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Bear Review is an online literary journal of poems and micro prose out of Kansas City, Missouri. Published twice a year, in fall and spring, *Bear Review* is made possible by its readers' help and support. The editors, Brian Clifton and Marcus Myers, would like to express their gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the journal.

We read submissions year-round at www.bearreview.submittable.com. Send up to five poems or one to two short prose pieces (maximum: 500 words). We will consider a long poem, as well as a sequence of interconnected short sections of a short story, as long as it promises to keep the fire stoked. We are open to simultaneous submissions but ask the writer to notify us immediately about an acceptance elsewhere.

Cover art, 'from the Garden of Earthly Delights, Exterior Panels' by Hieronymus Bosch (1450 - 1516).

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AN ACCOUNT

Susan Hutton

Empty space is not always empty.
Energy can burst into being
for the blink of an eye, and –
I was born into a body as a photon
can vanish and appear somewhere else,
and be nothing in between.
My body meets an object
outside the sequence
that brought it into being.
Out of the blue
means cresting a hill under an open sky
after many days of walking, and –
Out of the blue
a ship! Out of the blue, a present
beautifully wrapped in colored paper
with its bitter history of trees,
& etc. And the speed at which time passes—
Where is the weight of a child encircled in your arms?
You cannot tell the birch, *keep your leaves*,
or find a red-wing blackbird in winter.
Last week a man rose alone to
the very top of the stratosphere and saw
the layers of heaven against the darkness of space.
Even in suffering's empty state time spilled before me.

Julie the Astonishing (How She Didn't Leave the Bed for 120 Days)

Julia Story

And another thing she read about were trees,
how they talked to each other underground, all different
species, using fungus as a conductor.

Dead people came.
A voice said "Good morning"
clearly in her ear.

She turned onto her side and saw black birds on the edge
of her vision, erased them, and filled the empty space
with other birds who were made of paper.

She turned onto her other side, cut open the horse,
and climbed inside and slept.

Julie the Astonishing (Her Time in Purgatory)

Julia Story

Would you rather stay here or return
to your body?

Return to my body.

Even if the body is wrong:
A lump of no limbs, or invisible
to most people. Even if you have to live
away from the world.

Yes. Even then. Away from
the world.

And will you climb into ovens
and pour boiling water onto
your limbs to show people
who I am?

I don't know who you
are. But I am willing to
endure pain however
it comes.

And will you tell no one
of this place, but allow a piece
of yourself to live here
until I am ready to bring the rest
of you back?

A piece of myself has always
lived here. A piece of myself
is all I have.

X

Abigail Williamson

X sits on her bed cross-legged

X leans over on her knees

X reads the allegory of the cave as she absentmindedly drinks 2% milk

X gets to the part where the prisoners see the shadows on the cave wall and believe them to
be real and not byproducts of fire

X feels the light-bulb above her head turn on

X understands how the prisoners feel

X knows what it's like to see only the shadows cast by others and believe them to be truth

X knows people who want you to believe they're something they're not

X is "friends" with some of those puppeteers who marionette their lives

X begins to feel like a prisoner no more.



Fritz and The Peach

Tim Georgeson

A Shadow's Shadow and That Shadow's Shadow

Ryan Downum

for Dillon

Try not to overthink fractions, the unexpected, or the ratio of clouds to sky. Suppose you suddenly stop believing in gravity. There is beauty in not knowing. I am often unsure and full of feelings. Inside my head are echoes of cut up string and stones. My hands are full of sky. Imagine wearing a different hat for each emotion you feel throughout the day. Imagine the ridiculousness! Hearts full of feathers. A handful of light. Clouds moving backwards. Speaking through twigs and shrubs. Outmaneuvering a ladder propped up against the edge of the sky. A conversation with a pond. A paper boat beneath my tongue. Here is all my uncertainty neatly inside a paper boat. A feather remains aflame inside the body inside the tree.

