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.

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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.

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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.
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.

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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.

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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

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Yes, that's right the world has gone MAD.  
STAAAARKKKKKKK RAAAAAVING 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
THINKKKKKKKing -

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.

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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).

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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
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
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 Matter
an America where all our boats

of Dylan and Baez
of making love not war

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.

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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 identity and communicate their feelings.

**********

April 15

Katabasis

by Katrinka Moore

Tunnel of shrub and vine
hems in the summer-dry stream
steam 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.

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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.

**********

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.

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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.

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April 21

A Fly or I See What You Mean

by Edie Abrams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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 threshed by cats?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I found the fly dead between the window and screen in my bathroom. It was lying there kaput.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I didn't hear it buzz, see it frenzied. The dying dying lye-dragoneez faded my mind. I fancy this quandary in retrospect. How I got here I don't know.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 daydream, 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 your 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.
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
pull yourself together
Do you have a doctor's appointment?

I love the mornings
silver-silver 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:


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

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

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

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

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

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

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