

# *Windows Facing Windows Review.*



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# Stone

*Olivia Allan*

stone body—  
i am what i fear  
heart in porcelain pieces  
strewn through the tall grass  
in a yellow field, hot

my borrowed strength  
and inspired choices  
are the big red beautiful  
stage curtains  
i am grieving behind  
as one small, cold stone  
still in the dark.

# Anisoptera

## *Lorelei Bacht*

To be immemorial. To reside  
in this exact instant. Snap luminance  
Renewed for no more than five weeks.

Five invincible weeks. To learn—to know  
How to throw ourselves into voids, into  
Savage encounters, the freshwater

Feast. To be winged unequal, at ease  
With the kill. To be conspicuous in flight,  
And choose not to care: We are fast.

To be that fast, to bolt, to light, to see  
So much of the world at once: the first,  
The last, the sun's unblinking eye. At last,

To grab one another midair, collision  
Of bloodlines in curves, transparencies.  
To hope the nebulous, compelling hope

That something of us will go on.



# What everybody should know about

Lorelei Bacht

1.

In kitchens and doorframes, when no-one else is listening, she overshares cryptic: I must embark a mission, to find her sister, the matchstick, buried or lit up in a ditch. A pine needle in a forest of black. Black pines, at the end of the line.

2.

With or without the crude geometries of stars on clothes, there is a nose that says *shifty*, that says *crooked*, that says *I'm after your money*. She knows the counter-jinx: she says it is because she has always worn thick glasses.

3.

Her favourite non-sequiturs make avid mention of the hair, the long blonde hair that endlessly cascades in gold ringlets, in rivulets, out of the scalp of every other girl. Valkyries. I had never noticed. Every random woman known as: Gertrud.

4.

A story. She keeps rewinding it and I will never know anything past the first few frames: the soldiers are coming. There is a bicycle, a bunch of carrots, bunch of boots, polished to perfection. There is a pause. People not seen again. People.

5.

I am both asked and forbidden to name. I am dispatched without information. I am told and untold, given testimonies that say ignore. I am a mess. I am not sure what to say to the little ones. Then, I am told: *they would be dead, by now*.

And then, I breathe.

# Last Logorrhea

Mark Blickley

That idiotic doctor smiling down at me as if I am a Christmas leg of lamb ready to carve into my chest searching for a purse of gold and municipal bonds safely guarded by Margaret's father cruel old bastard God Forgive me bribing me to marry his obnoxious daughter crying in the corridor afraid I might live and interrupt her carnality and bastardly children dear Lord I am sorry do not treat me harshly why did you plant this Covid-19 have I not suffered through years of archaic gospel and fanatic potbellied evangelists kill Margaret's father or my bacchanal son not me or that incompetent surgeon ready to claim my wife's loins along with her insurance oh Jesus remember I am sick I will die today spouting blood making nurses convulse with disgust splattering my fluids onto sterile white aprons disregarded in garbage cans as my flesh is shoved into an incinerator Blessed Mother is it hot in there will my flesh sizzle does the soul scorch damn family tradition I do not want to be cooked like spare ribs on a spring picnic I want to stay alive inhale spring's aromas my God it will be spring in less than a week when my corpse will have entered its first stage of decay and I revert back to the existence I led ten months before my birth oh Holy Father I do not mean I have changed you are the light why do they turn on those lights before I am under turn them off turn them off I will not have you see me like this stop stop I demand no one will see who I am I do not want to die put me back where I was do not put me under Blessed Saints I am drifting help me help me pull that mask off my face so I can tell Margaret's old man to shove it and quit his factory to escape his grandchildren calling me old fart unloving thanks to the shithead shrink he sends them to forgive me Lord they are beginning to slice my flesh who cares I am exhausted by this reminiscence of my life the larger box preceding the smaller one fourteen years overseeing the manufacturing of cardboard boxes Margaret's father probably display me in number 324D all purpose industrial container engineering breakthrough designed by contents within the urn be displayed next to my collection of Dickens or Margaret turn it into a night lamp flicking me on and off teasing the lovers of the loveless sweet Christ hallowed be thy name thy kingdom come shit what is the rest ha my rest eternal rest eternal darkness dear god are they dimming the lights I will not succumb to them or you Holy Virgin forgive me it is too cold I am scared you scare the man just as the boy threatening vengeful flames perpetual blindness oh merciful Lord forgive my transgressions I loved people before machines consumed my fervor you know people are malicious untrustworthy beasts preying on you devouring gentleness defecating deceit help me everything is black empty listen to me I repent you win just help me do not leave me in the dark please leave me alone it is your fault

