

Circle Show

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## Founder/Editor-In-Chief Seth Jani

## Assistant/Fiction Editor Taryn Hendrix

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## Cover Art

"Up a Ladder" by Cristina Conti

## Liz Betz

## **Genealogy Peace**

Catherine, during her genealogical treasure hunt, has found a letter from Fort-Whoop up that is attributed to a relative.

Her husband reads it aloud to anyone that will listen. The distant ancestor wrote that he had fatally shot his partner for "putting on airs."

Then a few sentences later he states that the potatoes were coming along fine. Slap goes her husband's hand on his thigh as he sputters with laughter.

"...the potatoes, coming along fine. Those were the days, I tell you."

His bizarre admiration grows with each telling of the tale.

She'll not share any more of her finds.

## Not So Alone, Not So Crazy

Catherine feels her legs go out from under her, once Elvira leaves. She sinks into the chair, her head drops onto her chest, a blush colors her cheeks as she wraps her arms around her head. Just from the look Elvira cast around the room, it is obvious that she had overheard Catherine talking. There is no one else in the room. Everyone says you have to be crazy to talk to yourself.

But Catherine isn't alone, nor is she crazy. Her husband's ashes are in the bear cookie jar, lid glued shut.

She talks to him.

To that.

To no one.

## Carl Boon

#### This Farm

The children of my cousins keep horsehair on their bedroom walls and walk on floors that creak no matter the season. They live their days on the edges of ponds and know the mystery of the silo. They grow tall and blonde in the sun, eat blueberries, and do not wince if their mouths turn ragged in July. They are the first to see the frost and the last to stumble. This farm will be theirs eventually, the dogs that lean into the reeds, the almanacs, the pumpkin spice, the apple tree. They know the falling branch before it's broken and fall softly when they have to fall. It's summer in their skin; it's summer for them when we have nothing more to say. Verbs without boundary, almost they are poems as they pray on Arthur's Cove or Midnight Hill.

## **Thomas Cook**

#### A Grenade Falls

I have tried hiding from machines. I drag my body down the stairs, in the dark, and curl into a corner with the secretary desk that has haunted my family for centuries. The saddest letters have been composed there. Thumbs have been shut in the hutch. Ink from the last aunt has been smudged across the topmost shelf.

In the backyard, there it would fall, between the sunburst trees and without hope of undoing. In a flash, I picture different children, from an earlier era, dancing in a circle, clutching one another's wrists. Some are still alive, some are gone.

The palmetto appears, but why, no one knows. It suggests a lover and an attempted escape. The fronds on a face are like a whisper that dissolves without a promise.

#### **Tucson**

The road to reconciliation is dark, but the stars are bright. If you want nothing more than what is in store for you, it's easy to ride west, on the flat road, forever out of Lordsburg.

A ghost town is a ghost town by any other name, but the television stays focused on the gun smoke, while I can't take my eye off the girl playing outside her mother's RV.

She is twirling what I first think is a ribbon but is actually toilet paper. Her mother watches her happiness, unsure. I have just stepped in a puddle of snow and fuel. There are 200 miles left in the day.

## You May Not Be

For the first time in my life, I sit behind a window into which a bird flies. It's afternoon, and from here I can see a library near the ocean.

The study of topography has largely neglected roofs. No more. I have written a letter. I have sipped from the water bottle my mother-in-law gave me for Christmas. It is metal painted with a wood-grain pattern.

At any one moment, Debussy is a flight pattern or digestion. I ran up that river and back. This was months ago, in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

## S. Preston Duncan

## Half Awake in No Pajamas

You with the shape of dancing, a subcontinent of color like temples at night or the face of a river.

I have been awake awhile in a room with no light silent as the door between your breaths autographic as your absence.

Hold a pose against this, stringless as the ocean where your hands were undone

your breath is a chant in the hall drying like flowers a pulse of ink and skin.

One by one, they come mantras, mouths, mythos opening and opening

the earth always turning toward the sun.

### **Outside the Ashram**

The future is cold and calculated. The man with the wheel is weary. We know everything about him. He has never bought anyone flowers.

There is sadness attached something you felt once

the way we attach to anything

cedars fall to their knees. The highway is so long.

## Craig Finlay

#### Tom Joad of Osceola

How to find me: Go to Mega Liquor and Smoke on Lincolnway near where the Wooden Indian still stands for a while. Walk through the parking lot toward the alleyway, then over the tracks. On the other side, you'll find a hobo camp. A scattering of empty plastic pint bottles of vodka and cans of Hurricane High Gravity Lager and Steel Reserve. Grab one of the vodka bottles. Drop a poem inside and screw the cap on tight and throw it off of the IUSB footbridge and I'll find it. I promise. I'll be there. The moment when the alcoholic graduates liquor knowing when the store closes to knowing when it opens, I'll be there. Whenever he stops off after work, before home, to chug a quarter pint of liquor, before the driveway before he's got to think another minute. I'll be there. The first time the alcoholic drinks at work, nervous pulls in the bathroom, handfuls of Altoids to cover the smell, then hand sanitizer, for the alcohol, before speaking to anyone. I'll be there. They light candles for me, sing their votive chants. So much depends. I have love.

## **Hayley Mitchell Haugen**

#### Confidence

(for Dave Layzell)

like climbing into the wicker gondola of a hot air balloon on a father's birthday – the pounding heart the trust that the nylon envelope will fill will lift you high above Napa Valley, Columbus, Ohio, the Derbyshire Dales

like the young photographer startled by the buoyant splash of color breaking through dark clouds, waving at the miracle of two men — soaring — snapping her pictures and knowing, suddenly, her work has a story to tell

like landing — like knowing you will land — the uncharted descent into any farmer's open field. You know it may be rough that you may bump along. You know you may have to make a leap for it — and when you need to, you do.

## Nostalgia

(for Sebastian DeBovian)

When the D&D teens come to play, five big boys with their post-lunch appetites, I give them

a shiny silver mixing bowl full of apples. The empty bowl wobbles around my living room floor as the weekend unwinds,

the dogs finally nosing it into their realm under the couch. Jack salvages it, places it on his head, and exclaims,

"Look, a colander hat." And just like that, it's New Year's 1993, the poets partying in a Long Beach apartment, in our twenties

and stoned as fuck. Someone snaps a picture — the only one — of our surfer friend, our funny guy, my too-brief lover

with his January tan, milky-blue eyes, and that blonde hair falling straight across muscled shoulders from beneath

the shiny silver colander on his head. I laugh at Jack, and smile, not at his antics, but at the memory

of my long-dead friend, at youth, at the sudden sense that sons never fully know their mothers.

## **Candice Kelsey**

## Ode to Sleeping in My Mascara

Sometimes it's just too much effort to

ascend from the sofa & pluck

each contact lens first left

then right, when I'd much rather be

reading about Aaron Copeland,

who was male and wore glasses &

didn't worry about such things.

I blame you, Cover Girl's Clump

Crusher in double plush onyx! Or you,

Sephora's Volume Glamour Max, with

extreme ebony extra-large rounded brush.

I won't carry my bed-ready self

to the altar of the medicine cabinet; I fail

to atone for my modernity

sloth & soot-black smear.

I am fine with melting wax & oil,

waking on a pillow of illiterate ink whispers.

And as I sleep I dream ancient Egyptians –

men and women who mixed charcoal with

crocodile feces & honey,

not for vanity but to stave off evil spirits

& protect the soul. I'd sit by the Nile

exhausted after a long desert day

of producing male heirs who will not ever

know the sweet quiet rebellion of

going to bed with the ink-smudged

eye of Horus or new feminist flag.

