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THE SPACE BETWEEN US
KB Ballentine

I am traveling from one September to another—the surf’s growl echoing a half-life.
Summer sighs goodbye to the bee,
to the slow days parroting each other
in blue perfection. Foolish
to mourn the equinox, leaves scratching the sky,
lobes spinning into brown crumbs as they must.
Gone the iris, the hollyhock, stalks shriveled
into dry needles. Hollows hug their shadows longer,
ridges baring themselves to the horizon,
stark until twilight blurs the seam.
It’s always September now—gannets harping the wind,
promise of winter in its chill.
LISTENING TO PET SOUNDS
INSTEAD OF MAKING THE HOSPITAL VISIT
I WISH I COULD MAKE
Marybeth Rua-Larsen

Last night’s storm blew through, taking every loose branch with it. You gathered those that survived and set them ablaze in the fire pit. They deserve another half-life, you said, one that transforms rather than disintegrates, like gauges transform the ear lobe from a pinprick incapable of illuminating the stars to large-screen viewing of the night sky. You keep the fire going for hours on nothing but twigs, and we listen to the only Beach Boys album I can stomach, a marvel of introspection, harmony and Brian Wilson, when they finally left the “California Girls” behind, proving you don’t have to be a parrot of yourself, someone whose first comforting words have devolved into a repetition of you can do it and how can I help you.

I will do better. I will burn down that ladder of inertia and save the sparks. There is no end of dead branches, and we move our chairs closer to the flames.
Monday morning we get a brain is in the middle of November right before Thanksgiving. All of us in AP Biology are ready to be stuffing ourselves with turkey, but then Mr. Lenero brings out the brain and we forget about turkey entirely. He shows us the frontal lobe and then he turns the brain around to show us the other side and we stare in awe at the chunk of meat in his hands.

Nya sits beside me. She is a sparkler of a girl, a radioactive particle with the shortest of half-lives, always changing and shifting. Today she is a bird, more specifically a parrot, all brightly colored clothing, red feathers hanging from her ears, her fingers jangling with more silver rings than I can count. She lets out a squawk like a parrot, too. Nya is always changing how she reacts. If it were Wednesday, not Monday, maybe she would’ve been the first to offer to hack at the brain with a scalpel, and if it were Friday maybe she would’ve been smoking in the parking lot in a black leather jacket, like a cool kid. I have been trying to figure out the mystery that is her for a year now. I am slightly in love with her, in the same way a meteorologist is in love with hurricanes, and I tell myself this to avoid thinking I am really in love with her, because that would lead me to admit to myself things about girls I am not quite ready to admit yet.

Mr. Lenero smiles and explains that once, this hunk of meat in front of us used to belong to a person who donated it to science. I wonder if that poor sucker knew he was donating it to a bunch of teenagers, most of whom will never professionally hold a scalpel, and I can tell the other kids are thinking the same.

Mr. Lenero says we can now slice the brain, thin slices, like pastrami, and go look under the microscope. I do the cutting as Nya titters nervously beside me, and I slide the sliver of brain under the microscope and press my eye down. I can see the cells, and even though it isn’t very scientific of me, I can see the memories, too, and the dead thoughts.

Nya takes a look after me. Her thin shoulders begin to shake, her shiny yellow top shimmering in the fluorescent lights. At first I think she’s crying, but when she rises, she is smiling, a huge smile highlighted with purple lipstick.

“Look at that,” she says, twisting the silver rings on her fingers, “that’s all I am.”

She looks down at her boots, which are the same purple as her lipstick and suddenly I see every side of her is a slice under a microscope, the bird parts, and the emo parts, and the bad girl parts. I have been obsessing over each and every facet of her without realizing each aspect is as thin as a blade of grass, that
she has been slicing herself in order to see her cells in every which way and I have been trying to collect all the pieces separately instead of placing them all together. In a laboratory that smells of disinfectant, Nya becomes more than the sum of her parts. We look at each other for a moment, and smile, and I can see she is thinking the same. For a moment, the two of us are in the eye of the storm that is her.

When Nya brushes against me as we leave the room, I can feel something stabilize inside her, protons and neutrons settling together in atomic harmony.
I do not expect to see Venus rising fully formed. Only the sun and a seal break the surface of the bay.

