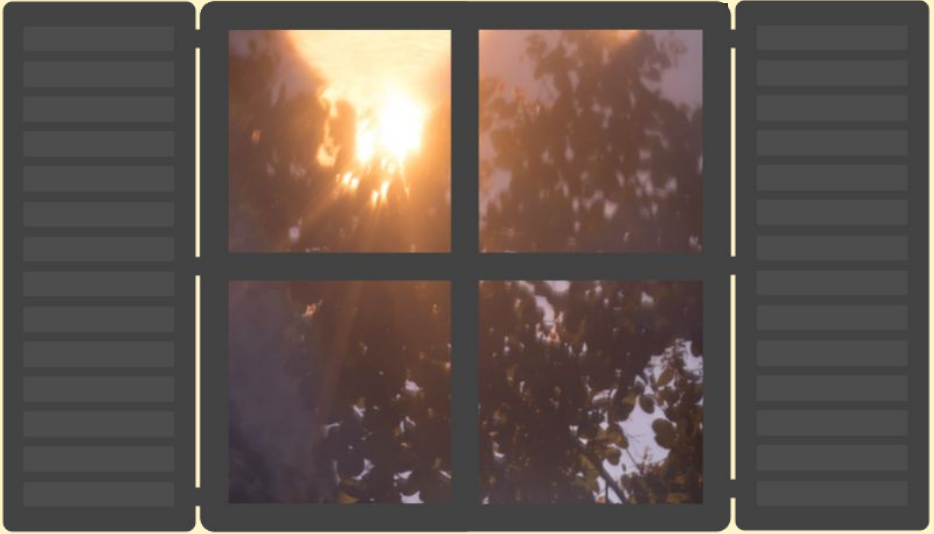
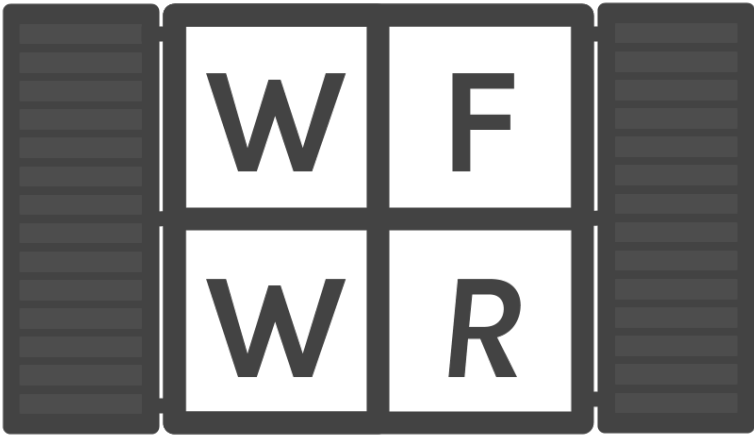


Windows Facing Windows Review.



an open journal of poetry

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sea lesson oo
Catherine Bither

Sea's never known
her practice
nearly breaches
Her beneath.

sea lesson 03
Catherine Bither

every wave's geometry crashes into shattered glass.

sea-spit vacuums sea shore, spars gulls,
drinks up space and strands of kelp.

yet, Her Deepness stays unbroken by crackling sunbursts.
starlight's soft lips illuminate Her creases.

Sea purges the distance between she and land —

the hurt happens beyond shore.

epilogue

Catherine Bither

she scans the rocks before stepping
she wades through wet sand in socks.

she recycles her shape from yesterday.
she shoves herself in her box.

she follows the lines.
she traces her imprint in pen.

she fills her spirals in pencil.
and then she jumps in.

We Kept the Dresser

Adam Chabot

In case we have “long-term guests,”
you said, like a heron poised among
paddlings of the ducks you once loved,
a reach into the concealed sarcophagus,
an ironed illusion we ignored.
It’s empty.

Years ago, you believed in poltergeists,
like soldiered belief and prevailed faith
in the hijinks of cracked mirrors and stacked
chairs. A glorious emprise morphed
by melancholy: everything claims
good intentions at the start.

