

CircleShow

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From The Editor

There is something solitary in this issue. Some grave secret gnawing beneath the surface. A sort of electrical undercurrent of longing bursting here and there from the spaces between words. Many of the poems here presented feel as though they were written to give voice to a haunted past, to people and memories that, for one reason or another, can longer find expression on their own.

It is in honor of this beautiful, but unsettling feeling that we have chosen, for the cover of this issue, a photo evoking the solitary in us all; the loneliness of a silent snowscape juxtaposed with a human but seemingly alien presence.

We thank each of the 19 writers included in this volume, who not only submitted their quality poetry but, by an almost synchronistic phenomenon, culled forth from their desk drawers poems of a similar thematic strain. And it is on this note, of shared vision and craft, that we are proud to release out into the world our Winter 2009 issue of CircleShow.

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William L. Alton

William L. Alton started writing in the Eighties while incarcerated in a psychiatric prison. Since then his work has appeared in *Gloom Cupboard*, *Amarillo Bay* and *Breadcrumb Scabs* among others. He earned both his BA and MFA from Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon where he continues to live with his wife and sons.

Blues

I like my music with whiskey and cigarettes.
I like it strong and biting. I like my music to twang. I like it blue.
I like it smoky as hell and harsh. I like my music to hurt
and rattle like a ruined lung.

Where The Words Tasted More Of Meat

It's a house of little noise. I learned to walk
on thickly-padded slippers. I learned to walk
the long way around
when my father was reading. I learned
to stay out of his light.

He smiled when I brought his Guinness. He took me in his lap
and pointed out the words, one at a time.

Words saved my life. My father saved words
like gold and gave them away like pennies.
I ate every book as if it were my first cherry.

I never brightened a lamp. My father liked me in the dark
where he could pretend I slept. I never slept. I was quiet.
And dark. Where the words tasted more of meat than melon.

I became a trap
catching all the clips of day my father flaked off. He had a way of
curling
my hair behind my ear and cupping my chin when he looked at me.

My father's breath smelled of beer and cigarettes and the books he
wrote. His teeth were worn with whispering the spells that make a
poem.

William L. Alton

My father sat at his desk and wrote
or in his chair and read.
I'd never seen him without paper to write on.
My father was never far from a pen.

My pencil drew letters in my journal
like little tombstones. I was afraid
of what I wrote. My father would've boomed
with laughter. I was afraid. I was afraid
of the ghosts I'd raise.

My father carried his language like a stick
to close the eyes of the day. He paced in his office, hanging
words on the walls like scraps of tapestry torn to pieces in some foreign
war.

I closed my eyes and waited. I waited
for my father to rumble up from his writing
and tell me what to fix for supper.

Bread crumbs lay on the window. It was impossible to plan
for tomorrow. The animals hoard for the winter and starve
in the spring. My father piled his words in stacks on his desk.
He sent them to publishers and cried over rejection slips.

My father was a sensitive man.

In the hush, we all sounded like stone. I could not see
my face in the mirror, only my eyes. I was tired beyond belief.

They said my father was dying. They said he was wasting
from his thundering self to a whisper. He would become a sliver.

My father thought he was dead. His tongue stiffened
and he couldn't taste the nights. He spit his words like bile.

The cancer sat in the middle of him. The doctor said he had a year. A year
to write his final book. A year to breathe his last poem.

The flies in my father's study were bored. My father had gone to bed
for a few days with the chemo. He could not think to the end of a line.
He huddled
over his journals and pecked out letters one at a time.

His flies never bothered to visit, even when he began to smell of bad
meat.
His bedroom was sacrosanct. It's where we would die. The flies would
get to him later.

I sneaked into my father's desk and traced the words he has whispered
there.
His voice went hoarse in the end. Before he died he told me to burn
the work.

The fire twisted a small wind into the trees. The words curled
around themselves and collapsed. They fell into coals. I imagined I saw
them dancing
there but it was only a figment of my imagination.

Gary Beck

Gary Beck has spent most of his adult life as a theater director and worked as an art dealer when he couldn't earn a living in the theater. He has also been a tennis pro, a ditch digger and a salvage diver. His chapbook Remembrance was published by Origami Condom Press and The Conquest of Somalia was published by Cervena Barva Press. A collection of his poetry Days of Destruction was published in 2009 by Skive Press. Another collection Expectations is being published by Rogue Scholars Press. His original plays and translations of Moliere, Aristophanes and Sophocles have been produced Off Broadway and toured colleges and outdoor performance venues. He currently lives in New York City, where he's busy writing. His poetry and fiction has appeared in hundreds of literary magazines.

