



Rensselaerville Library

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

Celebrating National Poetry Month 2025

Poem-A-Day

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

showcasing different voices, styles, subjects

3500+ pageviews

Enjoy!

Tom Corrado, Curator, Poem-A-Day

Patrick Wynne, Director, Rensselaerville Library

Viviane Galloway, Program Manager

April 1

Lust

by Elaine Kenyon

in my intention
I drive to Salem
knock on your door
let myself in
we contemplate, meditate
on the wonderment of words
their dance, delight and design
the cat purring perched and listening
you say why you liked my poems
I wrote as I read your *Green Midnight*
I am humbled by your sentiment
I tell you I am easily carried to comfort
with each line of your poetry
I am drawn to you
this is not lust
this is affection
adoration
I did not take that drive
and now
there's nothing
but a carcass to caress
lines and curves on the page
to trace
I am emptied

-

Elaine Kenyon is the host of the 2nd Wednesday Poetry Night at the Schuylerville Public Library. She enjoys reading and listening to poetry at local open mics. She currently tutors children with dyslexia and is the owner of Olde Saratoga Literacy and Learning, LLC.

April 2

Elegy: Shot List For An Art House Obsessive

by David Gonsalves

And what, after all, of jealousy
the future of measurement
a meadow that plunders the calendar
a day out of tolerance
moon without memory
wave after wave of oakleaf
blind eye at the edge of uncertainty
free of what is often brilliant
the liberation of liberation
a series of speckled rose buds
the liveliness of even-tempered swallows
even as protocol locks out the tide
knowing only weightless reassurance
the need to avoid some staccato obstruction
or fall into a featureless distance
footprints ravaged before the peat bog
raw and inquisitive tapestries
prelude to a dose of ambiguity
falling snow, the end of anniversaries
the inability to understand the unrehearsed
progression of last-ditch vanishing points
a jet stream as strange as it was simple
glad that the body has no disregard

a way to keep the sundial unmannered
twilight and the return of humility
brief mastery of something delicate
divine indifference made intelligible.

David Gonsalves should have been born in Nepal, but wasn't. Lives in a cave beside
a river that flows both ways.

April 3

What It Means to Not Have a Grandchild

by Edie Abrams

No smooching a bellybutton.

No caressing a cheek or sniffing the scent of innocence
from the top of a head.

No holding, hugging, enfolding, rocking back-and-forth
as if nothing else in the world exists.

No counting fingers and toes in a warm bath
with baby balanced against knees.

No hearing the giggles of peek-a-boo,
that delight better than ice cream on a sweltering day.

No reading aloud with an exaggerated "I'm coming to get you,"
fingers spidering from toes to the Michelin Man neck.

No singing silly songs like "Beautiful Doody" to the tune of "Beautiful
Dreamer,"
or the ones your Mom and Bubbe sang in Polish, German, Spanish, or
Yiddish.

No watching each breath when each new puff is a sign
that a robin will sing in the dawn of a new day.

-

Edie Abrams retired from the NYS Assembly 100 years ago, and has been writing poetry since she developed the typical mother-daughter relationship during her teenage years, a million years ago.

April 4

Granny's Cottage

by Sylvia Barnard

After they sold the farm,
they moved to the main road
to a little three-bedroom house
like a hobbit house under a bank.
On the other side, my father planted
an English-style hedge and behind
the house were big trees and my
mother's compost heap frequented by
all the little animals that still
lived along this road, avoiding the cars
whizzing past their lairs and burrows
on the way to town to get groceries.
In the summertime, we went there
for long periods, my daughter
going to Vacation Bible School
at the Congregational Church
and playing with her third cousins
along the brook and in the woods.

-

I am a native of western Massachusetts where this poem is set and came to Albany in 1967 to teach in the Classics Department at UAlbany, which I did for 43 years. I have read and published my poetry in the area throughout that time.