12 Poetry

## Robert S. King

## **Getting to Know My Place**

A house keeps the scents of all its guests. I move in and haunt this place, though I call the house the true ghost floating as stale air through empty rooms. I've come to fill the vacant space, but this home doesn't know me yet or understand my noise.

Perhaps its creaks are complaints about the habits of its new owner, if the unwelcome can truly own a house that grumbles on its shaky foundation.

Maybe it hates how I flush its pipes or how I twist the thermostat high enough to make the windows sweat, how I spit paste in the sink or clog its arteries with my hair.

The home may hope that I'm just another house pest, a lone termite that will get its fill and leave,

but the mortgage says both house and pest will pay for the rest of their lives.

## Mirages

The eye of hope searches for homefires just beyond the blooming desert where dunes are oceans, and sands blow like rain or pass in peace through the hourglass.

The dark eye sees shadows beyond the sands of fallen stars, sees dunes as beaches where body and hope might wash ashore and sink beneath the grains of time.

Mirages cross both eyes, and the hand of truth passes through them like a homeless ghost.

#### **Wind Power**

The last man's pocket is full, but he feels cheated. His pocket is full of want for an Eve with whom to want. Alone, he has no way to measure his worth. With all wealth and power, he never has to pay.

In a cold night's reflection of solitude beneath the heavens, perhaps he'll become God, perform miracles, without wings fly from a skyscraper's roof, diving and reaching for the stars winking in the shallow pool far below.

## Richard Luftig

## **Computational Skills**

#### Addition

They pass one-by-one-like soldiers on parade. But surprising too, like the magician who shows us there's nothing up his sleeve just before he pulls another ace out of thin air. Or the joy of a newborn child, summing to three where once there were merely two.

## Multiplication

Here the poet must refrain from using any simile that refers to *rabbits* or *begetting* or *fruitful*. And yet, this most bountiful of operations: a Beatitude of multiplicity where bread, fish, lives are not cast upon waters but shared like love so many times.

#### Division

It is what we have learned to fear most in this life: Cleave, separate, split in two then split again. Chaos. Out of control. Like cells hidden, deep somewhere in our organs,

breaking away to go off on their own, murderous path, long after the radiation of our years have ceased and we so foolish to have looked away.

### Subtraction

The saddest process, even in that language they taught us in second grade.

Take away.

Remove.

Reduce.

A thing no longer whole.

Exactly what will remain of me when you are gone.

## Grace Newman

#### a moment in color

time is anonymous but I like to assign it a face as on a watch it stares at stares at me and I wait for it to talk: I answer back and my tongue curls and hurls strange and bitter strings of letters that sting the teeth.

the eyes of a second should be blue and wary and spry and sparkle in the quiet moments

the stars, too, glimmer in joy
they are the buttons
of the night sky, keeping it from splaying
all across us;
my brain works in color
code and mars the world with
slabs of blue
but I long for a calm sea green
my favorite shade only after
emerald.

the return to classical proportions is imminent:
I was made for a different age, one with softer curves and louder songs in the banquet halls. before we knew clouds were but wisps on the wind, bundles of grey and fraying strings, they were divine entities. white is too angry a color now; these are dangerous days.

my mother warned us against digging up the sky like that, gazing at that orange orb and spinning in circles like purple gods and smoky, pruning planets.

#### camisado

the sea is volcanic this morning
i am a stagnant geyser on the dunes
my eyelids are flaking into my cranium
the marrow was vapid and rotted away;
come to lie here forever
over pirate's treasure;
these words, they shatter and fragment
i am lucky to snatch up
a phrase or two, organize them
by day like one does with chores or pills!

there are things i do not like around here: sunny weather, the word "eschew," several friends of mine but two of these three things are unavoidable

moronic or laconic or psychotic or iconic these are the only options the dealer has dealt with jokers, jacks, and queens spread across the table you cannot bridge this communication gap; your grammar bores me, all the politics behind a comma; i know me well enough to know it's desperate not genius; on the topic of thin lines, i like the way the mist melts into chilled frigid sand; the brine of our hair is tasty, see?

some things i wish i did like: mathematics, old films, dancing they are romantic and have a steady order to them

the merrymakers are hiding again and so i will search for them in the untidy laundry folds of the waves seize them by the hair and rip them out of the water then drag them, giggling, on shore; i cannot find the source of Virginia's lava or David's fire it is as if i were hammered out of the dirty March ice on the curbside; my cousin used to call me cool as a cucumber! now i have forgotten how to shiver, and under my towel, i drink to drown out the screeches of the gulls, those scrappy and hungry creatures i have no patience for!

someday we will sail like this: careening across hell on helium carousels.

## L.T. Patridge

#### The Cadeaux Decision

I took the Lyft sign off my car and went to Wenham Hall again. I parked a half-mile off campus, so nobody could see my one car next to the dorm and say, ma'am, can I help you, in that fixing-to-call-security way. I figured that if I couldn't get into it, I could at least see the gardens. And I did: the gardens are just what they were, just as magnificent. It's worth getting out of breath to get up that hill and see those rows of lavender and staked dog-roses. The students have planted sunflowers and pole beans at the center diamond between the gravel paths, the one with the fountain in the center. The robber baron who built the place would have loathed that. Vegetable gardens used to be tacky.

Wenham Hall stood open. I didn't expect that. I didn't expect I would get what I wanted right away. I thought the door would be shut, and I wouldn't be able to get in without an RFID reunion pass. But I guess they haven't updated every dorm at Volumnia. Wenham doesn't have a chip-lock; it has the same key lock it always had, the same one that was always propped open for something or another. Maybe somebody had been moving out. I think that the rooms get rented to grad students in the summer sometimes, but the college never rents Wenham Hall for high school band camps or nonsense like that. They'll use New Caledon or Brinston Hall for that. Those hideous old trapezoids can take anything.

But Wenham Hall is precious. It has stained glass. It has a hand-painted mural of Athena addressing Telemachus in the parlatory. It has a history.

#### Larinda Dasher > VC Alumnae

August 15, 2018
Does anybody remember a story about how they used to keep a dead kid preserved on campus?

Like Comment

I didn't see Wenham Hall when I went to my reunion. They put all the alumnae in Brinston Hall, which is a better idea anyway. Brinston has

new all-gender restrooms and private showers. Women's colleges belong at the forefront of things. Otherwise, what's the point of them now? You might as well send a girl to Ouachita Baptist for her MRS. Maybe they had a cocktail party at Wenham or something, but I didn't go. It's a bit of a ways off the main campus, down the woods where Hartford Road turns into Route 90, and not all of the road has a sidewalk.

I never did mind the walk. I lived there my senior year, 2001. I had room 31 — a garret, really, but my God, what a garret. The ceiling and the walls were painted vermilion, and my desk faced the dormer window. If I looked up from my work, I could see over the long flagstones of the patio in the front, over the azaleas and the birdbaths and the warm green lines mowed into the grounds, down into the pines and maples hiding the road from sight. I didn't deserve it. I lived in a mansion and I was white trash, and I didn't deserve it, not once, and knowing that made me taste the sunset, every night.

#### **Rachel Porta**

are you thinking about something the college got from that medical school it bought

#### Sara Bresselau

wait what?

