

CircleShow

The Official Journal Of Seven CirclePress

Vol. 1, Winter 2008

Seven CirclePress

CircleShow Vol. 1, Winter 2008

Copyright © 2008 by Seven CirclePress And/Or Its Respective Authors

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without written permission of the authors.

www.sevencirclepress.com

Foreword

It seems incredible that what began only as the private endeavor of a young New England poet to portray his as of then unknown work, has in but eight months time become a respectable online community consisting of many talented minds. While this may be just one more potential prospect of publication to many of the poets herein, to myself it is the first inkling of fulfilling a dream that has been dually haunting and driving me since I was eight years old, the dream of giving voice, through both my own work and that of others, to the world. For poetry is nothing if not the attempt to allow the world, by way of symbols, to express its unspoken potentials, its secret longings and joys.

The 25 poets within these pages represent the cream of the crop, carefully selected from the hundreds of submissions received in this first year in the hopefully long life of Seven CirclePress, they will stand as the precedent upon which all subsequent issues of CircleShow will be judged.

To honor this initial foray into the ancient world of words, the cover of this volume is inscribed with the faces of some of the world's greatest poets, men and women who have held particular importance to me and I think culture itself. From left to right respectively you will see: Lord Byron, Walt Whitman, George Trakl, John Keats, Hart Crane, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Anna Akhmatova, Salvatore Quasimodo, Czeslaw Milosz, Li Po, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Federico Garcia Lorca, Allen Ginsberg, Pablo Neruda, James Wright, William Blake, Dante Alighieri, Rumi, Goethe, Arthur Rimbaud, Wallace Stevens, Hermann Hesse, Rainer Maria Rilke, Langston Hughes, Emily Dickinson, Sylvia Plath, Vicente Aleixandre, Baudelaire, Ungaretti and Eugenio Montale.

This debut issue of CircleShow is dedicated to the immortal line of great artists, thinkers and writers of whom we are the heirs and I thank all who have sent me their work in the last eight months and all who with trembling hands read their words. May the poetry of the earth be heard again and may the light of the past always illuminate the uncertainty of the future.

-Seth Jani
Poet And Founder Of Seven CirclePress

December 21, 2008

Table of Contents

L. Ward Abel.....	1
A Gathering Of Things.....	2
Drought Is Over.....	2
Portal Fear.....	3
Lester Allen.....	5
Cabbage Patch Kid In The Mouth Of A Lion.....	6
Dungeon Crawl.....	6
Porchlights Of August.....	7
Arlene Ang.....	9
Ants.....	10
How Did Her Garden Grow.....	10
Phantom Limb.....	11
Buff Whitman-Bradley.....	13
Bikes & Trains 9 Poems.....	14
Home To Roost.....	16
Tabula Rasa.....	18
Tobi Cogswell.....	21
Epiphany.....	22
Paramecium.....	23
Sanity Among The Wildflowers.....	23
Vince Corvaia.....	25
Exile.....	26
Space Toilet.....	26

What I Can't Bear.....	26
John Dorsey	29
No Help Wanted For Jessica.....	30
Sunday Afternoon In A Sandusky Ice Cream Shop.....	30
The Great Depression	32
Theresa Edwards.....	35
Flat & Hollow	36
Healing.....	36
Holly Rose	37
Dorothy Fletcher	41
Last Words.....	42
Lunacy	42
Summer Girl On December 3	43
Taylor Graham	45
"Aunt Sarah".....	46
Private.....	46
Traveling Light	47
Michael Grover	49
From Toledo To Cleveland.....	50
He Went Walking Into The Brutal Cold Wind.....	50
Sittin' In The Parking Lot.....	51
Jason Hardung.....	53
I Knew She Was The One.....	54
Six Feet Above	55
Waiting On A Woman	55

Doug Holder.....	57
The Big Bang.....	58
" Touch Me, So I Remember Who I Was"	58
Spring, This Ain't A Love Poem.....	59
Seth Jani	61
Another Kind Of Music.....	62
Last Lines To A Friend.....	63
Mortal Fear	64
William Taylor Jr.	65
My Plastic Heart.....	66
Poem Written While Getting My Hair Cut By A Pretty Korean Woman Who Doesn't Feel The Need To Talk So Much, Which I Think Is Nice.....	66
This Quiet Room	67
Kelly Kuerzi	69
Deluxe (Abridged).....	70
Mind/Matter Trilogy.....	70
Three Poems	71
Cameron McKenzie	75
Dig It	76
Ignorance Of A Love Thought Found	78
Joan McNerney	81
Invitation	82
The Subliminal Room.....	83
Corey Mesler.....	87
On Your Hair, Etc.....	88

Private Showing.....	88
The New Man In Your Life.....	89
Aj Naslund.....	91
Flypaper.....	92
Meditation On Gasoline.....	93
Praise Firewood.....	94
Dan Provost.....	95
My Unborn Son.....	96
Suicide Bank.....	97
Worcester State Girl At Job Fair.....	98
Robert Snyderman.....	99
Sequences From "Meadow And Torrent".....	100
Nicholas Sola.....	107
Afterwards: Fourteen American Haikus.....	108
Beautiful From Behind.....	109
My Headrest Is Singing.....	110
Petra Whiteley.....	113
Drip Dripping.....	114
Sisterly.....	114
Allison Whittenberg.....	117
Life Slips.....	118
Narrative.....	118
Water's Wine.....	118

L. Ward Abel

Poet, composer of music (Max Able / Abel, Rawls & Hayes), lawyer and spoken-word performer (Scapeweavel), **L. Ward Abel** lives in rural Georgia, USA, and has had hundreds of his poems published in the U.S., Europe and Asia. He is the author of *Peach Box and Verge* (Little Poem Press, 2003), *Jonesing For Byzantium* (UK Authors Press, 2006) and newly released *The Heat of Blooming* (Pudding House Press, 2008).

A Gathering Of Things

Another month goes by.
The music builds across the creek,
morning cracks like a bloodshot eye
and I gather my things.
There's a chill I hadn't noticed,
it buttons up shirts that I couldn't
wear until now.

Goodbye to all
that shouldn't matter but does. I'm picking up
where I should never have left off.
Old but only because of memory,
old for lack of a better word, tested
from all that was put in my way,
resolved from a lack of choice. And
another month goes by.

Drought Is Over

Packs of showers
roam the countryside tonight.
Summer gives up the ghost
of water.

I choose to turn off music
And just listen, as the waves now
pass over beyond out

it's already night. West
to east, my breathing
understands. I just
breathe.

Breathe like the fish
that I am, while my heart
does all its work in this
rain.

The stain of watching has
become an obsession;
little storms have conspired

after all this time, joined
like a name over me.

Sometimes there's a gentleness
in things. Sometimes there's a
cruelty. Their confluence
can own me. But even as we speak
the drought is over.

Portal Fear

My heart ain't in it /
but I'll hold the door.

Gregg Allman

Cold the august rain
hot the winter snow
cold the heat of Cuba coming up
molten Hudson Bay
hard the life when things move on
move on from sentience
the space that retained and then
relinquished. They tell me
that a law of physics teaches us
no energy ever passes away
nothing really dies. But no one
relishes the door.

Lester Allen

Postal dude by day, beer-drunk, pen-wielding madman by night. Lester has scattered his poems across the small presses with poems recently appearing in Up the Staircase, Debris Magazine, and decomP. He has two books forthcoming from d/e/a/d/b/e/a/t press of California.

Cabbage Patch Kid In The Mouth Of A Lion

crawling the cave of yourself
pitiful hands
and bruised knees, stomach
soul

looking up at the sparrow in the trees
and wondering:

how did you get
so high?

Dungeon Crawl

I bathe my thoughts in
the stomachs of frogs
happy for your smile
the bright wind cannot touch me
the fly I am ice-cream cool
in the many eyes of Christ
the bridges I have crossed now
down fingers ribboned with flame

it is the same for all of us, I'd
imagine
 we find our voices in the
 rings of trees
in the reflections of
ancient armor while searching carefully
for point of entry with one
thrust
through flesh
 and bone
then finally the victory of blood the sound
of joints
resigning
as the beast collapses at your feet
twitching just a little
then still

at this point two words of advice:

expose only enough weakness
to lure them in and never
lower your sword

with any luck at all

they will never quit coming

Porchlights Of August

like little suns
 strung up on systems of pulleys
the slow bluing of an evening
and frayed cord of the
 last good fan

I am confused by everything
confused by you
confused by the taxi driver,
the garbage man, the bum
all with breaths of purpose
but the poet, the
poet I am not so sure of
vacuum packed in burlap curtains
stinking of vomit of booze and
miscalculations
waking at noon and wasting the rest
but you know
you know
neither desiring life nor accepting it
and always the questions - what good is
any of this when the disease of the dream
 is free?
why are the fingernails so long? why is
the good liquor ALWAYS 2 dollars more
than what's in the pocket?

while all around machines grind at the days
like maggots in millions on

dead bone or houses quietly slipping into
the sea

the night is warm
the crickets the
crickets the
crickets sing

while the chariots of Ben Hur beat dust of
mind my free hand moves
towards the head of the cat Russian tanks
roll through Georgia as the dog's tail wags
you press desire like dried flowers into
my chest
and if nothing else

it's a dream worth remembering

Arlene Ang

Arlene Ang serves as a poetry editor for *The Pedestal Magazine* and *Press 1*. A poetry collection, *Bundles of Letters Including A, V and Epsilon*, co-written with Valerie Fox, was published by Texture Press in 2008. She received the 2006 Frogmore Poetry Prize and the 2008 Juked Poetry Prize. She lives in Spinea, Italy. More of her writing may be viewed at www.leafscape.org.

