

VOICES FROM THE ATTIC

VOLUME XVI



VOICES *from the* ATTIC

JAN BEATTY | SERIES EDITOR

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Series Editor: Jan Beatty



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for Patricia Dohler

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Introduction

Voices from the Attic, Volume XVI, is the best work from the Madwomen in the Attic Writing Workshops in poetry, fiction, and nonfiction at Carlow University in 2009 and 2010, taught by myself, Evelyn Pierce, Nancy Kirkwood Raynovich, Ellen McGrath Smith, and Stacey Waite. The writers in this collection represent a cross-section of women writers, ages 21-96, who meet to study writing in a challenging yet supportive environment. These writers have a range of backgrounds, goals, and styles of writing. In any Madwomen class, one might find former college professors, high school teachers, arts advocates, waitresses, visual artists, musicologists, and lawyers. You would also find women on pilgrimages: a woman who is a dragon boater, a woman who traveled 7,430 miles on her motorcycle across the United States, and many women who have traveled long and challenging internal roads to believe that they can write.

This past year has been a year of great change, as the Madwomen have grown to offer six class sections: four in poetry, one in fiction, and for the first time, creative nonfiction. Along with this growth, we have many accomplishments to celebrate. Madalon Amenta's chapbook, *Kandinsky and the Stars*, will be published by Finishing Line Press in 2010. Madeleine Barnes received the John Woods Scholarship for the Prague Summer Program, and also won 1st Place in the *Three Rivers Review* poetry contest. Joan Bauer's poem about Anna Akhmatova, "Remembrance," was published in the anthology, *Love Over 60: An Anthology of Women's Poems*, Mayapple Press. Gayle Reed Carroll was a Finalist for the Robert Frost Award for a poem that reflects Frost's legacy, for "Carved in Stone." Madwoman Angele Ellis

won the Pittsburgh Filmmakers' G-20 Haiku Contest in September, 2009, a contest that gained national attention in *The Wall Street Journal* and NPR's *Here and Now*. Marilyn Marsh Noll has written a children's book, *Jonathan and the Flying Broomstick*, published by Sunlight and Shadow Press, to be released in 2010. Kayla Sargeson's poetry was featured in a national anthology, *Time You Let Me In: 25 Poets Under 25*, edited by Naomi Shihab Nye. Other notable achievements include Kayla Sargeson's admission to Columbia College Chicago's MFA program and Lisa Alexander's admission to Drew University's MFA program. Madwoman Victoria Dym received her MFA from Carlow University's MFA program, and Celeste Gainey, friend and supporter of the Madwomen, also earned her MFA from Carlow University.

This year has brought great losses to the Madwomen, with the deaths of Madwomen Wendy Davies, Dorothy Holley, Christina Murdock, and Madwomen friend Anita Byerly. These brave and talented women will be terribly missed as we continue to celebrate their lives and work. After her death in 2009, Wendy Davies' chapbook, *Morning Alive*, was published by Mad Books. A full-length collection of poems by Christina Murdock, *Burying the Body*, is forthcoming from Mad Books. Dorothy Holley's fourth book of poems, *Dream Quartet*, was published by FootHills Publishing in 2009. Anita Byerly's book, *Steam Rising*, was published by Mad Books shortly after her death in 2009. These determined, gifted women leave a great legacy. They are part of the fabric of our group, and their words and spirits continue to inspire us.

Guest writers who visited the Madwomen this year include poets Jennifer Perrine and Jennifer Sweeney. Many of the Madwomen submitted their chapbook manuscripts for publication this year, and many others continue to send out full-length fiction and poetry manuscripts. Their work appears in national journals such as *5AM*, *Indiana Review*, *Main Street Rag*, *Poet Lore*, and *The Comstock Review*. The selections in this anthology are varied, speaking to the wide interests, the far-ranging curiosities, the obsessions, desires, and wild humor of these surprising, lively women. I am honored to work with them and to learn from them.

—Jan Beatty

The Mill in Winter

Below them, the valley cradles
the mill's dark body which lay
for a decade like a stunned animal,
but now awakens, almost innocent again
in the morning light. A pale disk of sun
pinks the crusted snow the men walk on,
the first thin columns of smoke brush the sky,
and the odors of coke and pickling acid
drift toward them. They taste metal on their tongues
and yearn toward the mill's black heart.
To enter, to shut out the bright cold air
is to enter a woman's body, beautiful
as ashes of roses, a russet jewel,
a hot breath grazing their arms and necks.

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At Age Four; Looking for Johnny

At the C&L, avoiding the
ham-handed paper hat heads
behind the deli counter,
I'd go immediately to the frozen
meat section, to the grate mounted on the front.
Caked with gray gratefuzz, blowing
cold air from its darkness, I'd peer
into it like binoculars. *Johnny. Johnny*
I'd whisper into the tiny holes,
the name of my cousin who died at 19.

At the bowling alley, I'd eye
the darkness behind the pins
looking to find him there.

At home, I'd call for him
inside the furnace, saying his name
to the center of the flame.
I believed he could hear me
when I'd call into unknown space.

Bitch to Me Even Then

I ran from mannequins flushed
with fear, sneaking behind
clothing racks like a spy. Couldn't
stand their stalwart stance,
elbows pointed in the sassy pose
that said bitch to me even then.

Always afraid I'd see one sharply
turn its head to me, feel
a heavy dead hand grab
my chin and force blank
beige eyes in my little kid face,
its empty stare eating through my chest.

Mother Love

Middle of the night, tears
like I just made love
to your mother—strange,
the way I feel her. Not just the shape
of your face, elegant legs, the eyes
I recognize in our child, whom she has never
seen and will never. The road to her:
slow and mute with grief
in the room where you grew up,
where you read the books
that shaped you and lay nights
in the heat, masturbating,
waiting. The pull of both forces,
love and death—barely a touch
and I was shuddering, in tears
that she was dead and we were making love.
You said in the thickest dark,
My mother understood about love.
We decided in the grief of her
fresh death to marry; I proposed it,
the dark curtain drawn as if to say
He belongs with life and you now.

still life with more time

to do everything,
to do nothing at all

look at the new blue
on the walls, watery,
gray, trim that took days
the creamy shade
of magnolia

follow the grain
in the shelves,
knuckle-sized knots
with nubs of rough
and gouges
low,
where the cats scratched

south sun
has placed a square
on my lap
one of them's eyeing,
swishing her tail,
worked up about something

outside
the neighbor's circular saw,
two different
barking dogs,
a child with a recorder.

Ecce Homo

We're dust and gas
and pain and anguish

Sometimes we laugh
We sigh

And there are times
we even fly a little

Invictus Sixty-Six

Azalea, lilac, lily of the valley
fleck the pale green silk of spring

Oak leaves, elm leaves
rise higher than the house
to a scrubbed blue parabola of sky
from which a golden halogen sun
beams pure light

Head still bloody
only bit by bit
becoming bowed

Haven't the heart

I don't want to hear about the real Frédéric Chopin and George Sand.
I don't want to hear what happens when she takes him
to Majorca.

The carriage pulling away and pulling
them to a trip abroad, a happy destiny
however pretend.

I don't want to know about the cold, the piano caught
up in customs, how everybody caught colds they couldn't,
wouldn't let go.

How she paid for the piano's passage,
how they left it there. How she never forgave
the turbulent waters around Majorca

and the sea sponges that were his lungs
for collapsing. I don't care about sea sponges, how they dine
on breath, how hard it is to tell if they are alive

or dead because they never wilt when cut, they are forever
soft when wet. But eventually their insides eat them up,
their middles hollow. And I don't want to know

that Chopin was afraid of being buried alive.

How, in his last breaths, he requested they cut
his heart out of his chest. How his sister consented

and carried his heart, kept in brandy, back to Warsaw.

Actual relationships are too domestic
to report: two dirty tea cups to stain tomorrow

and the tomorrow after that, things to carry, to hold in one's hands
a sea sponge for a loofa that has torn, pulled away from its center
and how, as Sand and Chopin held it in their hands
to wash one another,

it gaped up at them: an open chest and a missing heart.

the mother/the memory

after Jennifer Perrine's "Mother as Rope"

In bodies of both bearer and born, a daily doom & boom.
There is no reason for the keeping of that bond, the chore of it.

A washcloth looks amiss, a struggle of wet, kept weeping—
the memory/the mother. Guttural and ecstatic is the
bitterness sometimes:

a dance of dying porch light.
Something peripheral to the home, but not the home.

The mother held onto the daughter like a grudge,
thought of her as a fat bruise of a child.

Why is it war?
To remember. To know and be known like this.

The Mark My Body Draws In Light

These books have my mother's hands
and when I hold them, I believe I have become her.
This is my chest that rises, I say. These are my knuckles.
From my mother I learned to speak slowly,

to wrap my words like scarves around the necks
of strangers. I learned my bones are framework
for loss, paper stripped free of information.
The books are restless and open in their sleep.

Read this, she would say with a fistful
of chimney smoke. *This one*, breath white
as wildfire. I learned from my mother to consider
my shadow, the dark cast off by shins, the calves,
by hair shaken out from the root, the mark
my body draws in light. I learned to locate myself
in her vertebrae, arms outstretched to a reticent sky.
I hemmed her skirt with sand to anchor her.

Once in our house, she positioned a flashlight,
leapt into the otherwise pitch-dark living room,
lifted my hands to cast their weight into space.
The light that outlined us was opiate gold.

Mobility

*When a thing ceases to be moved, it does not therefore
at the same time cease to be movable....*
—Aristotle

Sleepless, I'm never sure how to wash stars

from my hair, each follicle rinsed with those barbs,
headache after headache calling tendons
into motion: night runner, I ran.

I juxtaposed ankle
to tar, sprinted the imagination's stadium.

I fell & fractured the metatarsal bone. So what,
I fell, I stood up, kept walking, ripped space from cuticle,
brain stem, crumbling infinitesimal sparks into ash, ash, ash:

there is anguish in movement but I have to move,
go to class, work—what use are studies and predictions

to force, the flash in my muscles that says *here, now*,
who am I? That's who. I stood up. What can you mend
when you too dissolve into pixels, 1 gram

of imagistic fragments? What's left? 6-8 weeks,
elevate the foot, sit still and rest, while the earth is quaking?

Motion; anemia, osteoporosis, night runner unbeats
the heart into living, where is calcium in space?
How will I know what remains if I stop,

and the ache ends? I will forget
how you look. Get me up. I was one ache

away from understanding. I couldn't move, didn't know
what I was comprised of
until it had to be repaired.

Donatello's Mary Magdalen as Exegesis

Invariably, you must turn away.

Suppose her emaciated body as the text—the bony legs under
torn strips of rough fabric as hard consonants & the way
she holds her hands palms facing w/o touching

almost praying the vowels of space between, a gulf
of desert sand & it blows a blinding
storm of verbs through her broken teeth.

What has she seen to frighten her so?

The first recorded witness to the Resurrection.

She is determined.

Her long hair covers her like a dress—falls in clumps
her fitness, the unresolvable
it is contradictory, resistant.

Stare into space—time is unrepentant.

There are her fierce fixed eyes, her muscled arms
w/flexed biceps, her open mouth.
A red egg, extant.

Thirty years of fasting in the wilderness.

What is it Donatello's Magdalen suggests:
strength, suffering, a penitent?

The four dimensional, wood-carved continuum:

up-down

left-right

backwards-forwards.

Take heed: there is only time to save yourself.

The internal grinding of gear against gear.

Migration by the Dim and Flaring Lamps

Through my kitchen window a March crow scales the roof next door
its black cawing longing swoops down on me like the raven last summer
swooping down along Thom on the Appalachian Trail taking Shenandoah
Valley skies and most of July in its curved shiny bill enfolding whole days
in thick endless wings leaving you frozen still hungry on your small kitchen's
floor discovered too late by your last baby girl uprooting full planes west
to east gathering flesh in spectral iridescent sweeps closing down throats
and quieting tongues with blue stories untold culling even my mother's two
veiny pink hands from my hold in a hospital bed where you rest against
each other two mountains ageless deathless two pinnacles immovable
together you pray your bodies two ancient holy birds sacred here now
in this anesthetized room the raven's carrion grip blocked by your oracles
Amazing Grace The Battle Hymn of the Republic Ruth you can't speak
but mouth hymns my mother's voice always fixed and weighty cracks
eerily rises reedy like the banshee she tells me later when you've passed
beyond her keening moves in cantos to Elysium it rises fervent and is gone

I'm Not a Woman Who Throws in a Single Towel

I'm too enviro—but I confess:

I love doing laundry
with the modern push-button, perforated double tub,
wash-rinse-spin.

Sweat, stain, dog puke, what-not.
I'm ready & it gets me thinking
if I were a woman
in Sicily,

I could be tugging at a clothesline
across a crowded street,
towels & slips
& skimpiess flying—

But better that
than kneading rags at a watercourse,
or bashing them with bat or club,
or boiling them
in a giant pot or running them through something
(rather ominous) called a mangle.

