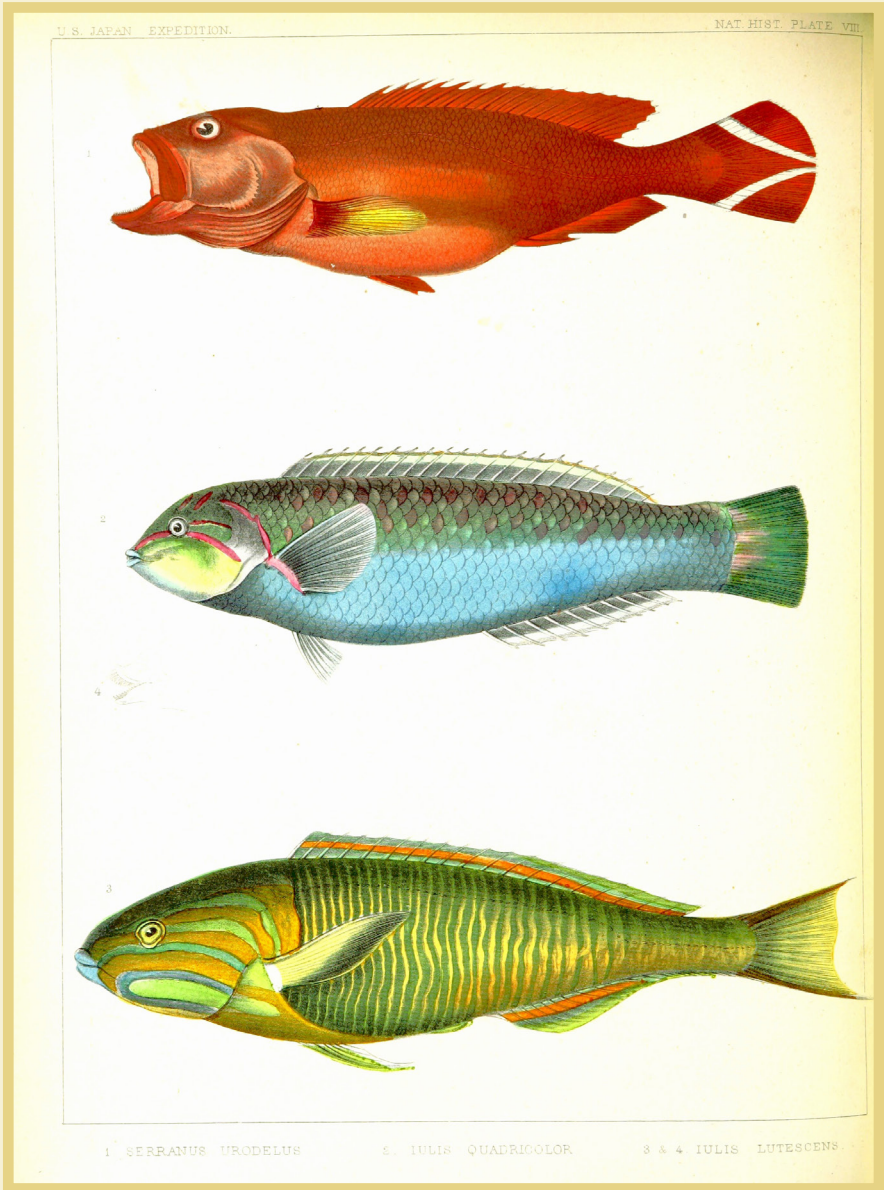


# WORD FOUNTAIN



The Literary Magazine  
of the Osterhout Free Library  
Issue 16, 2019

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The Literary Magazine of the Osterhout Free Library

Issue 16, 2019

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# Tiny Suitcases

Kathleen Apolo

words don't cook rice.  
it may look cute, or it may be  
serious. we came this far, dragging  
our tiny suitcases & now we're left  
with two choices:

go back, or turn here.

turn here.

go back.

## The Transfer of Power

Kathleen Apolo

Underneath the fingernail thin fuselage of the jet over Missouri,  
little subdivisions and the snake of the river.

I watch the river, safe from the flames,  
every night on the news, safe with my fear.

I don't know what I feel right now I'm feeling  
for a light in the dark, some response to this transfer of  
power.