#### Rachel Porta

this was in the 40s sometime. VC bought out a women's medical school that was closing & they moved all their stuff over into the old STEM library, the one they replaced w/Roz Franklin Center. I thought maybe Larinda was thinking about something they had. bet they had babies in jars

## Tilly Perez

#### Larinda Dasher

no it wasn't that. it wasn't a baby

I don't know if you saw my cousin Jessica on the news. It was all over Twitter. She called the cops on a black kid at the beach in Gulf Shores because he sat down on her drink cooler. One of them pushed him facedown in the sand. He was nine. The hashtag was #JungleJuiceJessica. I think the family is suing. I hope so. My point is, that is twenty-five percent of my DNA, right there. And that's *one story* from that side of the family. Sometimes I wonder if I could

squish one-quarter of myself down into, say, my leg, or some other major visible organ, and have it removed. Then people would see me using a crutch or needing bandages, but they wouldn't mind. They'd see that I was trying. They'd see I was okay to have around.

Volumnia gave me a full ride. They took the awful kid I was, the one in the secondhand blazer that didn't cover her bust, and gave her four years to be alive. I don't know if I was alive before. I know I haven't been alive since. Of course, people have told me that there are other reasons I might feel that way, such as "clinical depression" and "chronic underemployment," but what does all that matter? Everyone is dead, you understand. We've all been dead for some time.

So I thought it would be nice to take off from whatever it is I do and go down to Volumnia again. It's an open campus. Visitors are welcome. Alumnae get twenty percent off at the bookstore. And I wanted to be in Wenham Hall again. I wanted to feel it breathe.

#### **Bryanna Corfield**

you mean the "boy in a basement" story? I don't know it I just know there was a story

#### Jenifer Pisano

whoa what was that about?

## Morgan Smith

there was a ghost story about Mary Rose Whatshername in Pruitt Hall. She was a real person IIRC and she really hanged herself but they turned her into basic Bloody Mary. freshmen all turning the lights off in the fourth-floor bathroom and holding a birthday candle shouting Bloody Mary three times. my roommate wrote an anthro paper on it

#### Larinda Dasher

right, but this wasn't a ghost story though

Wenham Hall is breathing because it has a family. New Caledon and Brinston are good facilities, but that's what they are — they're facilities. They keep girls upstairs, they feed them downstairs. Wenham Hall was a home. It really was; it was Wenham Manor once.

There's a Wenham Township about a hundred miles west of the campus, out there in red-ass country. I don't know if anyone lives there anymore. From what I hear, it's like Centralia now, except without the natural wonders — the oil well closed, the kids moved

away, the buildings fell in. But that was the same Mr. Wenham that built this place. He built it in the 1880s, and it was a castle. They expanded it, they passed it on, and then when the last Mrs. Wenham passed away, she left it to the campus.

I walked through the front door into the golden light of the gentle and rich. Nobody minded me. One of the housekeepers brought a cleaning caddy down the grand stairway to the left, just as I walked in. It scared me for a second, but she smiled at me, or through me, I don't know which. Like I said, I'm pretty sure that everybody's dead. I smiled back and walked through the arched hall, past the Odyssean mural painted over the inset glass-front cabinet, into the parlatory.

## Nina Stavenhagen

maybe it was a Cadeaux thing. maybe somebody passed on one of those babies in jars that you mentioned

#### Callie LoPriore

the hell? what's Cadeaux

## Nina Stavenhagen

seriously, do you not know? oh my God did they quit doing Cadeaux?

## Naima Young

yeah somebody's mom said it was hazing & went to the Deans. Gen Z sometimes, istg I don't know how they breathe

#### Heidi Colebank

\*puts on mod hat\* OK, guys, some of you might not have been here when we had TWO threads with a reaction to the Cadeaux decision back in February, you are welcome to search and find those threads, and if you still find somebody to argue with you can do that, but if people relitigate it in any other thread I am shutting it down

The parlatory is what a peasant would call the living room. It was always called the parlatory, because in the '50s girls had to go sit there if they wanted any boys to pay a visit, just like nuns in a convent, but God knows the last time that was a rule. So long as anyone remembers, the parlatory has been a place to lie on worn-thin satin-covered horsehair couches, to pretend to do group projects, to eat barbecue chips straight out of the bag while watching *The Princess* 

*Bride* on a TV/VCR somebody hauled downstairs. It's still pretty much the same, except there's a flat-screen TV mounted on the wall, and a cable box.

Mrs. Wenham left her furniture, too. That heavy claw-footed rosewood stuff doesn't wear out, except for the fabric, and sometimes not even that. That meant I got to be on a chaise longue for the first and last time in my life. The chaise longue was still there, still dusty-rose with pinstripes, so I lay down for a while and stared at the ceiling, at the slight yellow of the cracks where people smoked and the nicotine gathered at the edge of the molding around the hanging lamps. I caught my breath, and I thought about how to go see what I wanted to see, before somebody found out what I was doing, or, more to the point, what I had done.

#### **Gwen Bunting**

oh I heard this story! somebody brought it up in Intro to Humanities. They don't do that anymore but it was mandatory through '02 I think. We studied a lot of different texts. It was super general. We did "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas," like you do. And somebody said, I don't know who it was, "It's like how there's that dead kid in a basement some where on campus. He's taking all the bad luck of the school for us." And of course everybody's like WTF, and she says she heard somebody saw it. But that was it. The teacher got us back on topic

I shouldn't be too hard on Jessica. Or at least, before the whole incident; that was something I always used to say to myself: I shouldn't be too hard on Jessica. She lost her stepbrother when we were little girls. He wasn't her actual stepbrother — that wedding never did happen — but we all used the word, because it meant something. Jessica and her little brother Brayden were living in the back half of a wood-frame house on Forrest Street with Aunt Lorna and Tommy McAdams and Tommy's two-year-old Casey. It burned up in the middle of the night. They got all the kids out, but Casey still didn't make it: smoke inhalation. The dogs didn't get out at all. It all started in an old electric blanket in the bedroom.

My mom wouldn't cry. I never met the baby, but I cried. When my mother was sad, she got angry, and she looked very, very angry. I wasn't allowed to go to the funeral. I wanted to go, but she said *no, there is going to be a scene*. Of course I argued with her, but it turned

out she was right. Casey's mother tried to strangle Tommy in front of the casket and Tommy's mother pulled out a hank of her hair.

What my mom said to me was this: of course this wasn't that child's fault. But when people are sleeping in a shitpile house with shitpile electrics and making excuses and not paying attention, somebody is going to burn up, and it is going to be *somebody's* fault. And if you do *one* thing I have taught you in life, do not end up sleeping in some tinderbox next to some no-account no-bill-paying son of a bitch like Tommy McAdams. You remember that, all right?

I remembered it, all right, mainly because the words "sleeping next to" made me blush. But, like I said, I didn't know the kid, and Jessica didn't live nearby, and with one thing and another, I stopped thinking of it a whole lot, and years went by, and I came to Wenham Hall. Nobody in my line has ever lived in a house with a name, so far as I know, unless they were maids back in old England. Wenham Hall is red brick and Wissahickon schist. It is hardwood and leaded glass. It is high and cool and delicate, and it needs care. But you make the best friends in a place that needs you, I think.

