Contents

Nonfiction
35  Thinning Light  Catherine Alice Michaelis
19  Visitation Rights  Michael Hein
50  The Movie My Murderer Makes: Season II Episode XIV: Monsters and Costner  Christopher Shipman

Fiction
10  Skyward  Nicole Melchionda
16  Canned Art  Alex Nodopaka
35  Three Graves  Sandra Hosking
43  My Favorite Things  John Chavers
58  Eduardo Chillida’s “Elogio del Horizonte” en Gijón, España  Thomas Murphy

Contributors
63  Bios
Your torn Tolstoy,
moldy *Middlemarch*,
untouched *How to Be a Better Man*.
Your poster of the last supper with Satchmo
in the place of Jesus, surrounded by jazz greats.
There are signs of you everywhere—
Coke cans and half-lit cigarettes,
white t-shirts and frayed cuffs.
A kid picks up your old lighter,
a silver Zippo with a lightning
bolt, says *Look at this shit*
and the visitation is complete.
American or British: 
look at his clothes; he might harm you.
He waits at the Mahmud Coffee Shop, 
checking his phone, listening 
to stitches and static in the dark. 
He conceals his pink 
tie inside his jacket, but you 
wear your pink flamboyantly, 
your lavender scarf at your neck. 
Espionage or rope—the difference 
is how you’ll move, come 
to his flesh when he pauses 
to imagine your mother’s face, 
kneel to his thighs when he pours 
black-market Scotch, whistling, 
telling one of many lies. From the motel 
window eight palms sway 
and you miss your daughter, 
wonder at her math homework, 
if she’s old enough to warm the pasta.
Saturday night, Nahid, and the world’s askew. Temples are failing to the west, visitations trend toward violence, and this man’s mother, in a suburb of Atlanta, turns her Toyota toward yard sales on Rawson Street. You can’t imagine that. You have no map save your skin writhing before him.

There was hail like manna and then there was nothing. Concrete stars wedged like thumbtacks in a massive piece of felt. Tiny traumas welted wet between beneath beside beyond. Call the void a visitation and move on. I want to be metallic magic coiled around your needy thighs, like when oil slick eyes slip undone from filthy sockets and roll heavily away. This body is not a temple, so don’t lie prostrate on my chest, but anoint your head with honey and repent. Mouthfuls of manna, fistfuls of felt. This body is a yard sale of the crudest, cruelest kind. Call the void a visitation and move on.
Supply Chain
Robert Fillman

How a temple
is rarely a yellow leaf
wheeling by its tail,
in the low-slanting
light of the autumn sun.

Our visitations from God
lack the magnificence
of the commonest grackle
that speckles the perfectly
manicured lawn in the suburbs
before a yard sale.

Even the weathered
gray wood that hems
the grimy steel rails
at the train crossing
warrants more consideration.

The products
we cling to are polypropylene,
pieced together
by a nameless Bangladeshi
we’ll never see.

It cannot be those
goldenrod fields we passed by
in our cars, each
individual stem
borrowing the current
of the wind to dance
yellow electric yellow,

a flowering pulse
rustling up through it all
to impale the air.
The tragedy of growing old is not that one is old, but that one is young.
-Oscar Wilde

It’s malleability and rigidity
that petrifies my brain of itself.

It crawls and claws between temple,
from picto-stimulants of nose-blowing

or dog-sniffing—those
everyday observations that

rabbit-hole to rhinorrhea research
and look-ups of chemoreception.

But Einstein was a genius at fifteen, right?

Such solidity at twenty-three;
such churning goo at twenty-two.

When will we know when it all turns and stops?
Visitation to Princeton, Yale, and mental yard sale
to pick and purchase all these little thoughts. What if I’m thinking nasty things when it all stones?

Thinking about the thinking when I can’t think as well as I can think now.

I hear the whisper:
When will it all rock?
When will it all rock?

**MOM** tightens my backpack straps so they pull my shoulders back and puff my chest out before I step through the screen door onto the little wooden landing. I stand at the top of the outdoor stairs, which lead to our second floor apartment, watching for his tired old pickup truck, listening for its squeaky wheel bearings. Mom is more realistic. She’s behind me, just on the other side of the screen door, drinking coffee and watching *CBS Sunday Morning*. She knows I might stand here for an hour or two in vain, but it’s as good a place to stand as any. My father is famously unpunctual, but I am becoming famously patient.

I don’t fully understand the term “visitation rights.” I’m the best reader in my class, but I hadn’t yet parsed the subtext—determined who here has the rights. That’s why I’m grateful for every second I get, and forgiving for every one I miss. And that’s why I’m surprised when I actually hear the squeak I’d been imagining so hard, approaching the gravel driveway before the dishes from breakfast are even clean.
“Ready?” comes my father’s voice, through the window of his truck and up the stairs to me. I nod, though he’s too far away to see. Mom comes out and gives the straps on my backpack another yank, then looks down at him from above.

The seatbelts in his truck only go across your lap and not your shoulder, which is fine by me because he’s missing the booster seat I’m still legally required to sit in, despite having been given a few of them by my mom. We lurch over the potholes and sharp bends of my street, back towards the more populated side of town, where he lives now.

“When’s the last time you saw Grammy?” he asks. I shrug. “We’re gonna go see her now, cool?” I nod. Grammy has a cookie jar shaped like Oscar the Grouch. Under the porcelain trash can lid are sure to be some Nestle Tollhouse cookies, and I know I can count on my father to sneak one for me and one for himself. My fingers are crossed by my side; I’m practically praying for double chocolate chip over oatmeal raisin when the truck stops in front of the church.

“You’re late,” says Grammy, who has materialized by the passenger-side window. “Hello, dear,” she adds, touching my hair. “Service is at nine,” says my father, glancing at his watch. “We’re supposed to be seated first,” says Grammy. “When’s the last time you were at church, Jonathan?” There is no answer. We speed-walk up the steps and push some people to get an aisle seat.

