



Rensselaerville Library

Preserving a historical gathering place
Promoting a life-long love of learning
Fostering personal connections

Celebrating National Poetry Month 2023

Poem-A-Day

30 days ... 30 poets ... 30 poems

showcasing different voices, styles, subjects

2800+ pageviews

Enjoy!

Tom Corrado, Curator, Poem-A-Day

Patrick Wynne, Director, Rensselaerville Library

April 1

offerings

by Naomi Bindman

Spring Beauties—tiny five-pointed
stars, shine like fat snowflakes
decorating the dark carpet of decay,
lavender veins streaking each minute petal—
a collective cloud below
my feet.

Once, when you were small,
your teacher showed them to us
and the bright yellow Trout Lillies
drooping dainty red stamens
like little blood drops dangling,
their leaves speckled as the fish
for which they're named, and
lacelike ivory Dutchman's Breeches,
Hepatica, the leaves shaped
like a liver—or was it a heart?
I am grateful for her teaching
as I walk these awakening
woods alone.

And the Violets. White
with purple centers, yellow ones,
and violet too, of course.
Those were your favorites.
You'd carefully pick purple
handfuls, present them proudly
to carry tenderly home, place
gently in a tiny spice jar vase
until they'd wilt.
I hated to throw them away.
You loved to gather armfuls
of fluffy dandelions, chin coated
in shiny dust reflecting your
glowing face, as you'd come
running back to me. I never
had the heart to say
"They won't last, not even
till tomorrow."

Now, it is I who collects these beauties
to leave in heaps on stone
for you.

-

An award-winning educator who lives in Vermont, Naomi Bindman's articles, essays, and poetry have appeared in anthologies, *VT Digger*, *Mothering*, *So to Speak*, *Friends Journal*, *Consilience Journal*, *Import Sky Journal*, and *El Portal Literary Journal*, among others. Naomi has been a featured reader in Albany's Poets in the Park, and Calling All Poets. She has received grants from the Vermont Arts Council, and is on the faculty of the Vermont State Colleges. Naomi's memoir, *You're the Words I Sing: A Memoir of Song, Sorrow, and Solace* tells the story of her journey back to life performing the songs of her daughter, Ellen, who lost her life in a car crash at the age of seventeen. Naomi's website is NaomiBindman.com.

April 2

Introduction

by Jonathan Lloyd

I'd like to introduce me, myself, I, a man, if you will,

Who wears his semicolons on his symbolic sleeve, burnishes the helm of Quixote to fine gleam, and who thinks poems are all the weapons a revolution really requires;

Who has his own secretary, Isabella, who speaks only Spanish, drives a very cute Vespa circa 1989, and who dislikes answering the telephone since, as she says,

¡Es una pérdida de tiempo!

Who prefers to wear his Sunday best on Wednesdays and Fridays while slumming the rest of the week in those ridiculous basketball shorts men wore in the 1970s;

Who, whilst born to be king or emperor or at least a stylish dandy of the order of an abdicated Edward VIII, stands before you at the ready, with gumballs in his pockets to strew upon the floor if too many paparazzi follow upon his heels too closely;

Who thinks a trilby is not merely a hat, thank you very much, but a way of life, a philosophy if you will;

Who begins writing at precisely ten minutes to ten with a sip of Earl Grey straight no chaser, as long as the birds are not singing, the wind blowing overmuch, or the neighborhood children are not too chatty;

Who believes—understands, really—that to call something chintzy is to remark on its availability, not its value—and he also is very chintzy;

Who attends a clown school in the sky, on clouds—pink clouds with bright red poofery—gesticulating wildly so that someone might notice—not notice himself, no, but might see a clown gesticulating wildly there in the sky, and so he himself becomes quite convincingly invisible;

At the end he is whoever his body tells him to be, the man parodying a man parodying a man pretending to be himself: the body knows— yet, he never listens to his body;

He has never recovered from his mother reproving him saying, at a necessarily early age, No—not Moohah! Momma!

Who when introduced at poetry readings, likes to flop onto the floor in a heap and play dead;

Who will only look straight ahead as he declaims in an elevated tone what his most beautiful self really is to the gray-haired man at the back of the room who looks almost like himself.

-

Jonathan Lloyd lives in Valley Falls, NY.

April 3

Where I Might

by Gary J. Maggio

lose my father

He rose up the stairs of the Farber's after toiling, a tool-and-die maker in Soho. This is where I lose him. I don't know him reaching the top of the stairs to the attic.

I'm an infant, with sun on my crib.

