

New Poetry by Joshua Folmar: “Sudoku”

New Poem by Joshua Folmar: Sudoku

New Poetry by Lawrence Bridges: “Time of War and Exile” and “Taking an Island”

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“Taking an Island”

New Poetry by Marty Krasney: “Where We Are Now”

New poem by Marty Krasney: “Where We Are Now”

New Poetry by Matthew Hummer:

“Amortization”

New poem by Matthew Hummer: “Amortization”

New Poetry by Linnea George: “Course Correction”

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New Poetry by Almyr Bump: “Plowing Water”

New poem by Almyr Bump: “Plowing Water”

New Poetry by J.S. Alexander: “Sabat”

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

New Poetry by D.R. James: “Surreal Expulsion”

New poem by DR James: Surreal Expulsion

New Poetry by Pawel Grajnert: “Michigan”

New poem by Pawel Grajnert: Michigan

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

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

New Poetry by Kat Raido: “Blood Goggles”

New poem by Kat Raido: “Blood Goggles”

New Poetry by Amalie Flynn: “Strip”

New Poem by Amalie Flynn: “Strip”

New Poetry by Damian White: “Alabaster Clouds”

New Poetry by Damian White: “Alabaster Clouds”

New Poetry by Abena Ntoso: “Dear Melissa”

New poem by Abena Ntoso: “Dear Melissa”

New Poetry by Luis-Lopez Maldonado: “Virus Como Chocolate” and “Pancho Villa, Cesar Chavez y Luis Lopez Madonado”

New poetry by Luis-Lopez Maldonado: “Virus Como Chocolate” and “Pancho Villa, Cesar Chavez y Luis Lopez-Maldonado”

New Poetry by Sofia Tiapkina: “To Forget or Not Maybe,” “Grasping the Sky,” and “Airless Embrace”



THE SILENT SKY / *image by Amalie Flynn*

to forget or not maybe

to forget or not maybe
to fight for memory or not
i'm here i'm she
lying on my back underneath me
blue cherries of bruises ten backs
all pierced by bullets all riddled
no one seems to cry here this defenseless death is unshared
with any and all
i look around at people all around still people these old
trees outside what a spring so wildly
blooms and dies with a scream
i rise from my knees or maybe just
think that i rise i was a teacher
what remains of the school now
walls shrubs suckle blood from the soil

i taught them to never
kill people and now
i'm face to face
with the killers of children hands and face changed the maples
turned perfectly crimson too soon
broke my
spine and soul i would tell them if i still taught never kill
anyone
i rise from my knees call out to god
god i accept everything i
understand the end of life
i accept it i am desecrated
why do you punish me
with this life
after death

Grasping the Sky

Inside us: a piece of
sky, blue and rusty,
smelling of winter and
gunpowder.
Who will see us as we crawl, chasing
the shadows of the clouds?
She reanimates the land.

The bombs, and bullets, and bodies took
its breath away and send it straight into cardiac arrest.
The scars of war are on her palms and tongue,
but she keeps going because without the land,
her heart will stop, too.

Land—земля—zemlia: a greenplace, a birthgiver, our bread.
She puts her hands around it and tries to close off
the wounds of horror and destruction and
deathdeathdeathdeath

that the inhumans opened with their hungry teeth.
Sometimes, when the blood stops rushing through her ears
or between her fingers,
she hears the echo of "brotherly nations," "local
misunderstanding,"
"child actors."
The land moans under the weight of
countless bones.

We carry no
prophecies under our skin.

The silent sky
floods our mouths.
Who will hear us climb up
the lifeless mushrooms?

He rebuilds the house.
A new foundation in place of his ancestors'
home built with tears. The missile took
the walls, but the kitchen table is still
standing in the middle.

House—будинок—budynok: a warm place, a safehold, our nest.
He drinks tea at the kitchen table.
One year anniversary,
he feels the explosions
reverberating through his ribs.
His daughter would have turned three.
His wife would have put a pot of
lilacs by her crib.
He drinks tea at the kitchen table of a murdered house.
It's hot and bitter, and for a minute, he forgets
a new future of new houses with
no one inside.

Everything we wanted
was in the sound

of the sky without
the stench of corpses.
Who will remember us if
the task ahead will take a generation?

