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The Sandstar Review

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A Replica of Venice

In a garage off West Fortieth
Burke has built a full-scale replica of Venice, complete with canals, glories of St. Mark’s, the campaniles, mysteries of the Doge’s Palace, Bridge of Sighs, Arsenal, churches of gilt and mosaic. On this set Burke films himself as detective solving crimes in Venetian byways whose narrow streets end at canals where carcasses bob on greasy slick.

With a federal small-business loan Burke has hired a troupe of actors to live in the ancient palazzi and faux-murder each other with grace and aplomb. He tries to peddle his series to networks, but no one believes he’s rebuilt Venice not quite a mile west of Midtown.

As they watch the tapes the eyes of executives glaze with daydreams of the actual Venice. They’re sure Burke has filmed his series there. They won’t buy his product until he confesses that he’s tricked them and hired real Italian actors at far less than union scale.

Meanwhile Burke can’t pay the rent, so the owner of the garage evicts Venice and the actors. He hauls St. Mark’s and the Palace
to the dump in the Meadowlands where the great Penn Station repines. The canals pour into the Hudson, leaving scum on the concrete floor. Burke retires to a single room in Chelsea and sighs greater sighs than the Doges ever inspired.

His detective’s unable to solve the mystery of his great ambition, unable to follow the draining of his Grand Canal, the crumbling of thousands of mosaics, toppling of two great campaniles, and most poignantly the renaming of famous antique palazzos after the many crooked mayors true New Yorkers always love.
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Antoinette Forstall

At a Tender Age

They had covered the path in palm leaves before me. And I rode with my legs swung over the side of an ass.

We were sitting with our backs to the wall, searching through the city skyline for the occasional medical helicopter. Skaters swarmed in circles around ramps and dips, and kids sat with their legs hanging off the wall, their feet kicking the air.

This isn’t my story to tell.

She signified that I was the one with a kiss on my cheek.

We smoked cigarettes as the night fell upon us, pinning itself on the skyscrapers. We had driven in circles for hours, and we had been lost, and we’d been found by a field. We wanted it to find us again, but it was too distant and its beauty was so immaculate. I was almost afraid to see it again; next time, the sky wouldn’t be painted in gray and lavender, or there would be a corpse of a cat.

They bound my hands and led me away to my final earthly judgment.

We walked around the park, and we thought that You Are Beautiful.
We crossed under a bridge and we thought, You Are Not Beautiful Because You Chose Not To Be. We thought it would be nice if you were to open your eyes, and see that this is not true. But your mother made you go to sleep so early. And you did not have anywhere to go anyways.

I will rise from the dead in three days.

I have filled the shoes of those girls before me, those who wrote on the bathroom walls and stayed with their wings shut all of the time. I have a list of songs that you must sing before my funeral, and I want to be burnt on a pyre so my ashes can mingle with the air and the dove wings and I can make my way to heaven. Never bury me. I will just sink straight into hell.

Although, I dreamt about floating into the ocean on fog, in a carved boat filled with smoldering logs and luscious lilies and roses.

I will crack the temple into halves.
My father really isn’t that powerful. He’s like me.

The world is making a strange, horrifying noise. I am worried that it could collapse any day now.

I am constantly tired. I fall asleep everywhere I shouldn’t, under tables and in class and propped on uncomfortable restaurant chairs. I don’t mind that much. It’s everyone else who is worried and offended.

I wish we lived in Europe, because there no one minds if you smoke or drink or pretty much do anything else, and you never have to show anyone your I.D. I know it seems like a
ridiculous reason to be in love with a continent, but hell, people have been in love with a lot stranger things.

I guess it’s impossible for me to get things done in a p8ntraul.

I don’t remember saying that last sentence that was ascribed to my dozing brain. Every day, at this time, my eyelids are as heavy as my heart.

I don’t want to defile myself with ink and writing and fake colors splashed in the most narcissistic way.

I would never ask myself to be around you so often; there is too much transfer of my blood onto your hands.

Changed from bread and wine into flesh and blood, she died a virgin, drowning in her own anointment at birth.