from *I Am Heavy w/ Feeling*

Joshua Young & Alexis Pope

What shook us what clanged
against the inside of this
I'm being vague because
mostly feelings can be
one-sided ok so what I mean is
that our neighbors have more money
than I will ever have—
I'm not implying anything
they're good people so this is just factual
& Ryan & I keep texting *let's get famous*
but I really want that because
it means I could pay off my loans
love is harder without money love
is harder when the guts that got it going
become barely something worth
 nostalgia's time
remember when we used to fuck
& it meant something
outside of ourselves
remember how it shook us
remember the moon cut in half
by clouds & you said *don't ruin this with a poem*
 come here
you said *come here*

from *I Am Heavy w/ Feeling*

Joshua Young & Alexis Pope

I keep telling

my students

to interject

in the poem

but I'm paraphrasing

what another

poet told me

who is this

I'm meeting

shake that limp hand

& everyone asks

how are your classes going

how do you say

amazing because

I am amazing at teaching

without sounding

like a total asshole

thing is I believe it

my evaluations prove it

except the one that says

don't hire grad students

from when I wasn't

a grad student

I should probably

start dressing better

Emily

Monique Quintana

Seth always wanted things his way. When I told him I was having a girl, I could tell he couldn't take it. You should see the pictures of him at the hospital when she was born, pretending to be happy with me. Everyone else brought me pink balloons and teddy bears, like they already knew. We all knew, but he was in denial. And now he's two days late picking up his daughter. I remember when I used to wait for him, lying on my bed with my feet up on the wall. He'd take so long, I'd fall asleep. Then he'd come for a little bit and take off. Now he's with some chick that wears Juicy sweat pants. That's the thing about Seth. He only lasts for a little while.

Gina

Monique Quintana

The first time I met Seth's daughter, she moved her head around in circles. Pointing her fingers at Seth, saying, Don't talk about my mom. She has the cutest pigtails and her eyes slant when she laughs. Everyone says she looks just like Seth, but I don't see it. She looks just like her mom. She's got her eyes and her nose and everything. Except she's prettier than her mom. I saw her mom up close once, when she was getting her mail. She still has a spiral perm. Bree's a cute little girl though. But damn, she has an attitude. One day she's writing me letters on her kindergarten paper, filling all those dotted lines up with hearts and kisses, and then the next day she's asking me what am I looking at, haven't I ever seen a little girl before? She said that last time she came over. I didn't even know I was staring at her. I didn't even feel better when Seth yelled at her for saying that because she's never going to listen. She just walks off splashing the water hose like a scepter, playing a princess. He's picking her up today. He asked me if I wanted to come for the ride. But I said no. Said he should spend some time alone with his daughter.

Jim Limber the Adopted Mulatto Son of Jefferson Davis Cannot
Afford to Make Demands of Love

Shane McCrae

Momma Varina feels for Negroes daddy
Jeff says she feels for Negroes more than what
She should but he don't tell her what she should be
Feeling for Negroes he's the president
And what's more daddy Jeff and if he want-
ed to he could instead he talks to me
A lot of the time he talks to me about
Things he don't talk he says to nobody
About he says it's something like a Ne-
gro cannot listen like the folks he owes
A duty to and that's a great relief
I know he's scared sometimes but he don't show
It much to nobody else that's how I know he
Loves me because he don't mind what he shows me

Jefferson Davis the Adoptive Father of the Mulatto Jim Limber

Dreams the Future of the American Entertainment Industry as

He Dreams He Is Arguing His Cause in Washington D.C.

Shane McCrae

The wheel of history turns in the gut

of the white man but the Negro is strapped

to the wheel and broken by the turning

and nearly liquefied by the turning

and the white man sickens to him who says

we do not pay for the life we enjoy

I say we pay with our sickness I say

our enjoyment is not what you suppose

but it is instead a life of worry

and disappointed love to him I say

yes we love our Negroes and with a great

love Yankees cannot know and would not want

to know if they could and to those who would

free the Negro I say look to your guts

you fatten on the people you would free



12th and Oak

Adam J. Long



11th and McGee

Adam J. Long

Hey Siri

Em Moak

Hey Siri, tell chain-smoking lover
I don't need his passive-aggressive sympathy.
"Sorry, I didn't quite hear that, Em."
Siri, what's the longest time it's
taken for a body to be discovered?
"According to this article, a Croatia woman
died in front of her television
and wasn't found for forty-two years."
Hey Siri, do a search for 'heinous sins.'
"Did you mean 'hairy sims'?"
Siri, is there a 1-800 line for confessions?
Do you think a dozen Hail Marys
would keep someone in the grave
and not haunting the graveyard?
Siri, can you OD on melatonin?
"I'll look that up for you."
Here are some results: 'Need help? United States:
1 (800) 273-8255
National Suicide Prevention—"
Siri, text Chain-Smoker "I love you"—
Don't send.
Siri, play bleakness on repeat.