Ants

The first one I found, I killed---
a light pressure of the thumb on that part
of the pillow where he would lay
his head. In his absence,
I kept to my side of bed and ate
my meals there. I watched
the television as it changed the color of my legs:
mauve, brown, yellow, midnight snow.
More ants found their way
to my hand, like an aftermath of sorts,
and died attempting to take away
the dead. It was summer;
the Gulf War stayed between us like a molar
the tooth fairy never came for.
I easily fell into the habit
of sleeping with the lights on.
This morning I woke to the sun
on his pillow---the absence of ants
lead my attention to its pristine state
as if nothing ever existed for it.

How Did Her Garden Grow

It was sick rabbit. It was deathday
on a stone path. The long grass howled
with insects as if they were
corpses beating their hands against
the tough soil, wanting
to be let out. Ripe mangoes were
pricked open by birds, the flesh
thick with bluebottles.
In the midst of it, a wart-backed toad
crept out---a god of sorts---
for that Sunday walk just before
the rev of dawn.

Phantom Limb

A dead fly lay
on the side of the bed where
my husband flopped
his arm as if I weren't there---
only the arm
which he had already lost
during the war. He slept
mostly naked, like pain,
and the sheets
twisted around him
at night until his skin was scuffed
with red marks.
He never remembered
his dreams,
or that he crushed
insects with his live arm
all the while
pretending
they were phantom itch.
When morning came,
he held my hand
so tightly that
I grew afraid of the sound
our bones
would make
when we crumble.

Buff Whitman-Bradley

Buff Whitman-Bradley is the author of two books of poetry, *beagle*, poet, and *The Honey Philosophies*. His work has appeared in a number of literary journals. He also produces documentary videos and audios including the award winning video *Outside In*, about people who visit prisoners on San Quentin's death row. He lives with his wife Cynthia in northern California.

Bikes & Trains 9 Poems

i

A young boy is riding his bike in the park
Pumping his right hand up and down making chuffing noises
As I pass by I ask him Are you driving your train
He looks at me sternly and says This is a bicycle

ii

The day Joe Ragsdale got stung on the dick by a bee
He and Monte Conway and I had ridden our bicycles out into the woods
Where we built a fire and cooked Spam and Wonderbread for lunch
Afterwards Joe walked over by some milkweed to take a pee

iii

Time goes more slowly closer to large masses
So if you are planning to visit the red spot on Jupiter
You should not travel by rail because
Although the trains there are never late they never actually arrive

iv

The boy who had no friends loved his bicycle so much
He brought it into his room every night before he went to sleep

It was the first thing he saw when he woke up in the morning
And the two of them would lie there for a while talking about their dreams

v

We reserved seats on the all-night train from Uruapan to Mexico City but
Found all the places occupied by Tarascans taking their meager wares
To the Saturday market and I shamed myself by shouting at those
Quiet people with laps full of children that my kids had nowhere to sit

vi

Imagine a few million of us riding our bicycles day and night
From cities and towns and villages across America
Arriving all at the same time in Washington D.C.
And surrounding the Pentagon to demand our money back

vii

On the Bullet Train to the deep north the great poet Basho wrote:
Harvesting rice they
Pause to watch the train flash by
Parting the white mist

viii

In one of those cheesy parking lot circuses a bear
In a red coat with gold epaulettes rides a bicycle across a tightrope
In the darkness outside the ring of bright lights
An owl trills, the bear looks up

ix

In his numinous solitude a young boy
Drives a locomotive through the crowded park
He has disguised the locomotive as a bicycle
So no one will know

Home To Roost

Not all of them live nearby
Most have gone away hundreds even thousands of miles
And because they are flightless it is no tea party
For them to come home to roost

They have made lives for themselves in the new places
Husbands wives kids jobs Rotary Club memberships
But when the call comes they know they have no choice
Except to make their way back to you

Buff Whitmann-Bradley

Some of them punch holes in cardboard boxes
Climb inside and mail themselves to your address
Others put on tie-dyed clothing and hitch-hike cross-country
Still others borrow motorcycles from friends

However they travel they begin arriving in large numbers
On your front porch day after day for weeks on end
And you find places for all of them around the house
In bedrooms in closets in cupboards in the shed out back

Like you they have grown old and are too exhausted
To peck out your liver
Some have a kind of domestic fowl dementia
And can't recall what they have returned to reproach you for

But you have not forgotten anything you remember
All of their names and would recognize any one of them
You ran into by chance on a downtown street
In a way you know them better than anyone else

You are strangely comforted by their presence every night
You listen to them clucking softly as they settle down in their fresh straw
While you lie sleepless in the wide-eyed dark hands folded behind your head
Staring up at the blank ceiling and counting chickens

Tabula Rasa

A man sits at a table and faces a blank piece of paper

The piece of paper could be anything say a map of London

The man begins driving a bus across and up and down the page

One of those open-air buses filled with camera-pointing tourists

The man speaks through a microphone and points out

Interesting sights along the way the word *contumely* for instance

And the sentence *under the perfumed eyelids of the Contessa*

Famished wolves lay in wait for the gentleman from Athens

After a few hours the bus pulls over just off the edge of the paper and

While the passengers pick up their souvenir-filled tote bags and debark

The man thanks them all and tells a cute story

About a puppy and a blind boy and the word debark and everyone chuckles

The bus is gone but now there is a small wooden boat

The man shoulders the oars and drags the boat out onto the page

He rows toward the right-hand margin into the teeth of a howling gale

And although he pulls the oars mightily he seems to be getting nowhere

As the rain cuts into his flesh like millions of tiny knives

And the little boat is fiercely knocked about by the wind and the waves

He is tempted to cry out to a heaven he doesn't believe in

And a god he doesn't approve of but

Decides instead to look Davy Jones square in the eye until one of them blinks

The next thing he knows he is waking up on a driftwood-littered beach on

The far side of the page remembering black and white movies he loved as a child

Fred Astaire floating above a polished floor and singing *Gotta dance*

Tobi Cogswell

Tobi Cogswell lives in Southern California. Her work can be read most recently in *SPOT Lit(erary) Mag(azine)*, Penumbra, Bellowing Ark, Newport Review and Essence (UK) and is forthcoming in Forge Journal and Northridge Review. She has three chapbooks – *Sanity Among the Wildflowers*, *Hostage Negotiation in Negative-Land* and most recently, *Carpeting the Stones* (2008).

Epiphany

I will meet your eyes.
I will read your soul.
There is fear there, you,
your too short dress with
shot-glasses on it
bare legs, flat sandals,
a dedication to who you
wish you were. This is
an airport, you are dressed
like an aging Las Vegas
whore, your lipstick sunning
itself in the
cracks of your dry lips.

Your hand gnarls
around the arm of a
man who guides you
through the terminal while
he follows the ass of
some woman you
never were, even when you
were young. Your breasts push
a welcoming hello out of
the neck of your ugly dress,
but your skin is that speckled
reddish-tan with spots of white that
shows your hello is more
than half-way to good-bye.
It does not take a pair of glasses
to see that you are trying too hard.

What can I do for you? What
can I ever do for you? I
do not look away and then
I smile, a friendly smile not
out of pity for you but out
of pity for myself, because I
could be you in another
20 years, and that's a hard
lesson for me to know.
God damn it, it's a
hard lesson.

Paramecium

You may think you are quite common
but I think you are the devil.
Predatory scum, your exact function is not known.
Populations bow to you, single celled creature
your undulating tail rotates on an invisible
axis while we try to place you in a bright light
to slow you down.

The five senses are sight, touch, scent, taste, and hearing
but you use none of them for
physical or chemical stimulation
stimulus -
without the luxury of labor -
two to three times a day -
coming together to exchange nuclear material,
you notice the reaction,
you notice the compatibility.

You are the devil
of small size and stout build
your stains are quite complex.
You ingest the curious,
are responsible for disease and infection
Oh, to press down on the cover-slip
and keep you from conjugating.

Sanity Among The Wildflowers

My lover's teeth are gray from lies,
spitting the poison out has darkened
them around the edges.
Her smile reminds me to be wary.
Remember the doctor smiling,
holding some vaccine behind his back,
that is how it feels today.

Our neighbors destroyed a
row of cypress trees
between our properties. I
am helpless in the blinding
spotlight I cannot ignore she is

untruthful, her thoughts a mosaic
I cannot parse and so it goes.

I am an uncomplicated man I
am not a hero.
I spread a blanket in the field,
ease into her journals.
There is no epiphany I know
I will never make her happy.
Only temporarily, as an orphan waits
anxiously along the edge of
a darkened train station for
rescue she waits with me.

She squeezes an orange
her hand shakes, how long
will this farce be played out?
It is very quiet in our house, civil
to the casual eye, never joyful,
her teeth are gray from lies.

So many lies.

Vince Corvaia

Vince Corvaia earned his MFA in creative writing from Wichita State and has more than 60 poems published nationwide. This fall, he has poems forthcoming in *Apple Valley Review*, *Home Planet News*, and *The Write Place at the Write Time*. He lives in New Gloucester, Maine.