My mother cooked and cared for us in the attic, all shadowed walls with alternate sunlight,
my sister touching her cheek in a dark corner.

He has no breath, my father
His eyes are black and unfocused
His skin smelling of motor oil

lose my mother

Although spending all day with her, sea air sending a sweet recollection, my sister kissing her fingers in the corner. I must be crawling, my blue eyes must be clear. I lose her grey eyes
looking at the cracks in the attic floor.

My father scans the room, wishing for tools and dies and something to fix.

Her eyes are down,
But trying, but crying.

lose my sister

I'm newborn, she is pigtailed. We, at once, begin to grow apart, her eyes on my crib, her warm breath, a girl's breath, a stifling. I will play piano, I will be a man, an artist. She will serve as only a sister, as only a mother can.

She will always recall and never discuss the attic, the diffuse sunlight, the Brooklyn noises below.

lose myself

in the ceiling sunlight

-

Gary Maggio, semi-retired, makes a few bucks drawing pastels of people's pets. He's also a local stage actor. He works part-time as a standardized patient at Albany Medical College. He's short and has two tall sons. Check out Gary's artwork, poetry, and more at gmagikman.com.

April 4

Summer Night With Friends

by Charles Rossiter

loon cries
over the still lake,
an eagle glides
to a nearby treetop,
we sit on the porch
sip wine and tell stories,
later we will light a fire
and harmonize

-

Charles Rossiter, NEA Fellowship recipient, hosts the bi-weekly podcast at poetryspokenhere.com (since 2015). His poetry collections include *The Night We Danced With the Raelettes*, a memoir in poetry, *All Over America: Road Poems*, and *Green Mountain Meditations* (all from FootHills Publishing). He lived in Albany during the '90s and currently lives and writes in Bennington, VT.

April 5

My Sister Lives Inside a Looking Glass

by Jackie Craven

My sister lives inside
 a looking glass, stealthy,
silver, and synchronized.

 I touch her nose. She tips her head.
She glints along the beveled edge
 and presses her hand to the shine.

But you're not real, I cry,
 and she breathes, Of course I am,
and softly chimes the hour.

-

A version of this poem appears in my chapbook, *Cyborg Sister* (Headmistress Press, 2022). But nothing is ever done! I rewrote this because I hope to fit it into a collection I'm pecking away at.

-

Jackie Craven has poems published in *AGNI*, *Massachusetts Review*, *New Ohio Review*, *Pleiades*, *Ploughshares*, *Poet Lore*, and other journals and anthologies. She's the author of *SECRET FORMULAS & TECHNIQUES OF THE MASTERS* (Brick Road) and two chapbooks, *CYBORG SISTER* (Headmistress Press) and *OUR LIVES BECAME UNMANAGEABLE* (Omnidawn), winner of the Omnidawn Fabulist Fiction Award. She lives in Schenectady and hosts the 2nd Wednesday "Writer's Mic" on ZOOM. Find her online at JackieCraven.com.

April 6

Old Fences

by Anthony Bernini

Old fencing stands precariously still,
leaning against itself in an embrace
of one, as if to cover up a chill;
discarded now, protects no private space.

Not brown, not grey, it bears some muddled stain
blown by prevailing winds deep in the grain.

The fencing stands unrecognized,
more like lost sight of than unprized.

Stacked within itself, left there in the snow,
it shelters only its old sturdy planks,
parts of itself it did not see or know
when reaching out, with sunbright flanks
to hold the ground for transients and banks.

-

Anthony Bernini graduated in Manhattan from St. Joseph's Grammar School, which no longer exists. He is the author of two volumes of poetry, *Distant Kinships*, and *Immediate Worlds*. He now works in Brunswick, New York, where he lives with his wife, Mary Ann Cleaves. Like all poets are, he is independently wealthy.

April 7

Through The Trees I See

by Nancy Dunlop

Three baby deer play tag
on our property, darting
around and against each other, very
cheerful, very invincible during this cool
September morning, just as the light
breaks through and day
remains smudged and the grass is still
wet. That moment
right before the quivering world
dies down, hardens, grows
relegated to the edicts
of the day, the transiting
sun.

But those running babies!

Free of all of this change,
running unencumbered
by anything that came before,
anything that will come soon enough.

Life unwraps herself.
She has a way of happening around us.

Little deer. Little deer. Let this be enough.
Let this be all that is
and ever was.

