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Biographies

BARBARA ADAMS has published two books of poetry, “Hapax Legomena” and “The Ordinary Living,” a book of literary criticism, “The Enemy Self: Poetry & Criticism of Laura Riding” and a memoir, “The Stone Man and the Poet.” Her poems, stories and essays have been published widely in literary magazines.

SHERRI BEDINGFIELD, a licensed psychotherapist and family therapist, has published in journals including **Caduceus, Journal of Poetry Therapy** and **Connecticut River Review**. She has presented her poetry at venues around Connecticut and her poem “Love Struck” was performed by the East Haddam Stage Company. Antrim House published her collection “Transitions and Transformations” in 2010.

MARIANNA BONCEK is a local high school teacher and author of “The Spooky Hudson Valley.” She holds a B.A. from Vermont College in Writing and an M.A. from Goddard College in Secondary Education. She is a member of the Woodstock Poetry Society, The Goat Hill Poets and Delta Kappa Gamma.

ROBERT CARNEVALE’S poems have appeared in **The Paris Review, The New Yorker, The Alaska Quarterly** and other magazines and anthologies. He teaches writing and literature at Drew University and Kean University.

ALAN CATLIN has published over 60 chapbooks and full length collections of prose and poetry. His more recent chapbook is “Deep Water Horizon” from Pygmy Forest Press.

TRACEY GASS RANZE is a member of the Upper Delaware Writers Collective and the Milanville Poets UnLtd. She performs her poetry in a variety of venues in the Northeast, where she lives in the inspiring mountains cut through by the Delaware River.

LEE GOULD lives in the Hudson Valley where she teaches and writes. Her poems, articles and reviews have appeared in **Quarterly West, The Berkshire Review, Passager, Bridges, Women and the Environment, Magma, Phoebe, Chronogram** and others. Her chapbook “Weeds” was published by Finishing Line Press in 2010.

CAROL GRASER lives in the Adirondacks. Her collection “The Wild Twist of Their Stems” was published by Foothills Publishing in 2007. She runs poetry workshops for teens and at risk youth and hosts a long-running reading series at Saratoga’s legendary Caffè Lena. She has performed her work around New York State and been published in many literary journals.

LOIS MARIE HARROD won the 2010 Hazel Lipa Chapbook (Iowa State University) contest with her manuscript “Cosmogony.” Her 11th book, “Brief Term,” a collection of poems about teachers and teaching, was published by Black Buzzard Press (Visions International) in March 2011.

Saratoga Springs visual artist and poet **MARY KATHRYN JABLONSKI** freelances in design and PR. She is the author of the chapbook “To the Husband I Have Not Yet Met,” and her poems have appeared in numerous literary journals including **Beloit Poetry Journal, Salmagundi** and **Blueline**.

PATRICIA KETT is a retired nurse for whom writing has been love, obsession, play and escape for many years. As a nurse she published health-related articles and poetry. A member of the Upper Delaware Writers Collective, she has participated in poetry readings in New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

MARKA KNIGHT is an opera and jazz singer who has recently moved to Sullivan County, NY. She is a regular contributor to **Classical Singer Magazine** and has published accounts of her travels and anthropological research in journals worldwide.

DAN STEPHEN KRAUSS currently lives in Saratoga Springs, NY, often longs for Brooklyn, his native soil, and for real love to come into his life again.

ARLENE GAY LEVINE’s poetry and prose have found a home in **The New York Times**, literary journals, an off Broadway show, radio, magazines and numerous anthologies. A new poetry chapbook, “MOVIE LIFE,” is available from Finishing Line Press. Visit <http://www.arlenegaylevine.com>.

ARLENE L. MANDELL, a retired English professor, was a writer/editor at **Good Housekeeping** magazine. She has published over 400 poems, essays and short stories in publications such as **The New York Times, Wild Violet** and **Women’s Voices**. A recent publication, “Scenes from My Life on Hemlock Street: A Brooklyn Memoir,” is available at www.echapbook.com/memoir/mandell.

PATRICIA MARKERT lives and works in New York City. Her poetry has been published in “To Genesis,” an anthology of midrash poetry, which, along with her chapbook, “Watched You Disappear,” were published by Five Spice Poetry. Her work has also appeared in many poetry magazines.

JOAN McNERNEY’s poetry has been included in numerous literary magazines such as **Seven Circle Press, Dinner with the Muse, Blueline, 63 channels, Spectrum**, and three Bright Spring Press anthologies. Four of her books have been published by fine small literary presses.

THOMAS NICOTERA has been a factory worker, street performer, mime, water/sewer repairman, copy editor, library cataloger and teacher, while keeping poetry as the one constant in his life. He lives in Connecticut where he co-hosts a library poetry series.

IRENE O’GARDEN’S writing has found its way to the Off-Broadway stage (“Women On Fire,”) into hardcover (“Fat Girl”), children’s books, literary journals and anthologies. She has received awards, fellowships and residencies, and listings in “Who’s Who in the World, in America and in American Women.” Visit ireneogarden.com.