#### Callie LoPriore

is it okay if I just ask what Cadeaux was though, I didn't want to start a fight? the deans' letter is on the school website but it doesn't actually say what it \*was\*

#### Marala Rosenbach

Cadeaux was a tradition in the dorms. it just means "presents." every dorm had different kinds of presents, and the seniors passed them down to other seniors. sometimes they were secrets and sometimes they weren't. but obviously every senior couldn't get Cadeaux, and it was a social thing, so a lot of people thought they were unfair, biased, etc. like the one for Ellis Hall which was real ruby earrings, and it was called the Grand Cadeau, and of course you had to be \*somebody\* to get that

#### **Trisha Casares**

was that the Grand Cadeau? I thought it was the tiara they had in Pruitt

## **Alvita Darcy**

I wonder with happened to those. rubies are two thousand dollars right now

Even though you had to get a pretty sweet room-draw number for Wenham Hall, it didn't have to be quite as good for the seniors, because everyone knew their Cadeaux sucked. Your senior gift for living in Wenham Hall was that you had to clean it.

Housekeeping came in for the big jobs, like hauling the trash and recycling, and they worked in the summer, but traditionally it was pretty much our own. The school adjusted the dorm fees a little and gave us a budget to manage. There were the bathrooms to scrub, with the delicate tiles and the teakwood fixtures upstairs. There were the windows to clean — all of them, all their precious little panes — and the dusting, my God, the dusting. And in season, there were the gardens to tend. I always thought the worst chores were the meetings. At least you could get the rest done when you wanted to, and I liked that better than showing up at nine o'clock at night to sit downstairs and argue about the chore list and then argue about the time of the next meeting to sit downstairs and argue about the chore list.

Jenny Ross, who showed us all the budget forms and everything before she graduated, told us that the story behind it was that the girls took over cleaning in the first year when a Polish maid somehow knocked down a whole chandelier. Of course, that's a racist joke, she said, and I'm sorry to pass it on, but it's all the story I've got for you. Please, guys, please take more donuts, I cannot be left alone with them. (She had bought us Coke and a tray of Krispy Kreme for putting up with this.)

I liked Jenny. I guess I still do. I didn't know her well; I never did, but we all figured that she would be important someday. If I was in the district where she's running, I would vote for her. But since I didn't know anyone in the dorm that well, I didn't expect her to hand me the Chatelaine.

But she did. She said to me in front of God and everybody: Lynna, we talked about it, and we want you to have the Chatelaine, okay? That's just what we call the storage keyring for the closet and the basement. It's a pain in the ass, and you'll be responsible. And since *I've* been so responsible with it, I forgot it upstairs in my room. We'll get it when we're finished. I just want us to stay on task for the meeting, okay?

## **Elyse Lowell**

Larinda, there was definitely a juvenile skeleton under glass in the basement of the Tyler Building. I know because I had to do my lab requirements down there in '89. It was not a spooky place; it was very bright all the time because there were no windows and the lights always had to be on. But when I realized that the bones were real, I did not feel very scientific.:) It was about three feet tall. Someone said its name was Little Lord Fontanelle but I did not think that was very funny. They did demolish Tyler that next summer to make way for Franklin. I do not expect they found any more use for that poor thing, so if they did not sell it, it is probably in a basement somewhere still!

#### Larinda Dasher

wow, so it was true! whoa. thank you!

## **Elyse Lowell**

Hope it helps!:)

I like cleaning. Or rather, I like doing it when you don't need to do it so you won't need to do it. Wipe down a clean counter, dust a black surface, put pens in their drawer, put books on their shelf one by one. You've done something small in no time at all, and that's how you keep a house clean! I don't know where my mom came by that, but she said it to me until it stuck. Right now, though, I can't exactly eat off the floor at my place. Or the table. I got sloppy after school. I just was so tired all the time. I still am.

But I enjoyed my Wenham chores because they didn't need too much doing. I liked seeing the oriel window gleam after Windex. I liked climbing a ladder and waving a dust mop in corners. They were right about the keys being a pain in the ass, though. Anyone else who needed a ladder, mop, or cleaning caddy had to come up to me, and I had to let them in or out of the closets, of the basement. Sometimes I'd let them take the closet key by itself, if I knew them well enough and I knew they'd be right back. But I didn't do it too often; I had to sign for the Chatelaine. That meant lock-replacement fees if anything got lost. So I never gave the closet keys to anyone I couldn't trust. And I never, ever gave anyone the key to the basement.

## Alhena Adams > VC Alumnae

August 27, 2018

Hey guys, I just saw this piece about Lynna Wroe '01. She has been missing since Friday. Please share. I'm afraid we haven't met in years, but she was super nice and I am worried

Police seek information on missing woman, 39

http://www.townshipnews.com/180727 ... 89

Like Comment

I never won anything at Volumnia. I won all the prizes I wanted at Barnett High, just by showing up and not being stoned, but Volumnia made me its bitch. I was just another girl, just a charity case, without even the spit and the polish you're supposed to have for that. I'd never managed a translation prize or a merit award. I wasn't going to be *magna cum laude*. I hadn't earned anything. Not until I got a Cadeau. You don't earn one of those at your desk. You earn it because you belong — you *belong* at Volumnia College.

After the meeting, Jenny led me up to her room to get the Chatelaine. Evelyn and Kris were there — other seniors, which was natural. Jenny's room had high ceilings and a bay window overlooking the back of the grounds, plus she had a TV and an old NES. It was late, and Kris was playing *Life Force*. I signed a college form for the keys.

Then Jenny said: Lynna, there's one more Cadeau for you in the basement. It's a secret. A real one. Not like the ruby necklace. C'mon, guys. Get the flashlights.

Oh my God, I said. Oh my God, sweet. Thank you.

Kris stopped playing her game, and got up; Evelyn put one arm around my shoulder, and Danielle put another.

#### **Evelyn Hung Cho**

oh my God. Shared in LA. she was such a sweetie. I'm so sorrv we were out of touch

## Kris Mager

same same same. shared this in Austin. God.

Here is the thing about basements. Everyone is smart enough not to go in them when the basement isn't theirs. Anyone can yell at the screen: idiot, don't go in the damn basement! Tim Curry is down there fixing to eat you! But we *do* go in basements, every day of our lives. We bring down the laundry, we bring it back up on one hip; we don't worry.

So that is why I went downstairs so happy, locked and giggling, with the departing seniors, as Jenny said we need to show you around while we're down there. You have to be careful. The walls are unfinished, it smells like the devil's wet laundry, and I don't think it was ever up to code. And the light bulbs are so far apart you need a flashlight every time you go, or you won't see the pull cords. We'll show you.

Someone was watching the Muppets on a TV in the parlatory as we passed, walking along towards the second-most stairway: a grand

staircase in any other building, but just a good one here. In one of the wooden panels along the side of the stair, there was an iron grille, slantwise, old and lozenged. It looked vaguely to do with some '20s idea about ventilation.

Kris tapped the iron and pointed to a little plaque mounted on the bottom grille: WENHAM WELL, CA. 1740. Then she shone her flashlight down inside, and I looked: twenty feet below, a crescent of wood.

Check it out, she said. They built over a well from colonial times.

Wow, I said. Cool. (Kris didn't talk a lot. I wanted to help.)

Let's go, said Jenny. C'mon!

#### Tana Caudell

shared in Des Moines, this is so sad

#### Else Siddons

Please, if any of you are in crisis, remember the National Suicide Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or visit crisischat.org.

## Kris Mager

Else, I know you mean well but nobody knows what has happened and some of us actually know Lynna. Would you please not try to be helpful in that way right now

#### Else Siddons

Hello Kris, I don't know if you're aware but this is a closed group only available to graduates of Volumnia, which is a women's college. I've contacted the mod but you may want to remove yourself as a courtesy.