I sit between Grammy and my father. She is so happy: she smiles in recognition and knows all the places to say words along with the priest, just like me when I’m watching Sesame Street. My father is fidgety, though. He tugs at his collar, undoes the button at his throat, then does it up again. He looks at his watch. He shuffles his feet and sighs. I’m glad Grammy is happy, but I wish she would realize that my father is not and let us go. When he catches me watching him, he straightens up, holds his breath, looks solemn and dutiful. I do the same. I’m glad we’re doing this for Grammy, the same way Mom watches Sesame Street with me even when her soap operas are on.

Outside the church, my father stretches his arms in a Y shape, leans back, and groans with relief. I try it too, and find that it feels good after those wooden seats.

“Did you eat?” asks Grammy. I nod. “You’re hungry,” she says, holding my chin and looking into my eyes. “We’ll be over in a bit,” says my father. He puts his arm around my shoulder awkwardly and hugs me to him. We walk like that halfway to his truck before he steps on my toes, gives up, and drops his hand to his side.

We drive around with the windows down, enjoying the lazy Sunday, the spring breeze. I squint as the sun rises, and my father rustles up an extra pair of reflective sunglasses from the glove box, identical to the ones he’s wearing. They are oversized on my developing head, and he grins with amusement when I look at him through them.

“You like those?” he asks. I nod, noncommittally. My eyes do feel better. “Keep ‘em,” he says. “They look cool on you.” I take the glasses off and examine myself in their mirrored surface for a moment before putting them back on and glaring out the window, fearless, wide-eyed, my chin high. “Oh!” exclaims my father, jerking into a U-turn and then pulling up to the curb. “Yard sale!”
This stranger’s front yard is crowded with people poring over dusty merchandise, all labeled with prices written on masking tape. There are other kids; they stare openly at me but do not approach or say a word. I give them a glance over the top of my new sunglasses, then act as if I can’t see them. My father makes a beeline for a folding card table leaning against an old dresser. He seems not to care whether I follow, so I wander towards some old toys in a plastic bin. There are Power Rangers from a few seasons ago, mismatched Lego blocks, and matte green army men. Then there’s a slew of unfamiliar robotic figurines with strange attachments and articulations. Some have tires on their arms or legs, while others appear to be car chassis with vaguely human appendages. Fascinated, I scoop two of these—along with two Power Rangers and a few Lego blocks that I know I’m missing at home—into my arms, and I march over to my father. He is examining the card table from every angle while talking animatedly to the man who is apparently running this yard sale. It takes him a moment to notice I’ve returned to his side.

“Whoa,” he says. “Transformers?!” He plucks one of the robots from my arm. As he talks, he fiddles with it, eventually changing it from a humanoid shape into the cab of a semi truck. “These were cool when I was a kid,” says my father. I’m holding my breath, watching his hands as they move deftly over the toy.

“Think that was my oldest’s,” says the yard sale hocker. “Toys are a buck each.” My father looks at the pile of toys pinned between my forearms and my chest. “Want these?” he asks, offering the truck back to me. I nod emphatically, but I don’t have a free hand to grab the truck. “You gotta choose,” he warns, feigning the stern voice real parents have. “Transformers? Power Rangers? Or Legos?” He places the truck on top of the pile I’m holding. To get a better look, I drop all the toys at my feet, then bend over and examine them each closely again. Finally, I pick up the two Transformers and hand them to my father. Then I gather up the rest and rush back to the bin to replace them.

It’s an ordeal to secure the card table into the bed of my father’s truck. It’s so light and wide, it could easily catch wind and fly out behind us. He scrounges up some hooked ratchet straps from under the seats, then places me up into the bed to help him while he leans over the sides. He hooks one end of a strap into the eyelet towards the front of the truck, then tosses the other end across the table to me. He indicates the eyelet near the back. I attach the hook uncertainly, petrified of doing something wrong.

“C’mon,” he barks, and I do. He comes around the other side and puts another strap through the opposite eyelet, then, with a bit of leaning and grunting, crosses it with the first strap before handing the final hook to me. I am distracted by this primitive web he has made so effortlessly. I lean in for a closer look, and he grows impatient again. “Let’s go!” he commands. I am struck by the way he sounds like any bossy kid on my playground or in my class. Spoiled.

With the table rattling behind us, we pull into Grammy’s driveway. One Transformer is shoved into my backpack, and I have the other in my hand. I’m trying in vain to reverse my father’s transformation. It was incredible to see it happen, but let’s be honest: a robot is much cooler than a semi truck. I’m so focused that I barely notice when we stop, and my father comes around and scoops me out of the seat by my armpits.

Church is one thing, but now we enter Grammy’s true temple.
of worship: the kitchen. Inside there are, indeed, double chocolate chip cookies. My father hands me one, shoves one into his mouth nearly whole, and palms another. My grandmother rushes to assemble three ham sandwiches.

“You want milk for that, honey?” she asks, but then she’s already pouring it for me anyway. I take the milk into the living room and set it on Grammy’s coffee table. I put the remaining half of my cookie down beside it and sit down on the carpet to really work at the Transformer. It simply won’t change, but I’m sure I can figure it out.

“...well, tell Chrissy I say ‘hi,’” I can hear my father saying in the kitchen. There is a jingling of keys and clumping of boots. “You gotta go in when you do the drop-off. She doesn’t like the kid alone on the stairs—”

“What are you talking about, Jonathan?” asks Grammy.

“I’m going over to Neil’s,” he says, pitching his voice up innocently. “To watch the game.”

“It is your Sunday with your child,” Grammy growls. “You are not leaving to go out with your idiot friends.”

“Not out!” cries my father. “The game is on! Patriots!” I risk a peek. Grammy’s arms are crossed. Her eyes flash dangerously. But I know she won’t hit him; there’s not much to see. I return to the Transformer. “You said if we went to church,” my father tries for a measured tone, “that you’d do the rest of the afternoon. Remember?” My grandmother sighs heavily. I realize with a start that the head of the robot emerges from between the panels which make up the back windshield. There is a long pause in their conversation as I finally begin to make out a discernible torso.