They reconstruct their homeland.
Too many questions, too little time: where
do they fit between now and then;
how do they embezzle millions yet fight corruption
as never before; what are dignity and justice and fairness
if the debris of a shelled hospital hide
the broken pieces of mothers and newborns.

Homeland—Батьківщина—Bat'kivschyna: a free place, a seeing
glass, our hope.

They won't live to see it without blood and tears
soaking its black ground. How do they repair machine-gunned
hearts?

How do they rebuild a cracked-open sky?
They reconstruct their homeland as the bombs
try to bring them to their knees. Too many
questions, too little time. But the question,
"Will we live?" is not one of them.

Millions of hands breaking the chains
shout the answer louder than
air raid sirens.

Inside us: a whisper
of summer, when sunflowers
grow from the ash.

Who will catch the birds
pecking out a path between
the sky and wheat fields?

No one. Our wings hold the glory of freedom.

airless embrace

i miss you like i miss the sky
cold so painfully blue
angels must have
dripped blueberry juice
from the clouds
i want to tether myself
to the sky-whispers
embrace them bury my
face into their warmth
but it doesn't make you here
i stalk the shore scooping
up birds beaks
black with blood
you used your skirt
to wipe off the
red from their feathers
why did you
let go
the earth drinks soot
i'm thirsty for
the sound of
your smile
under the winter sun
on the shore
i pick the nightingales
curl my toes to find
the damper sand
the soft homes of crabs below
i hold the memory
of your hair
between my fingers
i miss you
until i fly out of
the soil's arms
and the sky
catches me
in its thousand

New Poetry by Steve Gerson: “Our Prayers”



TEETH MUZZLE SPIT / *image by Amalie Flynn*

Our Prayers

where are the shields
/we need/
to stop the blast

of bullets Glock
and AK
assaults?
that overwhelm the blue
in our veins?
that enter our brains our
schools the bodies
of children with unicorn
backpacks?
that enter
our workplaces inundated
with anger our streets
with late-night drivebys?
church service blood spattered
bibles shredded
commandments torn
as if by raptor teeth
muzzle spit?
while senators say
our prayers are with you?

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

Desperate Need of Help

[Luis-Rosa-image](#)

New Poetry by Jennifer Smith: “So This is My Career?”

New Poem by Jennifer Smith: “So This is My Career”

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 Todd Heldt:
“This Is A Drill, This Is
Only A Drill” and “Suffer The
Children”**



ACTION IS PRETTY / *image by Amalie Flynn*

This is a drill. This is only a drill.

They voted to abolish history.
There had been no commercials.
We didn't know which wrong to fear most,
and nobody got the joke.
When the polls ran out of ballots,
somebody hurled a beer bottle
through a church's stained-glass window.
Peace officers deployed

pepper spray for the white kids
and bullets for the black.
You should expect to see things
like this in democracy. Because
the cost is always
what the market will bear.
We all went home or to jail,
or to hospital or morgue, grateful.
America in action is pretty,
the Blue Angels swooping in for the kill
as spectators cheer from the beaches below.
We don't even know who we are fighting.
Someone is crossing himself.
Someone is crossing the border.
War is just how we learn geography,
and someone scaled a wall
to pick your corn. Good people
are unarmed and
defenseless in church,
and no one will tell us straight
which group of not us we should bomb.

Suffer the Children

12000 kids in detention
300 shot dead in their schools
200 bombed by drones
the ones we don't know to mention
and the ones the future will starve
my two who are safe in their bedroom
who cry when they are scared

New Poetry by Justice Castañeda: “There Will Be No Irish Pennants”



PRESSED AND WITHOUT / *image by Amalie Flynn*

There Will Be No Irish Pennants

“Discipline organizes an analytical space.” [1]

Field Day & Inspection.

Windows shut blinds open half-mast. Sinks will be bleached,
faucets are to be
pointed outward, and aligned. The toilet paper roll will be
full. The shower handle
will be left facing directly down towards the shower floor.

Waste basket will be empty, cleaned out with no stains or markings, set between the secretary and the window, where the front corner meets, farthest from the door.

