

CircleShow

*The Official Journal of Seven CirclePress*

*Vol. 4 Summer 2010*

Seven CirclePress

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ISSN: 1948-1098

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Published by Seven CirclePress: A Homegrown Literary Venue

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## From the Editor

The poems in this issue dually alternate between the dry swirl of country dust and the black, smoky coffee-grit of city living.

The imagery is often astounding, whether the author is describing a cemetery in winter or the surreal, suffocating sense experienced at the edge of drowning.

Volume four may be our shortest issue of CircleShow to date, but the poets included have kept the issue rich, exciting and far from diminished.

As usual thanks goes out to all the wonderful authors who sent work our way, as well as to the readers who continue to loyally peruse this modest venture.

Enjoy!



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## **Eric Comerford**

Eric Comerford was born in Arizona and has soaked up enough sun for the time being. He will be moving to a place where it snows in the fall, Michigan. He plans on hiking, fishing, indie music festivals and reading.

## **Global Warming**

the hills are sleeping,  
ice melting paradise.

the sapling leaves kiss summer,  
we walk away, into some focused dimming.

mother morning takes in her  
hair  
and remembers.

## **Vince Corvaia**

Vince Corvaia is an award-winning poet who has had more than 90 poems published in literary magazines nationwide, including Seven CirclePress. He earned an MFA in poetry from Wichita State University. He lives in Maine with his two cats, Sophia and Isabella.

## **Kansas**

All I know of Kansas  
is the white interior glow  
of a lone combine at night.  
I lived there ten years—  
readings, parties, betrayals—  
but what remains  
are scribbles of lightning  
in a blackboard sky  
and the last farmer to call it a day.

## **Things That Make Me Sad**

Snow, the delicate way  
it's falling right now  
as if unsure of its welcome.

Saying goodbye to the school  
where all the teachers are new  
and no one remembers me.

Playing Gorecki's Third Symphony  
as I move living room furniture  
at 3 a.m.

The expression  
on my unrequited lover's face  
as she listens to God.

Mourning dead celebrities  
as if I knew them,  
as if I had all the time in the world.

## Meredith Devney

Meredith Devney received her MFA from Emerson College where she taught English and was also a poetry staff member of *Ploughshares*. She is currently an English teacher as well as an adjunct at Marshall University. Her poetry has been published in *The Coe Review*, *Cherry Blossom Review*, *Sawbuck*, *The New Verse News*, and most recently in an anthology titled *Double Lives, Reinvention, and Those We Leave Behind* published by Wising up Press. She has just recommitted herself to the submission process after a too-long hiatus and currently lives in Kentucky with her husband and child-like cat.

## **Flinch**

The blackbird sings  
like a glum criminal  
outside my window.

A pot roast falls  
in 2B. The newlyweds  
who live next to me

realize they have not  
made love since yesterday.  
The raciness multiplies.

The manager in the hallway  
is teaching his dollar to fly.  
Outside, the flags are disgusted

and beat their hearts blue  
against a cold arch.  
I, too, lose convention

and consider the threshold  
to our engagement, and the  
consternation dwarfs create in me.

Were you here, we would not tolerate  
monkeys in aisles. We would drive  
all night, your head tilted on my shroud.

At daybreak, I would nudge you  
with my anxious fist and say,  
“Already, we are in Idaho.”

## **Sabbatical**

I am shattered sick, standing in bloom,  
staring up at the ugly sun.

Husbands of houses roost for the day.  
Talons dig into roofs.

You once told me,  
*Bad men have but a morgue to claim.*

You believed  
blunt was better than earnest.

But now I am convinced –  
the vile *and* purest do die.

Never mind meeting me at your will.  
The Waltz around us is breaking.

You are vocalizing your way to hell.  
Our saga will never be fine.



## **Diandra Holmes**

Diandra Holmes has previously been published in *The Ivy Review* and *The Albion Review*. She currently resides in Missouri.

## Margaret

She spits out black like it's stale  
coffee grounds, curls her lip that it was  
even in her mouth. She'll suck  
it out of her teeth while she prays at  
the ceiling, her delicate  
Jesus fingering his glossy curls  
while the angels stand by. They've  
got two wings to hide their faces, two  
wings to hide their feet, and two  
wings to shade their porcelain savior  
from the brutal sun. God for-  
bid his rosy cheeks grow dark and ripe.  
Lord, Lord, she prays, let no mark  
of Cain enter this house and pollute  
thy sanctuary. The end  
floats feebly from her creamy throat, twists  
into a worn song of praise.

## Universal Departure

She waits for her husband  
while red matches shift to blue.

Cigarette ashes swirl, smoke  
slinks through the air, traces

splinters of eyes and teeth,  
pieces of scattered galaxies,

the wet ring on the table.  
The lacquer bubbles and chips.

Voices echo in continuous loops,  
no depth, words flake, lost in scratches.

