

Rhyme and PUNishment

Comedic Verse

Edited and Compiled by Nick Hale, James P. Wagner (Ishwa

Rhyme and PUNishment

Copyright © 2012 by Local Gems Poetry Press

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.

Staff Page

Edited and Compiled by:

Nick Hale

James P. Wagner (Ishwa)

Cover Art / Layout Designer:

Melissa Theodorakatos

Associate Editor:

J R (Judy) Turek

Published by Local Gems Poetry Press

www.localgems.weebly.com

www.randpanthology.com

Foreword

"I've found out why people laugh. They laugh because it hurts so much... because it's the only thing that'll make it stop hurting."

—Valentine Michael Smith, *Stranger in a Strange Land* by Robert A. Heinlein

Comedy is a funny thing. At least good comedy is. It's both frivolous and intensely serious. Sometimes, when times get difficult, it can be all too easy to get caught up in "serious issues" and forget how serious and important humor can be, how much of a relief it can be to laugh.

It's easy to dismiss comedy as frivolous in the wake of serious problems, but it is far more than fart jokes and celebrity impersonations. Comedy often gives us unique and deep insights into serious issues. For centuries, satirists have used humor to discuss serious issues, expose problems, and teach while getting a good laugh in. Alexander Pope used humor to expose the foibles of the upper classes; Mark Twain used it to expose the dangers of racism and of romanticizing violence. Every age and every literary movement contains at least one example of a satirist who uses humor to address important human issues and give readers, listeners or viewers a fresh perspective on the problem.

It's also not uncommon for comedians to tackle important social or political issues. Some comedians build their acts around such issues. George Carlin was known to address social and political issues. Some comedians even build reputations and entire acts around specific social or political issues.

While comedy can be serious, it doesn't have to be. Plenty of it exists for the sole purpose of making people laugh. There's nothing wrong with that. It's important to laugh regardless of the cause of the laughter. Laughing, like crying, is a cathartic release, an emotional purging.

Laughter is powerful beyond reason and should never be disregarded or trivialized. The ability to laugh at ourselves tells us we're human and helps us to better ourselves and the ability to laugh at anything' can sooth even the deepest of emotional wounds.

~ Nick Hale

Introduction

“The world is a tragedy to those who feel, but a comedy to those who think.”
—Horace Walpole

Poetry is older than written language. For a long, long time people regarded poetry as fun and entertaining. Somewhere on the timeline of human history, however, poetry acquired the reputation of being something that could only be appreciated by the intellectuals and the academics. *Rhyme and PUNishment* seeks not only to disprove that theory—but to smash it to pieces with all those funny limericks, the clever rhyme schemes and hilarious free-verse that have been assembled here.

There are TONS of funny poets out there, but for some odd reason so few comedic poetry nights and publications for them. The number one thing that most of the submission letters in this book had in common was their relief that a publication was finally considering comedic poetry. A good number of the poets in this volume expressed how they “always wrote funny poetry, but so many markets are so serious these days I never dared to submit them!”

Comedic poetry is by no means a new concept—and there have of course been other books, magazines, etc that have taken them. But in culture for the most part (other than the few notables like Dr. Seuss and Shel Silverstein) poetry does not have a generous comedic reputation. In fact, poetry has unfortunately become synonymous with subject matter that is down right depressing! (oh, the images of Goth kids with death poems!)

Everyone loves comedy! And why shouldn't they? Regular life can be boring, frustrating and dull! The hustle and bustle of our over crowded world (with far too many people in it!) with our over busy work week pushes us all to the breaking point and people end up taking things and themselves, far too seriously. And we all know that people who take themselves far too seriously, become far too serious—and where's the fun in that? As the joker said—“Why so serious!?”

Rhyme and PUNishment if nothing else, is meant to be a simple break in the day for those who have no other breaks—a chance to sit back relax and laugh. At best—*Rhyme and PUNishment* hopes to be a reminder that poetry doesn't have to be depressing! That poetry can be hilarious, funny and something that people might actually find value in getting out of their houses to go and hear! So pass this poetry on, share it with your friends and family—drop it in a dentist's office for the waiting patients (they could use a laugh, right?) and above all, laugh at it!

“What is life?”

Life is that thing that is depressing for the philosophers, a mystery for the scientists, a thing of the past for the historians and a boot and a half for the comedians!”

~James P. Wagner (Ishwa)

Table of Contents

Lloyd Abrams	13
<i>doggie dialectic</i>	
Jonathan Aibel	15
<i>Little Epimetheus</i>	
<i>The Meaning of Life</i>	
C.B. Anderson	17
<i>The Kind of Club Groucho Would Want to Join</i>	
Sharon Anderson	19
<i>Daymare</i>	
<i>Worst Verse (Versified Joke)</i>	
<i>What A Gem!</i>	
Diana Anhalt	23
<i>On Spelling</i>	
<i>Gender Swapping</i>	
David B. Axelrod	25
<i>Candy</i>	
<i>Gallows Humor Haiku</i>	
<i>Love Shows Haiku</i>	
Diane Barker	27
<i>A Nursery Rhyme for Our Time</i>	
Alessandra Bava	29
<i>The Headache</i>	
Antonio Bellia (Madly Loved)	31
<i>The Big Bang</i>	
Danielle Blasko	33
<i>Letters on the Wall</i>	
<i>Two Witticisms: A Double Cinquain</i>	
Sheila Blume	35
<i>Barefacedly</i>	
<i>Don Carlo</i>	
Gabrielle Bryden	37
<i>Wine Connoisseur</i>	
<i>Cartoon Life</i>	
Ryan Buynak	39
<i>Johnson!</i>	
<i>A Lot Like Bus Depots</i>	
<i>A Mexican, A Marine, And A Poet Walk Into A Bar</i>	
Paula Camacho	43
<i>For Today</i>	
<i>Summer's Gone</i>	

Fern G.Z. Carr	45
<i>Peter Peter Meter Reader</i>	
<i>Seducement</i>	
Barbara Lydecker Crane	49
<i>The Phobics Take a Field Trip</i>	
<i>Roger R.'s Undercover Report</i>	
Kate Boning Dickson	53
<i>Sealed For My Protection</i>	
<i>Grooming</i>	
<i>Practicing Comparisons Sonnet</i>	
Jessica Goody	57
<i>The Hausfrau</i>	
<i>Limerick I</i>	
Jack Granath	59
<i>Amorous Compliment Gone Awry</i>	
<i>Colonial Art of Quito</i>	
Russ Green	61
<i>Untitled</i>	
<i>Bad Karma in Paradise</i>	
<i>Exaggeration</i>	
George Guida	63
<i>Pirates and Parrots</i>	
Nick Hale	67
<i>Procrastinator's Ode to Homework</i>	
<i>Cracked China</i>	
<i>Autobiography: First Attempt (It's a PUN-derful Life)</i>	
Jackie Hassett	73
<i>The Gym</i>	
George Held	75
<i>Death & Taxes</i>	
<i>Go Faux</i>	
Joan Higuchi	77
<i>Pretty Polly</i>	
Cindy Hochman	79
<i>Elegy to my Youth</i>	
<i>Ode to the Japanese poetic form (or, Haiku You)</i>	
<i>Ode to Rattle</i>	
Arnold Hollander	81
<i>Dollar Bill Phil</i>	
<i>In Style</i>	
<i>Tea</i>	
Maria Iliou	83
<i>Dentist</i>	

Vicki Iorio	85
<i>My Love Thumbtacks the World</i>	
Michael Lee Johnson	87
<i>Wind Chimes</i>	
Evelyn Kandel	89
<i>How The Tuba Got In My Bedroom</i>	
<i>This Is Just To Say</i>	
Margaret Koger	91
<i>Free Poems for Special Occasions</i>	
<i>Sex and the One-trick Poem</i>	
Beverly E. Kotch	93
<i>Dishwater Ode</i>	
<i>Music to my Ears</i>	
Jordan Kraiss	97
<i>Uncle Brian</i>	
<i>Walt</i>	
<i>The Dangerous Lives of Confused Young Teenagers</i>	
Mindy Kronenberg	99
<i>Late Night Thoughts on Indigestion</i>	
<i>Hidden Beast</i>	
Karen Lake	101
<i>Leaf Blower Blows</i>	
<i>Dueling Dreams</i>	
John Lambremont, Sr.	105
<i>Food Fight</i>	
Steve Levy	107
<i>The Creation of Dental Surgery</i>	
Ed Luhrs	109
<i>The Blind Date</i>	
<i>Foghorn Leghorn's Finger Lickin' Clawhammer</i>	
John Makin	111
<i>The Village Clock</i>	
Maria Manobianco	115
<i>Limerick</i>	
<i>Peppery</i>	
Meira Marom	117
<i>The Giraffe Uttered Not</i>	
Judith Mesch	119
<i>For Mother's Day</i>	
Eric G. Müller	121
<i>Untitled 1</i>	
<i>Untitled 2</i>	
<i>Untitled 3</i>	

George H. Northrup	123
<i>Vasari's Portrait of Lorenzo de' Medici</i>	
<i>Dermatophagoides</i>	
David O'Neal	127
<i>Making Love</i>	
<i>Dear Editor</i>	
<i>Stopping by Woods on a Snowless Evening</i>	
Milind Padki	131
<i>A Certain Difficulty after the Poetry Workshop</i>	
Carl Palmer	133
<i>A Dog Named Sex</i>	
Matt Pasca	135
<i>Random Firings (A Teacher's Brain on Friday Afternoon)</i>	
<i>Recommendation for a Pre-Schooler</i>	
Peter Peteet	137
<i>Pack</i>	
Ellen Pickus	139
<i>Cracked</i>	
<i>Squirrels</i>	
Anthony Policano	141
<i>Instructions in the art of shaving</i>	
Kelly Powell	143
<i>The Bi-Polar Cafe</i>	
<i>Identity Theft</i>	
Phyllis Quiles	145
<i>No Lover</i>	
Chris Reid	147
<i>Uberwonky</i>	
Phil Reinstein	149
<i>Cyber Date</i>	
<i>Insurance Man Reggae</i>	
<i>New Year's Thoughts of George Carlin</i>	
Vincent Renstrom	155
<i>The Abnormality of Sex</i>	
Jack Ritter	157
<i>Fearful Fuzzitry</i>	
<i>The Last Manly Summer</i>	
Jillian Roath	159
<i>Somewhere, the Ancient Egyptians are Laughing at Us</i>	
Marc Rosen	161
<i>Cripple Revolution: Fear the Wheelchair!</i>	
<i>In Praise of The George Carlin (an Absurdist sermon, revised)</i>	

Ruth Sabath Rosenthal	163
<i>His Aunt Anna, A-Z</i>	
Narges Rothermel	165
<i>A Salesman And A New Invention</i>	
<i>Still on duty</i>	
Jeff Santosuosso	169
<i>Kolache Round (In Praise of the Schma)</i>	
<i>Suspicious Cheddar</i>	
<i>Pharmaceutical Boy Action Figure</i>	
Joseph E. Scalia	175
<i>Aging Un-Gracefully</i>	
<i>Funeral Arrangements</i>	
<i>I Harbor a Cat</i>	
Lawrence Schimel	179
<i>Robert's Rule of Disorder</i>	
<i>Counting Rhyme</i>	
<i>Fight Choir With Choir</i>	
Jean Schmidt	181
<i>Dear Santa</i>	
<i>The Super Exploitation of Over Usage</i>	
Herb Shallcross	185
<i>The Magnificent Cock</i>	
Jeffrey L. Shipley	187
<i>Living in Fear</i>	
Herb Siegel	189
<i>A Whodunnit?</i>	
Carol Lavelle Snow	193
<i>The Camping Song</i>	
Jennifer Stella	195
<i>On Dating a Vegetarian</i>	
Ed Stever	197
<i>This is Not About Education</i>	
Tom Stock	199
<i>The Broadside</i>	
Douglas Swezey	201
#984	
#852 (Pornstar Name)	
J R (Judy) Turek	205
<i>Quick-trip to the Grocery Store</i>	
<i>And She's Not Blonde</i>	
<i>For the Men in My Life</i>	

James P. Wagner (Ishwa)	209
<i>To My Former Lover</i>	
<i>Am I smarter than a Fifth Grader</i>	
<i>A Typical Order</i>	
Pamela Wagner	215
<i>Untitled</i>	
Margarette Wahl	217
<i>A Sheepless Night</i>	
<i>Superhero Poem</i>	
Charles Peter Watson	219
<i>Insanity (It's Calling Me)</i>	
Samantha Weiner (Lady Samantha)	221
<i>The Amoeba</i>	
Joanna M. Weston	223
<i>The Cat Out of the Bag</i>	
Sandy Wicker	225
<i>Ode to Prunes</i>	
<i>Pun-ish Me!</i>	
J. Barrett Wolf	227
<i>Baiku</i>	
<i>Untitled 1</i>	
<i>Untitled 2</i>	
Tim Worsham	229
<i>Nothing Kabobbed</i>	
Laura Wysolmierski	231
<i>A Life of Gratitude</i>	
Changming Yuan	233
<i>Partner Perspective</i>	
<i>Fame Check</i>	
Ed Zahniser	235
<i>A Presbyterian Group Epitaph</i>	
<i>Dewlap, Dewlap, Dewlap</i>	
<i>Rolling Stoned</i>	
Lewis Zimmermann	237
<i>Write Right!</i>	

Lloyd Abrams

doggie dialectic

listen ...
you dog you
we are not walking to petco today
nor to the bakery for a cheese danish
nor to mcdonald's for a double cheeseburger
not even to grandma's for a hebrew national frank

you are going to walk a simple loop
in our neighborhood
like every other normal dog
there are enough sniffs to be had
enough pee-mail to read
enough places to lift your leg

and furthermore ...
i am not your servant
i am your master
oh yes i am
so you can stop looking at me like that
stop staring at me
and stop wagging your tail
... oh no you don't
don't do it
don't you dare roll over
i am not going to rub your belly
oh all right
... but just this once

Previously published in *Paws, Claws, Wings and Things*, Local Gems Poetry Press, 2012.

Jonathan Aibel

Little Epimetheus

Our space rock spins
its squirming hydro-

carbons: one phylum grows
a shell, another learns
to use rocks to break shells.

The clam lives to filter the bay,
eats tasty filth
adapted to be perfect

in New England chowder;
whereas I
am evolved to eat it,

although only happenstance lifted me;
it might have been bivalves
nibbling on soft-skinned mammals:

I don't give a fig
for the feelings of a clam;
forged on evolution's anvil,

flushing my Prozac into the waters
is my birthright, my revenge.

The Meaning of Life

Stuck in traffic on Fresh Pond Parkway --
a pond drivers cannot see --
through one, two, three
light cycles, creep, creep,
bored, bored, bored,
my radio, turned unwelcome guest,
talks constantly about the war
or sings pointless pop songs...

I join Doctors without Borders,
and work in some god-forsaken hamlet
to help save some children while
others die of measles

and Starbucks is a thousand miles
from my tent, ipod, and two meals a day,
but I feel secretly lucky
that I don't have it as bad
as the natives.

With so much purpose and meaning
I'll know with certainty
that I am happy

missing family, fresh bagels, "I Love Lucy" reruns,
but I brush it off with my purposefulness
and never spend twenty minutes staring
at the backside of a yellow hummer
because some idiot didn't know
you can't turn left on Huron Ave.
between four and six p.m.

C.B. Anderson

The Kind of Club Groucho Would Want to Join

I don't care to belong to a club that accepts people like me as members.

— Groucho Marx

No Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, Jews or full-blood Irishmen are welcome to apply for membership. No Turks from Istanbul or Anatolia should even try.

To anyone who comes from Pakistan, to Indians whether they are red or brown, to Arabs raised in any faith, the ban applies as well. We most especially frown

on certain Nordic types with hair too blonde and eyes too baby blue. And blokes who speak with British accents we are not so fond of either. Likewise if they're French or Greek,

or have a family name that ends with "ski." We don't like high school dropouts very much, or anyone who's earned a Ph.D., and though we don't look down on them as such,

the women of the world are not for rubbing shoulders with. So now there's just the two of us, the founding members of the Club, but I'm not sure I'm comfortable with you.

Sharon Anderson

Daymare

“Is that a warthog in that tree?”
the squirrel stammered tearfully.
“‘Tis not, you fool,” the owl replied,
and swept down in his fearsome glide.

The squirrel scrambled to escape,
and felt owl breath upon his nape,
and cried aloud, “Please let me be,
and take that warthog from that tree!”

The owl, distracted, missed his mark,
and swooped off grumbling in the dark.
The squirrel shook from his close call...
the warthog just slept through it all.

“Is that a warthog that I spy?”
remarked a field mouse running by.
The squirrel checked his tail for rents,
and then replied, “That makes no sense!”

The mouse spun around and stood right there,
fixed squirrel with a trenchant stare.
“You think that you’ll get sense from me,
while warthog sleeps in yonder tree?”

The warthog raised his head to roar,
“Please read for me page sixty-four!”
My head snapped up, my glazed eyes cleared,
and I beheld what I most feared,

my teacher, with a face like stone.
I sat exposed, my cover blown.
I'm not a squirrel running free.
I'm trapped here in room twenty-three!

Oh, how could I have been so crass!
I fell asleep in English class!

Previously published in Volume II of *On Viewless Wings*.

Worst Verse (Versified Joke)

Two pals were out fishing, hoping for a hefty catch.
One pulled out a big cigar, and fumbled for a match.
On finding all his matches damp, he pondered on his plight,
then poked his bud and queried, "Any chance you've got a light?"

His bud dug in his tackle box, with fingers swift and strong,
and finally pulled out a Bic that was ten inches long!
"My Gawd!" his buddy shouted, "It's a monster, I declare!
I've not seen the likes of this before, not anywhere!"

"Oh, I got it from my genie," said the fisherman with pride.
"Want to see him? He's there in the box. Take a look inside."
By now the first guy had forgotten all about the fish,
and staring at the genie he said, "Can I make a wish?"

The genie owner answered, "Sure!" His buddy grinned, "Aw, shucks,
I know exactly what I want. Give me a million bucks!"
And suddenly the air was rocked, a deafening outcry
as a million ducks came flocking, filling the entire sky!

"What's this?" The man erupted, "I didn't ask for ducks!
Is your genie off his rocker? I want a million bucks!"

"Well," the other said, quite sheepishly, "His hearing ain't that slick.
Did you really think I asked my genie for a ten inch BIC?"

What A Gem!

Hubby went out shopping to buy me a surprise.
Something that would please me, put a sparkle in my eyes.
He drove the poor clerk crazy in his quest to find perfection,
til she had pulled out nearly the entire jewelry selection!

“I’m not sure that she likes pendants. Pins are iffy, truth be told.
Is that silver? Oh, it’s platinum? Do you have that one in gold?
Earrings would be lovely. Are her ears pierced? Can’t remember.
Do you have a chart that designates the birthstone for December?”

He didn’t know my ring size, or whether I like pearls.
The clerk acquired a clenched-teeth smile, and pulled her frazzled curls.
Finally he queried in a voice grown slightly hoarse,
“Were you my wife, what would YOU want?” Her answer: “A DIVORCE!”

Diana Anhalt

On Spelling

Iguazu is the way they spell
the place in Argentina:
And its Iguassu when you're in Brazil
And you're speaking Portugeezer
Well, If I-guas-u
What I-guad-u is curse and cry
Oh Jeezer?
Why turn Iguazu into Iguassu?
When the whole thing could be easier?

Gender Swapping

*(Based on NY Times Article “Albanian Custom Fades: Woman as Family Man”
06/24/2008)*

According to the New York Times, had I been born in Albania
I could have been a man. First I'd chop off my hair,
trade in dress for long pants, forsake marriage, kids, rouge.
But I could own a gun, earn money, drink booze.
A steep price to pay for manhood's swagger, you'll say?
But so it's decreed and that being the case, why should I disagree?

If I were a virgin born in Albania, I'd be worth twelve oxen, otherwise six,
suited for housework, and babies and such, tending the cows, tilling the land,
and lacking a man to make money and work—because only men can—
just by changing my sex I'd have prestige, wealth, luck,
drink raki and beer and—most important of all—piss standing up.