A heron hunts in the shallows, frozen in the now, and we, together, are dwarfed by silence.

There is no point in love poems. They only parrot what has been said again and again.

So much more than words, we are no less than when we first burned with radiant intensity because the fury of neurons firing in the temporal lobe is only the discovery, the atom unleashed,

the first second of the half-life of love, then not half-death, but change of state.

And after so many halves, we are still here deep in the silence, watching a heron wait.
A few months after his fifth birthday, your son starts to parrot everything you do. At first, you think it’s some kind of joke, a bit he picked up from cartoons. He definitely watches too many cartoons. Every night, after his bath, he lies on his belly watching brightly-colored tornados on the television and pulling individual threads out of the rug. While he watches, he tilts his head slightly to the right, just so, like a musician listening for a note out of tune.

Every morning, you resolve to cut back on the cartoons. Tonight you will take him to catch frogs in the creek behind the Walmart. You will pull out the foam alphabet letters you forgot about in the front closet and teach him the difference between “dog” and “dug” and “Doug.”

But then there is kindergarten dropoff and the front desk where you work at a car-repair shop and handing customers their paperwork and scanning their insurance cards and fending off advances from the mechanics and then school again and dinner,
and before you know it the windows have faded from a violent yellow to blue and your son is back on the rug. You give up, because you are always so tired, and besides, he is an agreeable, unspoiled child, despite the cartoons, and you love that little tilt of his head.

One night, your son comes down the stairs from his bath, his damp footprints zig-zagging across the kitchen floor. The house smells like burnt broccoli and sunscreen. You are sitting on the beige couch under the window watching the last few chips of pink paint on your grown-out toenails and wondering why your houseplants are dying.

“I think they have fungus gnats,” he says.

“Huh?”

“The plants,” he says. “I think they have gnats.” You both look at the philodendron in the corner. One leaf drops to the ground.

“Did you learn about plants in school today?” you ask, still confused.

“No.”

“Oh.” You are five years into parenting and know that sometimes there is no use asking questions. “Do you want the remote?”

“That’s okay,” your son says, climbing onto the couch. He stretches his toes out next to yours and focuses on them. “I’ll just sit here with you.” Just like that, he stops watching cartoons. He is wearing maroon shorts and a matching pajama top that says Blammo! When you put him to bed he puts one hand under the pillow, like you. This strikes you as cute, a tiny genetic similarity.

For the first few days you don’t think anything of it. When you get up in the morning, he joins you in the bathroom and brushes his teeth right along with you, left-right-left-left-right. You smear peanut butter on his sandwich for lunch only to look up and see him making a bagel for the dog. It’s sweet, you think, so responsible. At work, six fender-benders come in, all in a row. The mechanics bang out dents all day long.

Then it starts to worry you. While measuring out the water for a pot of spaghetti, you sneeze twice. Your son, sitting at the table, sneezes right along with you.

“Why’d you do that?” you say, a little too sharply.

“What’s wrong?” you say, checking him all over for blood.

“I don’t have a purple shirt,” he wails, and is inconsolable until you change.

It’s somewhere around the Purple Shirt Incident that you start to wonder if your son’s behavior is your fault. Maybe you’ve stunted him in some way, not through cartoons or sugary cereal, but by being his only family in the world. He used to put his baby hand on the front window and babble at every living thing he could see, down to the bugs in the yard. Now he takes the bowls out of the dishwasher with both hands and copies everything you do and doesn’t watch cartoons. Maybe, you fret, maybe you didn’t
know how to take care of that friendliness in him and now it is malfunctioning, short-circuiting inside his brain, which according to WebMD is no bigger than a tennis ball. You are his only living parent, his father dead in 26 seconds flat of an aneurysm. Maybe you are not taking care of his brain and it is going to backfire on you just the same. You lay in bed at night and try not to worry because you know that if you do, your son will be kept awake in his bed worrying. He will pad downstairs in the morning with his hair rumpled and ask for a cappuccino.