April 5

Lines Composed A Few Light Years Above Tintern Abbey

by Larry Rapant

Hi! I am the kind of vegetable that can water itself
Or I am a fruit because I have free will
Or I am a toy pretending to be real
Almost leap enough squirrel enough to catch onto things

I am a piano played by random fingers
I tingle in the upper register - mingle and mangle
I've been nibbled on by tropical birds and dragonflies
Now I'm ready to rip the clothes off language

Suck on the atmosphere
From the music box called poetry
With an opening bunch of ding dong pirouettes
A self-scented reasoning brute - that's me

I got unlinked from my apishness
And wreaked communiques blurts and havocs
Tooth and nail
In my Udopia, brooks of blood tumbling by

War is me

Words stuck on the sticking points
Protected by high mass weapons and bioillogicals
While the naked billions of late stage terminals
Starve and perform for CNN

Casually and warmly I welcome
The disappearance of the poles
Devolution takes place in my topdown motor vehicle
Full of waving and singing drunks

Fool on the hill says nothing
And everyone else screams:
"Sure it's easy for you
But we have kids in the back seat!"

"As if rubbers had never been invented"
Sings a cherub with a lute winging by; and
"Please, be fruitful and multiply no more!"

-

I'm a dotty old man who lives next door to Assisted Living. I'm trying to Hack into Gene's mind and break the story. I'm also in love with a local poet named Jill

whose last name escapes me. I take 5 mgs of Tadalafil every day which makes me a very happy man. My poems are all jokes on me.

April 6

Beauty Queen Brahmani

by Rhonda Coulet

From childhood,
able to understand,
cosmic ideas as home.
Once a year,
my neighbor sold books,
on a card table in her front yard,
25 cents a copy,
metaphysical words in depth,
matching my mamaw's oral rules
for living a good life.
Pearls, jewels of wisdom,
from an unknown world,
beyond her country church,
and the circuit preacher
passing through once a month.
Hanging on the wall by her door,
a picture of Jesus knocking,
"If you meet me and forget me,
you have lost nothing,
if you meet him and forget him,
you have lost everything."
Forced to leave her at eleven,
puberty claimed me.
I lived in a shroud of beauty,
inherited from handsome parents.
I was tempted to compete and conquer.
Born to a man's world,
I learned to fight for freedom,
but I always lost in the end.
A lifetime later,
I heard mamaw's voice,
in a mantra sung by a Guru.
A Swami willing to teach me,
called her a saint,
inspired by faith in life,

love as its only purpose.
Fifty years, she lived in a shack,
but her back yard was the universe.
At ninety-seven, in a nursing home,
a shining forehead of gold,
she met a friend in the hall each day,
to recite the Lord's Prayer,
and shuffle blind,
down to the chapel to pray.
Fighting for freedom,
anger as your sword,
is killing yourself with a drug.
We're only alive when we love,
the light of cosmic consciousness,
lets freedom find you,
like a book from a neighbor,
a mamaw singing children to sleep.
Freedom is forever, and for everyone,
it's a promise heaven must keep.

-

About Rhonda Coulet . . .

*Poems "The Long Unraveling" Published 2023 "Lenticular" magazine. "Linghara"
Published 2022 "Poem-A-Day" poem, Rensselaerville Library.*

*Playwright/composer/lyricist: "Runaway Beauty Queen" Production Resume: The
Martha's Vineyard Playhouse, Florida Studio Theatre, (Barbra Anton Playwriting
Award, Sarasota Magazine's "Most Intriguing Autobiography")*

*Lyricist/Composer: "West Heaven" (Tribute song to John Belushi, SNL), "Bigger than
the Both of Us" (Jimmy Buffet Grammy nom.)*

*Actress: Broadway: Starred in "The Robber Bridegroom" (Barry Bostwick, CD) &
"Pump Boys and Dinettes." Starred in LA "Hair"*

*Actress: Off Broadway: "National Lampoon's Lemmings" (4 CDs, C. Chase/Belushi/C.
Guest). Starred in "Cowgirls"*

TV/Film: "Mr. Mike's Mondo Video" singer with Paul Shafer, SNL Spinal Tap

April 7

2024 - A Synopsis

by Mimi Moriarty

January

glacier slow, hollow pearls of quiet against laughing snowfall

February

love makes its annual journey, an imposter in the spare room.

March

the atmosphere turns jolly, we drink foamy brew as medicine.

April

buds sigh above the grit, wink at the daffodils waving their fronds.