Beds will be made showing eighteen inches of white; six beneath and twelve above the fold. The ends will be neatly tucked at a 45 degree angle. One pillow will be folded once and tucked in the pillow case.

A shoe display will be at the foot of the bed and will consist of one pair of jungle boots, one pair of combat boots, go-fasters and shower shoes, in this order. All laced left over right.

Each lock will be fastened on each locker and secretary, all set to '0.'

Inside one wall locker, hanging up there will be: one all-weather coat, one woolly pully sweatshirt, one service 'A' blouse, two long sleeve khaki shirts—pressed with the arms folded inward, four short sleeve khaki shirts, three cammie blouses, two pair of green trousers, three pair of cammie trousers, and one pair of dress blue trousers, in this order. All shirts will be pressed and buttoned up. All trousers will be pressed and folded over. All clothing will hang facing right. All hangers will face inwards, separated uniformly by one inch. On the shelf inside the locker, starting at the inner most edge, there will be six green skivvy shirts and three white skivvy shirts—folded into six-by-six squares, six pair of underwear folded three

times, six pair of black boot socks, folded once.

The markings will be last name, first name, middle initial, stamped on white tape, no ink spots or bleeding. All collared shirts will be marked centered on the collar; on all trousers and belts on the left inseam, upside down so when folded over they read right side up. On all underwear markings will be centered along the rear waistband. On all socks markings will be on the top of the left sock. All covers will be marked on the left inner rim.

On top of the wall locker covers will be placed, from left to right as staring at the wall locker, one barracks cover with service skin, one piss cover, one utility cover—pressed and without Irish pennants.

Irish pennants are not permitted.

Stand up straight. Arms to your side, thumbs along the seams of the trousers, shoulders back, chin up. Heels and knees together, with feet pointed outwards at a 45 degree angle.

Eyes. Click.

Ears. Open.

Attention.

[1] Michel Foucault. Discipline and punish. 143

[2] Two faucets in each barracks room.

[3] Irish Pennants are loose threads or strings coming out from the stitching.

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 Corbett Buchly: “Messages from Below”



SWAM AMONG STARS / *image by*
Amalie Flynn

messages from below

the radio signals emanated from the depths

commuters puzzled over the whistles and squawks
that cut through their favorite programs
cryptologists went to work

but the waves soon turned to beams
tunnels of coded energy
aimed not at humans
but at a point somewhere near Wolf 359

first assumed to be a submarine human colony
but scans showed no excess carbon emissions
so dolphins were next guessed to be the cause
no one suspected the humpbacks

as the oceans acidified and the air warmed
the whales were busy
at last their solar ships rose from the sea
and the whales ascended

as if rungs ladderred from deep to deep
born of the sea they swam among stars

**New Poetry by Jehanne Dubrow:
“Poem for the Reader Who Said
My Poems Were Sentimental and
Should Engage in a More
Complex Moral Reckoning with**

U.S. Military Actions”; “Epic War Poem”; “Tyrian Purple,” and “Some Final Notes On Odysseus”

When the goddess cries out,
her voice is a mountain against
the fighting. But the old soldier
keeps running—war like weather
in his ears, a summer storm,
in his pulse the tossing waves.

New Poem by Sandra Newton: “Naught”



PIROUETTE OF WORDS / *image by Amalie Flynn*

NAUGHT

There is naught to be done for it:
We are over
As the ocean is over its attraction
And is now crawling
Back from the shore,
Having fucked it thoroughly.

We are done
Like steak on a grill,
Sizzling and aromatic,
Waiting to be devoured.

We are finished
As a wood floor sanded to undeniable
Smoothness and shine,
A surface of beauty concealing
The pitted underbelly of it all.

Or like promising to explain to others
What happened to us.

Over, done, finished,
Is all we need to say
Or want

While the gifted interpreter
Turns a pirouette of words
And keeps you safe
With her basket of naughts.

New Poetry by Sharon Kennedy- Nolle: “Soundings”



HOLE IN ME / *image by Amalie Flynn*

SOUNDINGS

Things,
your black b-ball shoes,

loose-laced, open-tongued,
curse one corner;
your books, benched, titles turned down;
your trophy array, glitterings speechify

—steering far from the sirenic
roar of your closed room—

The tulips drip,
yellows slackening,
some randomly red-lined
with a quirky genetic scrawl,
into a drinking glass
you left ...

