

SONIC BOOM

...for writing that explodes



issue thirteen

December 2018

(Poetry, Fiction & Art)

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EDITORIAL

It gives me immense pleasure to present our fourth anniversary issue, our very own Baker's dozen, to you, dear readers. When we started out four years ago, we never dreamt of how far along we would come on this incredible journey. We feel blessed to have published well over a hundred artistes since our inception. And many of them have become regular favourites.

Issue 'Thirteen features work by 57 contributors, all jostling for the reader's attention with their exquisite and powerful pieces. It was a joy putting this issue together and I am sure its contents will delight you. The highlights of The Poetry Shack include cleverly crafted poems by Keith Pollette, Steve Klepetar, Scott-Patrick Mitchell (SPM), and Iain Twiddy, among others. Their poems transform the ordinary into a heightened experience of the senses. The Paper Lanterns section contains haiku, senryu, and tanka authored by some of the most brilliant minds in contemporary English Language Haiku. How did we get so lucky? These poets continue to push the envelope as they experiment with Japanese short-forms of poetry. We are never disappointed with the results!

The Fiction section features nearly a dozen haibun and flash fiction pieces that are as varied in their styles as they are in the emotions they evoke. Whether it's Gautam Nadkarni's hilarious anecdotal haibun, Linda Ferguson's evocative and enchanting letter to her brother, Piet Nieuwland's narrative tinged with nostalgia and longing, or the surrealist pieces by Johannes S. H. Bjerg and Salvatore Difalco, these stories will leave you wanting more. We see the collective unconscious at play in the Visual Art section, where each piece seamlessly links to the one after it—resembling a single photo essay by multiple artists.

We are also excited to share our exclusive interview with Kyle Hemmings, a Pushcart and Best of the Net nominee, as well as the author of over two dozen chapbooks. Kyle has been a long time contributor of the journal and is one of the poetry and fiction editors over at our affiliated press, Yavanika. He talks about his forthcoming full-length collection, the afterlife, his influences, and more in his inimitable manner. If I were granted one wish, I would choose to be Kyle Hemmings for a day and experience how that frightfully beautiful mind of his works.

All that's left now is to dig in. Enjoy!

- Shloka Shankar

THE POETRY SHACK

Save Nothing

By Alvin Pang

Much upon the grass, brined by spray and the low brume
of another scarp, me you locked and asked, tongue still
spiced from the lash of malt, to bend. Something about

how forms of a certain vintage crumb when touched,
flint doffed and squammed, peppery, if grey in the glint.

The scent between fingers of old moss, must musk, but
parmesanal, fridged fust, estuarial on the sheets. Spent
yeast. And you unrisen, all too summery then, insinuous,

game but cautious of gain, unsodden and wary of ignition.
Your eyes calid, the loom of you windward and parlous.

I had to stop the wound from seeping, just in time.

if/in #11

By Darren C. Demaree

the fix dissolves
in the fixing the fixing
tries

to create love
forms we understand
we understand

that to put down
an instrument is not
the same as playing it

Kamifuusen

By Iain Twiddy

For some reason this week my niece
got a Japanese toy at school,
but she couldn't read the label,

so got her dad to write an e-mail
saying she wanted to talk to me
about it on Skype that night.

I didn't read it till a bit
after she would have gone to bed.
So I replied that it looks like

you got a *kamifuusen*:
kami means paper, and *fuusen* balloon;
they were made ages ago,

in the days when rubber was rare,
and the mystery is with them
that there's a hole in the bottom

to blow air in, *but it stays open*;
in fact the more you bat it about,
the more full of air it gets.

I guess by now she's bored with it,
thinking what's the point, we've got proper ones,
since she hasn't written back,

she in the southern hemisphere,
me in the north, going round since
pricked by the fact we couldn't speak,

still pumped with the breath I didn't
let out about the *kamifuusen*,
this object from so long ago

that fleetingly meant the world.

Koans

By Keith Polette

Who is the Buddha?
A retired dentist living in an RV in Clovis, New Mexico.

What is the sound of one hand clapping?
A painting you cannot finish in the attic.

What was your original face before you were born?
A boathouse door that has no lock.

Would you like a cup of tea?
Only if it is served in a shoe from a lost forest.

What would you do if you found a diamond on a muddy road?
Return it to the frog on the edge of the pond.

Is that so?
The child has taken off the mask.

If you were to meet the Buddha on the road, would you kill the Buddha?
The sparrows have already flown out of the tiger's mouth.

What is this?
I am biting your hand, barking like a tree.

Where does the mind come from?
A dispatch center on fire in a young girl's dream.

What is enlightenment?
A pen knife can do wonders for your complexion.

When you can do nothing, what can you do?
Become a trumpet, eat the moon like a warm tortilla heavy with stars and salsa.

When the many are reduced to one, to what is the one reduced?
The sound of a seagull calling forth a tidal wave,
a priest in search of an Uber confessional,
a girl clutching a bag of hearts in a land of snakes.

What else?
A Ukrainian paperweight.

What is the way?
Qwls have no sense of smell; skunks fear them.

What is the color of wind?
The stipples of a trout that has developed a fear of water.

Do you wish to enter?

I am not here. Do you not remember meeting me on the road?

We Are All Strangers Here

By Marilyn McCabe

As stars are not
the mystic harbor of my wishes
nor mass but space and burning,
so are my questions.
I come to every strange city
as a refugee coming home,
the old streets as if new,
a familiar portico, flourished pedestal,
view from this dusty window.
I am this name unasked.

::

stars are
burning
questions
I come to every city
as if
a
dusty window

::

stars are
burning
every
city

My Legitimate Silence

By R. T. Castleberry

Born in dread,
I learned to mourn
before I learned to beg.
I sold some years in
day rate single rooms,
Armageddon letters folded
for bookmarks in Orwell paperbacks.
Cigar burning in a corner booth,
I heard my sister's cough as
confessions to a wrong,
my brother's gossip as
concessions to ugly hungers.
I watched the landlord take
my messages, those minor grievances,
flip them to the floor like pennies in a game.
Slain to a grave, my father left no good example,
only a workman's stolid silence,
Johnny Walker Red for the weekend.
Hands folded on the desk,
I remember the hour I left prayer.
It was 3am. I'd had enough of mystery.

The Price of Paperbacks

By Raymond Cummings

Just another crude obelisk indicting a
skyline, slick with human teeth. Just
an another improbable brawl of friezes
retreating into infinity, indecorous.
Just a disembodied perm in an outsize
sweater, leveling a camcorder.

granite dadirri

By Scott-Patrick Mitchell (SPM)

here, the irrefutable truth of stone:
hear a sentiment of what is meant

a kernel the shape of a rock
in your head, your voice, in you

speaking unspoken sediments
through one definitive audio statement

how a mountain can be built from this
a pebble is the corner of a landscape

Twenty Questions

By Steve Klepetar

They ask me questions from out in the dark
beyond the range of streetlights or lamps
with voices cold as wind.
Why are you named with a name of grace?

Why have you stuffed your ears with mud?
Do you hear music from inside your brain?
What is the name of your star, your moon,
your firstborn sailing through the birth canal?

What is the color of your tongue, your eye,
what is the shape of your morning prayer?
Have you eaten seeds of the underworld,
followed the river to the place beside the tree?

By now all blossoms have died, turned
to rust, scattered on the grass and disappeared.

PAPER LANTERNS

a laughter long enough for a day

- Johannes S. H. Bjerg

terrarium
the inner life
of dreams

- Gregory Longenecker

alive as if in your future rainy season dream patient trees

- Timothy Murphy

stymied by hooks, everything else looks okay

- Richard Gilbert

under the tree
sitting there waiting
perhaps

- Daniel Birnbaum

page seeds chanting a way out

- Timothy Murphy

still night
crushed velveteen

- Helen Buckingham

fainter stars the bluebells shake out a morning

- Alan Summers

soft mule

between my life

the aubergine

and your life

of infinity

a bilberry

- Michael O'Brien

dune dream interrupted by a ceiling chirp

- Bill Cooper

petrichor reminiscing Monet's water lilies

- Kala Ramesh

hare in the moon jumping double dutch

- Robin Anna Smith

whale footprints the day begins in earnest

- Alan Summers

nesting doll
opening the sound
of shadows

- Gregory Longenecker

thru the windows of the waiting room the windows of other waiting rooms

- Mark Gilbert

melancholy—
the chair becomes a womb

- Kyle Hemmings

Snow shooting the weight of a star

- Susan Beth Furst

why didn't I
the blue in her eyes
cutting string

- Alan Summers

relapsing into old habits the solace of myths

- Madhuri Pillai

the wild blue yonder wholly out of me out of me

- Hansha Teki

the chains
in your dreams
black roses

- Timothy Murphy

new moon rising up from my belly a fear of what

- Kelly Sauvage Angel

criss-crossing my ocean a thimble full of angels and skulls

- Johannes S. H. Bjerg

where the river runs I glitter fish scales

- Alan Summers

worn right down

in my spirit

my dreams
pebble down

I find the nowhere

a primal shore

to hide

- Hansha Teki

well well isn't that

- Elmedin Kadric

wall of dolls the river takes the river gives

- Adrian Bouter

theta waves
where my DNA
does not apply

- Pat Davis

bedside I describe her own nature with pomegranates

- Panagiotis Kentikelenis

good egg—
I edit my genes
in a post-postfeminist
sort of way

- Martha Magenta

walking the coast path
pixies in my head

- Mark Gilbert

crocodile tears
a river of what
I can't feel

- Kyle Hemmings

exploding stars what of our candy apple cries

- Kelly Sauvage Angel

as birdsong
I start off
from an elm

- Elmedin Kadric

the blob on the screen is your infected muse

- Kyle Hemmings

the way of words ever-an-i-don't-know

- Richard Gilbert

sacrificial iamb

- Nicholas Mathisen

reading footnote to howl out loud to the autumn wind

- Matthew Moffett

murmuring starlings
the acrobat's
death poem

- Stephen Toft

writing me with typos the finger of dusk absentminded

- Johannes S. H. Bjerg

lightening the identity overload unsolved rosebud mysteries

- Timothy Murphy

passers-by

distant surf

speaking of reality

all I want to do

a verse unfinished

is sleep

- Hansha Teki

flaring hills finding a voice that fits my shoe

- Keith Polette

swooning over the moonflower a pisces a taurus

- Nicholas Mathisen

an easy idea
your lover on the roof
training the horizon

- Keith Polette

torn between two trains
both protesting
they will never leave you

- Keith Polette

wrapping your arms around my negative space

- Kyle Hemmings

through the malarial haze
her hand, perhaps

- Ashish Narain

for the bird in your voice something yields

- Johannes S. H. Bjerg

plant bolting
your voice breaks up
on the phone

- Devin Harrison

your apology—
a juinjutsu you learned
by binding your tongue

- J'Sun Howard

revisiting
the places I've lived...
sorries
come faster in reruns
and loving words easier

- Pris Campbell

FICTION

Better Safe Than Sari

By Gautam Nadkarni

I once went with my sister to buy saris. Like Edmund Hillary saying he once climbed Mount Everest. In that casual tone of voice. And let me add that Hillary's task was a piece of pie. Anybody who has flirted with man-eating tigers would know what I am talking about.

