

New Poetry by Jason Green: “Winter Haiku,” “Spring Haiku”

New poems by Jason Green: Winter Haiku and Spring Haiku

New Poetry by Wayne Karlin: “What Binds Us”

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New Poem by Nathan Didier: “Hearts and Minds”

New poem by Nathan Didier: “Hearts and Minds”

New Poetry by Elisabeth Lewis

Corley: “An Loc”

New Poem by Elisabeth Lewis Corley: An Loc

New Poetry by Patricia Hastings: “Dad”

New Poem from Patricia Hastings: Dad

New Poetry by Faye Susan: “I am the Daughter of a Storyteller”

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New Poetry by Sara Shea: “Customs”

New poem by Sara Shea: “Customs”

New Poem by John Thampi: “Ad Memoriam”

New poem by John Thampi: Ad Memoriam

New Poetry by Aramis Calderon: “Loyal”

New poem by Aramis Calderon: “Loyal”

New Nonfiction by Fred Cheney: Tracers



I've changed all the names in this story except my own. They're all dead, but ... that afterlife thing just might be true.

I'm an old man now, but I was ten or eleven or so in this story. Across the road, lived Ben, six months my senior, and Timmy, six months younger than me. We lived out in the country, without another kid our age for miles. So, we bonded.

We bonded by chasing the neighbors' cows. We bonded by stealing cigarettes from our parents. And we bonded by reading GI Joe comics. Each week one of us would put up the nickel to buy the latest one. When we got a chance, we lied our way into a war movie in Brunswick, usually Audie Murphy stuff. We were fixated on the glories of war.

At the time, Ben and Timmy's father, Arkie, would get drunk and talk about war. He had fought in the South Pacific. Word was he'd killed 27 men in hand-to-hand combat there. [I wonder why he drank.] Another skill he had was theft—or souveniring, as he called it. He shipped or brought home on leave an impressive assortment. Helmets, ceremonial flags, swords, maps, and firearms. Had he made a career of the military, I'm positive there'd have been a Sherman Tank over there.

Did I mention firearms? The one that fascinated us most and was most supported in the GI Joe comics and Audie Murphy movies was the BAR—Browning-Automatic-Rifle. And among the things we liked about it from our reading and viewing were **TRACERS**. These were bullets that left a fiery trail so the soldier could see where his ammo was hitting at night. This was exciting on the pages of a comic. It was thrilling in a movie. And Arkie had a BAR and according to Timmy a bunch of clips with *TRACERS* written on them.

We knew better than ask him for a demonstration. "You stay the hell away from that war shit. It ain't good," is what sober Arkie would have said. However, we weren't about to stay the hell away from this fixation, and besides ... we were sneaky.

I don't know if the counterpart of *carpe diem* is *carpe nocturn* or *carpe noches* or what, but there came a night for us to *carpe* ... or seize. My parents were going over to Cumston Hall in Monmouth where the players were doing Gilbert and Sullivan operettas that summer. I had made them pay dearly for dragging me to *Madam Butterfly* two weeks before. So, they made me promise to brush my teeth and go to bed on time. Step 1 of the

plan was handed to us. Step 2 came just about as easily, as Arkie nodded off just when it got dark. Ben snuck the BAR out, and Timmy scored three clips that were marked as having one tracer every fourth shell or so. We headed for their back field.

We settled ourselves on a rise with about 120 yards of open field before the tree line and the railroad tracks. We hefted the rifle, and brought it up to our shoulders, practiced bracing our feet. That last didn't work so well, and I decided that I'd shoot from the hip, just like GI Joe. But I wouldn't do it one handed because, at about 18 pounds, the gun was too heavy.

We usually did a series of rock-paper-scissors to determine who would go first, but this night Ben played the age card. "I'm oldest. I go first." Since we'd all get a chance, Timmy and I let him get away with it.

Ben got into a sitting position and mock sighted with his elbows on his knees. Satisfied, he set the adjustment for full-automatic, slapped the clip into the magazine, jacked a shell into the chamber, and released the safety. He took a breath and pulled the BAR tightly into his shoulder. He held the trigger enough time for four or five tracers to launch. Then, he put the gun on safety and prepared to hand it to me.

But I was jumping up and down and slapping Timmy's back. We were excited beyond belief that it was even better than the comics or the movies we'd seen. Then Ben, reflecting on something new, yelled, "Stop, for chrissake. STOP!" We stopped.

What neither G.I. Joe nor Audie had explained to us was why tracers glowed. It's a magnesium fire in the bullet, and it burns at about 3500 degrees.

Ben elaborated. "Down there. We set the pickin' woods on fire."