Sitting in front of two men looking down on the land  
One says pretty, the other says lots of money to be made down  
there.

Two visions: One to recline their seat with riches,  
one in the eye of the  
beholder.

From this window, the birds  
have arranged themselves staring back at me.  
We have these dark centers to our eyes.

Centers that promise one beautiful day,  
one requiring first light.

I turn the lights on when I get home.  
I have no idea how it actually happens.  
I look in the mirror. We the people.

I clear my throat and begin listening to the hum.

& we the people . . .

I hope you all make it  
from the bottom of my heart



## Rappahannock ky li

River ripples secrets of ash and bone  
through the cove. Undissolved lovers  
sputter by on vessels made from feral  
dreams. Weathered laurel shore up  
structures resting on sand, hard-pressed  
from scrubby oak & twisted pine, as rain  
scatters sideways from festering wind.

An urn on a mantel, holds cremains  
while a mind holds resentment. The  
unabashed grievances of a lifetime  
flicker across a face in cross-hatched  
lines, sleepless eyes & down-turned  
smiles. Words stream guilelessly into  
an emerald current's divining wake.

Awash of Rain  
ky li

On days of rain  
lines form lithe,  
plain & simple.  
They outline minds  
with words, orange  
& black like poppies  
on a roadside stretch  
that belie their tangle,  
their maleficent  
meander from one  
to the other & leave  
a passerby awash  
with impressionable  
puddles of stirred hope.

## The Starry Chicago Night

Steven Concert

What if Van Gogh had painted  
*The Starry Night* using the windy city

as his muse? He was dissatisfied  
with the modern city, yet I can still image

him using the same deliberate brush strokes  
to paint the nebulae swirling back and forth.

Can you imagine the Sears Tower with black  
and blue striations climbing upward?

If he had tried, could he have captured  
the grin of the Man-in-the-Moon?

Would he have portrayed the hurried  
lines of the bustling metropolis?

Or the madness of the nighttime,  
its stars pulsing in the background

like the bang and flash  
of eleven murderous gun shots?

## Aftertaste

Steven Concert

Inhale the sweet scent of orange flesh,  
recall your perfume, its fragrance  
trapped in cranial cavities;

peel back the pocked rind,  
retrieve your memory,  
hidden treasure like the fruit inside;

halved along the horizontal,  
spy juicy petals of sun-kissed flower,  
*she loves me, she loves me not;*

I bite into the citrus delight,  
recoil in pain from the tart tang,  
of unripe fruit, of unripe love,

squint back the tears:  
*she loves me not;*  
like bitter memories,

the aftertaste remains,  
and now, the bitten fruit  
lies fallen on the ground.

## Buffet Restaurant

Diane Webster

Not as orderly as cattle in a feedlot  
when the truck drives by depositing  
a meal's allotment;  
as each bovine sticks its head  
through the assigned hole and eats.  
Not like hummingbirds forever darting  
in and out to plastic flowers  
sipping quick tastes of red sugar water  
before the next hummer hovers  
or fly-bys a nudge to move on  
move away, move back, in and around.  
But like holiday shoppers  
dodging and elbowing  
over clearance racks  
in a today's-only frenzy.



## Opening Up

David Bankson

Here is me opening all my holes.  
Is me stoking flame images  
saying I'll cook zucchini for a side.

On forgoing the exceptional,  
(the lives I'll never have)  
the premonitory prophecy my father

has given me: I want to be the person  
of a ham and eggs breakfast.  
Often feeling obscure or excessive.

So, support me intimately now. Like the continuity  
of skin on skin, to make me think  
I am animal being fed by hand.

## How the Horizon Appeared Autumn 1984

Jane Rosenberg LaForge

You cannot change the past yet the past changes  
in photographs: the contemporary  
yellows like fingernails  
or the half-moon buoyed by debris  
spewed between continents.  
I was twenty-three when a bandage  
of rock and heat  
exploded in the Philippines, and I had to realize  
I was an American, irretrievably.