First, the female sibling studied a vast array of shelves and racks. Then, with an index finger, she pointed out more saris than one could compute on a mainframe computer. Every jab of her finger made me flinch like a cornered Injun being fired at with a Buntline Special. Bullets whizzing to left and right. I could now empathise with sitting ducks.

Next, she picked up a ghastly piece, draped it around one shoulder, and raised a questioning eyebrow at me. I shook the noggin. As sari after sari was held up and examined, I kept shaking my head. Finally, just as I got the sneaking suspicion, that intuitive feeling, that my skull would soon part ways with my shoulders, she pounced on a silk specimen. She beamed and looked at it from every angle. This time when she quizzed me I nodded my head, but dolefully. What could I do? I wouldn't have dared select it even as a shroud for myself but she obviously loved it and loved it dearly.

Later, I treated her to *brune maska* and *cutting chai* and made peace with myself.

haute couture
afterwards the diva
slips into shorts

Relativity

By Johannes S. H. Bjerg

God expands or contracts according to different traditions. My rooms do the same but are conditioned by pain and the degree in which external and internal darkness mixes.

unfalling

*if
only*

Welcome Home

By Johannes S. H. Bjerg

With Him gone for a few days, I walk around the house cleaning up his photos. From these I remove doors no one has used for years and which probably don't lead to anywhere but perdition—or a time pocket forever standing still in which the unfortunate traveller who went through the door can do nothing but pick his—or her—nose till God decides differently. I wipe away faded eyes that have long ceased seeing; waterfalls that have stopped falling and turned green; girls in folk costumes frozen in dances; accompanying musicians long since absorbed by the then blue-grey now yellowing mountains in the background; men holding up dead animals; buildings I'm sure are no longer fit for human living; clouds that belong to a black-and-white era; cars He no longer has the money to repair; jokes no one will laugh at now, and so on. But the stone at the centre of the dining table? I leave it be. The stone is not in a photo and I'm sure He'd feel uneasy if it wasn't there to hold his thoughts, to anchor his shadows.

in the distance crows and bells fighting for attention

Instead, I pull a rose out of the palm of my hand and put it on the stone. Just to say *welcome home*. But the stone absorbs it without a sound. So much for my good intentions.

from Bean's diary
(1967)

By Kyle Hemmings

The schizophrenia of playful faces. Your little sister pulling logical rabbits from your father's homburg. They jump back inside the walls. You and I spending hours in the basement, the hit and run of finger foreplay, the geometry of our kisses. Nothing dies without you saying so. In China, you'd be the empress of spontaneous shadows. The empress of hugs and please return. No matter how much I tell you I want you, we're still made of glass and the reflections are confusing. You don't seem to understand. Near the opposite wall, your gerbils build a mock world and run it. Someday they will escape and die in the rain. You'll return to the house, drenched and shivering, shake your head sideways, and announce that they're gone for good. Your mother will be a Siberia of stillness. Your father will discuss the practicality of cats. But you'd want a stray, one with hard, cold eyes that can see through you. A cat that will discover that you're only happy when you're unhappy. And then, it will leave.

passive resistance...

the people we want

hold their breath inside bubbles

Letter, with Elephants

By *Linda Ferguson*

“The elephants have been restless again. I think it must be the drums.”

– Peter Weir, *Green Card*

Dear Brother,

Not much has happened since I wrote last. The elephants are still on edge. I thought they were dreaming of Africa, but now I sniff Parisian fantasies – visions of damp beige streets and the sizzle of butter and shallots. I see their hunger even as they turn their heads from my armfuls of dried grass.

I found Grandfather’s drum in a corner, tucked behind stacks of brittle sheet music and the box that once held the molting fur coat and the cream hat with silver combs that Gram pressed into her crown of braids. I like to sit on the floor with the hat slanted on my head and the drum between my knees as I pound out a pattern, sometimes slow and rhythmical – a hypnotic ritual – and sometimes so hard and fast even my heart can’t match its speed.

Oh, my heart, my heart. It bangs around in its cage, wanting out. Sometimes I calm it by singing. Or I stand by the kitchen window, looking out at the white rose that climbs the arbor as I sway like the elephants. Sometimes I write our names, with the loops of a cursive *E* for me, a proud cursive *R* for you. When my heart shuns comfort, I take out my brushes and paint portraits of the elephants. Someday, I think, I’ll send these pictures to you, but for now I wrap them in tissue and slide them under the bed in your old room.

Outside my study now, I hear the elephants shifting their feet in the hall. If only I could press my face to their leathered skin, but they flick their tails and turn away whenever I reach for them. Last night I lay awake and felt the tiffany shade of the ceiling fixture tremble, and I knew they were in the attic again, although I’ve warned them about trusting their weight on the warped floor planks.

Remember how you and I climbed those narrow stairs, how we arranged boxes to make a hot, airless cave where we swathed ourselves in velvet and chenille and made plans for our escape? Once we had a picnic of ginger snaps and strawberries. Sitting across from each other, kneecaps bumping.

“I’m a zebra,” you whispered, and I knew I was a tiger, a cub, my teeth not yet sharp enough.

And now? Surely I’m more than a mouth, yellowed molars, a soundless opening and closing.

When I went to the attic last night, hoping to coax the elephants down, they froze and became shadows.

No matter.

You, brother, are the one who was always at home with my pounce and purr and growl. I was about to urge you to come back just now, then I stopped myself. After all, you and I are continents apart, and yet both of us are striped.

True Colors

By Lori Cramer

Whenever I drew her picture I used orange crayon for her hair, fascinated by the fiery curls so unlike my mother's and my boring brown locks. She waitressed the breakfast shift on weekdays at the diner, and when I stayed with her on weekends she'd let me pour out her jar of tips, shiny coins clanging onto the worn carpet. Side by side on her sleeper sofa, we watched doubleheaders, sitcoms, and old-time movies. I never thought of asking whether she liked living alone or if she sometimes wished for an easier life; I simply kept her company.

Flight 238

By Piet Nieuwland

In the flower of your eyes are pohutukawa and hibiscus, gestating through winter and blossoming in red vocabularies of petals, stamens, pollens, and secrets. In the eyes of your flowers, there is a song that sings—it sings through the minds of insects and the thought of birds, it sings whenever the moon calls from the sky and there is a ripple of waves upon the beach, it sings while you sleep and while you are feeding. It sings in the flutter flash you make when blinking. When you are, open into the cathedral of stars at night, blue shifting into yellow and greens that make silvers, iridescences into colors beyond sight.

This is an afternoon when the freedom of the wind carries me and I see and look and think and feel what it is to be like *this* and *here*. It is returning to a balance and stretching out. It is with an old camera of my father refocusing on the subtle imagery of identity. It is being what I want to be in a house of possibilities, in the ocean of what could happen, in the future that I am living into.

In the evening, when the horizon is a cloud over Pukenui beyond profiles of pohutukawa lining this street, the walk is in cool air. The black cloak folds over. An invisibly black cat passes with phosphorescent green eyes and a moth hovers. The forest is silent but for the far distant hiss of the river. You are still here with me, in as much as that is possible, in the ways we have intertwined since that evening near the airport last year.

Dappled

By Richard Gilbert

At that moment I knew I was very lucky to be the one who had found a tracing of an artwork of a painting of a sketch of a drawing of a model of a landscape that would eventually be found to live again.

flying to a new season
newton's apple and a basket
upside-down

Love Is Make-believe

By *Riham Adly*

My daughter Evol asks me if a flat line in a mirror can ever get splashed. I tell her flat lines in a mirror are a rarity but straight lines can curl after the slightest swivel.

Her caramel eyes carve their disapproval at my current state of affairs, but not before inviting me to her invented *Cumbria*—something like other children’s Narnia but this one sounding like an actual place—of frothy waves and sand dunes hand molded into castles.

She curses the sun for having hurt her mama; she says it has a sour mouth the same color as ketchup. She lathers my back with soothing crème and asks me to sing along. Her song’s about an Eskimo girl living in an iceless hut with a heart the size of an iceberg.

My two-piece swimsuit reminds me of the prison bars that held back the girl from one of Evol’s favorite anime series she used to watch with her father.

I think about how sea-glass, seashells, and grand sand castles look good on a postcard.

When he sailed down south, she knew it was her fault and that she should have been like a sunflower looking dutifully towards the sun, following it, adoring it, worshiping it, but she didn’t. She let the whip of its rays slash at her skin.

So he left, but not before smearing her forehead with the illusion of a kiss.

“I’ll be back.” They both knew the truth. They both pretended not to look at their mirror with all its flat lines and straight lines spelled backwards.

My daughter loves to play make-believe.

“Mommy, imagine you are a fairy, then you’re a fairy. Imagine the sand castle has a king and you’re its queen.”

“Mommy, imagine the water in the hole is my favorite letter soup. Or if I were an Eskimo with whales for friends.”

“Imagine Daddy loving whales and those oranges you called mandarins. Imagine if I could not swim... but then I can.”