Pickin' was our word then; it was safe to use around adults, and they wouldn't get on our ass, but we knew what we meant. Timmy and I looked at the tree line and, sure enough, the pickin' woods were on fire.

I've never known that level of fear, before or since. We three were ripping up ferns and tearing down branches that were on fire. We stomped them out. We kicked apart brush piles and jumped on anything that glowed. We gave up our bodies rolling on tufts of flaming grass or even sparks. We had to get those fires out, all of them, or Arkie could easily round his total up to 30.

With our last breath, we felt that we had all the fires out, little and big. We unloaded the BAR and headed for home. They went in their house, and I went across the road to mine.

Since we didn't have running water then, I couldn't take a bath or wash my clothes. They were burnt and sooty, so I threw them away. I went to bed without brushing my teeth.

I was asleep when my parents came in all excited about *The Pirates of Penzance*. The smell in the house dispelled that excitement right away and drew my mother to the trash bin. "These are what Freddie wore today, but they look like they been rubbed with ashes. Look, some are burned through."

My father took the clothes, sniffed them. "I'll get him up."

The combination of fear and fatigue put me in a truthful state. I didn't even consider making up a story to cover this. I told the truth, the whole truth.

"Are you sure you got all the fires out?"

I nodded.

"We'll check."

So, I put my filthy body into clean clothes, something I was

never allowed to do, and my father and I walked past Arkie's house and down to his back field. I showed him where Ben sat when he shot, and where the fires were. I skipped the part about how pickin' dramatic tracers are at night. Right about then, I just wasn't feeling it.

We went behind the tree line and paced back and forth. In somewhere between 30 minutes and three months, Dad said, "Looks like you got it. Good job."

When we got back to the house, Mom had bath water heated. I stripped down in the middle of the kitchen and washed the grime off.

Dad said, "Now go to bed. We will never talk of this again."

And I haven't until now. Everybody's dead.

New Poetry by Carol Alexander: "Late of Somewhere in the East"

New Poem by Carol Alexander: "Late of Somewhere in the East"

New Poetry by Rachel Rix:

“Experimental Simulation of Joint Morphology During Desiccation,” “Second Deployment,” “CO’s Canon”

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New Poetry by Richard Epstein: “The Dance”

New Poem by Richard Epstein: “The Dance”

New Poetry by Ellie J. Anderson: “Impact, 1984”

New poem by Ellie J. Anderson: “Impact, 1984”

New Poetry by Peter Mladinic: “Fist”



AIR THICKER THAN / *image by Amalie
Flynn*

In Okinawa I made a fist
and my fingers stuck together
that stop over night
my one stop before Danang,
between two worlds,
the flag burning, tear-gas
U.S. and the Vietnam rat-tat-tat
automatic fire, the LBJ
How many kids ... and the sandbag
fortified bunkers. Didn't
see anyone die, only the dead.
In Okinawa, planes
on the runway, the air thicker
than Danang's.
The smell of napalm,
how real for some.
I stood holding a metal tray
in a chow line, slept
in a top bunk, spit-shined boots
so their tips were mirrors.

New Poetry by David Burr: “Harvest”

Hurl of metal – iron, steel – as shrapnel,
as bail hail, as HE detonation, all
forged and spit out again with new fire,
matériel barrae, meat-mincer for

New Poetry by Jayant Kashyap: “The War”

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New Poetry by Phillip Sitter: “Krakivets, Odyn” and “Elemental”

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“Elemental”

New Poetry by Shawn McCann: “All I Can Do Is Watch” and “No Way To Fight Back”

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New Poetry by Kathleen Hellen: “People Boats” and “Pretending There Is A Garden In The Spring, Paradise In Time”

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New Poetry by Lawrence Bridges: “Time of War and

Exile” and “Taking an Island”

New poems by Lawrence Bridge: “Time of War and Exile” and “Taking an Island”

New Poetry by Matthew Hummer: “Amortization”

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New Poetry by Almyr Bump: “Plowing Water”

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New Poetry by J.S. Alexander: “Sabat”

New Poem by J.S. Alexander: “Sabat (Loyalty)”

New Poetry by Ben White: “Cleaning the M60 – 39 Years and January 26, 1984”

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January 26, 1984”

New Poetry by Kat Raido: “Blood Goggles”

New poem by Kat Raido: “Blood Goggles”

New Poetry by Luis Rosa Valentin: “Desperate Need of Help”

Desperate Need of Help

[Luis-Rosa-image](#)

New Poetry by Jim Kraus: “Amphibious”



ABOUT TO DISAPPEAR / *photo by Amalie Flynn*

AMPHIBIOUS

In Hokusai's "Kanagawa Wave," the boatmen
look like a school of masquerading fish
about to disappear into the vast trough between waves,
the scene a masque for the knowing seascape.