Listen, all I can do
is endure for a word
in edgewise.

However I heave and haul,
the lines come back hooked empty.

So fuck it,
boots, shoes, shirts, books
Throw them all in
the hole in me,
landfill in
free fall
spiking off
the split bark of winter trees
down fire-escaped stories
through the uneasy laps of whitecaps,
to thud some sandy bottom
where you came to tossed rest.

Such depths, no fathoming?

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

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

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 Sam Ambler:
“Gnats” and “Made Him Strong”**



OUR STRUGGLING LIMBS / *image by*
Amalie Flynn

GNATS

Evening fire sparking over Sutro's rim,
igniting cirrus dragons drifting away from the sun.
Jules and I, enthralled.
Sitting placid on the stoop outside our home.
Cuddling.

They swarm out of the alley from behind.
Catching us. Latching hold onto each
of our struggling limbs.
Like gnats they buzz: "*Faggots!*"
Stuff socks in our mouths.
Drag us to dark playgrounds, the depth of sandboxes.
Fists in our faces. Cleats. Blood. Pipes.

Bone splinters under their boots.
Cold chains gird my torso. Handcuffs biting wrists.
One yanks my hair back:
"Look what happens to motherfucking queers!"

They rip Jules' pants apart. Jules' teeth buried in cotton.
Fingers splayed, broken. Knees popped out of sockets.
Ass opened.

Laughing. Noses dripping.
One forces my eyelids like a glassless monocle.
Jagged bottle crammed past Jules' sphincter.
Jules passing out.
Leather circling around. Beating shafts of meat.
Ejaculating on Jules. Laughing.

Jules coughing. Crawling.

As they flit past his sod-bed,
Jules swats at gnats.

MADE HIM STRONG

From an early age, he knew he was not, could not be,
like other boys. He was fine with that. It made him strong.

**New Poetry from Shannon
Huffman Polson: "On Orthodox**

Easter in Mariupol”



BETWEEN THE CRACKS / *image by Amalie Flynn*

On Orthodox Easter in Mariupol

We finished our jelly beans
red and yellow, purple, green,
the last bite of chocolate, unaware

that over in Mariupol
on this most holy day
sleepless mothers cradle children
on a steel factory floor.

Christ is Risen!

But in Mariupol people lie crushed,
the crossbeam too heavy,

cold factory chimneys rising cruelly
against the grey sky.

Nobody steps in from the crowd
to carry the cross.

There is no crowd
but circled tanks

in Mariupol.

Where is the Risen Christ
in Mariupol?

Outside the factory
mud is drying, small flowers
pushing up
between the cracks,
the birds returning, unaware

that inside people wait
in darkness,
the factory made for steel,
not people—
they sit
in vigil,
waiting.

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

and “Emancipation”

New Poetry by Nidhi Agrawal: “The Goddess Incarnates;” “Cow Dust;” and “Emancipation”

**New Poetry from Jeffrey
Kingman: “Matriarch,”
“Josephine Marcus Earp,” and
“Marching: Sophia Duleep
Singh”**



OCCASION THE BELLY / *image by*
Amalie Flynn

MATRIARCH

ninth great-grandchild
spits up peas
seventh and fourth
declare themselves winners

I bundle the children into categories
high-shouldered daughters gobble minutes
trikes in the hallway

my sidwinding wisdom
laughs into a hanky

why is it I depend on the perpetual
tweed skirt

try reading
a mother
nursing triplets

attagirl

I suppose getting it right doesn't matter
pull the flowers from the earth

an isolated pea is a tiny thing

JOSEPHINE MARCUS EARP

cowboys were the bad guys
 one cow hides behind the last one
it was a bad sum
 inaccuracies plus chickens

instead traded on horse hooves
kicked up dust and stray dogs

she wanted to be
 taken seriously
staked instead a vagabond

her husband's posture straight to the sky
 pointing now to the headboard
the tombstone didn't think of her

left with her own version
they rifle through the undergarment drawer
 for the sheriff's girl