Don't Look Back

When I was young
boys still enjoyed
building snow forts,
snowball fights,
sledding,
ice skating.
Greenhouse effect
and climate change
altered winter.
At the same time
boys left the farms,
flocked to cities
and moved indoors,
plastic toys
the substitute
for outdoor play.
Video games
enslaved them,
planting youth
in front of screens
that shield them
from the future.

Janet Butler

After many years in central Italy, where Janet developed both her passion for watercolors and poetry, she relocated to the Bay Area in 2005. She currently lives in victorian Alameda with Fulmi, a beautiful Border Collie/Setter/Spaniel mix she rescued in Italy and brought back with her.

She currently teaches ESL in San Francisco, and Italian, privately. Some recent publications include the *Chaffey Review*, *the 13th Warrior*, *Plainsongs*, *Locust* and *Cutthroat*. She was recently awarded 1st and 2nd place, HM, in the Bay Area Poetry Coalition's annual Maggi H. Meyer Memorial Contest.

Eden Fables: Beginnings

Snake slipped in surreptitious quiet
the tall grasses
pulled by the lure of woman scent,
flesh warmed to drowsiness
under a sun fixed in an eternal
here-and-now.

She lay in nonchalance and caught a flicker
shadow that seemed light wind
a breath of blue nudging
transparencies of green in this perennial spring.

She almost sleeps, a sweet fall into
passivity. He glides the yielding grasses,
he slides, a faint weight on soft flesh
to burrow in secret places
agitating dormant soils
fertile soils
planting the subtle seed
of desire.

Shadowline II

They live among us
perhaps.
Spirit shocked into eternity
befuddled, naked,
lost before that empty something,
obscene shell they once were.
Best buried or flamed to flakes
yes, better dust adrift on winds
brushing green lands blue skies,
dusty film of melancholy,

Janet Butler

a gray shudder
on sunlit days.

Tobi Cogswell

Tobi Cogswell is a Pushcart nominee and co-recipient of the first annual Lois and Marine Robert Warden Poetry Award from Bellingham Ark. Her work can be read in *SPOT Lit(erary) Mag(azine)*, *Penumbra*, *Seven CirclePress*, *Spoon River Poetry Review*, *Illya's Honey* and *Blue Earth Review* among others, and is coming in *Ozone Park*, *Rhino*, *Slab*, *Off the Coast* and *Decanto*. She has three chapbooks and her full-length poetry collection Poste Restante is available from Bellingham Ark Press. She is the co-editor of San Pedro River Review (www.sprreview.com).

Midnight Meditation

It will be a month of lonely evenings
she said, we see the same moon
but not the same dawn, only she will
smell the ocean.

They drink coffee
together in the morning and wine
together at night, together being
imagine my arms around you,
imagine my kisses in a month
they will be real.

She worries
does he still want her, she is tired,
does he still want her, he can have
anyone, does he still want her,
what if he forgets?

The hawk soars over beloved hills
offering hope that straight flight
means the heart's desire knows no
boundaries, no whispers, only
wings and tides, it shall be.

Winter Water

The tide burbles up,
rushes into the toe-holes
our feet make as we take
our last walk. We converse
about the small things,
kick stones with
misplaced grief.

Salt spray refracts our hearts
cracking, we see the shells
as if mounted under glass.
We head toward our sandals -
my dress absorbing the
colors of the crashing foam
your legs purpled with the cold.

Small crabs clamor in
the warm wet of our
impressions - the front
of mine deeper as I
lean toward you, your
heels deeper as you lean
away. I feel spent as beach grass.

The symphony of winter is an
appropriate final audience for us -
witnessing our undoing.

William Doreski

William Doreski teaches at Keene State College in New Hampshire. His latest collection of poetry is Waiting for the Angel (2009). He has published three critical studies, including Robert Lowell's Shifting Colors. His fiction, essays, poetry, and reviews have appeared in many journals, including *Massachusetts Review*, *Notre Dame Review*, *The Alembic*, *New England Quarterly*, *Harvard Review*, *Modern Philology*, *Antioch Review*, *Natural Bridge*.