Exile

I never expected to end up here.
My map indicated a green campus
dotted with red brick buildings
and young people carrying books.

But instead I live on a ranch
I share with my sister and brother-in-law
where a horse and two sheep run
like children in the sandy corral.

I feel like an exile from another country
who is making the best of a new land
but sometimes longs for the path
he started on long ago. My compass
is broken and points everywhere.

Space Toilet

A shuttle is headed toward
the International Space Station
to fix a toilet.

We have that in common,
my nameless neighbors and I,
that a broken toilet floats
somewhere above us.

If I lived on the Space Station,
I would know my neighbors.
Sadly, that is what it would take.
I would be glad we shared
the same toilet.

What I Can't Bear

What I can't bear
I find a way to bear.

Doors open in
from the outside.

The door I can't bear to open
stares me down like a gravestone

until I mourn into my hands
and the dead invite me in.

John Dorsey

John Dorsey currently resides in Toledo, OH. He is the author of several collections of poetry including "harvey keitel, harvey keitel, harvey keitel" with S.A. Griffin and Scott Wannberg, Butcher Shop Press/Rose of Sharon Press/Temple of Man, 2005. He is also a member of the poetry performance group THE BEARDS.

No Help Wanted For Jessica

i want to write
a confession along the
coastlines of your
lips tapping my fingers
against the wind every
morning jesse james becomes
a dove inside my skin

no help wanted i
hold in a tired
breath you write a
sonnet become a love
poem every day you
tell me just breathe
signs are everywhere smiling
wide war can turn
grown men into beauty
queens there are flowers
only death can smell
here we plant seeds
of love in red earth
the poet's blood painted
on rocks printer's ink
is a pleasant memory

i wear jack gilbert's
tired gloves my heart
covers the sun it
is a puzzle i
can feel you gently
warming up to

Sunday Afternoon In A Sandusky Ice Cream Shop

i stand outside of
myself shaking in the
summer sun there are
things yet to do

moments left to pause
and think about

how if i was
frank o'hara this would
be the exact right
moment in my life to write a
list poem except i'm
not and i can't
ever seem to remember
an exact right time
for anything

so i think about
the old man who was
evicted from my apartment
building on 12th & spruce
after 38yrs to make
way for college students like me

i remember how he
liked to wear a
polyester jacket every day
no matter how hot
it got to be
outside and how the
last time i saw him
he seemed to be riding an
elevator with no real destination

i wear jackets too
made from leather
made from cotton
made from words & flesh
hung together with boyhood dreams
of suicide as if they
were a second skin
but i'm not the
red baron these hands
are not a sanctuary
and i can't really
say what direction our
dreams might take so
play it as it lays

i stand there thinking
about how melted ice cream
is a good representation
of our potential and how
that old man once

called me a spider
twice removed from miracles and how
this is as good
a time as any
to tell you that
it is august and
that my hands shaking

i want to make
a list of flesh & blood & poems

i want to throw
scrapes of this moment
to the wolves in heaven

hungry for words

whatever their final destination

The Great Depression

there seems to be
a cure for everything now days
just pop a pill
turn on a television
that sings lullabies and
tells you that everything will be alright

we live in a
country that says the
great depression was never
anything personal yet we
die inside its walls every day

my depression is behind
on the rent it
spent my dreams on
old bessie smith records
most days my heart
feels like a lost
blues opera by fats
waller a tall tale
by any stretch of
the imagination madness where
i sing the river

electric in ghost tongue
as my eyes fill
up with alligator tears
and voodoo dreams for the big easy

my dreams sweat every
night shaking like typewriter
keys palsied hands that
drip words from ghostwritten
pulp novels when skeletons dance here
it is usually in the rain

sometimes these walls stare
back at me looking
for answers sometimes they
want to hollow out
our language with a shotgun
and sometimes when i'm
being honest i'll admit
that i want to do that too

most nights it feels like
there is a hooverville inside
my brain built from
soggy cardboard and used
takeout menus where i
end up having to
share a bathroom with the dead
where at night i
watch neighborhood kids
make dream forts out
of the emperor's new clothes
because they can't afford
to dream of ice cream

and where when the
lights go out that
doesn't mean there's a vacancy
but simply no place
left to call home

Theresa Edwards

Theresa Edwards's poetry is forthcoming in *Press 1* and has appeared in *decomp*, *Triplopia*, *AdmitTwo*, *Boxcar Poetry Review*, *Clean Sheets Magazine*, *Softblow*, *Chronogram*, and elsewhere. She has an M.A. in English and an M.F.A. in Creative Writing (poetry). She tutors writing at Marist College and is founder and editor of *Holly Rose Review*, www.hollyrosereview.com, a new online poetry & tattoo literary journal.

Flat & Hollow

"pain has, or can at least sometimes find, form."
~Maggie Nelson

Pain has form
molds itself
flat on the front
of the daily news
Silly Putty flat
 pink peeling off
 a black & white
duplicate
of violence.
We hold it, stretch it,
the words
killed last *night*
manipulated by dirty
finger tips,
 those *l*'s strangling us
into skewed horizontal.
Words woman found
naked in field adjoining mall
press into pink solidness
flattened by our thumb,
fleshy witness
to what's left out:
below her waist,
 a blackened space
 hollowed out
like eyes sucked dry
by cavernous night,
her edges traced with a blade
to find light.

Healing

Two weeks after radiation,
you slowly slide your index finger
across your gristly areola,
gently peel the dark brown skin from your left breast.
 Tiny flakes fall to the floor,

an odor, like the smell of dirt in the cracks of a child's neck.

Your right breast: almost ivory, soft pink nipple,
accompanies the ghostly lingering of the left side.

And you're naked in the mirror,
hairs wet from the morning shower,
armpits damp from sweat already gathering
as you softly rub ointment on your tender scar,
feel the slight indent, gravity filling it in.

You hesitate before getting dressed,
eyes trace the brown scalene triangle
from your left breast, extending slightly
into the shade of health on your right side.
You feel a silence of process: that languid,
invisible sketching of the path
you've taken to heal your body.
It's something like that dream you remember
from childhood: the brook crossing that doesn't end,
you're caught somewhere mid stream,
deaf amid a strong current, cold water
soothing hot toes through sneakers.

Holly Rose

My eyes listen to the tattoo artist
a dance of curls beneath a winter hat
he wears inside his tattoo parlor.
The Joker tattoo on his inner right arm,
ear lobes half moons of studs.
All of a sudden, my ears
the snap of sterile vanilla gloves,
buzzing resonance of metal in air
as he tests his machine then quietly
applies the pattern for my third tattoo.

Cigarette smoke lightly shades
the air, maneuvers down my throat.
I'm not ready for the pain that
begins the outline on my stomach,
left of my belly button.
A sharp, blackened ripping of my body
made by covered hands that guide
the tool's cut, then wipe my blood into the past.
The stale room presses deep, sucking color from my face

as sound carves symbols of my parents.

I have nothing to hold onto,
his lean legs straddle the chair's
side; I imagine them against me
as I try to clutch leather before my husband's
thick, strong body takes its place in my mind.
Needles press just below my ribs,
form a new genus on skin:
holly vine entwines thorn-stem of rose.
Vine and stem fuse in remembrance:
holly for December (my father's birthday month),
rose for June (my mother's).
Their inked tribute lost momentarily
in my obsession: younger man, artist's
art on me.

~
I go back for color;
go back for him,
This time lidocaine two hours before
helps numb the needle's entry.
His winter hat with "FUCK YOU"
on the back. Clean, blue gloves
pour ink in tiny, sterile plastic.
I follow his blue eyes, his grey
chin hairs I stroke in my mind.
Came in three hours ago,
turned the heat on for you, he says.
I'm hot, flushed below my inked flower,
near my husband's touch
the night before.
I laugh, green-needle drone cutting,
shading, skin beneath skin
until the lidocaine wears off.

He asks if it hurts.
Excruciating, I think.
This is it for me. I say.
Last time in this place.
He rattles my dark fantasy,
loudly snaps the latex off his hands,
says, *Maybe I'll see ya*
not for a tattoo.
My husband's trust along my thighs,
his goodness in every
colored cut below my heart.

Theresa Edwards

Holly Rose: my parents love,
my own reminder of loyalty I'll wear
with chance of only fading.

I listen
but leave the noise behind.

Dorothy Fletcher

Dorothy K. Fletcher recently retired after 35 years of teaching high school English in Jacksonville, Florida. Her poetry has appeared in over 80 literary journals, and she has published three books. In 2006 she won First Place in the 2006 Robert Frost Poetry Contest, and she was invited to read her poetry at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC in 2006.

Last Words

“It is very beautiful over there.”

~Thomas A. Edison

My father's old bony fingers
hold out pennies to me
or maybe even dimes.
It could be a pinch of tobacco
for his smooth cherry wood pipe
or maybe just a piece of fluff
picked from his trousers.
But it doesn't matter.
I cannot see what he holds.
I cannot feel the silk neckties
he's trying to put on
in front of imaginary mirrors
nor can I taste
the apples slice so juicy
that he puts to his lips so dry.
Old gestures die hard
as old men die hard
in front of eyes that cannot see
the magic of the world that's
slipping through fingers'
or a world lying just ahead
just beyond reach
with fields of youthful pleasures
and sunshine streaming.