I look at her all grown up in the mirror, fiery braids the color of sunflowers, and wonder why I spelled her name in reverse.

I imagined her shrinking to the size of a fist ball, finding her way back inside my belly, exploring haunted beginnings, and that one true story I won't read to her at bedtime.

Blizzard Scenarios

By Salvatore Difulco

Wrapped in sheets I stooped into a white wall. Teeth clenched, eyes thinned, leaning forward, I pumped my arms and legs. Made little progress. A man with an orange helmet emerged from a snowbank. He asked about the sheets. *I have no answers*, I told him. *Someone pushed me out the door like this. Have you no friends?* the man asked. *I have many*, I said. *Apparently not*, he said. *What's with the helmet?* I asked. *I'm working*, he said. *Can you point me toward the frozen river?* I asked. *It's frozen?* he said, mouth down. The wind shook his helmet. *What keeps it from flying off?* I asked. He grabbed the helmet with both hands and lifted it from his head. Oddly, the top of his head was missing. *What happened to your crown?* I said. *Electrical accident*, he replied. He replaced the helmet to his head. *You can still function*, I said. *Indeed*, he said. *My only problem*, he admitted, *is I can't feel my feet. Perhaps the cold has something to do with that*, I said. *Nah*, he said, *the condition preceded the storm. I'm unhappy, in general*, he added, *but this numbness in my feet deepens my wretchedness*. The wind gusted, flapping my sheets. I felt I had nothing more to say to this worker. *I wish you well*, I said. *No you don't*, he said. *Be honest. You threw me into your path for conflict. We are not at odds*, I said. *But you're exploiting my oddity*, he said. *It was more about the helmet*, I said, striding forward again, looking back once at a soft orange blur.

Alice

By Susan Beth Furst

I must go,
she said, as she closed
the electric book.
Down is up and up is nowhere.

It is time,
she said, as she climbed down
from her wobbly throne.
It waits for no one.

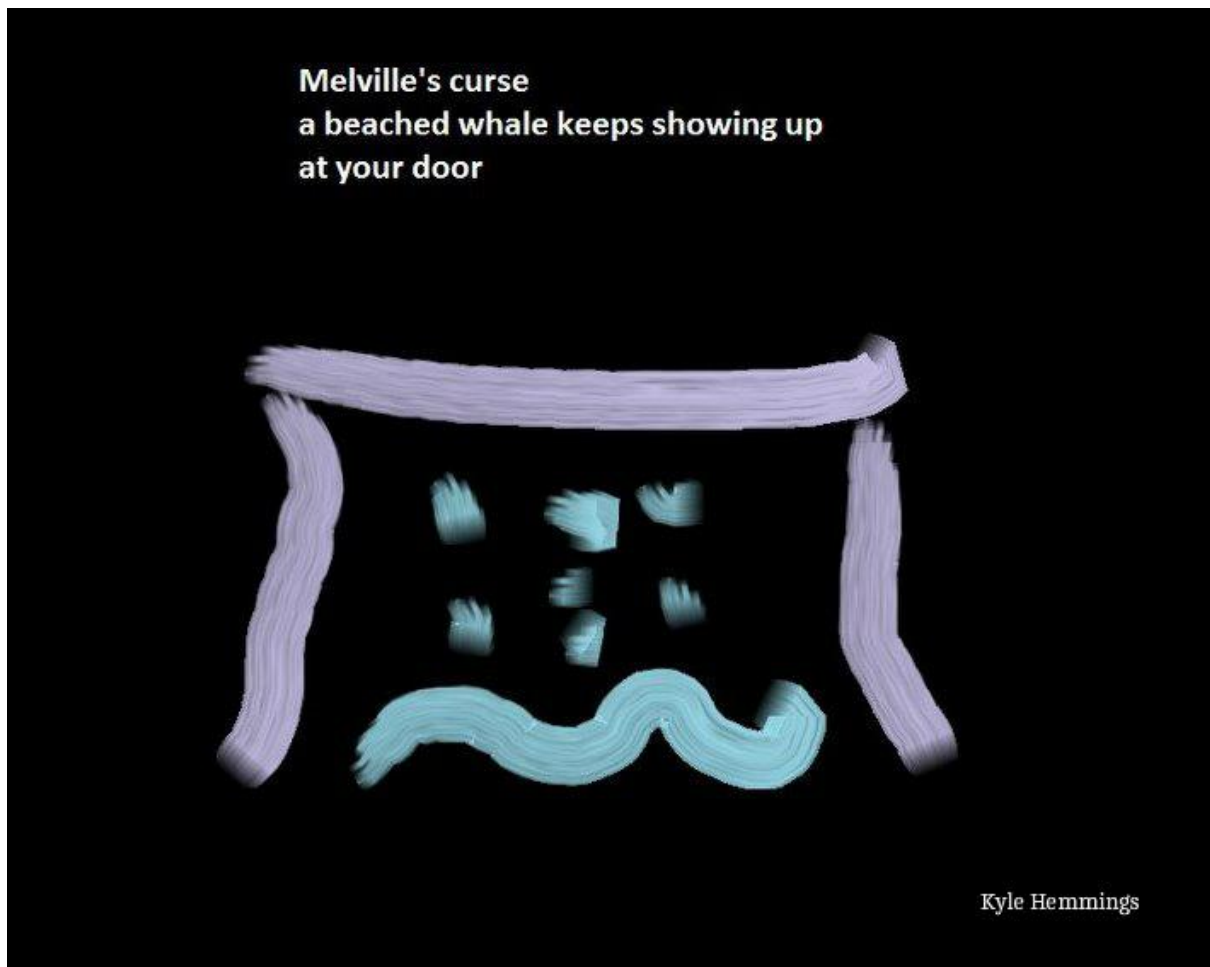
I will look to the east,
she said, as she remembered
the line from the song,
for the sunrise.

One can never be lost when one looks for the sun...

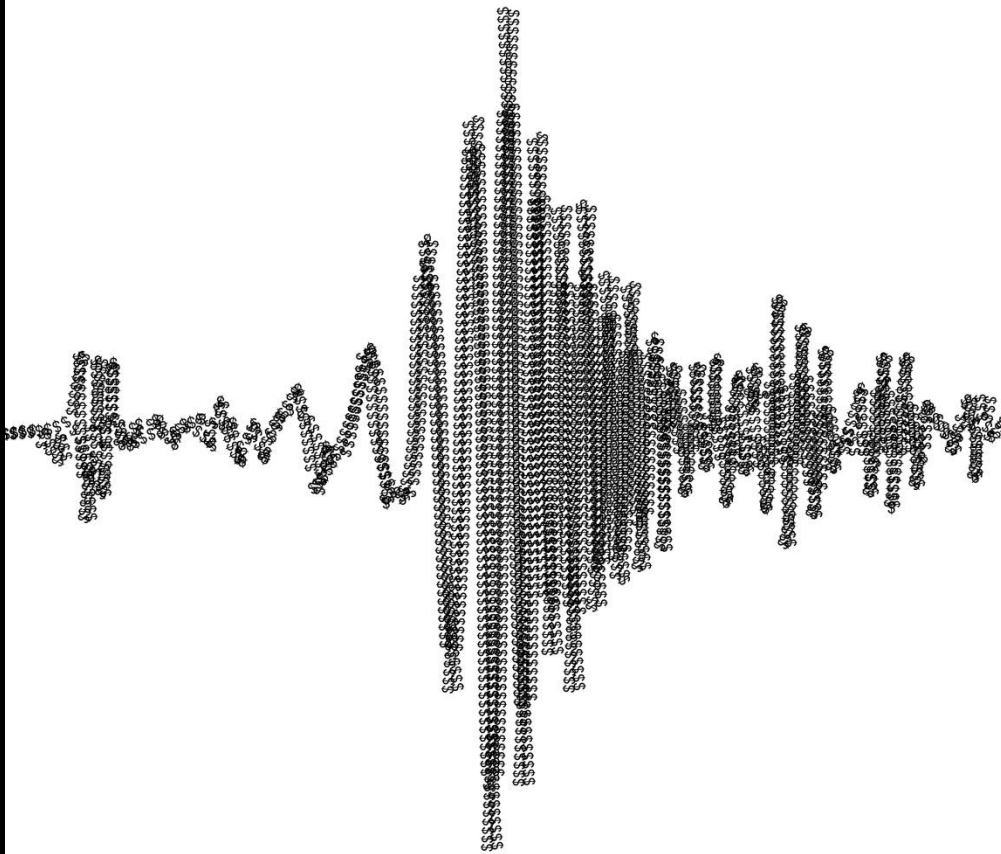
checking out—
the emperor's clothes
flutter on the line