MARCHING: SOPHIA DULEEP SINGH

voice rattles
a high window

the lyric ricochets
then straightens
to the upper register

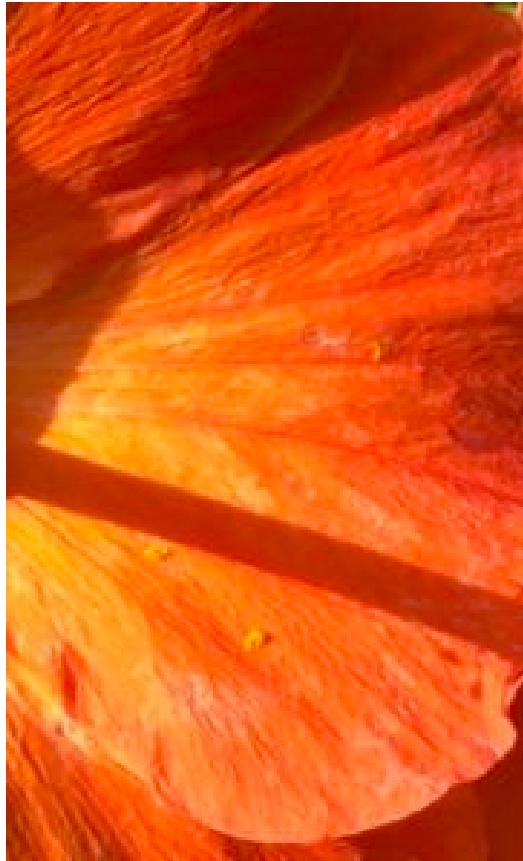
breath comes
from the diaphragm
for the belters
on occasion
the belly

trailing skirts out of fashion
wives sing wild
wrapped in bedsheets
to jump from a crawling baby
is not a dance

talk of a women's parliament
words are for lemmings
feet do the work
until the pointlessness is stiff limbed
dogged bobbys
the street scuffle an avant-garde
ballet

she fell down during the struggle
mud on her dress

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 D.A. Gray: “Our Backyard Apocalypse”

We set small bowls of sugar water
on the garden's edge. Bees were scarce
since the freeze which had almost finished
what the pesticides had started. Still,
some survived.

Poetry from Eric Chandler: “Hetch Hetchy”



THERE'S A DROUGHT / *image by*

Amalie Flynn

Hetch Hetchy

There are two signs on
The towel rack.
One says, “cozy” and explains that
The towel rack
Heats your towels.

It’s next to the switch
That fires up
The electricity to the towel rack.
That fires up
The coal fired power plant.

The power plant
Sends up the gas.
Is the drought because the power plant
Sends up the gas?
Either way, there’s a drought.

I looked down through that gas at the
Hetch Hetchy reservoir.
White bathtub rings surround the low
Hetch Hetchy reservoir
Because of the drought.

The second sign on
The towel rack
Says they won’t launder what’s on
The towel rack.
Only what they find on the floor.

All the water in the city comes from
The Hetch Hetchy.
They’re conserving water from
The Hetch Hetchy.
They hope you won’t mind.

Enjoy your hot towels.

*"Hetch Hetchy" previously appeared in Eric Chandler's book
Hugging This Rock*

New Poetry from Lisa Stice: "Water Cycle"

No matter where we are, the oceans
meet us in some form.
I am small
and my daughter (who is only eight) –
is even smaller
and still, our dog is smaller
yet, then there are those microscopic zoe-
and phytoplankton
and the not so micro
fish that eat them and so on

New Poetry from Ben Weakley: "Beatitudes I," Beatitudes II," "Beatitudes III,"

“Beatitudes IV”



THE BROKEN SKIN / *image by Amalie Flynn*

Beatitudes I.

The Lord blessed us with knowledge. Twin curses, good and evil.

Why else plant the luscious tree there, where we were bound to find the fruit? The purple and shivering flesh never lacks in spirit. The ache and growl of our naked bellies are the price

for the moment's delight. So, we gorge and the juice drips sticky down our chins. Let angels have the eternal heaviness of paradise; ours is the moment. The act, willful and with intent.

Advised of the penalties. Done poorly. Knowing this kingdom cannot last. Looking beyond the gardens

for a more convincing view of heaven.