Missing

yuan changming

your presence will fall upon me
like the first rain
of spring, and
everywhere I go
is mushroomed
with song

Plot

from *Fingerling Lakes*

Simeon Berry

When it rains I come talk to Gram

When things are upsetting

When my body
smells like elements

Like a bunch of stupid names

When Dad drives erratically
and says the tavern

is a pissbucket
with a bunch of paychecks in it

The rain makes the dirt erupt
in tiny punctuation

Bends the grass

And Gram keeps
saying her one sentence over

and over again

All Set to Beat The Last Trump

I like to think of her sick
Wrapped in a robe of menthol

Unknotting a lake fish
like a fat comma

Telling me

*You could drown
in the gulf between*

what is and what wasn't

She kept separate
bedrooms from Gramp

for the last forty

She danced with the axe
over the cordwood

Muttering *Your parents
don't know what they should*

*be forgiven for
Bless them*

*Remember they're going
to be dead longer than you*

I tell her about Jay
The way he's only gentle

around her sister

Why Dad seems to have left
the best part of him

in that field
with his good right hand

Why Mom seems
to worship

men who tell you
how to get over

on the world

Those people who put
their backs to the fire

and looked

out into the sands

Where God was

brooding with his vendettas
Manufacturing willful daughters

and weakened men

Scope

from *Fingerling Lakes*

Simeon Berry

Jay's sister Margo
loves snipers

Their altitude
Their theories

Their way of leaving

blotched mannequins
behind them

She fists her pills

and adjusts the pillows

as rain prickles the windows

Her favorite is a Finn
who killed 700 Russians

in 100 days

Who held snow
in his mouth

so his breath
won't condense

I ask about Jay's moods
and she snorts

He tries to be careful around you

They all think women

have glass jams

Her hand trembles

On the coverlet as if
in an updraft

It's like we're Camaros

that have been wrecked

and put back together

perfectly

*None of them can quite
believe it*

*At bottom they don't think
we should be able to do*

what we're able to do

Conclusions

from *Fingerling Lakes*

Simeon Berry

Stell likes to make graveyard rubbings
of the most absurd deaths

Killed by a mule
Poisoned by berries

Battered by iron

I like to accompany her

these late nights

Not for the last facts
about any of them

But for the way the grass
smells dismally of reclaimed water

Like perfected regret

Miss Raylene says
the Arabs invented the zero

Before that there was always something

The one thing we were
never short on

was metaphors for death

I agree

High school offers hundreds
of opportunities every day

Being alone and despised
in the crowd

Not knowing how to stand right

Hating the kiss that hasn't happened

I watch Stell pause in front of
The Beautiful Consumptive

Seeming to slip sideways
into the stylized cough

of her Marlboro Red



'The Sacred and The Sick (Pyre)

Renee Cinderhouse

Laugh and Hang

Amy Lawless

There were these food carts
On campus called Grease Trucks
You could get a gyro with french fries inside
Or even chicken cutlet hoagie
Topped with french fries and mozzarella sticks
These are called “Fat Sandwiches”
They don't exist anymore but
I feel them
You can still get a Fat Sandwich at that place on the corner,
but not really
I left the building with tears drying on my cheeks
This is coldness on skin
& I passed the building development that sprang up
After the Grease Trucks were put out of business
And felt you in my lungs on each inhale
So clichéd
I caught myself back with each exhale
Thought I'd write a big poem for you
But all I could write was:
permanent deadeye



'The Sacred and The Sick (Portrait)

Renee Cinderhouse

Gabriel Garcia Marquez once described Columbian villagers who dug up their dead ancestors in the cemetery and carried them to wherever they went to next. What is the purpose of burying your dead if you don't leave them to rest? What is the purpose of grief if you carry it with you forever anyway? The villagers didn't know where they'd go next, so they carried the corpses with them.

I feel and smell my ancestors on my back. I smell an Irish cargo. Canadian cargo. My grandparents. Czech cargo. I smell a little Scottish cargo and Bohemian cargo. But I also smell the cargo of my friends and their dead. Deoderant is popular but ineffective. "Someone had to tell you it's not working..." Fashion is marketing of fabric to cover up the smell. I love how we are weighted down with good weight, bad weight, any weight. You can't cover it up.