RICHARD PARISIO has worked as an interpretive naturalist for over 30 years. He is currently NYS Coordinator for River of Words, a national contest of children’s poetry and art on the theme of watersheds. His own poetry has been published in **Hard Row to Hoe**, the **Woodstock Journal** and three regional anthologies.

TAD RICHARDS is artistic director of Opus 40 in Saugerties, NY. His poetry collection, “My Night With the Language Thieves,” and his novel in verse, “Situations,” were published by Ye Olde Font Shoppe Press, Waterbury, CT.

ALANA SHERMAN, poet and teacher, lives in Woodbourne, NY with her husband and dogs in an 1834 farmhouse. She is a member of the Alchemy Poets in Sullivan County, NY. In addition to her writing, she is a community developer, working to preserve The Old Stone House of Hasbrouck.

EMMA GABRIELLE SILVERMAN lives in Ithaca, NY where she is employed as a yoga instructor at Cornell University. In her non-working hours, she enjoys hiking, growing food and the **Sunday New York Times**.

MATTHEW J. SPIRENG’S full-length book, “Out of Body,” won the 2004 Bluestem Poetry Award. He is also the author of five chapbooks. His collection “What Focus Is” is due out in July from Word Press. He lives in Lomontville, Ulster County, NY.

CHARLOTTE SKINNER TILSON has published her work in **Aurorean, Hard Roe to Hoe, Poets from the Center** and other journals. She is a native of New Jersey. She lives in the woods in Sussex County with her husband and two cats. Her poetry comes from nature and place, the heart of life, where spirit is rooted.

A retired airline pilot, **CHUCK TRIPI** is founder of The Paulinskill Poetry Project, a small press dedicated to the poetry of the Upper Delaware River tri-state region. Recent poems have appeared in **California Quarterly, Hayden’s Ferry Review** and **Poet Lore**.

GLENN WERNER is a graphic designer who has been writing poetry for 15 years. His writing seeks to find revelations in commonplace moments and unconscious behavior. He features at many local venues and has work published in publications including **Chronogram Magazine, The Waywayanda Review, 4th Street** and **Snow Monkey**.

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Letter from the editor

"All that we see or seem/is but a dream within a dream."
—Edgar Allen Poe

Many artists, famous or otherwise, have found inspiration for their work in dreams. Dreams, like art, operate in non-linear ways and use symbols, metaphors, associations and startling connections to create the image and move the action along. Although dreaming is shared by all people, it remains mysterious and challenging. We must use a different part of our brains to unlock the meaning of a dream, much as we are challenged to do by art. We hope you will enjoy this foray into dreamland by the 27 contributors to this issue of the **Literary Gazette**, enhanced by the dreamy photographs of Milford photographer Norma Bernstock. Please be on the lookout for our blog, literarygazette@wordpress.com, to be launched soon, and let us know what you think!

Mary Greene

Mary Greene
Section Editor



About the photographer

Beginning in the 1960s with black and white photography, **NORMA BERNSTOCK** has been interested in experimenting and going beyond the traditional limits of whatever medium she uses. Her current work includes hand-manipulated SX-70 Polaroid prints (featured in this issue), hand-colored image transfers and a newly developed instant film produced at a resurrected Polaroid lab.

Bernstock discovered the artistic possibilities of instant Polaroid film while teaching a summer photography class in New Jersey schools, using many creative techniques, suggested by Polaroid, with her students. When searching for a new outlet for her own art, she began using these same techniques and has been experimenting with this medium ever since.

"I enjoy photographing architecture, icons of American pop culture and scenes that are reminiscent of the past," says Bernstock. "Because I am also a writer, I photograph subjects that suggest a story. It is the story behind the image that I am trying to portray in my work. The process of SX-70 manipulation is very satisfying as it extends my interaction with the image. Shortly after exposure, I use a variety of tools to manipulate the film's soft emulsion in order to achieve the distinctive painterly effect. However, I do not manipulate the entire scene. I want the viewer to be left somewhere in between the reality of photography and the fantasy of painting."

With the rise of the digital age, Polaroid announced that by July, 2009, the company would stop production of all Polaroid films. In 2008, a group of former Polaroid employees established The Impossible Project (www.the-impossible-project.com). They saved the last Polaroid production plant for integral instant film in the Netherlands, and started to invent and produce totally new instant film materials for traditional Polaroid cameras. In 2010, the project released various brand new and unique instant films. Bernstock is currently experimenting with this new film.

Bernstock has studied at the Center for Photography at Woodstock and Peters Valley Craft Center, among other places. Her work has been exhibited widely through the region and her photographs have received numerous awards, most recently Best In Show 2009 at the Skylands Juried Art Show, Sussex County Arts and Heritage Council. She is a member of the New Jersey Photography Forum, Sussex County Arts and Heritage Council and Pike County Arts and Crafts.