“Do the rest of the afternoon,” Grammy mutters.

“Just this once, Ma,” my father whines. “The Pats are on. They usually play on Mondays, but—”


“Bye, Ma.” I hear him kiss her cheek. His boots clump towards me. “Good to see you, kiddo,” his head says from the doorway. Before looking up, I put his mirrored sunglasses back on. He is wearing his as well. “Love you,” he says, and he’s out of sight.

“Jonathan,” Grammy is trying to whisper as he heads for the door, but she needs to make herself heard over his great thunderous boots. “I ought to charge twenty bucks an hour for babysitting,” she says. “At the end of the month, spend some time with your child, please.”

The robot is almost recognizable now, except for one arm pinned to his back, and his feet which I’m sure shouldn’t face backwards like this. I’m sort of tempted to give up and ask my father to show me the answer, so I’m glad he’s gone. That way I don’t have the option to cheat. Grammy appears in the doorway after a few minutes, with a ham sandwich cut diagonally for me. She sits on the couch and eats hers while I face her, eating mine off the coffee table.

“Cool sunglasses,” she says.

“Thank you,” I say.

“Are you okay spending the rest of the day here, honey?” she asks. I nod. “Should I call your mother? Would you rather just go home?” I shrug. “We could go to the park, if you like,” she offers. “Or we can play with your new toys. Actually, I think I still have some of your coloring books around here.” She trails off. The Transformer is nearly a man again now, besides the one arm trapped gruesomely behind his back, only able to bend at the elbow. It’s so frustrating to have all the moving parts in front of you, but just outside your grasp. I shove the plastic robot into my
backpack.

“Will you take me home, Grammy?” I ask. “I don’t want visitation rights anymore.”

Now when I’m walking around Kenyon College
I’m thinking of that Frank O’Hara poem
the one about how funny it would be if we only shit once a week
because it’s raining here not cats and dogs
I don’t know if I’ve ever said it’s raining cats and dogs
if I said something like that now I’d say skunks and spiders
that’s what I have in my head right now I have spiders in my head
spiders because Andy said the other night
that he’s always looking out for spiders around here
then later I saw a web while we smoked
on the porch outside the O’Connor house and I mentioned it to him
said better look out and pointed at the web which
had no spider just a bug I don’t know the name of and when
I pointed to the web I remembered remembering
to tell him I saw a spider on Brad at the bar the other night
it was sort of still in a way that made it seem lost
and surely it was lost and not attempting some awkward visitation
to the dimly lit rooms of humans so I cupped it
in my palm took it outside into the drizzle and now it’s raining again
it wasn’t when I saw the skunk with Geoff and Jennifer
the skunk that skunked right toward us yesterday afternoon
when the sun showed up and the skunk
must have felt liberated in that flash of warmth like us
when it rose to sniff the air then skunked slowly off to sniff
other air not wet with rain it wasn’t raining then
but now it’s raining again but harder than before and I’m thinking
of that Frank poem that particular one because that’s when
I think I got Frank the first time I mean really got him
when I was on the phone with him sort of as he might say
not at the yard sale where I bought the tattered little book
that looked like it had fit in so many pockets of so many poets
but alone in my apartment alone in a new city
in a new state with no one to talk to or have lunch with
and it was raining out and my apartment was dark like I like it
when I’m reading dark like a temple in a movie or a dream
the dark that drives my wife crazy that tells her to tell me I’ll go blind
maybe I don’t like it maybe I just don’t remember
to turn on the light but there is something in that kind of natural light
that gray middle-of-the-day rain-light coming through the blinds
that makes you feel like you’re in a cabin on a big boat
going somewhere exotic and that’s the kind of rain we have now
the kind of light walking around Kenyon through the rain
on the way to lunch at the deli where I have a bagel and lox
that I just about finish before a couple folks show up
I can’t remember their names and I’m sad
I can’t remember their names but happy they join me and we talk
about potato chips and tattoos and music and movies
and then Andy joins us too and maybe that’s when we start talking
about movies and now I’m thinking of Frank again
who loved the movies and I like to think loved the rain and sun
the same and that maybe that kind of thing just killed him
but now alive and sitting at Kenyon having lunch
at the deli now we are in love with Birdman with talking about
The Slow Stipple

Devon Balwit

We have been married a great long while, the years extending filaments, gusting spores. Our photo albums flock mildew, ready for the yardsale bin. Having fought and grappled much between bruised sheets, we weary of being pressed flat, anguish over our slow stipple. Release us, beg the crinkles at our eye corners, our turned-up lips. Perhaps some collagist will dissect us for scraps, not minding our brief visitation, hands resting on each other’s shoulders, smiles held, even as mouths sever from cheeks, eyes from faces. There in the temple of scissors and glue, we will be offered up.

Last Rites

Liz Harms

It was less your body and more the sixty-six old Parenting issues appraised at five cents a piece.

More the way you decided to spring clean memories and price them low for a yard sale.

I’m less than your body. Your body is less and less mine and your touch is forced visitation and I become less, still. A fanny-pack man pays twenty for leftover water rings formed when we were too tired to drink and a drawer perpetually off its track. When fanny-pack leaves with the bedside table where I kept my ring and you kept your gun, the spring sun should be too cheerful, but it isn’t, because it’s just us. And us is less and less by the minute. When the toddler pulls his grandmother to the pile of stuffed animals, when he cuddles Elmo
to his cheek, when the fur sticks, you tell them you’ll take a dollar.
I want to scream it’s not enough. It’s growing less and less to you
and more to me. More than me—you hate how I temple her old room.
I hate how you sell us away for two percent market price.

These have meaning for me alone
in the world now. Mother walks
across a German field, backed by
poplars; her red dress sways in wind
and her long black hair streams behind.
She is a visitation. My children
wouldn’t know her; she is nothing like
the solid Frau, the German teacher. Now
here I am, a high-school girl with glossy
brown hair, slim, looking eager,
barely controlled, as if I wanted
to jump right out of my skin. My children
might see that she was me, but then might not.