## **Gwen Bunting**

Jesus fucking Christ Else

When I was a kid, we weren't allowed to bring our own toys to school. They were a Distraction. What the school meant is that they would get stolen, so the school's solution was to have the teachers steal the toys and cut off the Distraction before anybody got punched about it. So instead we stuck a shoebox in the drainage pipe that was covered up by the tall grass at the back corner of the playground. If you had a toy for it that it didn't have already, you could find out where it was, and you could come and play. I only had a M.U.S.C.L.E. guy and Anna Cox said that wasn't good enough but

Stacy Poole was my friend and she said it was okay, so they showed me. The look Stacy had on her face when she grabbed my hand to get me to come and crawl up to the pipe: that was the same look that the seniors had. Full of importance and full of delight.

The basement was as gross as Jenny said, but I liked it fine, especially because there was a bottle of 151 on the shelf that I had to take a slug of. (This is part of the gift, Jenny said. You have to make everybody come down here and take a shot after finals.)

Okay. Now open the closet, Kris said. You have the keys.

I realized she meant me, and so I went to the closet door, which stood near the middle of the room — this plain '70s door, this simple wood frame in a heavy stone wall. When I opened it, I saw a grille of light from above, and I heard the music from the TV in the parlatory. We were just beneath the stairs, at Wenham Well.

#### Heidi Colebank

Guys, I just deleted a whole bunch of nonsense so I'm shutting off comments on this one. Please share Lynna's information if you can. Please also consult the pinned post about respectful discussions. We are not having the "TERF war" in here again and \*certainly\* not now.

## An admin has turned off commenting for this post.

Evelyn slipped past me and lifted the wooden lid from the well. It took two hands. I moved to help her, but Jenny took my arm.

This is the worst part, said Jenny, and I'm sorry about this, but we have to do it. It's traditional. We have to read you a poem.

Oh, no, I said.

At least it rhymes, said Evelyn.

I think that makes it worse, said Kris.

There was a manila envelope taped on the underside of the wooden lid. Evelyn fished inside the envelope with her fingers. It's in here somewhere, she said — it has to be — Jesus Christ, what if it fell down?

Let me help, I said, and pushed towards her, just as Jenny and Kris said: No, no!

But it was too late. I had seen the light from above, falling to the bottom of the well.

Wait. Here's the poem, said Evelyn.

Kris said: Shhh. Lynna. Shhhhh.

Jenny took my hand and said: Lynna, this is the Boy Scout. He's yours.

## Stasia Byman > VC Alumnae

August 28, 2018

New piece about one of ours (Class of '00) to remind us: the midterms are COMING. #BLUEWAVE LADIES!

Jennifer Ross-Holzman surges in poll: is R seat "safe" in... http://www.southheraldbee.com/180727/jennifer\_ross\_holz... 356

Like Comment

## **Kimberly Trapper**

hi thanks for assuming we're here for more liberal bullshit

## **Gwen Bunting**

die in a hurricane Kim:):):)

This is how it is when you are me. You lean over the side, you shine your flashlight down, and there he is. There is not a frame between you. There is not a TV set, not a screen, not a page. Here is a boy, maybe twelve, with his mouth open, reaching up to you with one gray hand. You could reach down. You could take it.

Do you know what adipocere is? This mid-Atlantic climate isn't much for mummies; people don't dry out like they do in the desert. But they might stay who they were if they were fat. This boy was fat — not huge, but plump enough. When a dead body in the wet and cool is left alone for long enough, the fat turns to gravewax: adipocere. It's kept his shape for him — a little low and triangular in the face, like a dead child from the Far Side. His glasses are white as smoke. Dust is on him like a blanket. It could be lifted from him and torn: so humid, then so dusty, then so humid, for years upon years.

The Boy Scout, Kris called him — maybe he's not. You can't see any patches, at least not from above the dust. But he has the little kerchief,

that much is for sure, and the short pants, and a ranger's hat. You have to crane to see the hat, though. It fell off; it is stuck behind his back.

### **Kimberly Trapper**

if I did it would be my fault sweetie:) it's a little something called responsibility. they taught it at VC when I was there

### **Gwen Bunting**

ok! here's an idea: why don't you take that fish your hubby's holding up in your banner pic and cram it up your cunt. fins first < 3

Evelyn made an unfolding noise — more I think than she needed to — so that I would stand back, then showed me the poem. It was a single page, yellow and typewritten. Fingerprints covered the edges.

Anyway, she said. Here's how it goes.

if you are reading this my friend you have the Grand Cadeau someone could shut down all of us if anyone should know

how long this has been going on (which none of us can say) how long we have been keeping him day after year and day

no we don't know where he came from no we don't know when or how we think it was an accident but you can help him now

keep him quiet, keep him safe we are his resting place we are the sisters of the boy without a name or face

we all are sisters at VC we look out for each other the way you can protect us all is take care of our brother

#### Heidi Colebank

What has gotten INTO everybody? Would you PLEASE REFER to the guidelines, people, in comments AND posts An admin has turned off commenting for this post.

What I said, when I spoke, was: Why did you pick me?

Evelyn said: We like you.

Kris said: It's sort of that.

Jenny said: It's something more. It's something that you know, that we know too. About being here when you don't belong. Or you don't think you belong — because you do. We all do. I was homeless once. My mom and I — that's not the point. The point is, you know what life is like. And you can handle what we know. You can pick other seniors to share it with. I picked Evelyn and Kris, because ... well, you guys can tell her what you want about yourselves, but what I mean is, you know what it's like for this place to matter more than it does to other girls, who don't have jobs and shit, who get crap just handed to them. So next May, Lynna, you'll pick somebody else who can handle this.

Evelyn said: I'm sorry it isn't a necklace or something, but look. Here's what I thought. Anyone could wear some jewelry. But when you know this, you wear the whole school.

#### Michele Sandor > VC Alumnae

August 28, 2018 Time for a pet thread I think! :) here's my Coco

Like Comment

# **Gwen Bunting**

read the room Shelly

# Heidi Colebank

**GWEN** 

# Casey Kuba

this is Bella! she is 14 now but she is still a puppy

I could tell you that I had bad dreams. I could tell you that I cried.

I could tell you that I sent a letter to the cops. I would be lying. I did not. I never even meant to do it. I never thought. I never.

Somebody who was dead was dead, I figured. Nobody would have murdered him, at least nobody here and now. His parents couldn't be alive. We were alive. We were living in a dorm that would have the whole basement torn up, maybe the whole building, if the police ever heard anything. Then there would be lawsuits. Or charges. Someone would have to be liable. And everything that VC was, and everything that VC is, in a world where women lose first and hardest: no. Who needed that suffering? Never the boy. To lie six feet under is all that we're promised in life, and that much he had.

What I felt wasn't fear. It was honor. I can't ask you to understand. I think that I'm past asking anything.

# Darcia Lucas > VC Alumnae

August 28, 2018

Hey I'm on Twitter and it says there's a lot of cops on campus right now. Does anybody know anything? I don't see details Like Comment

#### Casey Kuba

oh shit not a shooter. please please not VC

#### Pratibha Subramanian

I'm an adjunct and I haven't heard. There's no shelter in place text or anything. Don't panic, I'll post if I get word

I lost my job. I lost my husband. I don't want either of them back. My mother's done with disappointment; she died six years ago. I don't have a child who needs me. I don't, except for one. And that one is at the bottom of the well in Wenham Hall.

Little boys are born bad and take twenty years to fix, is what my mother told me; and it took me twenty-three years to find out she was wrong. The boys at my school bit me, pushed me off the swings, pulled my pants off and threw them to the top of the tetherball pole. I liked them anyway, back then. Some people tried to tell me that they secretly liked me, too, but I figured out that wasn't true when we were in middle school and none of them lied about how much sex I was having with them.

