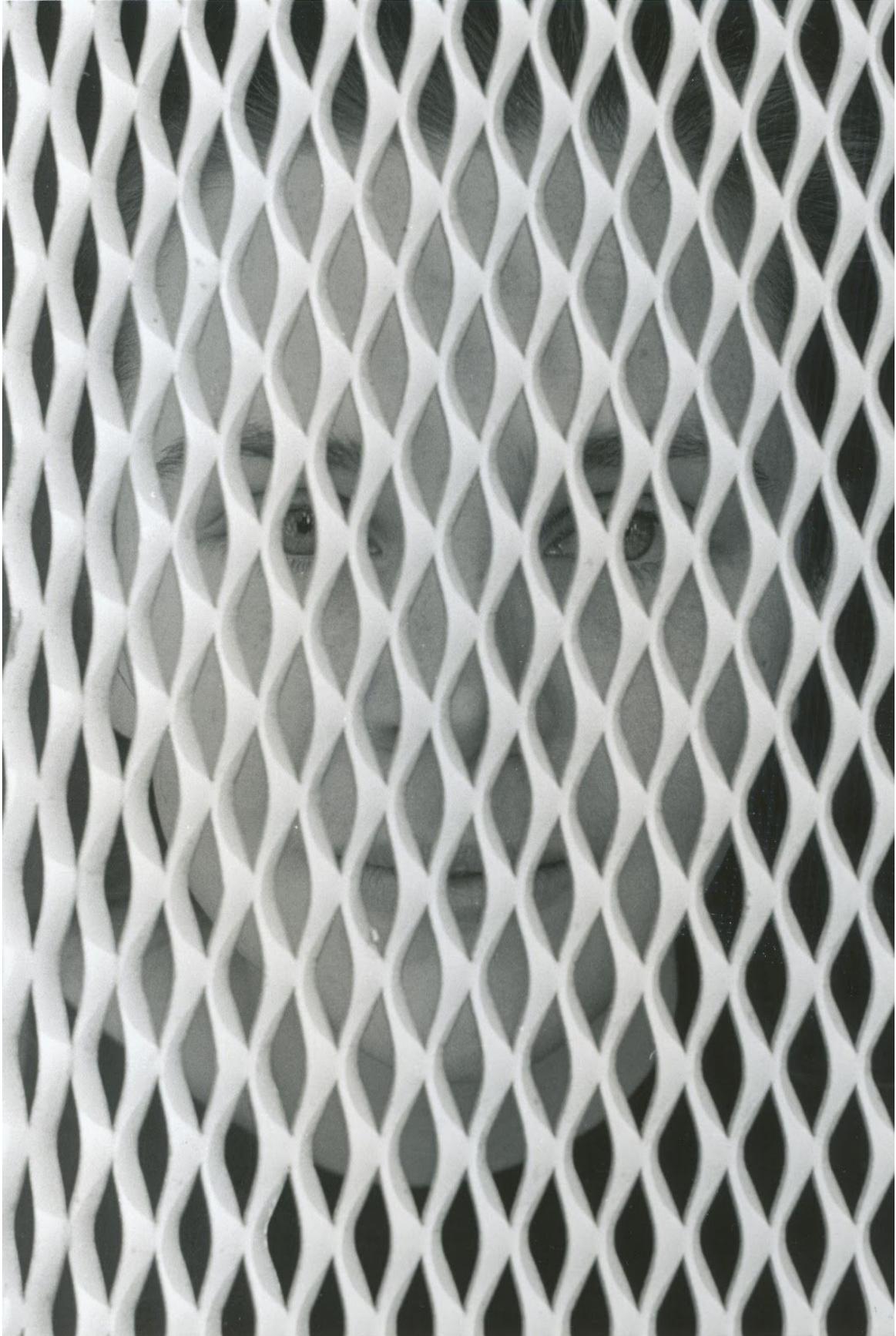
Agnes, the gardener and defender, was accustomed to winning arguments like this by confident certainty, and did so now.

"Be patient," she argued. "The coyotes will solve the problem. They'll eat the rabbits, and that will put an end to it."

The neighborhood caucus broke up, the light sleepers at least temporarily in retreat.

Agnes, it turned out, had it almost right: After Fifi noisily drove off rabbits for two more nights, the coyotes did indeed solve the problem. Everyone heard barking after midnight, then a nearby chorus of snarls, then yelps, a blood-curdling wail, then silence.

A broken-hearted Joanie moved away.