Since You Proclaimed Yourself Famous

As I try to change the channel
the TV sneers in colors
too lurid to occur in life.
You're on every cable outlet,
your face garish as tropical fruit,
your designer outfits flimsy
and revealing, though only
the most turgid adolescent
would call them sexy. Meanwhile
a man too lonely to love
kneels between me and the screen
and begs me to reconsider
my commitment to your species.
I admire his desperation,
but the west wind has toppled
Boston's most famous steeples
and the moon has become a discus
thrown by a child on steroids
and the phone has been ringing
since the Pope declared Jesus
Public Enemy Number Three.
Nothing, you see, has changed
since you proclaimed yourself famous.
The dark retains its whiskers
and the clock's still counting backwards
the various retorts to our lives.
The man lies flat on the carpet,
writhing, and I point the remote
between your eyes but collapse
of boredom before I can trigger
that tiny infra-red signal
you'll detect as a faint tickle
confirming how vaguely we touched.

To A Raconteur

Someone trips drunk across the sky.
The spark-trail suggests the Wendigo,
but I know it's your ego,
disembodied by vodka sipped
ice-cold, and alienated by age.

The dark highway whispers along
not like a river but a reel
of recording tape. I'm driving
with so rigid a grip on the wheel
the antics of untethered ego

can't distract me enough to crash
my little car into the pines.
Earlier your humor astonished
the visiting lecturer. Your tale
of the ghost elephant roaming

the campus offended a colleague
who knew when you almost split
four ways with laughter that she
was the elephant, the butt
of your imported Asian wit.

And later, at lunch, you stole
the occasion with a story
of a wheelchair ghost rasping
through the attic of a dorm
while cringing students engaged

in the grossest of sexual acts
to nullify their creeping fears.
This time everyone laughed
because the story explained
everyone at the table while

offending us so generally

we affected not to mind. Now
as the moon winks behind hints
of cloud your spark-trail shatters
onto the snowy forest and snuffs;

and as you drowse over those books
with your nervous intellect idling
your ego flits home to hunker
in the back of your skull and plot
the dream-life you really prefer.

Howie Good

Howie Good, a journalism professor at the State University of New York at New Paltz, is the author of 11 poetry chapbooks, including Still Life with Firearms (2009) from Right Hand Pointing, Visiting the Dead (2009) from Flutter Press, and My Heart Draws a Rough Map (2009) from The Blue Hour Press. He has been nominated four times for a Pushcart Prize and five times for the Best of the Net anthology. His first full-length book of poetry, Lovesick, was released in 2009 by Press Americana. He is co-editor of the online literary journal *Left Hand Waving*.

Where I'm From

I came straight from work
to meet them on the corner,
but, of course,
they had already become
fine particles of smoke.
While I waited, I listened to music
for barbed wire and accordion.
The short days of winter
had sneaked up on us,
the sky like a fogged mirror,
the frozen puddles like pale bruises.
I stood there for what
seemed a lifetime,
naked by then and shivering
and with my hands raised
in the air, an unqualified witness
to an unspecified event.

Taylor Graham

Taylor Graham is a volunteer search-and-rescue dog handler in California. Her poems have appeared in *American Literary Review*, *International Poetry Review*, *The Iowa Review*, *The New York Quarterly*, *Notre Dame Review*, *Poetry International*, *Seven Circle Press*, *Southern Humanities Review*. Her book The Downstairs Dance Floor (Texas Review Press) was awarded the Robert Phillips Poetry Chapbook Prize.

An Olive Tree Grows In London

*Whether, indeed, it was nothing less than a dove
from your own American woods that dropt one of your
Olive Leaves in my cab*

- Douglas Jerrold to Elihu Burritt, 1846

Elihu, how did your *Olive Leaf* find its way
into the cab of Douglass Jerrod, editor
of the *Shilling Magazine*? Did English Friends
place your “healing leaf” at his disposal?

Brotherhood earns many friends; some
have never shaken hands or looked each other
in the eye. But they can see, beyond oceans,
that it wasn't fiery swords of angels

that slaughtered nine thousand Sikhs in India,
but “the cold iron of the English infantry.”
And now the Oregon Question threatens war.
But Jerrold trusts your *Olive Leaves*

to cool the “glory fever.” “Learned Blacksmith”
indeed. Peace-loving Britons are keen to ride
the horse you've shod, and wield
your words to “weld men's hearts together.”

Googling Your Image

The tip of your crown appears first
on the screen. Waves of hair on top and wings
at temple – you don't bother to tame
such things. Time is flying, the thin ranks
failing. “Courage and faith!”
Your locks recede, your brow's exposed.
A raptor profile, eyes deeper

Taylor Graham

by the year, dark wells of Baca.

