

MY  
DREAM  
OF  
YOU



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IRENE TOH, EDITOR

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# My Dream of You

Irene Toh, Editor



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Cover artwork: Henri Rosseau, *The Sleeping Gypsy*, 1897

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## My Dream of You

*I came upon her on a full moon, her breath coming and going as she laid in the sand. She had been playing her mandolin before falling asleep, a jug of water on hand. I tried to put a paw on her—she sleeps lightly as a feather does she—but she merely shifted her weight and slept more deeply.*

Oh yes, Shakespeare did say, “Perchance to sleep, to dream.” In Henri Rosseau’s *The Sleeping Gypsy*, a lion comes into the woman’s dream. It does not attack her. I have myself dreamt of wild animals, like tigers and elephants and hippopotamuses. They come at me often in water, a figment of the imagination invoking fear, and then they do not attack. Often dreams are surreal and only make sense within the dream itself. While one dreams one believes. When one awakes, it’s utterly unreal. Often the dream mines the unconscious, of our fears and longings.

In the painting Rosseau depicts the woman’s dream. But is he in fact the dreamer, creating the art we see? It’s all in his mind’s eye isn’t it? So it is for those who write. Haruki Murakami said “writing itself is like dreaming. When I write, I can dream intentionally”. But unlike a dream which poofs into nothing on awakening, the writer can continue the dream by continuing to write the story, or making up a new story. A dream is exactly like a story.

Dreams are like portals to another world. That’s how the surrealism presents in Murakami’s stories but not as a literal dreaming but what’s happening feels all real. His characters enters a portal, in the form of a well (*The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*) or an underground subway route (*IQ84*) and so on. “So, in my stories, if you go down to the bottom of the well, there’s another world. And you can’t necessarily tell the difference between this side and the other side.” His characters typically learn some difficult truths after coming back to this side.

The plot device of other parallel universes is evident in stories like in the Harry Potter stories or *The Chronicles of Narnia*. So it is that poems, as stories, may also function as portals to other worlds, the point of which is an attempt to uncover the mysteries of humanity. It triggers an awakening. One transcends time and space when one steps into stories. And doesn’t one bring something back afterward? In writing and reading, as in dreaming, we ourselves are immersed in a different time and space, in a completely different narrative. We are imagining other worlds.

I want to ask you, what is this dream, this imagining, about which you as a poet writes? Is it a longing? Is it a dream of you? Who is this you? Answer me that. A loved one, a ghost? Even if the you is not named, is often amorphous, a relationship is being set up. Is it a loss of something, someone, and a desire, a dream to recover it, or the connection, in a poem? I think it is often about that too. Is it a dream of some better future, some better self? Like in this poem by Langston Hughes.

Hold fast to dreams  
For if dreams die  
Life is a broken-winged bird  
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams  
For when dreams go  
Life is a barren field  
Frozen with snow.

But the meaning has shifted. Dreams shift our reality. This type of dreaming is not a literal one but more symbolic? A mindset? In which case, dreams are not to be dismissed, well in this sense of the word. As you imagine, imagination opens the door to dreaming, and dreaming opens the door to the imagination. A door to riches, to happiness can happen in dreams, as we shift our mindset. I was mesmerised by the ending of JD Salinger's *The Catcher In The Rye*, when Holden was just watching Phoebe going round and round on a carousel. I think on a deep dreaming level, happiness happens.

*I was damn near bawling, I felt so damn happy, if you want to know the truth. I don't know why. It was just that she looked so damn nice, the way she kept going around and around, in her blue coat and all. God, I wish you could've been there.*

Then there's a type of dream that interests me—the one of God. Our dream of God as it were. The God that lives within our imagination.

If God exists he isn't just  
butter and good luck.

He's also the tick that  
killed my wonderful dog  
Luke.

Said the river: imagine  
everything you can  
imagine, then keep on  
going.

—Mary Oliver, “At the River Clarion”

Importantly the linchpin of our belief system gives us the meaning of our existence. I want to believe God's dream of us, God dreaming us into being. What do you make of your own life? Do you believe the path you have been put on is not an accident but a destiny? Who put you there? Chance? God? I was watching *The Last Kingdom* on Netflix and was transfixed by the path of Uhtred of Bebbanburg. Born a Saxon but brought up by Danes, he was a warrior who had fought many battles in support of King Alfred of Wessex, whose dream was of England. He believes that “the truth of a man lies not in the land of his birth, but in his heart”. In his path of unpredictable twists and turns, where demands were constantly being made, he responded and acted according to his heart and a sense of calling, and concluded that “destiny is all”.