David B. Axelrod

Candy

People shave
down there. Others
get permanents or
dye their hair.

Let's both go
pink and lubricate
with peppermint.

We'll be oral
all the time, sending
shivers down our spines.

Liquor may be quicker
but candy can
take a long time.

Gallows Humor Haiku

The trick is knowing
when to step aside before
the trapdoor opens.

Love Shows Haiku

man in speedo suit
woman in a bikini
see what he's thinking

Diane Barker

A Nursery Rhyme for Our Time

This little piggy went to market
NASDAQ lows
Oil price highs

This little piggy stayed home
For sale
Foreclosed

This little piggy had roast beef
Personal chefs
Corporate jets

This little piggy had none
Food stamps
Welfare rolls

And the last little piggy *Mad-off* with it all
Ponzi schemes
Living high on the hog

Alessandra Bava

The Headache

Zeus descends in
the forge, eyes
blinded by obscurity.
“What can I do for

you, father?
In need of more
thunderbolts?”
says Vulcan lifting

his sooty head from
the sword he has
been chiseling with
monomaniac precision.

“This headache is
killing me, son, cut my
head in two, will you?”
“Sure, daddy. Let me

fetch my sword.” Vulcan
aims with precision
and strikes. Fully armed
a goddess leaps out of

the cranium with a smile.
“Well, thank you Father.
Thank you Bro?. I couldn’t
resist much longer in there

in this attire. So long.”
says gray-eyed Athena
departing. A roar follows
the grave silence:

“Blimey, son, another
witty woman? You’d
better hand me an
aspirin next time...”

Antonio Bellia (Madly Loved)

The Big Bang

You could hear sounds of sirens,
Of fire engines;
You could hear them afar-
Smoke everywhere, people crying out in fear.
Finally arriving, everyone said:
“We all heard a big explosion, a huge boom,
A very loud big bang.

A warehouse filled with parts
To be assembled into Ferraris had exploded.
Courageous men in black coats and helmets,
Ax at hand, walk into what they thought
Would be rubble;
Speechless, running out, screaming to the crowds,
“This is unbelievable, the big bang
Has created a magnificent Ferrari.”

All, pleased and satisfied, went home;
College texts were written,
And students since hoped for
More bangs and more Ferraris.
I've never seen it, never believed it....
But actually, experientially, I knew of
Three big bangs motivated by love-
Creating Eva, Vanessa, and Phillip.

Danielle Blasko

Letters on the Wall

She walks through the halls
Finding letters that she's written
But can't remember writing.
One letter is addressed to Mr. Rye:
You are the male Lance Armstrong.
The male lance, arm strong?

At the cafeteria table,
Someone makes a joke about her:
"You know what the terrible thing is?
After you sleep with her, she is in everyone's arms but your own."
She laughs and looks for a friend.
A friend finds her and she never looks back.

Two Witticisms: A Double Cinquain

He says,
“I enjoy you,
The woman, but I would
Like you even more if you were
Gravy!”

Then says,
“Drinking this beer
Is like licking the ice
Nipple of a glacier woman,
So Good!”

Sheila Blume

Barefacedly

“Grow a beard. You’ll look great!” Mother cried.
“I’d look weird in a beard,” he replied.
Then at college he said
He had grown one; instead,
Momma found he had barefacedly lied.

Don Carlo

Don Carlo, by Verdi, it’s plain,
Is an opera that’s all about Spain
Back when Phillip was king.
The remarkable thing:
All his courtiers could sing in the reign.

Both limericks previously published in *Ominificent English Dictionary in Limerick Form (OEDILF)*.

Gabrielle Bryden

Wine Connoisseur

see, swirl, sniff, sip, savor
spit
blahblahblah vibrant drop blahblahblah
see, swirl, sniff, sip, savor
spit
blahblahblah full bodied blahblahblah
see, swirl, sniff, sip, savor
spit
blahblahblah woody notes blahblahblah
see, swirl, sniff, sip, savor
spit
blahblahblah complex flavours blahblahblah
see, swirl, sniff, sip, savor
spit
blahblahblah strong finish blahblahblah
see, swirl, sniff, sip, savor
slurp, slurp, slurp, slurp, sluuuurp,
blahblahblah flubalubalub blahblahblah
hic
sleep
ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ

Cartoon Life

I want to live a cartoon life.

Things are clean and crispy white
in cartoon land.
Tintin's dog Snowy,
Casper the friendly ghost
and Snoopy breathe in
the illustrators oxygen.

Strong clear black lines,
simple forms.
Dirt, unpleasant odors and itchy orifices, are found elsewhere

Swift resurrection follows bomb blasts,
bloody severed heads and ruptured spleens
no-where to be found.

Cartoon cats are squished, splayed, spliced and stretched
into emaciated bubble gum shapes,
but no worries – they quickly
spring, re-inflate and snap back into shape.

Scientific principles, gravity, speed and such like, are flexible.

Daffy Duck steps off the cliff,
suspended in mid-air, until realizing
the jam he's in and plummets to safety.

Bugs Bunny is catapulted out of a cannon,
speed unchanging until telephone poles get involved.

Cowardly cartoon characters exit buildings
via replica perforations in the walls -
threat of marriage, often the motivation.

Solid walls painted to resemble a tunnel
can be entered by some but not others.
Flattened bodies of rodents, rabbits and coyotes
are testament to this variability of access.

But best of all, bags possessed by cool characters
have the ability to hold any amount of stuff
with no changes in the external dimensions
of the bag – just like Dr Who's TARDIS.

Yes, I want to live a cartoon life.

Ryan Buynak

Johnson!

Johnson is pink.
A happy little prick.
Every teller at the bank hates him.
Every drunkard at the bar loves him.

Johnson is a good singer.
An awful lawyer.
An Alabama wonder.
Prankster archetype.

The terror of Owen's Family Funeral Home.
He burned it down last year.
Saying he was cremating the building.
He spent only three weeks in county.

At barely thirty-one.
He is a smooth talker.
A terrible dresser.
A big fan of the band Thin Lizzy.

Johnson doesn't whistle when he walks with his wife.
Johnson's wife, Julie, is jolly.
She broke her hip during childbirth.
Their son is named Windmill Once.

Johnson has a few bullet wounds.
No one knows where Johnson and his wife are from.
They ain't from here.
This small town.

Johnson whistles when he walks alone.
And while he drinks whiskey.
And he does both of those things when he writes.
Goddamn poetry.

A Lot Like Bus Depots

confidence is half the key
and alcohol is the other half
on nights after restaurants' life,
and we are all hummin' in the rain.

another battle is won and lost
when ten hipsters risk
the rumbler for hutch and yak.
fuck Brooklyn.

uptown,
don't talk to me about money,
smile for the midnight game of darts,
desolate in spirit and Biddy's is dangerous,
but we all live to die
so who cares if we go poor.

hope is not lost.
I am an airport
and I look like a desk.

A Mexican, A Marine, And A Poet Walk Into A Bar

present tense is all we need,
and less yesterdays.

hanging out after work.
Sawtooth Ale and surprises.
I wanted to go home and write
but good times, great people,
and drinking
took precedent.

we kept saying,
brother,
pour me another,
cut me one more.
midnight came and went.

until.

we closed the wine bar
and walked north,
a Mexican, a U.S. Marine and a poet,
pantomiming tales,
talking about our worlds before this place,
and our girls.

the rain started a bit
and we made our way to danger,
to Biddy's.
The Scotsman was tending the bar,
The Daniel was there with whiskey in hand.

Sure, we took whiskey, too.
Too much.

Sure night of simple grievances,
sure night of laughter,
proving that humans hold adventurous life
very close to hollowed heart,
even if we don't speak the same language.

spring closes in,
as does tomorrow morning,
and we
close the tab with
a good night joke
and a punchline of cigarettes,
only no one has a goddamned lighter.

Paula Camacho

For Today

He argues back and slams the door
Leaves his clothes all over the floor
I cringe inside but hold my tongue
I got a report on my son
Today I won't be a preacher
For today I will let things pass
The report came from his teacher
He's a pleasure to have in class

Summer's Gone

The pool is covered
Deck furniture put away
Before I even knew it
It was Labor Day

The seasons seem to be
On some kind of accelerations
At the mall in August
I saw Christmas decorations

But weather can be fickle
There are no guarantees
After packing up my summer things
It turned ninety degrees

Fern G.Z. Carr

Peter Peter Meter Reader

Peter Peter meter reader was an officious PEO –
a Parking Enforcement Officer and real so-and-so.

Peter remarked which cars were parked and for how much time;
it was his sworn duty to make the punishment fit the crime.

With baited breath and seconds left his heart was pounding fast
as his eyes espied with a sense of pride the time limit had passed.

Hypnotically he raised his pad, his pencil poised to write
a ticket of which he could only dream and fantasize at night.

The pencil touched the paper – everything would be alright,
but to his chagrin he'd not win as a man dashed into sight.

“Please don't give me a ticket. Please don't give me a fine.
I appeal to your compassion. I don't have another dime!

I was helping out the orphans. I went to feed some strays.
I visited a nursing home and time just got away.

I was right on track on my way back helping a granny cross the street
when I saw a bedraggled beggar with nothing on his feet.

I had to take him to the store to buy a pair of shoes;
there were so many different styles he took too long to choose.

I came upon a robber there – I had to foil the crime,
in frustration I yelled out, ‘I'm running out of time!’

The robber was so startled he dropped his gun and ran,
but at this point to my dismay I found an injured man.

He lay bleeding on the ground – I called 911;
I could never leave him 'til the paramedics were done.

I knew time was running out so I hitched an ambulance ride
when they informed me of a crisis occurring right inside.

‘There’s no more blood, we must transfuse.’ The ambulance sped away.
I pulled up my sleeve to run an IV – they said I saved the day.

They couldn’t stop to drop me off so I hitchhiked my way back
when menacing clouds darkened the skies and thunder began to clap.

Well, I had pity for a poor little kitty completely soaked in the rain;
she was just about to be washed down a sewer drain

so with a leap and a bound I turned around and rescued the poor little thing,
all the while with hope in my heart simply wondering...

I know there is a compassionate soul waiting for me out there –
an example of humanity’s best who really truly cares.

When I explain my story he’ll appreciate my plight;
he’ll rip up that old ticket and make everything just right.”

Peter Peter cleared his throat and looked him in the eye,
“I was the man in the ambulance. Thanks to you I did not die.

So I won’t give you a ticket. I won’t give you a fine,
but park illegally one more time and your butt will be mine!”

Seducement

If the result of a seduction
Is that someone's been seduced,
Then during an induction
Wouldn't athletes be induced?
And if an inducement
Eases childbirth labor,
Isn't it seducement
To titillate your neighbor?

Barbara Lyndecker Crane

The Phobics Take a Field Trip

The Phobic Club imagined they could dam
their flood of foolish fears, large and small,
and enjoy a weekend trip to Niagara Falls.
But right away they found themselves in jams.

When the arithmophobic one, in Buffalo,
spied the sign for Motel 6, she fled.
In the lobby, when a speck crept overhead,
the arachnophobe backed out: “That’s *it!* I’ll go!”

Of course the claustrophobics quickly took
the largest room. They never checked the closet.
Bedside, a man unearthed a Gideon deposit
and tore a fit. That bibliophobe is booked.

They left the ceiling light burning bright
and bid goodnight to twitchy nychtophobe.
At three he woke to see that trusted globe
throw sparks and die—and so did he, in fright.

Nightmares plagued the sleepers without stop.
At eight the raccoon-eyed somnophobes
were beaming, “Not a wink! We’re on a roll.
Just leave us here, encamped in the coffee shop.”

The four remaining phobics motored, noses
noting others hadn’t bathed or showered.
At every waving motel sprinkler, they cowered.
When they cut the engine at the Falls, they froze.

The roar! The drop! They couldn't catch their breath.
A dreadful thought began to seep and flow.
“Now we're hydrophobic, too? Holy Joe!”
They crumpled at the edge. They felt like death.

Then one arose and cried in clouds of mist,
“Where's your necrophobia now? That fear
of death and dying—you need to hold it dear.”
She raised her fist. “*Use* it, friends. RESIST!”

The frozen phobics stirred and turned away,
a lump of bodies creeping from the brink.
They stumbled off to toast themselves with drink,
and lived to face their fears another day.

Roger R.'s Undercover Report

—based on a *BBC News* story broadcast on July 20, 2006

Pic-
ture us
in our tête-
à-tête—that
python's jaws
unhinged, about
to set upon my
favorite neck.
'Doing lunch'
is very hip,
but *being* it
does not be-
fit the book
of Rabbit Eti-
quette. So to take
my exit, I dove below the
electric blanket that kept that
reptile's cage much warmer than
his heart. The python circled, hunt-
ing *moi*—his sushi rabbit meal. When
I felt that blanket start to slide off my
prize Angora ears, I stroked a furry foot.
I gawped at my luck to see the snake bite
the *blanket*, and the Nitwit didn't quit in
downing that acrylic. Growing thick and
thicker-set, the goggle-eyed and blimpy
pet at last lay quite inert. Electric wires
dangled from his fangs like strands of
dental floss. His master happened by
and cast an eye; that man let out a
string of epithets that I would
deem R-rated(i.e., *not* for
Rabbits). Just when
he hoisted his pet,
I reloaded every

leg and leapt.
I high-tailed
through the
dINETTE door,
launched my
haunches into
a little thickET.
Man and beast
sped off—to the
vet or (*let it be!*)
to pay the city
coroner a visit.

Me, I dined and
dozed till dark,
when I shrank
at the moonlit
silhouette of
van and man
and—*damn!*
—the TWIT.

My prized
ears picked
up the news:
two vets had
slit his scales
to extract the
tattered cloth,
then adroitly
stitched intact
that ubersloth.
Why *did* they
have to patch
it? Point of
fact, I wish
those docs
had used
a *bat-*
chet.

Kate Boning Dickson

Sealed For My Protection

I'm brave, apparently,
or else naive -
attempting to open
bare handedly
packages
with innocent labels
that encourage me
to pull a tab or twist a cap:
sealed for quality.

And I go at it -
in the astonishing repetition
of pure gullibility -
expecting that the dotted line
will actually allow it this time
to open freely.

Foolish me
to be continually deceived
by the flimsy appearance
of plastic
which guards the contents
with muscular invincibility.

Unrealistic as I am
I comply with directions
or try -
bewildered each time
my fingers bleed
from clawing at cardboard
glued with Fort Knox impenetrability.

As if a package could be so simple
as to come unfastened implement free.
As if I wouldn't need
scissors, knife, machete -
maybe a truckload of TNT
and better yet
an indestructible set
of brand new teeth.

Grooming

The cat is finding places to lick
chews a paw
reworks an area of tail
busies herself with maintenance

makes me think of my mother
with all her upkeep on the house
the projects, the cleaning, organizing, sorting out.

And my parents' house
is licked shining
lived in well over 50 years
in far better shape than ours
(decaying for under 20)
in which I cough hair balls
just considering what needs doing
in which I can't find the ambition
to lift a hind leg or
stick out my tongue.

Practicing Comparisons Sonnet

Would you compare me to a roller-skate?
For keeping you off balance is such fun.
Of course I might make you regurgitate:
But summer days pale by comparison.

Might you compare me to a coconut?
I'm hard to crack with flaky layers, too.
I also go quite well with chocolate, but
I don't know if I go too well with you.

I might compare you to a cell phone screen;
A different number every time it glows.
At least you haven't yet become routine.
But obsolete is more the way it goes.

So when technology makes you passé,
No similes will boost your resumé

Jessica Goody

The Hausfrau

You'd be surprised at the acumen
A housewife can show
In matters other than vacuuming
You may think that she is lusting
For new clothes while she is dusting.

You'd be surprised to know
The sort of things she's reading
While baby on her hip she is feeding--
Kaufman, Plath, De Beauvoir, Friedan!

And even though she's acting doll-ish
While rubbing 'round the furniture polish
And expecting to be kissed
While writing out the grocery list.

She's thinking about politics
While beating the Bundt-cake mix
While washing the dishes
And folding the clothes
A lyrical sonnet she attempts to compose.

While picking up toys and making the beds
She composes music in her head
When shopping, or mopping
Or setting the table
She thinks up a story for the baby,
A fantasy fable.

In short, although she spends her day
Doing chores, she has much to say
She knows about more than just ironing clothes--
Politics, music, science, and books
She peruses while she sweeps and cooks--
Although she knows plenty about those.

A woman needs more to do than chores
Otherwise life would just be a bore
So although she may toil
Folding laundry and putting water on to boil
She isn't simply satisfied
Being merely a housewife, a maid, and a bride.

Limerick I

When the bloom is off the roses,
Some women develop neurosis.
They thought they'd stay young forever-
A noble endeavor,
Accomplished by psychiatric hypnosis.

Jack Granath

Amorous Compliment Gone Awry

Let bright cities fall for your delicate hand,
Men bleed for your heavenly grace,
For where is the citadel built to withstand
The battering ram of your face!

Colonial Art of Quito

Caspicara and Pampite touch
The worldly tourist with a mute rebuke.
Christian suffering should lift us up,
But one more bleeding Jesus and I'll puke.

Russ Green

Untitled

No toilet paper in the stall
Fly lands on my shoe
Laughing

Bad Karma in Paradise

the flies! the flies!
they are ravaging me
little black demons
invade my meditative
vista they buzz by
my ears rest on my
skin they hover so
close as if they are
next of kin but oh
just the same they
are out to kill and
craze drive me to
sin maybe they *are*
family come back
to haunt me again!

Previously published in *Long Island Sounds Anthology*, The North Sea Poetry Scene Press, 2009.

Exaggeration

Hithertofore
I had not had a metaphor
But now I have no ass
It's frozen on the floor
And I should be out the door
But I stand here brushing my teeth

George Guida

Pirates and Parrots

It's hard to think of one without the other,
but I write my friend to ask,
Which is a bigger pisser?—
pisser being a better thing in New York
than in Chicago.

He says pirates, because they say,
“Aayyy!” which I suppose they do,
but I say, so can parrots,
and also “Hi” and, like pirates,
“Haaarr!” plus
they can sit on anyone's shoulder.
Let's see pirates do that.
And parrots are colorful,
like paintings of Tahiti.

But so are pirates, he says,
with their red sashes, green bandanas
and gold hoop earrings.

Their teeth are often yellow,
I point out, and their breath—
though I've never personally met a pirate—
is awfully foul.
Parrots have no teeth,
and not enough lung capacity
for breath to be an issue.

Pirates, however, he claims, are always drunk,
so neither is breath an issue for them,
unless you don't like alcohol,
which we both do.

Simple way to solve this, my friend says.
Would you rather be a parrot or a pirate?

Depends on where, I answer.
I wouldn't want to be a pirate in a tree.
Chances are I'd tear my beautiful clothes,
while climbing down. Or in a desert would suck,
because then I'd be unemployed
or have to change professions,
become a train robber or highwayman.
And in New York, I wouldn't be special.
There are probably hundreds of would-be pirates
roaming the streets of Manhattan as we speak.

But if I had a house in the Hamptons,
a pirate would be perfect.
I could ply my trade by day,
and hit celebrity parties by night,
because they all want to claim
they know flamboyant criminals.

As a parrot, the Hamptons
is the last place I'd want to be,
stuffed or caged
in some crazy actor's sunroom,
his new-age life coach
eager to pluck me.
And God knows
what salt air really does to plumage.

But then as a parrot I could just fly away,
over the city, across the desert,
back to the rainforest,
where I could shit on monkeys.

How about if you were drunk?

Then would it be better to be parrot or pirate?
Since pirates, we agree, are always drunk,
his question amounts to
What's it like to be a drunken parrot?
Neither one of us is sure
how it might be different—
except more psychedelic—
than being a drunken hawk.
You still risk soaring into closed windows
or diving into the ground
in quest of mice, if parrots eat mice,
which is about as likely, he thinks,
as pirates eating Norway rats.

The time's come to settle the matter,
so I choose a single principle of selection:
parrots can imitate any sound.
You can curse a parrot in Russian
or read him a poem in Chinese,
and he'll spit it back
like a beautiful, seed-eating tape recorder,
whether you want him to or not.