I didn't know any of these things about the world were wrong until the day I was on a bus and a two-year-old boy handed me a French fry.

This exchange lasted about thirty seconds. His mother was on the phone, in the middle of something tense, and he had found a half-empty McDonald's fry carton. I saw his little fist in front of my face, with an exploded fry in the middle of it. I didn't know the kid. I hadn't even been looking at him; I'd been looking at the tread pattern on the aisle floor, thinking about money. And here he was, his eyes glittering, holding this French fry up, urging it silently forward.

What could I do? I took it, and I thanked him kindly. He then watched me, chewing a fry of his own, and I was seriously contemplating eating mine when his mother saw us and said: *Jeremy!* Get back here! Put that down, that is disgusting! I'm sorry, Miss —

No, no trouble at all, I said, and sat back. What a sweet boy, I thought. A sweet boy.

And I had a lot of trouble putting together what I thought after that, and what I felt. My therapists could tell you that. All this is to say that I took a long time to think about the Boy Scout the way I should have in the first place.

Back when the girls of Wenham Hall typed up that poem, they didn't have digitized newspapers. I went to the local library last month and did some research, using the biggest, dumbest search terms I could think of. What I hoped to find was a newspaper article about a missing boy in the towns around Volumnia College. And I didn't find one. I found three. 1916; 1920; 1923. A boy of twelve; of fifteen; of eleven. Those were just the ones I found myself, and what am I? Not a police officer; not a forensic anthropologist: somebody who helped cover up the death of a child. That is all, I think, that I have been for seventeen years.

When I made a copy of the basement key, I didn't think of blackmail. I just was worried that I'd lose it. What I realized Evelyn half-meant to tell me is that I could ask the college for anything, if I figured out just how to do it. A great gift, like in the stories; a boon, kind of a thing. So I have come to get it, and I have come alone.

There are no deans to ask for this. There is no proof to give. I only have to do what he asked me to do in the first place: lean down and take his hand. And this time, I will stay, and I will keep him company, and we will be in the one place we've had peace. The girls here are prepared to ignore one body, but they will not, I think, ignore two.

#### Darcia Lucas

Pratibha, it's been a couple hours, are you good?

#### Pratibha Subramanian

Yeah sorry, I didn't mean to scare you! I just went out to get lunch & was busy. No alerts but I saw there's cops at Wenham Hall. I don't know what the deal is but there was an ambulance parked up the hill. The lights weren't on so I guess there was no rush. It could be anything. But we're good down here:)

#### **Darcia Lucas**

thank God for that

# Simon Perchik

\*

At the end this sand coming by covers you with soft flowers that long ago dried as footsteps

still treading inside some shallow grave smothered as afterward and dust – you loved her the way the Earth

keeps warm and between two suns place to place what's left you walk without looking down

though your arms are closing have grown together a single fingertip touching these shells and pebbles. These stones still breathing chill your mouth too, sealed in whatever is started — you kneel

at each construction site: this grave centered so the light inside helps you find the frost line

and in time the building no longer moves though you inhale side to side the way mourners

root each wall arm in arm and no more air — what's left you breathe out as small broken bits

that even in winter come by to talk, bring your lips a number, a street, a place. Easy, this lake sheds its bark and each ripple

makes room: birdcalls and the sky almost raining

wider and wider

– a great tree
fallen on its roots

and each splash leafs out dead rids itself

and those same footsteps passing you naked taken away

as shadows and ice weighted down holding you back

simple! you toss
 and this tiny stone
 is further and further

the deep breath no longer choking water and birdsong.

# Rochelle Shapiro

#### Ash

The stiffening of my husband's lips, his white-knuckled wheel-grip, darting eyes, signal that a car is trying to cut into his lane. His driving makes passengers' hands fly to the sides of their faces, their jaws go slack, their eyes pop, like the skeletal figure in Edvard Munch's *The Scream*.

Again, this. The fifty-three years of our marriage tarred with *I'm sorry*, and promises that never stick. My rage is fired up like a pot in a kiln. Yes, yes, I know so many of his relatives were herded off to camps, helpless. Ash. He must fight back. He must. "When will Europe be over?" our daughter used to ask.

Yes, yes, I know how, in the middle of the night, I bolt up, sweating, hearing my dead father call out the names of his five brothers murdered in the pogrom.

"We're safe," I remind myself, touching my husband's shoulder. He slows, waves on the other car.

As if the strangling bittersweet and garlic mustard vines were cleared from the roadside trees, I feel the light seep back in.

### The Light

You were four and too big for the crib. There was no room for a third daughter. Don't whimper. Don't climb over the rail. Your parents, for God's sake, deserve some sleep. But above you, that light twinkled like a signal.

Stare or squint, you couldn't make out a face or a pouf of yellow hair or a green dress with a jagged hem or blue wings like Tinkerbell.

What you saw was a sudden iridescence, like when the sun spotlights a mallard's head or the orbs of faraway fireflies. It never faltered with your father's roaring snores or after you went fishing in the goldfish bowl with a teabag and the fish floated belly-up in the brown Lipton water, or after you said *Abracadabra* and turned your glass of milk upside down, but it didn't stay in the glass like the TV magician's, or after you fed your father's herring to stray cats.

Never mind that you were forced to sit at the table alone because you couldn't make yourself eat canned peaches dolloped with sour cream or that when you crouched in the bathtub for an hour, the shower curtain pulled around you, and no one called, "Where are you?" You knew that in the night, that light would shine down on you.

# **David Spicer**

#### The First Time

I saw Delta Leo, she drank a carafe of pinot grigio in a Sicilian monastery. A sedan waited in the village down the road, she told me. Starving, struck by the aria of her beehive hairdo, I asked for a café recommendation. Oh, that's easy, she said, puffing on her just-lit cigar. Down in the cove, under five ladders, The Nightingale. Full of virgins, she added, just your type. But I'm a virgin, too, I lied. Delta Leo said. Come on. we'll scatter them and have the place to ourselves. No argument. I insist. The pianist played *Hotel California* as we sat at an alabaster table. I proclaimed my love the next day with a bucket of lilies and dove feathers. You're my angel, I said, and she laughed, rearing her head more beautifully than the prettiest horse in Sicily. Don't be a Puritan, she said. Let's fuck and get it over with. We didn't stop until our cottage rent ran out two days later when we both tossed a towel to the other, and she said, Let's go before the monks tattoo us.

#### **Home, Sweet Home**

Delta Leo, you wore a freshly plucked pimpernel in your white silk blouse pocket on the balcony. The donkey Peregrine ate unhealthy alfalfa and I snatched the first two evening fireflies. That day we harvested pumpkins from our valley farm and welcomed children afraid of lightning. Your grandmother baked rhubarb pies and told us to plunge in. We Bowie-cut two slices, emptied them down our wide throats with the blade. The sharp heat of the melted butter on the pie made us gasp with pleasure. We turned on the kerosene lamp's brass knob and saw the leper the color of a ghost, a messenger from the former priest's shack. He appeared at the door once or twice a month. You stared at him, asking, Yes, Dominic? Come, now! he whisper-shrieked. We hurried down the stairs and followed his crooked sprint to the stream. The panther in his black glory feasted on the priest's faceless body. It licked his nose and chin, growled and scampered up the ridge to the copper mine in the mountain.

