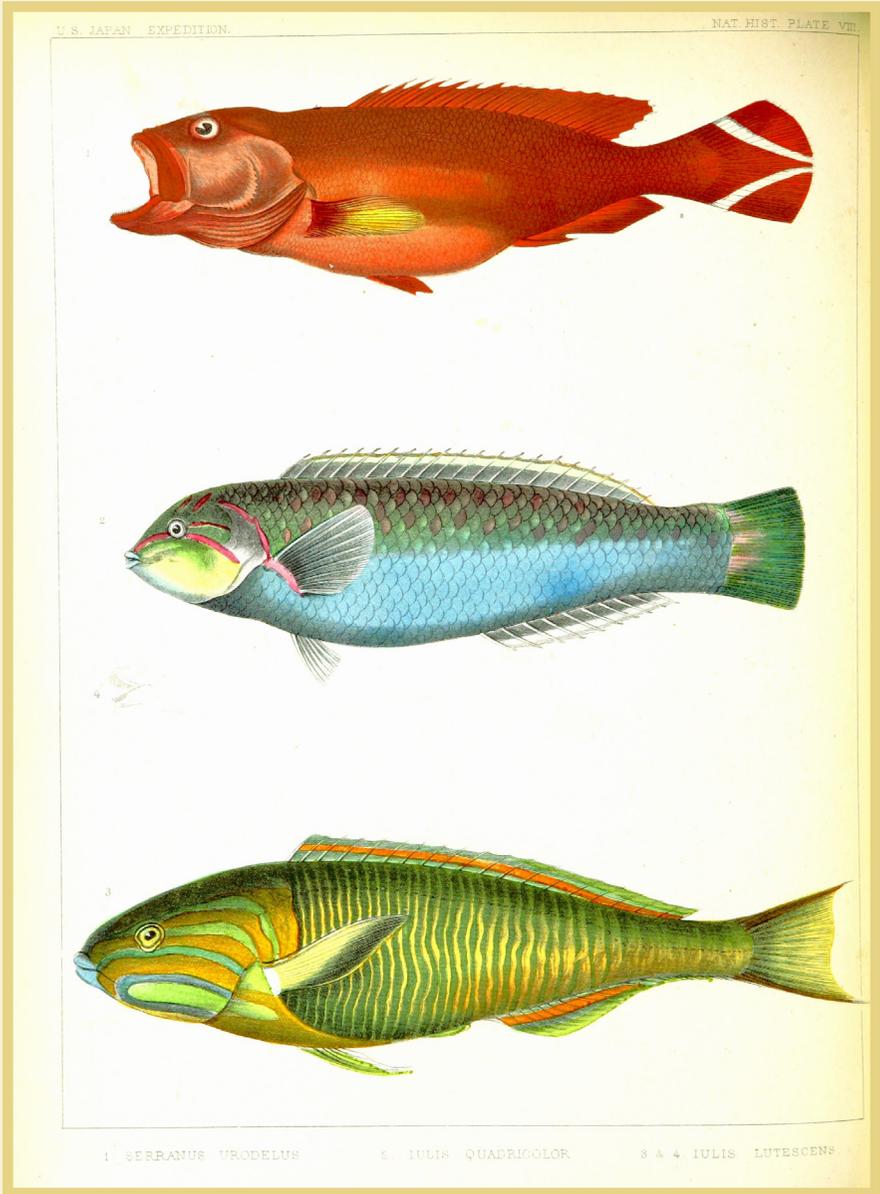


WORD FOUNTAIN



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

WORD FOUNTAIN

The Literary Magazine of the Osterhout Free Library

Issue 16, 2019

Copyright © 2019 Word Fountain

EDITORS

David J. Bauman
Sandra Kobos
Ainslee Golomb

READERS

Jenelle Bruno Culver
Laura Harding
Alicia Stier



Osterhout Free Library

© 2019 Word Fountain, the Literary Magazine of the Osterhout Free Library

WF 16, 2019

Printed by Cougar Prints, Misericordia University Printing Services.

Cover Art adapted from:

Perry, Matthew Calbraith. *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan*. Washington: A.O.P. Nicholson, 1856 (public domain).

Word Fountain is published by the Osterhout Free Library, 71 South Franklin Street, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701. All rights reserved by the authors.

WORDFOUNTAIN.NET

Contents

Kathleen Apolo

Tiny Suitcases	1
Transfer of Power	2

ky li

Rappahannock	3
Awash of Rain	4

Steven Concert

The Starry Chicago Night	5
Aftertaste	6

Diane Webster

Buffet Restaurant	7
-------------------	---

David Bankson

Into the Sea	8
Opening Up	9

Jane Rosenberg LaForge

How the Horizon Appeared	
Autumn 1984	10

Harold Ackerman

League	12
--------	----

Lester Hirsh

Sometimes	13
-----------	----

Sarah Russell

Recurrence	14
November Doe	15

Dean Robbins

The Orange Men
(at Lick Run) 16

Lucy Iscaro

Yeast 17
Timepieces 19

Sreekanth Kopuri

My Shoe's Letter 21

Cole Depuy

T.V. Dinner (*cathartes aura*) 23
Crack Pipe

T. Clark

Entangled 25

Jeremy Nathan Marks

Clemente 27

Daniel Gleason

When He Dies 28

Janine P. Dubik

Self 29
Alphabet 30

Stacy W. Julin

Breadcrumbs 31

Contributors

33

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.

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*, *Derelict 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.



Osterhout
Free Library

71 South Franklin Street
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701

WORDFOUNTAIN.NET