Bernstock has taught photography at numerous places and is a member of the Highlands Photographic Guild, a fine art photography co-operative gallery in Milford, PA. A changing exhibit of her work can be seen at the gallery located at 224 Broad Street and on the web at www.highlandsphtoguild.com.



Ghost Ship

Carlo Falls Asleep

By **CHUCK TRIPI**

Lately, Carlo goes to bed with the argument, form, or content? turning around in his mind, tries to choose, as from two beautiful women. Listening to “Agnus Dei,” or Puccini, Tosca, say, foreign words do not seem strange at all to him, nor Mascagni’s Intermezzo, strings and violins, that not a word is sung does not occur to him.

From September until now, closing his eyes, Carlo feels accompanied by five unusual things: himself, as if real, God, light, clarity, and Sophia. Look, it is not that he cannot discern, distinguish the one from the other. What seemed implausible, Carlo notices, begins to come true in the drift of sleep and unreality, this generous prelude, rest.

As Carlo falls asleep, it is without Sophia or God, or even Carlo. Tantum Ergo, he remembers just falling away, sacramentum, light catching at the monstrance, refracted beams, clarity across the water, shacks in the cordgrass, a phrase, hard a starboard, the slap of a hull, wakes, the other boats, the anchor, how it holds.

Residuum

By **ARLENE GAY LEVINE**

Revising our lives at night
active voices sing blue
like science fiction,
call the wild way to open
gates shaped in mind’s country
by a heart spying on itself.

Please eavesdrop on these grand conversations
inventing truth from ritual designs of day’s residue
or even pieces of childhood too short
to be saved, too important to be
missed by the REM of an eye.

Our private sleep life offers
a romantic education, both theory
and practice fashioning a text to keep us
word struck, chronically chronicling:
sun and earth, soul and senses --
cutting loose by finding/describing/understanding
the grain in the marble until

Oh, serendipity!
A gust of day’s story blows us off course
far enough to find our way back in.

Dreamscape

By **PATRICIA KETT**

A place between sleep
and awake, filled
with slippery images
fading voices
dissolving words.

I grab the last word
like a tail, hold it,
write it down.
Others appear,
spill onto the page,
reveal an animal

made of whole sentences,
whole images, wrapped
in some deep meaning
my mind attempts
to understand, just out of reach,

the animal, not of this world,
slips into the dreamscape
while its shadow remains
captured on the page,
within taunting words
that dare me.

I put away the page
until its time.



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Man and Kayak



Dream of the Search for Berries

By CHARLOTTE SKINNER TILSON

Raspberries grow along our driveway.
My son appears.
Together we fill several boxes
to their brims with lush berries.

Rain droplets wobble playfully on the raspberry leaves.
In a sheltered area I find berries covered with snow.
Digging, pushing ice away with my fingers
I lift out large bunches.
These look like strawberries.

We know of a lake
surrounded by swampland
where we can pick elderberries.
We borrow a canoe
to navigate the shoreline.

The dream for the search for berries becomes a whole expedition.
Many scientists travel with us.
Among them is a scientist who grew cynical in old age.
I find him sleeping in off crevices.

In high boots we tramp through rivers and streams
looking for berries
only to find the berries we seek
crushed beneath our feet.

Signs

By BARBARA ADAMS

I button up my dreams
As he clicks his big pen
Writing a coded message.

I stagger past two other suspects
Hanging in the cooler
Waiting room,
My chest gasping under the scarlet logo:
Thou Shalt Not Split!

Nearing the river
I see a sign—WORMS 100 feet—
Who would believe it?
Rain sags the lawn chair,
Yesterday's body drowning
In the puddled chaise lounge.

The country road rolls through spring
Oblivious to wind and rain.
Sheep gently graze
Behind a black rail fence
Dividing me from them.
Missing the turn for home,
I drive around in the rain
Looking for a reliable sign—
Here, anywhere.

I Saw My Father

By MATTHEW J. SPIRENG

I saw my father in a dream,
as alive as the dead can speak.
He lay propped up, pillow behind,
hospitalized, pale as the ghost
he was, dough-white with sunken eyes
circled in stains of brown. He spoke
to me in words, though what he said
was more foreign than the German
man who lay on the next bed, back
against a pillow, sutures crossed
on his throat, telling me in his
accented way how all these years
he'd smoked, and smoke and piss had caught
in his throat and had to be taken
out. Those were his words: smoke and piss.
And my father spoke right after,
but in the language of the dead,
in words lacking meaning which I
tried to answer. But I awoke
wondering what words stuck in my throat.



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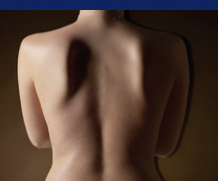
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Your Body Dreaming

By ALAN CATLIN

is like no other body,
undefined in places
like fog in the morning
rising from some place
hard inside, some place
rigid as steel or rough
as the scales of raw
skin flaked as if rubbed
by sand or blown from
clouds like snow the wind
carries from the hollow
places that once were
lips, the sound made
something like speech
if words could be spoken
the way birds fly.