The day he starts singing a song that is stuck in your head, you take him to the doctor. The doctor has a patchy handlebar mustache and looks younger than you. He keeps shuffling through your paperwork and dropping sheets on the floor. This does not inspire confidence. Your son is sitting criss-cross applesauce on the examination table. He is looking at a poster of Nick Jonas with diabetes. You lower your voice talking to the doctor. You don’t want your son to feel strange. “Could there be something wrong, with —” you point at your head. “Some kind of tumor? Or something?” You don’t say aneurysm. You know it isn’t an aneurysm. Obviously. But what if it’s something quieter, something you could stop if you tried hard enough? Something just as deadly if you ignore it?

“It’s just a phase,” the doctor says. “Many children go through this.”

Your son starts alternately jumping on and off the scale to watch the numbers change. Has he always had those dark circles under his eyes? In the glint of the fluorescent lights you think you see a little silver hair on his head. “But it’s too much stress for him,” you say. “I don’t want him to feel like he needs to be a grown-up.”

The doctor nods sympathetically, mechanically, like he has been taught to in Dealing with the Worried Mothers of Children school.

“I want him to have a child’s life,” you tell the doctor. “Not a — a half-life.”

“Maybe he could spend some time with someone else,” the doctor says. “Someone else in your family?”

“He doesn’t have anyone else,” you say. “He just has me.”

The doctor feels bad for you and gives your son a prescription for ADD medication. You ask the front desk nurse quietly about a CT scan and she informs you bluntly that your insurance won’t cover it. In the car, you Google search, “are aneurysms genetic.” Google says not usually, but sometimes, which is not helpful at all. You Google search, “are brain problems genetic.” Google says sorry, you’ll have to be more specific.

You fold the prescription into a tiny square and watch your son simultaneously folding an old receipt. He waves at your oval reflection in the mirror, chubby fingerprints covered in carbon. His carseat is getting too small.

“That doctor was a dummy,” you say.

“Dummy,” your son nods solemnly. You worry the whole way home.

On Saturday, you take your son to the park. All week long you have avoided any responsibility. He has kept you from the taxes,
an overdue trip to the DMV, a call about your health insurance. Instead you both finished a puzzle of all fifty states and ate ice cream for dinner. You went to bed every night at eight, before sunset. You tried not to get very angry, or very sad, or very stressed, only very happy (this is much harder than it looks). You taught your son how to make scrambled eggs. You think the bags under his eyes are smaller. You try not to think about his brain. Despite all this forced relaxation, you consistently feel like you just stuck your finger in an electrical socket.

At the park, you come across a ninetieth birthday party for a grandmother who is sitting on a blue picnic blanket and wrinkled everywhere, down to the lobe of her ear. She is wearing a scarf around her hair and wide, black sunglasses, like Jackie O. Her party looks like someone stomped on an ant hill. There are cousins and aunts and children and family pets pouring all over the park, rifling through picnic baskets and playing cards and tossing torn-up hot dog buns to the ducks in the pond. Many of them have a distinctly upturned, crooked-looking nose. The noses all come from this woman, the woman on the blue blanket.

Somehow you and your son get pulled into the picnic. Everyone is so warm to you, everyone is kind. They all assume you are a new wife or an old third cousin. You know you should excuse yourselves. You should explain to someone that you don't belong to this family; you are a family of two. But your son is exuberant and for once, not focused on you. You lose track of him around the time a piñata is brought out for the children. In the rush, you end up sitting next to the grandmother, who doesn't bat an eye. To her you are just part of the clan, another aunt or a godchild. You pick at a thread unraveling on the blue blanket.

“I’m ninety years old today,” the grandmother says, sounding extremely put out.

“Congratulations,” you say. The grandmother turns and stares at you from behind her huge black sunglasses. Maybe she knows you don’t belong after all. You try not to stare at her nose.

“When you turn ninety,” she says, “for heaven’s sake, don’t let your family throw you a party at a park.”

“It’s not so bad,” you say, thinking that she is complaining her party is not fancy enough.

“Oh, it’s a great party. The perfect party. And how do I get to spend it? Stuck over here on this blanket! I can’t even take a good whack at the piñata.” You both watch the group of children cheerfully mauling the piñata. It is a cartoon character you don’t recognize. Your son is standing in between two twin boys doing a kind of celebratory dance that involves spinning in circles and growling.

“Do you think I’m messing up my son?” you ask, surprising yourself with the question.

The grandmother sighs like she’s tired of people asking her questions. Hasn’t she earned a nice day at the park? “How am I supposed to know? Probably.”