Underwater, Ahab,
pinned to the great white
creature, like a wave that has
disappeared into silence.

In memory's slow dancing,
flesh now dissolved,
seafloor muck covers bones
and shark-tooth nodules.

Out of the bubbling methane,
Ahab is reborn with tripod limbs
and tiny feet, the wooden leg
now a trail of seafloor slime,
amphibious.

New Poetry by Carol Everett Adams: “Rabbit Trails”



THE TEXAS DUST / *image by Amalie Flynn*

RABBIT TRAILS

in the Texas dust. We're flat in the dirt

so we can poke around down there with a long stick,
while above us bullets fly and children

hold up their honor roll certificate shields.

You say blankets are the answer,
and backpacks and better officers and armed teachers

and doors that shut like Vegas vaults to keep your money safe,
keep your money safer than my child.

I forgot what we were talking about.

New Poetry by Lisa Stice:

“Our Folklore”



FIND MYSELF LOST / *image by*
Amalie Flynn

Our Folklore

Long ago, you were molten rock, and I—
well, I spoke the language of bears.

But now that I have been out of the forest
for so long, all the words and grammar escape

me, and I often find myself lost. And you—
well, you are often mistaken for a statue

in this solid state. No more rumblings and
agitations. We are both quiet these days.

New Poetry from D.A. Gray: “Cactus Tuna”; “We Return from the Holy Land. God Stays”; and “Reverse Run”

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New Poetry from Tanya Tuzeo: “My Brother, the Marine;” “My Brother’s Shoebox;” and “My Brother’s Grenade”



WAR HAS DONE / *image by Amalie Flynn*

my brother, the Marine

the recruiters come weeks earlier than agreed—
arrive in alloy, aluminum with authority,
military vehicle blocks our driveway
announcing to the neighborhood
they’ve come for a boy here
who will have to go—
though he sits at the top step
and cries

i follow them,
strange convoy to Staten Island’s hotel
where all the boys are corralled—
farmed for war, becoming weapons
of mass destruction
when before they picked apples
at family trips upstate

a hotel lobby—last stop before using lasers
to blow off golden domes,
silence muezzins in the crush

of ancient wage and plaster—
Hussein's old siberian tiger left thirsty,
watches other zoo animals
being eaten by the faithful—
just like a video game

i clamp onto my brother
beg him not to go, we could run away
he didn't have to do this—
recruiters quickly camouflage me,
am dragged outside—my brother lost
did not say goodbye
or even look at me.

my brother's shoebox

the room across the hall is inhabited again,
home now from another tour
like sightseeing from a grand canal
where buildings are art
and storied sculptures animate street corners—
my brother returns a veteran.

i want to remember who this person is,
or at least, find out what war has done.

he leaves with friends to drink—
that is still the same,
later tonight
he might howl at our parent's window
or jump on my bed until the sheets froth,
uncaring and rabid.

but i don't wait for him to come home
and begin searching the room
that is his again.

it is simple to find
where people hide things—
a shoebox under his bed
that wasn't there all these years
furrowed by sand
and almost glowing.

i open to find drugstore prints,
rolls of film casually dropped
for a high school student to develop—
silver halide crystals take the shape
of shattered skulls
goats strung and slit
a school made of clay
blasted in the kiln of munitions
“KILL ZONE” painted across its foundation—
each 4×6 emulsion a souvenir
of these mad travels,
kept to reminisce and admire.

my brother's grenade

my brother's room in our family vacation home
has embossed wallpaper, indigo or violet
depending on the light that filters through the mountains—
and his grenade in the closet.

i saw it looking for extra blankets,
thought it was an animal resting in eiderdown
kept by my mother in one of her tempers
but it didn't move
and so
i picked it up.

inhumanity held beneath iron's screaming core—
a pleasant weight,
like the egg i threw across the street

detonating onto the head of boy
who said i kissed him but i didn't,
is it like that for my brother?–
fisted mementos of thrill?

seasoned by cedar sachets,
neatly quilted metal shimmered as i turned it
forbidden gem, his holy relic–
i placed it back in the closet and began making dinner,
said nothing.

the slender pin preserves this household
where our family gathers
unknowing a bomb is kept here–
my brother roasts a marshmallow
until it catches fire, turns black,
plunges into mouth.

New Poetry from Nidhi Agarwal: “The Goddess Incarnates;” “Cow Dust Hour;” and “Emancipation”

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Dust;” and “Emancipation”

New Poetry from Laura King: “Orange”



MY ACIDIC PAST / *image by*
Amalie Flynn

ORANGE

It's June, and a few stubborn ones
still hang on the trees.