#### **Dreamstones Waited**

Forgive my monologue, Delta Leo, but I miss that time you dyed your cascaded hair auburn outside New Orleans, invited me for quince crepes, eating them with shish-ka-bobs in a plantation boxcar abandoned by Neo-Nazis. You played Blue Suede Shoes on the out-of-tune piano while I banged on a tambourine and we sipped a merlot from Styrofoam cups. Then you found diamonds in their black velvet pouch: we were rich! Twenty of them, one for each buzzcut bastard who camped out here before they skedaddled from the sirens. Yes, your premonition correct: finding them under a cat-demolished davenport, and damn, did we celebrate: you refused the rack of lamb from the butcher-cook at *Alfonzo's* and ordered a hotdog. Gimme a tube steak! you said. Thirsty, I added, A Vodka Salty Dog! The night suffered with us until they threw us out like a pair of wild sorrels, Delta Leo, after we offered to wash dishes instead of paying the 432 dollar check. When we woke up at dawn, nineteen dreamstones waited for us. stuffed inside your navy blue panties.

### The Menagerie That Glistened in Our Eyes

Delta Leo's swan, Frankie, ate boiled eggs every day as we gazed from the porch. Delta Leo stirred her brush in the turpentine. Our eyes glistened when we watched the pond, daydreamed our menagerie: a centaur named Mallet drank ale, Shine the bear growled at the stein: Give me some! Delta Leo a sleek buffalo and I a blue wolf. We'd eat linguine, olives. and broccoli from fine lilac china on that porch, and celebrate Easter. Icicles stared at the frozen ground. Our daydreams persisted like forest fires. The next day we escaped a shipwreck and trudged to the hilltops, the animals behind us, even Frankie and Mallet, not to mention Shine. We called the moon a fool for following us day and night.

### **Before I Flee This Archipelago**

I love my church: chartreuse shingles adorn the vestibule roof and on the Sabbath, I don't explode during my sermons. Today, though, a lunatic fed my hawk Sherry arsenic. Delta Leo, evil pranks like this prod me to place red daffodils in my vase on the lectern, but when the train whistle signals like a tuba, I see someone burn Our Lady of the Terrace.

I pray every day that any torch lit will tremble like a weak chain and the lake will drown the arsonist, but my last vision predicts Sherry will survive like an immortal virgin near the trellis, and I'll find my beloved hatpin — a swan with tiny ruby eyes — in the rubble before I flee this archipelago.

# Amanda Tumminaro

# The Company of Loneliness

Crickets are looking for a holy spirit, but all I've got are two cents. I'm looking for a blackjack partner, but one who lets me read their palm.

I tried drinking, but it didn't fit, so it split and agreed to disagree.

I got dibs on counting cars —

Maybe those folks are homeward bound.

#### You Don't Have to Understand

Love requires no understanding – You can love a creature that looks tangled, and by all efforts come up empty.

I wish for no understanding, just for my mother's continuing love cradled in her arm as set as stone.

It's a diamond if they "get" you – Then they hold you twice as a baby. But such things are rare as you fuss.

But it's enough just to be loved. That, in itself, is my magazine cover, and I'd never sell it at my newsstand.

# Irina Valerina

### Sand and a pearl

Before it grew into a rare pearl, before it adorned a precious necklace, it was a grain of sand. Getting into the watery flesh of a languid oyster whose valves opened at the wrong moment, it burned the supple body with pain until it got the first helping of nacre... And all it did was growing after that, infiltrating someone else's essence deeper and deeper. In the meantime, millions of people of one generation emerged from much more inconspicuous cells. They mastered speech, learned to walk upright, discovered intelligence in themselves, and just a bit later, stumbled on an animal in their hearts so as to fight against it for many years, to fight and fight and never win. They got married, conceived, gave birth, fell ill, set their beloved free to die, admitted new martyrs into being. They started wars and went away to them. They killed and got killed. There were awful lots of them. Millions. The human sand. Who can remember them? And the grain of sand, its nature hidden, kept growing. Harvested from the ocean floor, it became famous. its life was just starting. Now, time and again rolling into a cozy cleavage, absorbing the warmth of another self-confident body, it might as well be proud to be called a family jewel. But even the most primitive feelings are beyond it. It boasts a name, it owns a velvet case and a fireproof safe in an office

of one of the local temporary gods. It's old, in human terms. It's a centenarian, But does it mean anything for a pearl that lives five times as long?

(translated by Sergey Gerasimov from Russian)

# Laura Walker

### We Can't Capture the Sky

but we can't stop trying either. It's human nature to pay attention to a thing only insofar as it serves to augment memory, to stand for truth of things seen but not seen. It's human nature not to notice striation of cloud or depth of shadow or sharp angle of tree leaning in as if to whisper a truth, as if to tell us what we lose when we try to secret away the primal grace of nature.

# Lucinda Watson

### **Hiding Faith**

Cynthia Paterno said if I became a Catholic I would have a cleaner soul so I turned my closet into an altar using books, shoe boxes, candle stubs from the dining room, lace cloths from the top shelf of the linen closet where I often hid, and

odd detritus found in the sewing box.

Like a squirrel hiding nuts, I hid faith.

Every night I put my hands together like Audrey Hepburn in *The Nun's Story* and pray.

"Please, God, let Betty Webster let me into her secret club!" "Please, God! Let my sister get ugly!

"Please, God! Let the dog be able to sleep in my room tonight!" Sometimes I would put a white towel over my head and convince myself

I had Christ as a husband though I was only nine.

I never ate in there or spoke and though I was convinced I might hear voices I never heard a word.

I had to close the closet door carefully knowing it might latch forever and I knew no one would look for me even at dinnertime.

Months later or maybe it was only a few days my confessional disappeared, shoe boxes gone, candles missing, our mother making sure we had no faith as she never did and me thinking I wasn't good enough for God.

# **Looking for a Favorite Place**

I move when the light becomes too strong, and I am restless with waiting and counting.

I move when the house is explored and there are no more secrets and I know where the carpenter ants have done their damage and someone

has found where I hide when I can't work.

I move when the mailbox is too full.

I move when the newspapers repeat themselves with pictures of global weaponry and small photos of children with their animals, and there are reports of coyote's roaming in local fields.

#### I like:

drawer paper peeling off the bottoms of drawers smelling of must, perfume, mothballs and exploding bullets. People who live just across the street and appear out of nowhere from time to time.

I like finding things that don't belong to me.

Photographs and thimbles,

old tires and pet cages,

annuals that forget there are annuals and regrow in the flowerbed without provocation.

Once I found a ring and I can't give it away.

I move because tomorrow is a word involving pursing of lips and I survive on the pleasure of possibilities.

The future has no memory of pain.

The past belongs to everyone else and I am a voyeur in it.

I float from house to house in an altered state, sometimes leaving boxes unopened until the next move when I will unwrap a piece of a love affair or a dog's toy and the chambers of my heart twist into themselves.

#### Our Year on a Boat

Our father had a gun he used to shoot the kerosene stove in the cabin

at dinner time on the boat. We watched, sealed to the sticky,

red plastic banquette, all five of us, as he clicked it

against the burner. *Click*, *click*,

BOOM'

A relief to us if the stove ignited rather than him.

Dinner was Dinty Moore Stew and "No bread, girls!" and my mom did the

laundry, head hung, sudsing quietly under the floorboards and hung it out to

dry on wire fences around the boat. Even our spanky pants laid out

in plain sight in front of the whole ocean, mine with small pink roses.

That summer we sailed through the angry Baltic, straight on through nights locked in our bunks,

swaddled in stiff oilskins, imprisoned by childhood, smell of kerosene ether to desperate sleep.