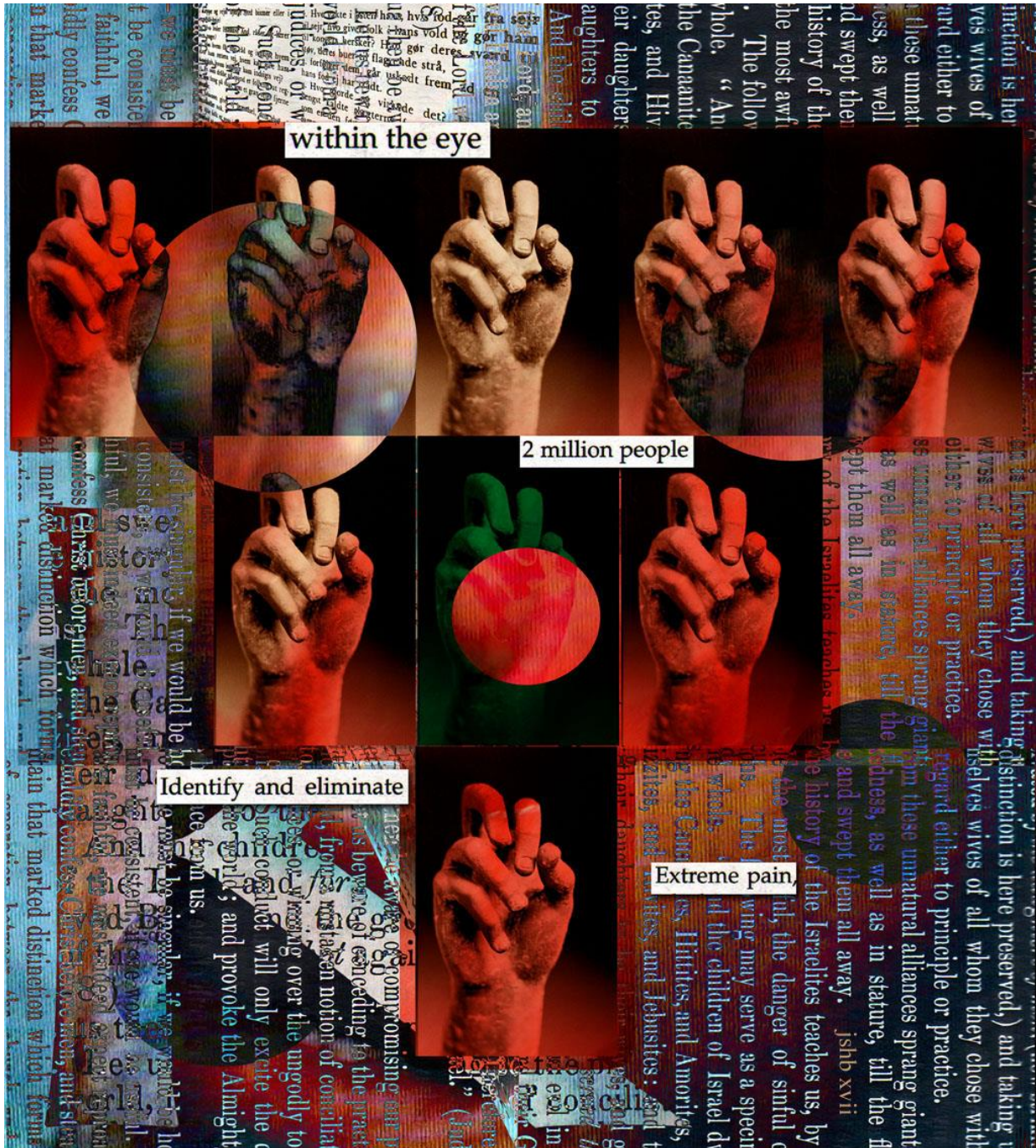
VISUAL ART

Melville's curse by Kyle Hemmings

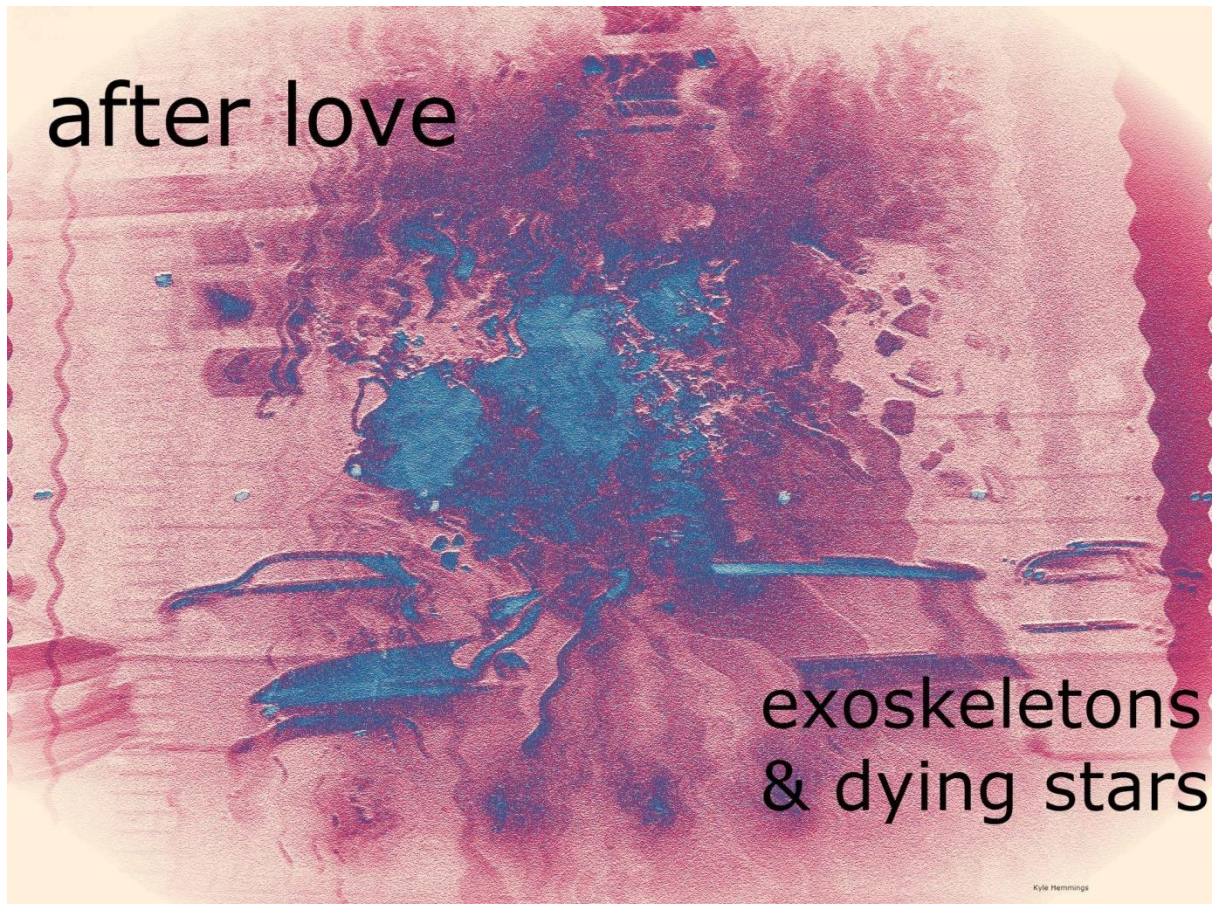


Worthquake

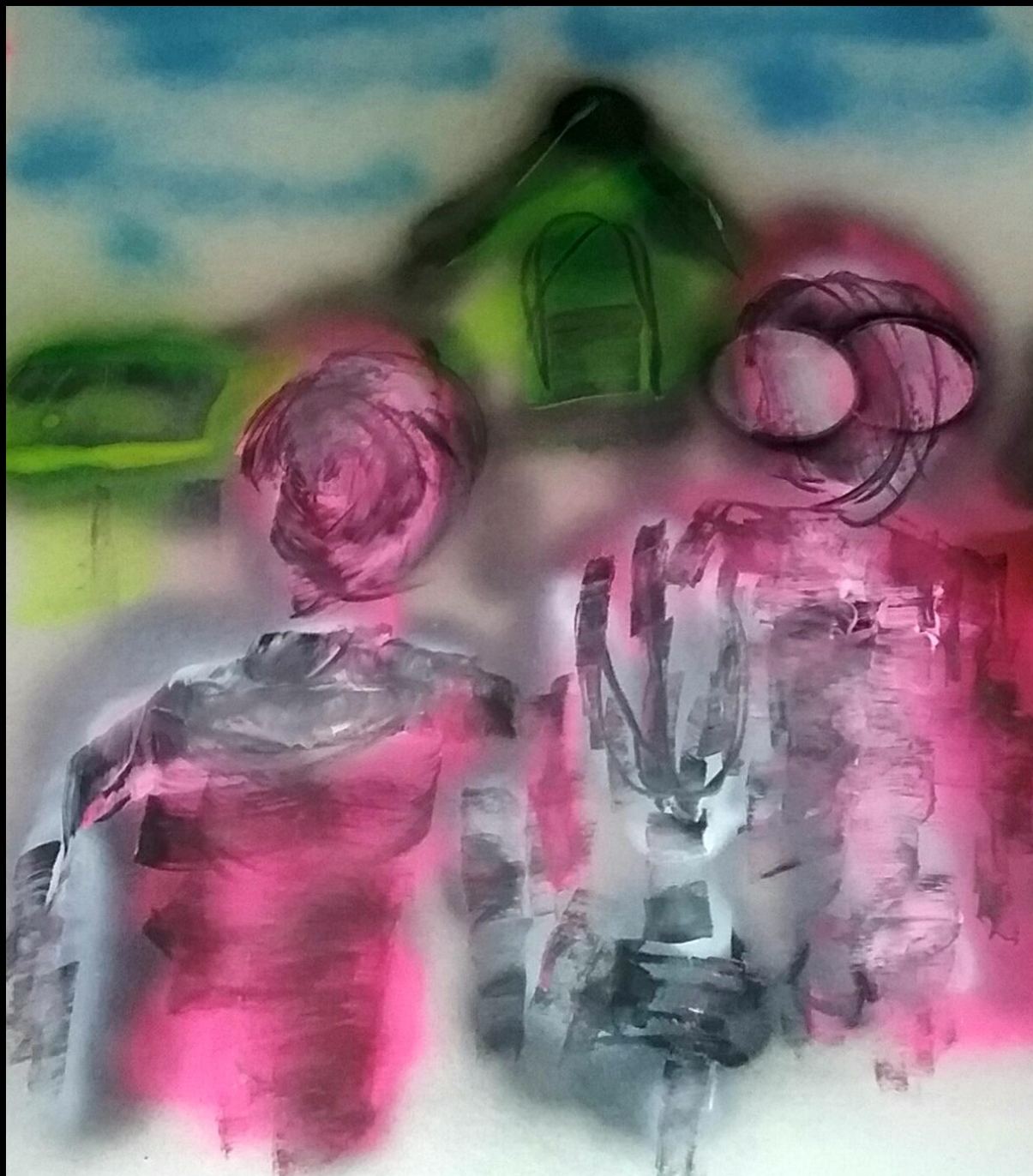


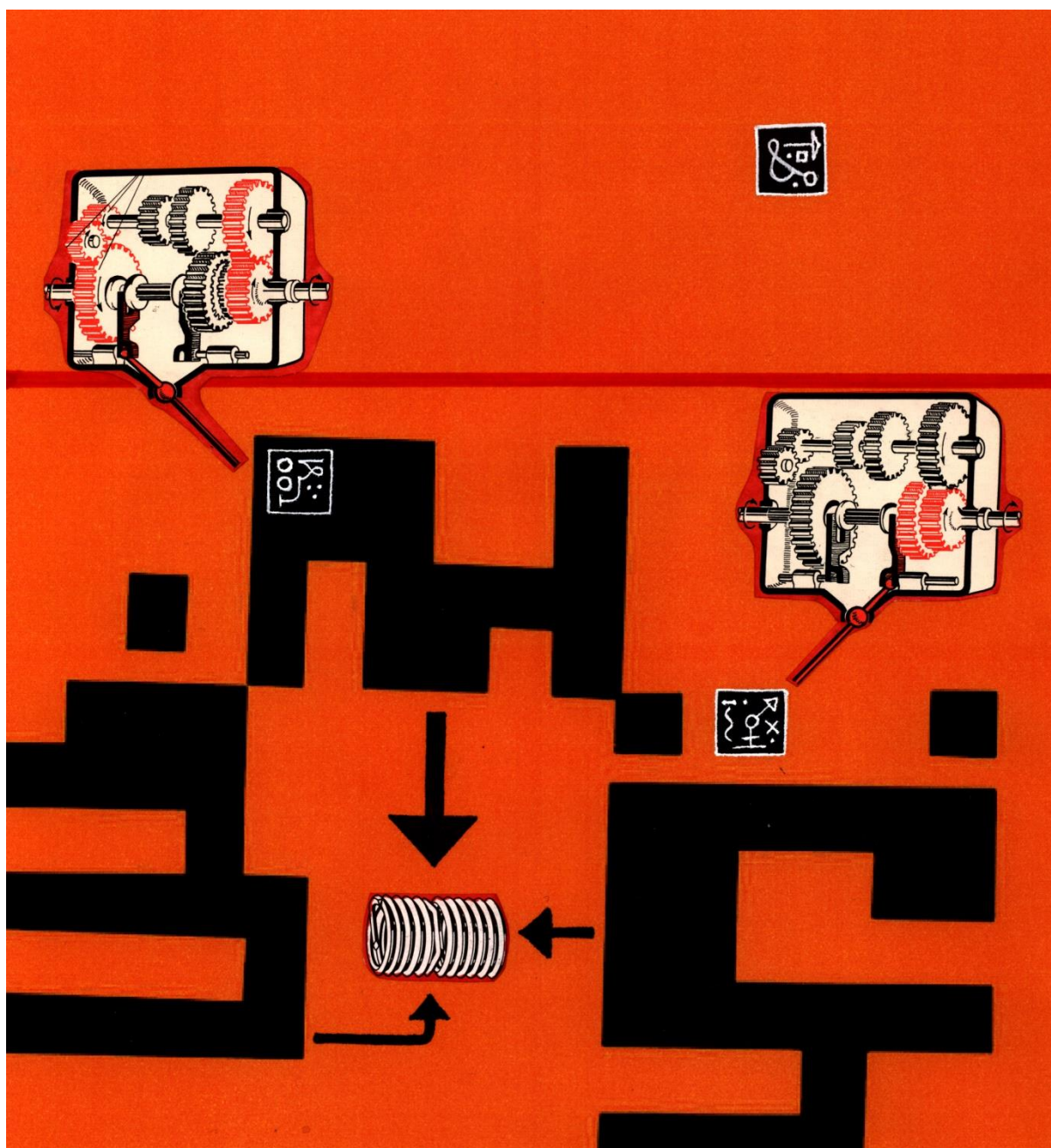


after love by Kyle Hemmings



Fishkill Motocross Club by Ody West

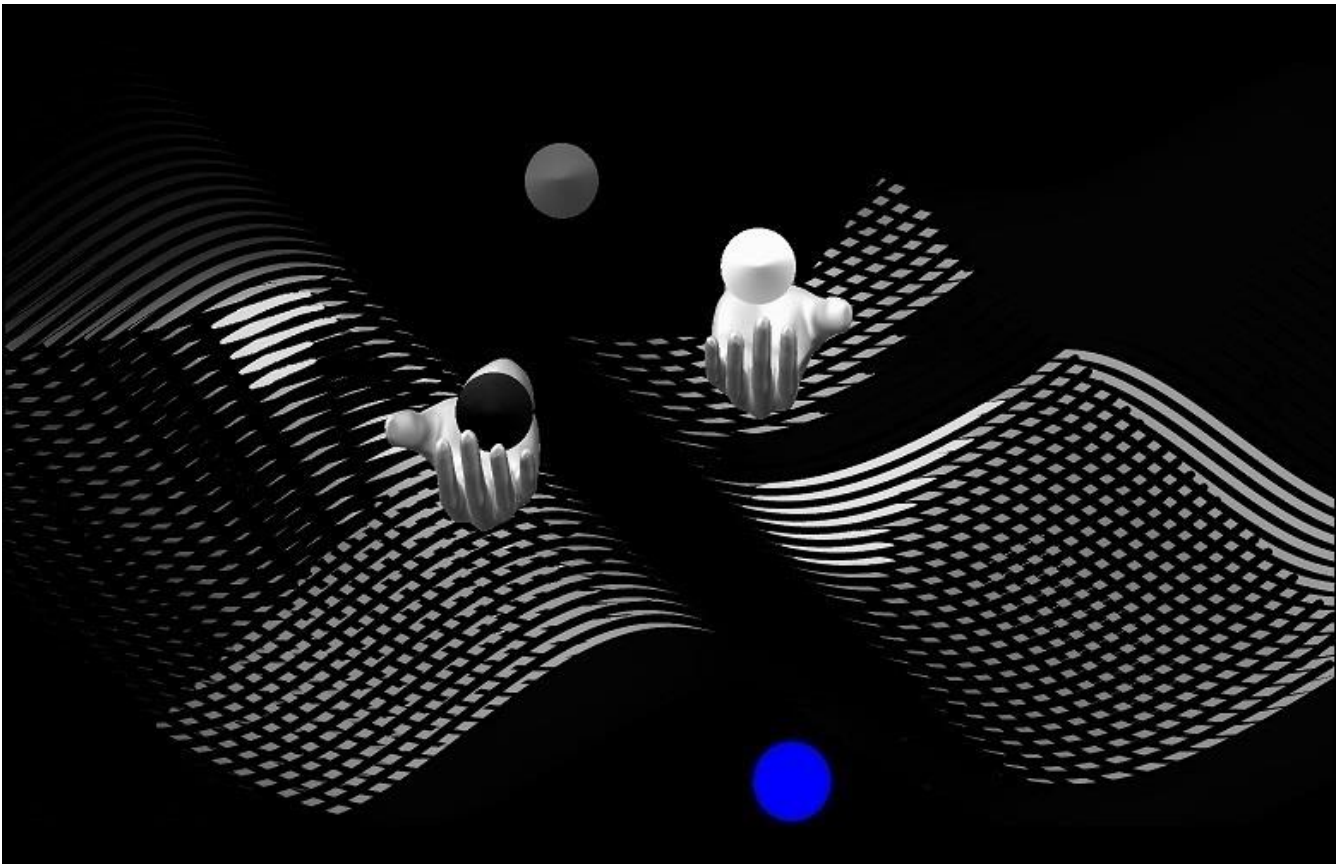




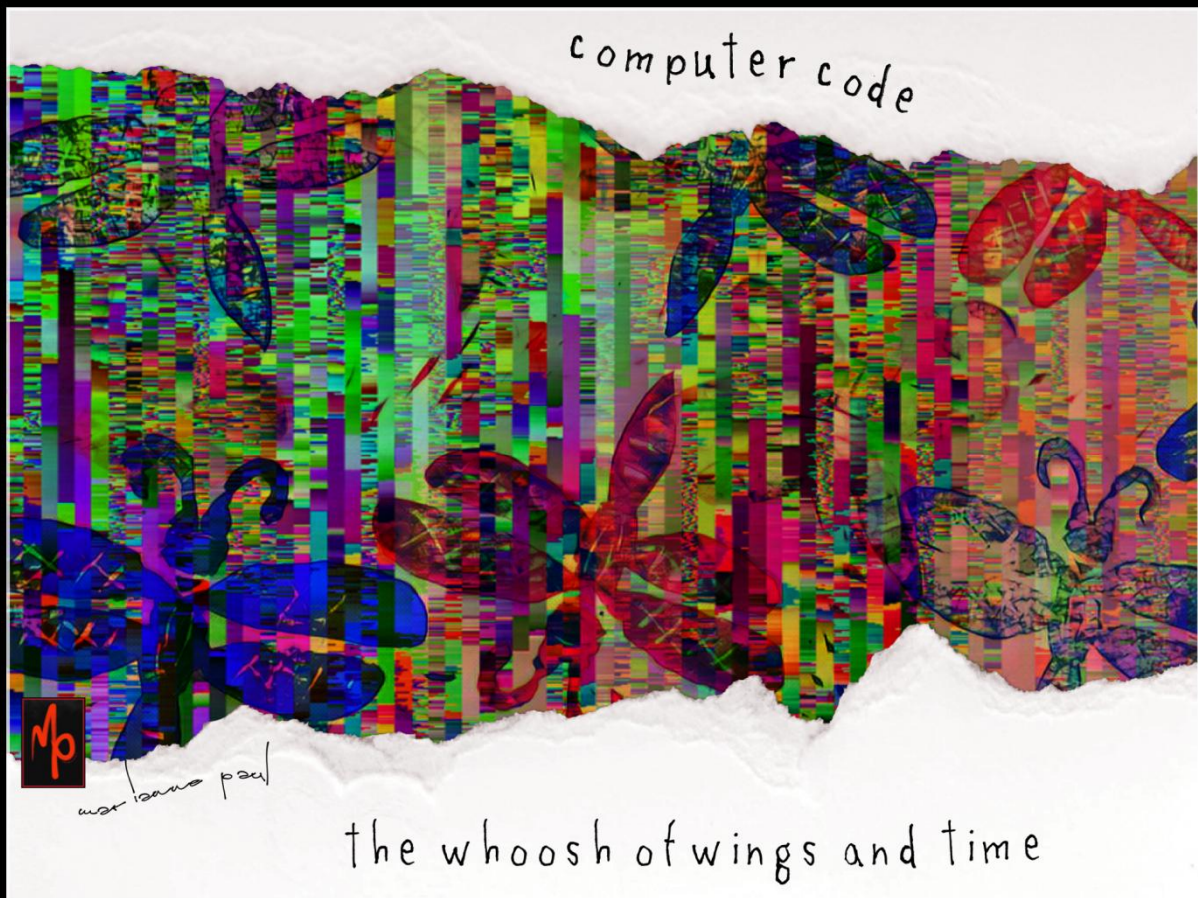
Mindscape by Denis Smith



Imagine by Susan Mallernee



computer code by Marianne Paul



Hexagonal Energy by Renata Solimini





Autumn, Dalton Crag by Stephen Toft



Pink Acres by Ody West

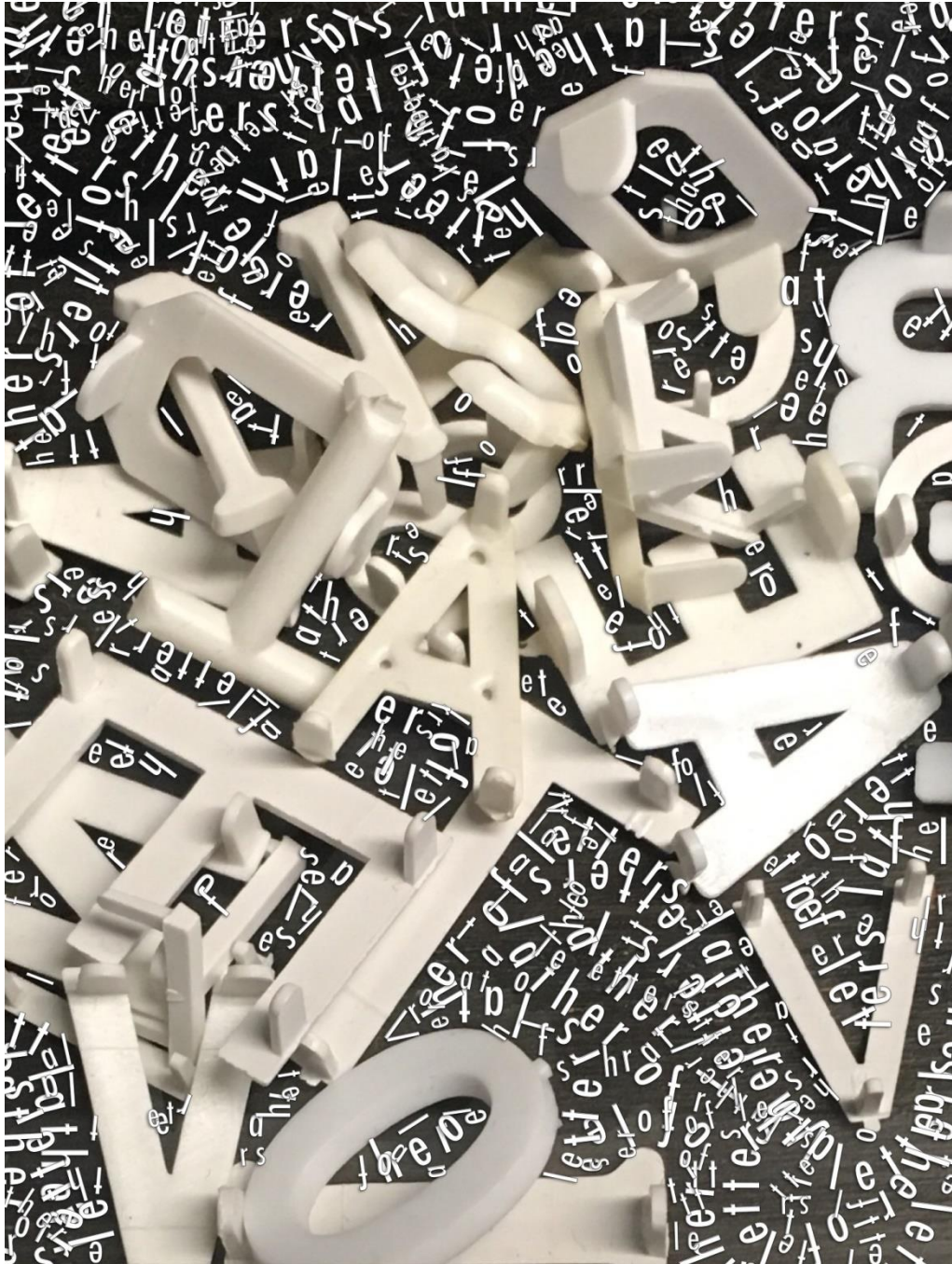


Haiga by Johannes S. H. Bjerg

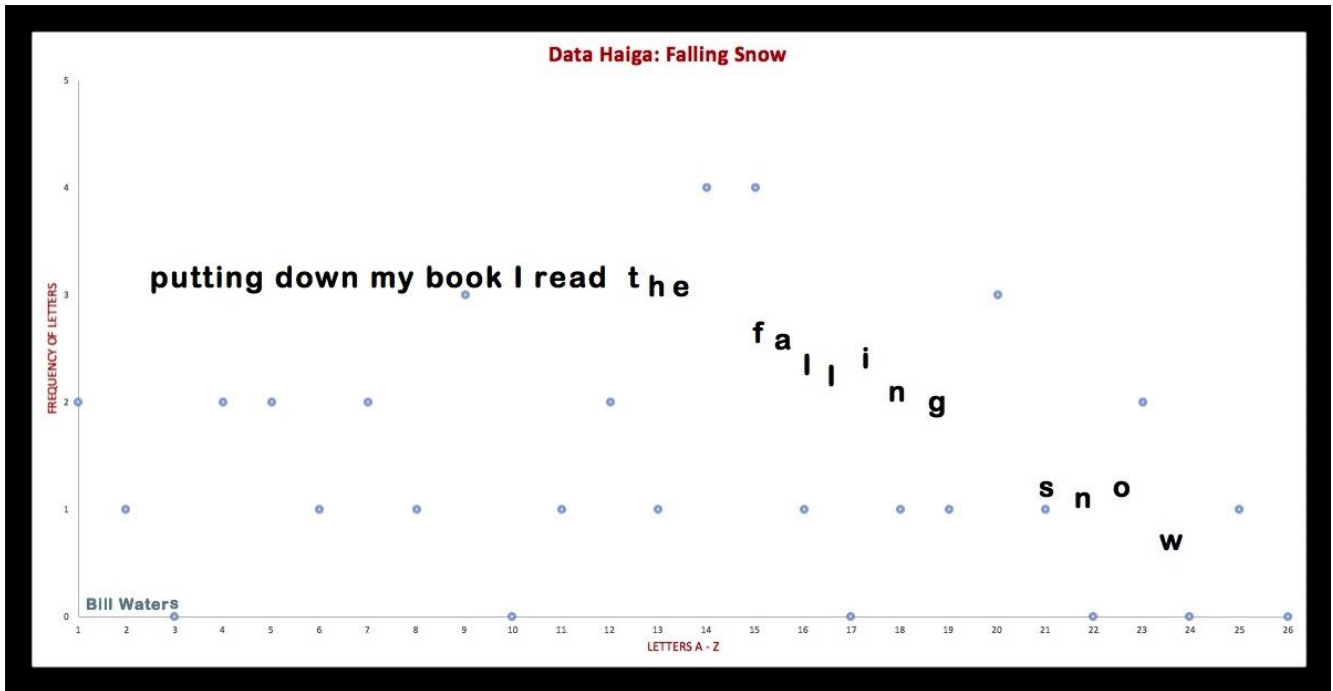


Volcano by Renata Solimini





Data Haiga by Bill Waters



Artist’s statement: Artists are doing some very cool things with “big data.” As a haiku poet, I found myself wondering if there might be something visual a writer could do with very small data. I knew that Microsoft Excel offers a graphing function and that a scatter plot might look a bit