*

When I was twenty, reading *The Stranger*,
I couldn't figure out Meursault.

I do know something about angst.
but why hold the gun—why pull the trigger?

But Marie—I could understand—
who loved nothing more
than hanging sheets
in the Algerian scorch-hot sun.

I'd imagine her in the courtroom, watching
the stone-faced jurors sentence Meursault to death:

If he'd only worn a nice clean shirt—

*

Socks are big for me.

In separation therapy,
when my husband Paul was so almost done with me

& everything was toxic,
my therapist Renee said:

*So what— if you mismatch his socks.
Tell him to tie his own socks together.*

Sewing Up the Bunny

My ninety-year-old mother tells me
I was wise not to have children.

Children aren't grateful for all a parent does.

I am listening (one ear on the phone),
as I sew up the bunny. My dog Daisy's bunny,
or rather a chewed-up green rhinoceros

that no longer has eyes, but a nice squeaky
Daisy tries to get at (tugging out

its poofy-cotton innards). And yes,
I decided thirty years ago

I would not have children. Even after
my eighth graders brought me burritos

from the cafeteria, saying,
Mizz B you oughta be somebody's mama.

Lovely to teach them,
lovelier still, when they went home.

Thirty years ago, I sewed up the bunny
with a rotating wheel of tiny pink pills.

Two Pictures of My Grandmother

after Dorianne Laux

The first, a perfect black and white square with scalloped edges. Sometime in the fifties, my mother's mother and hers. Winter sweater, woolen skirt, my grandmother's 1950s glamour: polka-dot dress, and white gloved hands mark her hourglass waist. In her smooth, moon-like cheeks and thin eyebrows I see my mother, myself in twenty years.

The second is tucked away in a shoebox. An orange date-stamp marks the bottom right corner: August, 2005.

In it, my grandmother's cheekbones are on the wane, thinned almost to sickle, to the unknowing darkness of the new moon, and I do not recognize her.

The eyes, coffee-bean brown are alive, almost vibrant. They say *what can you do for me now?*

The picture focuses on her face, but beyond the frame her bones are withered, clavicles sharp and ribs like wicker switches in the melting frost of spring.

Yellow Girl

I am scared to go down South in the summertime.
Scared of Mason-Dixon and the hot southern sun
browning my already-tan face.
Scared of *y'all* instead of *ynz* ringing from the
beer-soaked Lazy-Boys of Superbowl Sunday.
Of unheated nights and whispered lullabies,
liquor breath and cocaine.
Scared of my cheekbones giving me away,
that I'm the spittin image of my mother.
Scared of a lonely trailer on an acre of farmland,
of my grandfather's greasy restaurant, and his corn-fed pigs.
Scared of banjoes, belles and brisk afternoon tea.
Of dried blood in the grooves of my father's class ring.
Of his belt and knife, tongue and flashing eyes.

Coal At Any Price

for my father

Like king of the mountain,
my dad stands on the back of his five-ton truck.
Shovel scraping steel, he lifts and hurls black lumps
that rumble down the chute into a cavernous bin.

The lady of the house appears,
cradling a beautiful doll, missing one shoe.
Placing it in his sooty hands, she says,
Take this to your little girl. I don't have money today.

Depression Image

He caught a glimpse of me
and knocked,
to ask if he could photograph
the Shirley Temple look-a-like
peeking from the window.
My mother turned him down.
No money for this luxury.
He tried again and settled for
tomatoes from her garden.

The Awakening

from the upcoming book, "Girls Don't Ride Motorbikes"

My life was comfortable, filled with pleasant predictable routines. I had lived in the same area for six years and built a successful career in holistic health. For the first time I was financially secure and envisioned settling down, buying a house and opening my own healing practice.

The part of me that had rested quietly for many years woke up one day, shortly after I turned thirty-eight. At first, it chatted gently, slowly awakening from a deep sleep, lazy and yawning. It teased me, playfully reminded me that life was large, that there was more to explore. I knew this part of my personality so well. It demanded change. I tried to ignore the force that yet again would push me forward.

"The life you live now is not it," this part of me said. "It's only one little identification of yours."

"You call this a little identification?" I argued back. "Everything I do is really important to me."

"Exactly, you are getting too attached," the inner voice grew stronger. "There is more to life. Rethink where you are going."

Attentively, I considered my options. With my upcoming fortieth birthday, I could plan a trip—maybe revisit Brazil and retrace where my journey had begun. I picked up a *Lonely Planet Handbook* and leafed through the pages. Colorful pictures showed familiar sights: Rio de Janeiro, Foz de Iguaçu, the capitol Brasília, the Amazon River, the dunes of Fortaleza. I recalled the half dozen times I slept outdoors on secluded beaches, drifting to sleep while gazing at an endless star-filled sky and listening to rolling waves. Far from civilization, nature had provided the positive benefit of saving money. Once in Manaus, the night before my

passage down the Amazon, I stayed in the cheapest hotel at the fish harbor. Cockroaches infested the shabby room and the ugly creatures tap-danced up and down the walls all night long. I buried my head beneath the sheets, trying to get some rest.

I flipped to the page that listed the required vaccinations against malaria, typhoid and yellow fever. Did I really want to go through this again? I wondered.

I was older now and this was not my way of travel any longer. Why retrace the past? This thought kept spinning inside my head. A couple of weeks later a passion for motorcycles, travel, and the fascination with sacred circles combined and led me to the idea of a cross-country motorcycle road trip to walk labyrinths. The day I hung the map of the United States on my office wall and traced my itinerary with a yellow marker, the inner dialogue ceased. I knew that my destiny called me to get on the road and to breathe in the world. And, while traveling forward on my journey, I would have plenty of time to reflect on how I got here.

One

I am not the hawk soaring high up in the sky, above all.

I am not the purple cactus, different and standing all alone.

I am not the humming bee, ready to sting when you come too close.

I am the single drop of water listening to the call.

I dare to jump and plunge into the pond.

A commotion stirs the surface, waves spread in circles all around.

Drop of Jade

Fastened to fit upon milkweed drips
a lachrymal bud, suspended by a subtle black clasp.
Smooth and heavy, it hangs on display: a drop of jade.

Brush-finished cannetille has melted to green,
compacted into an alloy. Faceted rings sit atop it,
twice wrapped, weighing on strands of gold specks.

Antiquing, top downward, green body, bright specks:
jade blackens to onyx. Bronzed beads, in two lines,
trace the tightly clasped locket.

Folded inside lies the fiery form of a Monarch,
casting, waiting to articulate *en tremblant*.

Disintegration of Currents Getting Away

The room was vinyl tile and metal.
I barely knew Dad in a chair
with water a pool by his slippers: edema
leaking through leg skin.
His knee in both my hands an over-inflated volleyball.
I was alone.

He never opened his eyes
when I stroked his forehead, his arm.

The bed is a mountain he won't climb
said Brian, the nurse, *and it's worse now*
than just confusion. I couldn't
hear what he meant though perhaps
when I spooned a puree of lasagna
mouthing, *I'm sorry this isn't more*
like the beautiful food you used to prepare,
I may have known.

His hand flopped into my lap
so I couldn't guess if he knew
who held the plastic spoon.
Mucus flowed from nose and mouth
to a brown paper towel, all I could find.

Puree of lasagna is green the color of scum.
It went down if I dipped it first
in ice cream, melting so fast. Outside
the sun was lucid.
Vinyl and metal shimmered—
heat / rising / then
plummeting down around me.

The Don Quixote of Brooms

More and more my father's alone, afraid
of losing his usefulness.

Habits are still at work.
Today he walks out the door

to sweep the walk, a thing he still can do.
He stumbles into the cold

in a blue pajama shirt, an undershirt on top,
two pairs of pants, two belts, two slippers.

Up the walk, up the street, up the steep hill
he sweeps his way.

Picks a path through traffic, down
to the shopping center,

brandishing stick and straw against it all.
Into the world of filth and need, he sweeps.

In once familiar doorways
in spite of all that can't be done, he sweeps.

See him now, sweeping in front of the coffee shop,
pharmacy, bank, Gulf station.

And who would say it doesn't help?
Who would deny this one small thing

done in the cause of helping?
What if I, confused and stranded as I've been

in a world busy with scorn,
had done so well?

Blue

I go back to pull blue
between oak tree leaves
spread wide to grasp
blue in a sky
I stood under
vast as that day.

That day I never felt
the shale slide,
my feet slip
catch together.
I just got caught up
in all the blue
swirls that stretched
silent blue.

Silent and still
blue when the day
hangs upside down;
a paisley blue bluefish
slips through my fingers,
rushes wild for blue.

Blue, I never heard
my feet slip and catch
on sliding shale that day,
that day I swallowed the sky;
I never heard myself fall up
swept in tumbles, begging
blue-lipped into mighty blue.

Blue, I didn't know
I was shaking and breaking apart
never anticipated the dismembering
the cruel pull of blue

separating each
piece of me falling
deep into blue.
Call it all the way

to China blue
call it so blue
that I suffocate

in its comforting arms.

This Blue

This is the blue I have been getting to; the blue-
berry blue of early summer that melts
down the finger and sticks. That's the way
I remember the thick finger of a left hand
fox-nosed into thickets of shaded blue blankets.
His right hand held his weight a blue breath inch
from my brown-blue body and that's when I saw the ice-
angel float away to another blue world, unsweet—
out of reach of sailboats with lungs full of blue that blow
from the bedspread a blue iris limp, fog-silent
on chenille waves ten thousand miles high blue.

I felt the blue clitoris split and I knew
the blue would splash, knew that I could not stop
the blue burst of feathers; could not stop
the want of blue to fly away a bluebird
down my throat, circle me in its season of color
cradle me in a nest of blue; not like this forced blue
that made me crave flight too soon, before chasing blue
light of fireflies, before the leg-blue scratch of crickets
and before the numbing chill of submissive blue;
the feel-good-blue of supple flesh rubbed raw.

The blue comet of blueberries streaks in me still;
even after billions of blue Sundays in heaven's blue
box of prayer and redemption. I nurse blue shame
in the intricate folds of the labia
like lacerated flesh covered with thin blue skin;
my negligee of secret vines too blue to recognize,
too tangled to release the flow of blue blood
dried over layers of the vulva that have

long been two blue lips stiff,
open and adrift in this
vicarious blue.

Sky Over Pedernal

*God told me that if I painted it enough,
He would give it to me.
—Georgia O'Keeffe*

I climb to Chimney Rock butte
to celebrate your coming into yourself
as well as your art now eighty years past.
From an eagle's eye view I see your red adobe
down below. This high desert country became
both refuge and muse: your daily walks through
these canyons and arroyos restored you.
Painting them saved you.

No man can ever do that for a woman.
You learned that lesson through
your ninety-nine years and many loves.
Tonight by the fire at Casa del Sol, moon and stars
hanging low in cobalt sky over Pedernal, I think,
God gave you this land after all.

Purple Light

In the middle of summer I can't remember the bite of winter.
Eighty degrees and sunshine; gold finch on the sunflowers
breeze lifting hair from damp neck, soft air.

I do not remember the feeling of wind chill at minus twenty,
the bulk of too much clothing as I steer the car over icy roads.
The dark mornings, early nightfall; all of it only words now

in the warmth of August, birds singing, tomato vines full of red fruit
bending, needing to be tied up. Cosmos waving lavender petals,
the scent of petunias after a rain.

And light. Wonderful light.
Shining purple through the stained glass
of the bathroom window.

Winter Morning

I chip ice from the door,
start the car to warm it.

Across the street in the tall trees
some crows, having a convention.

They fly into a loud black cloud
in the dawn sky.

Frigid morning. Frosty air.
A clangor of caws.

Three times they reassemble
in the tops of the tall trees
then leave suddenly as they appeared.

Triolet

The bumblebees did not return this year.
The poppies do not quiver with their buzzing.
Their fuzzy gold and black has disappeared.
The bumblebees did not return this year.

The larkspur shivers, mirroring my fear.
We know and do not know what we are losing.
The bumblebees did not return this year.
The poppies do not quiver with their buzzing.

The Burning Day

Once upon a day in August, starlings fell
from the apple tree like swooping leaves,
black against a dripping silver sky, settling
on the bottle green grass where they spread
like a wave on a beach. Then the sun, pale
as a swan's wing, shone through the vanilla
mist, hung like a Chinese lantern from the black
tree branches and cast penciled shadows
across the porch chairs. The ghost snakes of fog
retreated toward the forest, gliding between
the cornstalks, twining up the tree trunks
to disappear into summer's leaves. The sun
glowed into a burning disc melting
the mist into dew and the hummingbirds
arrived to sip and hover around the feeder
in the ruby-throated morning.

