



# Rensselaerville Library

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

## Celebrating National Poetry Month 2018

### Poem-A-Day

(ctrl-F to search)

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

showcasing different voices, styles, techniques, subjects

1500+ pageviews

Enjoy!

Tom Corrado

Coordinator of the Library's Poetry Group

Kimberly Graff

Director, Rensselaerville Library

April 1

The Dog

by Thomas Bonville

Whose dog is that?  
I wondered, the sun  
elbowing its way  
into the winter daybreak,  
the animal ambling along  
the edge of my property,  
by the woods,  
not stopping, not sniffing, not looking about,  
soon, trotting out of sight,  
into the brush, the trees -  
the maples, the white birches, the red oaks,  
dormant, in repose,  
Ten Mile Creek nearby,  
more ice than open water -  
and the field at the back of my house,  
looking like it always does, a fresh February snow  
from three days ago, on the ground, undisturbed,  
until this morning, my thoughts, undisturbed,  
until I realized, sitting with my second cup of coffee,  
I had seen a coyote.

About the poet:

Thomas Bonville participates with the Rensselaerville Poets. He is a retired elementary school teacher.

\*\*\*\*\*

April 2

Dahlia

by Howard J. Kogan

The wizened tuber  
that appeared dead all winter  
and resembles Maria Ouspenskaya  
more each day

in spring  
sends up shoot after shoot  
life wants more life  
life finds a way.

About this poem:

"I grow dahlias and over the winter when the tubers are stored in my cellar many appear dried up and dead. Yet almost always they will come through in spring. Maria Ouspenskaya plays the Wolfman's mother in the original film and has a gloriously poetic name."

About the poet:

Howard J. Kogan is a psychotherapist and poet.

\*\*\*\*\*

April 3

Bison Turd in a Peanut Butter Jar

by Charles Rossiter

It sits on the top shelf in my office, and with it,  
memories of Teddy Roosevelt National Park,

North Unit, just up the road from Grassy Butte  
with the sod roof post office and the campground

so far inside the park that even the tire  
hum of passing cars on two-lane US 85

can't be heard, only the sweet harmonic  
howls of coyotes that swooned us to sleep.

Dusty trails, the Little Missouri River trickling  
by, Diamond Willows that can cure a headache.

All that from a simple lump of bison turd picked  
up on the trail by the light of the just rising sun

before a campfire breakfast, and heading back to  
the world of cities traffic and electric distractions

where folks don't generally think of excrement  
from large mammals as a form of memorabilia.

About this poem:

In my home office one day I happened to glance up and notice the peanut butter jar with bison turd and flashed on the idea that it's probably not too common to have a piece of shit on a shelf as a meaningful memento of a road trip so I began writing to see what might come out. TR National Park, North Unit, was a particularly pleasant road experience due to the remoteness of the campground and the coyotes that are mentioned in the poem.

About the poet:

Charles Rossiter, National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship Recipient, hosts the twice-monthly podcast series at [www.PoetrySpokenHere.com](http://www.PoetrySpokenHere.com). His work has been featured on NPR's "Poet and the Poem." During the 1990s he produced and hosted Poetry Motel, a cable television program seen on community access stations around the Northeast. Recent books include: All Over America: Road Poems, Winter Poems, Cold Mountain 2000: Han Shan in the City, and Lakeside Poems.

\*\*\*\*\*

April 4

Crazy Cenci

by Gary Maggio

Granny made bow-tie cookies called Cenci  
Delicate crumbly fried dough ribbons,  
Which she sweetened with honey and confectionery sugar  
Which stuck to the tips of your cold lips and fell like snowflakes  
Onto her worn-out rug tattered by fireplace smoke.

There was thin onion Sicilian pizza for breakfast  
Without tomato sauce, stuffed shells and manicotti  
And ravioli - a Ricotta-filled paradise - for dinner,  
But I don't remember what they tasted like,  
just the fragile pastry that made you crazy happy.

I can remember too the taste of a little mean cousin's  
Screams, her mouth dribbling Cenci and honey,  
When an impatient aunt told the child, frantic, that Santa  
Only brought presents to children who saw him  
In the sky;

At the base of the winding staircase  
That would soon lift us to bed, to be awakened for gifts  
At one a.m., stumbling down in flannel pajamas,  
The aunt and another vengeful sister and an uncle  
stood in front of the side door window,

blocking my little cousin's view of the dark-white sky,  
and they waved and sang "Goodbye, Santa!"  
And "Merry Christmas, Santa!" and "Fly away, Santa!"  
And he did and was gone and she shrieked, her chest heaving,  
choking, demented, on her Cenci.

About the poet:

Gary Maggio wrote his first poem, "October," at age 50 in 1999 in a NYS Writers Institute workshop overseen by Irish poet John Montague. Over the years, his poems have appeared in several literary and university magazines, both in paper versions as well as online. Gary is also a

visual artist; you can see his work, including some current poems, on his website, [www.gmagikman.com](http://www.gmagikman.com).

\*\*\*\*\*

April 5

Spathe Is the Plathe

*It looked more fake than the real thing.*  
- Andy Warhol

by Dan Wilcox

The eclipse is on TV  
the Great American Eclipse  
they say. I listen to Sun Ra  
"Space is the Place" - of course  
where else is there?

