

# **Rhyme and PUNishment**

**Comedic Verse**

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

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Rhyme and PUNishment

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# Foreword

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*"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

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*“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)

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## Lloyd Abrams

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### **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

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### **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 covered.  
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

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## **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

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### **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

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### **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

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### **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

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### **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

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### **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

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### **Wind Chimes**

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



## Evelyn Kandel

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### **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

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### 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

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### 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 Kraus

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### **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

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### 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

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### 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.

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### **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

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### **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

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### **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

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### **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

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### **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

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### 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.

## **Dermatophagoides<sub>1</sub>**

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!

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## Matth Pasca

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### 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

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### **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

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### **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

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### **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

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### 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

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### **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

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### **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

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### **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

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### **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 91<sup>st</sup>

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)

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### **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

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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

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### 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-Benzes  
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  
And 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

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### **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

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### **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

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### **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

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### **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

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### **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

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### **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

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**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.orgaxelrodthepoet@yahoo.com](mailto:poetrydoctor.orgaxelrodthepoet@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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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.

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