You're getting older. Brother Edmund Fry
is gone, swept mid-sentence heavenward, "peace"
still on his lips – a year younger than you.
In the picture, your lips are set, worry-lines
at the corners; headache. A bleak time
for brotherhood: the Crimea; Denmark and
Germany at war, again. At home,
North and South both calling on God

to aid their slaughter.
(That old hourglass – we're still down-
loading.) A strong chin. Collar high
at the throat. The very plainest fashion;
your pennies go for pamphlets,
not for style. Cravat above the pale
triangle of decent white shirt
discreet under a black frock coat.

And here the computer image stops.
No smithy-muscled arms, no
chest with its troubling coal-smoke cough;
no long legs to bear you seven hundred miles
on a wish. But at the bottom, your neat-
penned letters. High curves and
uplift peaks: your signature.
Your image stands on your name.

How Many Stars

*There was only one inn... and since the old coaching time, it had
contracted itself into the fag-end of a large, dark, seedy-looking
building, where it lived by selling beer and other sharp and cheap
drinks to the villagers.*

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

Darkness coming on, too many miles
to the next town. This village
would have to do – what used to be a stop
on the stage-coach line. Was that before
they ranked establishments with stars?

These days, the inn of Landlord Rufus
just sells beer to local farmhands. No bed,
no breakfast. You have to beg him for supper.
But here you sit in the kitchen,
in a corner of the great fire-place,

faggots kindled before you, tea-kettle singing.
On all sides, Elizabethan pots
and spits, hooks and trammels, polished
tin and burnished copper
arranged for use, not fashion.

You sit at a three-legged table,
single guest of the house, awaiting your tea
as you gaze up through the huge black
tunnel of chimney, at the stately circle-
dance of too many stars to count.

Practical Lessons

*How many barley-corns, at three to the inch, will it take to go around
the earth at the equator?*

- Elihu Burritt, a problem to be solved in the head while blacksmithing

Did your sum prove right, Elihu,
when your brother worked it out that evening
on a slate? How many barleycorns
to measure the circumference of earth?

You had your proof of honest labor,
so much ore in the smelting pot;

Taylor Graham

iron formed into hoe-heads and wheel-rims,
brass keys to match their locks.

You merely sweetened the work
with lines from Thomson's Seasons, that book
of poetry you balanced against the chimney
of the forge;

and sharpened your wits
with mathematical puzzles and Greek
conjugations, as you strengthened the muscles
of your arms.

A store of facts amassed
one by one like barleycorns, hour
upon hour, till they might
circumnavigate a world.

The Angel Inn, Pershore

*In this little out-of-the-way town, I set on foot a movement
which carried me in directions and into enterprises I had
never dreamed of.*

- Elihu Burritt, A Walk from London to Lands End (1865)

What better place for good tidings? This neat white inn in Pershore,
The Angel. You might have stopped, instead, at The Quiet Woman.
But as you say, an Angel has higher aspirations.

At the bay window you sit, writing out your creed – abstinence
from war, The League of Universal Brotherhood – when, by chance,
three young college men recognize you from a portrait in the paper.

Brotherhood indeed: they come right in and introduce themselves,
and before you can say “angel” you’re in a stranger’s upper room
full of attentive young men. For hours you preach brotherhood

and peace. Seventeen sign the pledge and get down on their knees

to pray. It's after midnight when you walk back to your inn.
Don't you know, an Angel's good tidings are likely to change

a person's life? You meant to walk from one end of England
to the other; that walk just ended in Pershore. Instead,
you've got The League of Brotherhood, International Peace

Congresses, the Olive-Leaf Mission. How many miles
by foot and steam you'll travel, how many speeches,
letters, and petitions. Angels mean hard work.

War-Flowers

As if War must have the flowers, and Peace the weeds
- Elihu Burritt, the Learned Blacksmith

Fifty thousand working men's sons –
the best and strongest, the ones
raised in English family love –
are chosen by their government
and vetted by the military surgeon.

On the other side, fifty thousand
working men's sons – brought up
French by loving families –
are similarly called, and sent
against them into battle.

Of these twice-fifty thousand
fine young men, one twentieth are
killed outright in a single day
and left lying on the field; three
times that many maimed for life.