Lunch on the Pier

I park my car on the pier in Pomeroy,
next to one of the white-painted gazebos,
to eat my lunch while watching the river.
The water is navy blue today with tiny
white caps from the strong wind.

Seagulls perch in a row
on the low stone wall in front of me.
The wind pushes the feathers forward
on their heads like spiked haircuts.

I finish my sandwich, put my seat belt back on.
When I look up, a tiny frog is clinging
to my windshield. He's bright green
with a yellow underbelly. I can see
his throat pulsing with his heart.
We stare at each other through the glass.

I'm wondering how to get him off
my windshield without hurting him
when there is a squawk and a sweep of wings
as a seagull carries him off.

Noticing

*If you notice anything,
it leads you to notice
more
and more.
—Mary Oliver*

For the first time
I see the thin line of dirt
ringing the white half-moons
of your squared fingernails.
All these years
you have been digging
for fresh poems
around your Provincetown pond.

Have you noticed the deer
and foxes and snakes
watching you expectantly
from their line of trees?
Have you observed how short
the days are becoming?

Friendships that we swore
would last forever
by pricking our fingers
behind the rubbish hut
at our convent school playground
when the nuns
with their long El Greco faces
were looking elsewhere—
have you noticed
even those friendships
have died quietly of benign neglect?

A Poem

for Helen and Charles

A poem should explode inside of you

like a small shower of silver stars

Cauterizing fresh wounds

Touching old truths

Burning cooling

Making all things new.

Intrusion

As we walk down the steep path
muted afternoon light
pours from a sky
bracketed by leaves
leaves also beneath our feet
as we skirt the trillium. A stream

stretches below the wooden
bridge; a little waterfall slaps
over rocks. I grab a branch—
something furry darts past. You
and I, trespassers on your land, startle
trees, wild creatures. The light

shifts. Like Birnam Woods,
the thicket, now a confusion
of brown and darkening
green, moves toward us.

Whiteout

The wilderness flies past
the train window. Pale clouds hang
on mountains, witness
to the scatter of ragged spruce. Fireweed,
sustenance of bears, spills
its lifeblood across vast stretches. No power
lines or billboards; an occasional cabin.

White white the snow falls,
bleaches the fireweed pink,
blots it out entirely, indifferently. Heavy
flakes of white on white

—polar bear white, glacier white,
white sharp as a stalactite,
white thick as a drum beat,
white soft as terror,
opaque as eternity—

shroud the ghosted train
and its muted passengers
coasting—

Clown's Prayer

Sister, Sister in blue blue leaning in the car trunk
in the parking lot, rosary beads hanging down,
answer me this:

How many nuns can fit into
your misty blue 1978 Chevrolet Impala?

I can show you
how to pack the Sisters neatly in,
folding bodies for maximum yield and grace.

Won't it be a fabulous show!

Me, a clown in nun's clothing, you
and all the Sisters Sisters

jumping up one by one—popping out, blue blue blue!
Slightly darker than the misty blue car
—for Mother Superior and all the world to see.

Thin

Rotten, and now, light comes in at night straight through
because everything is so goddamn thin—my eyelids,
toenails, blood—the light from the street lamp through the sheers
burning two shafts on the ceiling, through me, thin like towers.

Thin like twins, lying side by side in baby thin sleep,
like paper thin sleep—the veil between what is,
what could be, and what has been—so thin—
light comes in.

On the Corniche, Beirut

the wind of the explosion
the glass glittering in her hair
the high-heeled sandals in his hand
the road on the edge of the cliff
the full panoramic view
the day of the longed-for reunion
the hour of return from the beach
the moment when love reignited
the wind of the explosion
the glass glittering in her hair
the high-heeled sandals in his hand
the hole in the heart of the afternoon

Oubliette

Before my eyes had sight, I felt a wall,
damp as a cheek, its tears all wept.
My cracking voice brought back no call
into the iron darkness where I slept.
But towards the roof, a rim of light,
bright outline of the eclipsed moon.
I traced this circle on the penciled night,
bracing myself against another moan.
And then—the sudden breaking blue
of freedom, and I climbed to you.

Mazie's Hydrangeas (An Excerpt)

It was 1941 when Mother first threw her Bible into the fire. Quite a commotion ensued, with Mother accusing Daddy of sorceries and thefts.

“Hear me! Hear me! Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered and write them not, you *adulterous* bastard!” We’d never heard about adultery. We *had* heard about idols. Was it that Daddy was worshipping idols? Would that make him, then, a heathen?

“Eleanor, *please*, not in front of the children.”

I couldn’t believe that my own father was going to hell. I looked at Mother, hoping she wasn’t serious about the idol thing, but all I saw was her permanent wave growing out in every direction, accentuating the fire in her eyes. She seemed charged with something larger than herself, larger than the drawings of Elijah she’d sketched in the Margaret Morrison studio at Carnegie Tech. Malevolent, demented, a mask over her former self. My father, tall and redheaded had once called her his poised little brown-eyed brunette. But life had overtaken her.

Now Daddy looked pale, overcome with disbelief, and tired—so tired he hadn’t bothered to send us upstairs. It had been a cool summer evening, and Father thought a fire would make things more homey. A fire in July. One page of the Holy Word blew out and sailed around the room before Father stamped it out on the rug. So much for Mother’s interpretations of Revelations; so much for Father’s expensive Serouk. And that wasn’t the first fire to be extinguished by Father. There’d come to be different kinds of fires.

“Calm down, honey. Here, have a highball, have a cigarette. Simmer down, for Christ sake. The children are here.” Did that mean it would be all right for her to behave this way if we weren’t there?

Drinks seemed to make Mother normal, and Daddy often wished that she were a dipsomaniac instead of—whatever she was. After pacifying her, and getting her upstairs to bed, Daddy had a drink or two himself, then called Mother's sister, Mildred, who had read everything written about nervous breakdowns, from *Reader's Digest* to the *Ladies Home Journal*. She suggested Margie and I stay at her home across the river in Aspinwall where we would be safe, until something could be done about Mother. Eleanor could be cured, Aunt Mildred said.

But whatever could be done about Father? The *idolterer*.

The next morning Mother didn't come down. The odor of singed Bible was still in the air. I mentioned to Daddy that it was the awfulest smell I'd ever smelled.

"What did you expect? Your mother is becoming a mythoclast." His expression was hard to read as he served up his emergency ketchup and egg sandwiches, smearing the extra ketchup off the sides with a napkin and dripping the Gol-durn stuff all over the floor on the way to the waste can. With Mother's ruffled apron on and his office shirt sleeves rolled up, Daddy didn't appear at all like an idol worshipper. If it wasn't for him, we'd have gone hungry.

Mythoclast? We weren't going to ask.

Father helped us cram all the clothes we could into his two square leather valises and off we went in the cushy back seat of the family Packard, which seemed unnecessarily roomy, even forlorn, without Mother—without her felt hat and the reams of notes cascading out of her resplendent alligator handbag.

Off we went from our state-of-the-art Regent Square bungalow, downhill and over the river to Aunt Mildred's nineteenth-century dirty yellow brick monster of a house, nearly hidden by chestnuts and sycamores and standing like a beacon on

top of three steep flights of cracked concrete steps. We couldn't help but wonder where in the world would we do cartwheels?

"Are we going to sleep in this bed?" I asked Father, once we'd settled in.

"Yes. It's a beautiful bed. It belonged to your mother's great-grandmother, Magdalene Jones, born in Wales in 1816." Magdalene? What kind of name was that? Something biblical again, and it didn't sound good.

"Did she die in this bed?" I pointed the question at Father, but Aunt Mildred blushed. He cleared his throat and said no, she did not die in that bed. Which was probably a lie. If a bed could be prudish, this bed was—melancholy mahogany headboard, prim scrolled posts with feet like sequoia trunks. A perfect bed to die in.

"Can't we sleep in another bed? This one is too high and too noisy." If only I could have stopped Margie from bouncing on the saggy old coffin as if she actually enjoyed it.

"No, there isn't any other free bed. You don't want to sleep in the attic, do you?"

So Margie and I languished away the end of summer in Aunt Mid's tall, dark guest bedroom with its vaulting windows. At night there was this ephemeral, shifting presence; the old house seemed to inch leeward under the moss-covered sycamores. To make matters worse, train whistles screamed, and when the wind was right, the sad moans of barge horns joined the occasional shriek of an animal from the Highland Park Zoo. At first we thought it was Mother. We missed the innocent quiet of nights in Regent Square, back before all of this, when everything seemed just hunky-dory.

An Attachment Theory

Harville Hendricks says we choose our mates
to reflect the way we danced with our parents—
Is that why there's no music in my marriage bed?

My dead father's song can be heard in this room
and I suppose it has something to do with the birth-
father, too, who was invisible for openers—

I never forgave him—Is that why fast tempers
preclude slow-dancing with my partner?

I dreamed a waltz, never got past the box step,

should have watched my parents' old movies—
Their choreography a smooth foxtrot—but
no Twyla Tharp ballet is happening on my stage.

Adopted babies learn to dance
with shadows. Hard to get your arms
around that.

Don't Tell Me You're Too Tired To Talk

when there's so much more to say
and I'm just getting to the bridge...
Mary Lou said, Jazz is a conversation
so talk to me, baby, tell me pretty tunes
& I'll comp your lyric in three flats.

Tell me about the sweet smell of lilacs
your shirt carried to the Laundromat
after the last gig while I slept through
those sets in my loft on 48th Street that
never smelled of lilacs. Tell me the one
about the after-hours club bash I wasn't
invited to attend but you went anyway
& don't leave out the part about singing
three choruses of *Pretty Women*
to the redhead behind the bar after closing—
You never sang that verse to me when I
was pouring—let's free-lance some old
standards cause I'm so tired of those
sameold sameold riffs—let me hear some
new changes, even a new vamp to vary
my days.

Talk to me, now, jazz it before I cut out
my light, play us off with a sweet ballad
in B minor 'cause I got the major blues,
lover—no mood for a conversation
in waltz time.

Downtown Chicago

Marshall Fields has a clock at the corner of the store.

It's a place to meet friends.

The fountain in the middle of the rotunda attracted the elite.

As a hostess I took the folks to their seats.

Mrs. Ritz told me to seat the black couple in the far corner.

Instead I sat them in the beautiful rotunda.

She fired me.

I smiled and said, *Thank you, Ritz.*

Time Flies And All That

But I remember when
I had so much to do
That I could not find sleep
For thinking of all
Things I failed to do

I make the old woman
In the shoe look like
A piker! It's seven
And I've not yet
Come up with a thought.
Of course, I could skip class
But it's the highlight
Of my week so that is
Out!

The Grass is Green

Along the Monongahela
where mighty steel was made
where steelworkers fought Frick's
Pinkerton men and blood soaked
the ground, the grass now green,
where artist Vullo designed
with stone the peaceful labyrinth.

A friend and I slowly walk
its path to the center, she
in bare feet, grass between her toes
and I on sore foot praying
for you, me, the world,
the sun on our backs,
the breeze on our cheeks.

We Haven't Even Had Summer

Sitting on the porch
requires a sweater
and it's only July.
The sound of the leaves
reminds us of fall
and we haven't even
had summer yet. It's
like a life lived
only through spring;
no summer completed,
no fall or winter days
to enjoy life's breath.

Taste Test

it's important to know:

you like butter cream icing
 and hot fudge topping because it's gooey
but iced-tea shouldn't have ice
 and the cereal must be soggy

it gets us through
 all the particular appetites
and second helpings
 nothing with raisins or nuts,

just a sprinkle of salt
 thank God it's only the two of us
if you want some dessert,
 let it set to keep it wet—

get some before it all goes

Burying the Body

We have another fight where
I throw a tall black boot at your head
and hope this is the time
I don't miss.

You should know why
but don't. Never do.
It's always her.
I rip apart the earth,

break every nail
beyond the quick.
Unearth worms, black
beetles, flat stones.

I dig down until I reach
the frozen remains
of you & her. Warm
the rigid limbs under

my arms, between
my thighs. Move the bulbs
of my daffodils
to one side. Let both of you

rise & crawl back into the house,
through the long hallway
that opens into rooms where you fucked
& talked about nothing. Outside,

I draw the earth close.
This is where
I bury my body—
beneath a vine

of old morning glories,
a generic bag
of rat poison. Pennsylvania red
clay, twine & splintered bone.

Target Practice

for Terry

The evening of my best day was the color
of early October. Dead
leaves. Broken telephone wire.
The smoke of a neighbor's burn pile sliding
down my throat like fake cherry cough syrup,
chipped teeth. Cheap alcohol, straight up.

It is the color of a darkened room, where
the TV screen light streams over your face. I catch
you, in the corner of my eye, as you mouth the lines
to *Dawn of the Dead*. You know all
of Romero's movies by heart, have a plan
for what to do in case zombies
ever really attack Pittsburgh.
You've written it down on graph paper,
in red pen. It's in your briefcase, the one with a broken
lock that you have to break into with a butter knife.