The house is hollow with ghosts kept  
like old shirts. Frayed. Useless.



## **John McKernan**

John McKernan is now a retired professor who used to conduct seminars on Electricity and Punctuation. He lives – mostly – in West Virginia where he edits ABZ Press. His most recent book is a selected poems Resurrection of the Dust.

## I Like To Visit

That cemetery at midnight  
In the middle of winter

During a snow storm  
The vowels & consonants  
Of the wind driving North

Off to the right  
A traffic light clicks on  
& off to make everything  
One moment red The next green

Red is easy to understand  
The green's to suggest I guess Spring  
Its flowers & the smell of clover  
Help us forget the shadows lying there packed  
In the bleached sundials of their skulls

## **Adam Moorad**

Adam's writing has recently appeared or is forthcoming in *3 A.M.*, *elimae*, *Evergreen Review*, *Mad Hatters Review*, *Pindeldyboz*, *Underground Voices*, *Word Riot*, among many other places. His debut novella, *Oikos*, will be published by nonpress in 2010. He lives in Brooklyn and works in publishing. Visit him here:

<http://adamadamadamadamadam.blogspot.com>

**Bellevue**

in mornings we swim like there's a flood

we are button-down oxford shirts  
unbuttoned with the sleeves rolled-up  
steeped inside a sea of denim

we still feel cold  
when we close the windows of our seabeds  
and roll our cuffs down around our wrists  
and can't help but think  
the whole soaked world  
still feels dehydrated

**Duncan Wood**

you said this needle in my forehead  
was supposed to be the hypodermic cure for stress

i want you to know how impractical it makes me feel  
like I have been folded in the way  
christmas cards are slipped into envelopes  
and sent to estranged family members  
seeking religious asylum  
in some other magical wasteland

## **Lynn O'Donnell**

Lynn O'Donnell lives and writes in Sussex County, Delaware.

### **Stormy Brittany**

Il y aura de la mer cette nuit,  
the islander says.  
Sharon holds the phrase  
in two hands, then gives it to me  
like a ball of hollow light green glass.  
We are better than blood.  
Charmed by the same  
turn of phrase, we are bound  
by childhood and motherhood,  
and an ancient biology of the heart.  
Il y aura de la mer cette nuit, I say  
she says he says,  
*there is a lot of ocean tonight.*

### **Upon Learning There is Water on the Moon**

Thank God for science,  
the perfect math of genes  
mixing, blood cells coursing  
through arteries, watery organs, even bone.  
Sex should be careful.  
Evolution sings to the astronomer,  
and he chants:  
The earth turns on a dime, lover,  
the stars burn, every word is fancy and  
leaps from the tongue because  
humans are intended to speak poetry.  
The earth turns and the stars burn, shorelines  
move, sleep is a kindness from the heavens.  
The earth and the stars are yours and  
prayer a sweet commodity.

## **Linwood Rumney**

Linwood Rumney teaches writing in Boston. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Quercus Review*, *Superstition Review*, *Cold Mountain Review*, and *Cerise Press*, among others. He is a 2010 recipient of an emerging writers fellowship from the Writers' Room of Boston.

## Rockland Harbor

From branches of the Wolf River Tree  
my older brother calls my name,  
but not any name the living  
know me by.

As a child I wandered this shore  
searching for shells and strange stones.  
I gathered fragments of cables  
tossed up by the harbor  
and tapped a path on the pavement  
to telegraph my ellipsis home.

As a child my brother  
was too weak to climb trees.

Swinging sticks at brambles  
with their various shadows  
and leveling water pistols  
at the sun with its glistening thorns,  
he seemed uniquely capable  
of enduring.

It must be something beside  
my brother, less than his voice,  
making that racket.

If it is an ugly bird's shadow laughing  
at a bare branch, it must know  
how moon calls to tide.

If it is the claw  
the bird carried from the sand,  
it must know it was surrendered  
long ago to enable escape.

If it is, after all, an artifact

of my brother's voice, it must sense  
how, with each fragrant breath,  
these apples summon the ground.

## The Ice Storm

It must be tenderness that sometimes compels  
water to press itself so firmly against  
the landscape, like the too cold hand set upon  
a lover's belly to startle and amuse.

Trees break from the weight of this embrace.  
As in spring, through a trick of light, low-hanging  
branches seem to fracture as they dip below  
the river's surface. But there's no error

of appearance here. This season has gone literal.  
Something lost all patience with shadows and casts  
them out with a clarity that stuns  
for its accumulated barrenness.

Mornings, children skate in driveways, parents  
gather ice to flush toilets  
while the radio catalogs, as though  
in war, the losses of the day before:

*one trailer has collapsed, killing the sole  
inhabitant; another bridge declared  
impassable; and half the state  
cut off from the power grid. Residents*

*are advised to boil water, to  
ventilate if they use generators,  
to stay away from windows and off roads.*  
Later, there will be interviews with the woman

who gave birth in a car flipped over in a ditch,  
the octogenarian who burned

Linwood Rumney

furniture for heat in his living room,  
and the fortunate couple who, visiting

friends when the storm began, were not at home  
when an ice swell dragged the whole thing into the river.