toying with me playing my fear of darkness laughing at me writhing you  
sadistic creature of evil forgive me forgive me Father you do understand I  
see I see yes this is like birth dark frightening yet to be thrust in life light  
praise God on high a fresh chance to find joy forgiveness ah bullshit no no  
dear Savior they are hoisting my lungs put them back put them back that  
madman is murdering me do something I am so cold so alone a thinking  
piece of butchered meat pre-sold by Prudential premiums why why must I  
be punished I am a decent man unimportant undistinguished what about  
murderers rapists enjoying life as I am dissected I hate you give me back my  
lungs damn it oh Blessed Lady of Mercy grant me guidance save me from  
death and life's years of suffering only to die wondering running not escap-  
ing God forgive me because I will survive this surgery and laugh at my family  
destroying exotic visions of cruises and cars vomiting my bile in their hypo-  
critical faces stuffing my diseased lungs down their throats I will survive this  
operation if only to bring joy to Prudential My god help me help me Christ  
help me help me why am I here it happened no no no no no...

# My dad is an italian ghost

*Megan Cannella*

and if I had to guess what that means, well fuck if I know.  
If I ever get a therapist, I'll be sure to ask,

but I am not sure my copay  
covers ghost talk. I'd check

but I don't remember my password.  
Can you even filter search by your ghosts?

If I had to describe what it's like to grow up  
with an Italian ghost as a father

I'd say there was less pasta  
than you'd expect, and thirty years out

mom is still calling herself a widow  
because part of us is still

on the timeline where he didn't die  
randomly and alone on an anonymous

hotel balcony, on an anonymous  
business trip in fucking Florida.

**I'm not sure how much you will like hearing this, but laying in bed holding hands is my favorite part of having sex with you.**

*Megan Cannella*

I used to get upset with the way you didn't feed my anger and insecurity. I used to get upset with the way you are always so damn committed to finding a way forward, instead of joining me in my love affair with being stuck and miserable. My rainy day, comfort setting is petty with a hint of jilted, but I think your default might be happy? Or some positive emotion I haven't met because my family could only afford the Crayola 8 pack of emotions and I think you must have had the fancy 64 pack with the built-in sharpener and the coveted Robin's Egg Blue. I have always thought Robin's Egg Blue was happiness. You are proving me right. I kind of hate you for it. I honestly just don't understand. How you found this point of simple, pure joy. How you keep finding your way back to it. Though, when you are completely still like this, I can't quite tell if your joy is fully yours or if it is for my benefit because you hate seeing people stuck and miserable and petty. So we're laying here, not looking at each other, making spiders with our hands, and even when you say you think *Big Bang Theory* is funny, I don't pull away.

## the most embarrassing part about being nearly thirty & still, occasionally, thinking "i'd rather be dead"

Ashley Cline

is that it feels absolutely ridiculous, silly even, that, in nearly thirty years of living, it seems as though you still haven't figured out how to do just that. & well, it just seems like something you should have sorted by now, you know? it just seems like it should be easy, like breathing, which you managed to get right your first day on earth, & still manage to get right, given the fact that you are, in fact, still breathing, even though sometimes you wish that you weren't. & you know that you don't *really* mean that because what of your mother? & your guilt? & your dog, who was abandoned once before, like you, & you can't stand the thought of her thinking you've abandoned her, too? & what of carly rae jepsen? because, if we're being honest, she could release a new song at any moment, & what? you're just not gonna be here to hear it? like, okay. like, miss me with that. like, to be honest, for you to not think of survival feels like a betrayal of evolution. like, what of the stars that lent you their atoms? what of the books you've borrowed & have yet to return? *like, it just seems like it should be easy—or easier, at least. like springtime. like pink moons. like*— it is early may, & you are listening to more frightened rabbit than usual, which makes sense, if you think about it. & you drive to the river, where you think of weightlessness, which also makes sense, if you think about it. & you've seen enough television to know what the water can do to the body; you've seen enough television to know that *don't nobody wanna fuck with that*. so you watch the birds, instead. the way they cut corners & turn in the air, almost-frantic. the way they plummet & dive & fall towards the water, almost-graceless, before they flatten their bodies, these soft parallels, & skim the surface & skim the surface & skim the surface &—it is early may, & you feel safe so long as there is no future, & you wonder where you learned this kind of survival. it is early may, & you watch the birds—swallows, you think, or maybe martins—who don't think of nothing but the moment—who don't think of not existing, at all—but rather: the rise & the fall, the water & the sky. these soft parallels. it is early may, & you think you rather like when the sky & the water are the exact same shade of slate-gray, actually; it is early may, & you think this feels endless, in a way, & you like the implication that, maybe, somewhere, that is a good thing—or at least, it is not always bad. it is early may, & you decide to be endless (to be birdsong), too.