Even so we need to imagine for ourselves what we wish to do in this world, how we find ourselves to be, and change path as chance or God will have us. We do not see what is coming. We need to imagine, to keep on dreaming, to become who we are, to finally be at peace with who we are. We will dream till the cows come home. While I sleep, my dream of you has not ended. I leave you with a quote from the Bard: “We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep.”

Irene Toh  
Editor  
Fall 2021 Issue

To die, to sleep – to sleep, perchance to dream – ay, there's the rub, for in this sleep of death  
what dreams may come...”

—William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

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The End of Everything  
by Virginia Aronson

A roof thatched with blackbirds  
wine cellar alluring as the stable  
servants' cottage ready for guests  
the hills greenening, greenening  
everything has happened.

Baby unhappy, his swarthy face  
dark red and ferocious  
the little girl playing tea party  
under apple trees in bloom  
white petals floating down  
fat juicy blackberries, raspberries  
elegant old elms running slow  
to a river flecked with silvery fish.

A watercolor primrose garden  
flowers drunk on their own scent  
splurging lilacs and nut trees  
he plants peaches, plums, pears  
you can see from the window  
in your private study, writing  
at the desk he sanded down  
for you one long plank  
from a coffin  
everything has happened.

A tiny town of farmers  
factory workers and housewives  
no television or education  
just slow sheep, cows grazing  
lulling, lulling  
in a rippling sea of grass  
orange sunsets casting shadows  
over your country manor  
and the mad dreams you share  
with us still.

Sources: *Red Comet* by Heather Clark

Process notes: It seems almost trite to write poetry about Sylvia Plath but while reading Clark's new and fascinating biography, I erupted in a short series of poems. As Plath was struggling with the collapse of her marriage, she was also striving to be a successful writer and a good mother to two babies. This is the kind of impossible situation women writers have long faced, and it is still relatable almost 60 years later. Her desperation is ours too.

**Virginia Aronson** is the author of many published books, both nonfiction and fiction. Her poems have appeared in literary journals and in books from small poetry presses. *Itako* was published by Clare Songbirds Publishing House in 2020. In 2021, Shanti Arts Publishing will release *Hikikomori*. Originally from Boston, she currently resides in the lush and lurid tropics.

Dreaming of a Northern Spring in the Subtropics  
by Rose Mary Boehm

A month or so before winter stencils the almost bare branches of the ash in anticipation of silver-green turning to black and brown, when the muddy earth waits patiently for its feed of ash mulch, when the worms retire from the surface to prepare their survival deep in the warm earth, everything is ready, expecting death and rebirth. The centipedes huddle under the mountain of firewood just delivered, the river rats dig into the Styrofoam-covered ceiling, the last of the autumn apples are rotting between brown tufts of grass, while the fox barely remembers his friendship with the wolf dog. They'd danced only one summer. The sun hangs low, the moon a faint Cheshire cat rising behind the mountain, the poppy seeds rattling in their pods. The ravens croak overhead, steering with their diamond tails. The bird-scare guns are silent—no longer protecting harvests. There is a sharp scent of snow in the air, for now a warning, and the swifts dip their wings in yet another goodbye.

Rose Mary Boehm is a German-born British national living and writing in Lima, Peru. Her poetry has been published widely in mostly US poetry reviews (online and print). She was twice nominated for a Pushcart. Her fourth poetry collection, *The Rain Girl*, was published in 2020. Her fifth, *Do Oceans Have Underwater Borders*, has just been snapped up by Kelsay Books for publication May/June 2022. Her website: <https://www.rose-mary-boehm-poet.com/>

Horses and Water  
by Jeff Burt

I dream of horses on the High Plains plateaus  
gathering to run in wild magnetic orchestrated swirls,  
floodwaters propelling in dismembered droplets  
to form a rivulet, a stream, unfordable creek,  
though water lacks magnetism,  
has only that thin meniscus for bond  
rather than the electric pulse of flank  
that pulls it back together  
or bridges of ions like iron that bind  
like the bristles of the mane one side to another.