May

the musk settles; my mother still rattles her rusted cage.

June

it's official - the border is closed! The desperate keep climbing.

July

we sing from pulpits patriotic psalms wrapped in stars and stripes.

August

clans slip into carefree mayhem and chaos - the lake will do that.

September

the month hinges on a creaky door - opens - there is a party!

October

the door remains ajar; you peek; there is another door, closed.

November

it's all theater - the cast, the crew, the stage collapsing under the weight of thieves.

December

the virgins are hidden in the attic, the children in the basement. We stockpile cans of beans and rolls of toilet paper. We have been practicing since the epidemic, but somehow we are not ready.

-

Mimi Moriarty is a poet living in a log home overlooking the Hudson Valley. She is less active in the poetry scene than her younger self, but continues to write as she gracefully ages into a crone.

April 8

The Banks of the Stream

by Anthony Bernini

I might not know the sundered heart of Palestine
if it appeared to me along the Poestenkill
But surely, just beneath the dead
leaves pressed rigid through the year
by each new rain
something living waits.

What do I know about Jerusalem
where miracles are made
to wait for sticks and stones?

I might not hear the broken beat of that lost heart
if it was pounding there along the stream
whose sounding has the shape of tiny
thousands of passionate voices,
yet who can say it does not wait for us
along the banks, where no death can
outlive the pomegranate tree.

-

Anthony Bernini, from Manhattan's Lower East Side, now lives and works as a poet
in Brunswick, New York. His third volume of poetry, *Selected Poems, Anthony
Bernini, 2024*, will be published next month.

April 9

Fish Tale Lunes

by Alan Casline

Tom goes fishing
in his boyhood trout streams
never left home

once there was
a little-bitty boy who saw
a little-bitty fish

now he's grown
a big brawny working man
eats frozen fish

if he's lucky

he'll change into a frog
frogs eat bugs

bugs fresh unfrozen
sticky tongue replaces plastic fork
organic free-range flies

Tom goes fishing
he used to laugh more
over life's misfortunes

sad retired boss
misses being on the clock
pay's still nothing

-

Poet Alan Casline is the editor of *Normanskill*, a watershed anthology from the Normanskill watershed in New York State and is the editor of *Rootdrinker*, a long standing magazine of watershed poetics, art and nonfiction. As Director of Rootdrinker Institute, his efforts include running open mics and special gatherings for poets, producing the RD Newsletter and using Benevolent Bird Press to publish the work of fellow writers and artists. He is co-founder and on-going chronicler of The Cloudburst Council, an annual poetics gathering held in the Finger Lakes watershed. He lives with his wife, Jennifer Pearce, in a suburban neighborhood outside of Albany, New York.

April 10

Man In the Moon*

- *My Father, March 18th*

by R. A. Pavoldi

The moon is full tonight in recognition,
full with speculation and conjecture,
the moon tonight is a flashlight, keyhole,
portal, heart white hot filled to its brim,

it is an exit light, sinkhole, cataract,
hot shard in the journeyman's eye,
bouncing ball over the words to a song,
a smooth stone skipped from childhood,

a communion host, road sign, tunnel,
compass showing the cardinal directions,
compass drawing a slow perfect circle,
silver locket holding the best of him,

it is the hoop chased by the girl down
The Mystery and Melancholy of a Street,
an empty spotlight in a razed theater
the last live bulb in the marquee,

the moon tonight is full in remembrance,
full with speculation and conjecture,
hot air balloon, chamber, ventricle
flooding the brain as it empties the heart.

*First published in *Sky Island Journal*, Issue 24, Spring 2023

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R. A. Pavoldi is self-trained and credits the Napolitano American dialect and school of hard knocks for his voices. He's grateful to have published in *The Hudson Review*, *North American Review*, *FIELD*, *Cold Mountain Review*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Hanging Loose*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Ars Medica*, *Italian Americana*, *Margie: The American Journal of Poetry*, *Viewless Wings* podcast, *Sky Island Journal*, *Atlanta Review*, *Slipstream*, *I-70 Review*, *Hawaii Pacific Review*, *Subnivean*, and others.