We had a projector and showed these slides
on a bedsheets. Now I squint at a tiny viewer
that says 99 cents. But how clear the faces,
how sharp the jaws, and there seems to be
perspective, like with the View-Master I bought
at the yard sale, as if through a glass wall:
people who look vaguely familiar. Old
commercial slides, faded, of foreign cities that
are different now, temples bombed to shards, buildings long bulldozed, replaced by condos. Mixed in with our vacation to Miami. The shock of a room I could almost step into, the dog who followed me through grade school. All my places, chairs, beds, couches, hammocks, the winter garden, all my loved departed seem to be awaiting my arrival.

“Live where your feet are.” But I can’t. I throw away the black slides and the blur, start to sort, lose patience, put them back. Write keep on every box.
We knelt in a row along the front porch, Mom, Dad, and I, facing the rails, brushes in hand, painting the cracked and weathered wood white. The air was swollen with heat in spite of the splayed leaves of the horse chestnut trees shading the street. My younger brother and sister ran in and out of the house, slamming the screen door, and giving chase to each other. Dad gave me intermittent instruction: “catch the drips,” “don’t leave streaks.” I dipped into the can and dragged my brush along, saying nothing. A few months before, my older sister had run away from home and this was the first time the rest of us were doing something together that wasn’t watching TV. I didn’t like painting, but I wanted to do better than just check out like my older sister.

We were renters, one yard sale away from moving on. We’d lived in five different houses in five different towns since I’d started grade school. I liked the old houses best: they held better stories, like this one with wooden bins that pivoted open below the kitchen counter and the toilet on the back porch that froze over in winter. For the first time, I had my own bedroom with unexpected access through my younger siblings’ closet on one end or my parents’ closet on the other. The hedges outside smelled of lilacs and wallflower and prickled with Oregon grape.

I would walk straight down Holly Street eight blocks to my latest school where my sixth grade teacher, Mr. Wendt, taught us about World War II. He told us Nazis imprisoned anyone not of pure blood, sent them to labor camps or killed them in gas chambers that the people thought were showers. We read the *Diary of Anne Frank*. Mr. Wendt said Nazis escaped after WWII and some came to the United States.

After Mr. Wendt told the World War II stories, I had insomnia every night. I worried the Nazis would invade our town and find my family: part German, part Cherokee, part Polish. I thought the closet door entry might buy me time. I kept my bed looking as made up as possible when I got in, turning back the covers furthest from the door and sleeping as close to the far edge as I could. If Nazis came, I planned to roll off the bed, pull the covers up like no one had been there, and slip underneath. Even if they found my room they would assume it was empty. I didn’t think I could live without my family but didn’t know how to save them. As I lay awake, I calculated how long the canned goods in the pantry would last if I were the only one left alive. These thoughts made me cry, but quietly, so as not to cover the sound of boots on the stairs.

The last day of school Mr. Wendt said to me on my way out of his classroom, “Cathy, you would do better to leave your family problems at home.” My hand froze on the classroom’s door handle. What did Mr. Wendt know? I nodded and pushed through the door. Until that day I thought our family looked like...
every other. We did normal things like paint the porch. We went camping in the summer and worked puzzles on the dining table. Mom sewed our clothes and Dad worked on cars.

What made our family different, and what Mr. Wendt couldn’t know, was that my baby brother died when he was one year old and I was two. I was told his death was an accident, but I’ve never been sure. My parents decided church would console us, and so for a few years we went every Sunday and had our family portrait taken for the membership directory. We left the Jesus prayers behind in our long drive out west, but the wound stayed with us. This day, spent on our knees painting as heat stretched the thinning light across the dinner hour, was the closest any of us would get to being in a church or temple for a long time.

Because of Mr. Wendt, I noticed how our family was different than others on our street: my other brother set fires inside and outside the house, and it was my job to catch him; Dad came home from his welding work at 4:30 and slowly slipped into his glass of whiskey; Mom worked late, cashiering, so I would peel potatoes until they filled the pot and she would do the rest when she got home. When Mom smashed a plate against the edge of the kitchen counter, I would pretend not to hear. When I didn’t hate her, I resented my older sister for not taking me with her. Dad was hard to talk to. He answered my questions with either a joke or a glare. My older sister went into the category of subjects not to ask about—a category that included my dead brother, the uncle who beat his wife, and the meaning of the word “libido.” I dared to ask Dad about war, because he had fought in two of them. “War is nature’s way of keeping the human population down.” He wasn’t joking. I thought it was a stupid answer. He made it sound like my brother’s death was a favor to the world.

Soon after my sister ran away, I forgot about Nazis. Instead, I lay awake wondering which of my parents I would live with if they got a divorce. If I lived with Mom I would have to take care of my younger brother and sister all the time? And if I didn’t, who would? I couldn’t abandon my siblings like my older sister had. On the other hand, I thought Dad loved Mom more than she loved him and a divorce would make him sad. He would need me for company.

Two weeks before my older sister ran away, I walked into the dining room as my sister yelled, “Bitch!” Mom answered with her hand across my sister’s cheek. If I was thinking about this as we scooted around the porch on our knees, maybe Mom was too and I wondered if she regretted it. I was embarrassed to have witnessed this vulnerable moment, but wished for moments with Mom of my own. My sister’s departure left me hopeful my mother would turn to me and see a daughter worthy of confiding in. I wanted to hear about her boyfriends and how to wear makeup, shave my legs, and put my hair up like she did in a French twist. So far, Mom kept the rest of us kids at a distance. Dad was the one to offer a hug and a pat on the back for a good report card.

Under the guise of reaching for more paint, I shifted closer to my mom, hoping to elicit a smile for her do-right daughter. I did not get one. From Mom’s deflated posture I knew she would not look toward me. And then I realized we would not move from this house until my sister re-appeared. My sister had left us, but not let us go. The porch spindles stood rigid and endless as jail bars, and we were on the wrong side of the visitation.
Kara Walker’s Sphinx
Susan Duncan

This creature is a power image, a colossal goddess of the future . . . a blind diviner who knows that the American future is much less white, racially, than its past.
—The New York Times

She crouches near the East River—visitation to a defunct sugar refinery:
the riddler
and the riddle.