You're my daughter!

he announces
as if he'd been looking
for just the right words
then he closes his eyes.

Lunacy

in a renovated convent cell
in France where I slept one night
tall arched windows welcomed
moonlight soft into rooms

once holy with prayer
it flooded my eyes with sweetest visions'
gauzy curtains breathing
arbors heavy with grapes glistening
just beyond the sill
within my grasp
I let the wonder of moonlight
touch me
dispelling the notion
that it would make me mad,
instead I lay myself out supine
to receive its fullest blessing,
all night long I journeyed
in and out of dreams
and each time I became aware
of moonlit air around me
I was amazed and wondering
how such loveliness
could cause a soul to cringe
or take the demons in

Summer Girl On December 3

Frost is killing the crab grass.
At last I am free
from the tyranny of weeds
choking the tender grasses
their blades now asleep all winter
hopefully rising up green in spring
and bidding me to lie down
in their splendor. Still,
it is hard watching
the summer fade away
like blue jean blues.
Distant memories are
the crickets' songs
the cicadas' banter
while my Florida
heater clanks and bangs
discordant sounds trying
to make the air warm inside.
Outside cold silence and dead grass
are all that's left of the summer.
Windows try to keep the warm in
the cold out. Too bad the glass

does not bar the winter sadness
that comes in on chilly wings
like the freezing blue jays
trembling at the feeder just beyond.
But I will not let the sadness settle
as I sip my hot tea
Beach memories take hold of me
like gentle waves rising to the crest
lifting me up just before the spill,
and patience is a beach towel
I wrap around cold shoulders.

Taylor Graham

Taylor Graham is a volunteer search-and-rescue dog handler in the Sierra Nevada and has had poems appear in the *International Poetry Review*, *The Iowa Review*, *The New York Quarterly*, *Poetry International*, *Southern Humanities Review*, and elsewhere and has also been included in the anthology, *California Poetry: From the Gold Rush to the Present* (Santa Clara University, 2004). "The Downstairs Dance Floor" (Texas Review Press, 2006) was awarded the Robert Phillips Poetry Chapbook Prize. Her current project is a collection of poems on the American peace activist Elihu Burritt, the Learned Blacksmith.

"Aunt Sarah"

sits in the best chair,
the one closest to the fire.
Outside, an icy wind
sweeps the hour between lighting
of the candles to warm a church
as cold as Calvin, and its sermon.

Deaf in one ear, halt, not quite
right in the brain
but warbling thanks – each town
has its Sarahs. This one
occupies the best chair in a room
not meant to hold so many

children, plus mother (offering
tea in the unchipped cup to Sarah)
and father, who brings in
another unrelated uncle
to join the paters, sisters, cousins
in the nameless brotherhood

of man, a family so broad
and misty,
surely it would drive
a census-taker – or a housewife
counting mouths to feed –
quite mad.

Private

Few of my American and English friends can read German.
- Elihu Burritt

So, you write things
about yourself in German that you won't
confess in English:
how you worked with a smith's tools;
traveled with wares, tried shopkeeping,
made your way as a common man.

What difference between a farmer

or an artisan in any tongue?
Surely the hand of a Parisian
is fashioned very like a New Yorker's;
a baker in Brussels sweats at his oven
like a Harborne wife over her stove.

Whether you call it Hufeisen,
horseshoe, or fer à cheval, it takes
just as many strokes
to hammer into useful shape.
And yet, there's a camaraderie
in the shared word.

When you confide to German readers,
your voice comes cozy as winter
evenings beside a fire.
You skip all those pages of florid prose,
you get to the point as directly
as German grammar allows.

Why must you hide behind a stilted
English style? Why so bashful
to speak of yourself to friends
and neighbors?
Just tell your life
as you lived it; let that speak.

Traveling Light

"I had traveled nearly the whole distance incog,
without hearing my own name on a pair of human
lips for weeks."

- Elihu Burritt, *A Walk from London to John O'Groats* (1864)

Who wouldn't want to leave his name
behind, and travel incognito?
Become the mysterious stranger
with all roads and options open?
There's the story of a man over-

burdened by his life, not to mention
wife and kids; he left his car
with the door wide open, by the shore
at Malibu; resurfaced as someone
else, in Bangor, Maine.

But you, Elihu, journeyed simply
for enlightenment, 700 miles by staff
with a Hebrew psalter and a change
of linen in your knapsack. Did you find
the load easier without your name?

And when at last you resumed your life
and obligations, and boarded
the coach for London, did you feel
heavier or lighter by the weight
of a dream accomplished?

Michael Grover

Michael D. Grover is a Florida born poet. As a drifter he has lived all over the country. Michael's poetry has been published all over the literary underground. Michael is now living in Toledo, Ohio from there he hosts the website www.covertpoetics.com, co-edits CP Journal, and co-hosts a reading at The Collingwood Arts Center in Toledo. Michael is the president of The Beards performing group. His newest chapbook is . . .And Death Is All Around Us.

From Toledo To Cleveland

Traveling through heartland,
Golden cornfields
City to city.
Asphalt arteries,
Middle of somewhere.

It's not nowhere.
It's home to someone.
It takes all kinds
To build a nation
A few bad men
To tear it down.

Hawk sitting
On fencepost
Keeping watch over
Golden fields behind it.

Silos and farmhouses,
Fields full of barns.
It all passes by
In a blur.
As we rush through it,
Like there's nothing there.

He Went Walking Into The Brutal Cold Wind

It's only autumn,
But you can feel the change.
Gray sky all day,
Temperature dropping,
Cold wind blowing.
Soon winter will be upon us.
Winter enters brutally.

In front of the store
I saw a battered man,
Zipping up his jacket.
Over his shoulder a garbage bag
That held his whole life.
He went walking

Into the brutal cold wind.

Sittin' In The Parking Lot

Sittin' in the parking lot
Of the local porn theater,
Waiting for a friend to
Come out with his check.

She pulls up next to me
In a brand new SUV.
The alarm goes off.
She fumbles around to stop it.

"I hate this car!"
She says as she gets out
In a voice that's just a little too husky.
Short black leather skirt,
Black fishnet stockings,
High heeled boots,
And a button down shirt
To show cleavage.
She walks toward the theater
To start her day.
A Mexican man standing in the parking lot
Flags her down before she gets there.

Jason Hardung

Jason "Juice" Hardung is a late bloomer. After years of trying to live the junkies dream, he decided that junkies dreams never come true. He went to rehab and shook the insecurities out of his head and decided to pick up the pen again after a ten year hiatus. Since then he has been published in *Zygote in My Coffee*, *Lummo Journal*, *Underground Voices*, *Covert Poetics*, *Heroin Love Songs*, *Thrasher*, *Polarity*, *Flutter*, *The Socialist Women*, *Matter*, *Red Pulp Underground*, *Juice*, *Thick With Conviction*, *Iodine Poetry Journal*, *Sunken Lines*, *Up The Staircase*, *Outsider Writers*, *Straight From The Fridge*, *Kill Poet*, *Decomp* and many more. He has a chapbook out on Covert Press called, *Breaking The Hearts Of Robots*, two chapbooks forthcoming and readings across the country. He is an editor for *Matter Journal* *Front Range Review* and managing editor of the *Great Ecstatic Reporter*. He also is the *Beards Minister Of Defense*. He resides in Ft. Collins Colorado with his cat and they watch mountains out the window.

I Knew She Was The One

On our first date
she paid for cheese steaks.
I kissed her
in a dark corner of Tony's bar
she toyed with my belt buckle
and I dug her black boots.
We dug through ashtrays downtown
looking for half-smoked cigarettes.
The stores were all closed.
The morning arrived too soon.
She told me she loved my writing
while putting her panties back on.
I'll call you
she said.

She drove without a license
to watch me read my life story at the Rialto
and she felt it
and still answered my calls.

For my birthday
She bought me a magenta candle
and wore white panties.
We covered each other in wax.
Monday night with a Tuesday hangover
and she didn't mind.

On our third date
she pissed me off and I
punched the rear view mirror.
I don't hit ladies.
Now I can't look back.
She sat in the emergency room with me
for five hours
passing out
holding my hand
I bled all over her hundred dollar jeans
and the alcohol wore off
under all that sterile light.
I looked at my hand
I couldn't believe how white a bone really was
under all that dirty skin.

Six Feet Above

Most of my friends are suicidal.
Their eyes are children
waking up to burned down villages
every afternoon during The Price Is Right.
They have learned how to survive
whether it be from the top of churches
with the birds
or the bottom of an arroyo washed from a flood.
They see the light
but haven't fell into it
in a hamburger stand bathroom in Venice
in the teeth of a mutt barking at cars from a chain
in the stars swirling in a dank motel room sky
the bats are always around the corner
waiting.

Waiting On A Woman

It's karaoke night.
Neighborhood bars have the same facial features
but the guts are unique.
Dimly lit sticky wooden floors dart boards and booze signs
neon flash missing one letter.
Pool tables no elbow room
and a guy named Gus in overalls
over all the waitresses and
they know him by his trade.
He looks through you when he talks
and knows the universe like some
working class Stephen Hawking
belching quantum physics between cans
of Pabst and pulling Newports from his front shirt pocket.
He knows nothing.