April 11

All the Wonders

by Rhonda Rosenheck

One cup of his hand-ground coffee
is the entire ocean.
That I find it at my bedside
is all the wonders brought to me.

Learn this,
I whisper between sips
while warming my hands.

One tiny kindness

upsets the vast cruel order.
Each tender touch
undams a deluge of blessings.

-

Rhonda Rosenheck is a poet living along a dirt road in New York's Capital Region with a beloved who does, in fact, deliver hand-ground coffee to her bedside every morning. Every day, she tries to share the wealth of blessings she experiences with others.

April 12

Incubus

by Christy O'Callaghan

Tornadoes. Stalking me down the street. Following the bus to school. Into work.
Sucking items from my hands. From my pockets. The voice from my throat.

Whistling. Tunes buried in the folds of my brain. Tunes that don't exist. Calling to
the creatures in the trees. In the dark building. Behind the rainbow.

Running. Running. Running. Action. Doing. Moving. Panting. Hiding. Never stopping.
Never finishing. Morphing to new activities. Busy. Always busy. Don't stop.

Kitties. More kitties. Thoughtful kitties. Funny kitties. Dark kitties. Angry
kitties. Talking kitties. Voices I don't recognize. The one I do. I listen. Petting
kitties only to wake up to petting kitties.

Big sky. Broken sky. Snow. Acres and acres of frozen white. Silent. No smell. No end.
No life.

Hospital rooms. Known. Unknown. Mine. Theirs. Memories that don't want to hide
anymore. Beeping. Shuffling feet. Knowledge of the presence in the corner I can't
turn to see. Green glow under the door. Whiffs of alcohol wipes and overcooked
meat. Scratchy sheets. Needles.

Lapping waves. Swimming. Splashing. Lying on a blanket on top of the water in the
moonlight.

Screaming. Screaming. Screaming. Throat raw and swollen. No sound escapes.

More tornadoes.

Teeth bursting like popcorn. Hundreds of teeth landing everywhere. Covering the floor. Piles forming. Crunching under bare feet.

Flowers. Blooming. Orange. Yellow. Red. Fields filled with flowers. Heads bending in a breeze. Fire. Flames coming. The flowers are burning. Don't touch.

Fox. Bigger than a horse. Gray fur. Longer than my arm. Warm and breathing. I curl up with my head on her belly.

Dead. Dying. Death.

She waves goodbye as she sits on the bus. Yellow. School. But she is old.

Bells. Jingling. Ringing. Chasing the corners clean.

Ghosts can stay. They're harmless. They're lonely. They blow the dust off the shelves as they pass.

Hands. Holding hands. Her hands. Soft and cool and wrinkled. Firm. Strong. Loving.

Giggling. Chuckling. Laughing. Tummy aching.

Tears dripping from the end of my nose. Sobbing. Grabbing at my throat.

The pillow will be damp when I wake up.

And the shadow will remain.

-

Christy O'Callaghan is a dyslexic writer and editor in Upstate, NY. For two decades, she was a community organizer and educator and is now an Academic Advisor and adjunct professor for SUNY Empire University. Christy loves strange stories, plants, and lore. Her work has appeared in *The Los Angeles Review*, *Great Weather for Media*, *Trolley Journal*, *Under the Gumtree*, *Chestnut Review*, and more. christyflutterby.com

April 13

Vacation - A Haibun

by Megan McKinney Gillespie

The week of the Super Moon, July 2014. A seacoast sky abandoned by clouds, barren but for the summer sun. Green water blends with blue air, elements osmose at the far horizon. A hike on Maine's Acadia coastline. We are warm until we are cold - the ocean air's gelid ghost fingers clutch at us, and our skin spasms in shivers. Huddled on the rocky outcropping, we clumsily fumble in backpacks for windbreakers, turning together away from the gale, like cows circling with kin against an intruder, a predator. I help you into your jacket - waterproof, wind-resistant. We struggle to balance on a boulder, watch the waves douse and drown the tide pools, sending crabs and starfish awhirl.

Unfaithful weather -
Our family provides us
a ballast, an anchor

I live in Albany with my husband and three cats. My son attends college in West Virginia. I work as a paralegal. Some of my favorite poets are August Kleinzahler, Kim Addonizio, Tony Hoagland, and Daisy Fried. When I'm not enjoying poetry, I enjoy hiking and textile crafts.