I had surrendered strands of my hair  
to the proprietor of a Turkish teashop;  
droplets of exhaustion on the site  
of a massacre portrayed  
by actors with the oppressor's accents;  
a run of blood from a bite  
delivered by an unsupervised  
donkey making a break for it,  
out of a walled city policed by green lines  
and post-historic treaties, but his action  
was just another sterile gesture like my own,  
a failed exit strategy should  
my country turn on me  
like a pet snake, or scorpion  
carrying a horned toad  
out of the Amazon.



I was back home for the volcanic event,  
to watch air drunk descend into oranges and purples  
because it had nowhere to escape  
while I was everywhere and ignorant.  
Those sunsets were like witnessing the tissues  
of a body split, my ideas turning  
hungry and lurid, expelling their  
verve, youth, and youthful hubris into  
the fatigue of a planet,  
made smaller by my attempts  
to resolve its predicaments.

## League

Harold Ackerman

This child throws with such joyous abandon  
the batter drops the stick to stand and behold  
the arc of the dropping curve, the sheer loveliness  
of its candid and impromptu mathematics.

The umpire forgets to cry out, removing his mask and losing  
all count. Runners on base desert their one-time advantage;  
together now all players abandon the pretense of sides,  
ascend to the mound, unanimous in the impulse of play.

The sound they make sets the scoreboard numbers on fire.

## Sometimes

Lester Hirsh

Sometimes,  
he sits on a sofa,  
by the light of a lamp,  
in a dying coal town.

Pondering cliffs  
he climbs a hill,  
on the backside of a dream.

Sometimes,  
he desires not to desire.  
To see himself as a monk.  
To fast when other are feasting.

Sometimes,  
he wonders where he belongs.

Walking on broken streets,  
by black hills.

On a tropical beach.

At a poetry reading  
in a college town.

Sometimes,  
he dreams of solitude.  
A lookout tower.  
Staring at distant trees.  
A fire over the far ridge.

## Recurrence

Sarah Russell

"Here, feel this," is how it started  
that morning she stopped by  
like always Thursday mornings,  
like always for tea and then we'd walk  
along the river.

She lifted her arm, and I touched  
the pale softness, knew  
it was real, not maybe—  
a hard currant of a thing.

"I want to live," she said,  
and this time I knew  
she didn't mean forever.

## November Doe

Sarah Russell

The twitch of an ear betrays her,  
dun against dun oaks, still as held breath.  
I wonder how long she has watched me.  
I look beyond for others, but she's alone,  
fat from summer grazing, her coat  
already wooly for January snows.  
The morning is alive, anticipating flight  
as she moves, slow, along the scruff  
of goldenrod that marks the meadow,  
then turns back to the woods and disappears,  
asking no questions.

## The Orange Men

(at Lick Run)

Dean Robbins

The movement through the cabin window was  
a chipmunk shooting through fallen oak leaves  
as if a breeze had blown, though there was none.  
While inside, my verse filled notebook open,  
I heard only the calming, crisp silence  
of a wood fed fire. Too soon the men  
who'd left before dawn, well-armed, covered in  
camouflage and neon orange, returned  
empty handed; forests still home to bears.  
And I could think of nothing but that I  
wished to hike to the deep woods to find them  
and read them something from these worn pages.  
Something that says I'm glad you're still alive;  
something the orange men won't understand.

## Yeast

Lucy Iscaro

I prepare for Passover  
not like my grandfather taught me  
holding a white feather  
sweeping the crumbs  
from the kitchen  
and burning them  
I recall the rituals  
but no longer perform them  
what I do is  
put my sourdough  
starter to bed

from deep in the cold  
steel recesses  
the hungry starter  
must be fed  
flour and water  
then left to grow  
and catch wild spores

invisible to me  
but living  
nonetheless  
in corners  
on counters  
on my skin  
like Dr. Seuss  
creatures

unseen but mighty  
clinging together  
one cell  
to another  
to bubble  
then  
send out the promise  
of breads yet to come

after Passover



## Timepieces

Lucy Iscaro

Mom

was always hungry for more of his time  
come with me  
dance with me

Dad

fed her his time sparingly  
in sticky spoonfuls  
until one day  
she traveled without him  
into the past and left him there  
alone  
with too much time

a jeweler

he taught us about watches  
“Look! They’re always shown  
in magazines at ten ten.”  
and there we’d see  
page after page  
glossy Tissots  
Rolexes  
Piagets and Swatches  
their sharp hands  
splayed in wide vees  
each frozen  
In time

now he's gone  
I look at the clock  
the one we bought  
to guide him  
when his night was truncated  
his empty bed  
crowded with ghosts  
and he wandered  
silent halls  
past sleeping caretakers  
searching  
for oatmeal at midnight  
ignoring the dark

it's ours now  
this clock  
always wide-eyed  
blinking the hours  
and days  
but never telling us  
the truth  
about time