Bruno Schulz on the Street of Crocodiles

Howie Good

It is spring in name but not in substance, the trumpets of glory sounding strangely vexed, as if struggling with metaphysical doubts. And this isn't even the worst part. No, the worst part is that all that survives of *The Messiah*, the novel he was writing when he was shot dead by the Nazis, is the first sentence. A 100-year-old former concentration camp guard has only now been arrested on 3,518 counts of being an accessory to murder. I heard about it and thought, "Up, you corpses, get up."

endeavour

Cheng Him

what more can we do beneath the weight of all the grief in the world?
once, i watched a daffodil rise through a crack to greet the world

and though it was not there the next day its children's children made a field
where there once was road and till this day i dare say they will inherit the
world

that makes no space for small and fragile things, too caught up in its
overlarge mountains, forgetting that pebbles too help make the world

the way these flowers do, and you and i as well, two small and impossibly
frail specks of dust in the air, pushing through the cracks, looking for the
world.

Self-portrait as a daydream of a wuxia series

KJ Li

This once, let me forfeit Helen, Adonis,
the legions of classic beauties
cast in marble and praise. I want to whet

my mouth against a lush history: the jut
of the scorned prince's jaw in this warm, crafted light
could slice any man as cleanly as Paris's arrow

spitting Achilles straight into the ferryman's
eager mouth. Here the warrior-princess takes to knee
before the throne and I fantasy myself

the bright silk gilding her graceful sleeve, falling
open to reveal the inevitable wound, I the viper
glittering at the empress's throat, fanging air

or heir. I practice yearning like a blade
earns its blood, tongue sharpening against
itself until my mouth drips red fortune. It could

happen like this: I the sweet perfume jewel
the princess's sword-strong wrists, raising them
through the dark to that familiar

luminous face, drawing out the confession
that cannot be re-sheathed. And they will come
through to the other side changed, having

needed this, not knowing they will spend
the rest of their unwritten mortal lives
chasing after this brief animation,

not knowing the name for such
hunger, not knowing that certain beauty
strikes only once.

The year of undreaming

KJ Li

The phrase "bright dead things" is borrowed from Ada Limón's poem "I remember the carrots."

Often now I wake to this: the lights still
switched off, bathroom sink darkened
full of orchids that send up warnings
I disregard. What I wanted
was the bouquet peeled back to expose
the red mouth emptied of mercy,
the litany of inconvenient facts. Like

the moonbeam you slipped behind my ear
with my eyes closed, which was a blade
out of bloom. That most stars
are not, in fact, dead by the time
their light arrows into ours —they're burning
live-hot in the blackest room, waiting for you
to find your way back. But I've come to think

in a truer sense they've always been dead, deader
than the fox skull in our underbrush
you could never bring yourself to touch —
someplace beyond alive or not, the furthest
point from us you could get
while still sharing a lineage. Maybe
it's still comforting to think that no matter

the massive dying years between us,
in the longest run we're the same kind
of small, hurtling inevitably back
to the same place unwitnessed flowerings go.
I've been trying to sleep more, stop fixing
human eyes to every bright dead thing.
What I wanted to tell you: that black holes

don't mean to destroy what makes them,
it's only they can't bear to part with
what they've been given. In another
universe I get what I ask for: black hole
burial, my body finally put someplace
safe, made perfect and unattainable. Here

in this unconquerable night, I cast
my hand through the air still molded
after memory, tuck the last
secrets you gave me into the glare
of the bedroom mirror. Everywhere
I see the signs of all the things
too precious to keep or

surrender to, the light of your leaving
forever hanging
on the cusp
of what can't be taken back.

Grasshopper

Jenica Lodde

I hope the plague catches me dancing.
I'll say I spent all of my money,
wore out my good clothes.
I hope I'm singing
when the last wave smacks me across the mouth.

I was like every woman:
I lived the way I was taught
and begged for what was already mine.

They'll say when the storm stomped
his little ghost feet on the long grass
she stood on the porch and laughed,
rolled over and showed her stomach,
peddled the air with her paws
like a dog.

I hope instead of my name
they put on the headstone
"Insolent Wench,
didn't fear rage."
I hope I become the air-headed legend,
Buxom, thoughtless fool.
Died clean.
Head in a fog
all the way down.