April 14

Photograph

by Howard J Kogan

I'm looking through my parents' old photo album,
and find a picture I still remember.
We're standing in front of our house,
the photograph, taken with my sister's boxy Brownie,
is black and white with scalloped edges.
We were going to visit my grandmother,
and a neighbor, Mrs. Chapman, offered to take our picture.
My mother and father are standing together,
my sister, seven years older, is next to my mother,
I'm next to my father.
But there is a gap between my father and myself,
as a result, the frame of the photo cuts off my left arm.
I didn't like that picture then, but I like it now,
it was the way we were.
The three of them and me,
a little off to the side,
a little out of the picture.

-

Howard J Kogan is a retired psychotherapist and writer. He is a former resident of the Capital District who currently lives in Ashland, MA with his wife, Libby.

April 15

Boy Boy Teen Kiss

by Tim Verhaegen

The silence is loudest these three seconds
His eyes will decide everything
But your eyes can destroy him too
Be gentle both of you
The memories you create right now
Will stay with you throughout your life
Gaze deep into his eyes
While he shows you everything,
then hides everything
If you flinch
Then he'll flinch
Slam the doors
You spiral, he spirals
Everything comes down
Like an avalanche
It's all so fragile
The silence so powerful

Your forces so young
So new, so unpredictable
Out of control trying to keep everything in control
The mere touching of foreheads
Two sets of eyes too close and too far away
Stuck in the middle
Waiting Waiting
Which one of you will take that chance?
That Big, amazing, this-is-everything chance.
Who will touch whose lips first?
Either you'll regret you made the first move
Or you'll regret you made him do it
Either way you both just started all this
You'll be terrified
You'll be lost in him

Just afterward
When one of you takes their eyes away

You'll regret all of it.
And then you'll be thrilled with all of it

Too old to be a child
Too young to be a grownup

But there you are
And here he is.

-

Tim Verhaegen spent his childhood in North Babylon and East Hampton on Long Island. He has been living in the Capital Region of upstate New York since 1978. He loves writing fiction, memoir, satire, and poetry. He also loves genealogy, reading, history, poker, and photography.

April 16

We Age As We Are

by Alexander Perez

*

You have always been

my ears	when they could not hear
my eyes	when they would not see
my legs	when they no longer lift
my hands	when they won't hold
my heart	when love will not keep
my prayer	I try in the dark
my wealth	I have to save
my truth	I know I trust

*

It happens to the light & you	
are gone	& when this happens
I go dark	except here I am

and what shoes track in

tiny sagas
of the benthic zone.

-

Sarah Hacker is a contributing editor at *Conservationist Magazine*. She would like to thank Edie Abrams for her encouragement.

April 18

The Full Pink Moon

by Dan Wilcox

... peers into my window
as if she is a Witch from the attic
she watches me undress, slip between the sheets.
She is pink, like the blood flow to her cheeks
blushing with desire her intimate valley
glistens with passion the color of sunset
skies that are accidents of weather.
But through my later night window
she is the white light of a blank page awaiting
my touch of ink to describe her pink.

-

Dan Wilcox is the host of the Third Thursday Poetry Night at the Social Justice Center in Albany, NY & is a member of the poetry performance group "3 Guys from Albany". As a photographer, he claims to have the world's largest collection of photos of unknown poets. He was named one of the 2019 Literary Legends by the Albany Public Library Foundation & he is an active member of Veterans For Peace. You can read his Blog about the Albany poetry scene at dwlcx.blogspot.com.

April 19

Summer's Children

by Katrinka Moore

Scramble as day burns
down

Dash headlong into
dusk into

no-holds-barred
capture-

the-flag (a crimson
shammy)

Cast off rules in the rush
to run

tumble holler to hold
on

to this where and
when

to hold off the nightly
coming-in

We're not afraid
of the dark

universe spreading
around us

-

Katrinka Moore has published five books of poetry. She grew up in Texas and now lives in Manor Kill, NY.