# chernobyl berry, & other radiation blues

Ashley Cline

i hope you don't think me soft, but i've never known how to breathe in space. it's something to do with the lack of gravity, i think, or maybe, it's all to do with the science of hunger—it is hard to say, for sure. just as it is hard to know the exact moment when *thank you* becomes *i love you*,

but my mother told me, once, that *when it happens, you will know*. she says it's something that you feel—deep—no more, no less—& who am i to argue with the body? with this fragile thing that has held more heavens than you or i can ever know—they say that a freckle blooms along the

skin from the very spot where your soulmate's lips will find you, waiting. & if that is true—this blushing birthright—then goodness, how greedy my lover's mouth must be to grow such constellations & call them *human*—

call them *home*. & this kindness is gravity's greatest trick, yet: how the stars sound like *amen*— sound like *thank you* —when they fall from your mouth wearing my name; the way your mouth finds mine over & over

& over & over again, still. like ninety-five minutes over jupiter, like a landing of discovery—you ask me how long it's been since someone's

touched me, here, like this—& my throat blushes lilacs in response. you ask *how long's it been*, & petals fall from my tongue—

a prayer.



# My Brother

Miriam Gauntlett

My brother, who is alive,  
stands large as life and just  
as tall. *Oh my God,*  
a friend said after seeing a  
picture of us, *Asa is a giant!*  
Compared to me, it's true:  
I am older but he towers  
more than a foot above me.  
It wasn't always this way.  
Let's reel back the tapes,  
the old photo albums,  
through backseat car fights,  
family hikes, shared baths,  
until he's a gap-toothed kid,  
then a fat baby in my arms.  
*The longest relationship you'll  
ever have is with your siblings,*  
a friend's mother once told me.  
Well, I had another brother  
and he died. This was before  
Asa: my tall, living brother,  
who is here, picking me up  
off the ground, easy as that.  
I hope he lives forever.

# Building and Shaking

*Haley Jenkins*

Building a meal, from pasta tubes and ham chunks,  
seizing the blue and pink single-eyed  
shaker, I throw a jet of salt over the air  
above the steam, released from underground.

Caressing it, I think of Nana who collected  
so much china her spine grew shatterable  
all her pans growing into slick fat frames  
our Grandad never shielded with silver dresses.

No man can build a bird's nest, a woman  
spends hours spitting and mud larking, strikes  
car boots for love to fill a city room, building  
up shelter to keep from breaking and inhabit  
what will not survive them.

Dumpy, our bodies were builders, shakers, each pouring  
herself into mouths singing flavour into the food  
handed down from the women who sung themselves  
into the thick gravy, golden cakes and forgot  
to reserve salt for their emptying tongues

that spent hours every day convincing their hearts  
to be colanders, letting it all shift through and trickling  
away to dark corners of the kitchen where it wept  
in watery mass for the salted sea.

# fort

Christopher Lloyd

*the child is alone*  
in a house lit by thunder

*only in the presence of someone*  
baby cries in the cot

*it is a joy to be hidden*  
a teddy lost down the side

*but a disaster*  
of its fort                      da-

*not to be found*  
dad is there watching

cotton reel unspool  
*a man who has been*

as she mends the bear's arm  
*the indisputable favourite*

baby watches  
*his mother*

she is nothing  
*keeps for life the feeling*

gone she says smiling  
*of a conqueror*

no here it is good as new

## **Worn**

*Jacob Minasian*

I see a frayed  
line in my palm  
that I haven't  
known, maybe  
new from too  
many times in  
life closing my  
hand around nothing.

# leaving you a voicemail

Emily Norton

i want to stay up all night/ with myself/ touching his chest/re-imagining  
Genesis/ if Adam was Adonis/ he'd make a pretty boy/ from his ribs/ pluck-  
ing bone/ yes i think eve/ would be a lot like me/ had she had a different/  
father/ bite the apple/ or something else/ a little poison/ never did anything  
but/ poison you/ & who am i to judge/ when it comes to eating things you  
shouldn't/ i want to devour/ the liminal space of my body/ i want to feel  
full/ on forbidden fruit/ i want to want/ with all my might/ i want to tell  
you/ something/ hey, can you call me/ when you get this/ baby/ i'm think-  
ing about the ways/ we're tied together/ afraid of the things i'm hesitant/ to  
admit/ i'd consider/ going feral/ for you

# Auto bio

*Linda Umans*

That eternal attachments can start on a staircase. Wild boy Kintaro in the Utamaro print hanging there at Giverny. I saw him on the lap of his adoptive mother,  
fell in love, and he is still my boy. Relationships off the walls.