Ink

James Moran

It was not just an effect of the moonless night. The pool at Sandra's father's mansion appeared inky black because it was actually filled with black ink. The idea was Sandra's. Her father was an ink tycoon. He was on vacation. We had despoiled his warehouse of two hundred fifty barrels of ink. It had taken us the entire long weekend.

Now we stood upon the lip of the pool, holding hands. We were to jump in and haul the ink into our lungs, our bodies locked in a desperate embrace. This was to be our protest against humankind's flawed nature. We would end our own lives the same way humans had ended the lives of so many plants and animals: with industrial chemicals.

My vomit cut through vapors that zipped tight in its wake. Sandra was torn between consoling me, as she would have normally done, and getting on with it. She peered at my face with watering eyes that I swore swelled and deflated with her heartbeat.

"On the count of three." She barely got the words out behind a large unintentional gulp.

"Ok," I whined.

I bent my shaking knees and lifted one arm like the Tin Man before the oil.

She bounced as she spoke, "One... Two..."

Pulses brighter than the sun erupted overhead, throwing off my balance. Sandra and I gripped each other's hands so tight it was painful. We'd missed our chance to beat the end! The final result of our species' destructive instincts had arrived!

The pulses waned in intensity, revealing a shape and a color palette. A kabob of neon flames tore across the sky. The surface of the ink reflected the blaze. The reflection illuminated the undulations of the ink's glassy skin.

The colors in the sky flickered and died, abandoning a startled meteorite, a tiny space rock, to plummet to the earth as an auburn ember.

It wasn't that I could no longer follow through with the leap. It was that I couldn't fathom breaking the black skin of that beautifully amorphous creature made of ink.

When I was finally able to break my gaze from the ink's blessed surface, I was standing alone. I found Sandra in a bathroom on the ground floor huddled beside the tub, heaving after what had surely been an epic cry. I crouched beside her and rubbed her shoulder. She wrangled her breath until it broke and became barely perceptible.

"Come on," I whispered. "We've got a lot of cleaning up to do."

Pick and Strum

William Lanford

She picked and strummed. Flames licked logs and smoke curled around stars. Take a look, she sang. See what's here.

I saw fire and coals lusting for me. A red, glowing spirit looked into my eyes. It was me, burning.

Not there, she laughed. See what's here.

Earth turned to water. Dive in, she sang, I'm unexplored. Go all the way. I dove and swam and felt her warmth. Deeper and darker. Unexplored. Only me. There is a light. Turn it on.

I can fly.

Come here, she sang, come see what's here. She dropped her gown. I rose. A beautiful wonder in her perfect state. Pick, strum, lick, curl. Warmer and warmer with her sight.

She dove. Starlight rippled, coming for me, pulsing. Wait for me, she sang. Deeper we sank. It's almost empty. Only us. Unexplored. Strum, lick. We touched. We curled. We opened, explored. She wanted. I entered.

Drowning rapture. Warm and dark. Stay with me. Stay in me. Touch me again.

Tsunami.

Authors' Biographies

Larry Schug

Larry Schug is retired from a working life of various kinds of physical labor. He's published eight books of poems and currently volunteers as a college writing tutor and as a naturalist.

Gale Acuff

Gale Acuff has had poetry published in *Ascent*, *Chiron Review*, *McNeese Review*, *Adirondack Review*, *Weber*, *Florida Review*, *South Carolina Review*, *Carolina Quarterly*, *Arkansas Review*, *Poem*, *South Dakota Review*, and many other journals. He has authored three books of poetry: *Buffalo Nickel* (BrickHouse Press, 2004), *The Weight of the World* (BrickHouse, 2006), and *The Story of My Lives* (BrickHouse, 2008). He has also taught university English in the US, China, and the Palestinian West Bank.

William Doreski

William Doreski's work has appeared in various e and print journals and in several collections, most recently *A Black River*, *A Dark Fall*.

Stephen Barile

Stephen Barile, a Fresno, California native, is the former chairman of the William Saroyan Society and a long-time member of the Fresno Poet's Association. Mr. Barile taught writing at Madera Center Community College, lives and writes in Fresno. His poems have been published extensively, including *The Heartland Review*, *Rio Grande Review*, *The Packinghouse Review*, *Undercurrents*, *The Broad River Review*, *The San Joaquin Review*, *Haight-Ashbury Literary Journal*, *Beginnings*, *Pharos*, and *Flies, Cockroaches, and Poets*.

Paul Ilechko

Paul Ilechko is the author of the chapbooks *Bartok in Winter* (Flutter Press, 2018) and *Graph of Life* (Finishing Line Press, 2018). His work has appeared in a variety of journals, including *Manhattanville Review*, *West Trade Review*, *River River*, *Otoliths and Pithead Chapel*. He lives with his partner in Lambertville, NJ.