April 20

Confessions of An Old Fool

by Mark W. Ó Brien

When I was young and women grew on trees
I did not climb out onto every branch that I could

scrambling and scraping up my knees
as I went running recklessly about the wood.

Now, I see them like fallen apples upon the ground
and I would gather some up in my basket

before they wither in the grass, but I too am old,
ready for the casket, and no one wants my sassafras...

The failure of my prepubescent angel
to transcend my adolescent free will

has everything to do with the painful
taste in my mouth of this bitter pill...

Youth, unlike what we have been told
is actually wasted, upon the old.

-

Mark W. Ó Brien is an old man on the old man spectrum. The older he gets the worse it gets. As a result he may never finish what he is currently writing but as long as he is writing he is managing. Life is too precious to worry about things out of your control. Don't. History will repeat itself. Don't waste your stomach acid on it and whine in public. Take a walk in the woods. Listen to the wind. The trees are whispering their song to you. This is a melody you will need on long winter nights in the celestial meadow. Bring a blanket of stars. Borrow someone's puppy. Remember its smell. The first cup is the best cup. Name a goldfish after someone special. Maybe the planet is better without us anyway. Sheer numbers will overwhelm them eventually. Jack Sprat was lactose intolerant. Old women have their spectrum too. Somewhere between the smell of baby powder and peppermint candy in the antique dish on the living room coffee table. You may never know the thrill of driving a stick but you should. Penitent puppies will break your heart. Let them. Only some of this is wisdom. The rest is bullshit!

April 21

I Was Here

by Robert A. Miller

Leaves covered the rough ground
Musty smells mixed with
Fresh October air

I crawled out of the tent
Drank hot black coffee
And began my day's task of learning to read signs

Behind the tent on a steep slope
I examined my footprints
So I would know how it looked
When I passed through

For hours I studied
A cracked leaf
A snapped twig
A depression
After a time, I saw that
I had been there
Unmistakable

-

Robert A. Miller is the former Director of Educational Publishing at
Thirteen/WNET. He spent his childhood summers in the farmlands of the Hudson
Valley and now lives and writes in the northern Catskills.

April 22

Breakfast Solo

by Cheryl A. Rice

Bacon never the way I like it,
rendered but flexible.
I burn, I burn, the fear of god
and all things underdone
compels me to do so.
I resurrect charred batons,
lay them gently on a cot of paper towels.
They will not survive short of cremation,
beyond viewing, but I never discard.
They'll hide under crunchy toast,
fringed by a mandarin or two, peeled in
advance of my ascension to desk and day.
A chevron of grease awaits their eggy companion,
yellow eye of Horus clouded by
impatient technique.

-

Long Islander by birth, CHERYL A. RICE has lived in New York's Hudson Valley for over forty years. Her work has appeared in *Chronogram*, *Home Planet News*, *Florida Review*, *Misfit Magazine*, *Trailer Park Quarterly*, *Ragged Lion Journal*, and *Long Island Quarterly*, among others. RANDOM WRITING, Rice's workshop "for new and used poets," has been offered for over twenty years at such venues as the Poetry Barn in Hurley and the AIR Studio Gallery in Kingston. She earned a BS at SUNY New Paltz, and half of an MA at the University at Albany.

April 23

January

by Gary J. Maggio

The snow will come again tomorrow
Though it hasn't fully left for weeks
Sorrow might be an ill used usage
Ill used autumn ill used winter.

There is no color, grey wind and birds.
All cold and empty of leaves and grass,
Words directed away from each other.
You're heading upstairs beyond hearing.

Alone, this lower room is to me over bright—
Drop ceiling, framed prints in white and gold.
It's night our evening over,
your breathing loud and full of waiting.

The snow that will come tomorrow
will fall like breath, straight down
Sorrow forgiven, stillness, soft ground,
We ache, we sleep, we hope.

-

Gary Maggio spends his retirement in Albany as a visual artist, actor, writer, and an emotional and therefore godawful tennis player.

April 24

The Costume

by Nancy Klepsch

To be covered in frost,
Snowed into submission,
And to resist.

To be warm and fat,
Blanketed in safety,
While the war rages
On a blinking television screen.

To be running from bombs,
Blood and broken bridges,
Instant message shrapnel.