There will be stars and flickers of warm light and dripping wax, and I will serve you thick and creamy elixir that will slide into your essence and make you a more understanding person, and we will be enchained by smoke together and together we shall venture forth into flowers and thorns, and I will tell you their Latin names.

I will sing to you and you will sing to me, we have promised each other, and I will find time in the back of my closet and under the loose floorboard in my bedroom. I will wrap it all up and present to you little by little, and I will try not to be the storminess which you try to avoid. And after months and years of counting the hours and the times of writing and spilling paint, we will be.
My mother and my father taught me how to say please and thank you, and I would fall over a branch and scrape my palm, and you would wash it, and kiss it, and we would both cry when we saw my blood. I don’t know why, but I knew that I would understand and so would the world someday. I remember all of my childhood, but I do not feel like it belonged to me. I feel like it belonged to a different person who chose a different path at the age of eight. And I felt at peace for that person, and I kept my load firmly on my back, splinters digging through my robe and into my shoulders, sweat and blood streaming down my body, leaving a trail on the path behind me.

My mother wore a beautiful crown of roses, pink as the morning sky, as fresh and round as her smiling eyes. But under the modest glory, thorns dug into her head, her scalp bleeding, and she would watch her children run by her feet, and she would smile at her husband, and she would live a life that would be prayed to forever.

She would have never been confined to curl under the mass of her life, desperate for a way to escape into the darkness. And here I am, her daughter-son, forever afraid of death and fear and people’s eyes turning mean, with stones in their hands.

And here I am, able to run free, past the decisions in my life. I watch every decision in my life, and I watch all of the faces morph, and I keep circling back to the eighth year of my feet treading on the dusty roads of Jerusalem, and the final year of my head floating with my ambitions in the blackened desert sky.
We were moving from one city to another with the rest of the Jews. If you’d like to hear the more detailed, adult perspective of the story, there are wiser men who have written a more elegant tale. That is not my purpose. I was a child, with the knowledge that my blood was to be spilled sleeping in my bed and treading on my shadow. And my parents went in two separate herds of people, and I watched the men, then the women leave. My feet would not take me with them, though my heart panged for my father’s hands and my mother’s lap. I walked to the temple. I walked through the quiet rows of clay houses, making a procession in the center of the street. And in front of the temple, I found a group of children, sitting quite abandoned on the bottom step. We saw each other, each for what the other truly was. They had a leader, a girl who stood, and bowed, and asked to lead me to the sanctuary. I smiled at her, sad for her pain. I followed her up the marble stairs, and I looked back at the children. I stopped, I could not forget about my own. I went down and touched each where their hearts were.

“You were blind and now you see,” I whispered.

Then I ran back to the girl, almost afraid of their glowing faces. She took my hand and guided me through gardens, empty rooms, and then to the sanctuary. She stopped by the door, and I took her shoulders. She had golden brown eyes and mahogany hair, and she saw into my crown of thorns and the fluttering heart.

She couldn’t say anything without me already knowing it, so she kissed my lips gently.

I went into the sanctuary and was blinded by the golden light, so alien to the human world.

I woke up at some early hour and I did not know where I was. I rolled over in my bed and turned my light on. My dog
started and looked up at me. I sat up, looking into the mirror that was my armoire across from my bed, and I saw my own exhausted face. I fell back into my pillow, and slept, not to dream any more that night.

But you know that is a lie. That was not a dream. And that cannot be the proper ending of this story. This tale feels too mythical.
Howie Good

Monster

Hear that? A low wailing? Like a tornado of meat flies? I must have signed my name in the wrong place or acquired the wrong kind of expertise. As I drive into town, the glass eye soaks overnight in a glass of wine. No one among my so-called friends volunteers to save me. There used to be a rule, Monstrous face, monstrous soul. The crow furiously pecking at something red in the road ignores it.
Twelve to Fourteen Years

I do not understand why so many people
are more concerned about eternity
than driving within the speed limit.
It probably has something to do with October
and the celebration of Halloween
which seems to have lost its hallow-ness.
Since I enjoy a good conspiracy theory,
I prefer the idea that it is the fault
of the parakeet union striking for a longer life.
Anything that can drop a feather to waft
so elegantly, almost silent, upon currents of air
should be around a few years longer.
Tabulation