Walk backwards Unkeurig ungift unlaugh unlonely unkiss undoorbell unring unlook uncheap
vaporizer unbroken unwhat went unsaid unjulian schabel's house unbirthday undiabeacon
unthe Revenant unwoodstock unnew years unstormking unshit sheets unjoke unwish
unhope
unRick and Morty unsentimental
Unbeer unbeefstew
Unthink unspoke unthe Martian unCrimson Peak unDeadpool un13 Cloverfield Lane
unPSL jokes ungingerbread unrasberries in bed unfried lemons
Unnervous
Unswipe

Each night my body dreams me back into a full balloon

A day deflates it

With a face, a happiness in shattering scenes, can appear any moment

My lungs empty

And fill again

You're always either inside of a building or outside of a building

The air will always change

Bringing oxygen into the body

and removing carbon dioxide



The Sacred and The Sick (Portrait)

Renee Cinderhouse

I walk into the pet store where I find a canary singing alone.

A sign in her cage announces that soon she will be joined by a friend

But if she's anything like me, that's easier said...

I watch a video of an Xray of a female alligator breathing
& sit soothed by this cycle and set an intention
To watch the alligator video whenever I want to
To remind myself of who I am and what I can do
Without ever having to think about it
An alligator lung performs uni-directional air flow
Humans have bi-directional lungs
Which means that not all the air leaves our lungs each time we exhale
Something sticks



The Sacred and The Sick (Bed)

Renee Cinderhouse

Photograph of The Philippine General Hospital, 1905

Sarah Katz

Black water rolls through the hospital's arches
into Taft Avenue as terracotta roof tiles
slide into the new river
while four men search for a way out of it

One pushes his body with all limbs
so much river water dripping
off his chin
one could confuse his expression for crying

Two others in the bow and stern of a rowboat
point their salakót hats forward
Muscled arms folding inward and outward
they jab and pull long oars
propelling the boat onward

A fourth leads the rest, naked
his expression mute and river-gray
his legs foreshortened at the knee
immobile as a photograph

There will be a rescue I'm sure of it
but before the men are set free again
the tributary strays downhill
through rice paddy terraces
people and flat stones

Natural Disaster

Nicole Higgins

A man tells me he'll go to his grave
with the sound of a band ~~in his heart~~
in his head. In the torso, another
caged contortion. Between the teeth,
half wind. Can't riff without recall—
if the command is attached to muscle,
what of my aching neck equals
memory? I calculate the landscape of
Lincoln Cemetery: silent cousins,
four fistfuls of red gardens. A tourist-
trapped bird composed of gray stone.
Me in the hospital bed or falling from
the tower. Me with translucence and
the wooden baton—its small dark
grip delicately balanced between fat
fingers.

Étude

Nicole Higgins

I have good bones but turn
all tilt and fascinator, flat
every fifth. Bird
nesting in my hair. Somewhere

there's a saying about this.
C sharp, he says, *or you'll B flat*
and I laugh as if the joke
makes sense. As if a holiday,

I set my embouchure
for a meditation (*Relax*
he says) but I don't
know the procedure for un-

stitching lips so still—. In this case
of emergency I break
glass to cut my teeth
and breathing in

taste copper, taste copper

Say Ah

Nicole Higgins

Open wide for me, statistic. Say
forty-three percent. Say seventy.
Deep breath now. Act static
when every dawn a Band-Aid rip
raw. Your animal
heart tipped epidemic

to havenothavenothavenot.

I can tell you've been practicing
your tiny death. Don't panic, defib-
rillate. Tell me
when it hurts then swallow. Again
pretty face, articulate.
Tongue depressor, measure

of tick under ribs. Of mine
and hours. Count the fears
showing symptom no answer
as you summer sunset
down and out of the mouth.

The Good Fight

Alexis Orgera

Rules about my weapons: no guns
near the hunting dogs, no impaling
sunsets. Few artists paintball light this way,
mixing the regulation of fallow & shadow.
Turner, with his lo-def over-exposure like a perfect
blowjob. Bored gods tango with perception.
I wonder how many times I'll etch myself
into aluminum foil before I begin to imagine
my own combustion. I'm having a piece
of furniture made. We met for drinks.
He showed me plans. I fell in love
with the spare force of a tree planed just for me,
like a child given her first wooden sword,
a deception that both wields & concedes power.