I like the New Moon best  
because I have to believe  
it is there each month  
just as the clouds today challenge  
the claim that it is the Moon  
blocking the Sun, not  
just storm clouds rolling in.

On TV the 8-year-old says,  
"I've never seen anything like it!"  
She has yet to see Prom night  
the back seat of that Honda  
a missed period, throwing up  
in the last pew of church.

TV instant re-runs repeat  
the eclipse in places no one goes to  
& the Sun & I have a Corona.

This Great American Eclipse  
on my TV is like internet sex:  
so much better than the real thing.

& in Carhenge, Nebraska  
93 million miles from the Sun  
239,000 miles from the Moon  
200 miles from Nowhere  
someone on TV says, "It's like  
watching Day turn into Night"  
which I do each & every evening.

In my backyard, even the birds  
think it's just another cloudy day.

About this poem:

I hate hype of any kind, & if someone wants to make America great again they would get rid of media hype, particularly of things that we can't control & that have been happening since at least the time our solar system was formed. During the eclipse last year I watched TV & took notes since being outside was so boring.

About the poet:

Dan Wilcox is a poet & peace activist, & is the host of the Third Thursday Poetry Night at the Social Justice Center in Albany, NY. He has the world's largest collection of photos of unknown poets.

\*\*\*\*\*

April 6

One Morning in Preston Hollow

by Robert A. Miller

Nine degrees  
Metallic cast to the sky  
The sun red and fiery orange  
Peeks over the mountain  
The dog noses around me, gets scratched  
Goes back to bed  
There are blossoms on the Christmas cactus  
Things are very simple now  
At seven oh five a.m.  
A rising sun  
The lives of plants and poets  
The wind

About the poet:

Robert A. Miller is a journalist, poet and short story writer living in the northern Catskills.

\*\*\*\*\*

April 7

Newtown

by Dianne Sefcik

five years it's been since they were  
shot to death  
twenty first graders six adults

yet another slaughter of innocents  
of innocence  
huddled in their classroom  
like puppies in a pen  
nowhere to go

so small they were  
with their little hands  
their little friends  
their little arguments and big joys  
the clothes their parents washed  
the breakfasts they had eaten  
just another ordinary precious day  
until he walked in

we thought about them  
their families  
the ones who survived  
the ruptured lives  
we thought about our own children  
parents siblings partners friends  
it could happen anywhere  
a home made bomb

We are all Sandy Hook  
the preacher said  
his boy of color newly killed like so many  
before him like the ones the dozens  
the hundreds thousands millions  
caught in the blind sights the crosshairs  
of an ancient perfected defect  
the legacy of Cain

a brief commotion in Congress  
like a leviathan roiling waters  
just below the surface  
only to submerge again unbreached  
the shadow of America  
huge growing  
Bury My Heart again and again  
never give up shine the light

About this poem:

This poem was written on the five year anniversary of the killings of elementary school children and staff in Newtown, CT. The killings continue.

About the poet:

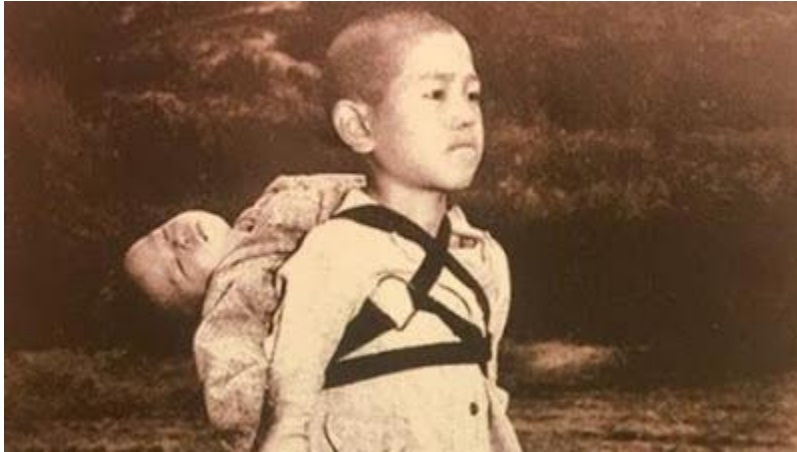
Dianne Sefcik lives in rural Albany County, NY.

\*\*\*\*\*

April 8

The World Has Gone MAD

by Nancy Dyer



Yes, that's right the world has gone MAD.

STAAAARKKKKKKK RAAAAVING MAD

And who is to blame?

OH yes, That one.

And That one.

And them.

And it.

And my mother

And the establishment

And the educational system

And the weather

And this Precedent (you can figure this out, can't you?)

And the last one. . . . Yes, him, too.

And why not BITCOIN?



But really, has anything ever really changed?

All the Avatars and Swamis and Gurus have come and gone.

Have they changed the world?

The world. This universe. This multiverse. . . .

Here for billions of years.

Do you really think anyone made a lasting difference?

When you go to sleep at night the world disappears, doesn't it?

And when You wake up, before U start  
THINKKKKKKKKing -

Who or what are you really?

What if you just dropped your mind into the SEA of  
ETERNITY?

What would you do?

And if that doesn't work run the movie of your life backwards  
as fast as you can to circus music and see what you are after  
that.

About the poet:

Retired sales person. Taught yoga for 15 years.