Unable to love you
the way you want to be loved
I do all the household chores
and stagnate in indecision
for a few days that add up to three,
then I slide my time worn hands
around the door knob
and turn it counterclockwise
to remove myself
from this troubled silence you prefer
and trust there is a sun
above this November grey wash
that cannot decide
if it is snow or if it is rain.
Danielle Hurd

killing habits

breathe in
killing yourself slowly but darling, you smell like a poem. there is tobacco under your skin, smelling like a home away from home. cold feet, rain here yesterday, cooled everything off, made it easier to breathe. you smoke menthol because you miss basil and that is the saddest part of all. tonight you inhale and lose yourself in one burn or another, warm glass under your fingers thumb on a lighter and you are getting better at this, might be good one day, recognizing the stutter slow stop of your thoughts, becoming one in the present moment faster than yoga can bring you there, but your bones still ache. people are here, other smokers, they are better. this is their habit, you are just visiting. you are looking for a new habit, because poetry is not good enough, because it takes up the time but you also breathe it sleep it drink it eat it it is not a habit poetry is homeostasis. it is equilibrium. your feet are cold because it rained and you are laughing at a conversation you are a part of and it has been a while, a long while since you laughed and meant it. this is their habit and you probably won’t pick it up, but it was nice to try.

breathe out
Midnight on the Youkali Express

This train stands still as the world
goes by—a blur of lights & speeding
darkness, the earth beneath us rumbling
and rolling. The shrill whistle gets a cold
finger from chimneys jutting out of half-
shuttered houses in the distance.

From the opposite side of the aisle (somewhere
in the collective stop-start stupor) I nod
by mistake and you smile.
Small talk reveals your preference
for riding backward, recklessly toward
the future, and my irrational fear of the slowly
disappearing past—a need to face ahead.

A passenger staggers by, hesitating
between us like a breath-held
pause, defining a moment.

This train drones on
under sinew and sleeplessness.
Sitting together now, coffee thermos
and whiskey flask keep us
company, raising questions about the scar
on your throat and my crooked
jaw—until a burst

of lightning, a beat of thunder, an x-ray
flash on black glass: glittering
runnels spread to enfold us in
the sensation of being
far from departure and destination.

This train cries out between breathless
mountains, chanting fountains and frozen churches, lunging back and lurching along the final widening grin of track.

Thermos and flask emptied of every drop, the shimmering sky and the conductor calls the stop as we stretch out the last leg of a journey just beginning.
Crossing

Sailboats and swans and pure
white clouds big as lawns

as we cross the Youkali.
There is an ocean between us.

Slow ferry ride, water
mirroring the sky, a glassy calm

that must belie the absence
beating in our hearts.

What is lost cannot be regained:
ripples sever the lake

leaving brilliant scars of light.
Seagulls soaring in mid-air,

their freedom merely mockery
as we cross the Youkali.
Evenfall

At dusk I took my pad onto the porch and tried to wrestle the crimson sky into six lines. I give up now. I have lost faith in the opaque, charcoal line.
When she’s born

In the womb of this treacherous terrain
dreams take seed
unfed, are born disfigured
uncared, grow stunted
before the sun bloodies the distant horizon,
the eve of their first shedding;
they lie violated.
Humiliation flows hot down the thighs
that have not yet returned from
sprightly chase after butterflies.
City Nights

she was a daughter of the house
on El Camino del Mar where
I did not exist

an import
from the Mediterranean
where spice had turned into perfume
and resin into the gems of
a hidden garden
from Munich
along her way to another
coast of sun and pomegranate
to be home

at twenty in the
doting house that let her hide me
a night or two in all the need
and confusion of her high room
where I
did not exist on El Camino del Mar

not longer
Bayou

Gliding through the bayou
Between the bald cypress trees
Draped with Spanish moss
In an aluminum canoe,
I press your tiny shoulders
Between my knees, take
Comfort in your firm grip
On my calves, convince
Myself you are old enough
To sit still and stay safe.
I point out dragonflies,
Duck blinds, lily pads,
Egrets, herons and catfish.
You sit silently, head swiveling
And eyes roving, ingesting
The new environment.
We scan the banks for alligators,
Listen for slithers and splashes,
Hoping for a little fright
Before returning to the familiar.
Sunday Drive

On the day we moved
Out of the house where
You were conceived,
We checked in to a hotel
And washed away the stench
Of moving. Then I strapped
You into your car seat
And took you for a Sunday drive.