Nixon is Born to the Elect

Seann Weir

Nixon was born in an iron home, with thirty locked doors and no windows, north of the Merchant's road. He was nourished on coriander and buckshot. His mother fed beggars bread crumbs from her toes while his father built cabins out of tin cans and mud. Nixon wanted to plug the dent in Lincoln's head and swaddle him in a trenchcoat. Instead, Nixon wrestled with Kennedy's ghost in the middle of the Golden Missile Factory as three naked monks cheered "we burn alone." He sought Elvis for counsel. Elvis said "Angels sleep in the throats of revolvers." Ask and you shall beseech. Nixon thought every camera was loaded with a bullet twice the size of his own. His wife shoved a derringer pistol down his pants every morning and said "don't you dare touch it with your little hands."



Atomic Birds II

Tim Georgeson

Jack Cousteau

Jonathon May

I.

Jack Cousteau wanted the aliens to want him as much as he wanted them. Which, as far as he knew, was impossible. He had spent years winnowing down the varied alien forms and representations from books and movies and his own home-spun imagination into a distillation, a look codified out of the dark of space and Jack's mind. They were pale yellow, like quartz, and looked more or less like people. Jack felt it only fair to go with the old urge, Made in the likeness of the Creator. But try as he might, he couldn't open their mouths, not even in his mouth. He tried telepathy a few times, scanning the noise of his own head and trying to spin from that a meaning. Nothing. So he was content with the wanting, which he could handle. He tried to tell himself that it wasn't impossible, of course, to break through, bridge the gap. Some brief moments, usually before waking, he envisioned a Water, Helen, Water scenario with the aliens. The usual celebrations followed, the crying, the collie in the yard, It has a name!

His mother recalled over a family occasion, maybe Thanksgiving, that Jack really loved those depressing space movies a lot. His mother, idiot, refused to see the grand beauty of alien life, its essential Ockhamness, rather content to philosophize from behind the glittering barricade of lipstick on glass. She, and his father, dutifully bought items from the Space Museum and NASA online in attempts to foster an interest in space in general, rather than just aliens. An astrophysicist, they knew, could rake in more dough than a "Believer." But neither could grasp firmly on their son's obsession. They never found any morbidly

sexual drawings or anything indecent, and it should come as no surprise that his mother took great liberty with the notion of privacy under her roof.

But Jack, now thirty and in an apartment of his own, could dawdle away the off-work hours in thoughts of meeting the tribe, as he privately referred to them. Jack knew that his position at the local used bookstore in Wyatt, Wyoming would appear to the unenlightened as an impossibly small place from which to aspire to be first contact with life from beyond the firmament. Jack, of course, knew better. They had come to him in a dream, or maybe he had come to them in a dream—it didn't really matter. Anyway, the whole thing was settled in a weird open plain with faint purple light. What appeared to echo from the undulating clouds was the I Love Lucy theme. Buh-nuh-nuh-nunna-nuh-nunna. Faint though, very realistic. Knowing how unlikely this would seem to others, Jack, of course, kept quiet about the whole matter. Sometimes he would hum it, though, when he thought no one could hear him.



American Hustle Camping

Zach Bauman

II.

At 4:13 A.M. on a Wednesday during the Obama administration, Jack woke up and knew it was time. He knew he didn't need to bring anything with him, so at the foot of his bed, he undressed in the darkness and smiled and felt completely whole. He kept whispering, I know, I know, to himself as he walked slowly from his room, down the hall, past the kitchen, and outside. A light shone outside and from it, he heard a voice, and he cried there, during his final steps into the enveloping whiteness from his house.

According to the police report, when they found Jack on his front lawn at 6:47 A.M., he was naked, foaming at the mouth. The paramedics said if the neighbors, the Straits, hadn't called when they did, he could have bitten off his tongue and choked on all of the blood. After running some tests, the doctors released him, with an order to take Lorazepam when he felt anxious. Jack flushed the pills down the drain when he got home. His parents told him that all of this anxiety about space and aliens and whatever was really his own body trying to tell him to find someone here, on Earth. Jack thought about calling his ex-boyfriend Evan. He always thought about Evan whenever his parents were on his ass and sometimes when he was alone in bed at night and needed something to masturbate to. But he never thought about Evan, for instance, at the grocery store or while reading the paper. There was no Oh Evan would find this interesting—I'll remember to tell him. That didn't happen.