Her forebears—sentinels on temple step, on Theban road—watched the rise of millennial suns,
the rise of pyramids, freighted with foreign bondage.
One remained
and saw the fall
of temple and pharaoh,
their melt into Egyptian sand.

Here in an abandoned Brooklyn warehouse still redolent of Caribbean cane—a modern sphinx waits.

May it not take a millennium for this shrine to fall.
(This factory’s fate is sure: as surely yard sale predicts eviction, condos will rise here.)

It is her privilege now: we must answer her—we have much to answer for.
Visitation is once a week. There are rules to this waiting game—about shoulders and skirts, shoes and identification—eagerly enforced by puppy-faced youths in tan. If the body is a temple, the city does not believe in separation, as if by showing up for the condemned we beg censuring, erasure of skin, stripping by covering. We keep yard sale sweaters and tees, loafers and jeans tucked in back seats in preparation. From seven to half-past eight, on molded plastic benches row by row, front to back, we wait for last names, the leap to cubicles and screens, corded phones from 1987. They, too—the chosen—wear uniforms, all elbows and smiles, combed hair over that nagging feeling, those words on repeat brain to brain to brain: I fucked up. I fucked up again. It cannot be this simple. We have all been tagged, doomed to play again and again. Something should change besides clothing.
Yard Sale
Mary Bunchinger

Her body—it was true—temple was just the word for how she felt: slim-columned and
trefoil-arched beneath a pale dome
she was open
and airy Saturn’s little sister divine skies
winding round her restless swifts and cumulus
until
the visitations began one sadness after another
and with each a wall a windowless wall
fitting into the dome the domed temple she
was born into
and she saw things that drove her inside couldn’t help the sadness in fact
ushered it in like a contraband animal smuggled into her room placed it on a pillow listened as
it whimpered
then boys with phone cords between their legs boys with legs with
between their legs and girls barefoot mourning
their temples girls in morning on a sunny June
porch cementing their sorrow

and she knew then she had to let go to offer up Something for Everyone for each
a fragment detached from where it started its
beginning no longer mattering the Used now
in someone else’s big blue field almost as if
New again
After the storm with its fire and wind, when pieces of airplane wreckage floated with the oil slick, luggage, and seaweed, and the ocean, quilted with endless waves, heaved with indifference, we searched methodically yard by yard. Sale of salvage on the black market will bring a good price as well as the visitation of other ruthless plunderers. It is good that the sea does not give up her dead; they remain buried in that watery temple, their ashes spread on a seabed altar in sacrifice to Poseidon. It is good that the sea will not rob them further; the pirate wind was enough.

I've seen old age that looks like you before—ashy, bent over with grief. Why do you look up at the blank sky to figure out how old you are? Time doesn't drift upward. It burrows like a lizard with half its body in the dunes. When morning scrolls across the horizon, you can hear the scratch of their underbellies against the sand—a pouring of sounds into the world’s temple. Listen. Can you hear the hawk sing its own name?

The visitation approaches, yet we sit in lawn chairs like discounted relics at a yard sale. People come and go, trailing the odor of greed, asking questions to feel alive. I answer. Why wouldn’t I when you’ve chosen silence? I once believed that only in colors could I find rage:
prune juice on stained teeth, age spots on clenched fists.
Do you know in which dark organ the soul lives?

Not in my heart. It weighs twenty-one grams
and has the consistency
of the white meat that surrounds
the custard apple’s black seeds. It’s a bruise,
unsuitable for storing hope or other sacred things.

Young winds, like a pack of coyotes, charge
the mountainside. Have you heard
the rain that sweeps across vacant terrains
into those lonely towns on the edge, blowing
over patio chairs and ripping
wigs off old ladies’ heads?
I heard the buds whisper about time,
and after the rain, yellow blooms
on the trembling skin of the desert. The petals,
like a thousand tongues, uncurl to say ah... men.
OUR block used to flood after heavy rain. We lived at the bottom of a ridge, and the sea monsters I dreamed about lived at the bottom of our ditch. But I’d already stopped having those dreams sometime before the worst flood I remember. It was summer, so I don’t know if it happened during the week or the weekend. And I can’t remember when, or to where my mother had gone, but I knew then that she had been gone too long. I was worried. Water in our front yard was up to my shins. Even at ten years old that was deep. The way it fell from the sky was like it would fall for years. Like one day a temple would be erected to escape the sky, only to stand inside and praise its name. I stood at the end of the driveway until my mother finally arrived two hours later. She had wrecked her 1980 Monte Carlo. The blue paint on the driver door was scraped, and her face was bleeding, but the image that stuck was her window. The glass was cracked like a spider web. It made me think of *Charlotte’s Web*. Even though it was a cartoon and supposed to be nice, that spider always scared me. Maybe it scared me because it was a cartoon. School started back soon after that flood, but I was home for a week, sick with pneumonia. I didn’t watch *Charlotte’s Web* when I was home sick. My mother had sold the VHS at our last yard sale, along with the stone Buddha Uncle Allen said I could take from the bushes of his yard the last time we visited him in Michigan. I was angry that my mother had sold the Buddha, but not the VHS. I was sick on that trip, and the little fat man with the mossy belly was a strange escape. Now, sick again, spider-less and Buddha-less, I watched *The Princess Bride* over and over. My mother was angry, not because I watched the same movie so many times, but because I’d just stood there in the rain, and because she had to stay home with me instead of going to work. Mostly, she was angry that where she did work was a shoe factory. Our coffee table was always covered with materials that marked her hope for future employment. You couldn’t sit a cup on that table without first removing an application for a department store or an unfolded pamphlet from one of the many hotels where she wanted to work. The first day I was well enough to go back to school, my murderer snuck me out. The intercom crackled and called my name. When I got to the office, the secretary said my father was there to take me home. My murderer winked from the bench where he sat. I didn’t protest so neither did the secretary. Maybe it was what he was wearing that gave her the impression that the reason for my absence was both serious and sensitive. As usual, my murderer was dressed like he was on his way to a funeral visitation. Not for someone he knew well, necessarily, but he looked as if, at any moment, he could be walking through the dark door of a funeral home. He walked me through the empty hallways at school with his hand on my back. “Let’s go and see a movie,” he said. “It’ll
make you feel better.” “The Indian in the Cupboard is playing,” I said, but my murderer said he had already bought us tickets to see Waterworld. That night the sea monster dreams came back, but I didn’t tell my mother anything.