This strikes you as the most honest thing she could have said to you. Now it is settled, like a key turning a lock. “Happy birthday,” you say, as an afterthought.

“Oh, thank you, dear. At least the weather’s nice, isn’t it?” She gazes out over the park, over all her family who can't quite get it right, and you know she is really very happy to be there. When you
get up from the blanket you feel somehow better and don’t know why.

You go home. You really can’t put off doing your taxes any longer, so you sit at the kitchen table and try to focus. Your son fills out fake forms in Magic Marker, putting little green scribbles where the Social Security number goes. He still holds the marker in his round fist. He hasn’t yet adopted your cramped grip. You find this vaguely reassuring.

“That’s very nice,” you say. “You have a real talent for art, baby.”

He glares at you. “It’s not art. It’s taxes.”

You have an idea. “Well, I like art. I’m gonna do some right now.” You put down the forms and go out to the driveway. You pick up some sidewalk chalk and draw a hippopotamus with a handlebar mustache. It looks a lot like the doctor. It’s much nicer than doing taxes.

Your son pokes his head out the door and frowns. “What are you doing?”

“Drawing,” you say. You sit back on your heels. The sun is warm on the back of your neck. Your son makes his way over to you. He picks up a piece of chalk and draws a smaller hippopotamus with a beard right underneath yours. It is opposite yours and wobbly, like the hippo is being reflected in a funhouse mirror.

You draw more animals together. Two flamingos, two iguanas, two lions, two monkeys, two worms, two giraffes. Your son has an absorbed, far-off look on his face. It is the expression he makes when you ask him an interesting question or when he is watching a particularly good cartoon. He draws five feet onto his giraffe.

Your son looks up. You are ready, prepared, for questions about taxes and brains, and why some people have so much family it seems downright criminal and other people just don’t. “Can we get a piñata for my birthday?”

“Sure,” you say. He draws another foot onto your giraffe, so they have ten feet between them. You wonder how long he will parrot you, and if a day will come when he begins to do the opposite, and whether that, too, will worry you.

“How old are you, Mommy?”

“Thirty.”

“Me too,” he says. “I’m thirty too.”

“You’re thirty-two? That’s so old!”

He thinks this is the funniest joke anyone has ever made in his life, and laughs so hard he starts rolling on the sidewalk. This makes you start laughing, and this makes him laugh even more. Soon you can’t tell when it began or who is imitating who or how much time has passed, if any has passed at all. The animals march two by wobbly two down your driveway and into the street. They have a lot of different noses. They all belong, somehow, to you.
GONE, BROTHER
Ellen Westa

You took half your name
and a box of unsoiled seeds
and the loose change
on Dad’s dresser. Every piece
of fruit in the kitchen rotted.
Smells of you
now. The back door hangs wide
in your wake, swaying over the river.
Momma asked where you’d gone.

You left me
a whole lie to tell,
and half an answer. I did
parrot the I’m sorry, the lip tremor.
I did but you have always
ebbed with the river.
She nodded like it was scripture.
I pine for theists because
they’ll believe in you too.

You had been counting down
your half-life for so long,
rotting from the inside,
half here and half gone.
Then you lobed yourself
off of us, washed us from you
in the river; I am
still attached to you.

Too close, the river
and its plain. When it floods
the house we climb in
the paddleboat and spin
around the new guestroom, dizzy.
When we flood our home
Momma prays the river
will wash you back in.
ELGIN’S EAR, FADING INTO BLUE AND GREEN

Soma Pradhan
Forgive me, Father, for I have forgotten what to call you and how. Blame my refusal to parrot my parents’ faith, my nightmare of waking on the threshing floor. Blame my brittle cravings, my miscalculations of a love’s half-life. Blame my brain’s burst pipes and temporal lobe’s flawed design (which is to say, blame yourself).

Grant me your secret syllables chiseled in the grit of cave wall myths. Grant me your siren song etched invisible on Leviathan’s skull. Atone and justify my silence. Then, grant my hunger hands to knead the bread I should learn to make and fangs to tear you open again. Have mercy on me, a heresy.
It must be garbage day. Which means it must be Thursday.