\*\*\*\*\*

April 9

An Elegy Upon the Death of a Public House

*for Frank and Gert Smith*

by Dennis Sullivan

Have you heard the news  
Someone shot our tavern dead  
And escaped into the night  
The sheriff hasn't a clue  
Who pulled the trigger  
The causa mortis still unclear  
Some say greed fondled by despair.

What I do hear is bulldozers

And cranes are on the way  
To pull down every rim and rafter  
And push the scrap into the Vly  
Scraped up like something the dog  
Left steaming in the open air.

One source says the corpse will be torn  
Limb from limb like a quartered con  
The State wants out of sight and ear  
Before the solstice begins -  
With the corpus delicti gone  
Everybody'll go scot-free.

I see dump trucks lined up  
To cart away every drunken conversation  
Every rejected offer of love at last call  
Every stinking poem a stinking poet wrote  
Cackling like a witch around a bonfire.  
Buried forever will be Jim Reed  
Standing at the corner of the bar  
Asking about the meaning of a rill.

Travelers who pass by tell me  
They ate pizza on plates here  
With the kids packed in the car  
To pick apples below the mountain  
Or came to drink when the snow  
Got too high along the bridge  
Mocking the weak-of-heart.

I used to see a politician with a gal  
He later married for love and dough,  
He waved to passersby like kin  
But could not escape sadness  
I don't think he ever went to school.

That's what they're saying  
They're saying they came to eat  
And drink and speak of love  
Some to honor the Muse  
By singing verses in a corner -  
The lines of one leaked so  
He whined about love  
Without good head.

But since I'm neither judge nor jury  
To say who deserves Euterpe's awe  
I'll praise instead the syntax  
I saw writ and sung in agony here  
As real judges like hierarchs  
Picked a laureate for the town.

From this Eden of bards I heard  
Howard Bob Karen Mike and Tom  
The one who lives on the mountain  
With a wife from somewhere else.

Do you have a favorite bard among them?  
Do you wear the dagger-cloak of death?  
Do you know who fired the deadly blast?  
Are you willing to swear in court?

But save the guilt and grief for tomorrow  
Today we'll raise a glass and chant  
Sunny hymns to Truth and Beauty  
And bury with this breathless corpse  
All hubris greed and the consternation  
Of every soul who sought fame and wealth  
Here, where I sit a homeless remnant  
Left with horse and plow to harvest silence.

About this poem:

This poem was writ for a gathering of poets and writers who met at the tavern to bid farewell to a piece of themselves. Bon voyage to Jon and John as well.

About the poet:

Dennis Sullivan is a poet who lives in Voorheesville, NY with his wife Georgia Gray and their feline family: Clare, Catherine (aka Slinky), Stephanie, Fiddler, and Juniper and our now RIP, Taco.

\*\*\*\*\*

April 10

Plains Song

by Susan E. Oringel

Something about the lands where the land stretches flat and wide  
and the sky and its changing face is the landscape's only ornament  
and the rush of the wind or the hush is its only song,  
which makes men and women sing a high lonesome sound  
with a guitar, a harmonica, a concertina. Simple songs  
echo plaintive across the plains. In West Texas, Kansas,  
Nebraska, Northern New Mexico, eastern Colorado, a car  
can travel all day and not pass another car, just dust, tumbleweed,  
scrubgrass, ragweed, mesquite. Cottonwoods by the creeks.

I've heard of cars careening into cornfields off I-70,  
drivers blinded by sky. I took a bus once from Grinnell, Iowa  
to Denver, 27 hours wedged next to a big woman and her baby's  
milk puke. I drove my '65 Dodge packed with all my goods

across I-80 from Grinnell to Boulder, vowing again and again  
in Nebraska's parching heat to stop at the next lake, only to have water  
disappear like a mirage. On the high plains in Lubbock,  
a town surrounded by cotton fields - grids of white fluff  
stuck on brown twigs - when I wanted wildness, I drove  
into the mesas to hear coyotes and see starfall.  
No, I was not from those lands, but I lived there.  
I have passed among them and still hear their song.

About this poem:

The title and the lyrical feeling of the poem (and perhaps, its melancholy) was inspired by Kent Haruf's novel Plainsong, which I presented at one of the libraries of the Mohawk Valley Library System in their Books A La Carte program. The details - chronicling life in my twenties - are all mine.

About the poet:

I am a poet, writer, teacher of creative writing at Hudson Valley Community College, and a psychologist in private practice in the Capital District. My work has been published in various journals and I co-translated a book of Latin American poetry, Messengers of Rain, (Groundwoods, 2002, 2011). My awards and fellowships include a fellowship at the Vermont Studio Center, an S.O.S. (Special Opportunity Stipend) grant from NY Foundation of the Arts, and an Individual Artist Grant from the Albany-Schenectady League of Arts (funded by NYSCA).