We stand on the back of the pickup to pluck one—
so easy to peel, this old girl the sun has sugared
since December's sharp tang.

Now it's sweet as honey, sweet as candy,
sweet as that boy child
who wrapped himself up in his binkie,
his raw thumb firm against his upper palette,
who sat on the stairs facing the wall
because I'd snapped at him again.

Why was I upset all the time?

Though everyone forgives me, no one forgets
my acidic past; bright orange, raw rage.

New Poetry from Virginia

Schnurr: "Touchstone" and "Valentine for Lewis Carroll"



VALENTINES IN ME / *image by Amalie Flynn*

TOUCHSTONE

My child's fairy-tale quilt is frail:
the wizard ripped, the prince bald,
the fairy's wing clipped.
Only the wishing well and frog prince survived
camp, college, the conception of my grandchild.

My eldest daughter wants the irreparable
repaired for her daughter, Maeve Arden,
named after a Shakespearean forest.

No longer willing to stitch painted pomp
I sketch a new quilt: a forest where the snake waits,
the dark trips, death lives behind every mushroom:
reality feelingly persuades me what I am.

My cataracts removed, I have a grander vision for Maeve's
covering.

I add the fool with his
books in running brooks, tongues in trees.

Absolute in my giving
savvy to the darker side of things
my needle pokes the sweet uses of adversity.

VALENTINE FOR LEWIS CARROLL

Purchased by an old woman
for her grandniece

I'm a blue plastic Valentine bag.

I have on me
a rabbit from Wonderland
whose creator liked
little girls without pubic hair.

I sit all year
on a doorknob
awaiting the day of hearts.

I'm singular,
not a carelessly covered box
but reusable.

My child places
her carefully labeled
valentines in me.

Unfortunately, this year
will be my finale.
My rabbit will hop off
offended by the onset
of hair.

**New Poetry from Marc Tretin:
“Justin Alter, Slightly
Drunk, Addresses Maya, Who Is
In Egypt” and “Maya Ricci**

Alter After Excavating A Pyramid South Of Zairo"



HOT WIRES SCALD / image by Amalie Flynn

JUSTIN ALTER, SLIGHTLY DRUNK, ADDRESSES MAYA, WHO IS IN EGYPT

Now as I am hungover and queasy
stumping about the tilting house
and sappy as my face is green,
Maya, your sculpture of Qetesh,
that goddess of sex and ecstasy,
whose torso of clear pink plastic
has a heart made of puzzle pieces
dangling from wires that run to an
automated external defibrillator
normally used to shock
a rapid cardiac rhythm
back to normal, stares at me with eyes
filled with both desire and despair.
Though feeling embarrassed
I touch the pink nub you meant
to be her clit and a soft whirr starts, then
puzzle pieces spin so fast they tear, and scatter
and the bare hot wires scald
the insides of her perfect breasts.
I pull the plug, but the smell of burnt plastic
fills our bedroom despite the open windows.
Why do you have to be gone so long?

MAYA RICCI ALTER EXCAVATING A PYRAMID SOUTH OF CAIRO

As I stooped beneath the
standing sun within the

meter-by-meter carefully
measured order of this
archeological dig and
brushed pottery shards
and papyrus crumbs through
a sieve to sift out the sand,
the heat's strong hands
touched me like a half-
wanted lover, whose warmth
is too familiar with my
body to refuse and that's
why when Jamaal, the site
boss said, "You look
overheated.
Cool off in my trailer."
"Yes," I said, knowing I
wanted to betray Justin
but not knowing why, so
after we had sex and while
I was thinking how can I
use this experience,
I saw Jamaal shave with
a straight edge then I saw
the dead-on right image for the God Set,
a cave-sized skull made of razor blades,
entered by stepping
over teeth made of sharp knives
into total darkness
except for a weak light
piercing this skull
through one of its eyes
and in that eye is a web
and tangled in its threads
are Zipporah and Justin.
Their faces, formless rags.
Their bodies sucked out hulks.

New Poetry by Michal Rubin: “I Speak Not Your Language” and “Omar Abdalmajeed As’ad of Jijlya”

I, born from the womb of
my mother’s remembrances
wrapped in the cocoon
of her story[...]

New Poetry by Scott Hughes: “Still”



THE FAULT LINES / *image by Amalie
Flynn*

STILL

I never thought of you
as a hopeless romantic; this was news to me.
Are you still meditating? Meditate
on this:
You can take the Mulholland Highway across

the ridges of two counties
and stay high a long time.
We parked there once in your subcompact
in love and unconfined.
From the afternoon shade of a scrub oak
I remember the ridge route home,
the silhouettes of Point Dume and your profile
in the afterglow.