John Lysaght

John Lysaght is a poet whose work first appeared in *Esprit*, the literary journal of the University of Scranton, where he graduated with a B.A. in English and Classics in 1968. His poetry seeks to invite the reader to participate in the experience of the word in real time.

Seven Liu

Seven Liu is a senior at Kinder High School of Performing & Visual Arts in Houston, Texas. She has been previously published in *The Interlochen Review*, *Canvas Literary Journal*, and *Octopus Ink*.

Toti O'Brien

Toti O'Brien is the Italian Accordionist with the Irish Last Name. She was born in Rome then moved to Los Angeles, where she makes a living as a self-employed artist, performing musician and professional dancer. Her work has most recently appeared in *Colorado Boulevard*, *Thin Air*, *Wilderness House*, and the *Hamilton Stone Review*.

Peter Kahn

Peter Kahn lives on a small farm in southeastern Wisconsin where he goes about day to day just barely holding on to the near side of insanity. His work has appeared in various small press journals but he'd rather drink muddy water than list them, though he prefers a brandy old fashioned.

Joel Savishinsky

A retired professor of anthropology and gerontology, Joel Savishinsky has studied human development, adaptations to diverse environments, and the aging process, in the Canadian North, Turkey, the Caribbean, the US, England and India. His books have won the Gerontological Society of America's Kalish Award for Innovative Publishing, and his poetry has appeared in *Anthropology and Humanism Quarterly*, *The Avocet*, *The Berkshire Review*, *Crosscurrents*, *From Whispers to Roars*, *The New York Times*, *PageBoy*, *Passager*, *Starfish*, *The Pharos*, *Third Eye*, *Windfall*, and *Xanadu*.

Caroline Misner

A graduate of Sheridan College of Applied Arts & Technology with a diploma in Media Arts Writing, Caroline Misner's poetry, fiction and non-fiction have appeared in several journals throughout the USA, Canada, India and the UK, as well as work published in several anthologies and webzines. A nominee of various prestigious prizes, awards, and

recognitions, she's published a few novels, including her most recent *The Spoon Asylum* (Thistledown Press, 2018).

Peter Mladinic

Peter Mladinic has published three books of poetry: *Lost in Lea*, *Dressed for Winter*, and *Falling Awake in Lovington*. He's part of the English faculty at New Mexico Junior College, and lives in Hobbs, New Mexico.

Mathieu Debic

Mathieu Debic is a writer and graduate student in Dallas, Texas. His fiction has previously been published online at *Mirror Dance Fantasy*, and his scholarly work has been published in *Confluence: the Journal of Graduate Liberal Studies*. He has also written for *Glasstire*, a magazine dedicated to art in Texas. He prefers cats over dogs, but dogs are still ok.

Hibah Shabkhez

Hibah Shabkhez is a writer of the half-yo literary tradition, an erratic language-learning enthusiast, a teacher of French as a foreign language and a happily eccentric blogger from Lahore, Pakistan. Her work has previously appeared in *With Painted Words*, *Petrichor*, *Lunate*, *The Dawntreader* and a number of other literary magazines. Blog: <https://hibahshabkhezicc.wordpress.com/> Twitter: @hibahshabkhez Instagram: @shabkhez_hibah

Roddy Williams

Originally from North Wales, Roddy Williams lives and works in London. His poetry has appeared in *Magma*, *The Rialto*, *Stand*, and other magazines. He has also written two plays performed in London and is a keen surrealist photographer, printmaker and painter. His first collection, *BBC2*, is due out next year.

DS Maolalai

DS Maolalai has been nominated four times for Best of the Net and three times for the Pushcart Prize. His poetry has been released in two collections, *Love is Breaking Plates in the Garden* (Encircle Press, 2016) and *Sad Havoc Among the Birds* (Turas Press, 2019).

R. Gerry Fabian

R. Gerry Fabian is a retired English instructor. He has been publishing poetry since 1972 in various poetry magazines, has published two books, *Parallels* and *Coming Out Of The*

Atlantic. His novels, *Memphis Masquerade*, *Getting Lucky (The Story)*, and *Seventh Sense* are available at all ebook publishers including Amazon, Apple Books and Barnes and Noble. He is currently working on his fourth novel, *Ghost Girl*, scheduled for publication in 2020.

Rae Rozman

Rae Rozman is a middle school counselor in Austin, Texas. Her poems often explores themes of queer love (romantic and platonic), brain injury, and education and have been published in a variety of literary magazines. You can find her on Instagram @mistress_of_mnemosyne for poems and pictures of her rescue bunnies.