I can imagine watching
from our second story, cut off
from the world. Below us, the mass
of dead bodies, slow like cold
maple syrup. Sticky with the gore of intestines,
brains. I like the idea of only us
surviving. Never having to leave
the house. When it all begins,
I will remember what you've told me
four thousand times:

destroy the staircase first,
block the door.
Always aim for the head.

A Gathering of Ants

They congregate inside my house
the first warm day of spring—
spill out on tiles above the sink.

Scurrying every which way
they greet me early in the morning.
They won't be in my kitchen long.

I respect their cooperative spirit,
admire their diligence in building
layered colonies two feet or more

below the ground, and their loyalty
to tasks and to each other.
Have you ever watched an ant

drag the body of a comrade away,
or observed chambered anthills
as complex as the pyramids?

Mandibles and feet their only tools,
ants build invisible cities ruled
by guarded, pampered queens.

Could it be that unknown beings
study us through telescopes above
as we build towers, roads and bridges—

observe our warlike ways?

Snowbanks

Years ago we found a pansy
blooming under the snow
in our garden.

I was a child then.
Now I am discovering
unexpected clumps of flowers

under snowbanks everywhere.

Discussion

It heated up when a woman wrote
it was an act of violence to lecture
about writers—especially to a group
of women writers—and to offer
only men as examples.

Are women, one said, so special?

Consider the canon.

*Need women hear only from people
equipped with a uterus?*

*The writers named were powerful,
so where's the problem?*

Faces intent, voices passionate.

We should "out" the lecturer.

No, it wouldn't be nice.

*Wouldn't even be accurate, she did mention
Jane Austen, accused of nature writing.*

We call ourselves Madwomen in the Attic,
Charlotte Bronte's monkey wrench
in the works of true love, the angry,
crazy woman locked up
in the topmost room to keep her
from setting the whole story on fire.

Troy Polamalu Zig Zags Down the Field and the Steelers Go to the Super Bowl

I asked the man who was teaching me
to lift weights how Polamalu did it,
that swift, mid-tumult run, changing direction
on a dime, this way, then that, eluding
tacklers. He grows flowers, makes
furniture and plays the piano, says one
website. And trains for speed, lateral
movement and vertical jump, says another.
But the weight trainer said,
He knew he had to do it, that's all.

They

They took Mother away today. She went quietly, shuffling her feet across the rough, gray concrete floor. She looked back at me once, just once, and said, “Remember all I taught you.” The orange uniformed men, one on each side of her, tugged on the ropes tied to her wrists. She didn’t look back again. I watched through the window slit. They put her in a wooden bus-box and sat beside her, one on each side. Six more men in orange uniforms were hitched up to pull the bus-box. I watched them until I couldn’t see them anymore. The sky was pewter.

I was on my energy board when they came in. They didn’t knock. They just came in. I turned off my energy board and got off, hitting my hip against the metal side bars. They didn’t say anything but just held their hands up in a way that told me to stop and not come any closer. My meter was only half way to finish when they came in. Seems like it takes longer and longer to get the meter all the way to finish. Jeremy, that’s my husband, says they increase the requirements on a regular basis. Jeremy seems to know things like that. He hears the workers whispering to each other at the District 18 recycle building. He calls it the re-sigh place. All the men in District 18 work at re-sigh. Every single thing in all the districts has to be re-sighed. Every single thing. It’s a lot of work and Jeremy comes home tired and dirty and smelling different every day. Some of the smells are bad. Jeremy says we have to recycle. Says we owe it to the world. They taught him that when he lived at the Children’s Village.

Just last week, he told me real quiet like, so Mother wouldn’t hear, that the Monitor Squad was tracking what time of day the wives worked on their energy boards. I knew right away what that was all about. Sure enough, I knew. I did my energy board first thing every day and then went to Mother’s board. Mother

couldn't do hers anymore. Not at all. Walking on the board gave her chest pain and made her short of breath. The energy board just took it all out of her. Poor dear. So I did hers for her. But a monitor would show that the different meters were done at different times in our living space. Anybody could figure out that the same person was doing two different boards. And that's not allowed. Everybody has to be productive. If someone is not productive, they aren't useful anymore. People who aren't useful are people who use more energy than they make. And that is not good for the Earth.

Everyone in every district has to pay back the energy they use every day. They call it Energy Neutral Fiscal Policy. I hate those big words. The men, like Jeremy, who work in the central buildings of each of the districts, get energy credit for their work. Plus the bicycles the men ride to work have extra friction built in somehow so it takes extra energy to pedal and that extra energy gets stored in little batteries and downloaded into the Community Resource Bank. Mother called the energy boards treadmills and said in her day people used them for exercise and only when they wanted to. No one had to walk the treadmill then. Mother was always comparing now to then. She didn't much like anything that was now. She had a bad habit of picking at her skin, making little craters, little sores, crusted with dried blood. She did it on her arms, on her face, on her shoulders. She did it while she talked. It was leaving scars. If she didn't stop doing this, she would soon be nothing but scars.

Guess it doesn't matter. They took her away. She's gone.

Seems so strange now with Mother gone. Just me, here, walking on my energy board. And quiet, too. Mother used to talk to me all the time. All the time, her voice going on and on like a metronome, a regular beat of words, tick, talk, tick, talk. She said she had to tell me how things used to be, way back when.

Way back when I was a little girl. Way back when we lived on a farm...and I don't know just what a farm is so she tries to tell me...way back before everyone was moved into Districts. She said they kept animals on the farm. Imagine that! Keeping animals on a farm. One of the things they talk about at the Social Update Meetings is how animals belong to the Earth, not to people. And animals are to be free. Last week Jeremy by accident ran over a snake with his cycle. He had to go to Council and confess. They made him do extra shifts as a punishment. Mother said that was wrong, just wrong.

That was the thing about Mother. She remembered how things were and compared that to how things are now and tried to show me how things now are wrong. But it's hard for me to know for sure. I mean, I can't even picture what a farm is. I just know what is now, and the energy board, and the meter with its round dial, and the needle that creeps around the dial until it hits the peg, and then I know I've made enough energy so Jeremy can stop at the Nourishment Center on his way home and get our rations.

We won't get as many rations now, with Mother gone. I'll miss her. I'll try to remember all she told me, but surely I'll forget some of it. That would be like forgetting history, erasing history. And that would be wrong, just wrong.

Bauer

You got those small circular burns
at P Café the other night. You spilled
some guy's beer, he stood up ready.
Let's go, you said, put out your cigarette

twice on your forearm. He thought
you were tough backed down getting small
on the sweaty leather bar stool. So drunk
you didn't even feel the singe on your skin.

Your breath weighs heavy today with ash
and whiskey burning. I remember that guy
remember being afraid you didn't think
it mattered that you burned holes into your arm.

You've gone out 7 nights out of 7 nights,
whiskey stains your tongue and teeth.

Somehow I let myself go with you. I hate
the fights but love the rough feel of your
bare teeth against my skin, the push
and pull of your lips crushing mine.

Even though last night you ripped
the orange bra with your teeth
and we did 2 bowls in your bathroom
today you don't speak. We wear our dirty

work shirts and clean tables your arm
brushing my side, without a word exchanged.

First Carolina Snow

She said she hated snow. It was one of the main reasons we moved to North Carolina. But at 3 am on a Tuesday it snowed. For the first time in fifty years in Fayetteville, there was more than three inches of white iced glory. Devanne was four and I was nine.

We were snuggled on the bottom bunk beneath three pounds of My Little Pony blankets. My mom came in slowly shaking our small shoulders and rushing us to the front yard. Piles and piles of white lined the steep driveway, white eating the curves

and ridges of brown green grass and the blue gnomes of the garden. A rare curve settles on her cracking lips softening her face against so much whiteness. We all run with gloves earmuffs and fleece, the down of our puffy coats flying and falling to the ground.

We dive deep into the wet white, face first until we are completely covered in the freezing wet mess. My mom throws snowballs bigger than our heads and doesn't once mention my father's name.

Thanksgiving

Libby squeezes into the bakery. So many bodies ahead of her, the door props itself open on her back. Windblown rain sneaking under the awning sprays the side of her hair, and she pats down the rising frizz. She has no time to wait in this crowd, no time at all. What if the apartment still resembles a bomb scene when Jake's parents fly in tonight? She has to help him clean her old bedroom where clutter has accumulated like autumn leaves since they turned from roommates to lovers. And there's the cat hair that's upholstering the sofa, the food-splotched kitchen floor, and the crusted crud on the stove. She tried to ask Beth, their other roommate, to help clean before she left town for the holiday. But she chickened out, rationalizing that she and Jake cause two-thirds of the mess (except for shedding cat hair). For them, graduate school, research assistantships, and sex take priority. She never knew that falling in love messed with a brain and made the gunk that remains after cooking together appear almost charming.

Why did she agree to host Thanksgiving dinner? Too intense for a first meeting, too much potential for giving Jake's parents a bad impression. Anxiety pummels her, turns her breath shallow, sizzles her insides. As always, she said yes because she hates to upset anyone, especially Jake. But agreeable can't be her default mode any longer. She has to be more assertive, even aggressive if necessary—just like that author of *Act Out to Win Out* said to do on late night TV. And right now, she needs to push through the crowd and get to the machine that tongues out numbers. When a man bellies up to her, trying to get out the door with his pie box intact, she dodges to the left and charges forward, her head lowered to avoid eye contact with everyone.

“Excuse me, pardon me.” She raises her voice above its usual wimpy level as part of her assertiveness practice, and

shimmies sideways through thick jackets, bumping elbows, and handbags. The odor of damp coats and wet hair competes with the scent of the pastries, and the stink is winning. She makes it to the machine and fingers the slot where the numbers normally hang. Nothing there.

A red-coated woman she pushed past strikes with a sharp tone, “Can’t you see it’s broken? You gotta go to the back of the line.” Libby flushes and notices the digital dots that display the customer number are dark. That explains why she hasn’t heard a number called yet, just the words, “Who’s next?” belted out.

She inches her way to the side, away from the grumbling red coat, but not to the back of the line. For one thing, there’s no *line*, only a clump of mildewing people. For another, she’s running out of time. She took the day off to prepare, and that angered her work-obsessed professor, which in turn upset her. She spent half of the day in the jammed grocery store, and now this. But she can’t leave without their yummy pumpkin and apple pies in case she screws up the meal. She wedges herself among a few older men whom she judges as less likely to send her to the rear, and though she hears a clearing of throats and sucking of teeth as if they’re readying to bark, none complain about her intrusion.

Waiting for the pack ahead to thin, she reviews the few hours left to scrub the tub, wash the sheets, vacuum, overhaul the kitchen. Tension stiffens her. A woman about her age with a stubby ponytail serves this side of the counter. She’s new with a name tag that says, “Hello, my name is Lottie.” That name is more old-fashioned than her own, but she lacks the crisp efficiency of the other mature workers. Lottie’s so indolent that Libby examines the other side to see if she can sneak her way

over there. The red-coated woman looks too intimidating to cross so she stays put, heating up over the snail pace.

Finally she's almost there, behind one man and a gray-haired woman with a baby in her arms. The woman orders one cookie—one, after waiting all that time—then she sidles to the side where the counter ends. Lottie mirrors the movement while peeling off her plastic gloves, and comes out from behind to play with the baby.

Hello, My-Name-is-Lottie, what are you thinking? Look at all these people! Still, Lottie coos at the boy, nuzzles his smeared cheek. Another worker calls to the man in front of Libby to take his order, covering for the missing-in-action Lottie, even smiles at the diversion. With a close-up view of the interminable snuggling, her irritation rises like a pus-filled welt. That *Act Out* author on TV would say to speak her mind. Time to stop being a doormat, even if it's scary. Time to say what she thinks. Like that red-coat did.

She catches something soft in Lottie's face that touches her, but she's so wound up that the words erupt anyway. "Stop playing around! You're making everyone wait!"

Eyes land on her. The baby startles, then whimpers. Lottie's face crumples. The older woman's reddens with anger, her mouth like a lion's about to roar. And she does.

"I'll have you know her husband was killed in Iraq. She has to leave her baby to work full time, and misses them more than someone nasty as you could ever understand."

Libby flinches as if slapped, feels mortified. Hot discomfort surges from her chest to her neck to her face. She bites her lower lip, tastes blood.

Lottie goes behind the counter, blinking back tears. "What can I get for you?"

Libby can't order and looks down. Her own worries seem as small as the crumbs on the floor. How does she apologize for clinging to flaws, for shutting out gratitude?

Going Postal

I can't believe I'm on a date with you,
your black skin shimmering under
a hot pink v-neck tee.

Can't believe I'm sitting here and I need
nothing more than to leave here,
ride pony express into your bed.