There’s a yard sale at the Temple—lightly worn effigies of last year’s gods and goddesses emulating us: walking Airedales, skiing, sporting the latest in vacation wear. Not a bad notion—a way to bring them closer to the crowds mobbing the shrines on weekends. Gods know there’s plenty of precedent.

Deities of yore embarked on visitations got up as an ocean wave, a shower of gold, a swan. And why not? In the abstract, the afterworld’s a bore; not much action after dark, no natural arc, no tragedy or conflict. And yet, something in us craves it.
Holy places perch on hillsides, high under made-to-order clouds, though the sanctuary, low and dark, hums with clergy, loud in their bright robes, at home amid the odor of plumeria and jasmine, today’s offerings.

The ancients knew best how to court the distance between us and the ineffable. Why would we turn to beings like ourselves? Soon enough we’d see it’s humans that we really care about, endlessly fascinating, so full of stories.

Winter Dusk
Maria Rouphail

On the root-clawed, rock-steep cliff the bare birches snare the setting sun and for a moment possess it.

Spears of coral light shoot aslant the snowdrifts. They disappear and the houses with their gabled roofs fall into shadows.

How many times has dusk in winter arrived? My spirit, with its broken rafters and dreary yard sale flotsam, rings like a temple bell.

Wrapped in night’s dark silk, I bow to the visitation of stars.
no one ever asked you what the harlequin did

Panika M. C. Dillon

have I been, for you have hid my heart & vomited up the dog / entree: no
ripe pomegranates here; maybe a Shirley Temple & a clutch / of pansies you
think:
the grass is a silver tea set, grandmother is tarnished so / like a homily in the
hope chest or
a tent bending in a field / a double bow on the ring master’s head—
pomegranates ripe: the clutch of curls on Shirley Temple, you think of /
pansies
would be a curtsy or a curse on anyone else / but to tame lions with flaming
hoops
a double bow in the field / the ring master bends to enter the tent, says
is not easy like the free heart / when you knock down all the pins, all the prizes
curtsy / would be a curse on anyone else to tame loins with flaming hoops, but
are yours for you are a prize / the Ferris wheel running all night & the kettle
corn
is not as easy or free / when you knock down all the hearts, you’ll get your prize
pin
rolled in under your freak show / lemonade & one ticket wins you a ring
for you are a prize, you are a Ferris wheel running / all night the kettle corn
pops like it likes your warship / I mean there is no battle plan clutched or
rolled in under the ring / there’s a freak show & lemonade & one ticket wins
you
the big top / but first you have to turn yourself inside out, to become
to become the big top, you have to turn yourself inside out
& hand me the trapeze from your ribs when I say I don’t / worship
like you I mean I don’t have a warship at all, no battle plan clutched
between my knees like a bottle of aspirin—just because / there is
a hand & me on the trapeze / from your ribs, I say I don’t / worship
the partridge in the yard sale of my chest / my double heart will mean
sweet stuck like visitation to your palate just / because my arms are open,
doesn’t mean I am / ready to answer the ringing: free heart? how it gallops
like the partridge in the garage of my chest / doesn’t mean my heart will stick
in your lung / poised elephantine on gallbladder & teeth packed into a toy
car / you
don’t mean I am ready to answer / the heart ringing—how it gallops freely in
the stands waiting for the band to march in / with the wind in their cheeks &
poised in your lungs like an elephant on gall & tears packed in your toy car—
have you been (for I have) / hid my heart in the dog, but she vomited onto
the stands / wait for the marching band: the wind in their cheeks ends up on
the grass—tarnished with the silver tea set from a grandmother’s hope / chest:
Later, you will dream of fire, of dragons, the zodiac sign of your Mother, who’s retrieved her emerald green, wafer-thin jade tea set made in Xinjiang. Like a magician’s trick, the teacups brim, yet don’t spill.

Don’t know how it’s done, maybe blessed in a Buddhist temple, she jokes.
All week, she’s been sorting, streamlining. No one, it seems, has yard sales in Seattle, not like Michigan, here, everything donation, give away.

She’s directing you which possessions to donate, which to keep for yourself to linger over, pass on, those you don’t dare give away, or face the dragon’s fury. Surely, there shall be visitations, afternoon teas where spellbound objects transform into blood memory.
Tempwork
Zachary Bond

In the war I performed my duties piecemeal, accepting tempwork from any tyrant with an exchange rate better than sand to sand dollars. I came home & all the trees I’d once climbed were chopped down, pulpfied, & pressed into Moleskines: if you listen close, you can still hear the Great White Male Writers whimpering about last night’s horizon in arrhythmic scribbles on the postconsumer recycled skin of all those Japanese Maples & Paper Birches. Today I assemble a temple for my false ancestors in the parking lot out back of the papyrus plant. Light incense upside down & backwards, put out the flame with my tongue. I bought most of my prophets at flea markets, secondhand stores or thrifties with names like Savers or Swap & Shop—sometimes a garage or yard sale. The occasional televised roadshow—profiting off tattered saints

lost & found—briefly let me, a refugee of my own mind, drift off to sleep. Yes, I was still hiding long after everyone else stopped playing Hide & Seek—still hiding when they all went home & grew up & got jobs & wives & lovers & divorces & left me sifting through strangely familiar sands. That night I dreamt the cannon I was stuffing was actually you. In a panic, I ran to the nearest library, but all the libraries were locked or turned into porn stores or stack upon stack of ATMs—my least favorite kind of vending machine. When the walls began to shake, I knew the cave was really a train tunnel. My pillow hardening with drool—cold, hard evidence of night’s visitation—when I rise I will scissor-cut the pillowcase into a million pieces & swallow this whole—each morning I light the gas by hand, scrambling my DNA till it reads something more like AND.
Contributors

Devon Balwit is from Portland, Oregon. She has two chapbooks: *How the Blessed Travel* (Maverick Duck Press) and *Forms Most Marvelous* (forthcoming with dancing girl press). Her work has found many homes, some of which are: *Glass: A Journal of Poetry, The Cincinnati Review, The Stillwater Review, Sierra Nevada Review, Red Earth Review, Panoplyzine, and The Inflectionist Review*.