And that, after all, is the definition of pisser,
to do what you want when you want,
without even the thought of inhibition.
Pirates just don't have the ear.

Nick Hale

Procrastinator's Ode to Homework

I
I will write
a poem for you,
my favorite thing
in the world.
I'll plan it as
an epic, but it might
come out haiku
or even a two-liner.

II
I will write
an ode to you
as I do you on
my desk.
I'll have to
finish it first,
of course,
before I finish you.
Odes are best written
when the love is
shiny-new.

III
I will write
an ode for you.
It will drip
with sarcasm
like the jaws

of a dragon
ready to swallow
me whole, so I
don't have to
finish it.

IV

I would write
to you, but alas
I don't know where
to start. I need
inspiration or a quote
that I can borrow.
I think I need
to get some sleep.
I'll try again
tomorrow.

Cracked China

Plates on the floor:
shards among the suds
and a hole in the door
the size of the fist
that slammed it
moments later
in a fit when
she reminded him
It was his turn
to wash
the dishes.

Autobiography: First Attempt
(It's a PUN-derful Life)

I don't PUNderstand
what I did wrong. I
mean, why bury your head in your
hand and sigh?
I'm a PUN guy
though I could do without
the mushrooms. And, blue cheese?
That's like green ketchup. It
completely misses the point.

You want to know more
about me? I can PUNderstand that.
I'm so intense, I could be
camping. I'm like a hat:
I go on ahead, leaving the
PUNkins to stand gourd.

If you ask me,
I got here in the nick of time-
You see, that works 'cause
it's my name-

You laugh? You can laugh.
Mock me all you want. You'll
never find a mock me.
I'm hard to imitate so contemplate
the prose and con-cepts lining
my pages.

"It's cheating,"
say the PUNdits, "it's not
real poetry. To throw
rhymes and puns at paper
and try to make them stick
the way the crimes and sins

you are charged with
will! You will be
PUN-ished, brought to justice for
your cavalier word usage and
ungodly long hair. Just this like
unnecessary um filler sentence ah, kinda seems like it
might be earning you a life sentence in obscurity.”

For those of you
who are still with me
*(And by the way,
if you exist, please pay
my bail
or
at least send me a letter
every now and then.)*
Here’s the important stuff.

I could’ve been born on
a PUN-day or even a PUN-day but I
signed up late and got stuck
with a WED-nes-day.

The first woman named Nes I meet,
I shall have to marry.

I’ve been called everything from
PUNctial to PUNgrateful by my
loving and hateful, and over-all
PUNctilious critics.

What’s my favorite
genre of music? PUNk, of course!
My favorite song? “PUNy for Nothing”
because there’s nothing bad about
free chicken.
My favorite thing to learn
about in school was PUNctuation.

I like my foods PUNgent and
I wash them down with
fruit PUN-ch

My favorite superhero is,
(Don't PUN-ch me
for this)
the PUN-isher.

That's about all you need to know.
I like to play with my words
and I'm not ashamed. I throw homophones
at homophobes and rhyme my name
with my word of choice for mean people
with their PUNy insults

If you'd like to know me,
I invite you to try. For
each person who hates me
ten hail me as if I
fell from the sky. I thank every
one of you
for doing what you do, and being
who you are. I love you for it,
I really do,
but this is my cue
so with a pun, and a
bough,
I bid you
a-choo.

Jackie Hassett

The Gym

I go to the gym to try and lose weight
Trying to escape a terrible fate
The results of too much candy I ate
Trying to lose pounds before a certain date

Halloween, while a scary holiday of fun
Had me cramming in Kit Kats on the run
Doing nothing but boring errands all day
Shoveling in a Twix, then a Milky Way
Not very smart of me, I must say

And so I drive to the gym to sweat
Stepping on the treadmill, I try to forget
All the candy that's still in the bowl
Running three miles, reaching my goal
I will NEVER eat candy again, I swore
But, let's face it, we've all heard THAT before

I hop off the treadmill, having finished my run
I will now go home, as my gym session is done
I run up to my door and turn my key in the lock
I laugh and suddenly realize what I forgot
The candy bowl, sitting on a table in front of me
Has my favorite candy, Hershey Kisses, you see!

I just cannot resist them, as I unwrap them with a sigh
Popping them in my mouth, I'm so happy I could die
"Tomorrow I'll do 5 more miles at the gym," I cry!!
I unwrap the rest, and eat them with glee
Knowing tomorrow, the treadmill, once again, I will see!

George Held

Death & Taxes

Dallas, Texas
Thurn & Taxis
Barns & Hexes
Phones & Faxes
Friend & Axis
Wheel & Axle
Spears & Axes
Horns & Saxes
Credit Maxes
Wanes & Waxes
Death & Taxes

Go Faux

Add Faux Fur to Your Winter Wardrobe
—AOL Shopping

All the rage is faux fur
For Madame, not Chauffeur

Daily we read our faux news
Then use it to wipe our shoes

At Macy's there's faux snow
Showrooms cast a faux glow

Fake is preferred to real
Fake needs no pontiff's seal

For those who're in the know
There's nothing like true faux

Joan Higuchi

Pretty Polly

Well, not really!
A Scaly-naped Amazon captured in the Andes
with reptile feet, red tinted eye
and a beak that could crack metal
you sneaked into our house
by being dispossessed by nuns
gift to a priest from a sailor
who no doubt chuckled at his slickness
in extricating himself from your care.

Marie could carry you about on her curled finger
cooing at you in an effort to teach you speech
but you learned no pretty plea for crackers
limiting yourself to shrieking “Help!”
When you wanted to be fed
which brought our neighbor running
when she thought Dad was beating Mom.

You enjoyed splashing water
all over everything
would sit outdoors in the apple tree
rocking back and forth, head swiveling
monitoring the feral cats with your one eye
the other lost in combat, leaving you
squinting like a pirate.

It didn't take long for us to figure each other out.
I knew you for a skulking, snag-beaked
squawking creature, probably endowed
with buzzard blood.

You looked at me with disdain
subsisted on a diet of seeds... and me.

Cindy Hochman

Elegy to my Youth

Once I was young,
All heat and pandemonium,
Now I'm the heat of menopause
And the flush of Imodium

Ode to the Japanese poetic form (or, Haiku You)

You said HAIKU
I said "God Bless You!"

I said TANKA
You said "you're welcome."

You said SEDOKA
I said . . . wasn't he that paunchy, balding singer who had a hit with
"Breaking Up Is Hard to Do"?

Ode to Rattle

(for the good editors at Rattle Magazine who turn down all my poems, including this one)

Plump babies in their prams & cribs shaking their revolutionary rattles,
their new teeth rattle and gnash. Something's rattle
in the state of Denmark, and this poem has rattled
around in my addled head since the first rattle of time
when the earth rattled in its molten core.

Do you know the history of the world, how it all began?
Let me rattle it off for you. That rascal, the rattle snake,
caused Eve to rattle her seductive fig at Adam. A typical wife,
she ranted and rattled.
God said "go forth and multiply like rattles" and then the red red rattle
came bob bob bobbing along. But love is a rattle field
and they rattled among the ruins — oh Rattle, Rattle, wherefore art thou,
Rattle?

Holy empires were built from all this.
You remember the story of Romulus & Rattle,
civilization and all that, when Man took his place among the rank and rattle.
But he soon found himself up the creek without a rattle.

So he did some saber-rattling and that was the beginning of War
which did indeed shake our windows and rattle our walls.
Still, we stood rough and rattle. We fought our own rattles.
And, when things got out of hand, we just swept it under the rattle.

But Old Age is nothing to shake a rattle at. First our tires rattle,
then comes the rattle of body parts and bones as we smugly eat our
rattled eggs and ham. And before you know it, that old death rattle
is upon us, jarring us out of our consciousness.

It's enough to get you really ... upset!

Arnold Hollander

Dollar Bill Phil

I'll sing you a song and it won't be too long
It's the saga of "Dollar Bill Phil."
He stole lotsa money and that wasn't funny
He got caught going over the hill.

His alias was gleaned from an earlier scene
He pulled in a town called Orleans
As he left in a flash with his stolen cash
A dollar bill fell from his jeans.

This thoughtless wise-guy figured that a disguise
Would hide him and let him walk free.
The disguise that he chose was a dress, I suppose
He thought that nobody would see

That under his nose hair had started to grow
A mustache as plain as can be
Or the hair filling in areas over his chin
Dull witted in his reverie.

Well, years have now passed and Phil is aghast
Since he now resides in the pen.
He can look high and low, but there's no place to go
Save his cell for twenty plus ten.

In Style

They say the style of wearing pants
hanging about one's knees
is catching on and we are now
witnessing public viewing of BVDs.
I know it's just a fad and someday
we won't look down our nose,
besides it's good to know they
are wearing underclothes.

Tea

Tea is wonderful, but not alone.
For taste enhancement, add a scone.
Tea comes in many delightful flavors,
but, admittedly it's the scone I savor.

There are some, whose numbers stun even me,
who have a fevered feeling about tea.
They set a special time to have a party,
using fine china that's floral and quite arty.

They dress in outfits from another age.
You probably saw them on some stage.
Scones on gilded plates for all to see,
now I wish they had invited me.

Maria Iliou

Dentist

Sitting, dentist chair...preparations stages
Positioning piece of cardboard, inside of mouth
Uncomfortable irritation
Camera directive, outer face
Pictures, teeth...practices 18 times

Teeth's cleaning is an experience of lifetime
Numbing gel rubs gums...numbs pain
Dentist ...instruments tools of unique sounds
Scraping endless hours, removing tartar,
Blood gushing out from gums

Certain places of working tool touches tooth
Extremely sensitive...excruciating pain
Piercing through nerves...emotions rattled
Mind drifting, intense sensory overload...touch
Rinse gargle mouth water...repetitive

Dentist cleans teeth...dipping into polish
Whirring motions sounds

Facial, jaw muscles tight...hours or days of relief
Sensitivity to certain touch...nervous laughter

Dentist looks in mouth
Explains problems in stages of reality
Persuading, reassuring
Fearless...no uncertainty

Novocaine injections inside mouth...preventing intense pain
Dentist working inside mouth, two hours
Hands, gloves, tools, scraper, pliers, sander, vacuum
Special sounds of unique movements,
Pressures affect nervous system...unhappy
Hands pressing down, tapping...acting scene

Discomfort of swelling within facial numbness
Unbearable funny feeling, days
Novocaine slowly disappears
Actress excellent performances...repeats performance
Schedule another play

Vicki Iorio

My Love Thumbtacks the World

Javier Badim

The J in your name is a sigh that leaves me breathless.
You pour sherry from Jerez on my chest, anoint me in a red ritual.
My nipples reach for your mouth, your kisses Castilian whispers.

You left me for Penelope.
You are Leo's papa.
I pour your sherry down my sad drain.

Harrison Ford

I like you as you are now,
rough around the edges,
no gawky Han Solo for me.
You are my America.

You left me for Calista,
Hollywood siren.
I throw your lightsaber out the window.

David Duchovny
New York neighbor,
your voice hugs my heart.
You confess to being a sex addict
I embrace your conversion.
You left your wife but you never sext me.
I shut off my iPhone.

Lower East Side comics
who wear thick glasses
whose jokes pop with their owl eyes
are my destiny
my school of perpetual blind dates.

I keep my nipples inside my bra,
put away my thumbtacks
stop searching the world for love.

Michael Lee Johnson

Wind Chimes

The wind chimes
on the balcony
today,
different
sounds in all
different directions-
my thoughts follow them.

Evelyn Kandel

How The Tuba Got In My Bedroom

I have no memory of how
a tuba got in my bedroom.
The bar was smoky, crowded,
people pushing against one another.

A band kept blues-ing notes,
the tuba player a between act.
He actually could get a soft sound
from it.

We had a drink together.
I drank the music and the wine,
left when both were finished.

Now I can't remember
if the player came with the tuba.

This Is Just To Say

I forgot that your birthday
was yesterday.
I thought it was next week.

There was a wonderful movie
playing in the theater
and Tuesdays are half price.

I really wanted to see this film
though it was your birthday.
I'm sorry I didn't call.

This is just to say
I can't meet you for lunch
I'm on a diet.

You like to stop at a bakery
though I cannot eat cake.
You won't take no for an answer.

This is just to say
I think it is best
you celebrate with another
and please don't call.

Margaret Koger

Free Poems for Special Occasions

I was down on my luck when I heard
they was passing out beers for free poems on
“Special Occasions” down at the J & W MiniMart.

I figured to get me some
if I could estimate how to come up with a
tale of one or two of them SpOs but
I didn’t know if they meant like a Weddin Day
or maybe the openin of Crawfish Season?
(I don’t go for any Holy Night horse-pooey.)

While I thought about the SpOs of my dreams
I tried to sort out my socks to match up
to the only pair of trousers I had that still zipped
and stayed that way, but all my socks were holy.
I wondered if Holy Socks would be Special
till I faced up to it—Occasion meant an event—
a happening like Congrats on Your New Baby Boy
(glad the little tyke has a pissar).

Now my wife keeps all her fancy cards
from birthdays, funerals, Mother’s Days
et cetera so she can read them over.

Sex and the One-trick Poem

Gathering at the edge of town, poetry fans exclaim
under red and green and white striped awnings of tents
where poetry readers prepare to slam. They've written
nothing high falutin, selected every adjective for thrills
added a plethora of action verbs, and sprinkled in spicy nouns
of shady repute. Professors and critics disguised
in hats and sunglasses creep forward aiming for front row
seats, intending to slouch under the honeyed buzz of youth.
Will readers display the views of Horace, the vocabulary
of Hermes, the sultry breath of Helen? Or will these
poems be one-trick ponies, each capable of only a single
leap through a hoop, forward curtsy, or commonplace rear?
Could hearts fall in the sawdust newly wet with tears
beneath a Trojan poem releasing its naked troops
confronting the walls of complacent lines
spears thrusting to kill, wreaking havoc, plundering
sainted forms, expedient forms, forms too tight for
an age of universal expansion? Helen, heart of my heart
lead us into the tent, recite a scalding torrent of tropes,
give Paris's mercenary friends a thrill, blush, and then
somewhat modestly retire, eyes lit by lascivious applause.

Beverly E. Kotch

Dishwasher Ode

Oh wondrous appliance
Oh glorious invention
 Of lowly modern man

You have freed me
From my solitary confinement
Unchained me
From that most repetitious of annoying tasks
Done while standing abandoned
 And lonely at the kitchen sink

I pray Thee long and fulsome life

O know that there are those
Who appreciate you not
Some among them claim
You make too much noise
And there are others who disdain your use
 For far less understandable reasons

What manner of human/lunatic they?

As for me
Oh magical machine
I bend my knee in humble gratitude
Each time I load you up
Feed you soap, slide in your shelves and close your door
Then cross myself and push your buttons
Linger, listen for your song
Before I dare
 Flee to freedom

Oh ye, of whirring motor
Know how I live in fear of the day you'll die
Leaving me alone
With no mechanical set of hands
Once again consigned to dwell
Among the down trodden
Once again to be considered merely
Kitchen staff

Until I once again stretch
My budget to the limit and go top shelf
For your replacement
Ere I become overwrought by
Being regulated to the status of a slave
Made to scrub up the platters
After the leavings of man
 From kitchen's space

Music to my Ears

Was what it was
As I listened to
My son
Complain
How
His son
Had referred to him
As
Being old
As being someone in need
of watching out for
As being one who care
had to be taken not to overtire
One for whom the pace
must be slowed
to accommodate
One who had joined the ranks
Of those whom he referred to
As old farts

He is now singing
quite a different tune
And I
Am
Laughing too hard
To whistle

Jordan Kraiss

Uncle Brian

TV Dinner man
Divides food the best that he can.
The chicken, potatoes, apple sauce, and broccoli
All ordered, cornered, and eaten separately.
The sauce has its instructions,
It's not to budge an inch.
The potatoes have been quarantined
In the west corner of the dish.
He's ready to make his move
He raises his fork to take a bite!
When all hell breaks lose
Over the entirety of the plate.
The potatoes are making a run for it!
The sauce is retreating.
The broccoli tries to hold firm
But the chicken is bleeding.

Walt

Walt Whitman infest my shoes and the cuffs of my pant legs.
Every place I go I find he's already been there
And no matter how many new shoes that I buy...
On my heels he always lies.

The Dangerous Lives of Confused Young Teenagers

They said not to run with scissors but mentioned nothing bout dancing.
Two rubber wrapped loops perfect to put both my hands in.
Ballerina shaped legs that point towards the floor.
Dancing scissors, I do adore!
Her hips are held tight by a mechanical steel linchpin.
No ankles to speak of she's so good at spinning.
And when we dance she leaves marks on the floor.
Dancing Scissors, I do adore!
Seeing her in anyone else's hands leaves my lungs gasping.
No respect for her talents they make her cut plastic.
She lies with other tools in her drawer.
Dancing Scissors you whore.
They said not to run with scissors but I'm starting to panic.
If I lose her for good I don't think I can stand it.
In a pool of blood she lies on the floor!
Dancing scissors no more.

Mindy Kronenberg

Late Night Thoughts on Indigestion

All night long
The body, bloated,
Whirrs beneath the blanket.

How is it that so much air
Is taken in, swelling the walls
Of abdomen, the tunnels of the intestines?

Consumed by what we consume,
The smallest living thing
Humbles our wondrous expanse—
Reduced to a distended dwelling.

Air within, without
The vehicle we become is filled
To the brim with appetite's hubris
Till we beg equilibrium.

How primeval, this lava flow
Grumbling brave new worlds,
The very birth of the universe
Recorded in the gut.

Under the membrane of bedsheet
Our dreams float and
Bubbles break like stars
Exploding from their own heat.

Hidden Beast

Having a big beast in your pants will make you a beast in bed.
subject line of a spam message

Having just come from “Where the Wild Things Are”
I couldn’t read that subject line
and not think of horned teddy bears
sticking out of his shorts, the man to whom
this message was meant, his mouth dropped open
in disbelief, the frantic call to get his money back.

I must confess that I might like to see
a shy koala peeking out
or a curious hedgehog emerge from the crotch
of an otherwise ordinary guy, its furry head
poking through his pajamas to scamper
and spin the sheets on the bed, purring itself to sleep.

Karen Lake

Leaf Blower Blows

I scoop frowzy poop my dog has hidden
 among dead leaves. What's that noise
 vibrating next door? Arousing through me a frosty
 horripilation. Lawn mower
 and weed whacker season is over.
 I discover his long leaf blower droning
 to leaves. Hey, James Brolin's clone—
 What's it moaning about? Sad truth
 of dead orchises annoying a sunny fall
 day. I'd rather listen to a scritch-
 scratching rake. What would you say,
 Robert Frost? It was not the sweet
 whisper of a scythe, though the groan
 would scare a bright green snake!

Leaf Blower Humdinger—
 There was never a sound by my lawn
 but one: my long leaf blower humming
 to leaves. What was it humming? Perhaps
 something about the frowsy
 yard next door smothered in lake
 leaves and dog flop. Perhaps
 it was warning me of those dead
 leaves blowing over to my lawn.
 Something, perhaps, about the purr—
 like a cat that doesn't speak.
 Swinging my leaf blower back
 and forth to the earnest love that leaves
 my lawn like a golf course,
 purring to spiked orchises,
 and like a horripilated kitten scaring
 a bright green snake, my long
 leaf blower hummed and left
 my lawn an open grassy glade.

Dueling Dreams

Cheers for Miss Bishop

A parade of clouds charade the house.
In a mock outline of light, the mother
stands in the kitchen watching her child
gulp down orange juice like a cup of good cheer.
The mother listens to a soap opera,
coming from the den, hiding her dream.

She has the sense to know her pipe dream
of being a doctor like Cameron on *House*
and not watching daily soap operas
is known only to her, like mother-
wit. She pours milk into a bowl of Cheerios,
and, in motherese, says to her child,

“It’s time for breakfast,” but her child
is having her own daydream.
So she says, “Ma chère!”
But the child draws her dream house.
And the mother, having spoken in her mother
tongue, recalls her days as a telephone operator.