-

Nancy Dunlop is a poet and essayist whose chapbook, *Hospital Poems* (Indie Blu(e), 2022) explores the realities one faces as a patient in a mental hospital. A finalist in the AWP Intro Journal Awards, Dunlop has been published in a number of print and digital journals, including *Swank*, *Truck*, *Green Kill Broadsheet*, *The Little Magazine*, *Writing on the Edge*, *13th Moon*, *Writers Resist: The Anthology*, and *Through the Looking Glass: Reflections on Madness and Chaos Within*. Her work has also been heard on NPR. She received her Ph.D. in English from UAlbany SUNY, where she taught for 25 years. She resides in Upstate New York.

April 8

This Morning

by Kate McNairy

I've been longing for you
minutes dog my hours—

a prism splits
early morning light,

there's so much chatter
among colors

that I am not alone—
there is so much to feel

in a clump of orange
tiger lilies by the road

petal touches petal

-

Kate has published three chapbooks, *June Bug* (2014), *Light to Light* (2016) and *My Wolf* (2021). Journal and magazine credits include *Third Wednesday*, *Misfits*, and *Raven's Perch*, among others. She was on the editorial board of *The Apple Tree* and was a semi-finalist of the *Blue Light Poetry Contest* (2014). She has also attended the NYS Summer Writers Institute at Skidmore, The Frost Place and Tupelo and lives with Jon in upstate New York. Kate's website is KateMcNairy.com.

April 9

Songed

by Karen Schoemer

in the blue motel of sleep
on the purple beat
a hand touches a piano key
I dip beneath layers deep
layers of voices
emerge into a hallway

closed doors of bedrooms
brass knobs with mechanisms
designed to stop me
rooms with mothers and fathers
sofas rugs mantelpieces
the complete Yale Shakespeare
surprising heavy small blue books
I whisper to the books
it is fortunate that I touched him
in the blue motel of sleep

-

Karen Schoemer records and performs with several bands, including Sky Furrows and Jaded Azurites. She is currently collaborating with the Chicago-based guitarist Zak Boerger on an album called *Day for Nights*.

April 10

Conflicted

by Marilyn Paarlberg

... the human heart in conflict with itself alone can make good writing because only that is worth writing about ...

- William Faulkner

Is there no stanza
worth the stalwart curve
of a red squirrel
on an icy branch?
Nothing implicit
in the perfect roundness
of a brown wren,
a doe's tender huffs
as she nuzzles her calf?
No merit in strophes
that echo the rhythm
of snow geese in flight,
cadence that captures
the scent of peonies careening,
bent like prodigals at first light?
Are these less worthy of pen
than escalating voices

laden with whiskey,
fathers spilling secrets
like gnarled wisteria
that refuses to die?
Is there no Muse
in a fair April sky?

-

Marilyn Paarlberg has been writing poetry most of her life, thanks to the encouragement of teachers and mentors along the way, as well as various classes offered through the NYS Writers Institute and elsewhere. She is retired from a career in a variety of educational and advocacy pursuits, and lives in Loudonville.

April 11

Last Snow by the Mohawk

by Thomas Reed Willemain

A half-white field glimpsed
on the road by the Mohawk
with April forcing its way back in
made me think something
has slipped by me
while I've been booted and bundled.

Have I been too busy
to fully know the cold season,
with its stark beauty,
its lessons of endurance,
and the calm blue light of wind drifts
at sundown?

In time, I may be graced
with another moment
to scent the first snow,
turn my face to the north wind
and manage a small smile
at what comes next.

-

Thomas Reed Willemain is a former academic, software entrepreneur and intelligence officer. His poetry has appeared in *Sheila-Na-Gig*, *Two Thirds North*, *Closed Eye Open*, *Dillydoun Review Poetry*, and elsewhere. He holds engineering degrees from Princeton University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He lives with his wife and son in Niskayuna, NY.

April 12

What Appears Abandoned, May Be Incubation

by Suzanne S. Rancourt

I have found peace here at the river's shore that people insist is a lake which it is not. Just ask the stones muffled by sludge banked over rotted homes flooded by the dam in 1930, eminent domain. Ask them about the gutted deep current that spines its way unnoticed by motorized wakes. This is a river, sure as the dead it never gives up still wedged between scuttled autos by the rolling belly sands of progress. This is the river torso-wind rides for free with its erotic undulations that press each stone. Someone once told me that the first time they heard water with their new hearing aids, it sounded like glass shattering. This valley shattered into a river that people insist on calling a lake - moaning not sharp - not splintered but in curves, or roundness, coming from the mouths of the people in the water. Their presence a peristaltic voice. They loved this valley too - born here, gave birth here, farmed and died here before the dam, before the flood. This is a river that innocent children, boys, summer, a luxury, that only poverty can turn into paradise. This is a river.