I say, apropos of nothing:
you remind me of a mail slot
and the conversation drops,
me unable to explain.

I don't remember walking out of the bar
or to my car, but I do remember
the white-washed door you walked through
on your way inside the home I'll never enter:
the fishnet stockings and the skin of you,
the zipped leather thigh-high boots and the
feel of you. The arrival of my hands, fingers,
belly at your thighs, mouth—undelivered.

agnostic, I write the holy

what breaks me loose from time is holy
and I'm not talking death *Wisdom*

graces a face limbered with long miles
an infant's eyes already encyclopedic

with light *Wonder* low on a ladder whose upper
rungs may rest against a rain gutter or nothing

nothing at all I'm betting on the gutter though
and I'm no gambler sex so deep there is no self

no other performance so perfect musicians
score audience disappear only music remains

You Don't Take Good Photographs

he said. Your facial bones are wrong.
Tilt your head down, to the right. More.
More. Slight smile. Hold. Relax.
When people take your photo tell them,
shoot your left profile. The right's
your bad side.

Other bads—I can't read maps,
can't tell north from east. Color
blind, so red looks brown. Right
ear nearly deaf, left breast larger
than the right. So near-sighted
I'll never be far.

Words inscribe me. Think triple
rainbows, the 53 varieties
of marble, the water drop
that sways at a pine needle tip,
sways, elongates,
falls.

The Exchange (An Excerpt)

The red sedan had long since passed the last hunter's cabin when the snow began, at twilight, beautiful. The two in the front seat played the radio softly and smoked; in the back seat the hitchhiker, Jan, watched the snow fall on an unbroken line of trees. Huddled in his coat, he was beginning to fall asleep when Michael shouted, "Christ!"

Deer loomed in the windshield, against a screen of snow. An instant later Jan felt the thud of contact. Michael braked and the car jarred to a halt.

For a moment they were silent. The shock of the impact rang through the car, and the air inside appeared to darken. Then Shana and Michael spoke almost at once: she urging him to get out, to check the car for damage, he asserting that it was running fine, that if no one was hurt he intended to drive on.

They had hit one animal hard, maybe more than one. What could they do? Probably nothing, but Jan couldn't leave it at that, couldn't let it go. He felt a flash of anger toward the others—they hadn't even mentioned the deer.

He slid out of his seat belt and fumbled with his backpack, where he kept a flashlight in a zippered pocket, before he decided just to grab the pack. Shana said, "Jan?" but he was already letting himself out of the car, feeling for the flashlight while he scanned the road.

The snow fell more heavily now and was hard to see. With his eyes on the ground, he crossed to the far side and played the flashlight over a drainage ditch. Nothing but a trickle of black water, a smudge of tall grasses beginning to catch the snow.

He turned and cast the light up the road, then walked forward, peering into the gloom. In his mind, a whole, live animal, stunned but recovering, rose up and bounded away. But

when he crossed in front of the car, the headlights showed only the whitening surface of the road. The deer seemed to have melted into the forest. He stepped over a gully to check the thicket of trees.

Unhh! Something had hit him, punched him in the gut. No, it was still coming toward him—it was going to roll over him and crush him.

He squeezed his eyes closed and avoided it, as in a dream. When he took his hands away from his face, he saw that no physical thing had threatened him—or even touched him. What had just happened? An after-effect of the crash? He thought of energy released by the impact, whipping through the trees with a sting in its tail. No, that wasn't possible. Some kind of electrical charge? That didn't make sense, either. But it had been like that: a thing without substance, barreling through. It had been like...a feeling. He found an image in his mind, of a feeling with a shape. A ragged ball of fear, or maybe grief. *In* the forest somehow, although how could that be? As if he had walked into a force field of emotion.

A snake of yellow light lay across a swath of pine needles where he had dropped the flashlight. After a deep breath, he picked it up and panned it back and forth over a tangle of brush. Then he turned back toward the road.

The flashlight's beam skittered as his hand jerked in surprise. *There was a deer on the roof of the car.*

He focused the light again. The deer was splayed there like a grotesquely oversized ornament. The light picked out the prongs of antlers—a buck! Was it dead or alive? Its head drooped and it seemed to nod. How could he have missed seeing it before?

Inside the car, someone had switched on the dome light. Jan saw Michael and Shana just sitting there, unaware of what they had taken on. Both heads were turned in the other direction. Michael rolled his window down and called Jan's name. The syllable dropped into the silence like a bright splash of paint.

Their heads turned toward him. Jan switched off the flashlight and stood motionless inside the envelope of trees.

Under the dark bulk of the deer, the car's interior glowed lavender. Shana's window rolled down. "Jan?" She hadn't seen him, though.

As she opened her door, Michael spoke to her. Jan watched a few moments of nearly inaudible conversation. Something about their hunched postures suggested that they didn't want to leave the car—even that they were afraid to leave the car. Shana pushed her door open wider and he shrank back, thinking she was going to get out after all, but it was only so she could slam it shut.

They gave him another five minutes. Every so often one opened a window and called his name to the deserted road. Neither looked behind them, where two forelegs were draped over the rear window, where, as the buck's head sank lower, an antler dipped into view, pointed toward the ground.

The engine revved and the car inched forward. He saw Shana looking out at the trees. Then the dome light switched off and the car, with its strange burden, picked up speed.

Surely the buck would slip off the roof. Surely Michael would feel the extra weight as he drove. Perhaps these things happened later, farther along the road.

Jan stepped out and watched the tail lights disappear.

Getting Left

Intermission at the Pittsburgh Ballet and the bartenders sweat tens and twenties. The sisters tap their fingernails against thin flutes, their backs to the red velour roping.

“*And* she was wearing white linen...did I mention that?” Mildred says.

“Revoltin’. Can you imagine? Linen—this time of year.” Sissy wedges her nose, wilted with age, into the narrow opening of her glass.

“And the baby. In sequins, no less. Unholy—if you ask me.”

“Well, honestly Mildred,” Sissy says, swallowing. “Why would anyone ask you?” Mildred is younger than Sissy—by one year. Mildred has buried a husband and learned to drive a car, but Sissy still speaks to Mildred the same as she did when they shared a room, and a last name, and two pairs of shiny buckled shoes.

“What kind of a thing is that to say? I’ve plenty—”

“Do you smell that?” Sissy lifts her chin and scans the crowd. “Something’s burning.” A man whizzes past them on his way to the bar, barreling into the bronze pole connecting the ropes and blowing back the sisters’ hair without so much as an *Excuse me, please*. His shirt flaps open at the waist announcing his unattended navel.

“Nothing is burning,” Mildred says. “Except for my eyes.” She shakes her head and sips her drink and wonders why she hasn’t noticed the change as it’s happened. Exactly when was the orchestra replaced by a taped recording? Which season, during which performance, did the dancers begin to lay on top of one another in what amounts to little more than a loin cloth? She can’t remember the point at which she became so utterly unseeable—this creamy bloused nothing.

The house lights flicker and dim. Sissy insists the smell is coming from the roof. She is certain someone has snuck into the balcony for a cigarette during the break, foolishly assuming the smoke would rise and evaporate and no one would notice or care.

“But they weren’t counting on me. Were they, Mildred?” Sissy marches to the bar and shoves to the front of the line. Mildred watches as her sister wags a finger in the bartender’s drippy face.

Mildred studies the flecked carpeting, examines the pink polish on her fingernails, and, as the final bell rings, drops her glass behind the brass pole. She slips back to their seats and leafs through the program as if it contains the instructions for evacuating a doomed flight. *First, save yourself.*

The curtains open and Sissy shoves in next to Mildred. “They’re looking into it,” she says. Someone shushes her. “The smell...they’re looking into it,” she repeats even louder, craning her neck at unreasonable angles. Mildred shrinks and nods, folds her hands into her lap, and directs her eyes to stage left.

A woman wearing a torn nightshirt writhes on top of a wooden table. Not a nice table but sturdy. A cloth might freshen it up—some cut flowers and tea cups to cover the splatters of white paint. The woman’s limbs are being loosened by two men, pulling at her from opposite ends. Who would think to do such a thing on a table? No orchestra. Just this thumping, and the silent audience—the sticky seat warmers afraid to breathe for fear they might be mistaken for panting.

Mildred feels her blouse brush against her skin. Blood surges to her center. The men stretch out next to the woman, one with his head at her feet, the other tickling the inside of her arm. Mildred closes her eyes and tickles the inside of her own arm.

“Ménage à trois?” Sissy says, breaking the silence again, and rams her elbow into Mildred’s side. “French perverts.”

Someone laughs, quietly as if laughing at a toddler. A ridiculous child who has repeated a dirty word in public: one that she cannot possibly understand—given her age—rendering the situation acceptable and ironic at the same time. Mildred places her palm on her cheek, attempts to conceal the family resemblance.

“Shh,” Mildred says with a sternness that surprises her.

“Shh, yourself.”

The trio of dancers sashays into the wings, and a chorus line of girls takes the stage. Mildred’s hands tremble in her lap as applause ripples through the theater. She feels like a spoon, powerless in the grasp of the oaf who holds it—fated to spiral down, down, drifting through that interminable silence before clanging stupidly against the floor.

Sissy fidgets in her seat. Her hose are likely bunching at the crotch. Mildred is confident it is only a matter of time before her sister will articulate the details out loud. She looks to her left and right. Oh, the malice in those mocking throats—hovering in close seats—waiting with ears, eager and patient as vultures. Mildred cannot bear it.

She tightens her fists and thinks about learning to merge into traffic, about the art of getting left, of bridges she’s crossed on orange evenings in the Buick and how she cuts the wheel—finally the one in control before soaring, sinking into welcoming water below.

Mildred gathers her things. “Fire,” she says under her breath. Sissy turns and furls her brow. “Fire,” Mildred says a bit louder, until she gets used to the sound of it, like a taste. It tastes good. Once more and standing now, handbag in hand, mid-chorus-line kick, she shouts as the canned music plays.

“Fire,” she cries. “Fire. Fire...Fire!”

Joe Rock Broke His Son's BB Gun

Without saying a word

snapped
the Red Ryder
in half
over one knee

the day
Bob shot Ronnie
in the ass
for scaring
a flock of birds
away.

Joe Rock Grew Roses

Surrounded the house
with bursts of pink, yellow
white, red.

Pruned in spring,
at first sight
of blooming forsythia,
removed dead wood/winter
damage.

In summer
scratched cottonseed/bone and blood
meal/Epsom salts
into the soil

and after
the first kill frost of fall,
built barriers
of compost and chicken wire.

Then, in the dormant
days of winter,
worked three to eleven
at the Clairton mill
and waited

Brocade

Sound the sunlight, one ear
caresses trees, blows half-notes.
Doves coo, grass sweats
people and chairs gather.

Bagels slathered with honeyed cream
fresh fruit, juices down arms,
brimmed hats fasten gray hairs,
Hawaii on shirts,
dogs unleashed, sandaled feet.

We sit in shade,
music tunes the air
folds Bach to Beethoven.
We bask to bliss,
trumpeting our smiles.

Folding chairs jewel with rain
falling soft, then pelting.
Umbrellas erupt.

Microwave

Today I could not name
that microwave
which has sat in my kitchen
since we moved here four years ago,

the faithful high-frequency
electromagnetic radiation oven
that nuked our corn on the cob
blasted our potatoes

unfroze our frozens
reheated our coffee or tea
warmed our buns
toasted our winter slippers

popped our TV popcorn,
\$19.95
with a coupon at Macy's.
I fear my memory is losing

its faithful oven.
I passed the seventy mark one time
and coming up on a second pass
in five months.

I visit nursing homes
where friends in maroon sweats for PT and OT
push their vital fluids poles
or ring for the nurse

who arrives just in time.
My life's hard drive,
my short term life, my way
to the doctor, grocer, church, family—

losing these would be grave,
a permanent amputation,
slobbery, blubbery, mindless
fodder for fiddle-faddle.

Packaged Deal

Since becoming anemic last year, Jonas Avery found it difficult to keep his body warm. The sunlight felt pleasant as it caressed him. Frail, balding, he was seventy years old now, his days of welding in the steel mill, lovingly caring for an invalid wife, and occasionally fishing on the lake were among closed pages in his life. Unlike the strapping dynamic go-getter that he was in his prime, Jonas had become a new man. He had come to terms. The images he once took for granted and touched with his eyes were now a part of his past. He settled gracefully into the inevitable rituals of his twilight years.

Gracie pulled the white lace shawl with pink butterfly figures over her lap. She looked down to make sure the shawl covered her knees and extended to the ground. She was still self-conscious about the amputation of her left leg. Her battle with diabetes had not been a kind one. She closed her sad gray eyes. Her oval-shaped plump face and lovely deep-dimpled cheeks gave her an angelic appearance as she sat beside Jonas in her wheelchair. She welcomed the serenity in the mini park in the back of the personal care home. No nurses, no pills, no overwhelming odor of urine. Just her, Jonas, and the squirrels.