A Ghost in Every Stall

By CAROL GLASER

This one has a haunted
restroom; stalls of ghosts
rising from ghosts sitting
on toilets. One seat is clogged
with expensive purses
the kind women bring
to formal affairs, colors
bright as gift wrap

We're here because a passing
truck whipped a chain at our car
that wrapped around a back wheel
that made the car lurch
and buck and we had to pull over

My thirteen year old is falling in
with the well-heeled ghosts
that are milling about the lobby
He wants to become ethereal and
cool

When I spy him in the distance
perched to dart into traffic, I leap
for the sky, fly as a matter of course
to pluck his dear body from danger
bring him back whole to our fixed car

Car show

Dream of my Daughter, Aged 18

By PATRICIA MARKERT

Almost within reach, she was

driving a fast car I didn't like

right down West Broadway.

On the sidewalk, I stood amazed.

She never wanted to get her license.

Living in New York meant

she didn't need it. To show how risky

the car was, I took the wheel and flipped

all the switches on the dashboard

including "windshield wiper fluid "and

"oil change is needed," then shifted

the Lamborghini into gear,

hit the gas and waited. She

seemed to smirk at the delay.

So I gunned it. Now the car

was screaming with pent up power.

Why didn't it start from its spot?

I woke up. I still want to race to her aid

four years after her death.



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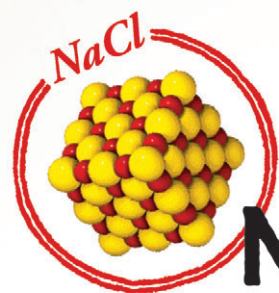
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Lady Slipper

By SHERRI BEDINGFIELD

in cedar bogs.

Scattered

in swamps.

In my dream

a glimpse of yellow,

a purse,

a bag-of-a-flower

a native orchid

painted with scarlet

brush strokes.

Petals tipped in purple.

Sepal brushed brown

competes with petals.

Almost weightless.

Body like a small child

with yellow boots

Exploring the florest

after a gray spring,

New England rain.



Festival Frolic

Glass Girl

By MARIANNA BONCEK

She slides noiselessly out of bed,
small, pale feet press onto barren floor;
sliding a child’s chair
to the base of the dresser.
Climbing up, she pushes aside hair brushes,
barrettes, a small doll.
Sitting on the linen dresser scarf,
legs akimbo,
she presses her small cheek
against the silver coldness of the mirror.

How did she get out?

Her fingers trace wide circles
on the smooth surface,
searching for the place.
She looks longingly into
moon shaped eyes
in front of her.
Eyes stare back,

giving no answer

In the morning,
Her mother will find her asleep
On top of the dresser.
Tired of scolding
she will lift the sleeping reflection
returning her to bed.

Dreamscape: Yellow Ibises on a Hillside

By THOMAS NICOTERA

Yellow ibises on a hillside
turning in great wheels
as we turn, following our every step,
pecking the ground as we move,
speckling grass white with droppings,
long beaks sawing the blue-breath air,
occasional clucking drifting,
but always that rustle of feathers
stirring the noiseless air,
fluttering in our dream
as we slowly move down the hillside.

Clutching our spears we turn
toward the village of our enemies
unsuspecting at the bottom of the hill
that we’ll sweep through
with this army of feathery followers
the like of which they’ve never seen.
Our powers will awe them
to part with their weapons
and we will saunter through
as gods of birds,
the holy golden ibises following.

Dreaming in Cast Iron

By MARKA KNIGHT

My notions of love, art, and faith have always been tangled in a complicated muddle, emerging no doubt from the odd intensity of the world I grew up in. I was raised by a single mother in a small hippie town in Southwestern New Mexico, where recent transplants from urban worlds came to “find themselves” and engage in brutally self-involved searches for meaning. I knew from a young age that it would be impossible for me to truly understand these other people, with their peculiar and entangled biographies, but I was consumed with the notion that if I could come to understand one other person deeply, then I would have achieved a communion with something outside myself, and, by extension, have contacted the world entire. As Evelyn Waugh writes, “To know and love one other human being is the root of all wisdom.” I wanted that particular brand of wisdom to be mine.

When I was twelve, I fell in love with one of my classmates. My small, deeply alternative secondary school (student population thirty) didn’t bother much with the received wisdom of Maths and Sciences, but instead offered classes in Metaphysical Studies and monthly camping trips to nearby mountains and deserts, where we sat in a circle passing a talking stick and slept out beneath the stars.

I loved him from the minute I saw him, playing Van Morrison’s Moondance on guitar and singing it like someone who had already known a consuming desire. He practiced Tai Chi and ate macrobiotically, avoided small talk and openly pondered existential questions. I felt pitifully unworthy by comparison, and in keeping with the spiritual vibe of the time (and ashamed of my own libidinal intensity), decided to play the role of self-denying ascetic as intensely as I possibly could. I fasted for days on end, limiting my diet to lemons and celery, and stole outside at night to prostrate myself flat against the earth. “Let me be worthy of love,” I’d chant. “Send me a dream that will tell me what to do.” Before this I had just been my own self, but now I felt a gaping emptiness, a sore spot behind my sternum that throbbed with longing.