Since then I have been a jack of all trades
and a master of nothing:
unremarkable, unsubstantial, undignified;
unresolved, unremembered, unconceivable;
unqualified, unpublished, unreadable.

I looked for you in the county beach campgrounds
where you went with surfers from your high school.
I looked for you in all the places I heard you were in love.
I looked for you where rumors sent me.
I looked for you in the hills of Northridge
where we walked around the fault lines.
I looked for you among the barstools
from Venice to Ventura.
I looked for you in old Beach Boys songs.
I looked for you in stacks of photographs.
I looked for you in the bottom of a glass.
I looked for you stranded after a concert.
I looked for you at the Spahn Ranch.
I looked for you in the bittersweet words in books.
I looked for you in unsold manuscripts.
I looked for you in the margins of old college notes.
I looked for you in every woman who looked at me.
I looked for you in dharma talks.
I looked for you in shrines.
I looked for you in my next life.

I don't think my karma is right.

Forty years on the hard roads of two counties
and I am
still.

New Poetry by Rochelle Jewell Shapiro: “Each Night My Mother Dies Again”



FALLS ON NIGHT / *image by Amalie Flynn*

EACH NIGHT MY MOTHER DIES AGAIN

Each night the phone rings—
Your mother has passed.

Each night I expect to be relieved, but night falls on night.
Each night she is the mother who makes waffles,
batter bubbling from the sides of the iron, the mother
who squeezes fresh orange juice, and serves soft-boiled eggs
in enchanted egg cups. Each night I squint into her face
as she carries me over the ocean waves, her arms my raft.
Each night she refills Dr. Zucker’s prescriptions
for diet pills and valium. Each night she waters her
rosebushes
with Dewar’s. Each night I see her hands shake,
her brows twitch. Each night she adds ground glass
to the chopped liver, rubbing alcohol to the chopped herring.
Each night she puts a chicken straight on the lit burner
without a pot. Each 2:00 a.m., Mrs. Finch from 6G phones—

*Sorry to say your mother is naked
in the hallway again.*

Each night my mother is strapped into her railed bed
at Pilgrim State, curled into a fetal position,
her hands fisted like claws.

Each night she calls to me
from her plain pine coffin, calls me
by the name she gave me, the name
she hasn't forgotten.

New Poetry by Stephen Massimilla: "Wounded"



CAPILLARIES OF ROOTS / image by Amalie Flynn

WOUNDED

-to Laura

Bleating thing without wool
Thunder without sound
Ghost of wooded peaks, of constricted arterial waters

There is a dog inside the heart, voice bursting
Interminable silence, blown-open iris

Over organs buried deeper in the earth
where capillaries of roots still bleed orange dust

Leave me be, hot tongue of fireflies,
cracked pharynx of ice

Do not ask me to slip
 down among green nerves of water-weed
 where the flesh of the sky
is unmoving and fruitless

The moon still hovers in its surgeon's coat

But do not try to satisfy the dead
who hold on with claws like desperate fevers

Leave my sutured skull of empty ivory forever

But pity me; put an end to this much hurt

 I am love, I tell you
and all the quick wings accumulating

as restlessly as the breaths

 that were once inside

these wheel-crushed, wind-scattered leaves

New Poetry by Kevin Honold: "A Brief History of the Spanish Conquest"



RADIANT AS NOON / *image by Amalie
Flynn*

A Brief History of the Spanish Conquest

Tell me again of that fabulous
kingdom where a single
ear of corn is more
than two strong young men can carry, where cotton
grows untended, in colors never dreamed of,
to be spun by gorgeous slaves
into garments that lie
cool as cornsilk against the skin and shine
radiant as noon.

*

How sordid and predictable history can be.
Within sight of the prize
but out of ammunition, they
lowered three men down the volcano's throat
to fetch sulfur for gunpowder.

This

was the vision
prefigured in the prophet's eye:
three men curled in a basket peering
back across the centuries,
their dewy starving faces so
desperate with hope
as they dissolve in a yellow mist,
felons set adrift.

*

North by west toward the cities of gold,
the soldiers in rags walked half-bent
with hunger and dysentery, nursing
grievous wounds sustained in hit-and-run attacks
by moss-troopers talking Choctaw.

Beside the mother of rivers, the horses sickened and died
but the soldiers, being less reasonable,

proved less destructible.

At disobedient towns they dragged out
chopping blocks to punish malefactors
and departed in a shower of ash, their legacy
a heap of severed hands slowly
clutching at flies.