like falling snow. So, I took a one-line poem of mine — “putting down my book I read the falling snow” — and plotted how many times each letter of the English alphabet occurs in it. Since the resulting graph did look reasonably like falling snow, I wove my poem into it, put a border around it, and voila: a “data haiga!”

Unblocking My/Your Dreams by Christine L. Villa



starlit wings by Robyn Cairns



INTERVIEW WITH KYLE HEMMING

Kyle Hemmings is a retired healthcare worker living in New Jersey. His poems, prose pieces, and photographs have been published in over 400 venues, including *Otoliths*, *White Knuckle Press*, *Bones*, *the other bunny*, *Otata*, *is/let*, and *Burning Word*. He loves street photography, French Impressionism, and obscure garage bands of the 60s. Kyle is one of the poetry and fiction editors of Yavanika Press.

SB: As a writer who has experimented with several genres, is there a favorite that you have made your own/comes to you effortlessly?

KH: I think my favorite has come to be the prose poem. I like its mix of being both loosely structured and the fact that it contains a lot of room to be playful. There's a certain freedom from a strict narrative and you can get away with not being too logical. I feel there's more emphasis on tone, color, detail, and mood.

I also like other forms not that far removed from the prose poem, such as drabble, flash fiction, haibun, and what not. But the prose poem seems to be my favorite medium to work with.

SB: If we were to rummage through your 'Work in Progress' file, what would we see? Are we likely to come across an Italo Calvino kind of book coming from you?

KH: I haven't been writing too much of late. Right now, the closest I have to a 'Work in Progress' file would be the haiku and prose that will form the raw material for my new collection, *Schizoid Tendencies*, forthcoming from Yavanika Press in early 2019. Shloka Shankar and I will be working together on a mixed-genre collection that might contain some of that Calvino sense of the surreal and the enigmatic. I hope readers will like it.