\*\*\*\*\*

April 11

Finding America

by Philomena Moriarty

In a propeller airplane  
my Irish family of seven arrive 1958  
lucky that the Irish can apply  
lucky that it's the '50s and '60s

a time of investment  
in people in education  
college a possibility  
opportunity on the rise  
for women, for many, for us

Lucky we inherited the spoils made  
by small pox blankets and land thieves  
by auction blocks and men hanging from trees  
from white hoods burning crosses  
and paths of destruction

We didn't know

(pay attention to)  
America of separate water fountains  
of separate and unequal schools

We touch down and  
my soul is kidnapped  
joining with my captors  
it was all I could do to become them

my yearning to belong  
to shed my differences,  
my brogue, my reddened  
windblown cheeks

Running headlong  
on tree-lined streets  
on roller skates and jumping rope  
neighborhoods where neighbors  
know my name

We touch down where  
the steel mills spray soot  
on the houses of Lackawana  
and thicken the waters of Lake Erie

My father who had walked the  
shores of Brandon Bay  
finding mussels  
did not find sustenance on Erie's  
shore in those days of dead fish  
belly up on its banks

Finding America  
hearts singing  
believing in founding fathers and mothers  
elites in their mansions  
protecting their taxes

Steeped in a myth of freedom  
of American dreaming  
my father with his calloused hands  
my mother working, sweating in  
hospital corridors

Finding too the America of  
transcontinental railroad  
of Chinese camps and bones  
of locked factories  
and shirtwaist fires

Becoming a generation

of Dylan and Baez  
the poetry of protest  
and song  
of making love not war

That saw America the Beautiful  
and America the Ugly  
children burned by napalm  
and crooked presidents

Finding America  
faithful  
to the walled in  
and determined to wall out

America of Liberty statue  
and innovation and exploration  
of invention and of "progress"  
of unions and bills of rights

We touch down  
to find the America of  
green forests  
mile wide beaches  
red rainbow deserts  
of eagles and grizzlies  
and salmon swimming upstream

America of freedom  
the arc of history bending  
toward justice  
star-spangled  
voices  
of King and Kennedy

Finding too  
the America of  
corporate welfare  
of homelessness  
in a land of plenty

a greedy America of  
mass incarceration  
police shootings and  
drug wars  
and rapists in high office

So I march for America  
for Women and Choice  
Black Lives Mattering  
an America where all our boats

can rise together

I'm finding America  
Lucky Irish  
Lucky time  
Lucky privilege  
Just Lucky

About this poem:

Finding America is part memoir/poetry about my immigration from Ireland to the US in 1958 and reflections on the America of my experience.

About the poet:

Philomena Moriarty LCSWR is a psychotherapist in private practice in Rensselaer, NY. She is currently a member of both Evergreen and Poesy Café poetry groups. She has published the book *My Moon Self* (a spiritual memoir in poetry) and often appears at open mics in the Capital Region.

\*\*\*\*\*

April 12

Watching the Turkey

by Mimi Moriarty

The chilled air rises  
I've eased from the bed  
to squint at the amber sky

I hear a lone turkey  
crunching leaves  
in the yard

I peek through a door  
which disturbs him  
then a window

Every morning I hear him  
on his hilly ascent from  
roost to feeding

as predictable as a professor  
in a tweed jacket or an  
electrician with a lunch box

Does it matter  
that I've lost the hearing  
in my right ear?

I can still hear the turkey  
when the world is quiet  
as a temple

once the ear infection subsides  
my hearing will return  
I cling to this hope, a chokehold

The turkey trudges through  
the underbrush, I stand aslant  
to watch his progress

He leaves no tracks  
which is another fear  
I harbor

not just going deaf but  
dying without leaving  
a permanent mark.

The deer have eaten the tulips  
but there's a single daffodil  
hanging limp in the dew

The turkey strides by, bows  
to its yellow head amid  
green shoots and dead leaves.

I used to leave a porch light on  
but now everyone who lives here  
is sleeping

except me and the turkey  
who are temporary residents  
and of course

the permanent resident  
of this household  
Time

whistling through  
though I barely  
hear her

\*\*\*\*\*

April 13

Still Life

by Linda Sonia Miller



That sudden view of you, distinct, anew  
startled as in Vermeer, seated at the café table  
in the Palais du Justice Square, blocks  
from an always sun-dazzled sea

on the day we'd spent agreed upon  
apart, your tanned arms, darkened lenses,  
summer-streaked hair, the seat  
you claimed to save for me

not knowing I'd appear - chance  
in a thousand in a city of this size.  
I stop and sit, enjoy the feast -  
the way you order, French gracefully

unfolding from your tongue, excavated  
from our younger years. You study my lips  
sipping Pernod. I observe the fold of fingers  
on the book you hold.

Back at home the snow is falling -  
our blur of years awaits us.

About this poem:

I've always been captivated by the still-life paintings of Vermeer, the way they freeze the smallest moments in time, and preserve them across centuries. This is one of the allures of poetry writing for me. Especially now, I am glad I have this moment spent in Nice, France, preserved.

About the poet:

Linda Sonia Miller has been a poet and teacher of literature and creative writing for almost 30 years. She has also studied Thoreau on the shores of Walden Pond, lived and taught in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont, and among the Winnebago people in Wisconsin. She has published short essays in The New York Times, poems in a variety of journals, her first chapbook *Something Worth Dying For* (Finishing Line Press) in 2012, and a full-length collection of poems *brieflybriefly* (Kelsay Press) in December 2017. Linda has also been a Connecticut Writing Project Fellow as well as the recipient of three National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowships.