*

But the much-sought golden cities sank below the horizon
like the tall ships of fable. For the Spaniards,
the age of miracles ended
somewhere in southwest Arkansas. The palaces of silver
turned Outlaw Liquor Barns, Triple-X Superstores,
the stuff of vision a mustard-colored mix

of smoke, dust, emissions
from riverside refineries and coal
plants along the Mississippi where squadrons
of John Deere combines like barn-size locusts
roll in drill order over the dry land,
half-effaced by squalls of chaff.

At night the fields burn.
Stray flames browse the blackened
shoulders of the interstate,
crop the stubble beneath the billboards.

*

In the state park south of Hot Springs
I fell asleep in a chair in the heat and woke
to a titmouse perched on the toe of my boot
with that peculiar weightlessness
shared by birds and planets

and I searched without hope for my place in the book.
Buzzards killed time there, their shadows
slipping across the iron ground

like fish in a shallow pool
while Time gaped
 at the spiders that battened
 on the flies that
swarmed the rotten
windfall apples.

*

Tenochtitlan.

At the imperial aviary, we found
a pair of every kind of bird in the world:
parrots and finches in profusion, brooding vultures,
egrets, ibis is sacramental scarlet.
Seahawks stooped and banked

through that hostile truce and we marveled
at God's prodigality, His exuberant
inventiveness, then piled tinder
to burn the thing to the ground.
Flames sheeted over the soaring

lattice dome like the fleet
shadows of clouds. For a time,
the structure smoldered,
a hissing wickerwork steaming as it cooled.
Here and there, a bird crashed the skein of ash

like a rogue comet bursting
the flaming ramparts of the universe.
Charmed in place, we held our breath,
beside ourselves, like couriers
trapped in a snowglobe, blinded
 in a tempest of embers,
astonished at the work of these hands,
the everyday miracle of destruction.

New Poetry from Gail Nielsen: “Something Like Nightfall”



BLACK LACE TREES / *image by Amalie
Flynn*

SOMETHING LIKE NIGHTFALL

something, like night falls
slow, as if
nothing in the world has ever moved
but distant hope descending, still ablaze
days soften to wonder

what else leaves
silhouettes these black lace trees
fades from me

it is you from my life
steadily, quietly
as celestial movement

New Poetry by Doris Ferleger:

“Praying at the Temple of Forgiveness,” “Internal Wind,” Driving Down Old Eros Highway,” and “Summer Says”



TURNING EVERYTHING AROUND / *image*
by Amalie Flynn

Praying at the Temple of Forgiveness *for Zea Joy, in memoriam*

Last Monday you threw yourself,
your body, dressed in red chemise,
in front of a train.

It was your insatiable hunger
for a more tenderhearted world,
your husband said at Shiva.

Now no one will get to see
what you saw from inside
your snow globe where you lived,

shaking and shaking,
breaking into shards
of ungrieved grief, unanswered need.

I will remember
how tirelessly, with your son,
you worked to help him turn

sounds—coming through the implant
behind his ear—into speech,

speech into understanding.

Everyone will remember
how you skipped across the dance floor,
waving pastel and magenta scarves,

and prayed to angels.

O, dear Zea, your human bones
thin as the bones of a sparrow—

the way you could fold
your body to fit anywhere.

Rest now. You have succeeded.

INTERNAL WIND

When you died, our son
became *my son*; I watch
through your eyes

and mine how he lifts
his whole body into
a long accent à droite,

arms taut, wrists impossibly
rotated back, fingers and toes
also pointed back

to all the hours, years
of practice in turning
everything around.

~

Over the hollow
you left, our son stretches
his fingers across

frets and strings

in C minor,
Bach's Etudes

the way you taught,
the way you closed
your eyes, nodded, satisfied—

our son will remember.

~

Remember how
he watched you deep-
breathe into yoga postures?

Now his own focused flow
heals what Western doctors call
tics, quiets what Eastern doctors call

internal wind. Listen
how our son calls
to his yoga students

what he learned
at your knee: *Effort*
brings the rain—

of grace.

~

When our son and I argue,
I feel homeless, divided,
until I remember how you

and I took turns massaging
his neck that ached from its day's
staccato singing—

~

Sometimes I can see his tics
as flawless, meticulous,
a body expressing itself
with perfect diction.

DRIVING DOWN OLD EROS HIGHWAY

Me, in my Q50 with its hot flashes and warning beeps,
heading toward Sweet Desire, New Jersey, where my love,
soon 70, will woo me with mango, melt the mushy pulp
in my mouth—or perhaps he naps.

You, CeeCee, painting the walls pink in the tiny house in
Pullman,
recently moved in with your old college flame, coming so
easily

against his new ceramic hip, just the friction of it. You say
your pelvis never quite fit with anyone else, including your
soon-to-be-

ex-husband of 30 years. Me, with a G-spot suddenly. A rainbow
of chaos tunneling through me when his fingers find it and
flutter.