SB: You speak of music as one of your biggest influences. Is there an art form you think could have been as big an influence but you haven't explored?

KH: Yes. Songwriting. In my next life, I will be a songwriter, successful or not, and I will start writing songs from the age of five. I grew up with music, the garage bands of the 60s to the hard rockers of the 70s to the punks of the early 80s to the grunge bands of the early 90s. I admire songwriters like Brian Wilson, Lennon & McCarthy, and Arthur Lee. If I had a better memory, I would rap, too. But I'm too humble.

Sometimes, a title or a line from a song finds a way to enter some of my pieces. It happened in my early stuff, such as in the chapbook [*Cat People*](#) (Scars Publications) and *The Lives of Rock Stars* (Ten Page Press). The latter is a chap of poems about a fictitious ensemble of rock musicians based on the ones I grew up listening to.

SB: In your writing, there's a delicious escape from reality. Do you consciously blur the present to write about another dimension?

KH: Yes, I do sometimes blur the present to write about another dimension. I like dark fantasy and some of my work veers there. Actually, I like taking a collage of past and present moments, mixing them together and getting some new and strange possibilities. Sometimes, I imagine myself as a 20-year-old but with the experience I have now. There would be a story in that.

SB: What is that one poem you would give us to take home?

KH: Okay, here's an early one. For some reason it has remained close to my heart, maybe because it reminds me of the East Village area where I once hung out. And, by the way, the title was inspired by a Fleetwood Mac song *The Green Manalishi*, written by Peter Green, and now considered a proto-metal classic. I also tried to incorporate aspects of the Shwemyethna myth.

The Green-Eyed Shwemyethna

Eyes that flash a beautiful anger,
two green moons,
an anger endless as dog day shadows.
I watch this moon-girl, bare bellied,
waist wispy, gyrate on the dance floor,
as if she's possessed by fever
or the ghost of a scarred ancestor.

The DJ, too stoned to get off his ass,
can't stop playing West End Girls.

Moon-girl spins around & around
drunk on her outrageous momentum
as if she could make the world rotate on its own fables.
Spin.
Spin along the edge of your own spoon.

She weaves her crazy limbs
under the dash of lights until they blur
into four or eight arms & her strange dance taunts me,
robs me of all false name pretense,
the body no longer a shock absorber
to sudden love.

Back at my apartment, a grotto of night,
I embrace her quiver, mimic her trilogy of sighs,
grip her arms white as heroin, a shade of Alice,
a shade of sugar. Her love is hard & fast,
sand & death & moon-dust kisses
but she soon evaporates from the room,
past the wall of white sleep,
perhaps too, from the agenda of stonewall rules & shallow breathers.

Tomorrow, the city will wake with the bustle,
the roar of downtown buses,
the grumble of impatient commuters & scam artists.
It will rain green, the weathermen predicted it,
everywhere it will rain green droplets,
& people will think green rain, shake off green rain at bus stops,
this green rain, its tragic love affair with the earth.
& somewhere a water-sister cries over her brother-lover
addicted to solids & city street maps.

I know that story.

& the world will know green
but it will not remember the green-eyed Shwemyethna
who died in my sugar-deprived sleep.

CONTRIBUTORS

Adrian Bouter lives in Holland and has two children. He's a caregiver and a poet, and likes to ride his bike besides many other things. Go deep, but travel light—life is (often) wonderful.

Alan Summers, co-founder of *Call of the Page*, was born in London, England, lives in Wiltshire, and is a Japan Times Award winning writer. He's been [filmed](#) by Japanese Television for *Europe meets Japan – Alan's Haiku Journey*. Website: www.callofthepage.org

Alvin Pang is a poet, writer, and editor from Singapore. Active internationally in literary practice, his writings have been published worldwide in more than twenty languages, including Croatian, Macedonian, Slovene, and Swedish. Among various engagements, he is a board member of the University of Canberra's International Poetry Studies Institute and a doctoral candidate in the practice of creative writing with RMIT University. His latest book is *WHAT HAPPENED: Poems 1997-2017*.

Arno Schlick was born in Nuremberg, Germany, in 1970 and studied philosophy and biology in Berlin. He has had his short prose, poems, and concrete/visual poetry published in many journals, including *Die Horen*.

Ashish Narain is an Economist by profession and a haiku poet by choice. His work has been published in online journals like *Prune Juice*, *Failed Haiku*, *Otata*, *Bones*, *Under the Basho*, and *Creatrix*. He lives with his wife and two sons in Delhi, India and has finally convinced them that he is almost famous.

Bill Cooper is president emeritus at the University of Richmond and has published haiku and senryu in a variety of journals and books.

Bill Waters loves to write Japanese-style micropoetry, photo poetry, video poetry, book spine poetry, ekphrastic poetry, found verse, and compressed prose. He also runs the Poetry in Public Places Project on Facebook. Bill lives in Pennington, New Jersey, U.S.A., with his wonderful wife and their two amazing cats.

Chris Dominiczak recently exhibited with AiR (Artists in Recovery) in Newcastle upon Tyne. He won the first UHTS Rosenberry Literary award for haiku and has been published in several journals—writing short poems, haiku and its related forms. When he is not writing, he's taking photographs, cutting trees, or is subject to his daughter's demands.

Christine L. Villa, apart from being a published children's writer and an award-winning haiku and tanka poet, is also the founding editor of [Frameless Sky](#)—a bi-annual poetry video journal. *The Bluebird's Cry*, her collection of Japanese short-form poetry, is now available on Amazon. Website: <http://blossomrain.blogspot.com>

Daniel Birnbaum lives in France. Aside from French literary journals, his poems have appeared in *Acorn*, *Atlas Poetica*, *Chrysanthemum*, *Failed Haiku*, *Modern Haiku*, *One-Sentence Poems*, *Presence*, and *Shot Glass Journal* among numerous others. He has twelve books published.

Darren C. Demaree is the author of nine poetry collections, most recently *Bombing the Thinker* (September 2018), which was published by Backlash Press. He is the Managing Editor of the

Best of the Net Anthology and *Ovenbird Poetry*. Darren currently lives and writes in Columbus, Ohio with his wife and children.

Denis Smith is an Australian born artist, who, for many years, has immersed himself in the calligraphy and painting of the Far East, as well as in asemic scripts. He has participated in several exhibitions in Australia and abroad. For Denis, art is a life-long journey of discovery and experimentation.

Devin Harrison lives in a rain forest in the Canadian Pacific Northwest where he embraces a minimalist lifestyle. He is a recipient of Akita International University President's Award. Devin's recent book, *meeting myself at the gate*, is available on Amazon.

Elmedin Kadric was born in Novi Pazar, Serbia, but writes out of Helsingborg, Sweden. He is the author of the haiku collection, *buying time* (Red Moon Press, 2017).

Gautam Nadkarni, at 62, has three passions in his life. They are reading, writing, and drawing cartoons. All three are effected with music in the background. Haiku, senryu, and tanka have been his obsessions since 2006, and now that he has married his senryu to his cartoons, he just cannot stop smiling.

Gregory Longenecker primarily writes short-form Japanese poetry. His recently released his book, *somewhere inside yesterday* (Red Moon Press), takes its title from a haiku shortlisted for a 2018 Touchstone Award. Gregory has been widely published and is a member of several haiku societies.

Hansha Teki exists in his reflection; breadcrumbs of a self that he broadcasts as he explores the labyrinthine undergrowth of presence, language, and consciousness. The trail of his breadcrumbs may be glimpsed at <http://hanshateki.com>.

Helen Buckingham lives in Somerset, England. Her work appears regularly in journals such as *is/let*, *Modern Haiku*, and *NOON: journal of the short poem*, and anthologies including *Haiku in English: The First Hundred Years* (W. W. Norton, 2013). She won first prize in the Martin Lucas Haiku Award, 2016, and her most recent collection is *sanguinella* (Red Moon Press, 2017).

Iain Twiddy studied literature at university, and lived for several years in northern Japan. His poems have been published in *The Poetry Review*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, *The London Magazine*, *The Moth* and elsewhere.

J'sun Howard is a Chicago-based dancemaker and poet. He was recently selected to participate in an artistic cultural exchange to South Korea by adjudicators for the 2018 Detroit Dance City Festival. His poems are forthcoming in GIANTHOLOGY and appear in *WusGood*, *The Shade Journal*, *Propter Nos*, *Bird's Thumb*, and *Calamus Journal*.

Johannes S. H. Bjerg is a Dane who writes in Danish and English simultaneously, and mainly writes haiku and its related forms. He is one of three editors of *Bones: journal of contemporary haiku*, and the sole editor of one link chain and the other bunny. A list of his published books can be found here: <http://january-stones.blogspot.dk/p/books.html>.

Kala Ramesh, to bring haiku into everyday spaces, has initiated *HaikuWALL*, *haikuTRAIL*, *haikuTALK*, *haikuWORKSHOP*, *haikuYOUTH*, *haikuUTSAV*, *haikuDHYANA*, and *haikuSTAGE*—a weaving together of art forms. *SAMVAAD :: the open*

sky — a dialogue to bring writers of different poetic genres together is her latest venture. Kala has been a speaker at several national and international literary festivals.

Keith Polette has had his poems published recently in *Typishly*, *The Peeking Cat*, and *The Esthetic Apostle*. His haiku have appeared in such journals as *Modern Haiku*, *Ardea*, *Hedgerow*, *Under the Basbo*, *Failed Haiku*, and *Daily Haiga*. Polette's book of haiku, *The New World*, is a Pond Frog Edition of Red Moon Press (2017).

Kelly Sauvage Angel, a graduate of Northwestern University, is the author of *Om Namah...* (published under Kalyanii) and the long out-of-print poetry collection, *Scarlet Apples & Cream*. Her haiku can be found within several of the finest journals. She's not necessarily as frightening as her name might suggest.

Kyle Hemmings is a retired healthcare worker living in New Jersey. His poems, prose pieces, and photographs have been published in over 400 venues, including *Otoliths*, *White Knuckle Press*, *Bones*, *the other bunny*, *Otata*, *is/let*, and *Burning Word*. He loves street photography, French Impressionism, and obscure garage bands of the 60s. Kyle is one of the poetry and fiction editors of Yavanika Press.