To be Western, weak and afraid,
Tied to commodities and politics,
To be brave like a Ukrainian,
Laughing back bullets,
Standing in front of tanks.

To be oceans, mountains and skies away,
Forever in a polarized state of lies,
To be free to speak one's language,
Bilabial fricatives proudly bouncing off of one's tongue.

To be reading a Swiss survival guide,
And thinking about how to take three dogs,
To be fighting, protesting, swallowing teeth,
Spitting crimson, staining the linen colored snow.

To be forthright and earnest,
And die with a gun strapped to one's shoulder,
The world around you bombed into rebar and mangled wires,
Cement-choked streets, dripping with the architecture of your life.

To be unclean, unshaven and heroic in green fatigues,
The color of fresh leaves,
To be the mighty ocean, stirring up a forty foot wave,

To be crashing into cars, masses of people,

To be awake and dry-eyed for 64 hours,

To drive through a concrete border that shows you no welcome,

To be homeless and hungry, feet sore and blistered,
To be the wings of a dove the chime of a church bell,
Ringing through the frigid night.

To be ice cubed, frozen into submission,
By the rants of a madman,
To be righteous and right,
New shoes stacked like apples for free.

To be united and tied into knots like a pretzel,
To the trinity shoved into a basic backpack,
As you forget the life you had and
Become a stranger in a new land.

To be the essence of life lifted into Spirit's hands,
To be dreaming of your castle,
Fabricated by your hands, worn like an old rug,
The stoop carved concave from the feet of your friends.

To be weak, needing more coffee and comforts,
To be along the sidelines,
Praying and choking on spittle,
That is not yours.

To be brave when it counts,
With only one round left and
The loss of your front line.

To be walking across broken bridges,
Aching bones and bombs bursting at your sides,
To be, to be to be here with arms wide open,
Chest out and calm in the middle of a napalm day,
What it is to be, what it is not to be,
We choose the to be part, not the not.

-

Nancy Klepsch co-hosts 2nd Sunday @ 2 open mic for poetry and prose and is the author of god must be a boogie man, available from <https://store.bookbaby.com/book/god-must-be-a-boogie-man1>

April 25

Crumbs

by Pam Clements

Finally able to work outside,
I put my book aside.
I can leave cracker crumbs
on this table
for birds to come
after, ravenous,
once I am out of their way.

Buried among a haystack of emails
proclaiming dead grandmothers,
asking questions about assignments
the answers for which are not only
posted on the syllabus but were
given in class (more than once),
hungry requests for extensions,
repeated explanations,
is one short message:

“Thanks
for listening the other day.”

Early spring late afternoon
brings a wash of warm air,
japonica just opening,
crumbs on the table.

-

Pam Clements lives in Albany, New York. Her poetry and nonfiction have appeared in literary magazines including *Kalliope*, *The Palo Alto Review*, and *The Baltimore Review*. She has published one volume of poetry, *Earth Science*, and is completing a memoir about five years she spent teaching in Charleston, South Carolina.

April 26

Knocked Back

by Barbara Ungar

*So we moved out, sad in the vast offing,
having our precious lives, but not our friends.
- Odyssey, trans. Robert Fitzgerald*

So the impossible rushes on
somehow I sleep

What to feel?

I expected to see you, like the sun
the next day

I still talk to you and feel you
in the lake Somehow
I am getting through all these impossibles
like summer

Emptied out
I am falling splendidly
everything falling along with me

My body returned to me after a long while

What would be a data breach of the dead?

What I wanted was the notion of a love
that could carry over from one life
time to another
more mermaid sightings
our sign

The skirts of Hurricane Helene sweep up the coast
if it's not connected to grief, I can't deal

The loon waited (for me?) beyond the lily pads

If anyone could paddle through the sky, it would be you
but how could you see me
maybe like recalling
a film you once played in?

We are sad only for ourselves.

There were no more years.

All the famous poet's velvets and silks
ruined by mildew and spider egg sacs.