Elihu, when you practiced numbers
to the beat of hammer against plow-
share, calculating barley-corns
and the circumference of Earth,

Taylor Graham

did you ever think it must

work out to such grim
mathematics, these magnitudes
that mankind sows and reaps
and buries
in his earthly garden?

Jackelyn Hoy

Jackelyn Hoy has had work published in *Alehouse Press* and *The Orange Room Review*. She currently lives in Chicago where she spends her time reading and writing.

Chicago

How beautiful the people
who run from the sudden rain
in the city
to the white canopies
of the downtown market.
The farmers in their hats
laugh,
the rain falls heavy from the red
awnings of the
cafes.

They look like gulls landing
with their suit coats over
their heads.
Morning waves on Florida beaches.
Sheets tangled.

The woman on the corner cries
for bus fare.

Moth

You look like a moth
swimming in your dress,
like you have wings around you.
Like you pollinate at night.

I sit dirty on the shore.
I want to be touched,
on my neck and on the balls of
my shoulders.
Your milky watery hands could touch me there,
like the German in the movie
theatre who held

Jackelyn Hoy

my necklace (where did you flock to
before lights?)
Would I be rough
like sand
on cattle bones (the moon?)
Bones in countries where people say
things like
The Sun is Low
and
He'll Come Back.
My Woman is Dead.

(we wanted to sleep through the movie
but she wanted to talk.

she told us her husband was a prisoner
of war.

she told us stories.)

Martin Willitts Jr

Martin Willitts Jr's recent poems appeared in *Blue Fifth, Parting Gifts, Storm at Galesburg and other stories* (anthology), *The Centrifugal Eye, Quiddity*, and others. He was nominated for four Pushcart Awards. His tenth chapbook was *The Garden of French Horns* (Pudding House Publications, 2008) and his second full length book of poetry is *The Hummingbird* (March Street Press, 2009). He has two forthcoming chapbooks: *Baskets of Tomorrow* (Flutter Press, 2009) and *True Simplicity* (Poets Wear Prada Press, 2010).

I Remember When There Were Four Blue Moons

The woods had glowering eyes.
Fish in their small still voices, were praying.
This was when I was young and foolish, in love.

There is nothing new anymore.
The singular sun is bored with my anguish.
As I get older, it is to see more misery.

If I challenge this, the contentment of the bluebells
will be everywhere, rapid streams of orange light
will leap from my tongue.

Sewing

Based on the painting, "*Young Mother Sewing*", Mary Cassatt, 1890

The mother is concentrating on her stitches
staring into the eye of the needle
stitching a pattern into a darker sun.

Her daughter has been tugging at her, moaning,
irritated at the lack of attention.
The mother does not notice this calling,
small as threading the path through the woods.

I understand this concentration.
When I am in the middle of writing,
you can talk to me and I will respond, still typing
stitching a thin veil of words.
You could rest your impatience on my lap
and I would not notice.

It is the same as you gardening the last frost.

When someone is embroidering silence,

Martin Willitts Jr

all anyone can do is watch.

The mother was hemming the horizon to the sky
while her daughter tugged at the seams to be noticed.
When one is concentrating, the other tends to be ignored.
This is the way things are.
We can only sew so much into the quilt of the night
while someone impatiently waits.

Steve Klepetar

Steve Klepetar teaches and writes in Saint Cloud, Minnesota. He has received six nominations for the Pushcart Prize.

Currents

Something is buried too deep in your brain to touch.
It whispers your name.
“Get ready to travel” it says, forming words
like a cloak in the dark, an instrument of flame and breath.

You have walked out on the window ledge, a swimmer
in the ocean of air. It’s been fifteen years
since your father died and on your brow you may feel
your mother’s kiss or the empty promise of wind.

Listen, and let your mind be grass.
Bend when that hand moves across your face, ride
hard the currents you cannot control.

Harsh Song

Long days, burnt color
of straw and again no rain,
somewhere invisible

in every human throat
a harsh song

we can save the state postage
again: deliver
the message by hand-drawn
bird: well-fledged pigeons of night.

Pickup

Moon glaze, white pickup truck
bumps along this dirt road and we

Steve Klepetar

are borne in the rattle of our bones,
caps and blisters, muscle memory

of shovel and red dirt. White owl
swoops among jack pine – gravel
and its elegiac call. Our dream crew
dispatched at the cavern's ghostly lip.