No blue drinks with French names here
just the blues seeping through cracks
in the hearts of men the same way
the Budweiser sign creates character
when it flashes against Debbie's cheek.
She has a bag full of dead dreams
and she doesn't bring her own money
to the bar.

A cell phone salesman sings
Shine On You Crazy Diamond.
He's five foot three.
Other locals clap and whistle for him.
Everybody knows his name.
Eddie
steps off the stage and
begins walking a little straighter and
orders a round for the table.
High fives and hand shakes.
He's six foot two.
David Gilmour has nothing on him.
Swinging London Grand Ole Oprey
Apollo Haight Asbury Whiskey A Go Go
ain't got nothing on Pitchers Sports Bar
on Tuesday night.

I'm sitting at the bar chewing on straws.
Alone and trying not to stand out.
Celebrity is contagious and
I get the urge to sing.
I used to sing her a country song about how
the devil drives a red coup deville
while we were naked in bed
then reach across her breast grab my whiskey
and she'd say
Give me a sip cowboy
and I would
and we'd share a cigarette
and fuck again.

I snap out of the memory
and hide my hard on.
Debbie is on Gus's lap blowing
smoke rings in my direction.
The cell phone guy Eddie is staring at me like
I just ruined his debut at the Hammerstein Ballroom.
I look at my watch and the door
shake my head
look again
like I'm really waiting for a woman.

Doug Holder

Doug Holder is the founder of the Ibbetson Street Press. His poetry and prose has appeared in Rattle, PRESA, Cause and Affect, Nibble, Brevities, the Midwest Poetry Review and others. He is the author of the poetry collection "The Man in the Booth in the Midtown Tunnel (Cervena Barva Press). He has worked as a counselor at McLean Hospital in Belmont for 26 years, and ran poetry groups for psych. patients there. His book of poems about his experience at McLean is "Poems of Boston and Just Beyond: From the Back Bay to the Back Ward" (Alpha Beat Press 1998)

The Big Bang

It is not the bang
So much
As the anticipation—
Sensitive hairs
Tensed in each
In each
Of your
Expectant drums-

You—
Curling
Into
A wizened
Fetus
Your clawed
And feral hands.

And it all
Boils down to
A histrionic
Exploding sun
And quite simply
You're done.

" Touch Me, So I Remember Who I Was"

Touch me
I want to remember
Who I was.
Brush my cheek
I want to feel
The warmth of my blush
Rise like scarlet sun.

Hold my hand
And make me stroll,
Slow my frantic gait.

Brush the remaining
Strands of my hair,
Remind me my love,

Of what was once there.

Spring, This Ain't A Love Poem

Oh for crying out loud
It is here again.
The tulips sprout
Like maddening clichés...
Those
Blooming idiots!
And the chirp
Of those morning birds,
What are we left with
Their pellets, their
Turds.

And some chick
In the Square
Say she smells the fragrance
Of love in the air.

A professor
In Harvard Yard
Tells his students
“Hope springs eternal”
Well, pal
I won't put that
In my journal.

Damn you spring!
You swept away
The cold insular
Comforts of my winter's day.

Seth Jani

Seth Jani is a young poet from Rangeley, Me. After a few unsuccessful attempts at publication he began Seven CirclePress as a means of portraying his work. Believing that poetry is a truly communal experience, one absent in modern society, he decided to open the press up to the voices of others. He continues to write and work with poetry and currently serves as Scp's Editor-In-Chief. His book Let Us Rejoice: Poems 2003-2008 is available through Seven Circlepress and includes the bulk of his work written during his formative years in the mountains of New England. He currently lives in southern California where he is a member of the Student Conservation Association's Desert Restoration Corps.

Another Kind Of Music

The world today was soundless,
No letters beating at the door,
No angry mobs howling in the
Streets,
The cars all shot their engines
And the last heavy heart
Ceased to weep,
In supermarkets merchants dropped
Their pennies to the floor,
Shoppers paused in their crazed
Consumption,
And the bars let loose
A flood
Of shattered chardonnay,
On corners, the homeless stopped
Their begging,
The rich, their greedy snicker-sound,
Students lit no cigarettes,
And on the ocean's chest
Not a single ship
Was seen
Drifting on the waves,
And the earth, the red earth
Spoke again,
Rivers raised their sleepy voices,
Mountains moaned in discontent,
And ancient forests, cracked their
Primal joints,
Somewhere, grass began to whistle,
Meadows blew kisses to the sun,
And the stars unveiled their full blue fade,
In cities too, the true music recommenced,
Children laughed their eternal laughter,
Lovers sang their burning songs,
And in little lonely rooms
One could hear
The old and dying
(Slumped in their chairs)
Softly sprouting wings.

Last Lines To A Friend

I think I will forget you now,
In my blood, the rugged flame
No longer burns,
And what I counted as eternal
Turned out no less pliable
Then anger or ash.

The street may still recall
My wandering,
You window grow nostalgic
For my breath,
But I think you too have forgotten
Those nights of long ago,
When we sat and trembled and
I confessed my longing.

What looked like promise
Petered to regret,
What looked like love, a sad mistake,
In the night a new moon begins to rise
And I want to tell you how I'm different
From that sad boy of seventeen.

But there will be no more friendship now,
No taunting touch or awkward coked-out kisses,
No aimless drives through the New England night,
A year from now and home will be some place
Far from you,
The desert perhaps,
Or some city in the south.

For the first time I will be of age,
Will slip into sleazy bars
And toy with desires long since
Shackled,
Because somehow, I think you always knew
That even our "Best Friend" status
Rested on the magnetic pull
Of human flesh.

But I will not renounce any word
I said to you,
Any poem written in your name,
Any soft song whispered against

Your window,
It's just that I want to tell you how
Things have changed,
But realize in some, strange ironic way
That it's hard to speak to strangers.

Mortal Fear

I found my body in the night,
An awkward animal
That prowled the silent streets
Seeking in the moonless chasms
For the flesh and form of others.

Who are you, Old haggard face
Burning in the sinews of the earth?
Why do you carry me in your frail
Frame?
What eternal kiss longs for your
Crumbling crux?

I shine in you!
Though the leaves are born to wither,
I shine in you!
Though this life is made of dust.

Old body, I hold you in my arms,
Why do you go on weeping?
Are you afraid that I will not
Remember
Your perishing little pain,
When I awake again
In that alleyway of stars?

William Taylor Jr.

William Taylor Jr. lives in San Francisco with his wife and a cat named Trouble. His work has been widely published in the independent press and across the internet in such publications as Poesy, Anthills and The New York Quarterly. His latest book, *Words For Songs Never Written: New and Collected Poems* is available from Centennial Press.

My Plastic Heart

In my time upon this earth

I have loved the sun
as well as the rain.

I have been at peace
with the light and the dark.

I have spoken
in private with the sky

and the night has shown me things
I've promised not to tell.

Wasting my hours
dreaming of my
wasted hours,

dreaming of everything
and everyone
I've ever loved,

surrendering nothing to the void.

My plastic heart breaks
for most anything as it melts
in the September sun.

The grand and beautiful
sadness clings to me
like a desperate lover

and I sing with its voice until
it becomes my own.

Poem Written While Getting My Hair Cut By A Pretty Korean Woman
Who Doesn't Feel The Need To Talk So Much, Which I Think Is Nice

And some days you still wake,
if not with a sense of hope,

then a sense that,
after all is said and done,

things are right enough with the world.

A feeling that
good and evil,
darkness and light,
life and death

all are in balance,
part and whole
of a grand harmony
we do not understand
and are not required to.

And then
you make the honest mistake
of going outside or looking at
the television

and all you see
are the faces and the voices
of the graceless and the damned,
a sea of dreamless eyes attached to
lives more dead than death.

And you are filled
with the horror of it,

and a vision of the last of our breed,
abandoned and unsaved
in some hell of our own design,

frightened shadows of what
might have been,

forever buried
in the ash of our collective
self-immolated
dreams.

This Quiet Room

Give us this,

these few decent moments
in between all the rest of it.

Enough wine,

some music,

and the simple
pleasures of each other.

Just this quiet room,

and the world outside like
a sad old war,

long grown tired of itself
but continuing on
because that's all it knows
to do.

Kelly Kuerzi

Kelly Kuerzi is a writer/poet/activist from New Jersey. She has helped tutor inner-city children as part of various Americorps volunteer programs. Her work draws on themes of poverty and life on the streets and often consists of poignant commentaries on the dynamics of abusive relationships.

Deluxe (Abridged)

Two eyes never held such sadness. Tears are not needed to melt into each other. We let go with all we had left to hold on. Laughter never seemed closer then now, but nothing has ever been so far away. Souls collapse with every contact. Shadows flutter when we look away. I cling onto this moment forever. Ours lips touched one last time. I saw you stumble over the fence, the place you cut your hand. Your hips swayed back and forth like the tire swing beneath the leaves. The bark contrasts to your soft skin and yet I fade into both. Headlights glare through the midnight scene as much as compassion shines through the darkness. The gong is heard again and again, as I breathe in your heartbeat. Never have I felt something so big as this. I watch you drive away into the grey sky and on Saturday it rains. I close my eyes and float away. Nothing is as warm as our hug on that freezing January night. I count my crows and we last forever. We fluster, we fever, we fear, what's nothing is everything and don't you deny it. You felt me shake and I felt you heave. I don't like the way you click on each desire. Who clicks better then we do?