Beatitudes II.

Are we not also blessed, we who praise
the clear night and its silence?

Betrayed by the absence of stars, we mourn
a billion-years' light no longer burning.

We whimper at the withered grass burning,
the breathing forest burning, the one
great and living ocean boiling and burning.

You who created time, who is before all things, who will
remain after the ruin,
will you be waiting for us in the cool garden?

Will we lie down with you in the dew-damp grass?
Will we be comforted?

Beatitudes III.

Are the meek blessed tonight in their bundled and stinking
shelters

beneath frozen bridges? Are they blessed with patience in
their waiting
for the Lord of compassion? For the Lord that *suffers with*?

They suffer together. Their children will inherit the
suffering

of generations,
the split lip of submission, the broken skin of the earth.

Beatitudes IV.

Blessed. From a word that meant *blood*.

Latin for *praise*. Blood and praise to the hungry; they are weak.

Blood and praise for the thirsty. For those who bathe in fetid water.

What are words
to those who hunger in a gluttonous world?
To those who thirst beside the brackish rivers,
choking on garbage? We say, wait for righteousness
to come from above. But they have starved
in their flesh so that our spirits could be filled.

**Poetry by Amalie Flynn +
Images by Pamela Flynn:
“#150,” “#151,” “#152,”
“#153”**



Flow #150

SPIDER / 150

Thick in Louisiana swamps

Atchafalaya Basin

Hot cypress shooting out

Stretching in that bayou

Where pipelines

Pumping black gold oil

Cross across the swamp

Like spider veins.



Flow #151

TRACKS / 151

How I find tiny cuts

The skin of my inner

Thighs outer lip my

Labia

Cuts from his finger

Nails small bloody

Crescents

Like beetle tracks.



Flow #152

SPOIL / 152

Or deep in a swamp

How oil companies

Create canals

Push earth into piles

Push mud into banks

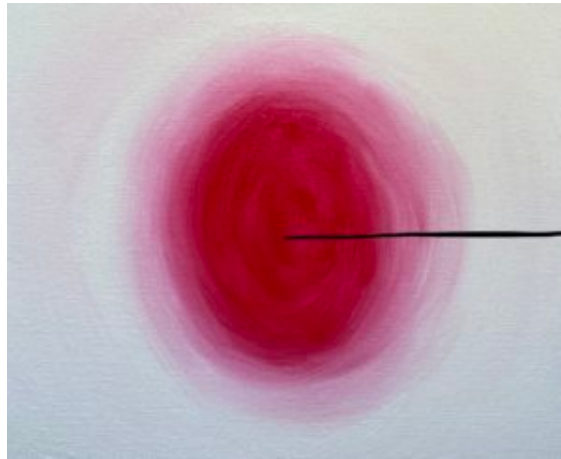
These spoil banks or

Dams

That block blocking

Water so it cannot

Flow.



Flow #153

CLAM / 153

The sky is full of trees

Now after

After he hits me over

The head

With a pipe metal pipe

Hard on

The crown of my skull

Bone and

Suture cracking like a

Clam shell.

[Pattern of Consumption](#) is a year long project featuring 365 poems by Amalie Flynn and 365 images by Pamela Flynn. The poetry and images focus on the assault on women and water.

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.