At last the dream I had so fervently prayed for came – and rather than sending me to fairy tale happily-ever-after heights, it returned me to myself. Never before or since have I dreamed like this, a dream lacking in narrative yet palpable and embodied. Outside of any time or setting, I was a single object: a cast iron frying pan. I felt deeply content as this seasoned being, the essence of both solidity and vesseldom. Air moved over my surface and caressed me, flowing and changing constantly. Rather than experiencing such empty space as the lack of love, I knew it as essential to my being a creature of endless possibility. It suddenly seemed that I could have a grounding in myself which would allow for the multiplicity of the world; to not just be consumed by one person, but open to and trusting of many changing currents. The dream was tinged with an aura of joy that did not dim for days after I woke.

In difficult moments I remind myself of this nocturnal experience and the profound calm it offered. Although its lessons of self-sufficiency, of letting that which is be, rather than trying to manipulate relationships or their outcomes, must seemingly be learned many times throughout my life, I hold the hope that such insights penetrate deeper each time, paving the way for a lasting sense of security, a contentment and solidity immune to the vagaries of change.



Wildwind Motel

Dream Abbreviations

By GLENN WERNER

No. 1
At a party
my girl friend deflects interlopers
by serving canapés from a tray.
She offers those who approach,
a shrimp, cheese puff, baby frank,
whatever works to keep them at bay.

No. 2
A young woman stands in a prairie.
Her boots are caked with salt.
She faces west into the sunrise,
shades her eyes in salute.
I fear she is too near the battle
where many have drowned.

No. 3
Returning home from my funeral
my wife stops me at the door. Says,
it is against the rules for me to enter.
I sneak inside but am caught.
I tell her that we can manage.
Looking in a mirror I see the truth.

No. 4
I discover a forgotten room
that is haunted by a demon
who evokes unnerving dread.
To use the room
I must bear its presence.
I am compelled to linger there.

In a Dream, She Sees Lester Young Standing Naked

By TAD RICHARDS

In a dream, she sees Lester Young standing naked
at the door to her kitchen.
He is as women are to men
in the dream, an invitation, not as men
are to women, intrusion. His body is
soft, and she wonders where
that hard part is inside him, the tunnel of breath
that turned Lady Be Good or Lester Leaps In.

She gets up and walks to the kitchen, but he’s
not there. Thirsty, she runs the tap, and while
the water cools, she watches it splash
on the round of a spoon, spongy and brittle,
as it would be, passed through that tunnel in
her, in Lester, diffracted, never shaped.

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Innocent Herbal

By **ROBERT CARNEVALE**

I was walking along with my thoughts
in a wood where sassafras thrive.
Why would I try to outrun wings
where one torn leaf keeps me alive?

This summer peace is no deception.
If I fall all too easily into the same
tired allure, if I grow offhand with fear,
it is not the sweet woods are to blame.

I do fear the bear and tornado,
and the voracious, alien beetle,
not because they are strong, it is heedless,
but because littleness becomes the little.

Here, I fit easily into my britches
and, pausing to smell a torn sassafras leaf,
I become small enough to fall right in
to a dear antidote to when or if.

Escape

Ariel's Birthday Flight

By **ARLENE L. MANDELL**

She flew through childhood's narrow corridor, past a
room with dolls still tucked in their wicker carriage.

At her parents' door she heard a warm voice of a
father dear many years, blew a kiss to the mother whose
pills eased the pain, unfocused her mind. At the shut door
of the brother who blamed others, who took money from a
confused old woman, she faltered, an uncertain blur in the
hallway mirror.

So many passages to revisit, some glowing with
candles, others twisted, murky labyrinths. She could lose
herself as many had, beating gossamer wings against harsh
memories.

Instead she rushed back to a midnight blue room
where a man lay asleep, a small white dog curled at his feet.



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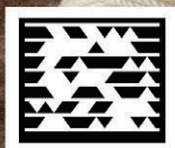


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On The Coast of Maine

Origami

By MARY KATHRYN JABLONSKI

In the month of no gods you sit beside
me meditatively, saying little, fingers
knitting origami in mid-air, beginning
with a fold you lick then tear. What are you
making in this half-light the Japanese
call *ke*? I say even less to interrupt
this sober ceremony, the crease
in my forehead sharp as that under your thumb.
This night I dream I am a green dinosaur
tattooed with my mother's name. I've become
a foreign country where you do not know
the customs. I would offer you a paper
crane of peace but am unskilled in the art
of understatement. Instead I fold
smaller, more compact: a geisha's paper frog,
mutely calling for a lover's return,
framed in this *Window on Midwinter*.

Ernest at the Lakehouse

By EMMA GABRIELLE SILVERMAN

I saw Ernest Hemingway that afternoon
Watching me from the second story window of the lakehouse
He looked out at the water as if it were the ocean
All lines of suffering forgotten on his face

I called out to him,
Ernest
This lake was never home to you
You were never partial to New England
Who are you haunting here?