Now voices sing an operetta
stirring the bubbly voice of Julia Child
which rings through the ears of the mother
filling her mind with other dreams—
Fairy-Queen, a French chef, anything but a house-
wife, which brings her some cheer.

Then a perky housewife advertising Cheer
interrupts the soap opera.
The mother ponders the typically full house—
three older children at school and a child
upstairs in her crib dreaming.
The “only” child shows the drawing to her mother.

She gazes at the drawing with motherly
love and hears the theme song from *Cheers*
percolate the TV—she sees a different dream-
scape for her child—not this comic-opera
drawing! She wants more for her child
than being a housewife aspiring to the *Good House-*

Keeping Seal of Approval. But it's the art, not the house,
says the drawing. The child watches her housebound mother
change the channel to *Oprah*, and live this *American Dream*.

John Lambremont, Sr.

Food Fight

The apple smokes the bacon,
and blows smoke up the eel.

The eel becomes so toasty,
it makes a tasty sushi.

The sushi rolls on the apple
for the sweetness of the juice.

The juice then soaks the apple
for its fair share of the sauce,
and the sauce turns itself in
to some very savory gravy
with which it bails the eel.

The apple, sour, smokes banana peel,
and soon turns yellow green.

Steve Levy

The Creation of Dental Surgery

In days long past, gone, forgotten, and dead
A rack, some rope or a whip made of lead
Would often suffice the torturer's needs
The only resolve to the victim, mere rosary beads

Perhaps the stocks, thumb-locks, or chains to break innocent backs
Or a pit, a pendulum, and countless other knick-nacks
Maybe the victim would be placed in an oubliette
A place where one is sent to forget

But those days are long lost, gone, and dead...

Today, many things suck in life
And here comes another
Going to a dentist who wants to take out his strife
Especially if you've offended his mother

Ed Luhrs

The Blind Date

You asked *what kind of car?* and what I do;
who I voted for, and what I make.
It was your perky cheeks first won me, true,
but now, I find, the rest of you is fake.
The caked-up mud you work onto your cheeks,
to hide away the creases worn with age,
reflects the inner nothing no one seeks -
oh, sad actress, so lonely on the stage.
But who am I to judge? I'm just a man,
and men are oinkers, you'd say, by and large.
And I'll agree, since you can't know my plan
To leave this evening's dinner in your charge.
So glad we met, so glad I had my fill:
so satisfied to leave you with the bill.

Foghorn Leghorn's Finger Lickin' Clawhammer

You got to learn that bum-bitty double-thumb drop-thumb;
play that crowd like a fiddle-diddle-diddle; no no I say I say
a fiddle-faddle-funky; serve those licks up
with some hee-haw Tabasco sauce; dare I say perhaps
a chinkle-chankle-chunky; but no! that ain't right.
We best begin with something more like a slip-dip-dimmy.
Start with "Angeline the Baker" - say the chorus over and over
until Maw and Paw Kettle howl the silver moon to cheese.
Then you got to pick up the pace, son:
a wang-ditty, wang-ditty, ditty wang-wang.
Hold that fist like a claw. That's it. Now stop flicking
those goddamned fingers. I say I say it's in the wrist!
I mean you got that bum-ditty slideaciousness
about you, boy. Come on, now! Slap that turkey down!
Hold on, hold on... that's right! You got me going now.
A wing ding-ding-ding diddle-diddle donkey
de-whop whop-whoppie de-bow wow-wow.
Hong Kong Phooey! Get funky with with me, now.
We're gonna groove, lawdy mama yes. Oh, yes.
Now that's the way you play a clawhammer.

John Makin

The Village Clock

I'll start this tale the age old way,
Beginning with a rhyme.
Consider it was long ago,
Yes, 'Once upon a time'

A business man while out one day,
Was walking down a lane.
A pleasant, rural, tranquil road,
He'd come this way again.

Through the rolling countryside,
He strode with hurried gait,
For, he did not know the time,
And feared that he'd be late.

He passed a farmer in a field,
And gazed at him in awe.
In classic pose upon the gate,
A-chewing at a straw.

He doffed his hat and said "Good day,"
Though Farmer Giles looked dour.
"It seems, alas, I've lost my watch,"
"Could you tell me the hour?"

Why, bless you Sir, now that I can,
If you'll stand there and wait"
With that he slowly turned around,
And strode fast from the gate.

Straight up the sloping field he trod,
Sure footed, striding free,
And came up to a placid cow,
That stood immovably.

Along her side the farmer passed,
Then bent and cupped his hand,
And gently raised her udder up.
An udder full and grand.

He slowly moved it up and down,
While looking carefully,
And then he came back to the gate,
And said determinedly:

“Tis ‘alf past eight, so not so late,
So best be on your way.”
“Why thank you very much my man”
He said, and strode away.

Such knowledge as old Giles showed,
He’d never known before.
He wondered at the country folk,
With all their farmers’ lore.

How could old Giles there tell the time,
By feeling his old cow?
And then he saw the village clock,
The time was right, but how?

Would you believe on his return,
The farmer leaned there still.
Though now his straw was almost gone,
He’d nearly had his fill.

“Hello again,” our walker said,
To Giles upon his gate.
“I’ve been delayed upon my way,
I wonder, is it late?”

“Oh, I can tell thee, never fear,”
The farmer said and smiled,
And strode to where his cow still stood,
So placid, staid and mild.

Once more he bent and gently reached,
And lifted up her milk,
And peered at it so tenderly,
As if it were of silk.

What did he see? What could he feel?
And why was that the spot?
What was it that that cow revealed?
That udder cows did not.

Old Giles he came back to the gate,
And then resumed his pose.
“The time,” he said, “is five past six,
Or nearly so tha’ knows.”

Our business man was sore perplexed,
He thought himself quite bright.
To get the hour was possible,
But five past? Was that right?

“How can you be quite so exact?
From that one certain cow?
For all you did was walk across,
And feel her udder. How?”

“Now you’re in business, I am too,
We both know what we’re at,
You try to keep your margins lean,
While I feed mine up fat.”

“You know your place and I know mine,
Yes each must know his stock,
And when I lift her udder up,
I see the village clock.”

Maria Manobianco

Limerick

Hanna from Havana
slipped on a banana
with feet in the air
her bottom was bare
exposing more
than she hadda

Peppery

You have a peppery personality-
unpredictable, spontaneous, spicy
However, you can overdo it
cause me to sneeze when I talk
interfere with my timing
leave me teary-eyed and red-faced

You're peppery manner
so fiery, so unsettling
Yes, you are clever; no you are not
always welcomed
Yet, you're too interesting
to ignore completely
so I take my chances

Meira Marom

The Giraffe Uttered Not

Note: An important zoological fact that is not widely known is that giraffes are virtually mute. They can snort and hiss to a certain extent, but they cannot make any other sounds.

Our story begins in the fine days of yore,
 Just around the Big Bang, or a little before,
 When a jury met up to assess every creature
 And determine what physical quirks it should feature.
 Their decisions were final, appeals stood no chance.
 No petitions were granted so much as a glance.
 The giraffe, so it happened, (it's worthy to note),
 Had its vocal chords cruelly removed from its throat,
 And the zebra was knitted a jacket so queer,
 It is crowned "Best-Loved Freak of this Decade"—each year.

Well, some seventy nine million years galloped by,
 And we pick up our tale in an arid July,
 When a paranoid zebra and friendly giraffe,
 Got caught up in a wrathful discussion, (or...half!)
 It was dusk, ninety hooves south of west Cameroon,
 Where a zebra reposed on the coziest dune;
 A giraffe paced along with a grin 'cross his snout,
 Grasping not the faux-pas he had just carried out.
 "Is there something remarkably funny up there?
 If there is, mister sky-scrapa', don't hold back! Share!
 Very well, I'll just guess!" (He liked stirring up drama),
 "Could it be that my pelt brings to mind a pyjama?
 Or a crosswalk, or *I* know...a jailbird's attire!
 Which one is it?" he shrieked, his mane nearly caught fire!
 "Oh, I know your kind well, ya' smug haughty old nutter,"
 "I didn't mean..." the giraffe softly didn't quite utter,

“Well, I’m through!” cried the zebra, resuming his fit,
“Here a sneer, there a jeer, or a wisecracky skit.
And what irks me the most is: *no* other striped beast,
Suffers any such blunt disrespect in the least!
Take the fur of the tiger: with all due respect,
It could pass for a basketball, last time I checked,
But just who in his right mind would be such a fool
As to tickle the feline expiring cool?
And who’d prove so imprudent to dare say a thing
To a highly striped bee with the power to sting?
I won’t stand such abuse! At long last you’ll be taught!”
“I intended no harm” the giraffe pronounced naught
“One last thing, if you will,” said the zebra, and yawned
“I’d advise that you have a good peep in the pond,
As your coat, my dear pal, you may deem *à la mode*,
But in fact it resembles an ORANGE-BRICK ROAD!
Now, assuming you haven’t a further remark,
I am low on my sleep, and it *is* getting dark.”
He then pouted and shut both his eyes as he lay,
“Ciao!” said not the giraffe and was off on his way.

Judith Mesch

For Mother's Day

While Mother is sleeping up next to her vent
We're thinking of putting her house up for rent
This way when she's better, she'll move right back in
And meantime, the rental will pay for Bob's gin
And trips up to Vegas and skis for the kids.

Of course it may make sense to sell.
See, we've received a few bids.

Now I'm sure that poor Mother, so involved at the present
with coughing her spleen up (that noise is incessant)
Will thank us at some point and feel great relief
Which is why I'm surprised that she called me a thief!
I sent her a bouquet of roses last Sunday
I mentioned her twice in my prayers at least one day
I thanked her out loud when I paid for the Hyundai
It seems to me Mother expects such a lot
I wish she'd remember who paid for her plot
Now of course it may be I'm misreading her lips
She's a bit incoherent since she lost both her hips
and her sacrum to ulcers
And everyone knows how erratic her pulse is
I would like to imagine that Mother's contented
and wants to forgive me, in fact has relented
There's really no reason there's really no cause
For this rift that's between us-
We all have our flaws
and mine is just loving my mother too dearly
I wonder if payments are lump sum or yearly...

Eric G. Müller

Hemingway had a cat with six toes
Who purred and softened his woes
She sat on his lap
And didn't give a crap
When he slipped off to Sloppy Joe's

Bent double over a bowl
He's retching out his soul
Feeling better
He writes a letter
To his gal, his only goal

Missy met Jones in New York
His eyes were those of a hawk
He plunged his talons
Into her soft melons
And plugged her tight with his cork

George H. Northrup

Vasari's Portrait of Lorenzo de' Medici

It's either you, Lorenzo, or Bob Hope
impersonating you in *The Road to Florence*,
your lips compressed to stifle
wisecracks for Vasari as he worked.
Was it your nose that made you
patronize the beauty of the arts?
Did other princes nickname you Pinocchio
as you inhaled the scent of power?
Flattering your face, Vasari painted
nearby visages looking nothing like Bing Crosby,
one holding back a smirk,
the other in an anguished pose.
Were they reacting to your nose?

When that severe Dominican, Savonarola,
in 1489 arrived, Lorenzo, O Lorenzo,
father of Leo X, poet, ex-communicant,
did he offer to burn
your furry cuffs and finely tailored clothes
in the piazza atop forbidden books?
Did he mock your secular excess in sermons
while privately imagining
a reliquary for the trophy of your nose?

You died so young, in 1492.
Savonarola forgave you at the end,
blessed you. He decided, I suppose,
you'd suffered quite enough already
here on earth, with such a nose.
If you and other new decedents rose
that day to heaven in a race,
tell me you beat them by a nose.

Dermatophagoides₁

Seven thousand wee dust mites
convening on a dime
enjoy delicious, dainty bites
of choice, select, and prime.

Munching epidermal cells
(canned, frozen, dried, and fresh),
their every scrumptious mouthful tells
the pleasures of the flesh.

Thirteen million tiny mites,
well, give or take a few,
get hungry all at once most nights
and look for skin to chew.

Seven billion mites, well fed,
in search of human skin,
in London empty every bed--
old, young, tall, short, fat, thin.

Fifteen trillion mites begin,
beneath arachnid flags,
to eat up Paris and Berlin
and bring home doggy bags.

Eight quadrillion little mites
invade the Tropic Zone
for homo sapient delights
and skin them to the bone.

People cry, "What shall we do?"
but lack a stratagem,
for self-defense runs counter to
The S.P.C.D.M.

Late one night the mites go out,
and by the break of dawn,
oh! everywhere you look about
the human race is gone.

Mites numberless as stars,
and crawling on all eights,
devour Jupiter and Mars
and eye the Pearly Gates.

Four quintillion mites at last,
with nothing left to eat
pretend to rue their greedy past
and pray to God for meat.

Four quintillion mites at last,
with just a pinch of grief,
contrive a penitential fast
and beg divine relief.

Mites, famished now, do yearn
for help with their complaints.
God willing, they would try to learn
to nibble on the saints.

[1] Inspired by an article in The New York Times, which profiled these tiny creatures, so small that 7,000 of them could comfortably fit on one side of a ten cent piece. Their diet consists of cast-off flakes of human skin. SPCDM: Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Dust Mites.

David O'Neal

Making Love

We made love
And became tight
As a zipper.
We made love again
And knew nothing
Could ever keep us apart.
Then we talked about money.

Dear Editor

Dear Editor, you are a damn silly fool.
How could you reject the poem I sent?
I know my poem “Sunset” is a jewel.

My poems make most readers drool.
But you had no idea what it meant.
Dear Editor, you are a pompous fool.

Your brain must be truly miniscule.
For superb poetry you have no bent.
I know my poem “Sunset” is a jewel.

Did you ever graduate from preschool?
You didn’t even make a comment.
Dear Editor, you are an arrogant fool.

Your lousy quarterly is a cesspool,
So your rejection of me is a non-event.
I know my poem “Sunset” is a jewel.

All my poems are exceedingly cool,
But now I think I’m getting violent.
Editor, you are a dumb-assed fool.
Or is it possible “Sunset’s” not a jewel?

Stopping by Woods on a Snowless Evening

(After Robert Frost)

Whose woods are these I think I know.
They're those of Joe and Lou Turko.
Although it winter again here,
There's not a single flake of snow.

My horse must think it's very queer
That there's no snow this time of year,
Nor is there ice upon the lake,
This whole evening is dark and drear.

I give the horse bridle a shake,
Which is a terrible mistake.
So bad it almost makes me weep,
My horse erupts like an earthquake.

Now I've been thrown into a heap,
I wish I'd brought not horse but jeep,
As I from Turko's woods do creep.
As I from Turko's woods do creep.

Milind Padki

A Certain Difficulty after the Poetry Workshop

What are we then, to make of me?
Beside this poetess, walking in glee,
Speaking earnestly of pro-so-Dee,
But sneaking a peak at
Her ass?

Books to the chin, an obedient grin,
“I am the dilettante – you are the queen,”
Bobbing my head, her favor to win,
But taking in only
Her ass.

“You are so hip – I am so square!
Of so many things, I am not aware,”
Dreaming of pentameters to share,
While taking in only
Her ass?

I am still reverent, I am attentive,
I need to improve, and I am so plaintive,
But how, of instruction, can I be retentive
While taking in only
Her ass?

[My rhyming by now must produce a groan,
Don't show this to her: she will only moan,
For she is the light, and I am the drone
Taking in only
Her ass.]

Things now come to a sorry pass,
Lacking subtlety, lacking in class,
A poet-to-be, I remain so crass
Taking in only
Her ass!

Carl Palmer

A Dog Named Sex

My pooch is not named Rover, Fluffy, Spot or Rex.
I wanted something different, so I named my puppy, Sex.
To renew my doggie's license. I went down to City Hall.
"I'd like a license for Sex," I said. He said, "Wouldn't we all?"
"You must not have understood, I need it for my mutt."
"I really don't care how she looks, if she's ugly, fine or what."
"But Sir, I must tell you, I've had Sex since I was four!"
"You are no more than a braggart," and he showed me out the door.

Newly married, we brought our pet along for the honeymoon.
I told the clerk, "A place for us and for Sex, a special room."
"Every room has a place for sex. Every room has a bed."
"But Sex keeps me up at night." "It keeps me up, too," he said.

At our divorce the court gave all my possessions to the wife
I protested, "Please Your Honor, I had Sex before my married life!"
The judge then said that he did, too. "It's not a real big crime."
"But Sir, before we tied the knot, I had Sex all the time."
The judge said that I could still have sex, so I took my hound and ran.
My wife then said that she'd miss Sex, so I stayed a married man.

Last night Sex ran off again as we walked around the block.
A cop pulled up and asked me if I knew it was three o'clock.
I told him that I was looking for Sex and he took me straight to jail.
Now I'm waiting for my trial to come and can't get out on bail.
....if I ever get another dog,
I think I'll name him...."Whoopie" or "Boom-Boom"
Anything but Sex!

Previously appeared in *The Feather Tale Review* and *Paws, Clams, Wings and Things* (Local Gems Poetry Press, 2012)

Matth Pasca

Random Firings (A Teacher's Brain on Friday Afternoon)

Bahdzoowat Mahabarata fish sandwich
Tortellini Javelin thrust

Ectoplasmic

Ridiculous this absurdity to sanctify the Big Bird in me
Snuffulupagus
Snuffulupagus

Has cooties, has windbags, has naughty naughty

Thermometers he hides in a greenhouse somewhere

You gotta have good dip if you wanna be my potato chip

Ergonomically sound Flea collarific
My spine is a glockenspiel upon which
rodents of unusual size bounce and whinny -

Do not wave Hostess products in my face
Mr Funny Bones!

Reflections of things past, such as breadcrumbs clinging to
cuticles and clarinet reeds numbing the creased
pink of your lip

I swear there is no substitute for a good can of Fresca!
How can it be a Diet Soda, and taste so fine?

But I digress. I must keep to my point.

Bahdzoowat Mahabarata fish sandwich
Tortellini Javelin thrust

Ectoplasmic

Recommendation for a Pre-Schooler

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my utmost pleasure to recommend little Thomas for acceptance to your august institution. I have known said applicant for all two and a half of his years on earth - even longer if you count the Sundays I spent with his mother, tracing the shadows of her latest sonogram - and I can attest to the fact that Thomas possesses all the major tools one might look for in a TOE, or Toddler Of Excellence.

Firstly, Thomas is both inquisitive and scientific. He chases Checkers the cat for hours, ducking down to discern under which part of the bed she has hidden. When he corners Checkers, he experiments on her tail, testing how hard it can be wrenched until she meows. He is also artistic - smearing phlegm and drool below his nose on long car rides and skinning his knee in cubist flourishes on the living room floor. He is benevolent, to boot. No one in the house is exempt when he doles out handfuls of Oatios.

As for interests, architecture seems to suit Thomas particularly well. Just last week, he arranged half a banana and two halves of a spinach bagel in such a way that suggested a Puget lodge or portable tent. I think he has literary leanings, as well, because he watches people at all times, zeroing in on the man in a blue shirt paying a lunch check and the lady with the short straight hair remarking how \$6 is insane for an egg salad sandwich.

Thomas also displays the kind of leadership expected of a new enrollee at your esteemed preparatory school. Why, just yesterday, he repeatedly tossed cups of coleslaw onto a restaurant floor, hoping, in this way, to help the staff perfect their response and clean up procedure. A bit Machiavellian for sure, but effective nonetheless.

In short, Thomas is more than ready for the challenges and pressures of pre-school. He no longer smears feces on the fish tank, gags on his thumb, or pees in his parents' faces when they change him. I think you will find Thomas a coachable young lad, and one in whom you will find growing the seeds of great success.

Enclosed, please find a print of Thomas's pointillist rendering of Stonehenge. He really takes finger-painting seriously.

Thank you for your time.

Peter Peteet

Pack

for Janisse Ray

You pull my shoulders back
And into your sack
Go both my rejoinder and attack
Pad above the butt
Dog obsessed with rut
Tribe howling at the moon
Birth and death
Too sweet, too soon
Into the harness all must go
Trail ho!