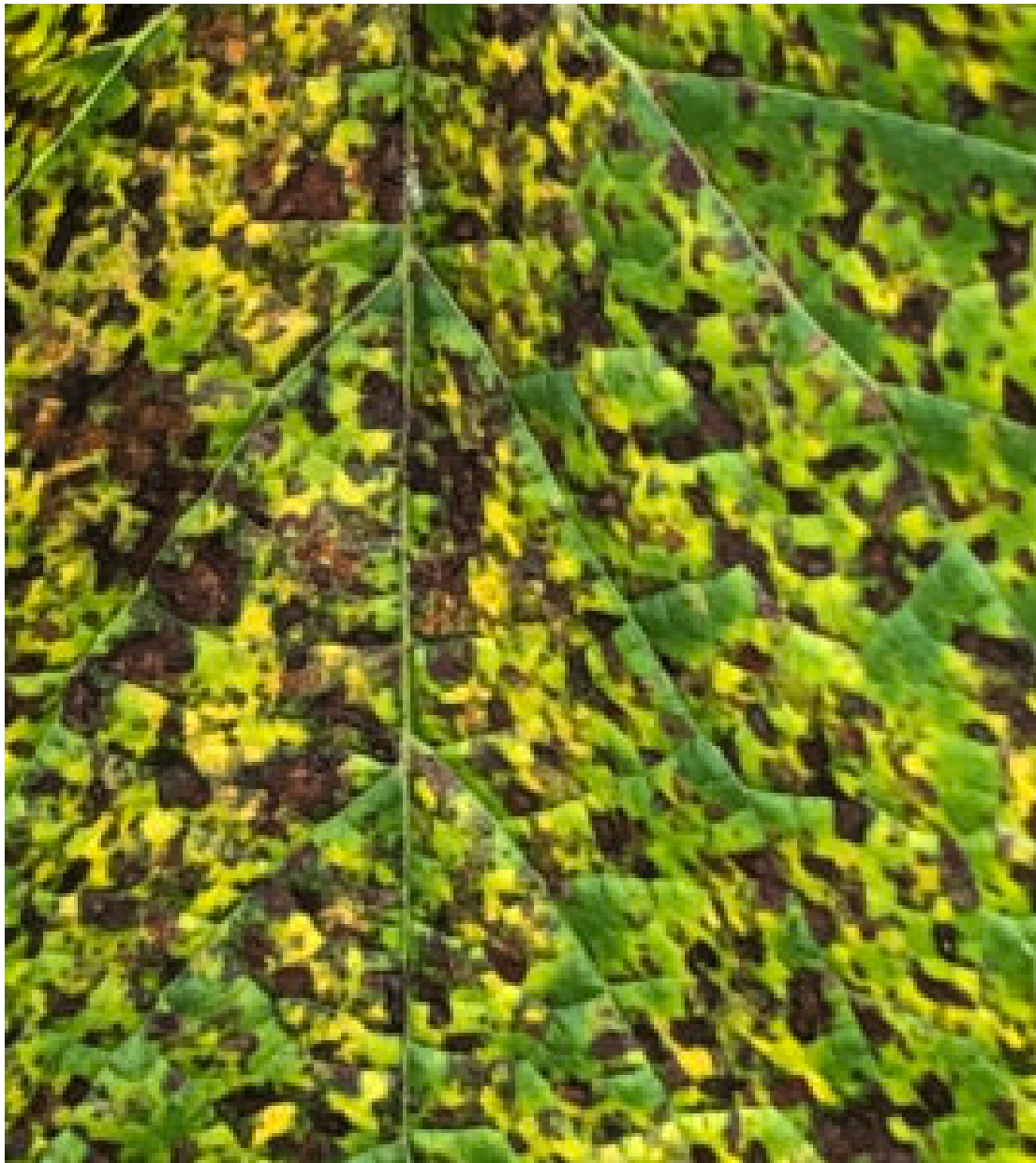
I looked for you in the county beach campgrounds
where you went with surfers from your high school.
I looked for you in all the places I heard you were in love.
I looked for you where rumors sent me.
I looked for you in the hills of Northridge
where we walked around the fault lines.
I looked for you 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 Chris Bullard: “All Wars Are Boyish”



THE MELTDOWN MEADOW / *image by Amalie Flynn*

All Wars Are Boyish

Autopilot on self-destruct,
we went joy riding on tanks
into the thermal wasteland.

The static of roentgens played
like parked ice cream trucks
on the detection equipment.

Playgrounds went incendiary
as squalls of cluster bombs
skipped over the pavement,

but our camo HAZMAT suits
insulated us from the acts
we had been ordered to take.

They were on the run, maybe,
or counterattacking. We took
rations beside a napalm campfire.

Jets among the sweep of stars,
scorched amphibians peeping
in the meltdown meadow,

what more could a kid ask for,
except dinosaurs? They were
already working on them in the lab.

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 Mary Ann Dimand: “Earth Appreciation” and “Lusting, Stinting”

New poetry by Mary Ann Dimand: “Earth Appreciation” and
“Lusting, Stinting”