Chicago New Years 2016

Zach Bauman

III.

Of course Jack called Evan up that night when he got home. He didn't tell him about the hospital visit or anything, because Evan thought he was a bit of a loose cannon. That was part of the reason Evan liked him though. Whenever they had sex, when they were together and after, Evan would squirm beneath Jack, who pounded into him, and think there was no greater happiness. Jack was a fantastic lover, and because of this, Evan, even though it was kind of late, came over when he called.

After Jack came inside of Evan, the two laid in silence.

I heard from the Straits that something happened today, Evan said.

I don't want to talk about it.

Okay...that's fine.

A few more minutes passed. Jack thought about the yellow hand of an alien man caressing the insides of his cheeks. Evan thought it was time to reconcile.

Jack, I think we should get back together.

What?

It's just—things are different. We're both thirty. We need each other.

Jack didn't want to say he'd been called for a higher purpose, or that he had just wanted to have sex because he was afraid of why he hadn't been taken. Jack was intensely scared. While having sex with Evan, he just went to that place in his mind where he was a dot falling into an infinitely expanding square of whiteness. Why did he wake up on his lawn, the ambulance screaming? Why didn't they take him? They had come for him—why didn't they take him?

Why what? asked Evan

I'll think about it, he replied, turning over to face the wall.

The next few days, Jack slept very poorly with fevered half-dreams of the yellow aliens coming and leaving, coming and leaving, as if through a universal revolving door. He would wake up, his legs jerking, his breath hot and hard in his silent apartment. He wasn't too worried about the hospital visit, the foaming at the mouth, the helpless insect feeling of writhing naked on the lawn. He viewed that as a test. Evan called, but Jack didn't pick up. His parents called, but Jack didn't pick up. He had leave from work for a week, so he sat in his living room, on the rug, willing the universe to take him, please. He had nothing without this.



Image

Zach Bauman

Doubt as I Knew It

Cali Kopczick

Someone must have been notified about the red light bulb under the sewer grate,
the one I can see through the flood. The one I can feel
through the broken main. *Something's gone wrong*,
a sheep bleats from a passing ark. *I must have turned into*
a one-way canal. And then a desk breaches
and the sheep jumps on, begins grazing on paper. The sheep turns into
a one-way initiative evaluation procedure.
Shucks, goes the stapler and *Click* goes the red light—
on just when I didn't know it was off.
It washes out my red ink and here I am uncorrectable.
It's uncanny, the ethical quandaries you get into
with the echoes of your own howling. It's uncanny
how these other wolves can swim,
how the downstream grows fat with their furry haunches,
how the broken main glitters
with their pearlescent teeth,
red and smooth like a thousand pushpins.

At Work

Danny Barbare

I'm just happy mopping the tile
 floor
as I find it all shiny
 equal and square.
It keeps me in line,
as the divine can
be hidden in the grout and groove.

ON CONSCIENCE

Brandon Lewis

It's not enough to empty my arms. Not enough
to fill my arms
—return the plastic bag in the appalled cashier's hands
and walk away with the toilet paper rolls
and my baby's birthday balloon that will never decompose
gripped to my chest. I loved

running through the graveyard. We laughed my friends and I

and heard the distant shattering: a melon, a species
dusting our ankles,
dusting the stones I lifted from distant rivers, souvenirs
whose precise origin I forget as ex-lover's faces,
letting contact
tumble. We can take a seat. We can name what we burn
—we are not yet endangered, not yet
rare birds.

Running through the graveyard we laughed my friends and I

And Spurnia, the ancient Tuscan of excess beauty, has slashed
his face.
And the peeled bananas have already told the jokes and mummify
beneath hills of landfill.
What prevents my arms from swaying in the wind but gracelessness,
what prevents my clumsy steps from scrawling a ransom note but sweet shame?

Running through the graveyard we laughed my friends and I

ON DIVERSION

Brandon Lewis

The state test approaches as an apparition, plangent
and blind. Secretly
I admire those students who complain

*You sing of Aeacus' line and the wars beneath the walls of Ilium: but you do not tell me
how much I must pay for a jar of Chian wine...*

and when I shall escape from the cold of the Pelignian Mountains.