Ellen Pickus

Cracked

The crack of the bat
The egg in the bowl
The smack in the head
The rift in the walk
The fault in the wall
The voice gone astray
The dawn of the day
The spine re-aligned

The floe turned to flow
The clap of the clouds
The smart of the whip
The wise of the clown
The turn of the safe
The mast in the storm
The boy-man in song
The bone that's not strong
The skew of my view

Squirrels

They chase each other around my oak tree,
uninvited tenants who are welcome to stay.
My deck rail is their highway.
Once a fat squirrel slumped across it in sleep,
his paws hanging over the sides,
relaxed and secure in his safety.
They chew pine cones, leaving
miniature haystacks on the rail.

Though we don't hunt them,
we are not overrun.
Though we don't feed them,
they survive on their own,
wily connivers who entertain
the lords of this manor,
jesters earning their keep.

They probably don't see it that way,
probably figure their ancestors
were in this oak long before the house was ever built.
But I pay the taxes, so I'll stick to my version of the tale.

Anthony Policano

Instructions in the art of shaving

The key is to start with a sink full of hot water, as hot as you can stand
Using regular soap, wash your face vigorously and leave it wet
Hold whichever hand you prefer, palm up, slightly cupped, fingers together
Kind of like a one armed man saying the Lord's Prayer

With the other obliging hand hold a can of Barbasol
Lightly push the trigger
Fill open palm with an espresso-short burst of foaming lather
Slowly, with thick white cloud attached, turn palm upside down
And touch the belly of magic cloud to the surface of steaming water

Apply lather like wet plaster to your beard
Allow stubble to soften by staring in the mirror for at least 30 seconds
(More than a minute is weird, even if no one is looking)

Take lathered hand; shake and wiggle fingers underwater
Come up clean and man your double or triple edged razor (disposables are acceptable)

Smoothly glide along the goose of your neck from Adams apple up to
The first natural stop
Aim blade like skis over the snowy mound of chin
If needed, stretch loose skin by pulling up and back to your ear
Ever so lightly, repeatedly, stroke the peach of one cheek and then the other

Finally, like a diver approaching the edge of a high-board, with confidence -
Brave the distance between nostrils and upper lip

When done, rinse any blood droplets with damp hands
Blot face with a dry towel (CAUTION; NOT from your wife's side of the rack)
Be proud of your manly dexterity
Pretend you are a French Lieutenant who's been insulted by an adversary
Go slap yourself silly with aftershave

Kelly Powell

The Bi-Polar Cafe

It's tough to get a cup of coffee there--
You only get served
half of the time.

Identity Theft

After my identity theft
I don't really feel like
myself anymore.

Phyllis Quiles

No Lover

When you've no lover
you needn't wonder
whether your underwear
has a teeny tear,
or worry if you're
(GASP)
seen with the light
showing your underwear's
a tad too tight.
You needn't fret if your underwear
bears some indelible stain.
Sexy or not, it's all the same.
Either or the other
when you've,
(Ho hum),
no lover.

Chris Reid

Uberwonky

'Twas kerning and the beta keys
Did ping and pixel in the node
All bawdy were the binaries
And the qwertys encode

Beware the Uberwonk my pet
The gigabytes – you'll be a nosh
Beware the spoofing shift and fret
The moodling macintosh

She took her GPS and fled
Throughout the Ethernet she sought
Awhile the Excel spread she read
And paused to rest in thought

And as in dweebish thought she stood
The Uberwonk true to his name
Came nerdling thru the lossy wood
And Googled as he came

He sent a Tweet that she found sweet
Their user files got interfaced
She left refreshed (her hair amess)
To bounce through cyberspace

And did you boff the Uberwonk?
Give me details - you tarty lass
You crashed his drive? He's still alive?
You grappled his badonkadonk?

'Twas kerning and the beta keys
Did ping and pixel in the node
All bawdy were the binaries
And the qwertys encode

Phil Reinstein

Cyber Date

I wanted to call but chose to hold tight
so relaxed was our first chat that time we sat
at our phones...felt so right
but now
summoning my all needing nerves not to fall
dropping the ball why do i stall
I did want to call
even heard the...dial tone

Long odds were counted faced and surmounted
you have cleared a hurdle or two
so tall and so slim so shapely accounted
shallowness in "moi?" is not new

You are poetic, play tennis, and find passion in dance
making art and your living with camera and lens
will it be you who breaks through?

Two great kids that you have are all grown of course
there is a dog and a cat at your side
you even possess an award-winning horse
long love and great pride in that stride
with your ride

More I hope to explore cautiously acknowledging that
long is the drive door to door for a morning
or afternoon chat
you live far away and we have not even met
with other first dating daters awaiting me yet

Mostly ok through the day also astonishingly strong
grounded in grief yet high as a kite,
with fervor and passion zeal and delight
I'll go for a walk don't want to talk or reach out tonight
longing those lips of lost love and bright light
I wanted to call to fish and to bite
I wanted to call but chose to hold tight

Insurance Man Reggae

{to the tune of *Jamaica Farewell*}

I am insurance man with assurance plan
picking programs for de woman or for de man
packing property protection for de family an' clan
be assured I am your insurance agent man

I am insurance guy no need to wonder why
I bring you up to speed feed dat hidden need
for de wife or for de boss for love... of course
give it up don't be shy *now* time to buy

future obligations family situations
conferences discussions procrastinations
computer calculations prognostications
deferred compensation Capital Dynamics Corporation

I am insurance maven from my home office haven
my guarantees are grand your security at hand
I have de whole life or de term my protection plan is firm
universal no dress rehearsal for de egg an' de sperm

I am plain vanilla insurance fella
I cover a commercial or a personal umbrella
disability long and short business buy and sell
I cover car home or boat call to me for telephone quote

I am insurance consultant feeling quite exultant
I can offer you more from my protection store
did I forget to mention annuity plans and pension
401Ks for rainy days relax your tension

I am estate and business planner with fax phone and scanner
never you be nervous professional policy service
always I look twice for fine companies best market price
give me a call I don't drop the ball

You will be much more wiser when you see me your advisor
when brought into court suit sought for tort
call I to report for help of any sort
me make safe your fort enterprise guys cries I support

*I am insurance professional this is my confessional
I am an agent man it be time to tell
here I submit my admission I am in it mostly for commission
there is no man with endurance like de man dat sell life insurance
call me for sure I am your insurance agent man*

I am poet I am joker I am policy poker
stogie smoker ganjatoker
hot tub soaker insurance broker
be assured so secure
for sure I endure I {not poor I} insure guy Your Man

New Year's Thoughts of George Carlin

I dig it get it glean it and I *mean* it
I understand it and know it now
I admit and absorb it
I hatch and catch
catch and snatch it
I bring it home baby
I realize as well as recognize it
grasping and clasping it
I claw it clutch it cling to it cleave it to me
I find and follow it and I *swallow* it
sighting and spotting it
tracing it and tracking it down
I make it out now
discovering detecting *inspecting* learning discerning
I perceive and believe it
I can comprehend it and I can even *care* about it
reflecting upon it all
I see what is now crystal clear

gawked at glared at squawked at stared at
considered contemplated *deliberated*
postulated positioned postured posed in perspective a point of view
angle aspect *attitude*
a new and exciting approach
sloping slanting *askew*
tilted turned twisted twirled
way of thinking mind set frame of mind state of mind:

this month's
de jour declaration obscure observation
revulsion revelation repulsion proclamation
fiduciary obligation fruit-juicy masturbation
compulsion expulsion defecation *situation*

We are *ALL* insecure
Quit your bitchin' and moanin'
Happy New Year
GET OVER IT!

Vincent Renstrom

The Abnormality of Sex

I injured my right wrist
in a domestic incident.
I can reveal no further details,
except to say that it
involved tickling, and
my doctor recommended
total immobilization.

My wife tells me she loves it,
that since my unfortunate
accident and subsequent
diagnosis, it's like she's
having sex with my mirror image,
who, it turns out, is a clumsy,
inexperienced lefthander.

Jack Ritter

Fearful Fuzzitry

Fuzzy Wuzzy burning bright,
in the forests of the night.
Fuzzy Wuzzy wasn't very flame-retardant, was he?

Goody Woody had good wood.
Goody wooded girls that would.
But Goody Woody wouldn't wood a goody goody
would he?

Fizzy Lizzy liked good wood.
Goody Woody said, "We should."
But Fizzy Lizzy was no would-be woodee.
So Woody wooded Wuzzycuzzy could
and burned his woodie good.

The Last Manly Summer

We became atight unit
the summer we found shotgun shells in a field.
Buzz pondered scientifically over what to do.

We harvested their powder in secret gatherings,
poured out silver piles in the sun.
I set them off with Aunt Hellen's reading lens.

Poof! "A *blue* smoke ring!"
And hot enough to light our Hav-a-Tampas.
Another job well done.

I said, "I bet we could pee a tree to death."
Every day the unit gathered around
a certain Box Elder sapling.

We peed out held-in loads.
It took a month to bring it down.
Afterwards, Buzz said, "Good call."

The next summer,
Buzz has a shaving rash.
And a girlfriend.

He made speeches
about what "real" men do.

It was hard on the entire unit.

Jillian Roath

Somewhere, the Ancient Egyptians are Laughing at Us

Remember the ancient Egyptians?
The ones who built those amazing pyramids
that still stand today and continue to amaze the world?

How do you think
those pyramids were built?

Did the Egyptians
build from the top first,
thinking the stones would trickle down to the bottom?

Of course not!
That would be stupid!

Anyone who's ever played with blocks
knows that in order to build something sturdy,
you start at the bottom and work your way up!

The ancient Egyptians knew that
and their pyramids aren't going anywhere...

So, why did anyone think
that trickle down economics was a good idea?

It's a good joke, of course.
The ancient Egyptians are laughing, wherever they are.
How long, o "fixers of the economy" will it take for you to realize
that those long dead master builders are laughing at you, not with you?

Marc Rosen

Cripple Revolution: Fear the Wheelchair!

The cripples are comin'!
The cripples are comin'!
We shut down the gov'ment and now
The cripples are comin'!

The Wheelchair Mafia's running our asses down!
Aww, fuck, the AARP joined in 'cause we cut off Social Security and Medicare!
And those vets! Now that the VA's gone, they shootin' at us, man!

We gonna die on Capitol Hill!
It's the Cripple Insurrection!
Run for your lives!

Why didn't we just listen to ADAPT?!
All they did was stop traffic to prove their point!
Now, we're fucked!

They wheelin' down Pennsylvania Avenue,
Usin' their adult diapers for firebombs,
Whacking people left and right
With their crutches and their wheelchairs and their canes!

Oh, FUCKING LAWDIE!
The Army's being overrun by the cripple kids!
They've broken outta the group homes,
And won't stop raising hell till their demands are met!

Oh, where did we go wrong,
And in how many ways?!
Oh, Lawdie, it's the end of the nation as we know it,
AND IT'S ALL OUR FAULT!

Previously printed in *Monster of Fifty-Nine Moons and Other Poems* (Local Gems Poetry Press, Feb. 2012)

In Praise of The George Carlin (an Absurdist sermon, revised)

There once was a great and holy man
Beloved by many, and despised by equal numbers

The Great Carlin, praised be His name!
And praised be his most sacred of incantations!

A chant so powerful, so magnificent, so glorious,
It pissed off not just an entire nation.
No, the Great Carlin, praised be He, wouldn't settle for that!
He riled up the entire WORLD with his holiest of holy mantras!

CAN I GET A HALLELUJAH?!

Yes! Glory Hallelujah! Praise be to The Carlin,
And his most sacred of sacred chants!

SHITFUCKPISSCUNTCOCKSUCKERMOTHERFUCKERTTTS!

Let these holy words SMITE the prudish heathens,
And bring eternal glory unto His name!

Previously published in Bards Annual 2011, Monster of 59 Moons, 2012
(Local Gems Poetry Press)

Ruth Sabath Rosenthal

His Aunt Anna, A-Z

- A.....his Aunt Anna's deltoid body
B.....her big buttocks and buxom bosom
C.....her camel's hump
D.....the daunting paunch she doesn't deny
E.....her eerie screech whenever a mouse streaks by
F.....her fat cat Fanny's once-fancy comb
G.....the girdle on her ghastly derrière
H.....huge hurdles he jumps to please her
I.....ill-will behind her ill-advised advice
J.....the rage she justifies hanging on him
K.....his king-size wish to kick her to kingdom come
L.....a litany of foul language he levies under his breath
M.....malignant mixture of his misery and her malice
N.....part of M, with nothing to add to it right now
O.....Lord, have pity on him!
P.....her pout when he pursues plans which displease her
Q.....her quirky queries and his quick-witted retorts
R.....the rankling he takes under her rigorous rule
S.....his sure-fire snake-in-the-grass escape plan
T.....the T-square proving useless in plotting escape
U.....uh-oh! Unexpectedly, Auntie has up and died
V.....valley of death, verily the pasture she now graces
W.....the coward he'd been for kowtowing to her
X.....[exact spot the old battleaxe had signed her will]
Y....."Yipeeki-yay" he yells -- arms sky-high
Z.....Zs he caught by laze-end of a zany shopping day

Narges Rothermel

A Salesman And A New Invention

His loud voice and kind words hush the elderly-crowd,

“It is a *Must-to-have* for all the baby-boomers
for the young ones too, even for the new bloomers
If you don’t need it today, save it for future use
This invention is here to stay. It is here to amuse

No matter if you are a frugal or a big spender
You will love this New *Invisible-Suspender*

You may wear either size “A” or double “D” cup
two mighty straps will pull your unruly boobs up
Either your belly has tires or jiggles like jelly
Strong straps will lift them off the sagging belly

Another set of strings will pull the side flaps back
and a few more will keep loose muscles intact

The neckpiece will shrink the extra hanging-chin
It will make you look young. It will make you thin
This Suspender will support every worn out joint
It will smooth the wrinkles of the face up to a point

This Suspender will adapt to every skin tone
can wear it under all attires at any time zone

Wear *the suspender*, put that favorite hidden-dress on
This Suspender is cheap, no need to apply for a loan
Rise against Gravity, Time, and Foes of youth and beauty
Looking good, looking presentable is your holy-duty

Trust this Magical *Invisible-Suspender*-
Against all elements, *this suspender is a real contender*

You, the baby-boomers, hurry, hurry, come on, come on
come and explore this new invention. Take it. Put it on
before this body shaper, this face saver, this magic-maker,
before, this eye teaser, and life saver is sold out and gone. ”

“Come on--come on
Come and buy one!”

I cursed the Alarm clock!

Still on duty

At midnight shift, ER was oddly quiet
that was, until Triage-Nurse swung the door
with her behind and yelled, "Chest-pain."
Then turned herself and the wheelchair around
faced the patient, "Okay Rob, you are in good-hands."

Someone took Rob's frantic wife to waiting room
She had driven Rob to ER. She was wearing a pink robe.

In no time, Rob was transferred to bed "#6"
He was hooked to monitor
Mask on his face supplied the sweet-oxygen
Gadget indicating blood oxygen on his finger
read, "96." It was a good sign.

One nurse drew Rob's blood and started IV
another nurse prepared Pain medication.

Rob claimed his chest pain has subsided
Rob's rapid heart rate was slowing down
ER-Doctor examined Rob then pulled back
the curtain, and handed me the clipboard,
"Call me with lab results. He is all yours."

It was my turn to examine Rob from head to toe
A complete detailed-assessment was a "must."

Rob had covered himself up to his chin
He was reluctant to let go of the white-sheet
I convinced him to let me do my job
While examining his lower abdomen area
I noticed, the sheet was elevated in specific area.

Oh there it was! The Invisible-Blue-Love-Soldier,
was still holding the flag-post in up-right position.

The New Ego-Booster, New Wonder-Potion,
New arrived eager to please "Viagra" was still on duty!
Rob' flushed face, rapid heart rate, and chest-pain
were signs of using too much of the New Wonder-drug.
Rob did not have heart attach. Lady in pink robe smiled.

Jeff Santosuosso

Kolache Round

(In Praise of the Schwa)

Kolache, ceviche
cacique, caliche
gnocci, tai chi
Maverick's Nowitzki
tzatziki, Ed Leakey
Ronde and Tiki
pita, margarita,
Bhagavad Gita,
feta, vendetta,
drive a Jetta
poinsettia
New Orleans muffaletta
"At Last" sung by Etta
Martha and Murtha
Siddhartha and Goethe
scintilla, chinchilla
Magilla Gorilla
Thrilla in Manilla
Kong fights Godzilla
chocolate and vanilla
former mayor of Wasilla
Bahama Mama
Yokohama
Dalai Lama meets Obama
queen of drama on a llama
ever seen just one pajama?
coma, stoma
Diploma from Oklahoma
iota, cream soda

Minnesota, coda
old Jedi named Yoda
daytime's Hoda
the stripper Carol Doda
Casablanca, Sri Lanka
the Germans say "danke"
Valdosta, Contra Costa
leafy shrub hosta
manna, banana
Taco Cabana
Copacabana
España Uncle Vanya
Texas' Tucker Tanya
singing Stand by Your Man-ya
tuna, kahuna
Spenser's queen Una
Nashua, Yeshua
Boa and Noah
nuts from Moana Loa
that's Hawaii, not Samoa
meshugge,
give a noogie
boogiewoogieoogie
Terlingua, Coalingua
Blockbuster's Huizenga
cowabunga, Cucamonga
conga with Tsonga
Dada, cantata
nada, fritatta
pina colada
medulla oblongata
The Devil Wears Prada
Abba, Ali Baba,
San Saba, Escanaba
Honda, anaconda
Beach Boys' "Help Me Rhonda"

A Fish Called Wanda
Jane, Peter, and Henry Fonda
flora, Torah,
Isle of Bora Bora
GH's Luke and Laura
bursa, vice-versa
cerveza, cabeza
Lao Tze, babooshka
Kinshasa, Mombasa
palapa, Mustapha
grappa, Tel Aviva Jaffa
Tchkotchke, dacha
ouzo on the Plaka
Han and Chewbacca
ricochet, fengshui
nosegay, Pei Wei
River Kwai, tea of chai
city of Mumbai
kamikaze, paparazzi
Nietzsche was no Nazi
Kolache, ceviche

Suspicious Cheddar

I've been watching the cheddar for long stretches.
Nobody else will do it.
Watching for aberrations in its behavior.
Cheddar behaves with no discipline, unpredictably.
I stare. The block is motionless.
When I am gone, I suspect malfeasance.
But the cheddar is cunning
and always returns to its original location.
Or so it seems.
The cheese believes it's gotten the best of me,
but I bide my time,
for I know the cheddar's ways.
I have to catch it but once,
and it will burger no more,
disappear from the land of the omelet,
never nestle next to the ham slice.
The cheddar will have its day.

Pharmaceutical Boy Action Figure

Real life-like twitching!

For Matthew L. and his students

I'm subclinical OCD,

Subclinical bipolar,

Subclinical

ADHD.

I am. Subclinical all that shit.

This pink one's for when I want to scratch out

My eyeballs.

The blue one – sometimes I forget

To take it.

It helps me

Remember.

The long one helps me read the whole page,

Sit through the whole lecture.

If I miss this square one too many times,

I forget to wash and comb my hair.

And then people notice.

So I *never* forget the square one.

I stay right under the goddamned radar.

I shake his hand, look him in the eye,

Speak calmly

And nice.

Meet your daughter nice.

Have a lovely evening nice.

Don't worry, Pops. I'll have her home by midnight.

That's plenty of time.

Joseph E. Scalia

Aging Un-Gracefully

It is doctors' week for me, oh, yes!
Uro-cardi-ophthal-gastro-enterologists
all conducting batteries of tests.
One or two of them (the doctors I mean)
in an effort to get to the bottom of things
will poke me with an accusing finger or two
(I hope the eye doctor doesn't do it!)
and tell me everything that shouldn't be
is up, while the other thing is not.
My cholesterol, HDLs, LDLs, PSA and weight
are higher now than my IQ and my bowling score.
Doctors' Week is kind of like "Fleet Week" in NYC,
except without the U.S. Navy, or the fun.
And the only FLEET that's in is the one
I bought over the counter at CVS.