It went that way for quite a while until Jonas broke the silence. “Know what, Gracie?”

“What?” She opened her eyes and frowned as she turned her head toward the wooden bench where he sat. She was not in a conversational mood.

“You’re a beautiful woman. I can hear it in your voice—bet you were belle of the ball back then.”

“Sure I was,” she laughed. Jonas didn’t notice the sarcasm in her laugh. There was a bell in our hell hut of a house all right, she remembered, a damn monstrous bell. Ding dong ding dong all

day long, even at night when she desperately needed sleep. Four children's voices ringing, crying mama, mama, mama, all because of a demanding, abusive, alcohol-drinking, no-good husband. He accused her of not fulfilling her wifely duties, would call her an inept slob, leave her alone in the middle of the night. "I'm going to the arms of a real woman," he'd say. Yet she always took him back when he'd finally return. Why did she do such an asinine thing? He'd terrorize the children so badly that their daughter Jane trembled every time he came near her. *No, Jonas, I'm not beautiful.* A beautiful woman would never let such an ugly thing happen to her children. She'd never let her two oldest daughters marry carbon copies of their father, which is exactly what they did. Poor Jane drowned in the Winston River at twenty years old. "Suicide," said the coroner. And her boy Kurt, rotting away in the penitentiary in Kentucky, beat his young wife to death while in a drunken stupor.

"Oh, Lord, I'm going to cry, please don't let me cry again," Gracie whispered. Her eyes felt the familiar sting. The salty tears hit her lips. The shawl slid from her lap and landed on the footrest of the wheelchair. She stared at her right leg. Why didn't she break the cycle when she still had a chance? Her mother certainly didn't.

"Gracie, Gracie, you're not coming down with a cold, are you?" Jonas seemed worried. "I thought I heard you snuffle."

"No, Jonas, no cold, I'm fine."

"You poor woman. I must be boring you to tears."

"No, Jonas, for the hundredth time, you're not boring me." He was such a caring man, and someday she'd tell him what troubled her.

The sound of thunder that echoed at a distance was closing in; the sky was darkening. "Looks like a storm is brewing," she said. "We'd better head indoors."

“Ah, phooey,” said Jonas, “the sun was out a few minutes ago.”

Gracie smiled as she reached for his red and white cane. He reminded her of a little boy with that big frown on his face. He took his place in back of the wheelchair, grabbed each handle with his hands. Gracie released the brake and directed him toward the ramp for the handicapped.

Our Angels

The fluid, siphoned by a delicate vacuum, is slowly pulled through a hard silver three-inch needle. The chemicals are toxic, powerful poisons. Her long brown hair is falling out in clumps. Her body is ravaged. Swabs of yellowish orange iodine are providing designs like henna imprints on her skin. An intense odor is penetrating my nostrils as I glance down at her body lying across the small hospital table.

Beeping machines monitor her heart and all of her small being. It sounds like an alarm clock in my mind. I can feel my own heart and pulse beginning to take on its own race. I glance down again; the iodine design is now on the base of her spine. It is on the the familiar spot, sore from being probed and prodded so many times before. *The angel kisses it.*

The needle is not inserted easily. It penetrates. It stops. The needle is hitting bone. My heart rate is elevated. My heart is pounding! I think the angels are hovering over her. Glances from the doctor's eyes, nurses' hands are holding her small body down. Confusion has set in. She is in a twilight state. I struggle to keep my composure, as tears roll down her face. She moans, she cries out, "Mom, Mom." I begin to whisper to myself. The shouting is heard, then screams, crying, and tears. They echo. They fill the halls. Not just one child, but rooms full of children, each enduring!

The procedure is still in progress. The doctors and nurses keep smiling! They look down at their own hands. Non-latex gloves cover their fingers as the blood trickles, expertise, steady hands. They continue composed, gently smiling. How do they manage to continue? I stand over my lovely daughter.

Tears now roll down my cheeks. My heart thunders, ready to explode. The nurse whispers, "We are almost done." I know there is no other option. The room is hot and small.

I whisper, “All the angels take your wings, wrap them around her!” I whisper again, with urgency, as she cries out, “Take your wings, wrap them around her. Protect her, save her! DO YOU HEAR ME? I ask your protection. I demand your protection.”

The procedure is completed. The hours pass, a consistent heart monitor begins to soothe my emotions. I believe the angels linger. They engulf her. I begin to slump in a very uncomfortable chair. Emotionally exhausted, I glance at my daughter. I imagine the angels kissing her tiny fingers. Their white wings brush and tickle her nose. Their eyelashes are delicate and soft. The angels spread a tint of pink on round cheeks as she sleeps. She begins to toss slowly. She is coming out of her twilight sleep. I imagine the angels gently rustling her. I exhale again. I whisper, “Thank you,” and feel a soft touch on my hand. She reaches for me.

“Hi mommy,” then a silent pause, she whispers, “Did you see them, mom?”

James on the Mission Street Bridge

He nudges my back as I fall asleep.
Dark hands appear over my head—
The landlord saw him fall off the bridge;
he died on a Saturday night.

Dark hands appear over my head;
I see the outline of his face in the wall.
He died on a Saturday night,
no one exactly knows what happened.

I see the outline of his face in the wall,
it wasn't an accident. I feel him watching.
No one exactly knows what happened.
Watching me get dressed, put on makeup, try to sleep.

It wasn't an accident. I feel him watching.
His body too big to fit between the ledge and the railing,
watching me get dressed, put on makeup, try to sleep.
He must have pulled himself up over the divider.

His body too big to fit between the ledge and the railing
watching me rub lotion up and down my legs.
He must have pulled himself up over the divider;
some think he was high or maybe lonely.

Watching me rub lotion up and down my legs
he sees me on top, my head flung back.
Some think he was high or maybe lonely,
my hips go up and down having sex with my husband.

He sees me on top, my head flung back,
some neighbors heard him scream as he dropped.
My hips go up and down having sex with my husband.
He nudges my back as I fall asleep.

This Evening

Before it came in close to the nook of my body—a sick daydream
a kind of allure, a charm, playing out each possible scenario—
Burnt. Shot. Drowned. Stabbed
or feasted upon by wild animals.

If you jump from a tall building to land on your back,
your eyes pop out and hang by
bloody cables—*Looks like joke glasses*—to be then
delivered naked, zipped-up in
a black bag for the most part
found whole.

This evening I am burdened, overcast—the mirror graying
as dusk & the familiar fetish play over in my mind—
crushed by a tractor,
struck by lightning, strangled with a spiral telephone cord—
has lost its appeal.

Before excited by the possible gore—what would it look like
biting into an extension cord while
standing in a shallow pool of water.
Now drifting off to sleep

I'm afraid to not wake up, to live unflawed, unwhole,
body descended—
I keep the book open.

Alas, Poor Gregor

A cockroach, prone
on the library restroom floor.
Frantic, flailing legs, so like
poor Gregor, Kafka's alter
ego, exploited, dismissed.

I turn the creature upright.

In Japan I once dodged
and splatted monstrous
flying bugs in the middle
of the night when I got up
to feed my newborn son.

But this insect isn't threatening,

just helpless, vulnerable.

Later, I checked on him—
it is again on its back,
lifeless, victim of someone
who has not yet read
The Metamorphosis.

Wendy

When her mother left the mortuary,
where she grew up among
corpses and funereal flowers,
she learned to paint azaleas,
tulips, roses, violets—living
blossoms in vivid colors.

Wendy's father photographed
trees and sky, land and lakes
birds and forest wildlife.
Her brother took pictures
of city scenes—tenements,
urchins, bag ladies, drunks.

Wendy's art, begot by dreams
gave birth to metaphors: A super
cat named Cerwidanth—which
was as well her e-mail moniker.
A half-human feline future queen
living with farmers in Kentucky.

Wendy rooted for the underdog:
A shy girl-child in the shadow
of a tale-telling older brother.
A tiny frog on her car window,
abducted by a ravenous gull.

I Boarded the Silver Line Bus at South Station

When the bus lurched and I, arms loaded
was falling

a man
closed his hand around my wrist
and held

the way an arm wrestler first
stops his opponent, then holds him there
before pushing him back by the hand to the center—

a man held my wrist, he watched my face
until I was steady
then opened his hand to let me go.

I sat down beside him.
His shirt was brown. The bus barreled on.

Did I hurt you when I grabbed your arm?

No, I said, Thanks.

I wasn't hurt. Still

next to the man on the Silver Line bus

I circled my wrist with my fingers
I watched my arm turn over and back.

My Mother Comes to Me

When the white fox came
it was August, air shimmered
she watched from the edge of the yard
waited with her kits,
turned away.

If my mother came to me then,
I didn't know her.

When the waxwings came
it was winter and morning
the sun still low so it lit the white page on my desk:
a letter to me, her writing, *Dear daughter*,
words I could read and still
I didn't know her.

Toehold

Every day you make the choice to live
on the slippery ledge, where you almost always
fail to find a toehold, mesmerized as you are
by the gelid clarity of water or the far-off blow
of some blue-green radiance, the steely whistle
of work and money, the softer mist of love,
everything draws you—the cold burn seizing
anyone who stands up in the boat. Paddle
through the irresistible archway. Take a piece
of the iceberg to chill your cocktail. It can
roll over you. Virtue will carry you only so far
and help never comes fast enough.

About the Winner

MARGOT WIZANSKY's poems have been published in journals such as *The Antigoni Review*, *Kalliope*, *Poetry East*, *American Journal of Nursing*, *Lumina*, *Inkwell*, and in several anthologies, including *Proposing on the Brooklyn Bridge*, and *Beyond Forgetting: Poetry and Prose about Alzheimer's Disease*. In 2008, she won the Writers @ Work Fellowship Competition. She has edited two anthologies of poems, *Mercy of Tides: Poems for a Beach House* (2003), and *Rough Places Plain: Poems of the Mountains* (2006). Her poetry manuscript, now in circulation, is titled *Don't Look Them In The Eye: Love, Life, and Jim Crow*, the story of a grandson of slaves, son of sharecroppers.

The 2010 Patricia Dobler Poetry Award Judge

LYNN EMANUEL has an MFA from the University of Iowa, an MA from City College of New York, and a BA from Bennington College. She has taught at the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, the Bennington Writers' Conference, and the Warren Wilson Program in Creative Writing. Currently she directs the Pittsburgh Contemporary Writers' Series, which she also founded. She is the author of four books of poetry, *Hotel Fiesta*, *The Dig*, *Then, Suddenly—*, and *Noose and Hook*. Her work has been featured in the *Pushcart Prize Anthology* and *Best American Poetry* and is included in *The Oxford Book of American Poetry*. She has been a poetry editor for the *Pushcart Prize Anthology*, a member of the Literature Panel for the National Endowment for the Arts, and a judge for the National Book Awards. She has been the recipient of numerous awards including the Eric Matthieu King Award from The Academy of American Poets, two National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships, and a National Poetry Series Award. In 2009, she was named Elliston Distinguished Poet-in-Residence at the University of Cincinnati.

The 2010 Patricia Dobler Poetry Award

This contest is open to any woman writer over the age of 40 living in the U.S. who has not published a full-length book of poetry, fiction, or non-fiction (chapbooks excluded). Current Carlow students or employees are not eligible.

Poems must be unpublished, up to 75 lines; up to two poems, of any style, per submission. Submissions must be postmarked by or before March 20, 2010.

Winner will be notified by April 21, 2010.

With each entry, submit the following:

- Cover sheet with name, address, phone number, e-mail, title of poem.
- Check/money order for \$20, made payable to Carlow University.
- Self-addressed stamped envelope for notification.

The author's name, address, and any identifying information should not appear on any poem. All entries will receive a copy of *Voices from the Attic*.

Send entries to:

The Patricia Dobler Poetry Award
Jan Beatty, Director of Creative Writing
Carlow University
3333 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Judge:

Lynn Emanuel

The winner will receive the Patricia Dobler Poetry Award, in the form of round-trip travel and lodging as a participating guest of Carlow's MFA residency at the Innisfree International College & Convention Centre (St. Angela's College) Lough Gill, in Sligo, Ireland, in the heart of Yeats' country, June 18-28, 2010, publication in *Voices from the Attic*, and a reading at Carlow University in Pittsburgh.

For information on the 2011 Patricia Dobler Poetry Award, or Carlow University's MFA program, please visit www.carlow.edu or contact Ellie Wymard, PhD, at 412.578.6346.

About the Madwomen

LISA ALEXANDER earned a BA in Creative Writing from Carlow University in 2010, and is working towards an MFA at Drew University. She was a featured poet in *The Carlow Journal*, and has been published in *The Critical Point* and *The Palimpsest Review*. She is a sound engineer for *Prosody*, NPR-affiliate WYEP's weekly radio show featuring poets and writers.