## My Shoe's Letter

Sreekanth Kopuri

Dear Sir!  
This is your old companion  
from the garbage heap.

I remember biting  
your hasty foot  
at first acquaintance,  
reminding the  
mutual adaptability  
along the *miles to go*

age with you  
into every sunrise  
as strong soul mate  
born to guard your foot  
as a white-hearted angel,

your diary to preserve  
miles of memory  
in a sleepless howl  
of burdensome silences

you scuffed my soul  
many a time, yet I bore  
those injuries to feed with  
the lessons for another journey  
into the unknown and the  
cobbler too beside the road  
of potholed dreams  
with his day's bread,

while in rest, I pray,  
and swallow all your fears  
with my huge mouth of  
toothless gums, with a  
classic grip stronger  
than an alligator's,

lately when you tried  
a new road of  
un-treaded cobblestones  
I held gently as a  
lion holds its cub.

PS: Kindly excuse this  
letter, tattered as my  
telltale skin.

T.V. Dinner (*cathartes aura*)  
Cole Depuy

Turkey Vultures,  
Slivers of night, kettle  
On thermal currents  
Like the moon's fallen eyelashes.

The weight of  
Sixty-four human  
Eyes, the buzzards descend upon corpses.

Detecting death like disease  
Does neglect. Vultures are not  
Violent creatures, yet,  
Even they hiss for a closer look,

A fuller taste. I, too, feast  
Upon climactic  
Reminders of what has not  
Happened to me today.

Crack Pipe  
Cole Depuy

She hands me  
the glass stem  
like a picked  
dandelion puff.

*I fit my house,  
car, kids, everything  
inside this pipe,  
she says. I'm all that's left.*

I exhale a thin vapor  
from blistered lips.

*If you don't eat  
something soon, sweetie,  
you'll be sucked  
in next, I laugh*

and she plucks  
the stem from  
my hand, holds  
the warm bulb

to her lips  
and blows.

Entangled  
T. Clark

I remember the silent terror  
that caught in my throat  
how my hand trembled gripping the wooden banister  
feet creeping up the stairs hesitantly  
the crash of plates  
slamming into the wall  
the room engulfed in anger

I remember the monster that lived under my bed  
how my bogeyman had a name  
how he would creep into sheets  
whispering silent warnings to keep my mouth shut  
I remember the time  
You were appalled by my soiled childhood

I remember the day I stopped being five  
The day he ruined it  
Ripped away an innocence  
He had no business touching

I remember the soft green velvet grazing my skin  
The way his eyes devoured  
Every inch of my delicate flesh  
Consuming my pint-sized presence in one gulp  
Intoxicated by the forbidden lust  
He claimed as his own

I remember soaring above the trees  
Eyes forced shut  
Arms spread wide  
With nothing but air below me  
The way his hands would touch  
The branches of my body  
Leaving spiders behind  
With every rough caress of his fingers  
Crushing my eyelids together  
Attempting to exit the confines of my body

I remember the first time  
Cool metal tore through my skin  
the first time they said  
*this is a safe place*  
*you can speak freely here*  
*use the doll*  
*show me what happened*  
I remember the days I want to forget  
I remember when you pulled me close  
And whispered into my hair  
That you loved me  
Me pretending to be asleep  
I remember how you wouldn't look at me  
When you broke my heart

I remember dancing in your bedroom  
Floating amongst the stars  
You sleeping in the chair  
You saying  
You didn't want to have any regrets

I remember you  
I remember us  
I remember us vs. you and me  
I remember how quickly my resolve melted away  
As soon as you peered into my eyes

I remember when I told them  
The heinous things he did  
That he made me do  
I remember when they told me  
I was lying



## Clemente

Jeremy Nathan Marks

Once every week (at least)  
my cousin and his father  
left their CPA office an hour  
before lunch to attend funerals  
on Forbes

How many eulogies they heard only they know  
but perhaps it could be said that fully one sixth  
of Pittsburgh's dearly departed passed before their eyes  
in that place in those years

The city had just known tragedy in its own way:  
anyone remember Clemente?