Rosalind Goldsmith

Rosalind Goldsmith lives in Toronto and has written radio plays for CBC Radio Drama and a play for the Blyth Theatre Festival. Her short stories have appeared in *Flash Fiction Magazine*, *Filling Station*, *Litro UK*, *Popshot UK*, *Spelk*, *Burningword Literary Journal*, and *Orca*, among others. "Sentinal" appeared in *Metafore's* Spring 2019 issue.

Don Noel

Retired after four decades of prizewinning print and broadcast journalism in Hartford CT, Don Noel received his MFA in Creative Writing from Fairfield University in 2013. He has since published more than four dozen short stories and non-fiction pieces, but has two novellas and a novel still looking for publishers.

James Moran

James Moran is a professional astrologer and writer who regularly publishes fiction, nonfiction, and poetry.

William Lanford

William Lanford is an outdoor writer and photographer, novelist and story-teller. He's a fisherman, lifelong outdoor addict and naturalist, an official oldfart, a student of sunsets, campfires and dawns, and a companion of dogs. He's highly appreciative of fine food and drink, fond of napping and comforted by silence.

Metafore Magazine Staff

Dany Hillman-Robles

Editor-in-Chief & Poetry Editor



Daniela Hillman-Robles is the Editor-in-Chief and poetry editor of Metafore. She is a senior of the BFA in the Creative and Professional Writing program at Maharishi University. Native to Mexico, she's braved the Iowa winters in search for the expansion of the heart. Daniela is a poet interested in the poetic nature of circumstances, the interrelation between beauty and pain, and drive for human connection.

A self-diagnosed Romantic, she enjoys her free time nurturing her soul with music, art, classic literature, good food, and love; that is, when she's not cuddling her cat.

She has published a short story in Revista Llave in Mexico and a short memoir in Crack the Spine. Her favorite authors include J.R.R. Tolkien, Joy Harjo, Mary Oliver, Andrea Gibson, Isabel Allende and Naomi Shihab Nye.

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Jeremy Erdman

Layout & Fiction Editor



Jeremy is the Layout Master for *Metafore Magazine*. He's a Minnesota native who is currently in Iowa working on his BFA in Creative Writing.

The ideas, impulses, and longings of old (and of late) are taking shape. As an aspiring author and screenwriter with much to say and share; his works are deep, reflective, bizarre, interesting, fun, slyly humorous, and always a little adventurous. During his time at MIU, he explored many of his other creative interests, including photography, videography, architecture, industrial design, and graphic and web design.

At around age fifteen, reading for pleasure was over, his hormones had the reigns and there was no going back, or so it was then. Of that experience he expressed what he could through poetry and short pieces of prose. It was this poetry and prose—the only artistic form of self-expression he had—that he used to express his innermost desires and feelings. He was a hopeless romantic (and still might be). He fantasized endlessly, and with words, was touching the essence of his being and revealing it to himself. The act of creation and expression satisfied a deep longing and still does.

A few favorite authors are: J.R.R. Tolkien, Susan Mary Cooper, Gladys Sophia Zehnpfennig, Geoffrey Chaucer, and C.S. Lewis.

Andrea Franz

Flash & Art Editor



Andrea is the flash and art editor for *Metafore Magazine* and working toward her BFA in Creative and Professional Writing at Maharishi International University.

Born and raised in the Northeastern Wisconsin countryside, Andrea spent her formative years camping, canoeing, and exploring the simple wonders of the natural world. She attributes her curious nature and thirst for knowledge to her parents, who always encouraged her to ask questions. Andrea finds joy in pontificating on wild theories of how we got here and where we are going, though she implores anyone who's listening to enjoy it as entertainment only.

Through her own writings of flash fiction, nonfiction, and personal essay, Andrea has come to better understand herself and her surroundings. In addition, through working as a consultant in the Writing Center she has been able to delve deeper into the craft for the benefit of others and herself. Though she doesn't study art as part of her degree, it is a passion for her and deeply entwined with her writing process.

Candice Rankin

Senior Editor



Candice is a senior editor for Metafore. She is a BFA student in Creative & Professional Writing with a second major in Consciousness & Human Potential. Born in Southern Indiana, Candice has spent the better part of four decades studying performing arts in NYC & traveling the world before returning to her Midwestern roots to write about it.

Candice favors memoir, flash nonfiction, & personal essay. Her search for the deeper meaning of existence often lead her philosophizing in a dark café by herself & talking to a bottle of red wine.

Favorite Authors: David Sedaris, Calvin Haul, Monica Drake, Augusten Burroughs.

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