Bruce Lader

Bruce Lader's second full-length book is Landscapes of Longing (Main Street Rag Publishing Co., 2009). His poems have appeared in *Poetry*, *Harpur Palate*, *Margie*, *New York Quarterly*, *Confrontation*, and other journals. He is a former writer-in-residence at the Helene Wurlitzer Colony and has received an honorarium from the College of Creative Studies at UC-Santa Barbara.

Farewell To A Pair Of Shoes

How will I walk without these twins
I keep mending, repeating are *only shoes*?
They've never let me down
or squealed a complaint
about the messes I've gotten into,
daily commuter treks, rocky wanderings,
never acknowledging *way-to-go* or *good job, guys*.

They've carried out their roles
so resiliently, put bounce back in exhausted steps,
balanced my modest wardrobe.
Though they look scraggly,
too scuffed for a thrift store tax write-off
or homeless shelter drop,
what a heel I'd be to throw the couple out
after such a long agreeable marriage.

No, I will resole them like tires,
stitch the threadbare seams,
give them more tune-ups of oil and polish.
Should I store them
yin/yang, wrap them securely
inside a shoebox confined in a closet,
the way mother preserved baby-shoes?

OK, I will cast them in bronze,
their actual tint, bookends sculpted
with steps light plays upon,
friends who couldn't dance enough,
couldn't say goodbye.

Uninvited Lady Bugs

They skitter in as if every window
crevice hadn't been weatherproofed,
dozens follow dozens like dotted
detectives searching the study
for clues in a convoluted plot.

My office is haunted by a chaotic
crowd of aphid-eaters who have trespassed
into this garden where I'm king,
they invade the perennial photos
on the walls, climb leaves and vines
of Venetian blinds.

A few besiege the flowering
bookcase and computer monitor,
mate like tiny turtles on the run
while others attack the printer,
scrawl cryptic comments over the ceiling
and occupy the light fixture,

couldn't care less about
sidetracking my focal point,
hindering me from earning my keep.
Why don't they hibernate
under tree-bark, look for cracks in rocks?

They secrete a sour odor, play possum
as I corral them in a container,
take them to the outside garden,
hoping they are messengers carrying wishes
that come true, ferry sound weather,
good fortune, peace.

Lori A. May

Lori A. May is a poet, novelist, and freelance writer whose work has appeared in publications such as *The Writer*, *Tipton Poetry Journal*, and anthologies such as Van Gogh's Ear. She is the author of stains: early poems and two novels, Moving Target and The Profiler. May is also Managing Editor at Marick Press and Founding Editor of *The Ambassador Poetry Project*. For more information, visit <http://www.loriamay.com>.

Clarence Street

Steam sighs from beneath the streets
Releasing its presence
Stumbling passers-by with confusion.

Even its breath has a home in this town
Dwelling defiantly below us
Hushing sirens in a misty swish.

It calls out for attention
Wanting to embrace visitors
And wrap winds around the willing.

Its underground world
Cannot contain its carefree cushion
Creeping up through concrete lungs.

It wants to be known
Understood
Appreciated for its participation in strolls.

Competes against rains
Discarded belongings
Trapped within its own cage.

Squeezing past barriers
In attempt to ghost this street
Sighs cry out in early morning dreams.

Passive aggressive
Urgent and defeated
Mists rise and fall back to crawl home.

Terry Miller

Terry Miller is a published and award winning poet who lives in Fort Bend County, Texas. His work has been published in *Sol Magazine* and other Texas publications. He is a member of the Gulf Coast Poets Society and is the founder of the Fort Bend Poets Group. He is a full professor at Kaplan University, where he teaches eMarketing.

New Star

His universe is held in place
by the breath-soft sunset
they shared one late August dusk
as her pale hand laced its fingers
into his. He slowly turned
to acknowledge the gift. Captured
in her eyes was the shining spectacle
of the family of suns that grew
to fill the evening sky as she rested
her head upon his shoulder
and the world released her
to join the cosmos as its
newest star.

JB Mulligan

JB Mulligan has had poems and stories in dozens of magazines, including recently, *Autumn Sky*, *Chiron Review*, *Argestes*, *Blue Fifth Review*, *63 Channels*, and *Aunt Chloe*, and two chapbooks: The Stations of the Cross and THIS WAY TO THE EGRESS, and has appeared in the anthology Inside Out: A Gathering of Poets.

Faith In The Harmony Of Chaos

In the garden of joy, to scream
as gnats and hornets sting and surround me.
Is there no respite from Paradise?

“Harder days are coming.” No shit.
Marching behind the prior harder days,
a life like someone else’s tree,
days gathered, grey and green,
dense, unkempt in the cold breeze.