You fell asleep one minute out
Of the parking lot, as planned,
But I drove for over an hour,
Covered thirty-three miles
Of northern Calhoun County
And briefly traversed southern
Eaton County. Free from
The demands of teaching,
Packing and moving, I relaxed
And explored. We drove down

Roads named Fourteen Mile,
W Drive North, Nineteen-
And-a-half Mile and Old 27,
Through Bellevue Village,
Walton and Lee Townships,
Across both I-94 and I-69,
Past two-storey brick farmhouses
Beside red wooden barns,
Past open fields sown with corn
And soy beans, through dense

Forest, hundreds of acres
Of swampland, by secluded
Luxury homes nestled on wooded
Acreage and four-room shacks
Surrounded by rusty trucks
And tractors. On Eighteen Mile
A fawn meandered across
Six feet in front of us
From her forest haven
To a narrow roadside creek.

On Nineteen Mile we passed
An unexpected field of lambs.
Capital letters spelt TROLLS
On a roadside mailbox.
We drove through Olivet
College, where Ford Maddox
Ford improbably taught amidst
Ivy-covered Anglophile architecture
And a lone brother sat with a beer
On his frat house porch.

As summer rain played
A tattoo on the windshield,
We drove down narrow roads
With trees embracing overhead,
Forming glistening tunnels
Of foliage. As we parked
In front of our hotel room
And you awoke, I wondered
Why it took four years to discover
The beauty of my own backyard.
Ice Skating Dindi

In my fantasy I’m skating
on a frozen Michigan lake,
stars peppery as a Perez Prado

mambo. A gorgeous woman
or man, why quibble,
sidles up. We’re beautiful.

We’re handsome. You ask
will I marry you.
You’ll have to be a man,

at least for now, or
we can skate to Vermont.
I awaken each night just

when you slip
the ring on my finger. Warm
bologna on the counter

I forgot to put away. Summer.
A rink forms
on a firefly’s wing

from love and diapers. Decades,
an icy sidewalk under
a high heel.
Opulent Dindi

In my dream I’m stinking rich and stinking drunk.
I wake up poor and sober.

Do trees dream? Holding sky in thickening branches, they may not need to. I doubt

I’d work out as wealthy—spend, spend, spend, and end up possessions reduced at resale shops and garage sales. I treasure tips, my paycheck, when I have one,

flimsy. Like most lovers, gone before I have it around very long.
“Weights”—Family Therapy Session

Baba, me, and our white psychotherapist:
the crazy Freudian mambo jumbo American crap.
Therapy was for the weak, the crazies—
like me, Baba, right?

But you were the crazy one that day.
You sat stoic as a stone,
never acknowledging my existence,
ever validating my pain.

“Cultural miscommunication” is all you’d say.
American crazies like psychotherapists twisting the truth to
 twist your pockets....
right Baba?
No, wrong again.

“You need to validate your daughter’s feelings,”
my therapist said.
But you didn’t validate me or my pain.
Didn’t validate the weights your father dumped on me at age eight
when he’d twirl my hair, kiss my lips, and call me his asal—
“ENOUGH,” you screamed.

“Now is the time to take your daughter's weights,”
my therapist said,
holding two five-pound weights.

You didn’t take my weights, Baba.
You never have—
you stormed out of the room,
leaving me there to shoulder the weights...
hoping I would do so in reverence to our family.
In reverence and in silence,
I carry these weights for you, Baba.
(Notes on) A Small Flat Town

Outskirts
Trimmed in dead corn

Snow shaken from
The pelt of a passing storm

Brick husks of the hardware store
The beauty school
The collectible shoppe that sold
Pearl-oysters in cans
And antique postcards

Sorrows raging
Out of the heart’s cellar
When the neighbor girl came out
To hoe black rows
Newly recovered