(the wind on the hills turned the leaves to their silver underbellies)

When I looked back
Ernest was still there
Although I don't believe he heard me
As the geese were carving their way through the air above Lake
Mahkeenac and
The twitter bugs were twittering in the low grass

In the small boat on the ocean lake
I float in and out of Ernest's sight, closing my eyes
To allow the boat to drift like the upturned leaf
Drawn across the symphony of the bowl

So it's true then:
What is he not haunting here
What thing is untouched by his warm summer breath

Beached

By DAN STEPHEN KRAUSS

He is riding his horse on a beach.
To his left, the tide speeds in.
To his right, the sand is forming a cliff.
He tries to ride his horse up the cliff
But the sand is too loose to gain footing at that angle.
They slide back.
The horse turns back its head
And asks to try it on its own.
Says it will throw down a rope when it gets to the top.
The horse takes a giant leap
But doesn't make the top.
It turns around,
Gallops down the cliff
And doesn't stop at the water line.
The horse drowns.
The moon turns the sand purple.
He is standing on what little beach is left.



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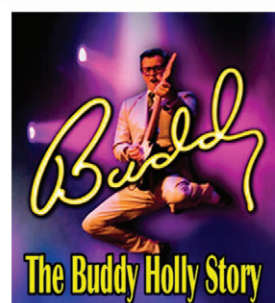
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The Summer Before

radio rain

By TRACEY GASS-RANZE

i imagine the dream just to survive
i am living in a bubble inside a bubble

the latter is some other's dream

in this way i take cover from that round place
where a red sun tries to snow and rain on me

red sun's flaming tongue laps at the salty sea

repeatedly i fall to my knees although i try to stand
i call with a voice that sounds nothing like me

now my iridescent sphere floats by far-away deserts
their billowing smoke shape-shifts in the wind

mixes all the blood into pools of cooling water
i think this is how the money is spent

it's not my blood but I pay a tax to slit it free

i read about the day the oil began to rain
it mostly comes down like bullets and artillery

and dragon's breath that strums the devil's harp

but i feel safe in my bubble inside that bubble
and i think this is why blood smells like metal

Somebody Else's Dream

By ALANA SHERMAN

They say you can't
dream your own death,
but I keep having this one.
The tunnel walls soaking

up black and the voices
calling for me
to do something
say something.

My hands push against
clotting air. When I
open my mouth words
are jammed back inside.

The clamor doesn't stop.
This has happened
so many times

but still I run reaching out.
The place I seek,
my own door on a dark
night, seems near.

You cannot dream
your own death
I tell myself with the crowd
watching as I hug the third rail.



Toxic

By RICHARD PARISIO

In the dream his dog was "toxic,"
scrappy cur, dragging a bleached
bone or gob of rotting kelp

to where he stood, a gaunt
old man on the moon-washed
shingle. Why curse this broken-toothed old mongrel?

The dog's my uncle's, but you're not him:
large, kind, he joked in scolding, tossed rocks
in the fat creek for his dog to dive for.

He belongs to us, this hound
who fetches back our failures,
disregarded tokens and dishonoured

goods. Now he trundles
a bottle, green and shining. Inside
there is no message.

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Exchanging Mothers for Horses

By LEE GOULD

A backlit horse crashes
through the kitchen window,
shards flutter like iridescent mayflies—
its face is framed
in the sash—portrait of a winner, bewildered—
did I say there was no blood?

On the grass beyond, a statue—
a woman reclining clasps her handbag
against her patterned dress, her veiled pillbox
perches on her head as though
she were standing. I know art, I say,
but I can't remember faces.

The rest of the horses startle,
their chestnut manes sunstruck, rippling—
the woman, like a giant balloon,
drifts vertical, bobs off
down the airy street leaving me
with my brother Absalom hanging by his hair.

Alchemy Dreams

By JOAN McNERNEY

i. Silver

How shall I begin my dream?
So strange. I could have fallen
from a cloud. Long, grey cloud.
I feel so strange...
cloud, shroud of sadness
wound through heaven.
Falling from my cloud
careening on ice
slipping sliding
over crystals.
Dropping through
deep night.
I fell alone
jackknifed on
silver ice.

ii. Mercury

Vessels of thought
as quick as mercury
spilling over.
We lie chained to sleep
prisoners of darkness.
Struggling against
edge of night listening
for animals pounding
closer closer.
Their scent surrounding us.
Galloping high
racing dark horses
nightmares.

iii. Copper

Who are we
without compass
without map
delivered before darkness?
We splay our hands out
tracing coils of copper
while lines of time merge
into mazes of memory.
Remembering shadows
we search our thoughts.
Over mountains of mist
looking for morning
drinking milk from the moon.

iv. Gold

I am searching for a
perfect color sound shape
to hold close to me.
I want something luminous
something cool.
This splash of sky
perfectly formed
drop of rain
drop of gold.
I will wear
in the hollow
around my neck...
This eye of an angel.