-

2x Best of the Net Nominee, Suzanne S. Rancourt, Abenaki/Huron descent, has authored *Billboard in the Clouds*, Northwestern Univ. Press, (received the Native Writers' Circle of the Americas First Book Award,) *murmurs at the gate*, Unsolicited Press, 2019, *Old Stones, New Roads*, Main Street Rag Publishing, 2021. Her 4th book, *Songs of Archilochus*, Unsolicited Press, scheduled to release Oct. 2023. A USMC and Army Veteran, Suzanne is a multi-modal Expressive Arts Therapist. Advanced degrees include psychology, writing, Credentialed Drug and Alcohol Counselor, Aikido and Iaido. Widely published, please explore her website for publications, events, interviews and more: www.expressive-arts.com

April 13

Ukrainian Spring

by David Walsh

When the snow and war still came
we postponed April

dark skies dropped metal
gray that set streets aflame

making peace a refugee, shadows
that chase tarnished borders,

winter coats the last protection
for exiles escaping colorless streets

framed with yawning broken windows
into perilous sanctuary

spring would still display forsythia,
yellow shattering the morning frost

-

David Walsh is a poet in training who depends upon his writing group to remind him that he should keep working at it. He lives in upstate New York. His poetry has been published in *museum of americana*, *NINE*, *Spitball*, *Haibun Today*, and *Adirondack Review*, among others.

April 14

Making Sense Beyond the Five

by Catherine Norr

When I was a young girl, skipping rope, skipping stones
Sights that gleamed and glittered lit my world
Fourth of July sparklers swirling against night, flashing fireflies
Held in a jar, Grandma's spangled earrings reflecting sun
Lightning splitting storm clouds on a sticky Southern afternoon

When I was a student, stepping out in town

Odors and aromas etched themselves best
Oil paint and clay, fried onion and peppers
Spaghetti sauce on the stove, mimosa in bloom
A boy's hot breath when we kissed

When I was a mother, making room for others
Touch was what caused both joy and pain
Velvet skin of a newborn, suckling at my breast
Heat and gritty scrub of Pacific sands,
Fallen mangoes squishing underfoot

When I was a traveler, roaming country and town
Taste was what brought me to ground
Rice & beans with bay leaf, filé gumbo, oyster stew
Roasted garlic, fresh-cut ginger, steeped green tea leaves
Picked with care, bare bread broken to share

When I grew older, more often sitting here, sitting there
Sounds are what rang clear, filling the air
Voices of neighbors carried on a breeze, birds and leaves
Rustling in the trees, piano notes and guitar strums
Reassuring words from family and friends

When I was out-of-body, higher than the clouds
Reality was an ocean in which we all dwell
Birds swim like fish, plants ripple with a swell
Above the choppy waves, a clearer air is breathed
Colors vibrate and formless voices speak.

-

Catherine Norr (née Smither) grew up in New Orleans, LA., received a BA from Newcomb College, Tulane University, specializing in French, Spanish, and Art. She now divides her year between upstate NY and Northern Arizona, and continues to participate in a longstanding poetry critique group via Zoom. Norr's poetry publications include a chapbook, "Return to Ground" (Finishing Line Press, 2014) and other journals such as *Avocet*, *Evening Street Review*, *Orion*, *Misfit*, and *Stockade Spy*. Essays were published in *The Sun* and online in *SVAN (Sacandaga Valley Arts Network)*. She has been a featured reader at Caffè Lena, Saratoga Springs, and founded and hosted the open mic poetry reading at Arthur's Market, Schenectady, among other activities with the New York's Capital District poetry community.

April 15

\$55 a Month!

by Thomas Anthony

The gleeful panes rattled with joy
over each passing freight beneath the sills

On roadside bedding drenched in sweat . . .
cheap winter's gas flaming hot ceramic bricks

Harassed by strange creatures rising
from the squatter's cellar invading my sleep

We stray cats paced the cracked kitchen floor
together looking for something never found

Still mourning the loss of the great white footed
porcelain tub that eased my youthful fears!

-

Thomas Anthony was born in a small upstate mill town and has spent his post-kindergarten years migrating between the greater New York City area and the great Adirondacks. He has been recording his thoughts and adages in the hope of figuring things out. Occasionally a small piece escapes to a wider venue. This poem is a reminiscence of a winter spent in an old trackside apartment during senior year at a big southwest football university . . . for better or for worse.