Your kids scattered some of you centerfield
in Fenway after a Red Sox game

I am a repository of a vanished time
my kid says He can't imagine the quiet
When the power goes out I remember
staring out the window listening to the wind

Weather is everything

Elephants listen for rain with their feet
Worms surface to rain's drum
Gulls do a rain dance to trick worms into rising
In Fiji, some could call up turtles from the sea
Everything needs to eat constantly or die
Even the soil is alive
The whole world eating and digesting itself, and growing

The garden puts itself to bed, each insect sings itself to sleep
I dreamt someone sent me my old stuffed dog, Lady,
but burnt black

Death did us part.

-

Barbara Ungar is the author of six books, most recently, *After Naming the Animals*, which confronts the sixth extinction. Professor emerita from The College of St Rose, she lives in Saratoga Springs, New York. www.barbaraungar.net

April 27

Howard's Beans

by Dianne Sefcik

after too many falls
he left his mountain home
and the beloved garden
where he grew primeval beans

into her hand he put thirteen
and thirteen into the other
one of each for every coming moon
then closed his hands around hers

Mohawk
he said of one
Mohican
of the other

they rattle in their twining vines
as she pulls the pods off yet again
collects them in their separate bins
to shuck them in the barn

one by one they leap free
wild as ponies on the walls of ancient caves
red ochre appaloosas
dun ochre buckskin bays

they corral together
in their silk-smooth skins
convey the heft and sound
of sacred currency

she saves thirteen each year of each
every bean a hope a legacy
full of stories old and new
and conversations with the moon

-

Dianne Sefcik is a poet, writer, painter and woodworker living in upstate New York. She often writes about our connection to the land and to each other. Dianne is a member of the Hudson Valley Writers Guild, the Evergreen Poets Workshop.

April 28

18 Days in April

by pmboudreaux

from the solarium

clouds look like mountains
distant horizons in stratosphere
worked in garden an hour, or two
but raked that gravel nuisance
creeping in, i hate that
the weather unsettled, though did not predict
hald inch of ice, six of slush, and ten of snow
recover Helleborus
i don't remember my father ever being this tired
except for those end years
i'm dying at fifty-five
and forty-four years later
you better learn to crawl
or insane attempts we communicate
find me among the Daffodils
of our futures, my present condition
i'm looking forward to the garden
i'm looking forward to the writing
forward to clering out the rubbish
lighten the climb, note: head start
i'm looking forward to
the smells, and the sounds
and the tiny little creatures
that will eventually eat me

-

pmboudreaux lives and writes in Rensselaerville, NY.

April 29

Insomnia in five parts

by Alan Catlin

1-

Flightless birds perched
in leafless trees. Dark
gray clouds turning black.
Held breath released

2-

Rhythmic patter
of rain on slate.

Listen: the cats
are snoring

3-

Reading by candlelight,
wax melt and eye strain,
how many hours before dawn?

4-

Not Written in *Book of Hours*;
church bells and wind chimes

5-

Playing the piano in
the dark. Discarded
sheet music on the floor.

-

Alan Catlin has a new book of poems, *Landscape of the Exiled* from Dos Madres Press. Forthcoming, *Work Anxiety Poems* from Roadside Press in November.

April 30

It Was a Wonderful Life

by Charles Rossiter

My buddy Jay tried hard to be harmless
and spent hours discussing minute
points from Kierkegaard and R.D. Laing.

John and Mary Kaye found each other
and I found Mary Ellen.
Gary drove to California
and came back knowing T'ai Chi.

Tom went to Naropa for a month
to type on Ginsberg's journals and
Kevin started a rock band named Cassady.

Joe and I took midnight walks by the lake;
Jeff and I ate diner breakfasts
that lasted till noon.

Monday nights we met over poetry
in our 'House of Words' warehouse office
followed by six packs down by the river.

It was the last time so many of us
had so much time to be alive.

-

Charles Rossiter, NEA Fellowship recipient, has been featured on NPR, at the Chicago Blues Festival and the Dodge Poetry Festival, in NJ. Recent collections include *Winter Poems*, *All Over America: Road Poems*, and *Green Mountain Meditations* all from Foothills Publishing. After many years living in Albany and along the shores of Lake Michigan, he's now across the river in Bennington, VT. This poem was previously published in *Paterson Literary Review*, and *Wisconsin Poets Calendar*.

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