And then a bird feeds, or a child smiles.
Something happens, brilliant beneath
the distant, disinterested sun.
Something small. And life is new again.

The topsy-turvy hurly-burly spin,
like a ball thrown into a cave -
each moment is a stillness,
hangs in the air like a kiss
when you first move slowly away -
then BLAM - there’s another damn wall.

And I know it makes sense:
there are slow calm honest words
behind the constant clatter and hammering.

William Ricci

Bill has been writing poetry for over 20-years, and recently began travel essays and prose. Recent publications include: a poem titled “A Visit” at *Whistling Shade* and an article titled “Alaska: Experience and Open Doors” at *The Loft*. Poetical influences include: D. Nurkse, Nick Flynn, John Haines, William Blake, Samuel Tyler Coleridge, and Arthur Rimbaud.

In Memory Of Arthur Rimbaud

In the morning light across
the bay through the
tree tunnel of pine,
I see each sparkle,
I see each breath,
I see each leaf overturning,
each leaf let go of the vine,
detaching in one smooth
ripple, letting gravity and
radiant breeze guide its path,
giving to fate, where it will
land.

MaeEllen Broderick Scarpa

MaeEllen was the first person in Columbia County, NY to be born in a bathtub. Since then, she has earned such distinctions as the only first-grader to make it to the top of the climbing wall, the most likely middle-schooler to wear a tunic to class and the only person in history to accidentally bake 14 pans of sticky toffee pudding. She splits a mean infinitive. A drama student at New York University, MaeEllen resides in Manhattan with two roommates and an imaginary owl named Wigpidgeon.

Fable

Crickets disagree, but
the ants think it's good
I made my bed neatly and kept
you out of it

and how we used the time we lost
to harvest wheat and weed
the walnut trees.

Micro Poems (*or The Good Bits Of Failed Poems*)

I

Like warm soup
Sunlight cradles my belly.

Nothing, I think
Is more sensual.

yet.

II

My world is a sponge today
moist and heavy

And the air holds hints
that maybe
the Earth is still alive.

III

I will not stop for soup or soap but I
will stop for you.

IV

Where are my socks?

Have you hidden them in hopes my bare feet
would bring the spring to us?

V.

Sing earthy tunes and let
the willow of your words fill me
Like a balloon
 til my toes barely trail along the pavement

Song For Your Journey's End

Unburden your shoes on me, Man of the World
 and I will cradle them in soft doll hands
 polish their scuffed soles.

For all eternity I wait in shallow pools
 light reflected on the ripples
 water through my toes.

Do not be frightened of this;
 I will not sink my teeth into some virgin flesh
 I ask only to touch what has been touched
by desert wind
 and dribbled from the stars.

Heather Ann Schmidt

Heather Ann Schmidt is an adjunct professor at Oakland Community College. She edits *tinfoildresses* and is the editor/ founder of recycled karma press. Her poems have appeared in several journals and anthologies. Her books are Njaa (recycled karma press, 2009), Channeling Isadora Duncan (Gold Wake Press, 2009), The Bat's Lovesong: American Haiku (Crisis Chronicles Press, 2009), The Owl & the Muse: Collected Tanka (recycled karma press, 2009). Forthcoming are Transient Angels (Crisis Chronicles Press, 2010) and Cepheid Variables (Village Green Press, 2010). She holds an MFA in Poetry from National University and is pursuing her MA in English there as well. Currently, Ms. Schmidt is writing her first novel, Lessons From the Orient Express.

The Last Day Of Summer

I make dresses out of bright red silk and wear the jade
for luck,
 for remembrance,
 for love I won't remember.

We escape....woven into the forgetting,
moving threads dragged under current--
our bodies and wrinkled waves
 move deeper into the clear brown.

Each grain of sand has a story to tell,
 so we move our ears closer to
the bottom
 to hear muted words.

And my daughter becomes the sepia picture of my past
as I wonder if my mother had thoughts like this at forty.
How old will I see her become?
Will I remember her name?
Will she hold my hand even if we are strangers?
And with each breath we let go,
our bones become softer.

The Soot Angel Goes Out In The Rain

I sought out a black marauder,
asked where the axe was
so I could chop wood behind the shed,

think my cave thoughts:

I know it is wrong to want his mouth on mine.

I HAVE IMAGINED....

how his (mouth) might miss (mine)
brushing a bottom lip

then the deepening.