April 16

The Cold Reminds Me

by Susan Oringel

Days of frozen weather with numbers trudging into single digits
and people in down, fur, and floppy hats remind me of the movie
Doctor Zhivago with blue-eyed Lara - Julie Christie - and her white fur
poufs and 60's lipstick, chalky pink, and Omar Sharif as the
spaniel-eyed doctor with Geraldine Chaplin, his wife Tonya, who knows
he's in love with Lara and can't do a thing about it. And then there's
the Russian Revolution which drop-kicked my people to the States,
specifically, the lower East Side and then Brooklyn, and the name Zhivago

whose first syllable sounds like “Zhyd,” for “Yid,” the Russian word I heard repeated one day on our local NPR station in a Chekhov story, reminding me that even if I take Jesus as my personal savior - which I don’t plan on doing, we’re just good friends - I’ll always be a Jew, no matter what. Just like I’ll always hate winter, no matter what. And the one thing that saves me in winter is my little wood stove, which blasts out dry heat like a tight embrace. But back to Zhivago. Before Russia splinters and the lovers tear apart, they have a daughter with emerald eyes, Rita Tushingham, so radiant in 60’s British indie films like *A Taste of Honey*. Which reminds me of the girl today who sang in church, something about moving mountains, and something about the innocence and clarity of her voice filled me with helpless tears, none of the heaviness that age and life will later thrust upon her. And I cried about her feeling the confidence, at least, the right to be heard, at age seventeen, in front of the whole congregation. Did I mention Zhivago was a poet?

-

Sue Oringel is a poet and writer, a teacher of creative writing, and a psychologist in private practice in New York’s Capital District. Her chapbook *My Coney Island* was published by Finishing Line Press in June 2019. A graduate of the Warren Wilson M.F.A. program, she is published in various journals, such as *BlueLine*, *The Maryland Poetry Review*, and *NCTE English Journal*. She also served as co-translator for a collection of Latin American poetry: *Messengers of Rain*, published by Groundwoods Press in 2002 and 2011. Fellowships and awards include Individual Artist award from the Albany Schenectady League of Arts, a fellowship from the Vermont Studio Center, and an SOS award sponsored by NYSCA. She taught creative writing at Hudson Valley Community College from 2004-2017.

April 17

Nesting

by Viviane Galloway

The ground is squishy with promise.
Puddles of joy spring up
in the sunny spots of the lawn.
Blues are turning to green.
Our feathered friends return.
Eagerly dining on our small offerings,

they share tales of their epic travels.
And suddenly,
I am aware.
I've sat in my nest all winter long.

-

Viviane Galloway lives in Rensselaerville, NY. She recently started as program manager at the Rensselaerville Library, and is beginning to feel the influence of the poetry on the shelves all around her.

April 18

Thrush morning*

by Ellen White Rook

 before dawn's
shell-shiny
start I notice
winter damage
on the neighbor's pine
the top blown
into its own branches
and from within this high
dark tangle hear
a voice

 he sings
a simple chord
two tones
or one
so rich and pure
it makes a layer
like the sound of light
enveloping
the moon
or fingers
on a soft
cheek

 this small
brown bird
offering the blossom
of almost spring
his split syrinx

captures all directions
as the egg-sun
oranges the broken tree
a dazzling parapet
commanding
his charmed
realm

* first published by *Cold Mountain Review*

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Ellen White Rook is a poet and contemplative arts teacher living in Delmar, NY and southern Maine. A retired IT manager, she now offers writing workshops and leads retreats that merge meditation, movement, and writing. Her work has been published in *New Verse News*, *Black Fork*, *New Note Poetry*, *The Banyan Review*, *Quibble*, *Trolley*, and more. A collection of poems, *Suspended*, is forthcoming from Cathexis Northwest Press in May, 2023. Visit her website at ellenwhiterook.com.

April 19

At Grief Counseling

by Rebecca Shumejda

I am expected to take off my shoes at the threshold before entering.
I feel lopsided, carrying the unevenly distributed weight of loss, more on the right side than the left. I am trying to compensate. I like to think because my dead husband was left-handed, but really I just fit awkwardly into this grief, a tight bathing suit pulled over a long, lazy winter. I take a seat and stare at the shade obstructing the view the window could provide. Everything I do and say feels awkward since he died. When asked how I am doing, I hear someone else respond, Good, real good. Who says good? I think, what an idiot, I think, you are well, not good in regards to health and wealth and I am neither. Outside I envision a Mourning Dove's nest on the window ledge, a few babies on the cusp of flight, calling out for their mother. How, she asks, are your daughters doing? Good, good, the idiot says as they thrash impatiently waiting for a worm or some other small comfort.