The only thing deluxe is the silent tone of the telephone. The only thing deluxe is holding hands in spring time. The only thing deluxe is the best I'll ever be. The only times we rhyme is when we don't try to be right. Nothing is as right as when everything goes wrong. Intimacy starts up the car, but we never drive away together. We have sinned where the childish aggressions laugh and play. We cuddle and everything is all right. We laugh aloud at what we both lost years ago. You reach out and I giggle and turn away. I reach out and your silence freezes my blood. You throw me n the bleachers, the stairs, her bed, her couch, your car, his couch, his chair, his bathroom, your couch, your floor, your basement, his hall, his refrigerator, his floor, my bed, the swing, the tree and I tackle you with passion. The chatter does not bury the intimidation. You bench press my body and tickle every tear. I throw the baseball, but your mitt misses the hint. I guess that's why you're always up to bat. It's been years since I've run barefoot down this murky road. We'll never understand. I sink into your skin, the music warms my veins, your lips give me life. Our love searches like your hands under the covers on another cold winter night.

Mind/Matter Trilogy

Mind Or Matter

The mind is a sickness
That intoxicates the heart
Reason or
Rationality
Cannot stand alone
Or

Like a virus
Will devour
All it touches
The heat of passion
Is a symptom
Of rapid reason
That the heart
Cannot
Cure

Mind Or Matter (Companion)

The heart is a weight
That crushes the mind
Passion
Love And
Devotion
Stand alone
Dragging
To the depths
And drowning
The last breaths
Of reason
Flooded
By fatal emotion

Mind And Matter

Radical
But
Harmonious
Is the jagged ambition
Of a balance
Between
The freezing poles
Of the heart

And mind
Reaching an overheated passion
At the center

Three Poems

1
Rays of the Sun

Snow falls on the ground
Fears seizing my luke-warm heart
Dreams of paradise
Beyond your breath of snowfall
I melt with rays of passion

2
Plunges

Plunging far below
Rushes of escaping breath
Faster and hotter
My fear seizes the moment
While love trickles down my face

3
Flap, Switch

Shock me
Scare me
Hold me
Golden sun of darkness
Death
And the lonely birth of nothing

Freedom
Fairytale
Hold my freezing hand
Singing a joyous tune
Listen

Flocking
Shocking
Love in face of doom
Cold
Soft
Squealing
Silence

Fill my heart of hope
The air rises ever higher
Moving
Still
Locked within a metal meadow

Grrrrind,

Clink,
Patter,
Pop,
Bliss.

Cameron McKenzie

Cameron McKenzie is a young poet from Gainesville, FL. He has slammed his poems at a handful of small venues and is noted for his high-energy, beat-like performances.

Dig It

This world is spiraling into chaos,

Driven downwards while hatred floods the hearts of men

Blinding them, confining them to a comfortable place surrounded by walls built in the hallways of their lives,

There is but one door that leads out of their fortress of fear

Covered in 1000 locks, behind it they reside shunning opportunity, loved ones, and new people, through a scrutinizing eye they gaze through a peephole

But yo peep this, while Jo Schmo hides

Behind his door unable to think outside of the box,

His fellow man that doesn't live in the box is dying round the world underfed and under fire

You can't say they dropped like flies

You have to say the flies are dropping like men

Cause you see in a world as such the flies' gotta better chance to survive.

What are you, you are what I am and what we are is the same thing,

Fools, fallible, flawed, we are human.

Top of the food chain, yet we still are the stupidest species on this cosmic orbiting chunk.

So you won't pick him up in a cab because he looks different,

Or let him in the bar because he does not have the same sexual preference,

Or give her a job because she isn't the same gender, your loss mate.

You are made less because of that close-minded decision, that ignorant choice, that prehistoric mindset.

Wake up and smell the futility of your actions Joe,

These men and women don't become weak due to your idiocy,

You see they will as long as this continues, have to overcome and surpass, such things growing stronger,

While you grow weak, less and less, hiding behind your 1000 locks.

Time rolls on and the plot always thickens as the drama unfolds,

Our fellow fools say we are making progress, progress towards what I ask you?

Progression towards regression

A revert to ancient times as history continually repeats itself and mistakes

Of the past are made again and again in a never ending paradox, a hell storm,

The mail storm of chaotic repetitions,

Until we all awake one foggy morning in spring and see all we are all

On the same levels, all tints of brown and all breathe the same air

Under the same moon and stars

True progress cannot be achieved.

Until that spring morning we will slowly slip into the same old same old in which we currently reside.

It was the Dr. Martin Luther King who spoke of dreams. Dreams are the foundation

For hope.

We must learn from his tragic story and seek out dreams

Before from this life we are untimely ripped.

Without Dreams we have but the waking world, the material plane.

We must take the visions and make them real.

Do it now "Carpe Diem"

Do not become Mr. Joe franchise, strive for me I implore you,

Youth of the here and now never allow contentment

To seep into every orifice of your body
Like an adhesive it will bind you where you stand.
There is but one way to end such an epidemic!
If at the end of the day you can look down at your hands and proclaim
“My hands have been bloodied with the flesh of the earth.
There is soil under these nails and calluses on my fingers,
My work has been good, my work here is done

Ignorance Of A Love Thought Found

Pacing in circles, cursing the cloudless heavens of twilight
Chain-smoking now as if the next cigarette will numb my memory of you
and the knowledge its predecessor failed to do so
Turning endlessly in a ring of self-hatred why have I fallen for you
I only remember one instance in which I was this way before
I know this irrational process, the familiar rush and heightened sense
Each time you are near, each time I hold you, each time I steal a kiss and your lips
grace
Mine with their presence and for an instant I am whole
And for an instant we are one
But now, now that instant is gone from me as are you
Gone are your radiant smile and hazel eyes,
Gone are your gentle touch and sweetly scented dark locks
Gone is my soul's reflection, its mirrored tune together
Creating harmony, but now mine is alone sounding into the endless darkness,

I know you are nothing but a memory now, stolen from me by nothing more then the slight event and the unceasing passage of time.

Joan McNerney

Joan McNerney's poetry has been included in numerous literary magazines such as *Boston Review of the Arts*, *Kalliope*, *Mudfish*, *Spectrum* and *Word Thursdays*. Four of her books have been published by fine literary presses. She has performed at the National Arts Club, Borders Bookstore, McNay Art Institute and other distinguished venues. A recent reading was sponsored by the American Academy of Poetry. Her latest title is ***Having Lunch with the Sky***, A.P.D., Albany, New York.

Invitation

Would you like to unwind
an afternoon at the lake?

Solar sparks spilling over us
in showers of golden sizzle.

Put on short shorts, skimpy tops,
stick our toes into oozy mud.

Breezes will shake treetops
while we listen to birdsongs.

Why not float on new grass
facing an Alice blue sky?

Read celestial comic strips
from mounds of clouds.

We can count sunbeams,
chase yellow butterflies.

Devour bowls of cherries
painting our lips crimson.

This noontime is perfumed
with illions of wild flowers.

Let's go away all day...be
embraced by the goddess.

The Subliminal Room

That weepy October
marigolds were so full.
I made an omelet with
them. Do you remember?

All November, leaves
mixed with rain, making
streets slippery. We
listened mostly to Chopin.
Leaves droop in September
too ripe and heavy for
trees. I was careful
not to slip, dreading
when leaves would grow
dry and crumble.
Some live all winter
through the next spring.
Chased by winds, they
huddle in corners,
reminding me of mice.

I confessed to you

how I loved Russian
poets and waited for
a silent revolution,
revealing my childhood
possessed by rosaries
and nuns chanting Ave,
Ave, Ave Maria. "Your
navel exudes the warmth
of 10,000 suns", you said.

We still live in this
subliminal room.

Jonah did not want to
leave the whale's stomach.

We continue trying to
decipher Chopin. Your
eyes are two bunches of
morning glories. Sometimes
the sky is so violet.

Will we ever live by the
sea, Michael, and eat
carrots? I do not want
my sight to fail. Hurry,

Joan Mcnerney

the dew is drying on the
flowers.

Corey Mesler

Corey Mesler has published in numerous journals and anthologies. He has published two novels, *Talk: A Novel in Dialogue* (2002) and *We Are Billion-Year-Old Carbon* (2006). His first full length poetry collection, *Some Identity Problems* (2008), is out from Foothills Publishing and his book of short stories, *Listen: 29 Short Conversations*, will appear in March 2009. He has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize numerous times, and one of his poems was chosen for Garrison Keillors Writers Almanac. He has two children, Toby, age 20, and Chloe, age 12. With his wife, he runs Burkes Book Store, one of the countrys oldest (1875) and best independent bookstores. He also claims to have written *These Boots are Made for Walking*. He can be found at www.coreymesler.com.

On Your Hair, Etc.

Your hair could house the
post-modernists. Your
eyes are nickels left in the
sun. Your smile, when
you use it, can sharpen wits.
And from here it looks like
another long year, another year
of living indoors, speechless,
dreaming of sleeping in your hair.