The River Reporter’s 16th Annual **2011 READER’S CHOICE AWARDS**

THE BEST BALLOT IS BACK!

We have added some new categories to our extensive best ballot! There are 255 categories but you do not have to fill all of them out. We ask that you simply vote for the people, places or businesses that you think are the best. Thank you for your participation and we look forward to receiving your choices.

We will publish our 2011 WINNERS in our annual Reader’s Choice Awards “BEST” supplement in January 2012.

Good Luck to all!

BEST PLACES FOR FOOD & DRINK

Appetizers _____	Liquor Store _____
Artisan Bakery _____	Lunch _____
Bakery _____	Martinis _____
Barbecue _____	Menu _____
Beer Selection _____	New Restaurant (non-chain) _____
Breakfast _____	Pasta Dish _____
Brunch _____	Pizza _____
Buffet/Smorgasbord _____	Produce _____
Candy Shop _____	Outdoor Dining _____
Cheesesteak Sandwich _____	Overall Restaurant:
Chinese Restaurant _____	in Delaware County _____
Coffee House _____	in Orange County _____
Deli _____	in Pike County _____
Desserts _____	in Sullivan County _____
Diner _____	in Wayne County _____
Dinner _____	in the Region _____
Early Bird Specials _____	Ribs _____
Family Restaurant _____	Romantic Restaurant _____
Fresh Bread _____	Salad Bar _____
Fresh Meats _____	Sandwiches _____
Gourmet Restaurant _____	Seafood _____
Grocery Store/Supermarket _____	Soups _____
Hamburgers _____	Specialty Food Store _____
Happy Hour _____	Steakhouse _____
Health Food Store _____	Takeout Restaurant _____
Home Cookin’ Restaurant _____	Vegetarian Food/Restaurant _____
Ice Cream Parlor _____	Wedding/Specialty Cakes _____
Italian Restaurant _____	Wine Selection _____
Kid-Friendly Restaurant _____	Wings _____

BEST PLACES TO SHOP

Antique Store _____	Jewelry Store _____
Art Supplies Store _____	Kitchen Supply Store _____
ATVs _____	Knit Shop _____
Auto Parts Store _____	Lumberyard _____
Baby/Kids Store _____	Mattress Store _____
Bait & Tackle Store _____	Medical Equipment Store _____
Boat Dealer _____	Motorcycle Shop _____
Bookstore _____	Music Store _____
Clothing Store _____	New Car Dealership _____
Collectibles Store _____	New Retail Shop _____
Convenience Store _____	Outdoor Recreation Store _____
Electronics _____	Pet Shop _____
Farm Equipment Retailer _____	Place to Buy Art _____
Flooring Store _____	Pottery Studio _____
Florist _____	Specialty Store (not food) _____
Furniture Store _____	Sporting Goods Shop _____
Garden Center _____	Tire Store _____
Gift Shop _____	Used Car Dealership _____
Hardware Store _____	Vintage Shop _____
Hot Tub Store _____	Wine Shop _____

BEST BUSINESSES & SERVICES

Auto Service Station _____	New Business of the Year (not food) _____
Bank _____	Pet Grooming _____
Builder’s Association _____	Pet Pampering _____
Cellular Service Provider _____	Pharmacy _____
Christmas Tree Farm _____	Photography Studio _____
Eye Care Center _____	Plumbing & Heating Supply _____
Elder Care Facility _____	Printer _____
Emergency Room _____	Property Management Service _____
Fitness Center _____	Rehabilitation Services _____
Funeral Home _____	Rental Center _____
Green Business _____	Real Estate Office _____
Heating Fuel Company _____	Septic Service _____
Home & Garden Store _____	Spa or Personal Pampering _____
Hospital/Medical Facility _____	Storage Center _____
Insurance Agency _____	Towing Service _____
Kennel _____	Trash Collection Service _____
Kid’s Camp _____	Tuxedo Rentals _____
Kitchen & Bath Store _____	Veterinarian Clinic _____
Maternity Unit _____	Well Driller _____
Modular Homes _____	Yoga Center _____
Mortgage Company _____	

BEST OF OUR COMMUNITY

Ambulance Squad _____	Eggs _____
Animal Shelter _____	Honey _____
Chamber of Commerce _____	Meats _____
Chicken BBQ (volunteer) _____	Maple Syrup _____
Civic Club or Organization _____	Wine _____
Community Festival or Event _____	Most Attractive Building _____
Fair _____	Museum _____
Farm Market _____	Neighborhood _____
Fire Department _____	Pancake Breakfast _____
Historic Site _____	Parade _____
Library _____	Penny Social _____
Local:	Place to Play Bingo _____
Artist _____	Place in the River Valley _____
Author _____	Place of Worship _____
Celebrity _____	Post Office _____
Farm _____	Radio Station _____
Getaway _____	Secret Treasure _____
Golf Pro _____	Scenic Drive _____
Musician/Band _____	Shopping Area _____
Photographer _____	Special Area Attraction _____
Potter _____	Sullivan Renaissance Project _____
Local Products:	Youth Center _____
Cheese _____	Youth Program _____