\*\*\*\*\*

April 14

Haiku

by Gail Haines

Pick up your paint brush  
Become a Sumi Master  
One stroke at a time

We search everywhere  
Looking for what we carry  
Deep inside ourselves

Night sky filled with stars  
Mirrors inner galaxies  
Ever expanding

Woodpecker drumming  
Echoes through foggy wetness  
As icicles weep

Enchanted by stars  
Walking alone in the woods  
Sipping moonlight

Open book in hand  
Fast asleep across the bed  
Twilight streaming in

About this poem:

Living in the woods, on the edge of Rensselaerville, I have gotten to know and care about so many local artists and writers. I have been encouraged to try new things. The local poetry group has inspired me to explore haiku as a way of capturing those moments between myself and nature.

About the poet:

Gail Haines is a psychotherapist who works with people and families to help them identify and communicate their feelings.

\*\*\*\*\*

April 15

Katabasis

by Katrinka Moore

Tunnel of shrub and vine  
hems in the summer-dry stream  
steamy thread - I duck in  
follow the channel, Stygian.

Knees bent, back hunched,  
Kokopelli with damp hair  
for feathers, head down, eyes  
on the bed of bare stones

where a clear pool survives -  
ocher sand-and-pebble bottom

strider bugs on the rim, their great-  
wheeled shadows roll below.

Haze-filtered sunlight - leaves and sky  
fill the puddle, deep as the ocean.

About this poem:

“Katabasis” means a descent (ancient Greek: kata down, basis going), such as a hero’s journey to the underworld or a trip from the interior to the coast. Kokopelli is a humpbacked, flute-playing deity of Southwestern Native American lore.

About the poet:

Katrinka Moore’s latest book is Wayfarers, just out from Pelekinesis.

\*\*\*\*\*

April 16

Colors With Linen Trucks

by Alan Casline

colors of garden flowers (pink, yellow  
white and blue)  
concrete pre-formed patio stone  
almost Italy, the light in the courtyard.  
cars going by, linen trucks  
for college students.  
sad as despair  
shutting eyes to wait  
not having the right shoes.

About the poet:

Born in Fort Johnson, NY in 1951, Alan Casline has lived in Elsmere, NY since 1993. His poetry, woodblock prints, photography, and collage building have all contributed to his work.

\*\*\*\*\*

April 17

In Retrospect

by Barbara Vink

In a small squat diner by the railroad tracks  
three booths, six stools, plastic red seats  
the air redolent with greasy burgers  
we had money enough for two cokes

and one order of fries to share  
Bob the cook, good natured  
with the horde of students crowding in  
noisy after school and all with little money  
my friend and I in the booth by the window,  
spoke of poetry and other worldly things,  
around fries dipped in ketchup  
and wet rings of soda on the tabletop,  
reluctant to go home  
we watched fat snowflakes begin  
a half-hearted ballet to the ground  
no trains, no traffic, no strident voices intruded,  
no ringing register, no sizzling fry basket,  
we had ears and eyes on each other,  
his eyes have pierced me, left me  
in the red booth, in the diner, by the railroad tracks  
so many snows have drifted down  
I would go back there if I could  
and change my mind.

About this poem . . . and poet:

An old writer taking stock of her life.

\*\*\*\*\*

April 18

My childhood, appropriated:



by Mark W. Ó Brien

I grew up in the vicinity of the Glasshouse, along Blockhouse Creek, not far from where it joins the Lookout Kill, before they come together with the Hunger Kill, which eventually into

Tawasentha spills, where it makes it's willful journey to Muh-he-con-neok (The River that flows both ways).

In the Vale of Tawasentha, in the green and silent valley, by the pleasant water-courses, as I traced them through the valley, unaware I dwelt with-in there, in the same spread of meadows, in the corn-fields, with-in.

If you asked me, I should answer. I should tell you your inquiries straightway. Unaware yet having knowledge, it happened in such words as follows:

I walked the wood  
Explored the same fields  
Native yet naïve.

About the poet:

Mark W. Ó Brien is an alumnus of the Fermoy International Poetry Festival, County Cork, Ireland, and has published three poetry collections. He is currently editing and publishing the anthology "36 Views of Ononta'kahrhon," an online collection of poems by poets using his photographs as prompts at [thirtysixviewsof.blogspot.com/?m=1](http://thirtysixviewsof.blogspot.com/?m=1).

\*\*\*\*\*

April 19

These Men

by Tim Verhaegen

Two old men sit in the art gallery.  
You peer into their windows.  
Squint at the shapeless smudge of colors  
thrown on canvas.

You visit them every day.  
These men shake your hand.  
You sit on one of their big-boy chairs.  
You feel grown-up, sophisticated, surrounded by their art.

Their gallery is in the center of town.  
This town. Ancient. All uniqueness.  
Lush, magical with its greenery, the sea, its other-worldly riches.

You take it all for granted.  
It will always be like this.  
You'll always be like this.  
You'll always come here.

Your brother swoops in and out like a dream.  
He's alive. You think he'll always be alive.  
Your grandfather is still alive.

The old ladies on the Circle are still alive.  
Everyone is still here.

The two old men are handsome, refined.  
“We strive to be dapper” their eyes laugh  
after you say you like their hats.  
They look strange sitting there.  
They face walls besieged with strange looking paintings.  
The paintings look like . . . nothing.

These men don’t curse, they don’t drink beer, they don’t watch sports.  
You see something else between them,  
you see it but you can’t quite see it.  
Their eyes dance with each other.  
They look alike, a sort of unit.