Private Showing

They made a movie
about my private affairs.
It had a private showing.
The people who came
recognized themselves
or didnt. The movie rolled
on like a magnetic river.
Near the end someone in
the crowd swooned
and there was a brief inter-
mission. I admit watching
myself made me squirm.
It wasn't the untruth that
was awkward, it was
the black and white thinking.
After the film we all
gathered at a gathering place.
The film was to be discussed
and my life gone over again.
I bought a round for every-
one and settled back in my
chair. I promised myself
I would only speak when
spoken to. There were too
many close-ups of his
privates, one friend began.
Everyone joined in after that.
The discussion was livelier
than a madman's dream.

The New Man In Your Life

Hell give you something
you already own
and you will act as if it were
your finest gift.
Hell smile like a coffin closing
and youll start to
sweat an exit strategy. And
just when he gets
comfortable youll wake up with
the antidote in your mind.
Youll run to write it down before
it dissolves the way dreams dissolve.
The thing he gave you will blacken on
your nightstand, a precise remuneration.

Aj Naslund

A. J. Naslund's work has recently appeared in such journals as *Caesura*, *Upstreet 4*, *Abiko Annual* (Japan), and other places. His book of poems, *Silk Weather* (1999) was brought out by Fleur de-lis Press, Spalding University. A resident of Louisville, Kentucky, Naslund grew up on a farm in Montana in the forties and fifties. He has taught college and university courses in English in the U.S., Japan, and in Korea in recent years. The writer has academic degrees from the University of Montana (Missoula, Montana—B.A. and M.A.) and the University of Louisville (Ph.D.).

Flypaper

I do not want to write about the massacre
but after all the bodies lie in the street
still before my residence. Smoke waters my
eyes, as I look through curtains moving in
air that readily penetrates my home through
broken windows. They have removed wreckage
of autos and the two tiered bus as evidence
and the charred lamp post has also been
uprooted and taken to headquarters. Since
no one is attending the bodies, this will
have to be their mass for me. I am shamed
by the religious authorities who have failed
us all in this matter. As a poet it should
be my call in a strident time to speak of
maggots and black clotted blood more than
the spirit, but I must bring myself over
morning tea to go beyond. The pale liquid
to whom we are beholden to the Nihongin is
my relief from headstrong realists who, in
a journalistic fervor, believe the truth
lies in facts and photographs. (Perhaps it
is for this reason the bodies have not been
removed?) Sipping noisily as the sign of
good taste in the East, I lift my cup and
retreat to the kitchen, old fashioned man
in whose summer rooms one can still find
the slick spiraling tapes that catch those
little devil flies. Here where so many chance
losses have been grieved, the sugar bowl on
one side, the salt and pepper set slightly
greasy on the back of the electric range, I
begin to believe again that the spirit is
gone now from those corpses, that the whiff
of smoke is not the scent of the many
deaths at all. Something finer, lighter,
a transparent coil of small wind within
translucent air--there rises the spirit,
not back to its maker, but onward toward
one great meeting with everything! I am so
convinced of this, I have courage to pick
up the daily paper (delivered despite the
widespread carnage to my door) to filter
through the news, to look idly at the

page of the dead, the obituaries, and to laugh. They are not mentioned there, my stiff visitors. Their names have been undone with indifference, for it is too much of a tsunami of dying to think of dying at all. We are born to it, this end of things and we are all going. Upward goes the steam from my pot, yes up among stuck insects on the tape, but up, where I still insist we all are tending. Do not believe me, though, believe the news. An appalling number of citizens were born away in the calamity, born away, and we can forget them. Has this been enough? Have I said what I said before in a new way? This life cannot hold me, brother, sister, and terror cannot hold us all forever.

Meditation On Gasoline

Who is this who stands on a corner, kin of many if not of all, a child of our society in fake lamb's wool parka, her hair blowing, eighteen or twenty years old? Is she waiting there for the bus or other gasoline powered conveyance? To go to the party, or school, but to join with the larger blood, flowing in among many, a bird in the great migration or to the nesting grounds? It seems she holds herself slightly stern despite the smile. Does she need to find the bathroom, urinate, hold some other of the many parts of her will in check for its time? How will she get back plural with us if gasoline should fail?--a philosopher's question, or, no, the question for the successors of John Maynard Keynes. If we are out of gas, maybe we are not out of electricity. It could be time to look to the sky, accept the blessing of the sun that penetrates the cold breeze buffered by those department-store clothes.

Are they thinking of her, those big economists? I mean of her. Plainly the marketers had her in mind when sending manufacturing specs to China.

Praise Firewood

Praise firewood sticks for dryness, for crackling fire, texture before burning, for the scent of sap for the odor of rough fiber by oak or by pine, pitch or cabernet wine. Of cold nights you have prepared us so well, and against the madman's spell when with your threat we raise an ugly arm to any of the bad guys on the perimeter. Praise fires for ache of taking over, of eating hardwood and burning ponderosa split wood to a likeable cinder. I sing the hiss of fireplace logs and the pop of branches in the back that we all had forgot till then, raising our beer cans high in fine aluminum anthems for the ski cabin that made us all into Norwegians with knit caps of family color and legs, oh legs that could cross-country with the best, coming back to the easy rest of wood burning, smelling good, ready even to heat the cold clay tunnels under Korean homes, or, as ready in stick form for that as for the Appalachian shack, America's poor and holy land.

Dan Provost

Dan Provost's poetry has been published throughout the small press. He is the author of seven chapbooks; two, *Fallen Empathy* by Covert Press and *A Quiet Learning Curve* published by Zygote in my Coffee will be published in November. Currently, he is the Assistant Director of Graduate Services at Assumption College.

My Unborn Son

My life will not
be with a Junior who
will take my name and
run around in a mish-mash
of silent dilemmas...

No, I have the market cornered
thank you—with senses damaged
by darkened events that stay
in my domain...

I remember once...talking to
a former lover about a dream
I had; we had a son through
telepathy-- naming him Adalius...

“Adalius?” she chuckled to herself...
“I like that name.”

She then asked me why I never had
children—which forced me to reveal
a broken past about parental wrongs done to me...

“I could never forgive myself if I made the
same mistakes.” I told her coldly...

She could sense the sadness in my
heart—realizing I was more scarred than
She thought...

“I’m sorry,” were all the words she could muster...

So my unborn son;
you will never know the experience of being human...
facing this world...and seeing how bare and unkempt it can be.

It is better for you in the long run however, there are too many
false dignitaries and lovelorn slow deaths to ponder...

The best thing for you is to never be born—to exist only in my
older regrets...

Maybe...to find other adults more willing and courageous than me; that will conceive you within the ideals of love, warmth and caring...

This is the only advice I can ever leave you...
The only substantial words I can say...

My unborn son...

Suicide Bank

Destiny is found on
The bank of the river
where at 2 AM—the last day man
looks up at an illuminated sky,
Holds up the Bottle of Wild Turkey;
And toast the nobody.

“Here’s to the memories,” he shouts...the
S echoes for a few seconds before fading
into the night...

He then pulls out his .38; looks around
To see if any imaginary angel or devil
Will stop him...

Then says to himself “Here goes nothing,” as
he slowly moves his trigger finger closer to
an eternity.

Tears stream down his face—the backwards
Notre Dame Hat he wears serves as a reminder
that once he had better days...

The inevitable shot...

The final juxtaposition of needless life
and carefully planned death...

All close and so...so near.

Worcester State Girl At Job Fair

Unsure in her slim
Scared psyche...

She waits her turn to approach the hiring
Insurance company table...twirling her brown
straight hair into a band of insecurity...

Pink top—long sleeves—gray hi-rider pants;
Conservative and by no means trendy,

She is willing to let others go ahead
Of her—obedient to let assured Monster
Suits walk the corporate walk and speak
the financial terminology.

Falling through the cracks will be the story of Ms. Timid Creature...

Waiting for no opportunity within quiet pain.

Robert Snyderman

Robert Snyderman is a poet. He was born in Pennsylvania.

He wants poetry to become a part of everyday life. So when he is not a mountain, he brings a typewriter to Central Park, or to Washington Square Park, or to Tompkins Square Park, and asks the people passing by if they'd like to motivate the spontaneous composition of a poem. Since he started doing that in June 2008, his idea of writing has changed. He doesn't need to be a bookstore poet. He needs to be his own store. He is also co-founder of The Institutionalized Theater of Brooklyn. He has directed many plays including *Today's Vengeance* at The Bowery Poetry Club, *Sleep Shit* at the Ontological-Hysterical Theater, and *Morning Morning* at The Pratt Institute. He is an avid member of The Corresponding Society reachable at www.thecorrespondingsociety.com.

Sequences From "Meadow And Torrent"

Salvation Limbs

I am introducing a sequence

To you who would not have advertised me. August 2007

And some time in July 2008. An irritable blessing.

Let the astonishment happen first. then guerilla warfare.

hostages and minimalism. Then, stigmata

in response to the pride of the climate. Thunder or Rain. Lightening or Shelter.

Man or Woman. Politician or Hobo. Conceptual Stigmata or Useless Sanitation.

I am introducing a sequence.

To you who would not have advertised me. I bought the violin in July 2007.

The Meadow raised me to be violent

Robert Snyderman

only intensely ignorant, each human
is always alone with another human.

Why write about the violin?

These are my questions...

These are my aid...

To you who would not have advertised me.

October 24, 2008. I took a bus to Philadelphia. abandon the home.