BARBARA ALSKO is an English teacher with degrees from the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Maryland. She is relatively new to writing and to the Madwomen. Her work has been published in *Pittsburgh City Paper*.

MADALON AMENTA appeared in productions by The Provincetown Playhouse and Circle in the Square in New York City, and Poets' Theater in Cambridge, MA. As a nurse, she published over 80 clinical and academic papers, manuals, newsletters, research reports, and books, one of which won an American Journal of Nursing Book of the Year Award. A five-year member of the Madwomen in the Attic, her poetry has appeared in Salon.com, *Pittsburgh City Paper*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *Signatures*, and *Stories about Time*. Her chapbook, *Kandinsky and the Stars*, will be published by Finishing Line Press in 2010.

MOLLY BAIN has taught 4th grade in Detroit public schools, multiculturalism at the University of Michigan, theatre fundamentals at Interlochen Arts Camp, and English at the Community College of Allegheny County. She has also written and performed two one-woman monologist shows.

MADELEINE BARNES is a junior at Carnegie Mellon University, majoring in Creative Writing and Fine Arts. In 2007, she received Princeton University's Leonard Milberg '53 Secondary School Poetry Prize, chosen by C.K. Williams. Her work has appeared in *The Allegheny Review*, *Oakland Review*, *Dossier*, *Spectrum*, and *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. She placed first in the 2009 Borders Open Door Poetry Contest, judged by Billy Collins. In 2010, she received the John Woods Scholarship for the Prague Summer Program, and also won First Place in the *Three Rivers Review* poetry contest.

TESS BARRY has an MA in Literature from the University of Pittsburgh's English Department. Her poetry has appeared in *Three Rivers Review*, *Pittsburgh City Paper*, and *Natural Language*, the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Sunday Poetry and Reading Series anthology. She also has been a guest poet on WYEP's weekly radio show, *Prosody*.

JOAN BAUER has been writing poetry for ten years, and has studied with Jan Beatty, Ellen McGrath Smith, and Michael Wurster. Her poetry has appeared in more than 30 journals and several anthologies, including *Only the Sea Keeps: Poetry of the Tsunami* (Bayeux Arts, 2005), *Come Together: Imagine Peace* (Bottom Dog Press, 2008), and *Along These Rivers: Poetry and Photography from Pittsburgh* (Quadrant, 2008). In 2007, her poem, "Sleepers," won the Earle Birney Poetry Prize from Prism International. Her poem about Anna Akhmatova, "Remembrance," was published in the anthology, *Love Over 60: An Anthology of Women's Poems* (Mayapple Press). In 2008, her book of poetry, *The Almost Sound of Drowning*, was published by Main Street Rag.

SHAINA BAZYK graduated from Carlow University with a major in Creative Writing and a minor in Art History. She has studied abroad, and her work has been published in *The Critical Point*.

GERRY ROSELLA BOCELLA is an arts advocate, educator, and designer. She graduated from Carlow University in 1958 (then Mount Mercy). In 1994, she received the Carlow Alumnae Service Award in the Arts, followed in 1996 by a Carlow Woman of Spirit Award. Her poetry has been featured on *Prosody* on WYEP-FM and in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and *Pittsburgh City Paper*.

DORIT BRAUER grew up on a dairy farm in Germany's Lower Rhine Valley. She studied fine art and painting at the Avni Art Institute in Tel Aviv-Jaffo, Israel. Her abstract oil paintings have been shown in Israel, Germany and in the United States. Brauer graduated from the Mahut School for Complementary Medicine and Holism in Tel Aviv in 1997. She practices holistic medicine and teaches meditation and guided imagery. In 2006, she traveled 7430 miles on her motorcycle across the United States and walked 46 labyrinths. She is currently writing a book about her great labyrinth adventure.

KAIT BURRIER recently graduated from Duquesne University, where her poems and art were published in the journal *:lexicon*. A graduate in the fields of Drama and French, she is returning to Paris to explore life and language through writing.

GAYLE REED CARROLL began writing poetry in the early nineties, and has studied with poets including Stephen Dunn, Kenneth Rosen, Jan Beatty, and Ellen McGrath Smith.

Her poems have appeared in several magazines and anthologies such as *The Comstock Review*, *Poet Lore*, and *Pittsburgh City Paper*. Wendell Berry chose her poem, “Dementia,” as the first-prize-winner in the Thomas Merton Institute’s 2009 Poetry of the Sacred Award. Her poem, “Carved in Stone,” was a finalist for the Robert Frost Foundation’s 2009 Poetry Prize. Her book manuscript, *Raking Leaves by Moonlight*, was a finalist for the 2010 Marick Press Poetry Prize.

SHEILA CARTER-JONES began writing seriously in 1987 at the Western Pennsylvania Writing Project at the University of Pittsburgh. She became a Madwoman in 1992 and studied with Patricia Dobler. Carter-Jones has been published in both local and national poetry journals and anthologies. Her first book, *Blackberry Cobbler Song*, was published in 2007.

REBECCA COLE-TURNER is a spiritual director, retreat leader, therapist, and counselor educator. A dragon boater, she is always ready to begin her next pilgrimage. She is on the writers’ board for the Mainline Protestant portal of Patheos.com, where she writes the blog, *Musings from a Meandering Pilgrim*. Two of her poems were published in 2008 in *Hungryhearts: The Quarterly Journal of Reformed Spirituality*.

KAY COMINI earned a BA in Writing and Women’s Studies at the University of Pittsburgh. Her poetry has been published in *Poet Lore*, *Pittsburgh City Paper*, *The Pittsburgh Quarterly*, and the anthologies *Dark Side of the Moon*, *Voices from the Parlor*, and in the Sandburg-Livesay anthology, *No Choice But to Trust*. She is a retired welfare caseworker, certified Gestalt therapist, and an energy healer.

PAMELA CURTIS is a cyber security information analyst at the Software Engineering Institute. She holds an MS in management information systems from Boston University and a BA in Management from Simmons College. She has published several articles in technical publications. Her poetry has been published in the *MorningStar Journal* and the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.

WENDY DAVIES graduated from Carnegie Mellon University with a BA in Creative Writing. She won the Grand Prize for Fiction and First Place in Poetry from the Westmoreland Arts and Heritage Festival in 2004. Her works in progress include a poetry manuscript, *Dancing the Blank Stage*, and a collection of short stories, *Photo-Reality*. Her chapbook, *Morning Alive*, was published by Mad Books in 2009. She died in 2010.

MARILYN P. DONNELLY has been with the Madwomen in the Attic since the beginning, and considers herself to be the oldest and maddest of the Madwomen. Her poetry has been published in journals such as *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Cape Codder*, and *Sojourner*. Her chapbook, published by Mad Books, is titled *Benediction of Love*.

JUDITH DORIAN received her Doctorate in musicology from the University of Pittsburgh. With Frederick Dorian, her late husband, she wrote the program notes for the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. She has also narrated poetry at the Bedford Springs Summer Festival in Bedford Springs, PA. Her poetry has been published in *Omega 2000 Clusters* and in *The Higginsville Reader*, *Main Street Rag*, and *Lilliput Review*. She has taken workshops with Michael Wurster, Jan Beatty, and Ellen McGrath Smith.

VICTORIA DYM is a graduate of Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Clown College. She has also earned a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from the University of Pittsburgh, and her MFA in Creative Writing (Poetry) from Carlow University. Dym's work has appeared in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *Pittsburgh City Paper*, *Pearl Magazine*, and various anthologies. She is a certified laughter yoga leader and was named 'Poet in Person' at Mellon Middle School in 2010.

ANGELE ELLIS is the author of *Arab on Radar* (Six Gallery Press, 2007), and a recipient of a 2008 Individual Creative Artist fellowship in poetry from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. Her work has been published in *Grey Sparrow*, *Mizna*, *Grasslimb*, *Oysters and Chocolate*, *The New People*, *Pittsburgh City Paper*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, and the anthologies *Come Together: Imagine Peace* (Bottom Dog Press, 2008) and *Natural Language* (Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, 2010). She was a prizewinner in RAWI's 2007 Competition for Creative Prose, and in September 2009, she won Pittsburgh Filmmakers' G-20 Haiku Contest.

ALICE FUCHS, a Madwoman since the mid-eighties, with time out to work towards an MFA at the University of Pittsburgh, is working on her third novel in a family saga series. She has published two chapbooks: *Morning in Agrigento* and *Blood Poppies*. She lives on a farm in Washington County.

LOIS GREENBERG is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in private practice. Her poetry has appeared in *Paper Street*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *HEArt* (Human Equity Through Art), *Pittsburgh City Paper*; in the anthologies *Electric Fire* (National Book Foundation), *Along These Rivers* (Quadrant), and *Alternatives To Surrender* (Martin Willetts, Jr. Ed.); in e-zines:

hotmetalpress, paperstreetonline, and writersalliance; and was recorded on a *YAWP* CD. She was a finalist for the 2007 Patricia Dobler Poetry Award. She is a member of the Pittsburgh Poetry Exchange and the Advisory Board of Paper Street Press.

CAY HAMILTON is 96 years old and a lifetime social worker. She writes poems about her father's blacksmith shop, World War I, and the horse-and-buggy days. Her chapbook, *The Allure of the Blacksmith Shop*, was published in 2009 by Mad Books.

DOROTHY HOLLEY has had poems published in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *Sacred Journey*, *Pittsburgh City Paper*, *St. Anthony Messenger*, and *Along These Rivers: Poetry and Photography from Pittsburgh*. FootHills Publishing published her four books: *A Whole Quart Jar*, *The Garden Journals*, *Late Day Thoughts*, and *Dream Quartet*. She died in 2010.

JONNA LUKETICH earned her BA in Journalism from Duquesne University, and has attended classes in painting at LaRoche College and in poetry writing at the University of Pittsburgh. She has worked in the concert promotions, desktop publishing, and real estate industries, and once wrote music reviews for *Discourse*, a locally published fanzine in the late eighties and early nineties. She is currently working in marketing and publicity for an independent music distribution company in the Pittsburgh area.

CHRISTINA MURDOCK was awarded the 2006 Sara Henderson Hay Prize from *The Pittsburgh Quarterly Online*, and her work has been featured on the radio show, *Prosody*, a public radio show on NPR-affiliate WYEP-FM featuring the work of national writers. Her writing was published in *The 10th Floor*

Review, Collision, Pittsburgh City Paper, and the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. She died in 2010. Her full-length collection, *Burying the Body*, is forthcoming from Mad Books.

MARILYN MARSH NOLL received her MFA in Creative Writing (Poetry) at American University in Washington, D.C. in 1994. Her poems have appeared in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *Folio*, *Restonian*, and other publications. Her chapbook, *Thirteen Ways of Looking at Bones*, won the 2007 Chapbook Award from the Pennsylvania Poetry Society. She has been a member of the Madwomen in the Attic Workshop at Carlow University and the Pittsburgh Poetry Society since 2001. She has written a children's book, *Jonathan and the Flying Broomstick*, published by Sunlight and Shadow Press, to be released in 2010.

LIANE ELLISON NORMAN's second book of poetry is *Keep*; the first is *The Duration of Grief*. She has published poems in *5AM* (forthcoming), *The Fourth River* (forthcoming), *Kestrel*, the *North American Review*, *Grasslimb*, *Come Together: Imagine Peace*, *Rune*, on newsversenews.com, in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *Pittsburgh City Paper*, and on the Pittsburgh Opera website. Her poem "What There'd Been" won the Wisteria Prize of 2006 from Paper Journey Press. She has published a biography, a novel, and many articles and essays.

HARRIET PARKE has been published in *My Dad Is My Hero*, *Tribune-Review Focus Magazine*, and *Pittsburgh Magazine*. She also received an Honorable Mention from the *Atlantic Magazine* Fiction Contest.

DORINA PENA was born in Falmouth, Massachusetts and raised in New Bedford, Massachusetts, and Fayetteville, North

Carolina. She received a BA in English Writing at the University of Pittsburgh, and is currently pursuing an MFA at Carlow University. She has had a poem published in *Pittsburgh City Paper*.

KATHRYN KATAFIASZ PEPPER completed her MFA at Carlow University with the full-length novel *Storm Dreams*. While searching for an agent, she is writing short stories and looking forward to beginning her second novel. She also holds an MSED, has worked as a counselor, and is a certified Coach in Guiding Mindful Change.

JAMIE PHILLIPS is an educator working in East Liberty, and a new Madwoman. She had taken a long hiatus from studying poetry until her first Madwomen workshop, taught by Stacey Waite. She has also taken classes with Michael Wurster and writing workshops with Laurie Arnold. The first poem she ever wrote was in grade school; it was about chickens.