When we hit land each time, off we'd go, cash clutched in chubby fingers,

the Swedish word for bread in our head. Me and my older sisters,

Free at last.

#### Vermont: Fall's End

Lying in a bath in Vermont in the early evening
With a small candle and a wet dog in the corner,
She wonders
If the man downstairs she came here with
Is as safe as the warm bath-water and the rain falling to music.
The window is divided into ticktacktoe squares
Misted from the heat.

In the warm bath, she watches the oil and water
Play with one another
Breathing in lavender while she breathes out fear
Adding hot water every few minutes.
She watches her body appear
Through the soap and water letting her belly rise like a small mountain
And her toes peek back: as disembodied little villagers
Looking for supper.

Tonight there will be dinner and family to meet They will bring magnifying glasses and notepads. The man has begun to peel back her heart And she practices putting it back together Just to make sure she can when he leaves.

# **Contributor Notes**

**Liz Betz** enjoys her retirement hobby of writing short stories and is always delighted to have them published. Recent publications can be found at *Ambrosia*, *Danforth Review*, *RKRVY*, *Pif* and *South85 Journal*. Follow her fiction writing journey at http://libetz.blogspot.ca or read her essays at http://sixtyplusbylizbetz.blogspot.ca.

**Carl Boon** lives in Izmir, Turkey, where he teaches courses in American literature at 9 Eylül University. His poems appear in dozens of magazines, including *The Maine Review* and *Posit*. A Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net nominee, Boon is currently editing a volume on food in American literature.

An editor and publisher of *Tammy* since 2009, **Thomas Cook** has published several chapbooks of poetry and prose. His work has appeared in *Bennington Review*, *Chicago Quarterly Review*, *Cincinnati Review*, *New Orleans Review* and *Quarterly West*, among others. He lives in Los Angeles.

**S. Preston Duncan** is an End of Life Doula, caregiver and BBQist in Richmond, Virginia. Recent aspirations include becoming the Jason Isbell of literature, stealing Death's laughter and transcendental pimento cheese. He is the former Senior Editor of arts and culture publication, *RVA Magazine*. His poetry has appeared or been selected to appear in *Tulane Review, Levee Magazine, Unstamatic, Coffin Bell Journal*, \*82 Review, the Yardstick Books Water anthology, and elsewhere.

Craig Finlay lives in South Bend, Indiana, where he spends most of his time doing library things. He has an MA in English from Western Illinois University and is currently pursuing a creative writing-track MA from Indiana University South Bend, where he is also a full-time faculty member. His poems have appeared in *Noble / Gas Qtrly*, the *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *After the Pause* and *The Blue Mountain Review*. His poem "Four Winds Field," in the Spring 2017 issue of *Twyckenham Notes*, was shortlisted for the Sundress Publications Best of the Net Award.

Hayley Mitchell Haugen holds a PhD in English from Ohio University and an MFA in poetry from the University of Washington. She is an Associate Professor of English at Ohio University Southern, where she teaches composition, American literature, and creative writing. Her chapbook What the Grimm Girl Looks Forward To appears from Finishing Line Press (2016), and poems have appeared, or are forthcoming, in Rattle, Slant, Spillway, Chiron Review and other journals. Light & Shadow, Shadow & Light from Main Street Rag Publishing Company (2018) is her first full-length collection. She edits Sheila-Na-Gig online (www.sheilanagigblog.com) and Sheila-Na-Gig Editions.

Candice Kelsey's work has appeared in such journals as *Poet Lore*, *The Cortland Review* and *North Dakota Quarterly*. She published a successful trade paperback with Da Capo Press, was a finalist for *Poetry Quarterly's* Rebecca Lard Award, and recently was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. An educator of 20 years' standing with her MA in literature from Loyola Marymount University, she lives in Los Angeles with her husband and three children.

Robert S. King lives in Athens, Georgia, where he serves on the board of FutureCycle Press and edits *Good Works Review*. His poems have appeared in hundreds of magazines, including *Atlanta Review*, *California Quarterly, Chariton Review*, *Hollins Critic*, *Kenyon Review*, *Main Street Rag*, *Midwest Quarterly, Negative Capability*, *Southern Poetry Review* and *Spoon River Poetry Review*. He has published eight poetry collections, most recently *Diary of the Last Person on Earth* (Sybaritic Press 2014) and *Developing a Photograph of God* (Glass Lyre Press, 2014). His personal website is www.robertsking.info.

**Richard Luftig** is a former professor of educational psychology and special education at Miami University in Ohio now residing in California. His poems and stories have appeared in numerous literary journals in the United States and internationally in Canada, Australia, Europe and Asia. His poems have been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and two recently appeared in *Realms of the Mothers: The First Decade of Dos Madres Press*. His latest book of poems is forthcoming from Unsolicited Press (2019).

Originally from Buffalo, New York, **Grace Newman** is currently writing at Stanford University in California. She has also spent time at the Iowa Writers' Workshop. In her free time, she likes to travel, scuba dive, and argue about politics. She would love to hear from you at grenewman@yahoo.com.

**L.T. Patridge's** work has appeared in Innsmouth Magazine, Lovecraft eZine, Grimoire Magazine, Foliate Oak and Not My President: The Anthology of Dissent from Thoughtcrime Press. She is a 2017 MFA graduate of Vermont College of Fine Arts in Montpelier.

**Simon Perchik's** poetry has appeared in *Partisan Review*, *The Nation*, *The New Yorker* and elsewhere.

**Rochelle Shapiro's** novel, *Miriam the Medium* (Simon & Schuster, 2004), was nominated for the Harold U. Ribelow Award. Shapiro has published essays in *NYT* (*Lives*) and *Newsweek*. Her poetry, short stories, and essays have appeared or are forthcoming in many literary magazines such as *Mudfish*, *Westview*, *The Iowa Review* and *Negative Capability*. She won the Branden Memorial Literary Award from *Negative Capability*. She currently teaches writing at UCLA Extension

**David Spicer** has poems in *Tipton Poetry Journal*, *Santa Clara Review*, *Reed Magazine*, *The Literary Nest*, *Synaeresis*, *Hamilton Stone Review*, *Oddball Magazine*, *Alcatraz*, *Gargoyle*, *Third Wednesday*, *Ploughshares*, *American Poetry Review* and elsewhere. He is the author of *Everybody Has a Story* and six chapbooks; his latest, *Tribe of Two*, from which the five poems in this issue are excerpted, will be available from Seven CirclePress in 2019.

**Amanda Tumminaro** lives in the U.S. She is a poet and short story writer and her work has been featured in *The Ginger Collect*, *Jokes Review* and *Underwood Press*, among others. Her first poetry chapbook, *The Flying Onion*, is available now from The Paragon Press.

Irina Valerina is an author from Belarus. S. Her most recent poems have appeared *Havik*, *Connecticut River Review* and *The Finger*.

**Laura Walker** holds an MFA from Northern Arizona University, where she was editor-in-chief for *Thin Air Magazine*. She writes both poetry and fiction, and teaches writing classes at Southern Utah University. She comes from Southern California by way of Flagstaff, Arizona, and always finds herself wishing for a little more snow and a little less sun. She has fiction featured in *Black Works* from Underwood Press and poetry forthcoming in *Roanoke Review*.

Lucinda Watson's work has appeared in over a dozen journals including *The Louisville Review*, *The Round*, *Poet Laurie* and *Pennsylvania English*. She received an MFA in writing at Manhattanville. She is a member of American Pen Women, Marin Branch.

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