And long live the reckless tongue. The old-fashioned clit-kind
of climax. Like a young planet rising. Oh, how old and greedy
I am

for that whole-body wave and chill and quiver and release.
You, purposely avoiding that whole-body wave of shiver,

as it reminds you of your ex's dogged insistences.

For your 60th, your daughter gifted you with a mini vibrator

on a rubber ring for your index finger. A *sex-thimble*, you
joke.

Sex over 60 seems unseemly to talk about, CeeCee,
but it seems more ungrateful to say nothing at all.
You and I speak of what our mothers couldn't give us.
Daily I pray at the temple of Venus.

SUMMER SAYS

Pay attention to
your heat, your survival—
the tree rooted in your garden
is a sequined vernacular, a cashmere sweater.
Because nothing matters in the end
but comfort and the bending light.

Summer says, I will be the room you die in.
You will dream, neither of regret,
nor in the language you were born into.

A stranger will comb your existential threads.
You had thought, for instance, humans
were gerunds or harps bent

on playing in a diner that serves
black coffee and hard donuts.
You ask, *What is the past?*

What is it all for?
Summer says, The wound of being
untaught. Says, hungry.

Says, the cypress is a hospice,
says, falter, falter, falter,
bloom bloom bloom—too soon
a pall will keep you company.

New Poetry by Ricardo Moran: “ABBA-1975” and “On the Street”



TAG EVERY WALL / *image by Amalie
Flynn*

ABBA-1975

Abba's lyrics, like water
shot from La Bufadora,
mingle with volcanic steam
from metallic pots of corn.

And the scrape on my knee
from chasing the seagulls
bleeds, but does not hurt.

On this Sunday, the ocean breeze slips
in gossip between vendor stalls
as young men in speedos walk past.
Tables of silver bracelets tap my eyes
and ABBA's Spanish melody
carries on my tongue
before any English syllable
ever arrived. Before the summer ended
when it tore me
from the sands of Ensenada
to a desert north of the border,

to a land with tongues
unfamiliar and stiff.

And now when I fall
chasing my shadow, my ABBA
lyrics cannot permeate
foreign soil. Cannot stop the pain.

On the Street

Run naked through the streets
and shout, "Make love to me!"

Tag every wall in a turf war
with quotes from the palatero,
from the child who yearns for love,
from the gay son who hopes his father
will welcome him,
this time.

With your sharp and fast tongue, mesmerize
passersby as they get caught in the gunfire
of stanzas and sonnets,
popping the air.

Bellow on the street corner
of how love abandoned you,
how your life is empty,
how you aborted your dreams.
And every day it rips into you
of every opportunity you threw away.

I want that on the wall.
I want all the pain and hurt
to get out of bed, to grab that bullhorn
and run naked through the streets.

New Poetry by Michael Carson: “Politics”



BLAME OUR BRUISES / *image by Amalie Flynn*

Politics

Every 20 years or so boys dress up
And kill each other for fun.
It's the way of the wrack of the world
The wind of our imagination and our love.
To blame our costumes for our beauty
Is like to blame our bruises for our blood.
The chime is what drives us, what ticks
Our tock forward to the next spree.
The foreshortened humiliation,
The immaculate imprecation,
Is neither what we fear or what we covet.
Man is. Rats are. Take what you can
While the day is rough
Move lengthwise into the past
And blame god for never enough.

New Poetry by Kevin Norwood:

“Rabbits in Autumn”



THE LUSHEST GRASS / *image by Amalie Flynn*

RABBITS IN AUTUMN

Who will find our bones in a thousand years,
bleached and brittle under the unyielding sun,
scattered in dried grasses by feral dogs or vultures?

Who will hold such curiosities, not knowing
that we stopped here to kiss and murmur
that our love would outlast the moon and stars?

Who will hold our bones, never to imagine
that under the same sun, we once made love
on the lushest grass, under a sapphire sky?

In autumn, the fox lies in wait, hearing rustling
in the tall grass. Having eaten, the fox moves on.
There are no questions of why, or how, or when.

Smoke rises acrid in the air; the sun sets earlier
each day; the grapes shrivel on the vine. Time
is the fox; we are the rabbits. Please, hold me.

**New Poetry by Betsy Martin:
“About What You Have,”**

“Female Figure in Photos,” and “To Missoula”



GRASSES QUIVER BEFORE / *image by Amalie Flynn*

ABOUT WHAT YOU HAVE

In my dream

Dad, age one hundred twelve,
has his first cell phone—

big and square,
with a rotary dial.