I can tell it’s garbage day because Clara’s footsteps are right above me. She’s rocking a little, back and forth; the floor creaks each time she shifts her weight. She’s talking to her baby who I guess is more like a toddler.

I make a point not to interact. What could she need from me? She smiles kindly. I nod back. It’s her mom’s house. She lives upstairs, I’m in the basement. Her mom moved out and now Clara manages everything. Left me a houseplant for no reason other than she wanted to.

Last month we happened to be outside at the same time, taking out the trash. I don’t know why I started talking about the guy up the street with the guide dog and the folding cane. I asked Clara if she’s seen him lately and she said didn’t you know, he died? And
then she looked at me like she was waiting for me to say something but the brown paper bag I had my recycling in broke open and everything inside tinkled to the curb: cream of mushroom soup cans and Pacifico bottles with the limes still stuck inside and the thin plastic film my cheese comes in. One of the wrappers blew down the sidewalk and she went after it—holding the baby and everything—scooped it up off the neighbor’s grass for me.

I almost married a girl who said she wasn’t ready. Five months later she got engaged to someone else. It’s not a new story. I don’t know anything about where that girl is now. I know where Clara is: right above me, standing at the window, waiting for the garbage trucks to come rumbling by because this simple routine—this Thursday ritual—makes her baby happy.

I know a few other things about Clara, like she dyes her hair to keep it blond and uses wrinkle cream even though she probably doesn’t have to. Her skin is white but gets red in the sun. I know her baby has huge blue eyes even though hers are green and her husband’s are brown. I know her husband leaves early for work, gets back late, and goes for long runs on the weekends. They get take-out from the Indian place down the street on Friday nights. With the closures now, she has all of her groceries delivered. Her husband works in the back room and I can hear him sometimes say: Shhh, no. Shhhh. Not now. I don’t know if he is talking to the baby or to Clara.

They don’t drink much. The one time I saw a bottle of wine—white—in their recycling there was enough wine left to fill half a glass. I know she washes out her cans and jars, her plastic tubs of cottage cheese and plain yogurt, before she puts them in the recycle bin.

Alone, below her, I sometimes think of her thinking of me, down here, thinking of her. It’s ridiculous, but there are hours to fill and so I fill them.

Today at the window she is letting the baby say: fuck, fuck, fuck because she knows he’s really saying truck, truck, truck. She tries to get him to repeat the right words: yes, she coos, garbage truck, garbage truck, emphasizing the tr sound with gentle force.

When I first moved in here, I would see the guy up the street walking to the bus stop and back, with his guide dog and his folding cane. Twice a day. In the morning, as I got in my car for work, and in the afternoon, when I came back. For months it seemed like we had the same exact schedule, and he would always say hello—always knew I was there—even though he couldn’t see me—by my shadow, my shape, or my sound: my car, my key, my footsteps.

If an ambulance came for him, I missed it. If I had known, would I have stood on the street with the rest of the neighbors, shaking my head in sadness, dismay? Would I have hidden inside, peeking through the blinds?

If it’s Thursday, that means I have a group I’m supposed to lead at 12:45 p.m. Everything starts later now so the teens can sleep in. I’m glad. Let them sleep through this. What else is there but sleep? Sleep and the half-life of their dreams. That’s what I’ll ask them about in our session later. Their dreams. Not for the future (god knows, what future?) but what they see when they sleep. Where they go. What they do.

There’s nothing to do anymore other than wait in long lines
at Trader Joe’s or track a UPS delivery. The health center where I work is closed because the high school campus is closed so I’m told to work from home. I’m told to meet with my regular weekly teen check-in groups via Zoom using the Chromebook the center sent me home with. It doesn’t work very well. The kids don’t use their cameras for our sessions and they keep their audio on mute. I stare at the black boxes with their names on them and ask: you okay? You doing okay? It’s okay.

If I’m lucky, a voice will crackle through with: yeah, yeah I’m okay.

Before the closures, this kid Sam would come in every day during second period because he hated P.E. I’d let him sit in my office. He only wanted me to talk about myself. He didn’t want to give away anything. Once he asked me about the scar on my earlobe. It isn’t really a scar so much as a tear, a rip. A chunk missing. I thought about telling him the truth: about my drunk brother and the fight, his knife, how I stitched it up by myself in the bathroom at 2 a.m. The infection. But we are supposed to give the kids comfort. Maybe it would have been comforting after all? See, look: I lived.