Floating

DS Maolalaí

my mother's spent five years
so far coaxing doreen
from bed every morning
to gravedirt. an elderly neighbour —
there's some obligations
you don't know you're getting
when you buy a place
30 years earlier. she's sick now —
she's bad, as these things go.
but been like that before —
sometimes you get leaves
which stay on the tree
curled up until the following
spring. and the trouble —no alz —
so we can't just abandon her.
the ribs of a boat
being pushed into water.
useless, but still
made of wood and still
floating.

Seashells, windturbines

DS Maolalaí

this is west galway
countryside —near barna
and nothing
but sky and the black
earth below us,
the hum of these
slicing horizons.
no trees for some miles,
and no houses —
small bushes, ragged
like a broken comb
dropped by a radiator.
you can see sometimes,
walking, what's the source
of religion. it grows
in the same earth
as heather.

Hunger

Evan Martinez

*There remains the mystery of how the pupil devours so much bastard beauty.
(from "The Rewilding" by Ada Limón)*

Brief is the fullness
of a creature without abandon

& the maw is a poem
without punctuation.

The groundhogs in my backyard
eat cat food we leave for cats
& I'm glad
they love themselves
enough to rise to the occasion
of massacre. Anthropocene —

It's a curse to live without edges
and be borderless
in an insatiable world.

Stir Well, Serve Hot

Evan Martinez

All I've ever wanted is to crawl inside the shelter of a perfect word / feel around /

Peel back rotting layers of the c o m m a until god's handwriting reveals itself / dripping /

Lick it clean while I listen and give life to another birdsong

I can't comprehend

My mom's first language is spanish,

My sibling says: *actually our first language was ripped from our tongue and used as seasoning.*

I think: Mmmm, adobo y sazón

The dish in question is irredeemable /

Sometimes I bare my teeth / rip tendons from my legs / plant them in the ground / vow to never

forget that there are still people speaking our first language /

We have just been severed from them /

Bone fresh

We / of this mid-atlantic / so named for a stretch of coast in an unspeakable nation / Tethered /

or something like it / unweaving threads / or something like them /

Until a basket is just fruits [mango] and sacrifice [leaving your children in Tunja and coming to

this kountry and not seeing them until they can articulate

how much it hurt when they watched you go]

And during kickball I learned / We are not from here / and we are dirty / and the first lesson in dominance: don't make your home in the weeds / they are tasteless

The amerikan imagination is flaccid / bland /

Filled with crunched up marbles and geriatric maggots cannibalizing the prenatal

The truth is that colonizing half the world was a vengeful beggar's errand /

But violent heritage / gnarled gums won't write themselves / into reality

The truth is that yt ppl should stop making food blogs / writing long stories
with unsavory
conclusions that they should try their hand at jerk chicken or panang curry
or arroz con
gandules /
But they will not be told no / conquest is unwinnable

It takes them 500 words to finally get to the recipe and when my
sibling reads the
ingredients they say: *for the love of god, someone get the spices.*

I Wonder Who Devotes Their Time To Editing Wikipedia And Whether Or Not They Would Sacrifice Their Fingers If It Meant The People They Love Could Live Forever

Evan Martinez

after Hanif Abdurraqib

I spent half an hour reading Marvin Gaye's page while I should've been writing eulogies for the dirt under my father's nails. He hasn't murdered me like Marvin's father. Our relationship is art obsessed with madness, light becoming treasure written in shadows, or pandemic, patriarchy, swing batter, battered swingers, violence and consent. I think I should submit to hysteria, submit to my dream journal, the one with all the black and brown queer disabled writers reimagining borders, consciousness, geopolitical vaccumes, volumes, lifted voices carrying what they can, bare on front covers, ears trampled to the ground, woman hoisting the dead weight of man, slinging bags over shoulders, slinging masks over crowded mouths, teeth, disease, damn panic, the disco burned down when white folks moved in. I read that Bowie's major tom didn't live to see us eat each other alive and that it's nearly impossible to cancel someone after they're dead, and cancel culture is a myth anyway, just ask R. Kelly or Trump. Thank Satan for that, thank g*d, thank the bus driver, thank the janitor, thank me for not giving up, say I'm sorry to the bus driver, look a homeless man in the eye, give him five dollars for a beer, say I hope this helps you make it through the day, say I saw a video that plainly stated COVID-19 will kill more people than the flu this year, and I ask myself how many refugees have died in ICE custody that they're not telling us about. The news is moot on that point. The numbers are brainchildren, braindead, incubators, sore throat, ragged bones. I wonder why you always bite the same spot in your mouth from yesterday, why it doesn't bleed so much as swell, why the body can take so much beating from the inside, something about the heart beating against rib cages begging to be spared in sweet air, cartilage bars undigested. The body has been carefully mapped by those with control over their own, the articles say as much. Say a prayer and goodnight, spore, infestation, poor guy, he never stood a chance, blood before it's set free, brain before coffee, before the world was big, before we thought the politics would kill us, now we know the virus will kill us but the politics will draw the bridge to our vessels, gates smashed from the inside. Mac Miller's death hit me hard because he wasn't trying to beat me to the punch, his ghost can't come back to earth, I wonder what it felt like to die doing what you love most, I wonder what the folds of my brain feel like. There's not much here about performing your own brain surgery. There is