Zachary Bond is a filmmaker and writer, was the cinematographer on the award-winning short documentary *The Seer of Poughkeepsie*, and the recipient of the Beatrice Daw Brown Prize for Poetry in 2014. His work has appeared both online and in print, most recently in *Crow Hollow 19*. He is an MFA candidate at UMass Boston.

Mary Buchinger is the author of *Aerialist* (Gold Wake, 2015, shortlisted for the May Swenson Poetry Award, the OSU Press/The Journal Wheeler Prize for Poetry, and the Perugia Press Prize) and *Roomful of Sparrows* (Finishing Line, 2008). Her poems have appeared in *AGNI, Gargoyle, Nimrod, PANK, Salamander, Slice Magazine, The Cortland Review, The Massachusetts Review*, and elsewhere. She was invited to read at the Library of Congress, received the Varoujan and Houghton Awards, as well as multiple Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net nominations. She is President of the New England Poetry Club and Professor of English and Communication Studies at MCPHS University in Boston, Massachusetts.
John Chavers enjoys working as a writer, artist, photographer, and general creator. Most recently, his writing and artwork have been accepted at The Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library - So It Goes 2016 Annual Literary Journal, Cream City Review, Blueline Magazine, and The Ogham Stone, among others. This September, he will be the artist-in-residence at Hot Springs National Park in Arkansas.

Panika M. C. Dillon was born in Fairbanks, Arkansas and reared in Austin, Texas. She received her MFA in creative writing (poetry) from Sarah Lawrence College. Her work has appeared in Oranges&Sardines, Copper Nickel, Borderlands, DIAGRAM, and others. She toils as a political organizer in Central Texas and legislative reporter in the Pink Dome.

Susan G. Duncan is presently an independent consultant with a performing and visual arts clientele, capping a long career in arts administration. She served as executive director for San Francisco’s long-running musical comedy phenomenon Beach Blanket Babylon, the al fresco California Shakespeare Theater, and the Grammy-winning, all-male vocal ensemble Chanticleer. Her poetry has appeared in Atlanta Review, Blast Furnace, Compass Rose, G.W. Review, Iodine Poetry Journal, The MacGuffin, Alphanumeric, OmniArts, Poem, The Quotable, River Oak Review, Skive Magazine, Soundings East, Thema, and The Yalobusha Review, as well as anthologies by Red Claw Press and The Poetry Box.

Robert Fillman won the poetry contest at the 2016 Pennsylvania Writers Conference and has been featured as a “Showcase Poet” in the Aurorean. Recently, his poems have appeared or are forthcoming in Blueline, Chiron Review, Evening Street Review, Kestrel, Off the Coast, Pembroke Magazine, Spillway, Third Wednesday, and others. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate and Teaching Fellow at Lehigh University, where he also runs the Drown Writers Series. He lives in eastern Pennsylvania with his wife, Melissa, and their two children, Emma and Robbie.

Dom Fonce is an undergrad English major at Youngstown State University. He’s been published in fiction, poetry, comics, and journalism. Some of his work can be found at Penguin Review, The Jambar, and Calliope of the University of Mount Union.

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Liz Harms is the Editorial Assistant for C&R Press, and recently graduated from The University of Arkansas – Fort Smith with a B.A. in Rhetoric & Writing. She plans to pursue an MFA in Poetry and continue working within publishing. Her poetry has appeared in Duende and Applause.

Michael Hein is a recent graduate from Eastern Connecticut State University. He is now living in New York City, for better or for worse. He hopes to soon have a book for sale on that little wooden rack found in the greeting card aisle of every major grocery store.
Sandra Hosking is a professional editor, writer and playwright based in Spokane, Washington. Publishing credits include The Spokesman-Review, Journal of Business, Glass International, Inland NW Homes & Lifestyles, Down to Earth Northwest, Insight for Playwrights, Joey, West Texas Review, Edify Fiction, Literary Salt, Redactions, and the Midwest Book Review. Her plays have been performed in New York City, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Canada, and elsewhere. Founder of Play-Makers Spokane, she has served as resident playwright at Stage Left Theater and Spokane Civic Theatre. She is the former editor of Insight for Playwrights, for which she interviewed Beth Henley, Horton and Daisy Foote, Steven Dietz, Jeffrey Sweet, and others. She is a member of the Dramatists Guild of America. Hosking holds an MFA in theatre/playwriting from the University of Idaho and an MFA in creative writing from Eastern Washington University.

Samantha Lê was born in Sadec, Vietnam in the aftermath of war, and immigrated to San Francisco when she was nine. She now lives amongst the foothills and vineyards of California’s central coast where she paints, hikes, and reinvents old family recipes. A recipient of the James D. Phelan Literary Award and the Donor Circle for the Arts Grant, Lê holds an MFA in Creative Writing from San José State University. Her publications include Corridors and Little Sister Left Behind. Her poetry has appeared in Able Muse Review, Bacopa Literary Review, Colere, Reed Magazine, and other fine literary journals.

John C. Mannone is a three-time Pushcart nominee, has over 600 works in venues such as Blue Fifth Review, NEJM, Peacock Journal, Pedestal, Still, and Town Creek Poetry. A Tennessean with three literary poetry collections, he edits poetry for Abyss & Apex and others. He’s a college professor of physics.