He picked up a packet of Post-Its from my desk and flipped through the blank pages. Flick, flick, flick. Stop. Flick, flick, flick. “Here’s an idea. You can draw what you’re feeling,” I said to him. Maybe I was being sarcastic but he didn’t take it as sarcasm. “I don’t know what I’m feeling,” he said. And then softer: “I’m not feeling anything.”

“Then draw anything,” I said.

“Whatever I want?”

“Sure.”

The kid drew a swastika and when I sent him to the office he came back to me with a note from the VP suggesting counseling. I tore the swastika sticky off the stack and threw it away, used the rest of the pad for office stuff—phone numbers and dates, file numbers and names—until I came across a question, written in pencil, a loose scrawl, sloppily taking up most of the square: do you love me God? Yes, the “g” was capitalized. Yes, there was a question mark.

Sam was gone by then—transferred or moved or missing.

Outside the garbage trucks rumble forward, stopping at each house. They lunge and stop, lunge and stop. It is something for Clara and the baby to do, I guess, and I think it must make her happy—to have this, at least once a week. She drags the activity out so it takes up a lot of time. They get to the window early. Stand there, rocking back and forth. Waiting, watching, looking. I know this because I can hear them above me. I can feel them, even, looking out the window, listening to the loud engine, the wheels whirring closer and closer. The ground vibrating as the truck turns the corner to our street. The baby squeals, watching the claws extend, clasp the bin, toss the contents up and over, up and over.

My bin isn’t out there. My bin hasn’t been out there for three weeks.

When I signed the renewal for the lease in January, Clara didn’t ask if I was neat, if I was tidy. She said: I can tell you’re neat. I can tell you’re tidy. I nodded because the pen was still in my hand. Now the trash in here is overflowing, and it reeks like I don’t know what.
I try to keep the recycling separate but it doesn’t always work: empty cans of Purina mixed in with empty boxes of DiGiorno, coffee grounds, chicken bones and such. I stopped getting the Kraft singles. I couldn’t eat them anymore without picturing Clara running down the sidewalk after the filmy packaging, bending to pick it up, dropping it into her bin—not mine.

We teach the kids in our groups about goal setting; we talk to them about making plans. Time management. Grids and schedules. Following through. It’s Thursday. Garbage day. The bins go out. Get your trash together, get it to the curb.

How many times have I said: it’s easy?
But I don’t want Clara to see my trash.

The truck is almost here. Fuck, fuck, fuck, the baby is squealing. That’s right: garbage truck, garbage truck, Clara corrects him. She wants him to parrot her—to say it right. Not fuck, say truck, truck, tr-uck. Is this what tips his squeal into a cry? I don’t know but suddenly the garbage truck is right in front of our house and the baby’s wailing. I imagine the anticipation, the excitement was too much for him.

You okay? You doing okay? It’s okay.
Imagine waiting and waiting and then—
—the rumbling is right in front of you and you want the claw to be a hand and you want the hand to be open. You want it to scoop you up and hold you, just a little, warm and soft in the center of its palm before you get dropped into the mess with the rest.

**ALWAYS SPEAKING**
Katherine Sánchez Espano

When she swallowed winter, even her voice wore white.
Chapped heart. Avalanche of lungs.
She burned his picture in the driveway, flames French kissing the air, all inconstant tongues.
What is the half-life of loss?
Now she’s drinking vodka shots and parroting Nietzsche.
Now she’s a plucked rose in a red bra, the steam from a quiet cup of tea.
Through the kitchen window, clouds pass like ignored words over the lobe of the moon.
She knows the sky is deaf to the passion of rockets, but the rockets still rise.
Each star is a new ear.
She presses her mouth to the glass.
THE CHANGELING WELCOMES HERSELF HOME