Funeral Arrangements

I told my children when I die I want a mime at the wake.
It's not that I like mimes. Nobody does. And if the
informal poll I read is true, mimes are hated, right up there
with death, taxes and Nazis, just before public speaking.
I told them I have put aside money, a "Mime Fund" in my Will,
not part of their inheritance, and I don't want them to scrimp.
I want a top-shelf mime in white face with a tear and striped shirt,
complete with beret, not at all like the cheap talking mime I once
saw at a 10 year-old's birthday party who kept announcing to the
kids everything he did as he did it. I also told them not to explain
him (though the *he* mime could just as easily be a *she*) to anyone
who might attend the service. Just turn that mime loose and let him
walk against the wind, get trapped in a box, mingle among the guests,
who will recall in the years that follow: "Remember the wake we
went to for I don't remember who? The one with the mime.
What the hell was that all about?"

I Harbor a Cat

I harbor a cat – Ursuler. with an e-r,
like Silvier, the cat I harbored before her.
She is OCD (Obsessively Cat Disordered)
though cat non-harborers couldn't tell.
She licks herself bald when I am away,
and most times when I am there as well.
I have thought of getting rid of her, but she
is a member of the family, like a retarded
old aunt who sleeps on the basement floor.
I considered getting her a companion
to play with, a kitten, but I am afraid it would
kill her, or cause Ursuler to lick until she disappears.
Urs, I mean, not the kitten. So instead I drag her
to expensive, holistic vets who scratch their heads
then stick her with acupuncture pins. I cram her
full of pills she leaves behind the couch or projects
onto the bed linens. I buy her cat medicines, sprays
that do not work, pour calming agents that do not calm
into her drinking water. I ring her neck with paper plates
to keep her from making bad matters worse. But mostly
I curse that I harbor cats, that I am a cat person.

Lawrence Schimel

Robert's Rule of Disorder

The thief who likes to read verses
When he's not out snatching purses
Learns the key to dishonest labors:
Good fences make good neighbors.

Counting Rhyme

Robert Frost
Turned and tossed
Unable to fall asleep;
He was counting iambs instead of sheep.

Fight Choir With Choir

I turned. I tossed.
Much sleep was lost
to neighbors' dogs'
barked dialogues.

At dawn's first light
I shared my plight
with neighbors who
were sleepy, too.

We raised our own
complaining drone.
Our landlord vowed:
NO PETS ALOUD.

Jean Schmidt

Dear Santa

This year for Christmas
I would like a dick

No
I'm not asking for a man
or
some disembodied piece
of sexual machinery

No
this year for Christmas
I would like to have a cock
of my very own

No
I don't want to be a man
or
to give up any of the stuff
I already have

I would just like to grow, you know
a "nice" one
somewhere down there

How much easier it will be
to give a specimen down at the lab

No more sitting on cold potties to P

Finally

I can know the joy of writing my name
in the snow, a shower of golden bliss...

Please Santa

if you could fill this request
and just one other...

If you're going to be bringing me a dick
would you also see about
bringing him a nice wet pussy?

The Super Exploitation of Over Usage

Icarus loved death
In his last moments
of crystalline perfection
he hung motionless in the Sun
reflecting on the Perfection of God
like Jesus on the Cross

Apollo watched Icarus
as he plunged into the warm, mirror smooth water
a winged beauty with no fear of his humanity
experiencing vertigo in his awe
of the psychic truth of destiny

Venus in infinite feminine solitude
taunted Icarus in his dying dance
In the heart of the black universe
her mother essence spoke images
of a beautiful constellation

Icarus , moved to tears,
wept diamonds into the splendid brine

Medusa rides Pegasus
across Aegean blue heavens
dips into Purgatory
in an effort to rescue Icarus
before he descends into Hades
begging Pluto to Fuck Him Hard!

Herb Shallcross

The Magnificent Cock

A golden ear to hear the world:
A precious gift indeed.
Or a golden thumb to plumb the soil
And make shoots of every seed.

All the world full of gifts,
But if I might be so blunt,
Nowhere a gift so dear to behold
As a gold forge for a cunt.

But for all the glory of that fabled story,
Another has gone untold.
The magnificent hen had a male counterpart
Who was nearly as dear to behold.

This cock of the walk sat atop the beanstalk
And jabbed his head at the air.
Jack considered snatching him up,
But decided he'd better not dare.

For the magnificent cock was in stature a rock,
And like most males, hopelessly reckless.
So Jack let him be, but had he only said "come,"
He'd have left with a sparkling pearl necklace.

So, boys and girls, there is the tale
Of the tale that never unfolded.
History's scribblers are invariably quibblers,
So some clay never gets molded.

Jeffrey L. Shipley

Living in Fear

I'm so afraid of people it's true;
in fact I'm even scared of you.
In spite of the fact we have not met;
which I must say I don't regret.
I'm so afraid of just what you'll think,
unsure of the depths to which you'll sink.
Because I fear you just might be mean,
I will try hard not to be seen.

Herb Siegel

A Whodunnit?

Just three in a sea of rooms,
 an edifice high beneath daily suns and moons,
 a virtual oasis in a bustling town,
 thirty-five stories closer to heaven and as long a way down.
 A mystery unfolds charged with chaos and grief,
 detected by neighbors and then the police.
 A look back at motives in the normal course,
 uncovers intrigues, triangles, revenge and remorse.
 The victim renown as a thespian star of theatre and screen,
 was cockled today without a whimper or scream.
 Found stark naked wedged in a garbage flue,
 head in, legs askance, butt up facing you.
 At first look the case is easy, clues are many and hot
 from a bird's eye view the *corpus* was surprised on the pot,
 it is detected the symmetrical ring is American Standard,
 and the typical spray pattern properly landed,
 no doubt a mid-course correction or unfinished business,
 a movement to give one Alternating Strabismus.
 Neighbors gather see the moon inside,
 the first for many, some laughed, some cried.
 "It looks like *murder*," exclaims Detective Derriere,
 "Underpants down around ankles, I've seen this snare
 many on the pot, some on the floor,
 but jammed head-first, ass up in a garbage flue is an eyesore."
 Round up witnesses learn the routine
 those familiar with the victim at the crime scene.
 This victim lived with a blonde siren, a butler, and a cat named Miss Hiss,
 neighbors she would flaunt, the butler ignored when the cat would piss.
 The cops wonder at it all nonstop for how did the victim get off the pot,
 get tucked head first, ass up, into a flue?
 That takes lots of strength but by whom? They didn't have a clue.

The apartment was neat, evidently no struggle ensued
doors were unlocked nothing appeared lewd,
yet the victim was in the hallway several doors removed.
Forensics was on the job back and forth they walked,
wondering how a suspended body could be chalked.

Enter a blonde femme fatale, curvy, cleavage and tall,
poured into a silk red dress, dancer's legs up to her tongue,
everything big, nothing small.

“What happened here? Where is ‘eh, my roommate?”

Throaty and mellifluous, her cow eyes fixate,
as she slithers toward Detective Derriere,
she statuesque, inviting, he stammering, “What a pair!”

“There was an incident,” the flustered cop says removing his hat
the startled femme responds, “where is my cat?”

“Your pussy is fine, it's your roommate who met an early demise,”

“but my little pussy is only this size,” holding her hands apart,

“puss is my playmate, roommate, lover, and it breaks my heart.”

“No, drools Det. Derriere, your pussy is safe under my stripe,
it's your two-legged roommate who turned ripe.”

“Oh” she says, “then give back my pussy, but keep your stiff tonight!”

Fact is she was nowhere in sight on that frightful night,
storming out the apartment shortly after their fight,
she recalled the bathroom in use after her shower,
she was bare and her roommate was dour.

As she flew out the door a fate to bemoan,

grunts and groans were heard from the throne.

Jeeves the butler appears at the door,
carrying pink boxes and bags galore,
He stands six foot-two, muscles that rip,
swears he was out on a shopping trip,
t'was his day off left early morn,
talks with “dems and doze” but swears he's wellborn.

The cat was examined from head to toe,
 it's the only witness in the know.
 After all bases are covered, there remains a solution to be discovered.
 A get together, all in one room,
 can solve this *murder* with one sweep of a broom.

No live suspects so far for these dastardly deeds,
 no blood, prints or other leads,
 yet a victim is present and the acts are foul,
 a bathroom the *locus* is missing a plunger and towel.
 Do we need a plumber or handmaid to find if they were mislaid?
 The suspects file in, one by one, the doll, her butler, and the cat on a run.
 A life-sized poster of the victim sans clothes,
 adorns an easel in his last repose.
 All are morbid and sullen, eyes filled with despair,
 seated half-circle around Det. Derriere.
 Police theory has it the victim was surprised,
 while otherwise engaged suddenly died,
 the shock had such zing the bowl left a ring.
 the missing plunger, and towel remains baffling.
 The pungent gore on the floor is from the victim's backdoor,
 and a smudged footprint leads to the boudoir.

So we have a victim stuck ass-up in a flue,
 a partial print of a shoe,
 the ring around the victim's rear is clear,
 a bitchy pussy, a cross-dressing butler, and a blonde who's a keeper.
 It looks suspicious but we don't know if the missing items are deeper.
 Not a clue how the deceased got to the flue or why it was the chosen venue.
 The ring around the rear and a match to the plunger seems clear.
 All suspects and alibis vetted, the clues are unfettered,
 the mystery deepens, solutions elude,
 though the scene was searched by several gumshoe.
 Det. Derriere is dean of the force, and recites this impressive discourse.
 "What is that rumbling noise?" says he,

“a porter’s cart, it happens every day,” says she.
The porter enters to Derriere’s invite,
is questioned about the fateful day and the fight.
He stammers and fluffs, has nothing to say,
pleads he does the same work day after day.
Derriere looks askance at the newcomer’s act,
points to him accusingly try’s to extract one fact.
The porter shivers and shudders then confesses all.
He heard the fight, the door slam but re-opened to the hall.
He entered quietly hoping to steal,
but the victim on the pot saw and began to squeal,
“Get out! Get out!” *she* did shout,
I panicked began to freak out, he
grabbed the plunger, stuffed it in *her* big mouth
wrapped her in a towel from the top south.
Into the cart, wrapped in swaddling towels,
Then dumped in the trash bin to hide her head to bowels.
But alas her tits were too big for the chute,
so he stuffed her head in, ass up, thought it was cute.
His was the first inkling of the victim’s gender.
On the cart inside the room laid her corpus,
and when Detective Derriere returned she had rigor mortis.
He pushed the cart, towel, and plunger out of the room,
leaving her torso straight as a broom.
The mystery solved, Derriere scampered off with the blonde
and her pussy while the butler pranced in his Pradas,
pirouetted, and fell flat on his *tushy*.

CASE CLOSED!

Carol Lavelle Snow

The Camping Song

(Refrain)

Oh, . . . there's . . . nothing as healthy as the great outdoors
far from the traffic and the crowds and the stores.
Never mind the blisters and the bugs that chew.
Keep on hiking 'cause it's good for you.

Nothing like having to pitch your tent
in the rocks and the mud when your energy's spent
and when the wind's blowing at a mighty gale
that mistakes your canvas for a galleon's sail.

(Refrain)

No, . . . there's . . . nothing as healthy as the great outdoors
far from the traffic and the crowds and the stores.
Never mind the blisters and the bugs that chew.
Keep on hiking 'cause it's good for you.

Nothing like dealing with a sudden squall
while you're out in the bushes at nature's call.
Nothing like a tent that leaks like a sieve
or a fire that won't start or a zipper that won't give.

(Refrain)

No . . . there's . . . nothing as healthy as the great outdoors
far from the traffic and the crowds and the stores.
Never mind the blisters and the bugs that chew.
Keep on hiking 'cause it's good for you.

After turning all night in a soggy bag,
you rise at dawn looking like a hag.
Forget your toothbrush? Use a twig.
Bring a bottle? Take a swig . . . or two.

(Refrain)

No, . . . ther's . . . noffing'shealfy as the greet outdoors
far from traffic an' the crudes an' the—floors?

Never mind blusters or bugs to chew

Keep on dr-- erhikin', ish good for you!

Jennifer Stella

On dating a vegetarian

for Sarah

They spoke of vibrators, these
women in a circle, and I
agreed with them (as if
I spoke the language. “Yes,
yes, yes.” I bought one. I
have batteries. I
wore them out). We

sat like butterflies
or Indians in
September. Urgency, we
said. They said and I
mouthed. Another day from
down the street – what women

want in this world.
That year I can’t remember
if I was eating
meat. So it was wine and Halal
potatoes crisped with chicken
fat, turning, spitting,

and the bottom of the metal
pan. Skin-slick, I
licked my fingers. (No use for
napkins where
there’s a rug).

It was before
I found hers, casual, without
thinking, in the bathroom.
Perhaps she'd washed it (how
I'd know to do this
later). The glistening tip.

The width of it,
the diameter compared to –
what. Standing, straight
on its ----.
We didn't talk about that.

It was the day after we'd,
writhing, not-quite
drunk as we were not-quite anything
that year – kissed.
(But not each other. Each
of us, a man with
sticks holding back midnight

crowds on New Year's
Eve). That night I was moved
like a snake without feet
and unseen hands grabbed me where

I would later learn to put
this. Before I returned to
approximately counting
lips encountered. (Now, I have fewer
fingers. Maybe enough other
appendages).

Do you want me to suck
on your toes, he says.
(I've never tried
it). I might still
get them to my mouth.

Ed Stever

This is Not About Education

My twenty-two year old,
recently graduated
and on a whirlwind tour of graduation parties,
calls down to the kitchen
from her bedroom, on her cell phone.

It's Saturday morning,
and she's hung over.
Her soft cobwebbed voice says,
"I would be eternally grateful
if someone could toast
a bagel and make a cup of coffee
for me and bring it to my room."

I reply, "Let me see if I can
find someone down here
just stupid enough to do that."

Then, after an assured beat she says,
"Let me talk to Mom."

Tom Stock

The Broadside

a bunch under arm walking around the village to post a broadside
it's been revised, workshopped, polished, edited;
the poem; printed on light brown, extra heavy stock
it's edgy; full of concepts; metaphors; enjambed stanza breaks; controversy
with extra-sticky tape, it jumps, wiggles, and weaves
with contact information on the bottom – e-mail, “feedback welcome”

at the train station, posts it near the ticket office, century gothic, 24 point font
high school corner hangout, taped to a tree; ditto a taxi depot
village hall corridor; gas station bathroom; food mart front door; bus kiosk
into a shopping cart and a copy of Newsday, at the Super Stop and Shop

tapes one on the glass front door of the local newspaper facing inward
a homeless man holds one, reads between sips from a brown paper bag
taped on the cooler at the bagel shop where a line forms on weekends

runs out of copies; no response
in the catholic church, posts it in the confessional and vestibule
walks his line weekly, a trapper checking traps; finds one torn copy on the ground

like in medieval times, news of the town, posted on the community bulletin board
Martin Luther nailed his edicts on the church door over there in Germany
get them thinking, inspire, and at the same time, be in the creative process
stir up apathy, reach down into complacency; this is art, man!

finally one day three months later, he gets an e-mail...
“read your poem; way cool.”

Douglas Swezey

#984

I thank you for picking me up.
I know my car died
But to keep me hostage inside this
Death trap while you forget
To actually press the gas pedal
And we crawl along the LIE for hours
On what is generally accepted to be a
Thirty-minute trip, as you swerve between all
Three lanes, answering the cell phone
 Texting
 Changing the CD's
 The radio station
Searching the back seat for a bottle of juice
You'd forgotten to bring
Up front for the billionth time
Refusing to let anyone do this for you
And we careen into close calls and near
Misses which scare
The life out of me as we drag
On and on and on
I think it's unfair
But again, I thank you for picking me up

#852 (Pornstar Name)

They say the name is created
By combining your middle name
And the street of your first house
This would make me

George the 91st

I have also heard
Combining the name of your first
Pet and the street where you live
This would make me

Keight the Second

Still not that sexy.

Combining the two,
Middle name and street
You live

On
Would make me

George the Second

Royal.

Risque? Still

Being American

Not quite hott

Maybe I'll go with

 Doug the Dog

 Easy Swezey

Maybe

 Pierre the Pornstar

I don't know

And the truth

Is that I never will be

Really care to be

I'll spend those late night hours

Tanked off my ass

Watching others online

With better names

 Better games

Cherish the dignity of anonymity

Slowly losing self-control

J R (Judy) Turek

Quick-trip to the Grocery Store

I sent my husband shopping –
something simple
no extra-long-thin-with-wings
no only-get-the-red-label-soup
no check-the-sodium/fat/carb-content.
No, something simple.

I have high expectations of simple
unlike when he says get me a screwdriver
and I ask
slotted, phillips, comfort grip,
ratcheting, jeweler's, hex-head,
hand-held Craftsman, Black & Decker,
the one I use as a paint stirrer,
or a 14volt variable speed quick-connect magnetic bit

or like when I say honey, give me a hand with the dishes
and he asks
right hand, left hand, or will it require both?
No, something simple.

Please get me vanilla ice cream.
I'm not expecting
vanilla bean, french vanilla, double vanilla,
slow-churned silk vanilla, vanilla orange cream swirl,
vanilla with whole, sliced, or bits of black cherry,
peanut butter vanilla ripple, vanilla cookie dough,
vanilla with peach, mango, strawberry-kiwi-passion fruit,
vanilla fudge, vanilla raspberry duetto, vanilla tin roof sundae,
vanilla light, no sugar, fat-free.
No, just vanilla.

He comes home with an assortment of anything vanilla
including vanilla creme yogurt, vanilla cappuccino coolers,
gluten-free vanilla cake mix, vanilla frosted mini wheats,
crumb cake with vanilla icing, a 12-pack of vanilla pudding cups
and four assorted vanilla something ice creams.

It was a whim, this taste for vanilla.
From now on, I'm sticking with chocolate.
Simply chocolate.

And She's Not Blonde

she's sharp as a bowling ball
bright as a starless night
she's quick as honey
clever as a cell phone that's off
alert as a bat in sunlight

she's a wickless lump of wax
she's an everyday waste of makeup
she's got that deer-in-the-headlight look
all the time
when her computer says she has mail,
she stands by her mailbox
she thinks Cheerios are donut seeds
when the phone rings, she answers the door
when a tire goes flat, she keeps driving
because she has three more

when her computer goes to sleep,
she covers it with a blanket
when she gets her doctor's bill, she mails him an apple
when her mechanic billed her for signal fluid,
she thanked him and paid it

she believes pushing the button
will actually change traffic lights
she went to the forest to find her family tree
she sued the candy company
for putting W's in the M&M's bag
she has more fun but doesn't remember
she hangs out with brunettes hoping ...
she thinks the capital of Nevada is 'N'
she smiles at lightning,
thinks someone is taking her picture

to change her mind, blow in her ear
to keep her busy all day, on both sides of a paper
write "Please turn over"
to keep her in suspense,
well, I'll tell you tomorrow.

For the Men in My Life

The misters in my life
are burly types not afraid to get the job done
with muscle and brawn, like my hero, Mr Clean,
who powers away dirt and grime to shine surfaces
bright as his follicley-challenged head; the one and only
Rug Doctor who steams through whatever mess our four dogs
can dish up when their dishes are down; and Mr Plumber
who drains my pipes of corrosive clogs; my bathtime buddy
Mr Bubble, who still brings Saturday night smiles
with suds of fun; and I'm compelled to add Mr Whipple
to my hero list for reasons I need not disclose.

The chefs in my life
keep my meals tingling with gustatorial pleasure,
like Jimmy Dean who sizzles my sausage; Oscar Mayer
who has a way with b-o-l-o-g-n-a; Mr Coffee who brews me
good-to-the-last-drop cups of ambition; Ron Popeil,
incessant inventor and perpetual pitchman
who keeps my kitchen full of gadgets I'll never use;
George Foreman who grills me up sumptuous feasts;
and my husband Paul who's the best cook of all.