Janet McCann has published poetry in Kansas Quarterly, Parnassus, Nimrod, Sou’wester, New York Quarterly, Tendril, Poetry Australia, and others. A 1989 NEA Creative Writing Fellowship winner, she has taught at Texas A&M University since 1969. She has also co-edited two anthologies: Odd Angles of Heaven (1994) and Place of Passage (2000). She has co-authored two textbooks, written The Celestial Possible: Wallace Stevens Revisited (1996), and published essays on Sylvia Plath, Wallace Stevens, and Emily Dickinson. Her most recent poetry collection is The Crone at the Casino (Lamar University Press, 2013).

Nicole Melchionda is a recent graduate of Stetson University, where she majored in English with a minor in creative writing. She has published numerous poems, essays, and articles. She is now working as an English teacher in China.

Catherine Alice Michaelis is a writer and visual artist, recently published in WA129, an anthology of Washington state poets. She was also recently interviewed by Craft in America for their PBS episode “Nature.”

Tom Murphy is an artist whose photography was recently shown at K Space Contemporary, the Islander Art Gallery, and Bell Library under the pseudonym Mot. Murphy worked under the tutelage of the photographer Barbra Riley. Murphy is also a poet. Originally from California, he lives in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Robbi Nester is the author of two books of poetry, the ekphrastic chapbook *Balance* (White Violet, 2012) and the collection of poems *A Likely Story* (Moon Tide, 2014). She also edited two anthologies, *The Liberal Media Made Me Do It!* (Nine Toes, 2014) and *Over the Moon: Birds, Beasts, and Trees — Celebrating the Photography of Beth Moon*. Her poems, reviews, essays, and articles have been widely published in journals and anthologies, as well as appearing on blogs and websites.

Alex Nodopaka was born in Ukraine in 1940. He studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Casablanca, Morocco. He is now a full-time author and artist living in the United States. His interests in the visual arts and literature are widely multicultural.

Christopher Shipman is, most recently, author of *The Movie My Murderer Makes: Season II* (forthcoming from The Cupboard). His work appears in journals such as *Cimarron Review, PANK,* and *Salt Hill,* and his poem, “The Three-Year Crossing,” was a winner of the 2015 Motionpoems Big Bridges prize, judged by Alice Quinn.

Christine Stoddard is a Salvadoran-Scottish-American writer and artist who lives in Brooklyn. Her visuals have appeared in the New York Transit Museum, the Ground Zero Hurricane Katrina Museum, the Poe Museum, the Queens Museum, the Condé Nast Building, George Washington University’s Gallery 102, and beyond. In 2014, *Folio Magazine* named her one of the top twenty media visionaries in their twenties for founding the culture magazine *Quail Bell*. Christine’s artwork has been recognized by the Puffin Foundation, Artbridge, and the Library of Virginia.

SG Woody is an East Coast native currently in search of a good city willing to take the place of a man. She earns a living writing boring things for interesting people and splits the rest of her time between her books, her Dalmatian mix, and her favorite pen.
Submission due dates are October 31, January 31, April 30, and July 31, for issues forthcoming January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1, respectively, unless otherwise noted on our website.

There is no minimum word count, but please keep your fiction and nonfiction submissions under 3,500 words. Poems must be under two typed pages.

It is equally important that all three elements given for the specific submission period be included within your story or poem. Artists and photographers are only required to represent one out of the three elements.

For multiple submissions, fiction is capped at no more than two stories per submission period. Poems are limited to five per submission period. In the event your material is accepted in another publication, we request that you withdraw your submission from 3Elements Review should you decide to publish your piece elsewhere.
Mikaela Shea is in her thesis hours of her MFA at Columbia College Chicago and was recently a writer-in-residence at Ragdale Foundation. She has published stories in *Midwestern Gothic*, *Copperfield Review*, *Waypoints Magazine*, *Foliate Oak*, *Hypertext Magazine*, *Paragraph Planet*, *Vagina: The Zine*, Columbia College's annual *Story Week Reader*, as well as a children’s book at the State Historical Society of Iowa. Mikaela is currently writing a novel and is Editor-in-Chief of 3Elements Review. @mikaelashea.

Megan Collins received an MFA in Creative Writing from Boston University. She teaches creative writing at the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts, as well as literature at Central Connecticut State University. Her work has appeared in many literary journals, including *Compose*, *Linebreak*, *Off the Coast*, and *Rattle*. When not writing or teaching, Megan enjoys reading, watching The Ellen DeGeneres Show, collecting miniature items, eating cupcakes, going on Netflix binges, and spending time with her husband, Marc, and her golden retriever, Maisy. Check out Megan’s work on her website, megan-collins.com.

Katherine Davis earned an MFA in fiction from the University of Maryland and a PhD from the University of Tennessee. Her most recent work appears in Gravel and in Broad River Review, and she won Gigantic Sequins’ 2014 Flash Fiction Contest. Currently, she is living in Wisconsin with a small flock of cockatiels and is completing her first novel.

Kelly Roberts received a BA in English from the University of Iowa. After years of writing creative nonfiction, she decided to give fiction a go. Kelly lives in Iowa with her adoring husband, clever daughter and rescued wire fox terrier. By day she works in Human Resources, which provides her with more writing material than she could ever hope for. Cooking, reading and popping bubble wrap—one bubble, one row at a time—are her passions. Her work has appeared in *Lunch Ticket*.

Sarah Wylder Deshpande has published fiction and poetry in The Dunes Review, Tammy Journal, 3Elements Review, Gravel Magazine, and Fire Tetrahedron. She holds an MFA from the University of Maryland. She lives in Oregon with her husband, son, and border collie.

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**Marlon Fowler** is a Des Moines–based designer and web developer for 3Elements Review, as well as a web developer for a Fortune 100 company. Marlon received his bachelor’s degree in Journalism with a major in Advertising from Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. Marlon enjoys all things technology, making websites “do things,” running, reading, YouTube, sports, movies & TV shows, video games, and Chicago food. Marlon would really like to learn more about PHP, and see more of the world.