Brenda Mann Hammack
That’s Mom’s handwriting on the back. You’ve got a parrot on your head and two more on your outstretched arms—one of them seems to be going for your ear lobe. Your new fiancée has her three parrots, too. Your pale Minnesota winter legs will surely turn pink by the end of the day. You both smile for the camera in that can-you-believe-we-have-parrots-on-our-heads way. And why not? You’re at the beginning, or if not the beginning exactly, at least the beginning of something. You can’t yet know that yours will be a half-life, no one thinks like that, and besides, those parrots on your heads must hurt, what with your hair just starting to thin and your wife (soon-to-be wife/widow) with her buzz cut that we all found so interesting. Did the tour guide tell you that some parrots live to be over a hundred? Well, it’s rare but it does happen, especially with macaws and those babies are definitely macaws.
SHOP GIRL
Mira Kamada
CONTRIBUTORS

Hugh Anderson has lived past several half-lives, but he’s okay with that; it’s all progress toward a final change of state. Recent publications have appeared in Right Hand Pointing, Praxis Magazine Online, The Willawaw Journal, Panoplyzine, Vallum, 3Elements Literary Review, and are forthcoming in Cold Mountain Review. He has one Pushcart Prize nomination.

Catalina Aranguren received their BFA at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Their work explores the relationship between perception and cognition, and is a dialogue about the modern world and our place in it. Light is the foundation and sets the tone of the conversation.

KB Ballentine’s sixth collection, The Light Tears Loose, appeared this summer with Blue Light Press. Published in Crab Orchard Review and Haight-Ashbury Literary Journal, among others, her work also appears in anthologies including In Plein Air (2017) and Carrying the Branch: Poets in Search of Peace (2017).

Mackenzie Colby was born in Abbotsford in British Columbia, Canada. Growing up on the beaches and in the trees of the Pacific Northwest, her love of the organic world flourished. A serial collector, Mackenzie has drawers, bins, and bags filled with items that many would call “garbage.” Mackenzie’s paintings were featured in a solo show at Emily Carr University in Spring 2020. She has also shown work in exhibitions at Eclectic 47, Schack Art Center, and The School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Noa Covo is a teenage writer. Her work has appeared in Reckoning and Newfound, and her microchapbook will be published by Nightingale and Sparrow this summer.


Sève Favre is a Swiss artist. She is focused on overcoming the classical border between an artwork and the viewer. She invites the Spectator to create from her works. The Relationship thus becomes intimate, tactile, plural, and a source of questioning. Do we want to hide or close? Show or open? This desire gave rise to “intervariactive” artworks (interaction-variation-activity).

Jeremiah Gilbert is an award-winning photographer and avid traveler based out of Southern California. He likes to travel light and shoot handheld. His travels have taken him to over eighty countries spread across five continents. His photography has been published internationally, in both digital and print publications, and has been exhibited worldwide. His hope is to inspire those who see his work to look more carefully at the world around them in order to discover beauty in unusual and unexpected places.
Brenda Mann Hammack is the managing editor and web designer for *Glint Literary Journal*. She also teaches folklore, modern poetry, and creative writing at Fayetteville State University, where she serves as coordinator for the BA in Creative and Professional Writing. Her book, *Humbug: A Neo-Victorian Fantasy in Verse*, was released in 2013. Other work (poetry, fiction, and photography) has appeared in *Menacing Hedge*, *The Fabulist*, *Anthropoid*, *NILVX*, *Hypnopomp*, *Rhino*, and *A capella Zoo*.

Bill Hollands holds degrees from Williams College, Cambridge University, and the University of Michigan. He is a teacher and poet in Seattle, where he lives with his husband and their son. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Rattle*, *Crosswinds*, *PageBoy*, and *Tipton Poetry Journal*.

Mira Kamada earned a Master of Arts degree in Painting/Studio Arts from Marshall University, receiving the Arthur Carpenter Graduate Award for Excellence in Art. After graduating, she taught public school classes and painting workshops for adults, moving into graphic design mid-career. She has lived, worked, and exhibited on both U.S. coasts, as well as the Pacific Northwest and Canada. Her work is represented in both private and public collections and has appeared in feature films. Her studio is in Bellingham, Washington.

Van Lanigh creates figurative and landscape pieces. Her unique style is a reaction to abstractionism in an attempt to capture surrealistic yet casual reality. One of her experiments is getting Pointillism into 3D space by making a series of human-face sculptures with small colorful handcrafted polymer clay balls.

Lisa Piazza is a writer and educator from Oakland, California. Her work has been nominated for Best Small Fictions, Best of the Net, the VERA Award, and the Pushcart Prize.