That the little girl said to her mother, Can I ask you a joke?  
Why did the baby cry? "I don't know. Why did the baby cry?"  
Because he was hungry....So ob-vi-ous!

A man with a cane was crossing the icy avenue. A snow-booted woman said,  
"You shouldn't be out on a day like this." He yelled back, "If I had someone,  
I wouldn't be." And she stood staring.



In a world like Dali's with swans reflecting elephants, some days I reflect  
an ogress, some days I reflect someone who is looking for a perfect apple  
in November, a perfect beet in August.



Who knew I would love bedazzlement  
who knew I had a loud side  
a broadside, a "nice lady" side  
a West Texas side, a caretaking side  
a Thanksgiving dinner side.



That self-knowledge bounces off the platforms of railroads.  
That I am refrigerator cool (Kintaro, you are still my love).  
That a woman can be beautiful in Paris and not in Kansas City.  
That a child can be better loved away from home.

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## About the Contributors

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OLIVIA ALLAN (she/her) is a writer from Melbourne, Australia. She is currently studying psychology in the heart of the city and loves riding the train everywhere. When she isn't studying she writes on her beloved typewriter and struggles in pilates classes. Her Twitter handle is @livppoetry.

LORELEI BACHT (she/they) is a curious and gentle individual on her bumpy way to middle-age. She lives in the Southeast Asian jungle and writes too much. When she is not raising children—which would be most of the time—she can be found walking her tortoise while listening to T.S. Eliot reading from his work. She can be found on Instagram: @lorelei.bacht.writer and on Twitter: @BachtLorelei.

MARK BLICKLEY (he/him) is an old U.S.A.F. veteran who grew up within walking distance of the Bronx Zoo. Married thrice, he can most certainly put to rest the false folkloric claim that the third time is a charm. One of his greatest regrets is that his partner Amy Bassin, an extremely accomplished visual artist, is allergic to cats. Blickley believes pizza has high spiritual as well as caloric value.

MEGAN CANNELLA (she/her) is a Midwestern transplant currently living in Nevada. When she isn't ignoring her to-do lists, she is watching Real Housewives. You can find Megan on Twitter at @megancannella.

ASHLEY CLINE (she/her) is an avid introvert, full-time carbon-based life-form and aspiring himbo who crash-landed in south Jersey some time ago and still calls that strange land home. Her debut chapbook, *& watch how easily the jaw sings of god*, is forthcoming from Glass Poetry Press. Once, in the summer of 2019, she crowd-surfed an inflatable sword to Carly Rae Jepsen, and her best at all-you-can-eat sushi is 5 rolls in 11 minutes. Twitter: @the\_Cline. Instagram: @clinecline.

MIRIAM GAUNTLETT (she/her) studies, works & writes in London. Her interests include revolutionary documentaries, long walks & tweeting @miri-aaaaamg.

HALEY JENKINS (she/her) runs Selcouth Station Press, tweets @selcouthstation, instas @selcouthstation and @haleythehobbit. She is a colourful sock collector, a tea-addict and likes to write and read about food.

CHRISTOPHER LLOYD (he/him) teaches and writes. His micro-chapbook, *PUT MY HEART DOWN*, is forthcoming. He tweets @clloyd9.

JACOB MINASIAN (he/him) is the author of the chapbook, *American Lit* (Finishing Line Press). Originally from California, he currently lives with his wife and daughter in Cincinnati, Ohio, where he teaches at Cincinnati State. Find him on Twitter @JakeMinasian.

EMILY NORTON is a 22-year-old poet residing in Toronto. Their work centres themes of reclamation and honesty within their queer identity and whatever hopeless romanticism comes up. When they're not writing, they're probably watching Bob's Burgers or playing with their cat. \_emnorton on Twitter.

LINDA UMANS (she/her) taught for many years in the public schools of New York City where she lives and writes, mostly poetry. You can find her on Twitter as linhelen @SednaLin.



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## About the Editors

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EMMA ALEXANDROV (they/them) is a writer and a student of the mind sciences. They tweet @emmaalexandrov.

KIMBERLY NGUYEN (she/her) is the Vietnamese-American poet of *I Am Made of War*, *flesh*, and *ghosts in the stalks*. Originally from Omaha, Nebraska, she is currently living in New York City. Kimberly was also a journalist at *The Miscellany News* of Vassar College, where she used her influence for activism: her articles have garnered the attention of the community and catalyzed institutional change. She aspires to a fruitful career as a writer, in whatever capacity it may be, and eventually wants to hold an advanced degree. Follow her on Twitter, Instagram, or visit her website.