I can give no wine, no coat. There is no secret glory
except that moment you are not
diverted, or at least know whose hand diverts: what goddess
Nike wants.

As they practice the test, phones and pheromones
hum across the room.

You can almost smell the test ghosting
—a bleach of the air

as information sheds over us, and we need
a thread
to not get lost. *Don't you even think of stopping.*
In brittle silence

our eyes appear larger, the exits wider, the breathes of others
aflutter in a cage
—and like them I break and lose focus, stare outside

at the bare-chested Tupac glued on a warehouse wall,
whose poems are stolen off my shelf
each spring.

If we were fully present, what would we even do with each other?
Don't you even think of.

FURNITURE MART

Heather Sager

They have South Dakota plates
but are here with me, at the Nebraska Furniture Mart.
I am looking at them through my window.

The two kids,
girls stuffed into an upholstered van with packed chairs leaning over them,
form shadows nimble and apart amid
dresser drawers and a small table
also purchased from the Furniture Mart.

I hear, through the smell of diesel and gasoline,
they make this trip every year.
The parents talking, checking
each strapped-in kid.

There's room to fit a little more here,
and there,
a table leg, another chair.
The girls look bemused—
it's a soft armature between them—
They will keep from fighting on the way back.

The couple loads up, and then they're gone.
Out on the wide and open,
the furniture bouncing between them.

If you live in South Dakota it is very affordable
To get your furniture
from the Omaha, Nebraska,
Furniture Mart.

Contributors:

Danny P. Barbare resides in Greenville, SC. He attended Greenville Technical College. **Simeon Berry** won the 2013 National Poetry Series for his first collection of poetry, *Ampersand Revisited* (Fence Books), and the 2014 National Poetry Series for his second book of poetry, *Monograph* (University of Georgia Press). He has been an Associate Editor for *Ploughshares* and won a Massachusetts Cultural Council Individual Artist Grant. He lives in Somerville, Massachusetts. **Yuan Changming**, 9-time Pushcart nominee and author of seven chapbooks, published monographs on translation before moving out of China. With a PhD in English, Yuan currently edits *Poetry Pacific* with Allen Yuan in Vancouver, and has poetry appearing in *Best Canadian Poetry*, *BestNewPoemsOnline*, *Threepenny Review* and 1179 others across 38 countries. **Ryan Downum** is a recent graduate from Knox College. Previous poems of his have appeared in *H_NGM_N*, *BOAAT*, *Pretty Owl Poetry*, and *Witch Craft Magazine*. **Nicole Higgins** lives, writes, and teaches in Kansas City, MO. Her work appears in *Natural Bridge*, *Passages North*, *Vinyl*, *Sink*, and elsewhere. She is a Cave Canem graduate fellow. **Susan Hutton's** first book *On the Vanishing of Large Creatures* (2007) won Ploughshares' John C. Zacharis' First Book Award. She lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan. **Sarah Katz** writes poetry, essays, and book reviews. Her work appears in *Deaf Lit Extravaganza*, *MiPOesias*, *RHINO Poetry*, and *The Rumpus*. She earned an M.F.A. in poetry from American University, where she received the Myra Sklarew Award for her thesis. She has also been awarded the 2015 District Lit Prize and a residency at Vermont Studio Center. Her poetry manuscript, *Country of Glass*, was named a finalist by Robert Pinsky for Tupelo Press's 2016 Dorset Prize. Sarah lives with her husband, Jonathan, in Fairfax, Virginia, where she works as the Publications Assistant at the Association of Writers & Writing Programs. **Cali Kopczick's** work has previously been published in *Bricolage*, *AU*, and the *Raven Chronicles*. She works as an editor at Chin Music Press and as the assistant director for the forthcoming documentary *Where the House Was*. She lives in Seattle, Washington. **Amy Lawless** is the author of two books of poems including *My Dead* (Octopus Books). Her third poetry collection *Broadax* is forthcoming from Octopus Books this year. She is also co-author of *I Cry: The Desire to Be Rejected*, a collaborative, hybrid book (Pioneer Works Press, Groundworks Series) with Chris Cheney. Her poems have recently appeared in *jubilat*, *The*