## **Larry Schug**

Larry Schug is employed as Recycling Coordinator at the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, Minnesota. This is a fancy job title that means he sorts other peoples' garbage for recycling. He has published five books of poems with the sixth in the works.

## **Apprentice Gods**

We spend the afternoon  
rolling rocks down a sandy scree slope  
at the base of Orphan Mesa,  
laughing like little children  
as the stones tumble and jump  
until lying still as gravestones  
when gravity exhausts itself on level ground.  
We play at rearranging the landscape  
as if we are apprentice gods, practicing on stones  
before learning to stir water and wind  
into floods and hurricanes,  
shake the earth into quaking, just for a laugh.  
Tomorrow, we decide,  
we'll plant trees and heal the scars of erosion,  
maybe pick up trash along the highway  
on our continuing quest for divinity.

## **The Perfect Time**

Enshrouded in a cloud of snow  
kicked up by a county plow  
on an icy road—  
it's enough to scare the Zen into anyone,  
not knowing if you've lived a minute  
or a lifetime  
inside this snowy nebula  
or whether your tires are still on the road or not.  
Only when you emerge  
into transparent blue air, alive it seems,  
and no other cars head on in your lane,  
do you think, damn, ain't this the perfect time  
to begin your life anew.

## **Michael Steffen**

Michael Steffen is a Y2K graduate of the MFA in Creative Writing Program at Vermont College. His first book, No Good at Sea, was published by Legible Press in 2002. His second, Heart Murmur, has just been released by Bordighera Press. Michael's poems and critical prose have appeared in a wide variety of journals including *Poetry*, *Poet Lore*, *Two Review* and *Alehouse*, to name a few. He currently lives in Roseto, PA.

## **First Things First**

No wonder our parents were so intent  
on teaching us what to do when  
the phone's ringing, someone's at the door,  
our hand is on a hot stove,  
and we need to go to the bathroom,  
to be absolutely certain, as adults,  
in that baffling shuffle of choices,  
where to begin, and why.

You'd think it would be obvious  
in the echelon of things to do,  
but someone at some point  
dragged a cart out of a barn  
and placed his horse behind it,  
the earliest failure of common sense—  
man and beast standing in the rain,  
puzzling over their lack of movement.

## **Patrick Sugrue**

Patrick Sugrue is a creative writing major at Loyola University of New Orleans. He has been published in the literary journal *A Capella Zoo* and *Revisions*, the student run literary journal at Loyola. He hopes to one day write screenplays or novels.

## Moonscapes

But, I mean, I am enchanted by you  
And in no full way am I planning on  
Having any dreams tonight.

I know mathematically speaking I'll live  
Until 2064. Long  
Enough to see the civil rights movement begin.  
World war two will be over, Korea too (just wait for ho chi

minh, kids)

I'll tell my children to doubt me;  
Calling a woman a flower is to  
Say she isn't yours, and never was.

That's true.

I'll tell them to watch how I acted before they were born,  
And to tell their mother too, that

All I did

Was make faces at the moon  
And note  
How different people have pronounced my name.

## **Kyle Torke**

Kyle Torke teaches at The Colorado College and the United States Air Force Academy and has published in every major genre, including books of poetry and fiction. His most recent book of poems is Still in Soil (2009), and the most recent fiction is Tanning Season (2009), both from Audience Press. When he's not teaching Shakespeare, Hemingway, or Atwood, he's teaching his sons (Conrad and Coover) and daughters (Ava and Liv) how to fly kites and alligator wrestle in Colorado.

**Inspiration**

After Falling Off a Raft in the Royal Gorge  
*For Eleanor*

From underwater, the world is new again:  
the blue seam of sky hovers above the cliffs  
like a wound, and derelict pines shimmer,  
sentries keeping all in the raft safe. The moss  
waves to me from the boulders sheered  
and dropped into the river, half out of water  
now, their darker half below the surface,  
where I am, unable to rise,  
the bubbles swarming like fish.

The world  
moves, but I am still. The current pushes  
me forward, a mother urging me to school,  
but the door will not open. I am a child  
again, unborn, in the grand womb of time,  
peering from the translucent belly to a world  
perfect and perfected in the scrim of air:  
The river, the beautiful place: noiseless  
and empty, suspended like a yo-yo spinning  
at the end of the string.

I am out of time.

The Potameides are above me. I can see a hand  
stretched toward me from the light, the blue  
scar behind the fingers, the sentries scattering  
in the air, hiding behind the hillside stones,  
the shadow of the raft like Michelangelo's clouds  
drifting away with the hand, the fingers, the touch  
that would spark life  
and fill me with everything necessary  
to rise and breathe again.

## 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.