I lie down and a hurricane passes over my body--
the wetness cannot penetrate my soaked skin.

I sit within the darkest corner
of myself
and long for his hands.

Will that marauder come and drop
more smoke and shrapnel around
my house on the corner?

will he knock at my door after 400 days
as if nothing was ever said?

John Sibley Williams

John has an MA in Writing and resides in Boston, where he frequently performs his poetry, though summer 2009 he is moving to Portland, OR to study Book Publishing at Portland State University. He is presently compiling manuscripts composed from the last two years of traveling and living abroad. Some of his over fifty previous or upcoming publications include: *The Evansville Review*, *Flint Hills Review*, *Cadillac Cicatrix*, *Juked*, *The Journal*, *Barnwood International Poetry*, *Seven Circles Press*, *Paradigm*, *Red Wheelbarrow*, *The Alembic*, *Phantasmagoria*, *Clapboard House*, *River Oak Review*, *Glass*, *Southern Ocean Review*, *Miranda*, *Language and Culture*, and *Raving Dove*.

A Song Without Music

The raw moonglow so certain.
The winged energy of tempest
married to the calm
concealed in its center.
Are you running naked
through the surf?

The sun buried deep
still warming sand and pebbles.
The contrasting murmurs,
lessons of history and rejuvenation,
reborn like a darkness
flooding the void behind a lighthouse eye.
But you like a prayer for both,
are you ever alone
in your own house?

The naked delight never quite resting,
blind to the flesh it's offered,
seeking nothing less than everything
you haven't yet beheld,
surging forward, an ellipses,
the full moon and its music
penetrating your body.

The one I love knows the Great Dancer
is a lamp without oil.
Do you need oil?
Are you any less naked
when the whole universe fills with light?

John Sibley Williams

A Village South Of The River

We live secluded beneath the smokestacks and power lines
fueling a city, but it's the land south of the river,
where the slightest rains overflow each bank
and threaten the meadow flowers and horses,
I entrust to you.

You who open windows for the storm
and speak of the sea in terms of herring caught,
who vanish into poetry, histories, and other fictions
to futilely escape self-meditation,
who begin a new conversation
two lines before completing the first,
like me who writes of you
and already feels the silent weight
following the last word.

A bridge built of our ribs arcs over the water.
You are the only path.
The vast circuitry of pure energy overhead
sizzling well past midnight, when we sleep
like stacked stones and no longer question
what keeps houses lit within.

My heart is a village
where the sun is burning out
but never quite extinguishes.
It lies south of the Danube
and is forever flooding.
As we rain together,
stripping the bark from the sun,
warring the clouds,
I spit out the stones long crammed in my mouth
and, again with meek voice and destination,
walk upon them, along the entire path,
remaining bone dry.

Accident Of Clouds

It could have happened many ways
but today they drifted on opposing currents
by chance? by strategized attack?
and collided into great thundering sparks,
rival armies' first clash, the first
always the bloodiest,
always harboring the most sensual dawns.

Two lovers prayed with their bodies all night.
All night it rained.
The sycamore's solitary limbs split, cauterized,
and, naked, regrew together, unhappy, malformed.

Even now the horses cannot rest,
awaiting smoldering barn fire
but no tinder catches.
In safety they look
across their beloved hills
and valley grown mute.
The lesson has changed somehow.
For some reason they keep seeking
a fallen candle or shattered lantern.

Changming Yuan

Changming Yuan authored several books before emigrating out of China and currently teaches writing in Vancouver. Yuan's poems have appeared in *Barrow Street*, *Best Canadian Poetry*, *Exquisite Corpse*, the *London Magazine* and nearly 200 other literary publications worldwide. His debut collection Chansons of a Chinaman and the monograph Politics and Poetics were recently released. Yuan has had work nominated for the Pushcart Prize.

Winter Sleep

between padded sheets
i envelope both
my senses and soul
and stamp my naked body
with a gear-edged dream
put into the big mailbox of night
and send my suppressed self
far away from home
to a strange place
unregistered

About The Press

Seven CirclePress was founded in 2008 by New England poet Seth Jani. It publishes both online and off and aims to create a collective of the best voices from the independent literary scene.

It commits to no prescribed esthetic but has a strong inclination to view art as a means of promoting unity and meaningful interaction.

It has a strong online presence with the amount of visitors growing daily.

SCP publishes a select number of books/chapbooks a year as well as CircleShow: The Official Journal Of Seven CirclePress, released biannually.