Old men in denim coats
Drinking in the park
Like crows—filthy! loud!—
Squandering
Their arguments as the starry resources of
Winter tricked into splendor

Houses
Knotted
Under cottonwoods
Out of danger
A game of hide and seek

Her last chip, this London hospital, the underground burrowing back through time to emerge in elegant Bloomsbury, where quaint signposts, polite as old fashioned policemen, told her way to the square with its railed garden. The building was grand as a Victorian railway hotel but stepping through doors that parted with a swish, she time travelled onto the bridge of the Starship Enterprise. Having given the slip somewhere in Kent to hospital records that bulged like a stalker’s scrapbook, she bore only a hastily scribbled note from her GP, so sat before this consultant, with the medical history of a new born. Seeing him nod after her responses was like ticking off the numbers in the lottery draw. A flourish of his fountain pen and she found herself entombed in an MRI machine. When his lines of enquiry were foiled by her tight-lipped body, I think we’ll keep an eye on you, knowing that some diseases like to play a game of hide and seek. So writing essays in the waiting room gave way to marking year 7 homework as check ups routinely reassured her, I don’t think there’s anything to worry about. So for years she didn’t.
Bedside Manners

A morning’s treasure hunt around London to distract her; peering in the overdressed windows of the drag queen shop at slippers fit for Brobdingnag Cinderellas. In the hospital waiting room he found a copy of ‘The Lady’ magazine whilst she shielded her eyes against the young woman with double sticks tottering towards the consulting room like a toddler taking her first steps. Well it’s not what you want to hear but it’s good news from our point of view. 10 years of baffled shrugs and suddenly during a check-up that was more of a courtesy, a medic thought he saw something out of the corner of his eye.

In her head the soundtrack to a disaster movie as she pulled out the list of questions from her bag. But each we don’t know revealed the specialist to be as ignorant of her condition as an 18th century sawbones. Her final ask like turning and facing the monster chasing her, Will I end up in a wheelchair? The doctors smirked, Oh I rather think you are overegging the pudding there, as unintelligible to her as Latin. In the pub nearest the hospital he gabbled between gulps of red wine about stem cell technology, whilst she downed a large
gin and tonic then pulled out her notebook to examine forensically the doctor’s words but finding only a few tight-lipped phrases:

*unknown disease, no treatment*, she grimly began to tell her own fortune.
The Yard

A pig’s knucklebone stripped to the marrow
is thrown to the dog. A snarl of matted fur,
wet from the constant metal rain.
Its muzzle-caged head resists the weather of men.
Lamely it turns the soil red bone and sniffs the air.
In the chained up doorway
a carcass hangs like a veiled threat,
curing in the flies buzzing heat,
dripping sequins of fat,
as it pirouettes and swings.
On this ground, this field, this yard,
a butcher’s leather apron
lies in oil and mud.
The scars of steel and hoof
etched in the steam of slaughter.
In the bins, shining balloons of intestines overflow,
finding split and folded skin,
livid green and pink their drum,
and all the while the grey rain spits and arcs
flowing down the gutter’s rusted line.
Persephonae Velasquez

truth

truth exists only in the south
you said, embers firing as you inhaled.
Raw sienna clouds against a navy sky, your smoke
gray pinwheels. Each leaf in your
cigarette moaned and crisped. I laughed.
what kind of truth is this?
You exhaled through your nostrils, kneeled
and left a streak of tobacco, charred and dried,
on the pavement.
only she knows. and she ain't sayin'.
Musing on Cézanne’s Mont Sainte-Victoire Series: 1885, 1886, 1900

“A work of art which did not begin in emotion is not art.”
—Paul Cézanne

The outlines of my mother's eyes
curve smoothly, blended mountain gray,
pine and shadowed snow.
Her skin is the color of sunrise
on Mont Sainte-Victoire, both darkened
and sun-facing, her arms tanned
from pruning her garden. Faint lines sprawl
from her forehead to her fingertips, smudged
by state lines and sleeveless pastels.

Her heart sighed for the dog on death row
and she brought him home that day, moved
books from the shelves to protect them
even as the rockers on the chair her mother bought
when I was born were gnawed into spear-points.
She rocked me in her lap every night and I
breathed in that day's perfume mixed with nicotine,
tickled by the hair she'd slather with cream
to straighten.