-

Rebecca Schumejda is the author of several full-length collections including *Falling Forward* (sunnyoutside press), *Cadillac Men* (NYQ Books), *Waiting at the*

Dead End Diner (Bottom Dog Press) and most recently *Our One-Way Street* (NYQ Books). Her latest book, *Something Like Forgiveness*, a single epic poem accompanied by collage art by Hosho McCreesh is out from Stubborn Mule Press. Her new collection, *Sentenced*, is forthcoming from NYQ Books and *Hope is a Prison*, a book of her poems with corresponding photographs by Jason Baldinger is forthcoming from Kung Fu Treachery. She is the co-editor at *Trailer Park Quarterly*. She received her MA in Poetics from San Francisco State University and her BA from SUNY New Paltz. She lives in New York's Hudson Valley.

April 20

BIRTHDAY POEM 2023:

Magic in Gloucester

by Dan Wilcox

The Marina Hotel's finicky
wi-fi sends me to Main St.
I find gifts for myself.
In Local Colors Adeline
crisp water-colorist
pulled from poem cards
"The 6th of Cups"
she said it made her day.
In Dogtown Books
I bought Ferrini's Pleroma
a scrap between the pages
with the address of
the editor in India.
In Floating Lotus
Diana pulled another
"6th of Cups" poem card.
On a wind- & sand-swept
Good Harbor Beach
my shoes & pants blessed
by the stealthy surf
"don't just walk around
the sand" it seemed to say
"we need to touch each other."

-

Dan Wilcox is the host of the Third Thursday Poetry Night at the Social Justice Center in Albany, NY. He was named one of the 2019 Literary Legends by the Albany Public Library Foundation.

April 21

Meditating in New Hampshire*

by Robert A. Miller

A comma of snow
Fell off a black branch
When I opened my eyes
From a deep meditation
In the New Hampshire woods

I lusted after
The woman of the house
Whose husband the potter was
In Cambridge trying to
Sell his wares

To support the huge farmhouse
Where we all were smoking dope
And arguing about
Which of our many spiritual paths
Would take us to enlightenment

* first published in *Up the River Journal*

-

Robert A. Miller lives and writes in the northern Catskills.

April 22

Her Name

by Howard J Kogan

Sometimes I come upon her name,
first thing I remember is

how she disliked it,
though disliked is putting it mildly.
This didn't matter to anyone
except her mother
who thought it a rejection,
perhaps expected from a teenager,
but odd
persisting into middle age.

She disliked it first
because it was her mother's,
boring and ordinary,
on a par with Jane Doe,
but lacking that name's mystery,
proof her parents had no imagination,
no interest or worse,
wanted her to be ordinary,
though if that was the intent,
it failed.

Of course, for years now
when I come upon her name,
it's simply a name many share,
she has no double;
I know.
I've looked.
Though that's the sort of thing she'd enjoy,
someone in a parallel universe
stuck being her,
when she didn't want to be her.

Once I asked her to a work dinner,
she said she couldn't possibly come,
not that evening,
then showed up,
confessed she'd always known she'd come,
but wanted to surprise me,
by cloning herself into the one
who couldn't be there,
and one who was,
like it was a magic trick.

Or the night she said,
I think of us as a threesome.
Lucky you with two women,
one in your bed,

another in your head,
she can stay as long as you want.
I said, not for the first time,
I have no idea what you're talking about.
No, she said, you don't.
That's how she told me.

-

Howard J Kogan is a retired psychotherapist and writer. His poetry books include, *Indian Summer*, *A Chill in the Air*, and his latest, *Before I Forget*. Please order them from SquareCirclePress.com, an independent bookstore, or, if you really must, the longest river in South America.

April 23

Arts & Crafts in the Day Room

by Alan Catlin

Somewhere around my
eighth birthday mother
gave me a hand crafted
wallet made from a kit
she made in arts and crafts.
She seemed diminished
to me: so happy, agreeable,
smiling and affectionate,
I almost didn't recognize
her. The nurses wanted me
to string beads, join in
with the others, "on parole"
patients in the day room.
I tried playing along but
couldn't handle it. All I
wanted was my grandmother
to get me out of there,
to take me home, knowing
that gift she made me
was so out of character for
her, I wondered what they
did with her in that place.
Who this person was. If I'd
ever get my real mother back.