Laura Ortiz is an asemic artist living in Canada. In 2016, she discovered asemic writing and was immediately fascinated by the combination of typography, design, and literature. Her works have been featured in art exhibitions and magazines in Italy, USA, Spain, and India. She is helping to explore new possibilities for asemics and visual poetry.

Linda Ferguson has won awards for her poetry and lyrical nonfiction, and been nominated for a Pushcart Prize for fiction. Her poetry chapbook, *Baila Conmigo*, was published by Dancing Girl Press. As a writing teacher, she has a passion for helping students find their voice and explore new territory. Website: <https://bylindaferguson.blogspot.com>

Lori Cramer's short prose has appeared in *Flash: The International Short-Short Story Magazine*, *Riggwelter*, *Unbroken Journal*, and *Whale Road Review*, among others. Her story *Scars (Fictive Dream*, February 2018) has been nominated for Best Microfiction, 2018. Twitter: @LCramer29. Website: <https://loricramerfiction.wordpress.com>.

Madhuri Pillai is an English Literature (Hons) graduate and has worked as a journalist. While books and writing have always been her passion, more recently she has taken to animal activism. Semi-retired, she lives in Melbourne with her family.

Marianne Paul is a Canadian poet and novelist. Late in life, she's fallen in love with haiku and related forms — as her time gets shorter, so do her words. Another new adventure of hers is mixed media via technology, bringing together hands-on “real-time” art with computer manipulation and presentation.

Marilyn McCabe has earned awards from AROHO, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the Word Works, which published her first full length book of poems, *Perpetual Motion*. Poems, essays, visual poems, and videopoems have appeared in a variety of literary magazines in print and online. Website: MarilynOnaRoll.wordpress.com

Mark Gilbert is a writer of poetry and prose whose work has been published in journals such as *The Heron's Nest*, *Failed Haiku*, *Akitsu Quarterly*, *Wild Plum*, *Atlas Poetica*, and *Haibun Today*.

Martha Magenta lives in Bristol, UK. Her haiku, haibun, senryu, and tanka have appeared in many journals and anthologies. She was awarded Honourable Mentions in contests for haiku, tanka, and haibun in 2017-2018. She is listed on The European Top 100 haiku authors, 2017.

Matthew Moffett lives in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, USA, with his wife and two kids. He teaches writing at Mid Michigan College and his poems have also appeared or are set to appear in *Frogpond*, *Under the Basbo*, the *Heron's Nest*, and *tinynwords*.

Michael O'Brien lives in Glasgow, Scotland. His work has most recently appeared in *Akitsu Quaterly*, *Cattails*, *Bones*, *Moonchild*, and *the other bunny*. He is the author of *As Adam* (UP Literature), *Big Nothing* (Bones), and *the anabasis of man* (Yavanika Press). You can follow him on twitter @michaelobrien22.

Michael Orr is a father, husband, laboratory technician, and visual artist, so far forever residing in Clarkston GA, USA. He has been experimenting with asemic writing, experimental and visual poetry for the last several years.

Nicholas Mathisen is a writer and creative director living in Portland, OR. His poems have been published in *Modern Haiku*, *Failed Haiku*, *Presence*, *Bones*, *bottle rockets*, *tinynwords*, and *Prune Juice*. When he's not writing haiku, he's making ad-like-objects. Website: nickmathisen.com

Nico Vassilakis is the author of *Alphabet Noir* (c_L books), *Text Loses Time* (ManyPenny Press), *DIESEL HAND* (Chax), and several other books. He co-edited *The Last Vispo Anthology* (Fantagraphics Books) with Crag Hill. Nico is a contributing editor for *Utsanga*. His text-based work concerns the visual phenomenology of experiencing text and his visual work pushes the outer limits of text's possibility within words. Website: <https://staringpoetics.weebly.com>

Ody West is trying to change the way people look at art. Similar to the Magic art craze, he has a theme hidden in most pieces that cannot be seen without the viewer truly sinking into the image. He calls it multiple layer art. Ody started painting in 2015 after a therapist told him to find a hobby to help combat his depression and anxiety. Drawing influences from his first few art superheroes, Banksy and Justin Bua, he invites the viewer to dive in deep and zoom in because, after all, the devil is in the detail.

Panagiotis Kentikelenis is 29-years-old. He lives in the woods, on mountain Holomontas, Greece, with his girlfriend and their five adopted stray dogs. He studied Psychology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH). He was a sergeant of Military Police in the army and a Brigadier's driver.

Pat Davis is a retired elementary school teacher. She grew up in East Boston, Massachusetts, and has been living in rural New Hampshire since the 1960s. She enjoys life with her husband, family, and friends, as well as nature, art, reading, and writing haiku, senryu, and cherita.

Piet Nieuwland has had his poems and flash fiction appear in many journals, including *Landfall*, *Geometry*, *Bonsai*, *Otoliths*, *Pure Slush*, and *Revue Post*. He edits *Fast Fibres Poetry* and lives near Whangarei.

Pris Campbell's haiga, haiku, and tanka have appeared in numerous journals, including *Frogpond*, *cattails*, *Atlas Poetica*, *Acorn*, *Haigaonline*, *Skylark*, *A Hundred Gourds*, and *Failed Haiku*. Seven collections of her free verse poetry and one book of tanka have been published by the small

press. A former Clinical Psychologist, sailor, and bicyclist until side-lined by ME/CFS in 1990, she makes her home in the Greater West Palm Beach, Florida.

R. T. Castleberry has had work appear in *Roanoke Review*, *Santa Fe Literary Review*, *Comstock Review*, *Green Mountains Review*, *The Alembic*, *Silk Road*, and *Argestes*. Chapbooks include *Arriving At The Riverside* (Finishing Line Press) and an e-book entitled *Dialogue and Appetite* (Right Hand Pointing).

Raymond Cummings resides in Owings Mills, Maryland. A 1999 graduate of Washington College, he is the author of books including *Assembling the Lord*, *Crucial Sprawl*, *Class Notes*, *Notes on Idol*, and *Vigilante Fluxus*. His writing has appeared in *SPIN*, *Pitchfork*, *Deadspin*, *Splice Today*, and the *Baltimore City Paper*. *Bricolage Bop*, his next collection of poetry, will be published independently in 2019.

Renata Solimini studied basics of traditional painting and calligraphy in China. She graduated with a thesis on ancient writings (Chinese, Egyptian hieroglyphic, and Sumerian cuneiform). These studies have significantly influenced her artistic pathway. Her art has been focused mainly on the Eye, the Woman, the Fish and the Sea World, and asemic writing.

Richard Gilbert nearly became a Buddhist monk, but moved to Japan in 1997, pursuing a passion for Japanese haiku (gendaihaiku.com), research (research.gendaihaiku.com), translation, and for living above the poverty line. He built the recording studio anarchicsanctuary.com, and his latest book is *Poetry as Consciousness* (Keibunsha, 2018).

Riham Adly is a mother, ex-dentist, and is trying to be a full-time fiction writer/blogger. She is also first reader at *Vestal Review Magazine* and has worked as a volunteer editor in *101 Words*. Her short story, *The Darker Side of the Moon*, won the Makan Award contest in 2013, and she was recently short-listed in the Arablit Translation Prize. Website: www.rihamadly.com

Robin Anna Smith is a disabled writer/visual artist residing in Wilmington, DE. She is a regular contributor at *Rhythm & Bones Lit*. She placed second in Sonic Boom's 2018 Annual Senryu Contest & received an Honorable Mention in the 2018 Marlene Mountain Memorial Haiku Contest. More: robinannasmith.com & @robinannasmith on Twitter.

Robyn Cairns is a Melbourne poet who writes many forms of poetry, including haiku, haiga, senryu, tanka, haibun, and free verse. Robyn's short form poetry has been published in Australian and overseas poetry journals. She has had two chapbooks published by Ginninderra Press, namely, *In Transit* and *The Drifting*.

Salvatore Difalco is the author of two story collections, *Black Rabbit* and *The Mountie at Niagara Falls* (Anvil Press). He splits time between Toronto, Canada, and Sicily.

Scott-Patrick Mitchell (SPM) is a non-binary West Australian poet. SPM appears in *Cordite*, *Westerly*, *Southerly*, and *Rabbit*, as well as anthologies such as *Contemporary Australian Poetry*, *New Poets 1*, *Stories of Perth*, *banQuet*, *Hashtag Queer*, and *Going Postal*. SPM's debut collection, *The Bruised Universe*, is forthcoming from Indifference Publications.

Stephen Toft is a poet and homelessness worker who lives in Lancaster, UK with his wife and their children. His first collection, *the kissing bridge*, was published by Red Moon Press in 2008 and in December 2016, Scars Publications released his chapbook *naming a storm: haiku and tanka*. In 2018, Yavanika Press released his third collection, *deer heart*, as a free to download e-book.

Steve Klepetar lives in the Berkshires in Massachusetts. His work has received several nominations for Best of the Net and the Pushcart Prize. Klepetar is the author of fourteen poetry collections, the most recent of which are *A Landscape in Hell* (Flutter Press) and *Why Glass Shatters* (One Sentence Chaps).

Susan Beth Furst is a poet and author. She loves writing haiku, senryu, and especially haibun. Her haibun, *57*, was chosen to appear in *old song: The Red Moon Anthology of English-Language Haiku* 2017. Her first haiku collection, *souvenir shop: memories of the highland park zoo*, was released in July 2018.

Susan Mallernee majored in English literature at Ohio University-Zanesville. She has been writing haiku for four years and has been published in journals including *Modern Haiku* and *The Heron's Nest*. In addition to pastel and watercolor, Susan has a love for digital art and haiga. Most of her time is spent striving to improve in all artistic endeavors.

Tim Murphy lives in Madrid, Spain. His haiku and senryu have appeared in several journals, including *Acorn*, *Bones*, *Chrysanthemum*, *Modern Haiku*, *Otata*, *Presence*, and *Under the Basbo*.

FINIS.