My mother's skin is the forest-edge,
river and aqueduct—her body traced
with black lines, tree-frog green,
stargazer lily and hyacinth, dotted
with studs and loops she keeps in an old tea tin.

She is the hum of cicadas and rooster calls,
drifting leaves in fall and she is
the girl who caught rattlers
in coffee cans, who sees truth
in both hanged men and cat's eyes, and people don’t stop to listen.
Nicola Walls

The Poet Must Write About His Plane Ride to Iowa City

data

the view from a mile
above the—
AMERICAN
MIDWEST:
the earth’s surface
was not engineered to cushion
the egos of the fifty-something
writerly types
quarantined to the front of the aircraft
“one’s soul is concrete,
cradled in the belly.
a fanny pack for my
metaphysical existence”
someone says over the asscrack of
a leather-bound, appropriately frayed
journal. twelve dollars and
fifty cents, tax not
included. twelve-fifty can buy you
a lot. twelve-fifty can buy
two weeks’ worth of soy beans at the least
soy beans contain estrogen. estrogen causes the same feelings
of being female that being female causes.

See:
I am not profound.
My only observation is
that the ground is planted with soybeans
and not nose-down airplanes
broken at the wings and bleeding
out burning poets from the rips in its steel,
while they scream:
THE HUMAN CONDITION IS FLAMMABLE.

This is what I am afraid of:
all of the part-time poets in the world
get on a plane to Iowa.
It doesn't crash and I am bored to death.
William Winfield Wright

**a natural history of your back**

it starts with fish
the long prehistory of fins

followed by the slow climb up the beach
the time of tails and then trees

a million years of hair
100,000 years of sunburn

10,000 years of clothes
and now the everyday marks

of freckles and injuries
the stiff shoulders and familiar mole

small curve and arch
you are not as supple

as when there was water
but you can carry more things

lovers children groceries books
all this

what doesn’t get revisited
in the 15 minutes it takes to scrub you?
clocks mean go to bed

your hair means it’s windy
jewelry that you have ears and wrists

taking so long in the shower means
come in here before the water runs out

walls are for hands
spoons are for contemplation

our clothes are designed
to lie on the floor and absorb sound

we move from awareness to application
wood/paper eggs/cake arm/fingers

we get our sea legs back
walking on the couch cushions

our bearings by pointing
your nose at the sun

I spill the salt on purpose
scratch my nose when I hear your car

box my ears so they ring
and then stare at the phone

clocks mean go to bed
where we’ll tell the time by counting your breaths
Contributors

**William Doreski**’s work has appeared in various online and print journals and several collections, most recently *Waiting for the Angel* (Pygmy Forest Press, 2009).

**Eva Eliav** grew up in Toronto, Canada and now lives in Israel. Her poetry and short fiction have been published in a number of literary magazines, including *Room of One’s Own, Natural Bridge, Stand, Flashquake, Quality Women’s Fiction, The Apple Valley Review, Horizon Review, The Linnet’s Wings* and *ARC Israel*. She received an honorable mention in the Glimmertrain Winter 2011 Very Short Story Competition. She is married and has a daughter.

**Antoinette Forstall** stole a wasp from its nest and cradled him for years. Now they’re both grown up, writing at the stroke of midnight, crawling under the Alabama sun. The wasp has grown so huge, he promises to carry Antoinette away one day.

**Howie Good**, a journalism professor at SUNY New Paltz, is the author of the full-length poetry collections *Lovesick* (Press Americana, 2009), *Heart With a Dirty Windshield* (BeWrite Books, 2010), and *Everything Reminds Me of Me* (Desperanto, 2011).

**Kenneth Gurney** lives in Albuquerque, NM, where he edits *Adobe Walls*, an anthology of New Mexico’s poetry.

**Danielle Hurd**, Alabama School of Fine Arts graduate. Current student at the University of Alabama. Fantasy writer. Woefully fond of confessional poetry, even it’s a bit self-centered.

**Steven Mayoff** is a full-time writer living on Prince Edward Island, Canada. His fiction and poetry have appeared in magazines across Canada and the US, as well as in Ireland,
Algeria and France. His collection of prose, *Fatted Calf Blues*, won a 2010 PEI Book Award.