-

Alan Catlin has published over 80 full length books and chapbooks. His book *Altered States* was just published by Cyberwit. The above poem is from a book of "real stories"; *Listening to the Moonlight Sonata During a Mohs Procedure to Remove a Skin Cancer* that was recently accepted by a UK publisher.

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April 24

I Watch Him Play the Piano

for Morey Hall

by Dawn Marar

With marionette hands,
he strikes the keys.
The action hidden; the felted
hammers strike my chest.

The music rack, a skeleton;
he plays from memory.
And they become one,
a horse pawing the ground.

I see the whites of stallion eyes;
the pupils, accidentals.

The tempo changes, dove wings
and grackles stir my heart.

Like a gang of kids who scatter
when the cops arrive, I watch, breath bated.
The furor subsides.

No witness protection program for me!
I'll take the stand.
Your Honor, there was no crime. Just
harmony.

The piano startles under my friend's touch
like a newborn foal
akimbo. Again, the Prelude grows,

becomes stable.

My friend spurs on his baby grand.
Steinway holds the shiny black
curved lid mane upright.

On the fall board, his hands reign,
and I'm right beside him,
although across the room,
riding side saddle.
I watch knowingly, listen knowingly
although I'm no musician.

My hands ache to take to my dapple gray,
the laptop keyboard where I compose this piece.

-

Dawn Marar lives in Delmar, NY. This poem was previously published by *Chronogram Magazine*. Her website is DawnMarar.weebly.com.

April 25

"Inconstant Moment"

by Joel Best

Although take notice of you at the lake, a shadow
emerging from shadow, leaned heavily into each metronomic
step, bow-back as though shouldering a difficult
and inescapable burden. Ratchet

up-and-down, loose at the baseline joint, scaled and tremulous hands
conducting a statted mindtouch with shorebirds. At which point the lake
conjoined with

sky, the lake is clouds exhaled into the intangible. In witness, I decide, your
clasp at what can't be held; then drop
facefirst like an empty purse onto silted

lakebeach sand. Is it you on a tangent or a daydream of you sighing
mouse-lunged and descended into the still Staring at what?

The true face of the
world?

On your belly, soiled dress damp with dew, hem hitched up high
and baring legs pocked and bruised and belonging to a corpse
exhumed from the peat bog. Dredging up

a seed-memory of dipping child-sized toes
into black waters. And disturbing blood-brown sandmites
among the damp granules.

You and them locked
into the same calm gravity.

-

Joel Best is a poet and artist living in upstate New York. His work has appeared in venues such as *Common Ground Review*, *JMWW*, *Glassworks* and *Apeiron Review*. His website can be found at joelbestpoetry.com.

April 26

My Mother's Pocketbook

by Francine Farina

My Mother's Pocketbook
was a mystery waiting
to unfold

As a child I wondered
what secret treasures
she carried inside

It seemed she was always
Able to produce what
was needed in any
circumstance

Band aids for a skinned
knee and a stick of gum
to take the sting away

Shiny pennies for the
candy machine at our
corner drugstore

Safety pins to secure
a loose button and
a threaded needle
to sew it on

The list seemed endless
Much to my amazement
And I was convinced
There was magic in
That bag

-

Francine Farina has been writing seriously for over three years. She has published a novel co-authored with Shawn M. Tomlinson and recently published a collection of poetry entitled *Old Bones* which is available on Amazon. She shares her home with three adorable rescue cats. She lives in Amsterdam NY.

April 27

They Gave Me a Parade Today

by Nathan Smith

They gave me a parade today,
marched rainbows down my street,
wearing reds, and blues, and purples,
and every shade of pink.

They gave me a parade today,
It has to be, I'm sure.
They must've heard how brave I was,
when I kicked down that closet door

Yes, they gave me a parade today,
as anyone can see,
so I'm shedding off my skin of fear,
It's time that I be me.

-

I am a 24-year-old gay poet living in Troy, NY. I grew up on a small farm in rural PA. I have been writing poetry since I was 16. My first book "Cotton Candy Sun"

came out this past December. My poems are about unrequited love, dealing with a broken heart, the struggles of being fat in the gay community, and coming to terms with who I am and the overall experience of coming out. I moved to NY to pursue a PhD in Biochemistry and Biophysics and fell in love with the area and all the arts that are embraced here.