There’s something between you and them too,  
a sort of inside when you’re usually outside  
you see it but you can’t quite see it.

You’re drawn to it.  
You come back and you come back.  
You watch them. Listen.

Your father, your uncles, their looks, their talk, lose color.  
In the gallery you gawk at the walls,  
the faded, frayed antique rug  
you gape at their coffee pot.

Every day they say “Isn’t it lovely?”  
Lovely lovely.  
Lovely darts around your head  
uncertainly, lovely  
Dad, your uncles, would never say lovely.

These men have tiny, porcelain coffee cups.  
You’ve never seen such coffee cups.  
The cups are so tiny, so white, so plain, so lovely.

You sip their coffee, black and harsh. Strong.  
You feel so grown-up. Strong.  
This art gallery, this world of grown-up-ness,  
of class and elegance,  
two houses away from grandma’s house  
her water stained ceilings,  
small animals living in the walls.

One day the art gallery is gone.  
The two old men are gone.  
They’re replaced by some store.  
You snub it every time you walk by.

You only see the art gallery.

As your childhood fades, those two men, the old ladies, your family fades too.

But you remember those tiny coffee cups for fifty years.

So white  
so plain  
so lovely.

You and those men  
so lovely.

About the poet:

Tim Verhaegen has loved writing all his life. His lifelong writing influences are Joni Mitchell, Stevie Nicks, Henry James, and Anthony Trollope. His current writing influences are Karen Fabiane and Tasha Kavanagh.

\*\*\*\*\*

April 20

The Magnolia

by Ann Lapinski

I was seven  
when we moved  
across the street  
and I saw  
her standing  
in a backyard  
large enough  
to accommodate  
her gangly arms  
giving my  
sisters and I  
limbs for climbing  
her pink buds  
providing us  
with a new  
seasonal anticipation  
and once opened  
the scent walking  
into the house  
with us  
leaving behind  
the smell  
of Brooklyn sewers  
her leaves giving

shade on earthen  
 ground softer  
 and cooler than  
 paved streets  
 and sidewalks  
 watching her  
 undress in autumn  
 making her  
 limbs easier for  
 us to hold  
 clinging to them  
 for a few extra moments  
 knowing we would  
 live with a hiatus  
 from her during  
 the days of winter

About the poet:

Ann Lapinski has been writing poetry for the last nine years. At that point in her life, she was drawn to writing lines. She is thankful that the Voorheesville Library poetry group provided her with a forum for her work. She is happy that writing poetry provides a stark contrast to the writing she does for her paid employment.

\*\*\*\*\*

April 21

A Fly or I See What You Mean

by Edie Abrams

I	II	III	IV	V
A fly was caught between the window and screen in my bathroom. How it got there, I don't know. If I opened the window to catch it to free it outside, out it would fly into the house. It was its own dilemma. I tried.	The moral question is, I confess, why didn't I take the chance to save the fly even if it would fly into the house where it could scare up food and water and die a peaceful death warm and thrashed by cats?	I, of course, limited the fly's life by rationalizing my own view and not chewing on this question from the fly's perspective, a 5-sided eyed a, b, c, d, e multiple choice proposition.	I found the fly dead between the window and screen in my bathroom. It was lying there kaput. A miniature Argent. How it got there, I don't know.	I didn't hear it buzz, see it frenzied. The drying dying <u>hy-</u> <u>drangeas</u> fazed my mind. I fancy this quandary in retrospect. How I got here I don't know.



About the poet:

Edie Abrams retired from the New York State Assembly and now volunteers at an elementary school where she smiles every day.

\*\*\*\*\*

April 22

Our Lady of Dark Mysteries

by Jill Crammond

The old black dog knows to turn around three times, even when all you say is lie. O Mother of Rapt Attention. O Mistress of Bones and Trust. How we dig holes and have nothing to fill them with. How the nuts we gather and bury are forgotten, and still we grow whole forests. This is blind trust. This is separated at birth and still holding hands, vows not yet written, cells unmindful of the dangers of splitting. Trust that the skin holds. Trust that the skeleton will not burst into flames. Spontaneous combustion as death threat, as day dream, as champagne toast at midnight. Mary didn't name the beast, but she will brush his dusty fur and read with care the ancient story between his ribs. If you are honest with your suffering you will wake to find a waterfall at the base of your bed, a sooty face hovering before you, a clean rag to wipe away the darkness.

About the poet:

Jill Crammond is a poet, artist, and teacher funding her poetry passion by teaching children's art and writing classes throughout New York's Capital Region. Her work has appeared in Crab Creek Review, Fire on Her Tongue, Peer Glass, Many Waters, and elsewhere.

\*\*\*\*\*

April 23

What Have We Done to the Spirit

by Jim Casey

Like virgin snow gentle on the ground  
Without a mark to abuse the beauty  
We are born a gift the world gifts itself  
Waiting to unwrap the goodness we bring

The crocus pierces spring snow a jewel of joy  
Each child a precious gem born of the earth  
A bud bursting with potential energy  
Creative spirit waiting to flower our world

For we are born arms open wide  
Willing to embrace the other  
We are burning embers of love  
Ready to set the world on fire

A fire of a different kind  
Now consumes the land  
What have we done to the spirit  
And where have all the flowers gone

About this poem:

This poem was written as a result of the tragedy at Parkland School in Florida where 17 children were killed. The poem is meant to celebrate the creative potential each child is born with at birth to make this a more beautiful world, but it also raises the question about what we as a culture have done to impede that potential from achieving full bloom.