SUSAN SHAW SAILER has published poems in *U.S. 1 Worksheets*, *5AM*, *Kestrel*, *Pearl*, *Appalachian Heritage*, *Pittsburgh City Paper*, and *Poetry International*. Several poems appeared in the anthology *Wild Sweet Notes II*; a book review was published in *Indiana Review*. She completed her MFA from the Low-Residency Program in Poetry at New England College.

FAITH SCHANTZ is a fiction writer and a freelance writer, and a student in the MFA program at Chatham University. In addition to producing publications for education-related non-profits in Southwestern Pennsylvania and school districts across the country, she has published reviews and articles in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *Mothering*, and *Country Journal*, among

others. She has won two Distinguished Achievement Awards from the Association of Educational Publishers and was a finalist in the Harry Chapin Media Awards, World Hunger Year.

BRIDGETTE SHADE was born in Great Falls, Montana. She joined the Madwomen fiction workshop in 2008 and holds an MFA from Carlow University. Her work has been performed at Antonian Theater and has appeared in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and *Clapboard House*.

ERIKA SIMILO is a graduate of Bucknell University and of the Duquesne University School of Law. Her poetry has appeared in *Pittsburgh City Paper* and the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. She is also a member of the Pleasant Hills Writers Group.

M.A. SINNHUBER joined the Madwomen in the Attic in 2005 and studied with Jan Beatty. She interrupted her study to open her Uptown Mt. Lebanon art studio, and in 2008, began writing again with Ellen McGrath Smith. Her poems have been published in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.

SHIRLEY SNODEY is a writer of poetry, fiction, and song lyrics, and is a seven-year member of Madwomen in the Attic. She attended Community College of Allegheny County. Her poems and stories have been published in *Pittsburgh City Paper*.

JULIE ANNE KERR STERNER has spent much of her working life in the travel industry, which enabled her to travel the world. She is a Montessori teacher. Her nonfiction story, "Our Angels," has previously been published in *On Angels – An Art and Literary Magazine*.

BERNADETTE ULSAMER earned a BA in Poetry and a MLIS from the University of Pittsburgh. Her poetry has appeared in *Pittsburgh City Paper*, *The Main Street Rag*, *Ophelia Street*, and been anthologized in *Along These Rivers: Poetry and Photography of Pittsburgh* and *Dionne's Story*. Ulsamer has also contributed and performed with the Pittsburgh Monologue Project and the Hodge Podge Society. She is currently working towards an MFA in Poetry at Carlow University.

LUCIENNE WALD is an artist who writes poetry and fiction. She has won awards in all three categories from the Westmoreland County Arts & Heritage Festivals. Her poetry has appeared in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and the *Leader Times*, an edition of the *Tribune-Review*.

LORI WILSON is the author of *House Where a Woman* (Autumn House Press, 2009). Her poems have appeared in journals such as *Southern Poetry Review*, *Poet Lore*, *Cerise* and *5AM*; on the *Poetry Daily* website; and in the anthologies *Along These Rivers* (Quadrant Press, 2008), and *The Working Poet* (Autumn House Press, 2009). She is a student in the MFA program in Poetry at Drew University.

Madwomen History

The Madwomen in the Attic Writing Workshops, named after the groundbreaking study by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar on the 19th-century woman writer, were formed in 1979 by Dr. Ellie Wymard, now director of the MFA program at Carlow, and esteemed fiction writer, Jane Coleman, after a campus visit by the writer, Tillie Olsen. When Olsen was mobbed by women with stories, poems, and questions, it became clear that there was a hunger and a need for women's stories to be told. Over the years, visiting writers such as Tess Gallagher, Maggie Anderson, Alicia Ostriker, Marita Golden, Naomi Shihab Nye, Judith Vollmer, Maxine Kumin, and Jean Valentine would arrive to feed this hunger. The workshops were originally taught by Ellie Wymard, then by Jane Coleman, and later the beloved poet Patricia Dobler directed and developed the Madwomen in the Attic Workshops until her death in 2004. Patricia Dobler dedicated many years of her working life to the Madwomen to create an inclusive, vibrant atmosphere where women of varied backgrounds could meet and study the craft of writing. For this the Madwomen will be forever grateful.

About Patricia Dobler

Patricia Dobler was born in Middletown, Ohio, in 1939. She is the author of *UXB* (Mill Hunk Books, 1991) and *Talking to Strangers* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), which won the Brittingham Prize in Poetry; a chapbook, *Forget Your Life*, was published by the University of Nebraska Press. She also completed a third full-length collection, titled *Now*. Her poems have appeared in such publications as *Mid-American Review*, *The Ohio Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *Southern Poetry Review*. Her work has been anthologized in *A Gathering of Poets*, *A New Geography of Poets*, *The Carnegie Mellon Anthology of Poetry*, *Working Classics*, *Vital Signs*, *Anthology of Magazine Verse & Yearbook of American Poetry* and others. She has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, fellowships from the Corporation of Yaddo and Villa Montalvo and a Pushcart Poetry prize. She lived in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and taught for many years at Carlow University, where she directed the Women's Creative Writing Center, the Madwomen in the Attic Writing Workshops, and was instrumental in developing the MFA program. She died July 24, 2004. After her death, her *Collected Poems* was published by Autumn House Press in 2005.

The Editors

JAN BEATTY directs the Madwomen in the Attic writing workshops at Carlow University, where she is also Director of Creative Writing and teaches in the low-residency MFA program. She is the author of three books of poetry, all published by the University of Pittsburgh Press: *Red Sugar* (2008), *Boneshaker* (2002), and *Mad River* (1995), winner of the Agnes Lynch Starrett Prize.

Beatty's limited edition chapbook, *Ravenous*, won the 1995 State Street Prize. Awards include the \$15,000 Creative Achievement Award from the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, the Pablo Neruda Prize for Poetry, and two fellowships from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. Her poetry has appeared in journals such as *Quarterly West*, *Gulf Coast*, *Indiana Review*, and *Court Green*; and in anthologies published by Oxford University Press, University of Illinois Press, and University of Iowa Press. For the past 16 years, she has hosted and produced *Prosody*, a public radio show on NPR-affiliate WYEP-FM, featuring the work of national writers.

EVELYN PIERCE teaches the Madwomen in the Attic fiction workshop and undergraduate fiction at Carlow University. She has published short stories and two contracted screenplay adaptations, and is currently finishing her novel. She has been teaching writing since 1983, and is the recipient of multiple teaching honors. In 2004, she received the Sustained Excellence in Teaching Award at Carnegie Mellon University, where she teaches business management communication in the Tepper School of Business. She received her MFA in Fiction from the University of Pittsburgh.

NANCY KIRKWOOD RAYNOVICH teaches the Madwomen in the Attic nonfiction workshop. She holds a BA in Creative Writing from the University of Pittsburgh and an MFA in Creative Writing from Carlow University. Along with teaching creative nonfiction workshops, she is a freelance writer, editor, and writing coach. She has won the Schuylkill County Arts Fellowship Award. Her work has appeared in *Literary Mama*, *Pittsburgh City Paper*, and the *Lewis and Clark Journal*.

ELLEN MCGRATH SMITH teaches poetry for the Madwomen, as well as writing and literature at the University of Pittsburgh, where she earned an MFA in Poetry in 1993. Her chapbook, *A Dog Makes His Rounds and Other Poems*, was published by Another Thing Press in 2002. Her poems have appeared in *5AM*, *The Prose Poem*, *Pearl*, *Southern Poetry Review*, and *Chiron Review*, with poems forthcoming in *Kestrel*. Smith's awards include a recent Honorable Mention for the Lynda Hull Award from *Crazyhorse* and a 2007 Individual Artist Fellowship (Poetry) from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. Critical work has appeared in *The Denver Quarterly*, *The Pennsylvania Review*, and other journals. She is a regular contributor and Reviews Editor for *Sentence*.

STACEY WAITE received an MFA in Poetry from the University of Pittsburgh in 2003 and currently teaches courses in composition, gender studies, literature and creative writing as a PhD candidate at the University of Pittsburgh. Waite has published two collections of poems: *Choke* (winner of the 2004 Frank O'Hara Prize in Poetry) and *Love Poem to Androgyny*

(winner of the 2006 Main Street Rag Chapbook competition). A third collection, entitled *the lake has no saint*, is forthcoming from Tupelo Press in 2010. Other poems have been published most recently in *Bloom*, *The Marlboro Review*, *Black Warrior Review*, *Cream City Review*, and *Interim*.

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LISA ALEXANDER earned a BA in Creative Writing from Carlow University in 2010, and is working towards an MFA at Drew University. She was a featured poet in *The Carlow Journal*, and has been published in *The Critical Point* and *The Palimpsest Review*. She is a sound engineer for *Prosody*, NPR-affiliate WYEP's weekly radio show featuring poets and writers.

GAYLE REED CARROLL began writing poetry in the early nineties, and has studied with poets including Stephen Dunn, Kenneth Rosen, Jan Beatty, and Ellen McGrath Smith. Her poems have appeared in several magazines and anthologies such as *The Comstock Review*, *Poet Lore*, and *Pittsburgh City Paper*. Wendell Berry chose her poem, "Dementia," as the first-prize-winner in the Thomas Merton Institute's 2009 Poetry of the Sacred Award. Her poem, "Carved in Stone," was a finalist for the Robert Frost Foundation's 2009 Poetry Prize. Her book manuscript, *Raking Leaves by Moonlight*, was a finalist for the 2010 Marick Press Poetry Prize.

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Imagine Peace, Rune, on newsversenews.com, in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *Pittsburgh City Paper*, and on the Pittsburgh Opera website. Her poem “What There’d Been” won the Wisteria Prize of 2006 from Paper Journey Press. She has published a biography, a novel, and many articles and essays.

KAYLA SARGESON earned a BA in Creative Writing from Carlow University. Her work has been anthologized in *Dionne’s Story* and in the national anthology, *Time You Let Me In: 25 Poets Under 25*, edited by Naomi Shihab Nye. For three years, she was the emcee for the Hungry Sphinx Reading Series. In 2009, she was accepted into the Tin House Writer’s workshop in Portland, Oregon to study with D.A. Powell, Kevin Young, and Marie Howe. With the writer Deena November, she curates the reading series, *Girls with Glasses*. She will be attending the MFA program at Columbia College Chicago.

SARAH WILLIAMS-DEVEREUX is a poet, mixed media artist, and educator. She lives in Pittsburgh and has read her work locally at various venues, including *Prosody*, the Choice Cuts Reading Series, *The New Yinzer* Reading Series, Incredibly Thin, She Said, The Sprout Fund’s Hothouse, and the Hungry Sphinx Reading Series. Her work has been published in *Pittsburgh City Paper*, *The New Yinzer’s Pittsburgh Love Stories* anthology, and the online journal SubtleTea. She is the co-author of the research monograph *Our Stories, Our Selves: A³P: The African American Arts Project: A Study of African American Young Adult Arts Participation* (PITT ARTS, University of Pittsburgh, 2006). She received her BFA in Painting from Seton Hill College.

Books of Note

BY PATRICIA DOBLER:

- *Collected Poems*, Autumn House Press, 2005.
- *UXB*, Mill Hunk Books, 1991.
- *Talking to Strangers*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1986 Brittingham Prize in Poetry.
- *Forget Your Life*, chapbook, University of Nebraska Press, 1982.

BY ELLIE WYMARD:

- *Talking Steel Towns: The Women and Men of America's Steel Valley*, Carnegie Mellon University Press, 2007.
- *Conversations with Uncommon Women: Insights from Women Who've Risen above Life's Challenges to Achieve Extraordinary Success*, AMACOM, 1999.
- *Men on Divorce: Conversations with Ex-Husbands*, Hay House, 1994.
- *Divorced Women, New Lives*, Ballantine Books, 1990.

BY JANE COLEMAN: *(additional titles not listed)*

- *Tumbleweed*, Dorchester Publishing, 2008.
- *The White Dove, Poetry of the American West*, High Plains Press, 2007.
- *The Italian Quartet*, Five Star, 2001.
- *The Red Drum*, High Plains Press, 1994.

BY JAN BEATTY:

- Red Sugar*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008.
- Boneshaker*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002.
- Mad River*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995.
- Ravenous*, chapbook, State Street Press, 1995.

BY ELLEN MCGRATH SMITH:

- A Dog Makes His Rounds and Other Poems*, chapbook, Another Thing Press, 2002.

BY STACEY WAITE:

- the lake has no saint*, chapbook, Tupelo Press, 2010.
- Love Poem to Androgyny*, chapbook, Main Street Rag, 2006.
- Choke*, chapbook, Thorngate Road Press, 2004.

BY LIANE ELLISON NORMAN:

- Keep*, Smoke & Mirrors Press, 2008.
- The Duration of Grief*, Smoke & Mirrors Press, 2005.
- Stitches in Air: A Novel About Mozart's Mother*, Smoke & Mirrors Press, 2001.
- Hammer of Justice: Molly Rush and the Plowshares Eight*, PPI Books, 1990.