BEST PLACES

Amusement/Fun Park _____	Night Out _____
Art Gallery _____	Place to Hold a Prom _____
Atmosphere _____	Place to Stay _____
Bed & Breakfast _____	Place to take the Kids _____
Canoe Livery _____	Place to Work _____
Campground _____	Playhouse Theatre _____
Cider Mill _____	Private School _____
College _____	Resort _____
Day Trip _____	Ski Lodge _____
Golf Course _____	Wedding Reception Location _____
Horseback Riding _____	Winery _____
Movie Theatre _____	

BEST PEOPLE

Accountant _____	Hair Dresser _____
Architect _____	Holistic Practitioner _____
Auto Mechanic _____	Interior Decorator _____
Bank Teller _____	Landscaper _____
Barber _____	Lawyer _____
Bartender _____	Law Enforcement Officer _____
Builder _____	Massage Therapist _____
Butcher _____	Medical Specialist _____
Caterer _____	Ob-Gyn _____
Carpenter _____	Pediatrician _____
Car Salesman _____	Physical Therapist _____
Chef _____	Plumber _____
Chiropractor _____	Politician _____
Clergy _____	Postmaster _____
Coach _____	Radio Personality _____
Customer Service _____	Real Estate Agent _____
Dentist _____	Roofer _____
Doctor _____	Salesperson _____
Electrician _____	Teacher _____
Event Planner _____	Waiter/Waitress _____
Excavator _____	Web Designer _____
Green Developer _____	

HOW TO VOTE: Print clearly or type your choices for “THE BEST” from the categories listed. Include the name and town of business, organization, place or person you are voting for. Best choices are limited to Delaware, Orange, Pike, Sullivan and Wayne counties.

HOW TO ENTER: NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Additional ballots are available at **The River Reporter** office at 93 Erie Ave, Narrowsburg, NY—**LIMIT ONE PER PERSON**. Ballots MUST be complete and include full name, address and phone number of voter. All ballots must be received by December 15, 2011. Employees of **The River Reporter** and **Stuart Communications** are permitted to vote but not eligible to win prizes.

HOW TO WIN PRIZES: All ballots will be included in a random drawing for prizes. Drawing will be held January 2012. No duplicate winners. Chances to win are determined by the number of entries. BEST Winners will be notified in January 2012.

OFFICIAL "BEST" BALLOT ENTRY FORM

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

☐ I am a current subscriber ☐ I buy it on newsstands

MAIL BALLOT ENTRY FORMS TO:

The River Reporter “BEST”
PO Box 150, Narrowsburg, NY 12764

or DROP OFF AT:

93 Erie Avenue, Narrowsburg, NY 12764



Warning in a Bottle

By LOIS MARIE HEROD

I became an old man.

When you carried me to bed,
your arms got tired.

My arms—I held them
along the horizon so the sun
would not drop into the sea.

You are trying
to do such a thing for me—

but you became a great tree stretching your limbs
like a priest.

In another bottle
this might be a blessing.

Don't you understand:
the throat that is open
was once stopped.
I am that flute.

Perkins Cove

Dream of Eventual Serenity

By IRENE O'GARDEN

Collapse and ruin everywhere I look on this tsunami-devastated island. Over here, thousands of collapsed identical orange structures: fallen posts and fabric, as if The Gates in Central Park had broken and blown down at once.

Here, amid the many staggering survivors, the other devastation: absolute repression by the government. People may not gather. All but brief conversations can be terminated by arrest. The fascist force, a mirror of their fear.

I talk in snippets with my husband. For safety, we wander off in different directions. Yet within this full destruction and restriction, something liberating, too: there's *nothing* to be done.

Men gather momentarily. They jest, as if buying drinks for one another.

I gaze at the Broken Gates awhile. An angled piece of fabric takes my eye. I tug until a graceful swoop appears. Light pours, glows the fabric. I adjust a rock, incorporate a stick, assemble one or two more things, and top it with a tiny needle-needy evergreen.

My composition pleases me. I'd like to take a picture. But, New Era. Can't photograph. Quite possibly, I never will again.

Nearby, an upright sapling tangle. One sapling bears a hollow-centered knot. I reach over and "click" next to the hole, as if it were a shuttered aperture.

I move on, hoping passersby enjoy my assemblage before it disassembles.

Soon, a little tree with many branches which terminate in tiny shelf formations. I place things on the shelves: a bit of shell, a pebble. Others left things, too. I like this: the invitation to leave something. Even litter would be interesting, so placed.

I find deep serenity. Even when all's lost, art continues bringing pleasure, to those who create and those who experience.

I look up. A vivid little moon. And just behind it, a shadowy gigantic moon. Which is real? Beautiful, this site, this sight, but not for comprehension, quite. A pupil moon within an iris moon.

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