Tears, simpers, laughter  
the sound of that last double to left  
number 3,000  
falling pill on a frozen rope  
followed by giddy relief  
at what the tax code was if not fog,  
shadows, and then a blinding eyeshade?

They took death followed by lunch at a bistro.

When my uncle died  
it was said of him that he was to Forbes  
what coke is to steel  
and my cousin, listening, said  
he was what memory is to sons.

## When He Dies

Daniel Gleason

When he dies it will be like this:  
a massive slab of granite falls,  
splits from a sheer face and collides  
with trees and earth and smaller rocks  
on its way down to the bottom  
of a ravine; the sound keeps on  
echoing with no one to hear.  
Who knows how long this sound will last.

Then what's left behind will slowly  
start to slide down the embankment—  
splintered branches, loosened gravel—  
making a protracted journey,  
one that will never stop until  
the mountain erodes down into a plain.

## Self

Janine P. Dubik

Conversation, I do see,  
is tentative, tedious  
when about me.

Self is shy and wants to hide  
and cower all alone.

I do not want to be  
the center of the crowd.

Well, maybe, just a little?

Be witty, bright  
and precise,  
my self says to itself.

## Alphabet

Janine P. Dubik

A bear cub dawdles,  
enters flower-garden  
haven in June:  
Kindly leaves marigolds,  
noshes on petunias,  
quietly rests,  
somersaults tipsily  
under vaporuous wisps  
x-ing yonder zenith.

## Breadcrumbs

Stacy W. Julin

A blue umbrella  
from my aunt's favorite drink,

a smooth purple rock  
from the dirt  
in the canyon.

My painted heart locket  
on a silver chain,

scattered through drawers,  
boxes of our house.

Their magic will not be inherited  
by those who come after,

nor secrets opened  
to the unknowing eye.

If they are spread out  
on the ground,  
like a trail of breadcrumbs,

no one else  
can follow them home.



## Contributors

**Harold Ackerman** lives and works in Berwick, PA. He has poems recently at *The Blue Nib* and photo art at *Noctua Review*, and *Broad River Review*. You are welcome to visit his gallery page at [briarcreekphotos.com](http://briarcreekphotos.com).

**Kathleen Apolo** has studied at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, MA. She lives in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania.

**David Bankson** lives in Texas. He was finalist in the 2017 Concis Pith of Prose and Poem contest, and his poetry and micro fiction can be found in *concis*, *(b)oink*, *{isacoustic\*}*, *Artifact Nouveau*, *Riggwelter Press*, *Five 2 One Magazine*, and others.

**T. Clark** is from Steelton, PA and is currently a senior creative writing major at Bloomsburg University. She hopes to teach high school English in the future.

**Steven Concert** is a Board member for the National Federation of State Poetry Societies and Pennsylvania Poetry Society. His publication credits include: *Word Fountain*, *Got Verse?*, *Listening to Water*, and *Mad Poets Review*. An excerpt of his poem “The Ghost of Agnes” was included in the WVIA (PBS) feature *Remembering Agnes*. He has published three chapbooks.

**Cole Depuy** is a teacher assistant in a poetry course at Southern CT State University. He is also a second-year an MFA candidate. Cole works part time at the SCSU social work department and even wears cashmere sometimes.

**Janine P. Dubik** has had her six-line poems selected for Poetry in Transit, a Luzerne County Transportation Authority project, since 2016. Her poetry has been published by *Thirty-Third Wheel*, and *The Electric Rail*. Her story, “Redemption,” placed third in the short-fiction competition at the 2016 Pennsylvania Writers Conference. Janine received her MFA in creative writing from Wilkes University in May 2019.