April 28

When I see an urban wall

by Franc Palaia

I see politics
I see frustration
I see inner thoughts
I see personal angst
I see passion
I see cryptic marks and images
I see a thousand years of art
I see twisted ideas
I see chaos
I see pigment, rust, paper and glue
I see humor and irony
I see low grade manifestos knocked out in seconds
I see layers of time
I see courage
I see modern cave paintings
I see violence
I see art history
I see tomorrow's news
I see Franz Kline
I see the emerging of ghosts
I see the punch of a fist
I see a graceful dancer
I see anarchy
I see anger and rage
I see reflection
I see physical hope
I see a human soul
I see a crime
I see a future photograph
I see art

-

Franc Palaia is a New York based multi disciplinary artist working in photography, public art, painting, murals, sculpture and is an independent curator and musician. Franc has been included in over 300 group shows and 45 solo shows, regionally, nationally and internationally. Grants include the Rome Prize Fellowship, two Polaroid Sponsorships, a L. C. Tiffany grant, a Puffin Grant, two NYFA grants. Exhibitions include the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY, Whitney Museum of American Art annex, LA MoCA, OK Harris gallery, PSl, New Museum, ACA Galleries, NY, Saatchi Museum and Woodbury House, London, Fundacio Salvador Dali-Gala in Spain, the Velan Arte Contemporanea in Turin, Italy, The American Academy in Rome and others. His artworks are included in the permanent collections of Museum of Modern Art, Newark and Brooklyn Museums and the New Jersey State Museum. He has painted over 40 indoor and outdoor murals. Some have appeared on WNBC TV, Time Warner Cable TV, and the Discovery Channel. His "Columbus Drive Mural" in Jersey City was the biggest mural in the United States in 1997; it measured 350' x 60'. His photographs have appeared in film documentaries such as "Shadowman" about street artist, Richard Hambleton and "Boom for Real" about Jean-Michel Basquiat. He has worked with and assisted well-known artists such as Annie Liebovitz, Billy Name, Robert Wilson, Salvador Dali and others. He was a producer and host of "Arts Focus", a half-hour interview program on Time Warner Cable Television in the Hudson Valley from 2007-2011. Franc was background (stand in) film work in an upcoming HBO series called, "White House Plumbers," a series starring Woody Harrelson about the Watergate scandal. Franc is also a professional musician/percussionist performing at dozens of NYC music clubs such as CBGB's and Danceteria. Franc's website is francpalaia.com.

April 29

THE WEB

by Andy Fogle

begins just behind
the head of every
kid, stretching back
into infinity.

All their troubles

and thrills are there, all
the questions and
silence and slurs
and absence and
wonder laughter salt

tears ground teeth
gut knots lust
and ecstasy fear,
all their selves
are there. It stretches,

funneling, back
to their birth, where
the web is rooted
to their parents' webs,
which tilt and swirl

even still.
It's like the night sky
when you're out in
the country: you see
so much more

out there, and so know
how little you
normally see, how
much more is scattered
across the cosmos

of strangers. And that's
what has arrived
before us this
moment: every
each other.

-

Andy Fogle is the author of *Mother Countries* (forthcoming, *Main Street Rag*), *Across from Now*, and seven chapbooks of poetry, including *Arc & Seam: Poems of Farouk Goweda*, co-translated with Walid Abdallah. He's from Virginia Beach, spent years in the DC area, and now lives with his family in upstate NY, teaching high school. Visit his website at www.foglejunk.squarespace.com.

April 30

Underpinning Before Decline

by *Laura Lucas*

Nothing shapes better than simplicity.
What can hold more firmly
than a single line,
 a perfect angle,
 a point of infinite strength
and indefinable dimensions?

I hold myself together
 with only two hands,
two stars circling each other
 around the silhouette of the galaxy.

I make do on magic crumbs of bread,
water
 that springs
 from
 dry ground,
 indirect sunlight,
 determination.

Beneath layers of old paint,
behind a loose floorboard,
 or stuffed into the darkest part
of the deepest kitchen cupboard,
you find the supports:

The network of spider webs strong enough
to suspend a city between continents,
maintain
 a universe
in motion,
convince an atom to stop itself
from spiraling apart.

-

Laura Lee Lucas (she/her) is a VONA/Voices fellow and a member of the Horror Writers Association, and has received financial support from Artist Trust. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Corvid Queen*, *Mountain Bluebird Magazine*, *Octavos*, *Black Imagination*, *Poplorish*, *Line Zero*, *Imaginaire*, *The Poetic Pinup*

Revue, *Vapid Kitten*, the *It Starts With Hope* anthology, the *Unchaste Anthology Volumes 1 and 3*, and the *Dead of Winter II* anthology, among others. She currently resides in the Hudson Valley in upstate New York. Laura's website is lauralucas.net.