About the poet:

I love the silence of the forest and the wonder it instills. My life work has been involved in sharing that wonder with others, most recently teaching philosophy. I have written two books: one on stained glass windows and one about to be published, *Reflections Along the Way*, which includes reflections in poetic form.

\*\*\*\*\*

April 24

Old Crow

for Nate Leslie

by Pam Clements

He spilled out of the plane,  
Salvation  
Army greatcoat  
flapping athwart  
his knees.

He loped.  
Exclaimed over the lower bits  
of the high peaks we could see  
through grimy restaurant windows.

Face carved from a mountain,  
his talent stuffed, with his resume  
in a leather briefcase  
so battered it had a nap.

He admitted university  
was not his natural home,  
not like the plowed fields of Ohio  
that had yielded  
arrowheads, fossils,  
bits of pioneer crockery, insect casings,

the elements of his poetry.  
What do you write about? we asked.  
What needs done,  
He said.

About the poet:

Pam Clements's poems and essays have appeared in literary journals such as Kalliope, The Pacific Review, The Baltimore Review, and Earth's Daughters, among others. When not writing, gardening or filling bird feeders, she is enjoying her final year of teaching medieval English literature at Siena College in Albany, NY.

\*\*\*\*\*

April 25

A Rose and a Baby Ruth

by Mike Burke

I got Dad's Super Olds 88  
telling him I had to go to the library . . .  
big paper due in History.

Why do you need the car  
to go to the library, son?  
It's only a couple of blocks.  
Prestige, Dad, for prestige.

Picked up Donna out front  
we rode around town  
radio up windows down  
singing along with  
Elvis, Fats and Ricky.

She sat real close  
arm around my neck  
hand resting on my shoulder  
the prettiest girl in school.  
Wishing my buddies  
could see me now.

Put off and put off asking her  
afraid she would turn me down.

I remember exactly where we were  
when she said yes . . .  
driving across the railroad trestle  
and what song was on the radio . . .  
A Rose and a Baby Ruth.

I flunked History that year.

About this poem:

Years ago I submitted this poem to a Valentine's Day contest. It won first prize - a basket filled with chocolate and bodice-ripper novels. The judge told me they didn't expect any entries from males.

About the poet:

Mike Burke is a blue collar poet who winters in the nation's oldest city and summers on a compound in the Helderbergs.

\*\*\*\*\*

April 26

Missing Someone

by Tony Fallon

I sat there and cried  
The awful morning that you died  
For weeks we had watched you in distress  
While the doctors said there was no progress  
Injections, morphine, and pills  
No more to return to your home in the hills  
No more to look out at the River Shannon  
We said prayers nightly with the Cannon  
I'm not sure I understood  
About God only taking the very good  
Why for the good must we say amen?  
And leave a husband with sad children  
Leaving behind half a loving pair  
And at the table an empty chair  
No more will you help in the meadows  
But on your grave will be a big red rose  
Why oh why was it your time  
Barely forty in your prime  
No more will you feed the lamb or calf  
No more shall we hear that hearty laugh  
No more shall you hear wild birds sing  
Nor teach your children the Highland fling  
No more shall you hear the Christmas noise  
Of your children opening Santa's toys  
Never will you see a daughter's wedding dress  
No grandchildren will you caress  
I think that was the day I became aware  
That life for some reason is often unfair.

About this poem:

This poem is about my aunt who died in the early '60s leaving nine young children.

About the poet:

Tony Fallon was born in Athlone, Ireland. He has written short stories, poems, and columns in more publications than he can remember since 1962. He has been on Radio for over 40 years in America and Ireland. Many of his poems and songs are on YouTube. He is Poet Laureate of the Cairo NY Public Library.

\*\*\*\*\*

April 27

Articles of the Morning

by Pmboudreaux

I get up early  
I don't want to get up  
I get up anyway  
One.  
coffee, caffeine, pills  
who said it was going to be easy?  
do whatever it takes  
it's going to hurt  
get up earlier  
Two.  
sit at the kitchen table  
sit and think  
sit at the kitchen think  
pull yourself together  
Do you have a doctor's appointment?

I love the mornings  
silver-sliver shimmer before the day  
the humming  
before the alarm clock goes off  
I close my eyes

I lie there a long moment  
slow and warm  
approaching  
low and slow  
the tarmac of the new day

Article Three.  
jump out of bed  
jump-up out of bed  
pull the covers over your head

One, Two, and Zero.  
Are you still dreaming?  
No, that was yesterday  
still yesterday? or still dreaming  
Five.  
I get up early

About this poem:

This poem began as "Articles of Daily Living." If you've ever answered ADL questions concerning a disability, you may have an appreciation for this poem.

About the poet:

Peter Boudreaux is a resident of Rensselaerville and a member of the Library's Poetry and Writing Groups.