I am introducing a sequence. To you who would not have advertised me
is an experiment for the idea of youth. written with haste. patient haste.

the civilization of the meadow
that raised me
is not aware
of the existence
of patient haste.

written between authorities.

written for authorities.

not written for possible burdens

(human solitude, unearth. earthly orgasm)

not written to relinquish possible burdens

I am introducing a sequence. An after life. A drum.

Salvation Limbs

Why Meadow? you have defied
the human voice, or sound in general
is homeward and deformed
sexual solitude if the context
is detachment
the bodiless and animal-like

among autumnal familiar
paranoia. your hair is the same
as mine.
your husband is sane
because he understands
that he is regretful.
Is your father a husband?
Is your hunger a human?

Hunger Birth. Why Meadow?

Mortality in Philadelphia
12:03 am abandon meant
A professor of pity. A student of pity.

Robert Snyderman

eye-urine. Why Meadow? I was
an upright human, until the wilderness
does not approach, Until I refuse
to apologize. The Civilization. The snoring dark,
not yet irritable,
and not yet seductive.
not hot fire inside hot fire.
The Civilization.
The thematic licking.
ruined you portable.

The portable end.

Why end? When did the
enslavement
become the talent?

Salvation Limbs

woman of sun machines... Often sun machines.
Sweeney do not stagger round-n-round.

The horse does not speak clearer than you

Although the silences are similar:

Fertile and Mutinous – you don't take enough of that river

She drinks from between the enormous fertility of

The horse does not cough up

Seasonal diarrhea

Of white man soul hunted.

Memorize the sex exit.

A Human Abundance. You holiness search the find.

Savings account.

Share light and unnecessary pain.

Then the pregnant becomes math.

He who throws a rock in to the Connecticut river.

sun machine and rail road track.

He who does not remember that day.

Too many useful drugs.

You are being watched

By an exact anarchist.

I haven't met her yet. Someday in the university of the future:

Robert Snyderman

Fertile and Mutinous, Healthy with fatal intentions.

Human blood must form The Mouth. Noose Carnivals mouth-like

Noose Pendulums mouth-like

The Inventor of Life. The Suicide Genius.

But myth is myth are portals of severe warmth.

Pearl Harbor. The child of both sexes stares.

Disease and Research.

Hobo scientist. Blood piss. Hereditary death.

The Logic! The Humor!

The newest disease and peasant language

My grandfather told me days ago,

his mother was born in the Yoral Mountains divide Europe and Asia Russia

Russia Then. Then. My mother is born in San Antonio, Texas.

The American Indian As If the sun had murdered

us into the temperature of the human eye. Disorientation ,

happened vivid breathing , a collapse, The World Trade

decentered. The human mouth that does not imply

ensorship = The newest disease The visual strategy,

Decapitate the poets! if there are any poets left,

nameless yourself. One poem. I manifesto the Jihad

of endless naming, between publishers,

chewing new hells into the familiar birth control,
the familiar trap
of concealed
gasp and clever
bleeding gap. A cancer of new hells.

A river of hostages,
the imaginary ejaculation weeps, The trees fall, That is the symbol.
soldier the turban
shock the corpse and tortured with bravery
Who is the lung? Who is the body? humiliated with bravery,

Who is the self? Who is selfish?

Who has not surrendered?
Who has not invented old logic?
Resurrection is not a type of silence?
High School was not a burden?
Sweeney isn't getting married to Adrian?
And I am not silence? And I am not the Yoral Mountains?

Nicholas Sola

Nicholas Sola resides in New Orleans, LA.

Afterwards: Fourteen American Haikus

I. Fountain.

Water.
It makes one younger,
In so many ways.

II. Cleaning.

We built our temple in 15 hours,
And took it down in 30 minutes.
How holy.

III. Waiting.

The eerie glow of the vending machines,
Awoke the evil computers.
The tales of youth return.

IV. Riding.

The car speeds up to an old 80's tune,
While intentionally scaring the pedestrians,
Innocence was still hanging in.

V. Adapting.

Waiting around.
Observing the surroundings,
I decided to join the decadence.

VI. Trouble.

Trouble turns the music on.
Trouble starts to dance.
I dance with Trouble.

VII. Intermission.

Food.
Movie.
Breaks over.

VIII. Contest.

Observing the renegade sprite at her activity.
I give it a try.
What are you looking at?

IX. Following.

Where Trouble goes,
I go.
I'm lucky I'm alive.

X. Involvement.

I attack,
Only when I'm attacked.
I was attacked.

XI. Feisty.

A vague idea of what happened.
Running for cover,
And waking up with a ringing noise.

XII. Called.

Being told to leave.
Trying to figure out if I'm in Heaven,
Or in Hell?

XIII. Hell

Waiting in the cold.
It makes me wonder about the night,
And if it was good or bad?

XIV. Mixed.

Reflecting on the night,
I realize that we are lucky,
That we are alive

Beautiful From Behind

Going up the escalator,

I noticed a woman in front of me.
Her back was bare,
Except for two white straps,
And her strawberry blonde hair.
She was probably 18.
Her backside was beautiful.
I hoped I would see her face,
But it never happened.
She went one way,
I wasn't determined enough to follow her.
She had a boyfriend.
No matter what,
She was still beautiful from behind.

My Headrest Is Singing

The place is dark.
The voices vary.
Two many drinks
Where's my fiancée?

Three men around
All good guys.
But the left is the best
He's the softest.

They go
They come
Back to me
In my dreams.

Now my headrest is singing.
What can I do?
The one on the right is bony,
And I just want some rest

Paper on the table.
Pencils near.
I've had a few.
Time to draw.

Put the pieces together.
Still Incomplete
Give out the pieces
Only to two

Now my headrest is singing
He won't get a piece
New guy on the left
More bony, But sweet.

Talked of dancing.
Drew on an arm.
Promised to pose
And Consume water

Final rotation came
Food we ate.
Slept on their couch
End of Saturday night.

Petra Whiteley

Petra Whiteley comes from the Czech Republic, she immigrated to the UK in 1993. Her poetry has appeared in *Osprey* together with an article on political and current events, another article has been published in *The Glasgow Review* with more to follow as she is their regular writer for the Opinion section. More of her poetry is forthcoming in *ETC*, *Eleutheria*, *Gloom Cupboard* and *Eviscerator Heaven*, which will also feature her articles on poetic movements and their methods in following issues. Her first collection of poetry, *The Nomad's Trail* was published by *Ettrick Forest Press* in September 2008.

Drip Dripping

Marat faces the entrance,
dense and deep,
 drip
dripping,

 crossing over

to the irrefutable smug smile of
the Reaper,
 swallowing burgundy flames.

Bath of cold water and warm blood,
rigor mortis settling into body,
betrayed and morgue-bound, slow
near blissful disintegration.

Betrayed, just like us
in this tumbledown town,
 this bearing down world.

 Change -
 a dream,
 drip,
 dripping.

(inspired by 'The Death of Marat', oil painting by Jacques-Louis David, 1793; in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium and study of French Revolution and current revolutionary theories.)

Sisterly

I can sense her in this room,

walking yellow shoed
across dirty blue carpet,

softly, softly.

Her rain soaked laces
keep on leaving thin toe traces
in the street lamp lit, darkened

spaces of small flat, its book scented air
is filled with her shallow breath.

I can nearly touch the void of her being.
Between the fingertips,
it feels just like black horse hair.

I can nearly smell her,

devil's meat sizzling on red electric
rage stove, the table set for breakfast -
white lace and red napkins, The works,
even flowers and soft piano wonder music.

She is formal and dignified,
yet beneath her white apron,
a dark mess, fossilized chaos.

Behind long eye lashes - a ticking eye -
nervously twitching lids and barbed sorrows.

When the sun shines on her pallid skin,
she tries to make it go away as if the rays
were no more than a storm of flies.

As she disappears into the light, she promises
to stack my accomplishments behind her,
assembly it with the blizzard inside her,
to come back for me when the sky falls across
me like a blanket, just after my last world-glance.

My sister, who loves me more than my brother.
She rests behind the horizon, horizontal, never born,
death's wrapped around her legs, she, the twin-stifled
aborted Goddess, and me her jangled disciple, lusting

for the bright life she's never had - the guilt-ridden medium.

Allison Whittenberg

Allison Whittenberg is a poet and novelist (*LIFE IS FINE*, *SWEET THANG*, *HOLLYWOOD AND MAINE* all from Random House). She lives in Philadelphia.

Life Slips

like two weeks like five years like coupon clippings
From a thick Sunday pull out
Shiny, vivid
Promising bargains in primary colors
Coupons expire
And expire and expire

Narrative

Though they are numerous
I will grant your wishes
I am your angel
Though my wings are heavy

Water's Wine

The balance of bliss is pain
The balance of pain is enlightenment
The balance of enlightenment is more enlightenment
The balance of more enlightenment is transcendence
The balance of transcendence is alienation
The balance of alienation is bliss

About the Press

Seven CirclePress was founded early in 2008 by New England poet Seth Jani. It consisted of little more than a simple website and a few handmade chapbooks. Wanting to establish a form of literary community that seemed to be largely absent on the commercial scene, the site was opened to the voice of other poets, young and old, established and unknown.

The press is aiming towards wider distribution and an increased library of offline material and hopes to host chapbook/book competitions in the near future.

For further information visit SCP on the web or email inquiries to editor-in-chief@sevencirclepress.com.