Soma Pradhan comes from a family of agitators and legislators with roots in coastal Bengal. Her paintings are available online at the Saatchi Gallery and she has exhibited at NAFA. Soma is an associate member of the American Watercolor Society. Her work has been published in *The Rappahannock Review*.

Whitney Rio-Ross is the author of the chapbook *Birthmarks*. Her poetry has previously appeared in *America Magazine*, *So to Speak*, *Waccamaw*, *Naugatuck River Review*, and elsewhere. She writes and teaches in Nashville, Tennessee, where she lives with her husband and practically-perfect pup.

Marybeth Rua-Larsen lives on the south coast of Massachusetts. Her poems, essays, flash fiction, and reviews have appeared or are forthcoming in *Orbis*, *Magma*, *Shot Glass Journal*, *Crannóg*, *Gramarye*, and *The Blue Nib*. She won the 2016 Parent-Writer Fellowship in Poetry from the Martha’s Vineyard Institute of Creative Writing, the 2017 Luso-American Fellowship for the DISQUIET International Literary Program in Lisbon, Portugal, and was awarded a Hawthornden International Fellowship in Scotland in 2019.
**Kayla Rutledge** is from Charlotte, North Carolina. She is the recipient of the 2019 James Hurst Prize for Fiction from NC State and the 2020 Louis D. Rubin, Jr. Prize in Creative Writing from UNC-Chapel Hill. She has work published and forthcoming in *Cellar Door, Manqué Magazine, The Roadrunner Review,* and *Gone Lawn,* and is an incoming graduate student in the MFA program at NC State University.

**Miya Sukune** is a visual artist working and residing on an island in the Puget Sound. She works with paint at her studio easel and designs in metal for her public art. Her solo shows include Mt. Hood Community College (OR) and Hastings-Cone Gallery.

**Ellen Westa** has a BFA in Writing, Literature, and Publishing from Emerson College. She completed a study abroad program at the Burren College of Art in Ballyvaughan, County Clare, Ireland, which focused on creative writing and the environment. She works for Cambridge Public Schools as a special educator.
Submission due dates are November 30, February 28, May 31, and August 31, for issues forthcoming February 1, May 1, August 1, and November 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 element.

Visit www.3ElementsReview.com for more info.
Erin Evans received her MFA in Poetry from the Vermont College of Fine Arts. Her work was nominated for a 2018 AWP Intro Journals Award, and she has attended the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference. An avid photographer, she works and lives in Vermont with her husband and their 2-year-old son.

Christian Anton Gerard is a woodworker, a poetry editor at 3Elements Literary Review, and the author of Holdfast (C&R Press) and Wilmot Here, Collect for Stella (WordTech). He’s received Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference scholarships, the Iron Horse Literary Review’s Discovered Voices Award, and he was a 2017 Best of the Net finalist. His poems, reviews, and interviews appear in magazines such as, The Rumpus, Post Road, The Adroit Journal, Diode, Orion, and Smartish Pace. Gerard is also an associate professor in the creative writing program at the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith.

Lisa Buckton grew up along the Hudson River and holds an MFA in Writing from the Vermont College of Fine Arts. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in Hayden’s Ferry Review, The Writer’s Chronicle, Grist Journal, and other journals. She has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and received an honorable mention in the 2018 AWP Intro Journals Project. She lives in Vermont, where she works as a librarian.

Sionnain Buckley is a writer and visual artist based in Boston. Her work has appeared in Hobart, Winter Tangerine, Wigleaf, Strange Horizons, CutBank, Autostraddle, and others. Her flash has been nominated for Best of the Net, Best Small Fictions, and Best Microfiction, and won first place in Exposition Review’s Flash 405 contest. This fall, she will begin her MFA in fiction at The Ohio State University.

Tamar Jacobs is a writer and editor based in Philadelphia. Her short stories have appeared in Glimmer Train Stories, Hayden’s Ferry Review, the Louisville Review, New Ohio Review, Grist, and other publications. Her flash fiction appears and is forthcoming on the Akashic Books website, and her essays appear and are forthcoming with New York Spirit. She placed second in a Glimmer Train Stories “Short Story Award for New Writers” contest. She holds an MFA from University of Maryland, where she was awarded the Katherine Anne Porter Fiction Prize.