The designers in my life
tempt me to keep feet clad in Steve Madden's,
drape me in Armani and Manetti, Valentino and Versace,
who plead to Dior me in tiffany and emerald cuts,
Ethan Allen craves to upholster me in Lazygirl comfort,
and Benjamin Moore who begs to palette my home
in 3,645 shades of semigloss happiness.

When it comes to two men
nothing can compare to my passionate moans
churned by Ben & Jerry, who know how to please
a woman, who have me burying the empty containers
deep in the trash, the evidence of my decadence.

All these heroes
who see to my every need, care for my every desire,
deliver catalog stacks of advertised ecstasy to fill my life –
please, stop delivery, my mailbox is full, my life is full –
hey, I don't need another hero.

James P. Wagner (Ishwa)

To my Former Lover

I will build a bust of you
my former lover
Carve out, your pretty face,
shape your eyes,
your lips
your beautiful, flowing hair.
Make every single little point, little details as perfect
as I remember you.
So that when I smash it with a baseball bat, it's that much more
satisfying.

Previously published in *Irrational Functions*, Local Gems Poetry Press, 2011

Am I smarter than a Fifth Grader

Aka Up Yours Foxworthy!

Aka Up Yours Even Harder American Public School System

You really are a Genius Mr. Foxworthy
Because you know the dirty little secret...
You know, that I don't know anything
About 5th grade curriculum anymore—
I don't know how many miles an hour a turkey can run,
It would take me at least a good 30 minutes to figure out and name the presi-
dents in alphabetical order,
And I don't know at what underwater frequency do whales communicate
What's more—I know, that you know that I don't know,
Because you know, that neither myself
Or anyone else
Has thought about that information since we left the 5th freaking grade!

But just how smart do you think that these 5th graders really are?
Are they smart enough to know that thus far the most useful stuff they learned
was in kindergarten?
Are they smart enough to know that those who made the curriculum just ran out
of useful stuff to teach them from a textbook so they threw in questions like
“if a train was going from Mars to Hong Kong at a rate of 18 miles per second
per second squared and Spongebob was the driver—at approximately what unit
of time would they collide with the other train coming from Singapore towards
Jupiter?” simply because they were being paid by the word count?
Are they smart enough to realize that despite all that math they are learning—
they're still never gonna be able to balance their checkbook? And people are still
going to tell them that debt is a good thing...
You think they're smart enough to realize that they are going to be going
through at least another 7 more years—probably 11 more maybe even 13 more
of relatively useless bullshit—keeping them away from important questions like
“why am I wasting the most lucid and productive years of my life sitting in a
room for 8 hours a day when I could be doing something useful?”

Mr. Foxworthy...do you think any of them are asking themselves “How come
all these famous, rich, successful people don't seem to know this any of this

crap?”

Do you think that’s a coincidence? I think not. I think you’re wise to this little scheme—this little game...

I think maybe you listened to Einstein—when he was criticized for not knowing how many feet were in a mile—and he said “why would I fill my mind with facts I could find in 2 minutes in any reference book when it needs to be free and clear enough to do more important tasks?”

Or when Henry Ford said “it’s not the facts you retain...but how you use them.”

How do you think these 5th graders are using their wonderful abilities to name the states in reverse alphabetical order?

One thing I do remember from 5th grade was learning how before WWI—kids worked on farms, handled tractor parts—built things in the factories with the skills of adults—

One thing I notice now—is these kids can’t even make their own freaking sandwiches for lunch...

But yet they all get a trophy in soccer—whether they win or lose,
Grow up feeling able and wonderful—for miniscule accomplishments their entire lives

And then—post college...

When they realize that they go right back down to the bottom of the Totem pole

That no one in the real world finds their theoretical knowledge useful

That they have to spend even more time on the job training

If they can ever find a job

And their spirits, egos, sense of self, and accomplishment

Come crashing down

Even worse than the stock market

Do you think they feel smart—Mr. Foxworthy?

I bet you know they don’t

I bet you get all this

And I see what you’re trying to do

With your little joke...
But I think you need to do a better job
Because I don't think that too many people out there really get the irony
Because when I think of who is smarter than a 5th grader
The only conclusion I can come up with
Is any parent who knows enough
To homeschool
Their children

A Typical Order

Pulling up at upwards of 60 miles per hour
in a 5 mile an hour zone
she sticks her head out the window
not waiting for my wandering eyes to make contact
and screams:

“Yeah gimmie your 3 half gallon special, chocolate, a whole...wait,
make that 2 chocolate and a fat free,
also gimmie your cheapest loaf of bread but make sure it’s a healthy grain.
Also I’ll take your two for 4 eggs—make sure they’re not cracked,
and by the way make sure that milk is the latest date possible.
I’ll take two medium one with one percent and two sweet and low one with
two percent and one splenda,
These are hot coffees by the way not iced coffee, last time the guy gave me
iced coffee...
Oh, can you put an ice cube or two in it so it’s not so hot?
It’s out of 50, but I’ll take 8 dollars back in quarters.”

I stare back without budging.

“What? Why aren’t you moving? Is there a problem?”

“Yes ma’am.”

“What?”

“You forgot to say please.”

Previously published in *Irrational Functions, Bards Annual 2011*, Local Gems
Poetry Press, 2011

Pamela Wagner

Sometimes I feel
as though I want to soar
soar like the birds.
I envy them-
high above in the
blue and white pillow
of fluff.
Above the dense air
above the dirty streets
free of filth.
I look up and I
envy the birds
it's so clean up there
and just then
a bird dropping falls on my head
are they giving me a clue?
I really do envy them.

Margarette Wahl

A Sheepless Night

As millions of things run through my head
Did I shut the lights? Am I ready for bed?
Must go to sleep must get enough rest
So tomorrow shall be awakened at my best.
Is the door closed and locked? Perhaps I did
Is it all cleaned up before closing my lids?
Are there enough hours to sleep tonight?
Need to relax, unwind so it will be alright!
Hope tomorrow I am able take it all on
Need sleep so all worries can be gone.
Where are the sheep I need to count?
Where are they at any amount?
Get relaxed be ready to sleep
Is that the alarm? That sound? That beep?
Spent the whole night worrying about sleep
Blaming it all on those damn lost sheep!

Superhero Poet

The Superhero, a poet
Here she comes
Watch out she has superpowers
Powers of Virelays
Apprehends with Proses
She's strong enough to put out Rubiyals
Carried out with strong Sonnets
Enticing her enemies with Villanelles
Her Stanzas are forceful enough
to leap buildings
Her almighty cape consuming any Rhymes
She flies across the sky with Free Verses
Saving the day with Pantoums
Never denounce these superpowers
these muscles
Her ability to save the day
Armed with a marvelous weapon
She can save you
Never underestimate the power of one person
Armed with a pen!

Charles Peter Watson

Insanity (It's Calling Me)

From months to years, there's blurry visions aired on HD screens
Where silicon chip boob tubes wet-nurse health-deficient tweens
It's diva sweeps and treason chic. That's hot! You know, like Nuevo-clique
Off to probe our warming globe for greener worlds to seek
Damn, it sucks, this growing old where dumb and smart collide
And data gained at light-speed rate gives aid to speed freak pride
Why do I not understand a single text U say?
Don't you know that with a ring, I'd blow your car away? Insanity

Paris, once in France's heart, is now an heiress be
While being real's colloquial on poor rich MTV
Fun's prescribed most commonly to offset common boredom
Girls gone wild with alcohol will land your ass to whoredom
Poor white trailer trashiness can drive Mercedes-Benzenes
Into anybody's life and pay for their expenses
Children born to skeletal recidivists of detox
Surely reap the benefits their parents spent on Botox. Insanity

Now the body is a cell locked inside an iPod shell
Bound for Idol worship hell
Hoping they're just hot enough LOL
On a map, you cannot find all the smarts you left behind
Or the nation you defined
How do you spell "undermined" in the time it will tell?

Greener gas alternatives can't beat an SUV
Unless it's in a race to see which tank won't reach the E
Telling red from blue is hard without a D or R
But text some digits, you can vote your 15-minute star.
Karma is a strange excuse to use instead of fate
Vulgar words that piss folks off are banned for spreading hate
Why not outsource bitching over jobs sent overseas?

And if someone's illegal, do they speak "illegalese"?
Insanity. It's calling me

How can square pegs fit their niche inside a pigeonhole
When all that's deemed "alternative" is common rock'n'roll?
If you win the War on Drugs, how will you celebrate?
Who needs Desperate Housewives when your cult allows you 8?
Your daughter's eyes need major Lazix if she thinks you're near
And once I had a certain Crow, she'll need more than one sheet
Now I finish with my rant on popularity
Post this work to 10 more friends and good luck being free
Insanity. It's calling me

Previously published in the 1991 edition of *Aitia*, SUNY Farmingdale's literary magazine.

Samantha Weiner (Lady Samantha)

The Amoeba

They say nothing is ever certain except death and taxes
Well not if you're an amoeba
You just keep multiplying
An no one ever taxes you because
THEY CAN'T SEE YOU!
If you are an amoeba
Being conceited isn't a bad trait
Because you keep falling in love with yourself...

Who needs cloning?
When you are an amoeba
You just divide
And create an exact replica of you
Because you are perfect.

You get bored while on a date with another amoeba...
You just split
(and so do they).

Scared of something?
No need to be-you're invisible
But you can hide inside yourself...
 and inside yourself...
 and inside yourself again....

Joanna M. Weston

The Cat Out of the Bag

as luck would have it, in the calm
before the storm I lucked
into a communist conspiracy
of blushing brides wearing

their best bib and tucker
that knocked my socks over
the moon so I kicked up
my heels as a mover and shaker

a poor excuse for a pillar
of society on a trip
down memory lane where the rock
and the hard place squash

the wolf at the door into
a plain old wheeler dealer
who got out on the wrong side
of the bed and got stuck in the mud

Sandy Wicker

Ode to Prunes

I do believe in prunes
I eat them with “imprunity”
but with prudence, of course!
One or two plump dried plums
will digestively do—
keep nutrition chugging through,
stay the bane of constipation.

Yes, I maintain
prunes should reign
as daily staple food
Add whipped cream, ice cream
for extra doodle-lee-do...
I’m treating and serving,
shall I save some for you?

“No Joke: Prunes Work Better
vs. Constipation,”
proven “beneficial” over psyllium,
the fiber often touted—
prescribed by physicians,
advertised, *ad nauseum*,
by huge pharmaceuticals.

Still, Grandma and Grandpa
knew and know what is best:
Prunes with their natural
antioxident polyphenols,
blend of soluble/insoluble
fibers, help me—and you
pass the ultimate, final test....

I do believe in prunes!

Pun-ish Me!

Always one to savor the pun
I relish the spice of language
the groan and the grin
that follows close when
some serious sort
grasps that my retort
is tongue thrust in cheek
directly oblique
the double-trouble entendre--
pugnacious pun.

Mirth
for whatever its worth:

Signs of the Times

Uncommon Grounds Coffee Shop
Happy Hocker Pawn Shop
Paws for Refreshment Doggy Spa

Mother Love from Above

Baby Pigeon to Mother Pigeon:
“Coo! I’m too tired. I can’t
carry this message one flap longer...”
“I’ll help you, Idgie-Pidgie.
Tie this rope to your foot
and I’ll pull you ...”
“No! No! I don’t wanna be
pigeon towed!”

J. Barrett Wolf

Baiku

pneumatic front fork
pneumatic seat and rear shocks
to air is human

something in back squeaks
when idling at a red light
nuts must be tightened

river is low but
in spring the water rises
I wouldn't park there

Tim Worsham

Nothing Kabobbed

Nothing kabobbed or full of sharp prickles,
Croutons are out, and kosher spear pickles,
Hot soup sounds gross,
And you won't find me close
To sunny-side eggs, and crunchy burnt toast.

Sausage sounds awkward, and lobster sounds painful,
Buffets might feel good, but the process is shameful.
Pancakes sound great,
Stacked high on the plate,
And a nest of spaghetti is really first rate.

You build your own list of fun foods to sit in
Like hot mashed potatoes, and country fried chicken;
Grapes squish real nice,
Both white and brown rice
Can be had for a pinch at a reasonable price.

Picnics will change in both mood and perspective
When finding fun foods to sit in becomes your objective.

Laura Wysolmerski

A Life Of Gratitude

Gratitude is knowing you were not dropped on your head after the doctor delivered you.

Gratitude is knowing your mother gave you up for adoption after she resumed her drug habit.

Gratitude is knowing the schoolyard bully only beat you for your lunch money instead of tying you to the railroad tracks.

Gratitude is knowing your college professor didn't tell you what he really thought of you.

Gratitude is knowing your employer was kind enough to lay you off during the summer and not during the holidays.

Gratitude is knowing that even though he falls asleep five minutes after sex, he only snores every other Wednesday.

Gratitude is knowing that even though she gained 40 pounds she at least still showers.

Gratitude is knowing the old age home the kids put you in is not a cardboard box.

Gratitude is knowing they spelled your name right on your tombstone.

Gratitude is being able to appear before the Lord and say, "Thank you sir, may I have another!"

Gratitude is hearing the Lord say, "You have three choices. One, you can go back and reshoot the whole thing. Two, you can sit in a dark theater and watch the funny outtakes. Or three, you can join us all for the after show party."

Changming Yuan

Partner Perspective

(for Hengxiang Liao)

When we were younger
My wife and I used to
Look at each other as true equals
Since we were both 1.64 meter tall
No matter where we stood

Now we are getting newly old
She begins to look down on me
Because I have been shrinking
In every conceivable way
She can perceive

Fame Check

If you google your own name
and find millions of search results
You are already as well-known as John Keats

If tens of millions of results prop up
You are comparable with Bill Gates, Isaac Newton

If hundreds of millions do
You are reputed like Tiger Woods, Shakespeare, Jesus Christ

If billions do
You are in the same rank as American President in office

If trillions or even zillions do
You must be someone called Allen George Michael John Smith
That is, more famous than USA

Ed Zahniser

A Presbyterian Group Epitaph

Here lies the entire men's prayer breakfast
fulfilling the church women's projections.
As if you haven't already guessed—
they starved for not asking directions.

Dewlap, Dewlap, Dewlap

Loose as a moose's
my dewlap flaps free—
too much stout & mousses
(chocolate), you see.

Now the more I waddle
round and around,
the closer my wattle
comes to the ground.

Rolling Stoned

I met a gin-soaked barroom queen in Memphis
who quoted verbatim from Thomas à Kempis.
Texts streamed from her lips
with but one or two slips
—from knowing too well what plant hemp is.

Lewis Zimmerman

Write Right!

Write a novel? Who has time?
Plagiarize one? That's a crime.

Write an essay? Too profound.
Write an opera? Hate the sound!

Write a sonnet? I'm no bard.
Math equations? Way too hard!

Write a tragedy? I'll cry.
Write an article? Who'll buy?

Write a speech? It's full of gaffes.
Write a joke? Nobody laughs.

Crossword puzzles? Words don't fit.
Write some smut? Too full of sh--!

Write a textbook? I'm no sage.
Write my memoirs? At my age?

Write short stories? I've no flair.
Write some libel? That's not fair.

Bedtime stories? I'm no kid!
Write a poem! I just did.

About the Authors

Lloyd Abrams is an avid recumbent bicycle rider and Wheaten Terrier walker, has been writing short stories for over 25 years. More recently, Lloyd added poetry and micro-fiction to his repertoire. His poems and stories have been published in several anthologies and local publications.

Jonathan Aibel lives in Concord, MA where he works as a software engineer with a specialty in automated testing. His poetry has been published by *Mason's Road* and *The Aureorean*, the *Rusty Truck* and *VoxPoetica* websites.

C.B. Anderson was the longtime gardener for the PBS television series, *The Victory Garden*. In the past 8 years hundreds of his poems have appeared in print and electronic journals originating from islands, continents, subcontinents and island-continents contiguous with the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans.

Sharon Anderson has been writing poetry and short stories since childhood. She is a member of LIWG, Farmingdale Poetry Group, and is an advisor to the Nassau County Poet Laureate Society (NCPLS). She is an editor, gardener (perennials only), and square dancer.

Diana Anhalt former resident of Mexico City now living in Atlanta, she generally writes serious stuff, but far prefers writing this sort of thing when she has a chance. Author of *A Gathering of Fugitives: American Political Expatriates in Mexico 1948-1965* and a chapbook, *Shiny Objects*, her poetry is forthcoming in *The Southern Poetry Anthology* and *The Atlanta Review*.

Dr. David B. Axelrod is founder/director of Creative Happiness Institute, Inc (creativehappiness.org) for creative writing and alternative wellness. His 20th book is *The SPEED Way: Poems about NASCAR and a Life around Racing and Cars* (Total Recall Press, 2012). Suffolk County Poet Laureate 2007-2009 poetrydoctor.org/axelrodthepoet@yahoo.com

Diane Barker defines herself as a prose writer but keeps dipping her big toe in the poetry waters. She is an award-winning poet, published in *Poetry Magazine* and *Long Island Sounds Anthologies*. Writing memberships include the Farmingdale Creative Writing Group, FBSN workshop, and the Long Island Writers' Guild.

Alessandra Bava lives and works in the Eternal City. Her first bilingual poetry chapbook, *Guerrilla Blues*, was published in 2012. She is currently working on an anthology as editor and writing the biography of a San Francisco Poet Laureate.

Antonio Bellia (Madly Loved) is a renaissance man who has traveled many paths, a man of deep sentiment drawn to performing arts, who has acted and danced throughout his lifetime, and always compelled to express his emotions and experiences in the form of poetry. He recently began translating his poems from Italian into English.

Danielle Blasko lives, works, and writes poetry in the city of Detroit. Her poetry has most recently appeared in *Etchings*, *march will be march*, and *rigormort.US*. She is co-curator of the 30 Day Poetry Challenge on Facebook, and Editor of *The Feline Muse*.

Sheila Blume M.D. is a retired Long Island psychiatrist, active in OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) poetry program at Stony Brook University. She writes limericks for The Omnificent English Dictionary (www.oedilf.com) and for *Addiction*. She has been published in *Oberon*.

Gabrielle Bryden lives on the shores of Hervey Bay, Queensland. Publications include *Mystic Signals*; *Ripples, Aspects, Speedpoets*; *Extempore magazine*; *Red Poppy Review*; *Green Tea Haiku*; *Verity La*; *Sorcerous Signals*; *Bolts of Silk*; *Specusphere*; and *Poetry24 ezines*.

Ryan Buynak is a very good-looking young man who happens to be the future of American poetry. His second book, *The Ghost of the Wooden Squid*, dropped this spring.

Paula Camacho moderates the Farmingdale Poetry Group and is President of the Nassau County Poet Laureate Society. Recent publications include *Mobius 2011*; *Paws, Claws, Wings and Things*; and *Bard's Annual 2011*. She has published two books, *Hidden Between Branches*, *Choice* and two chapbooks. She holds degrees in Nursing and Theology.

Fern G.Z. Carr is a lawyer, teacher, and a member of The League of Canadian Poets and former Poet-in-Residence, who composes and translates poetry in five languages. Carr has been published extensively from Finland to Mayotte Island in the Mozambique Channel. The Parliamentary Poet Laureate chose her poem, "I Am" as Poem of the Month for Canada. www.fernngzcarr.com

Barbara Lydecker Crane won the Helen Schaible International Sonnet Contest in 2011. In 2012 White Violet Press will publish her first chapbook, *Zero Gravitas*, a collection of humorous poems. She's the founding member of "X.J. Kennedy & the Light Brigade" and a member of the Powow River Poets. She lives with her husband in Somerville, MA.

Kate Boning Dickson studied classical piano performance and music education. She has taught music in school settings and teaches piano. A board member of the Long Island Poetry Collective, her poetry has appeared in *Bard's Annual Review*, *PPA Literary Review*, *Paumanok II*, and *New Mirage Journal*.

Jessica Goody's work has appeared in *Timepieces*, *Seasons of Change*, *Poetry By Moonlight*, and *The Sun Magazine*. Her work has appeared on the blogs Getting Along with Grief, Addictive Fiction, Riot Grrl Online, and Poetica Magazine. She has written a volume of poetry and a mystery novella and is currently seeking their publication.