**Daniel Gleason** lives in Dayton, Tennessee, where he teaches composition, literature, and creative writing at Bryan College. His poems have appeared in *Rattle*, *Rosebud*, *Red Flag*, *The Windhover*, and elsewhere. He holds a Ph.D. in English literature from Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

**Lucy Iscaro**, an academic tutor and former N.Y.C. Department of Education literacy coach, lives in White Plains, N.Y. with her husband and dog who helps her type. She was the 2017 first prize winner of the Greenburgh Library Poetry Contest. Her personal essays have been featured in *BoomerCafe.com*, *Reflections Magazine*, *Good Old Days Magazine*, and the *New York Times*.

**Stacy W. Julin** is the author of two poetry chapbooks, *A Pebble Thrown in Water*, published by Tiger's Eye Press, and *Visiting Ghosts and Ground* from Finishing Line Press (published under the name Stacy W. Dixon). Her work has been published in *Tiger's Eye*, *Oyster River Pages*, *Pirene's Fountain*, *Sweet Tree Review*, and *Word Fountain*. She lives in Utah with her three sons.

**Sreekanth Kopuri** PhD, is a Telugu-speaking Indian English poet from Machilipatnam, India. He recited his poetry and presented research papers in Oxford, Banja Luka, Caen, Gdanski, Dusseldorf and Wilkes Universities. He has two anthologies, *The Shadows* and *The Void* (forthcoming). His poems have been published or accepted in *Ann Arbor Review*, *Scryptic Magazine*, *Five 2 One*, *Ariel Chart*, *Vayavya*, *Forty-Eight Review*, *Poetcrit Indian Periodical*, *Deccan Chronicle* and elsewhere. He is a recipient of J.K. International Award for his poetry in 2015 from India.

**Jane Rosenberg LaForge** is the author of a novel, *The Hawkman: A Fairy Tale of the Great War* (Amberjack Publishing); a memoir, *An Unsuitable Princess* (Jaded Ibis Press); and six volumes of poetry. Her latest full-length collection is *Daphne and Her Discontents* (Ravenna Press). She lives in New York by way of an extended family in Wilkes-Barre, PA.

**ky li** is a folk poet who resides in Louisville, Ky. In 2018, he completed his MA in creative writing with a concentration in poetry. His work has appeared in *Brittle Star*, *The Oddville Press*, *The Ibis Head Review*, *Trade West Review*, and the 2017 book, *Six Voices*, published by Blackthorn Press.

**Jeremy Nathan Marks** is based in London, Ontario. Recent poetry, photography, and fiction appear in *Poets Reading the News*, *Ottawa Arts Review*, *Former People*, *Mosh Lit*, *Microfiction Mondays*, *Derelect Magazine*, *Rat's Ass Review*, *Writers Resist*, *The Blue Nib*, *As It Ought To Be*, *Verse of Silence*, *NRM Magazine*, *Front Porch Review*, *The Local Train*, *Cajun Mutt*, *Bold + Italic*, *Alien Buddha*, and *Unlikely Stories*.



**Dean Robbins** has been published in various journals and magazines. These include *Word Fountain*, *The Lyric*, *Inside Pennsylvania Magazine*, *The Society of Classical Poets*, *The Broadkill Review*, and *Ideals*. He has also written the words to *Listen*, a libretto (music composed by Steven Miller) for the sisters of SAI, Mansfield University Chapter. Robbins is a member of the Mill Street Writers in Danville, Pa. When not reading/writing he enjoys spending time with his children and grandchildren.

**Sarah Russell** has returned to poetry after a career teaching, writing and editing academic prose. Her work has been published in *Kentucky Review*, *Red River Review*, *Misfit Magazine*, and *Psaltery and Lyre*, among other print and online journals and anthologies. She has won awards from Goodreads, Poetry Nook, and is a 2017 Pushcart Prize nominee. Her first poetry collection, *I lost summer somewhere* was published in April by Kelsay Press. She blogs at SarahRussellPoetry.net.

**Diane Webster** grew up in Eastern Oregon before she moved to Colorado. She enjoys drives in the mountains to view all the wildlife and scenery and take amateur photographs. Writing poetry provides a creative outlet exciting in images and phrases Diane thrives in. Her work has appeared in *Philadelphia Poets*, *Eunoia Review*, *Better Than Starbucks*, and other literary magazines.



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