Ananya Mishra is a student of English at the English and Foreign Languages University, India.

Rodney Nelson’s work began appearing in mainstream journals long ago; he then turned to fiction and did not write a poem for twenty-two years, restarting in the 2000s.

Nathanael O’Reilly was born in Warrnambool and raised in Ballarat, Brisbane and Shepparton. He now resides in Texas. His poetry has been published in journals and anthologies around the world, including *Antipodes, LiNQ, Blackmail Press, Harvest, Transnational Literature*, and elsewhere. He is the author of the chapbook *Symptoms of Homesickness* (Picaro Press, 2010) and a recipient of an Emerging Writers Grant from the Literature Board of the Australia Council.

Kenneth Pobo has a new chapbook out from Thunderclap Press called *Closer Walks*. His work appears in: *Hawaii Review, Nimrod, Stickman Review, 2River View*, and elsewhere.

Roxanne Rashedi received her Master of Arts in English with High Honors from Georgetown University in 2011 and her Bachelor of Arts in English with High Honors from the University of California Berkeley in 2009. She has presented excerpts of her thesis, *Deconstructing the Erotic: A Feminist*
Exploration of Bodies & Voice Lucille Clifton, Audre Lorde, Nella Larson, & Toni Morrison, at numerous conferences, most recently the Negation & Negativity conference, and an excerpt from the same thesis was published in the Spring 2011 issue of Predicate: An English Studies Annual. Roxanne lives in San Jose, California where she teaches yoga and English composition. She is currently working on a collection of short stories with the working title Saffron Lips.

Eric Rawson’s work has previously appeared in Agni, Ploughshares, American Poetry Review, Crazyhorse, Iowa Review, and other periodicals. His book The Hummingbird Hour was published in November.

Fiona Sinclair's work has been published in numerous reputable magazines. Her second collection will be published by Indigo Dreams Press late this year. She is the editor of the online poetry magazine Message in a Bottle.

Mark Stopforth is currently Head of Art in a school in Gloucestershire and as an artist has exhibited at The Royal West of England Academy, Bristol. As a poet he has been published by Leeds University Press, Sentinel Magazine and Writer's Forum, and has won Fleeting Magazine’s “short writing of the year 2010.”

Persephonae Velasquez is a second-year English student at Cornell College who enjoys cooking, container gardening and cat naps.

Nicola Walls comes from Alabama with a banjo on her knee. A recent graduate of the Alabama School of Fine Arts’ creative writing department, she served as co-editor-in-chief of Cadence. Her work has been recognized by such national writing competitions as Columbia College of Chicago’s Young Authors Fiction Contest and YoungArts. In the fall, she will be a student in the Blount honors program at the University of Alabama.
William Winfield Wright is a Fulbright Scholar and a Fishtrap Fellow. He was born in California, and currently lives in Grand Junction, Colorado, where he teaches at Mesa State College. He has been published in *The Beloit Poetry Journal, Borderlands: Texas Poetry Review, Field, The Ninth Letter, The Seattle Review, The South Carolina Review, Third Coast*, and elsewhere.

**Artist**

Blake Taylor is a recent graduate from the Alabama School of Fine Arts, where she majored in visual arts. She plans to continue her education at Syracuse University in New York. A caffeine addict, she spends sleepless nights playing the flute and sketching in her notebook.

**Editors**

Tyler Pratt has been recognized both for his poetry and his nonfiction by national writing competitions such as YoungArts and the Columbia College Chicago Young Authors nonfiction contest. He was the recipient of the Sena Jeter Naslund Scholarship for excellence in three genres, awarded by the Alabama Writers’ Forum, and his work has appeared in *Right Hand Pointing*. After graduating in May from the Alabama School of Fine Arts, he will be attending New College of Florida in the fall.

Lin Wang’s work has been nationally recognized by YoungArts and Scholastic; she recently took 1st in Gannon University’s poetry contest. Her work has appeared in literary magazines such as *inscape* and *Cadence*. She will be attending the University of Alabama in the fall. She dreams best in June and writes best in October.