feeling, there is no feeling, there's the chance to get lost in margins, there will never be enough time to understand how we got here, so far off topic.

Twenty Six Reasons to Live

Evan Martinez

Fear is the idea that after a certain age you'll never have an original thought.

Around twenty-five, give or take some rising
& falling, human brains brace themselves
for the long haul. Hope finds a groove to rest,
desire flits then settles in folds,
forlorn beacons light the way
to a face only ever seen in reverse.

Fear is a contagion with blisters on its gums and limbs in its hands,
unspeakable.

There was a man who tried to drink himself to death
but all he got was more life to trudge through.
His wife succumbed to grief and his son left
& when he woke in the morning,
lips chapped from neglect,
he was no longer capable of thirst.

Fear is bridges and arteries and other things that collapse.

A body carries life itself. The word is miracle.
The journey is the destination is the cliché
is the way it feels to burrow
& sigh relief at the
think of gorgeous treasure,
Existence in your palms.

at 30 mph

Tran Quynh Nguyễn

we move in motions, we hold hands, we
dance. in homespun gowns. in bowless
suits. under frantic disco lights. in
my make-believe. if i make you my
destination i'm only moving
further each day. in this silence, no one knows how
far we could go. at 30 mph, we run for our
lives. in black tight khakis, gripping my thighs under
this heat that's gonna kill us all. at 30 mph, we
sprint towards an invisible finish line. in proud,
white shirts, drenched in sweat. i always fold my
sleeves twice then line my hands down my
body, just to feel thin like cover girls, then carry this
backpack on one shoulder feeling like i carry
the world when all i ever do is look for a corner
to belong.

Relics of ruin

Abdulkareem Abdulkareem

My nation gathers relics of ruin,
of houses
garlanded by explosives on the pages
of the newspaper —
of people morphed into bodies,
of placards painted
with the blood of their holders.
Borno became
a citation example in a Civic class,
on the topic enmeshing the student's brain
on the effects of bombs.

I know a woman whose face whittles with
tears birthed back to life, from each glance
on the debris folded to the tip of her wrapper,

& a man who strolls through our street at night
with half of his existence burnt, whose family
was shattered by shrapnels,

& a little boy whose parents
subdued to the euphony of the fire's melody.

a girl wants to plant a rose by the tomb
of her mother, but how would she when
bodies were bundled in a single pit?

A hollow space for broken bones

Abdulkareem Abdulkareem

The bullets / sneaked through the dark /
& buried themselves / into the succulent graves/
on our bodies / because we had voiced too much /
because we pulled / our painful innards /
for the father to see /

the father / swallowed his own sons /
& broke the incisor / of his wives /

home became a gag / to our mouths / &
a stick stuffed / in our throats/ home became
a pestle punishing / the buried earthenware
of our bodies /

Our eyeballs / morphed / into a video recorder /
through a year / that razed down a pole /
on every house/ gathering something /
for our mouths to say / to the forthcomings/

mother buried her tongue into my sister's ear /
not to stroll / through the darkness / with four legs /
& not saunter / through luminance with two legs /
so her sacredness won't shatter /

my skin awakes a dirge / on the lips of the world /
& It melts into a photograph / of dead boys /

hands up, don't shoot / I *ain't* got no gun / or how would
I harm you / when I can't breathe? / I was once sold down
the river / in Mississippi / on a different bone / my skin
is a user / of broken things / according to a bloke / on Twitter /

Enter Passcode

Shane Schick

Choose something difficult for others to guess.