With a proud index finger
he dials my mother,

gets her voice mail.
Together we lean in,
listen

to her low, drifty voice,
its mist so warm on my ear
as it rises from deep underground.

I ask Dad for *his* number,
but he can't recall it
before fading into the passage. He's left me

messages, though,
like: When eating fish be careful
not to get a bone stuck in your throat; when walking
tuck in the tummy; think
about what you have,

not about what you don't.

FEMALE FIGURE IN PHOTOS

fourteen-year-old mop of hair
sullen air in mod raincoat
on London sidewalk with
beaming scowling father brother

seventeen leaning
on brick wall in black-and-white flannel shirt
no cigarette yet mien
as in movies seen through a puff of smoke

college-era long hair
akimbo arms
eyes narrowed
to spot foe in tall grass

sixty odd in a museum at a window
face a little wooden
and through the panes
an autumn-leafed tree flames

TO MISSOULA

The cold air her pillow of courage, she skirts
the northern rim of the nation.

As she crosses the Dakota Badlands,
where even the hardest grasses quiver

before earth's uprisings and revolutions,
her eastern forest home has tilted

and is sliding over the rim!

She pulls her wings in closer
to fly fast and low

over layers of pink and gray guts
squeezed from deep under.

A tail feather tears loose,
whirls away;

she almost bursts into a plume of magma.

Night cools into dawn.

She parks the car,
steps out into a new world,
a young woman with compass and camera
and a crown of mountains.

New Poetry by Suzanne O'Connell: "Airport Luggage Carousel" and "Shipwreck"



IMAGINE GOLD DOUBLOONS / *image by Amalie Flynn*
Airport Luggage Carousel

A battered cardboard box
holes punched in the side
tied with frayed rope
lid popping up
plastered with masking tape, wrinkled.
One lone orphan

going round and round the luggage carousel,
heading nowhere.
Packed in chaos.
Full of soiled clothes
bloody Kleenex
unpaid bills
splinters
and Dear John letters.

This is what the last year has been.

So I imagine the contents differently.
I imagine gold doubloons,
a child's drawing of a rainbow,
a coupon for a free fried chicken dinner.
Maybe a photograph of a family, at Christmas,
standing together on a hillside,
everyone wearing red and green,
the husband holding a puppy,
and Carol,
still alive.

Shipwreck

She sniffed my trenches,
turned away from the skin she made,
her own thick blood
flowing in my waterways.
Me, a vacant dwelling on the shore,
wearing swaddling,
drinking low-fat milk.

Oh, wire mother of the soul,
entertainer of strangers.
She of too many decibels,
too many bright colors,
passing macaroons to visitors

while I carved "I love Chris"
in the dining room table.

Find the fur coat,
find the hairdresser,
find the beach umbrella
find the wine coolers
find the plants in pots
resigned to death.

Little fish swim by her ankles.
Like me, they long for contact.
Mercy, the color of the sea,
never granted.
In that day, at that hour,
on that wretched beach,
she wanted an audience
but found only me.

New Poetry by Tony Marconi: "Song of the Roadway Door"



WE AND MACHINES / *image by Amalie Flynn*

...three hundred miles,
 ahead the road more visible
 as the land dissolves in the pink light
 of almost dawn

you sit beside me,
 eyes fixed and restful on my face,
 offering hot coffee from a thermos

while the farm news
breaks morning music
on a local station

i could be here forever,
moving toward an unfamiliar place,
held by speed and the vibrating engine,

touched by the warmth of your breath

i could be here forever,
even as day turns into twilight;
you borne lightly on sheets stiffly cleaned,
wrapping your strength within, around mine;
prepared for tomorrow's miles

we and machines;
only we moving, moving;
i could be here forever...

New Poetry by Sam Cherubin: “Don't About Not,” “Mermaid Tavern,” and “Emerald Inula”



SUN HOLDING ME / *image by Amalie Flynn*

Don't About Not

If I can't or think
do it like I'm doing now

a beach

sun holding me

I am holding space
not space itself

not looking
being

gathering toward me

sun's filaments

fluidity
is all I need

Mermaid Tavern

A night-wind touching bare backs lying down
and bare arms spooned across my bed, in blue
light dreaming over skin, light-fingered sparks
of seaweed, dendrites rippling through the room.

Scales rubbed against smooth sheets, in silver
puddled water, a smell of open
ocean, roseate tips of waves, our hips'
undulations, in my body's rhythmic memory.

Emerald Inula

i.

Apples in Schiller's desk, Balsam of Peru, rockrose,
rose alba, Helichrysum Everlasting, *Immortale*.
Why can't this be enough?

ii.

Dried petals staining the pages.

Attar of cells breathing sun.
Flesh never accepting, but aching.