Volta, and *Washington Square Review*. Her poems have been anthologized in *Best American Poetry 2013* and the Academy of American Poets' Poem-a-Day: 365 Poems for Every Occasion. She received a poetry fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts in 2011. She keeps an online presence at <http://amylawless.blogspot.com>. **Brandon Lewis** lives and teaches in NYC. Poems of his can be found colored on and scattered about by his baby, as well as in *Drunken Boat*, *The Missouri Review*, *Atlas Review*, *The Massachusetts Review*, and *Water-Stone Review*. **Jonathan May** grew up in Zimbabwe as the child of missionaries. He lives and teaches in Memphis, TN. His work has appeared in *[PANK]*, *Superstition Review*, *Plots With Guns*, *Shark Reef*, *Duende*, *One*, and *Rock & Sling*. He's recently finished translating the play "Dreams" by Günter Eich into English. Find him at <http://memphisjon.wordpress.com>. **Shane McCrae** is the author of *In the Language of My Captor*, forthcoming in 2017 from Wesleyan University Press, as well as four previous full-length books of poems. He is a recipient of a Whiting Writer's Award, a fellowship from the NEA, and a Pushcart Prize, and teaches at Oberlin College. **Em Moak** is a student in the creative writing program at the University of Central Missouri. This is her first publication. **Alexis Orgera** is the author of two poetry books, *How Like Foreign Objects* and *Dust Jacket* and several chapbooks. Her poems, essays, interviews, and reviews can be found online and in print in *Another Chicago Magazine*, *Bat City Review*, *Black Warrior Review*, *Copper Nickel*, *DIAGRAM*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Drunken Boat*, *Forklift Ohio*, *Green Mountains Review*, *Gulf Coast*, *H_ngm_n*, *The Journal*, *jubilat*, *Lumen Magazine*, *Memorious*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Rumpus*, *Sixth Finch*, *Tarpaulin Sky*, *Typo*, and elsewhere. She is the co-publisher of Penny Candy Books with poet Chad Reynolds. **Alexis Pope** is the author of *Soft Threat* (2014), as well as three chapbooks. Poetry and nonfiction work has appeared in *Denver Quarterly*, *cream city review*, *Hobart*, *Poor Claudia*, *Prelude*, *The Volta*, and *West Branch*, among others. Pope lives in Chicago with her daughter. **Monique Quintana** holds an MFA in Creative Writing from CSU Fresno, where she was the president of the Chicana Writers and Artists Association. She is a Squaw Valley Writers Fellow, and was the Senior Associate Fiction Editor of *The Normal School* literary magazine. Her work has been published or is forthcoming in *Huizache*, *Bordersenses*, *Mount Island Review*, *Lunch Ticket*, *Ragazine*, *Madcap Review*, and *Heather Press*, among others. She is the founder and editor-in-chief of razorhousemagazine.com. **Heather Sager's** poetry appears in *BlazeVOX*, *Route 7 Review*, and *NEAT*. She has contributed fiction to *Fourth & Sycamore*, *Minetta Review*, and other journals. She lives in Illinois. **Julia Story** is the author of *Post Moxie* (Sarabande

Books, 2010), winner of the Ploughshares 2010 John C. Zacharis First Book Award, and a chapbook, *The Trapdoor* (dancing girl press, 2013). Her recent work can be read at *Sixth Finch*, *Salt Hill*, and *Gulf Coast*, and she is 2016 recipient of a Pushcart Prize. She teaches writing at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. **Seann F. Weir** graduated from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. He was the winner of the 2015 Kay Murphy Prize for Poetry. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *The Menacing Hedge*, *Meat For Tea*, *Juked*, and *Bayou*. He lives and writes in Kansas City, Missouri. **Abigail Williamson** is a senior at the University of Central Missouri. She is studying accountancy, but also has a minor in creative writing. She enjoys numbers and math, but also all things reading and literature. She has a passion for writing, especially poetry. **Joshua Young** is the author of *THE HOLY GHOST PEOPLE* (2014) and *Psalms for the Wreckage* (forthcoming 2017), both from Plays Inverse Press, as well as three other collections and a split-chapbook, *Sedro-Woolley Days: A Damien Jurado Mixtape*, alongside Talin Tahajian. His work has appeared in *Gulf Coast*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Salt Hill*, *Fugue*, *cream city review*, *Public Pool*, and *Court Green*, among others. He is Editor-in-Chief for The Lettered Streets Press and works at the University of Chicago. He lives in the Albany Park neighborhood with two humans.