\*\*\*\*\*

April 28

Dissident

by Adam Tedesco

Through the partisan rancor of getting to know the self's tender points  
in the mirror I discuss the blossoms' frosty coating, how the sky's a void

A pall across the dome, no discernable gradations to be found, I recall  
a dying bird nursed on a bus ride, every dying bird a synecdoche

Like a parent's narcissism, my unbroken reflection in Lake George's surface  
then playing Sims with my son, who won't allow my character to woohoo

I spend more time hoping to find the edge of the program than trying to  
win the game or building a repository of surface instincts and sleep masks

When I was my son's age I imagined someone on the other side of the game  
kept track of my score. I wanted to win, to feel the praise of the scorekeeper

Like this I found your God by accident, between the words shades and gray  
a long monotone stretch of the daily, a static spectrum of acceptance

Of all the animals I have been, I have finally come to learn to steer my presence  
knowing I am no less the animal, but a more common breed at peace in domestication

I recall how you told me that had I been there, had I asked you, you would of  
bent over the bar in the place we imagined our previous selves meeting

At night muscle memory builds a simulation of us, two strangers melting away  
memory, how long it would have taken those selves to destroy each other then

I practice the hard work of horrible sleep, the anemic wheeze of a higher power, asleep in the cpap's flow, knowing, whatever I am, sickness or health, I am that aggressively

About this poem:

This poem is part of a larger body of work tentatively titled Four Part Harmonies. Dissident, as well as the rest of the work in the collection, attempts to reconcile the polyvocality of interior monologue with common phenomenological states.

About the poet:

Adam Tedesco is a founding editor of REALITY BEACH, a journal of new poetics. His recent work has appeared or is forthcoming in Interrupture, Gramma Weekly, Funhouse, Fanzine, Powder Keg, and elsewhere. He is the author of several chapbooks, most recently HEART SUTRA, and ABLAZA (Lithic Press).

\*\*\*\*\*

April 29

Agora

by Dawn Marar

The sound of water builds.  
Water walls fall.  
The sound: how one imagines  
Two ginormous structures  
Collapsing. A ginormous chorus  
Voices thousands. Falls overlap,  
Meeting, cornered. Sound nearly  
Drowns living. Breeze in trees shade.  
Water volume diminishes  
As it falls into the base  
Of the fountains' center squares.  
The zephyr carries a drop  
To one arm; then another.  
The drop - a single tear.  
Our gaze falls upon a sea of names.  
Behind our backs we hear the drone  
Of a plane or something else  
On the verge

About this poem:

In ancient Greece, an agora was a public open space used for assemblies and markets. My poem, "Agora" was inspired by a visit to the National September 11 Memorial in NYC. The word "ginormous" is from 1940's military slang: a blend of "gigantic" and "enormous."

About the poet:

Dawn Marar's chapbook, *Efflorescence*, is now available from Finishing Line Press and Amazon. Visit the poet's website at [www.dawnmarar.weebly.com](http://www.dawnmarar.weebly.com).

\*\*\*\*\*

April 30

Notes from the Belly of the Beast

by Tom Corrado

1  
And so the damage  
the static of hair between eye sockets  
dropping to the floor  
arms shaking  
making room for 9-1-1  
who asks  
Which hospital?  
before hitting the siren  
over snow-covered streets  
as if we were going  
to grandmother's house

2  
you know he locks  
the alcohol  
in the shed  
when you're here . . .  
go ahead  
grab that rock  
smash the lock . . .  
yeah

3  
sitting in group  
*I'm this . . . and I'm that . . .*  
*I'm this and that . . .*  
on turn  
*but I'm clean . . . yup, clean . . .*  
and I can play  
this effin game  
as well . . . as you

4  
he doesn't know shit  
about this . . .  
*I'm going for a walk in the woods . . .*  
should I tell him



I've stashed bottles  
in plastic bags  
along the path?  
I've even got plastic cups . . .  
hahaha

5  
*Drop me off at CVS*  
*so I can get a water before group . . .*  
and a box of cold pills  
that I'll take into the rest room  
so I can get out of the store  
without paying

6  
in Walmart I tell him  
*I need Witch Hazel to take off my makeup*  
and he says  
get me a bottle too for an aftershave . . .  
next morning  
both bottles . . . gone

7  
in Walmart he buys a plastic mattress cover  
so another futon  
doesn't get ruined

8  
let go  
from Fantastic Sams  
for cutting  
while stoned

9  
cutting arms  
cutting legs  
cutting . . .  
to feel . . .  
something

10  
totaled three cars  
dropped out of three colleges  
the Monkey is Us

11  
she breaks into her counselor's office  
at the therapeutic community house  
drinks a bottle of hand sanitizer  
and is taken to the emergency room

12  
where she drinks more hand sanitizer  
then sneaks out of the hospital  
wasted . . .

13  
and is picked up  
by the police  
and taken to a homeless shelter  
on Christmas Eve

14  
then back to the community house  
the day after Christmas  
where she apologizes to her counselor  
and the other residents  
and is put on probation

15  
binging and purging  
she is given the option of treatment  
for bulimia . . .

16  
which she refuses  
and so is discharged  
to a cot in a warming center  
where the lights go out  
at 9

17  
next day . . . back to the street  
and square one

18  
*I danced ballet  
for 20 years . . . and loved it!  
that's when the cold pills began . . .  
I'd like to get back  
to dance . . . someday . . .  
maybe teach kids ballet*

About this poem:

This poem is about addiction.

About the poet:

Tom Corrado coordinates the Library's poetry group, and blogs  
at [www.scriptsfortoday.blogspot.com](http://www.scriptsfortoday.blogspot.com).