Jack Granath is a librarian in Kansas City.

Russ Green graduated Hofstra University with a BA in English. Travels through the Himalayas, Europe and across America, combined with his marathon running, yoga and practice of Eastern Philosophies have served for the inspiration and foundation for much of his poetry.

George Guida is the author of four books, including *The Pope Stories and Other Tales of Troubled Times*, and two volumes of poetry, *New York and Other Lovers* and *Low Italian*. He teaches English and creative writing at NYC College of Technology, and co-edits *2 Bridges Review*.

Nick Hale is a performance poet, comedian, entrepreneur, aspiring web designer, freelance educator, speaker, editor, and award-winning short bio writer. He has a BA in English and an MEd in Secondary education. Nick has worked on several other anthologies with Local Gems Poetry Press, including *Voice of the Bards*, and the *Bards Annual* series. He is a founder and the current VP of the Bards Initiative. Nick is a literal and metaphorical hat collector. He enjoys wearing many hats, playing games of all kinds, learning new things, traveling and sleeping. Nick loves comedy of all kinds but he has a soft spot for puns and other types of wordplay.

Jackie Hassett lives in N Massapequa with her husband and two children. She enjoys reading, writing and going to the gym every day to meet terrific people and collect information for future writing inspiration!

George Held, a six-time Pushcart nominee, publishes widely online and in print, and Garrison Keillor has featured his work on NPR. Held's most recent books, both 2011, are *AFTER Shakespeare: Selected Sonnets* and a children's book, *Neighbors*, illustrated by Joung Un Kim.

Joan Higuchi has recent publications in *Paws, Claws, Wings and Things; Avocet; Echoes; The Lyric; PPA Literary Review*; and as well as the children's anthology from The Lyric. Her poetry has been featured in *Iconic Towers* and *Landscapes of Transition* exhibits sponsored by Princess Ronkonkoma Productions.

Cindy Hochman is a poet, editor, book reviewer, freelance proofreader, and research consultant. She is the editor-in-chief of the online poetry journal *First Literary Review-East* and an associate editor of *Mobius, The Poetry Magazine*. Her recent chapbook is *The Carcinogenic Bride*.

Arnold Hollander publishes a quarterly magazine, *Grassroot Reflections*. He has been published in *The Best Poets of 2007*, and has poems and short stories in the *Bewildering Stories*. He belongs to Poets in Nassau, Performance Poets Association, and Stray Feet a group doing readings at schools and senior centers.

Maria Iliou is an autistic artist, poet, actress, director, producer, advocate, and host. Maria's been published in *Perspectives, Bards Annual 2011*, and *Rhyme and PUNishment*. Maria is host for Athena Autistic Artist, which airs on public access tv and hosts the radio show, *Mind Stream The Movement of Poetry and Music*.

Vicki Iorio is a native Long Islander who likes to perform her poetry at tattoo parlors and venues on the Lower East Side.

Michael Lee Johnson, poet, and editor, from Itasca, IL has been published in 25 countries. He runs five poetry sites and his published works are widely available.

Evelyn Kandel's chapbook *Shore Lines* won a 2nd place award from Bear House Publishers in 2011. Her third chapbook *Between Stillness and Motion* will be out in 2012. She teaches an adult poetry class in Great Neck and, with two other poets, presents *Plain Talk About Poetry* in local libraries.

Margaret Koger is a school media specialist who lives and works in Boise, ID, where she pays for her Laugh-a-Day Health Care with play money. She has been sued by the apple industry and the Daily Medicine Guild. One of her favorite movies, *It's a Mad MadMadMad World*, inspires her poetry. Recent publications include *Montucky*, *Blast Furnace*, and *Eternal Haunted Summer*.

Beverly E. Kotch is LIWG Director of Program Development, and has presented seminars on writing for Learning in Retirement, SUNY Farmingdale, and senior centers. Publications include *PPA Literary Reviews*, *LI Sounds*, *Songs of Seasoned Women*, *Bellmore Life*, and *Newsday*. Her first chapbook is *I'm In Here Somewhere*.

Jordan Kraiss is a student of history, a practitioner of wit, and a storyteller. His mother's good looks will carry him only as far as his father's string bean legs. He'll never marry an Irish girl because he doesn't know how to cook.

Mindy Kronenberg teaches writing and literature at SUNY Empire State College and conducts workshops through Poets & Writers. Publications include *Dismantling the Playground*, a poetry chapbook, and *Images of America: Miller Place*, a pictorial history. She edits *Book/Mark Quarterly Review*, now in its 18th year.

Karen Lake earned her MA in English and Writing from University of Massachusetts Boston in June 2011. She lives on the South Shore in Weymouth and works at a law firm in Boston. Her writing has appeared in *The Watermark* and *Taktil*.

John Lambremont, Sr is a poet from Baton Rouge, LA. He holds a BA in Creative Writing and a JD from LSU. Publications include *The Chaffey Review*, *Sugar House Review*, *A Hudson View*, *Red River Review*, and *TajMahal Review*. He is a Pushcart nominee and enjoys adult baseball, modern jazz, and playing the guitar.

Steve Levy attends Page One Readings/Bards Initiative, Carle Place B&N Poetry Night, and LIWG. By day, he is a Medicaid Service Coordinator, advocating for adults with developmental disabilities. Publications include *The Ecologue* and *Poetry Magazine*; he is working on his first chapbook.

Ed Luhrs started his craft years ago and remains an active participant at local events. He has been published most recently in the *Long Island Quarterly* and *Bards Annual*. He teaches composition courses and has MA and MAT degrees in English from SUNY Binghamton.

John Makin migrated into the early days of IT. He designed, built, and fixed computer systems until a mountaineering accident left him with head injuries and post-traumatic stress, which led to his retirement. As part of his recovery he started to write and verse was his favored medium.

Maria Manobianco's first poetry book is *Between Ashes and Flame* and her first young adult fable is *The Golden Orb*. Publications include *LI Sounds*, *PPA Literary Review*, *Dream*, *LI Quarterly*, *Songs of Seasoned Women*, *For Loving Precious Beast*, *Toward Forgiveness*, and *Voice of the Bards*. She is Archivist for Nassau County Poets Laureate.

Meira Marom is a writer and lyricist who recently moved to the US from Israel, where she was born and raised. She has published two books: *Two Holes in a Hand Fan* and *Of Candies and Dragons*. She is a graduate of the Odyssey Fantasy Writing Workshop, and has written lyrics for musical ensembles performing in NY and at Princeton Univ.

Judith Mesch was encouraged by rejection to keep writing and has been published, including a poem for children in *Off The Coast Journal*. Judith's first children's book for kindle, *The Strange and Wonderful Cornfield*, is available on Amazon and Smashwords, under a penname "because I didn't know any better, and imagined, I'd be fighting off the offers, and needing my Ray-Bans. You're never too old to make a goose of yourself."

Eric G. Müller is a musician, teacher and writer. He has written two novels, *Rites of Rock* and *Meet Me at the Met*, as well as a collection of poetry, *Coffee on the Piano for You*. Articles, short stories and poetry have appeared in many journals and magazines. www.ericgmuller.com

George H. Northrup is President (2006-) of the Fresh Meadows Poets in Queens, NY, a Board Member of the Nassau County Poet Laureate Society, and former President of the NYS Psychological Association. Recent publications include *Generations*, *Light*, *String Poet*, and *The New York Times*.

David O'Neal, retired Antiquarian Bookseller, now enjoys being a writer, mostly poetry. Publications include *Mississippi Crow*, *Two Hawks Quarterly*, *Marin Poetry Center Anthology*, *The New York Times*, *Science poetry*, *Vision Magazine*, *The Eclectic Muse*, and *The Lyric*. He lives in San Francisco with his wife and parrot, enjoys sailing and playing squash.

Milind Padki was born in India and till the age of fifteen, he had not met anyone who was not a writer. He holds a PhD in pharmaceutical science from Mumbai. He has been published in *The Times of India*. He divides his time between LI and NJ. He has published poems and short stories in his mother tongue of Marathi and English, both in India and the US.

Carl Palmer, twice nominated for the Micro Award in flash fiction and thrice for a Pushcart, is from Ridgeway, VA and now lives in University Place, WA without wristwatch, cell phone or alarm clock. MOTTO: Long Weekends Forever.

Matt Pasca teaches Creative Writing, Mythology, and Literature at Bay Shore HS. Pasca's poetry has appeared in *LI Quarterly*, *Pedestal Magazine*, and his first book is *A Thousand Doors*. He is a Pushcart nominee who shares spare time with his wife Terri and orange-haired sons Rainer and Atticus. www.mattpasca.com

Peter Peteet is 54 years old and lives in Atlanta with his wife and two sons. His work has been published in the online journals *Flycatcher* and *Salt*.

Ellen Pickus (Baldwin) taught English and Creative Writing for 30 years on LI, where she lives with her husband and son. Retired, she conducts adult creative writing workshops and volunteers at an elementary school. Her first book of poems, *Unbroken Promises*, is dedicated to research for Alzheimer's, a disease which affects her mother.

Anthony Policano was born in Brooklyn just days before Jack Kerouac's *On The Road* was first published. He thinks this may explain his fondness for jazz, road trips and run on sentences. He is a board member of The Long Island Poetry Collective and production editor of Xanadu, their national poetry journal.

Kelly Powell is a poetess from Long Island.

Phyllis Quiles is a happily retired educator/administrator. With support from the Farmingdale Poetry Group, Phyllis is reviewing, renewing and editing her poetry with the hope of publishing her work. A proud grandma of five, she enjoys time spent with her family. Each time is always "the best ever."

Chris Reid, a longtime slam poet in Chicagoland, who has been published in *Cram*, *NPR*, *Rhino*, and *World Order*. Chris holds undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Illinois. Forthcoming publication includes *Joy Interrupted: An Anthology on Motherhood and Loss*. Chris is currently working on a stageplay about her career as a civil servant.

Phil Reinstein is a former band leader, postal worker, NYC social services worker, purveyor of various environmental merchandise {umbrellas} with various midtown locations {wherever he didn't get busted}, NYC middle school teacher, 34 years as an insurance broker and financial analyst, a pretty good tennis player, Phil has finally become a performance poet.

Vincent Renstrom lives with his wife and two children in Middletown, OH. He holds a PhD in Hispanic Literature from Indiana Univ. His poems have appeared in *MARGIE* as well as in *Alba*, *The Centrifugal Eye*, *Gutter Eloquence*, *Red Lightbulbs*, *Shark Reef*, and *Slow Trains*.

Jack Ritter writes poetry, flash fiction, and comedy. His writing has appeared in the *Austin International Poetry Festival's anthology*, *Red River Review*, and *Illya's Honey*. His flash fiction humor piece, *Theory Ball*, appeared in the debut issue of *Theory Train*. By trade, Jack is a video game programmer. He's published original mathematical algorithms in 3D graphics.

Jillian Roath is an undergraduate student at Dowling College pursuing her BA in creative writing. She has been writing for as long as she can remember and is working on a novel. Jillian is VP of Dowling College's Spoken Word club and hopes to share her love of writing with as many people as possible.

Marc Rosen hosts Bards Reading From Page One, co-editor with James P. Wagner on *Perspectives: Poetry Concerning Autism and Other Disabilities; Perspectives 2*. Marc's book, *Monster of Fifty-Nine Moons*, debuted in 2012. He serves on a number of boards for the welfare and future of the disabled community.

Ruth Sabath Rosenthal is a New York poet whose poems have been published in numerous literary journals and poetry anthologies in the U.S. and abroad; she's a Pushcart nominee. Her chapbook is *Facing Home* and her full-length book is *Facing Home and Beyond*. www/ruthsabathrosenthal.moonfruit.com

Narges Rothermel, a retired nurse has been writing poetry in Farsi since 7th grade. Her poems in English are published in many anthologies including *Songs of Seasoned Women*, *Examination*, *Toward Forgiveness*, and *Voice of the Bards*. Her first book of poetry, *Wild Flowers*, was published in 2010.

Jeff Santosuosso is a business executive and poet who splits his time between Pensacola, FL and Dallas, TX. His comedic influences range from the Three Stooges to Monty Python to Woody Allen and beyond. His poems have appeared in *HoboPancakes*, *Pif*, *Red River Review*, *Illya's Honey*, *The Texas Poetry Calendar 2012*, and *Avocet*.

Joseph E. Scalia taught junior and senior high school English and Creative Writing on LI. His publications include *FREAKs*, a young adult novel; *Pearl*, a novel; *No Strings Attached*, a collection of short stories; *Brooklyn Family Scenes*, family stories, essays, and poems; and *Scalia vs. the Universe or: My Life And Hard Times*, a collection of his humor.

Lawrence Schimel writes in both English and Spanish. Publications include *Fairy Tales for Writers*, *Vampire Stories from the American South*, and the picture book *Let's Go See Papá*. He lives in Madrid, Spain, where he is a Spanish-English translator.

Jean Schmidt was an RN, who wrote under the name Grace Darling and participated in the LIPC Workshop, Northport Chorale, and Island Songwriters Showcase. Jean died of cervical cancer in 2007. Don't skip your checkups!

Herb Shallcross holds a BS in Psychology and a certificate in writing and publishing. His poetry is available online at *Apiary Magazine* and *Four and Twenty Poetry*, and in anthologies from Elektrik Milk Bath Press and Sleeping Cat Books. Herb lives in Queens with his easy-going wife and peculiarly demanding parakeet, both of whom he adores to no end.

Jeffrey L. Shipley is the creative force behind Unpopular Publications. They publish the critically acclaimed horror zine, *Tales of Blood and Roses*, and have a number of other projects in development. You can find out more at UnpopularPublications.com.

Herb Siegel is a PhD, holds degree in Business and International Law, was a CEO of major public companies, and is the author of *Life through My Glasses: A Collection of Poems 1950-2011*, a contemporaneously written continuum of a life ensconced in poetry. Previous collections include *Poems from my Drawer*, and *Poems for the Universe*.

Carol Lavelle Snow is a former college English instructor who has written for the Narrative Television Network and Spotlight Theater. She has published fiction as well as poetry, most recently in *Harp-Strings Poetry Journal* and *WestWard Quarterly* and forthcoming in *The Lyric*.

Jennifer Stella has lived in three countries and five US cities. She attended medical school in CA, moved to NY to start an MFA in poetry, and plans to specialize in internal medicine, work in public health and write poetry, non-fiction, and fiction. She does not consider decisions her forte. This is her first funny published poem.

Ed Stever is a poet, playwright, actor, and director, who has published two collections of poetry: *Transparency* and *Propulsion*. He is a Pushcart nominee and recipient of a National League of American Pen Women's award. He writes and performs with the Poetry Theater Ensemble. He is the current Suffolk County Poet Laureate, 2011-13.

Tom Stock is a retired science teacher, who calls himself 'poet of the pine barrens.' His latest publication is titled *Hidden Agenda: A Poetry Journey*, based on the decade he spent living in the Pine Barrens of Suffolk County. tstock39@gmail.com

Douglas Swezey holds a BA in English and Art History from Stony Brook Univ, was the Managing Editor of *Government Food Services Magazine* and author of *Stony Brook University: Off The Record*. He currently serves on the board of LIPC and TNSPS. He is an Associate Editor of PoetryBay and the host of LIPC's Reading Series at Barnes & Noble, East Northport.

J R (Judy) Turek is in her 15th year as Moderator of the Farmingdale Creative Writing Group, a Pushcart nominee, and is an award-winning poet with many publishing credits. She is an editor, workshop leader, Executive VP of the Nassau County Poet Laureate Society, Board Member for TNSPS and PRP, Associate Editor and Advisory Board member for The Bards Initiative, host for PPA, and author of *They Come And They Go*. She strives to write a poem a day and mostly succeeds. J R is a lifetime Long Islander who resides in East Meadow with her soul-mate husband, her dogs, and her extraordinarily extensive shoe collection. msjevus@optonline.net

James P. Wagner (Ishwa) earned a BA in creative writing from Dowling College and just recently earned his Masters in Liberal Studies with concentrations in Literature and Social Sciences. He is the first and former LI Poetry Examiner. As a performance poet, James "Ishwa" has featured all over Long Island, from Starbucks to the Hamptons. James is the founder of Local Gems Poetry Press and has been editor on several anthologies including *Perspectives* and *Voice of the Bards*. James is the senior-founder and president of the Bards Initiative

and serves on the advisory board for the Nassau County Poet Laureate Society. James is also an award-winning fiction writer, essayist, martial artist, and actor. He also enjoys playing the piano and djembe and cooking penne alla vodka for board game nights. He also works as a publishing coach helping authors find homes for their work. jpwpublisingc@gmail.com.

Pamela Wagner lives with her husband and son. A nurse, managing a doctor's office, she has been in the medical field for over 30 years and a member of ARE for 30 years as well. She enjoys writing and poetry, cooking, traveling, and rescuing animals.

Margarette Wahl is a member of Farmingdale's Poetry and Creative Writing Groups. A special educator, she advocates for Autism and Breast Cancer Awareness. When not writing poetry, she corresponds with pen-pals around the world; she also plays violin in the hopes of becoming an Irish Fiddler.

Charles Peter Watson is a merchandising vendor from West Babylon. He is a member of LIPC, PPA, TNSPS, PIN, Northport Arts Council, Axiom Nexus' Rhythm and Stealth. His first book, *Netherworld Befalls*, is available through Local Gems Poetry Press.

Samantha Weiner (Lady Samantha) enjoys spending her time reading, writing, and laughing, as well as learning about and observing bears. She has written for several online sources including *Yahoo!*, *Contributor's Network*, and *cynicmag.com*.

Joanna M. Weston is the author of a middle-reader, *Those Blue Shoes; A Summer Father*, poetry; and an eBook, *The Willow Tree Girl*. She has had poetry, reviews, and short stories published in anthologies and journals for twenty-five years.

Sandy Wicker has been writing poetry since childhood. She enjoys her participation in various poetry groups and has had her work included in several Long Island anthologies among other publications. She is a retired reading teacher and has published two books of poetry, *The Tennessee Waltz and Other Dances* and *Finding My Jewish Self*.

J. Barrett Wolf has been a singer-songwriter, carpenter, computer salesman, firefighter and police officer; he is a member of the Highway Poets Motorcycle Club. *Stark Raving Calm* is his first volume of poetry. He lives in upstate NY, where he was recently commissioned to compose a poem for the tenth anniversary of the county library. jbarrettwolf.com

Tim Worsham writes poetry, fantasy, and science fiction from his home in WI. Outside of his day-job and his other day-job, he enjoys reading anything he can get his hands on, and hitting the softball around with friends. Tim is currently at work at a middle-grade novel about radioactive pirates and leech-licking zombies.

Laura Wysolmerski is an award-winning poet. Publications include *PPA Literary Review*, *Toward Forgiveness*, and *Perspectives*. Laura is both honored and flattered to be apart of this anthology.

Changming Yuan holds a PhD in English and currently teaches in Vancouver. He is author of *Chansons of a Chinaman*, a 4-time Pushcart nominee, and published in *Asia Literary Review*, *Barrow Street*, *Best Canadian Poetry*, *BestNewPoemsOnline*, *London Magazine*, *Poetry Kanto*, *Poetry Salzburg*, *SAND*, and *TajMahal Review*.

Ed Zahniser's poems have appeared in over 100 literary magazines in the US and UK, 3 chapbooks, 3 books, and 7 anthologies. Publications include *Mall-bopping with the Great I AM* and *Slow Down and Live*. Ed lives in Shepherdstown, WV, where he is poetry editor of the town's all-volunteer quarterly print and online *Good News Paper*.

Lewis Zimmerman is a Science teacher at Forest Hills High School. He grew up in Forest Hills, Queens, and now lives in East Meadow with his wife Joyce. He has two grown daughters. His hobbies include music, comedy photography, bicycling, travel and, of course, poetry.



Local Gems Poetry Press is a small Long Island based press dedicated to spreading poetry through performance and the written word. Local Gems believes that poetry is the voice of the people, and believes that poetry can be used to make a difference.

Local Gems is the sister-organization of the Bards Initiative.

www.localgems.weebly.com

www.randpanthology.com