Not the month and the year you were born.

Maybe the number of times you've wished things were different,
or the grand total of mistakes you've managed to make over and over again.

Tally up the worries that came to nothing,
the hours you spent acting like God doesn't exist.

Count the votes of confidence you'd need to quit wondering
whether you could do what you tell yourself you yearn to do.

Dial all but one of the digits that would begin the process
of ending the argument, of potentially making up.

Estimate the days you think you have left. If it exceeds
the allotted six figures, just imagine the rest.

Match the alphabet from "one" to "twenty-six" and invent
a word that summarizes all you know but cannot prove.

Don't write this down. Let your fingers ritualize it until
it becomes a gesture expressing a truth so secret
nothing, and no one, would be smart enough to unlock it.

good morning, blue

Annie Powell Stone

open jars sit waiting, wanting

I'm painting myself
put me on your workbench to dry

I'm cracked, separated, and poured out
taste me and judge me

I'm extending myself, pointing
pretend there's sufficient grace

I'm writing myself into a love song
cry my name long and hard enough that it becomes music

a jar rolls past the lip, cracks

About the Contributors

CATHERINE BITHER (she/her) writes poetry in Chicago.

ADAM CHABOT (he/him) is the English Department Chair at Kents Hill School, a private, independent high school located in central Maine. He can be found on Twitter @adam_chabot.

HOWIE GOOD is the author most recently of *Gunmetal Sky*, a poetry collection from Thirty West Publishing.

CHENG HIM (they/them) is from Singapore. They work in the civil service there, and cope with the drudgery of cutting through red tape by cutting up words and putting them on a page. In their downtime they enjoy trawling the streets for cats, putting butter into coffee (it is a thing here), and trying not to think about the looming stacks of unfinished prompts and paperwork creeping up on them.

KJ LI (she/her) is a Chinese-American writer raised in central Texas. She currently lives in D.C., where she takes long walks to podcasts, misses the family cat, and frequents inexplicable YouTube rabbit holes.

JENICA LODDE (she/her) started writing before she understood why she feels such a need to stare at a white screen and viciously punch the keyboard of her computer. She invented reasons, wrote them all down, forgot them, and misplaced the file where she saved the information. That's okay, though, because somewhere along the way she discovered she doesn't need a reason and that it's much easier to just start writing than to ask yourself a bunch of silly questions all the time. She writes a lot of poetry about memory and trauma and mental illness. Her favorite pastime is blocking out massive amounts of time for writing and then spending it drinking coffee and staring into space. She also enjoys reading late 19th century British fiction for some reason.

DS MAOLALÁÍ (he/him) has been described as “a cosmopolitan poet” and “prolific to the point of incontinent”. He lives in an apartment in Dublin.

EVAN MARTINEZ (he/him) is from Milford Mill, MD and is an empath by nature and a cynic by nurture. He works as an RBT providing ABA services to autistic children and enjoys a nice hike as much as laying in bed with

his cat. He firmly believes that the only way humanity stands a chance at survival is by destroying capitalism. Follow him at @hard_to_be_soft and @gdlss_lvchld.

TRAN QUYNH NGUYÊN (she/her) is a rising senior at Hanoi-Amsterdam High School for the Gifted hailing from Vietnam. She likes mellow pink skies and green grasses and spends way too much time thinking about princess dresses.

ABDULKAREEM ABDULKAREEM (he/him) is a young Nigerian writer who wants his voice to go beyond the thatched roof of his mother's house. He writes fiction and poetry from the ancient city of Ilorin. He tweets @panini500bc

SHANE SCHICK (he/him) is married to an Anglican priest and together they live in Toronto with their three children. He has spent the past summer failing to beat them at foosball, air hockey and ping pong. His smartphone security could probably be better, but there's really nothing on it worth stealing anyway. Twitter: @shaneschick.

ANNIE POWELL STONE (she/her) is a fan of peanut butter toast. Poetry has come back to her after many years away and absolutely saved her sanity during lockdown. She lives on the ancestral land of the Piscataway people in Baltimore City, MD with her husband and two kiddos. Read more of her poetry on Instagram @anniepowellstone.

About the Editors

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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.