I think how often I fear horses,  
as a child bucked into space and kicked  
in the sternum, left with a bruised imprint,  
how ferocious the water I traversed  
in the thunderstorm limping home,  
how the creek water seemed to uphold me,  
just as it holds me, stuck here  
on a cliff of the Pacific coast  
watching horses on one hillside  
and the squall of rainwater on another,  
birds a-cliff, one lone otter bobbing in waves,  
riptides buckling shoreline, sucking sand under,  
intimidation mixed with rapture all these years.

Somewhere, Anywhere  
by Jeff Burt

It's natural to think the thread of a spider that wafts  
from a dying oak branch toward a blueberry bush  
is cast like an anchor from one ship to a floor,

but the filament is spun as it drifts, the spider is not in safety  
on deck but riding the forefront whiffed by the breeze  
eyes set on nowhere in particular or a vague set of greenery

where chances of prey are plentiful, being prey are few.  
They are the perpetual first astronauts launched  
in a cone on the top of a rocket screaming into space,

Not a void as in nothing in it, but void as in empty of experience.  
My ancestors from Sweden took trips in the dark night  
and ill holds of transports with all the other poor farmers

for a vague territory on a map of the western Great Lakes,  
not attached to a tow line that could snap them back to Sweden,  
but riding the deck, splashed with spray, to an unseen port,

like yearling whales on ancient and epic excursions  
ribbing sea's mountains and shoals following the same  
genetic geographic destiny without a clue of a resting place.

Even today at the 7th Avenue stoplight  
I think of being taught detachment from desire  
will enable us, but to what when we do not desire?

We feed on want and wish like fire eats oxygen  
and bound carbon until the flame poofs out.  
Bound carbon—that is what we are anyway,

waiting to be unleashed, our DNA demanding  
the chains be sparked into explosion,  
to do, to act, to have something other than.

Other than—to be other than what we are.  
Some of us are not meant to stay on the dying oak  
or strung on a taut string in comfort.

Some of us are not meant to farm the old land.  
Some of us are meant to launch into the air  
screaming as we head to who knows where.

The red light changes. I walk. I dream  
I have somewhere, anywhere, to go.

Source: A street corner moment

**Jeff Burt** lives in Santa Cruz County, California with his wife. He has contributed previously to *Red Wolf Journal*, *Williwaw Journal*, *Heartwood*, and many other journals.

The Realm of Marriage  
by Joe Cottonwood

Invited to a dinner party by the upper class  
the carpenter having a bad-spine day  
lies on the rug with ice packs  
while talking to seated guests.  
Ayama looming lovely breasts  
leans over him to explain why she has left  
her scientist husband plus two teenage sons  
to marry Seth, a stockbroker. Seth makes her laugh.  
And he provides, she says, financial security,  
pronouncing fi-nan-she-all sec-you-are-tee  
with a sensuous tongue.

That night the carpenter wakes  
from a vivid dream and tells Rose beside him  
that he served a two-year prison term. Rose asks,  
“Did you think of Ayama during the dream?”  
“No,” he says laughing. “Why?”  
“Ayama told me you would dream of her tonight.”  
“Ayama’s in a different realm.”  
“What’s our realm?”  
“Fi-nan-she-all *in* sec-you-are-tee.”  
“Why prison?”  
“I built a dollhouse for a client. So nice, I kept it.”  
“For our kids?”  
“Dunno. I dream without footnotes.”  
“But probably for our kids?”  
“Probably.”  
Rose thinks a minute.  
“I’ll keep this realm,” she says.

I humiliated myself  
by Joe Cottonwood

at a gathering of neighbors  
never mind what I said

They were polite  
but made it clear I blew it  
My wife among them  
says *What were you thinking*  
which is the problem—  
I wasn't

She loves me  
as one loves a smelly dog  
missing one leg  
who can no longer chase squirrels  
but lying on my side, legs outstretched  
with little yips  
in my dreams  
my four legs twitch

She sees them  
too

Lion Dreams  
by Joe Cottonwood

Harvey didn't walk, he lunged  
like a puppet, strung loose. Spastic.  
Couldn't hit a baseball to save his life.  
He asked questions like "If a lion eats you,  
do you enter the lion's soul?  
If the lion dreams, do you dream?  
When you come out as lion shit,  
are you double-dead?"  
We, each weird in our own way.  
Me, I got grade-school famous  
for kicking a bully in the balls.

Now this grassy park overlooking the Pacific  
a continent's width from grade school.  
I'm sitting on a black metal bench  
eating a KFC drumstick.  
A man beside me with short white beard,  
white hair in a ponytail, tossing popcorn  
to strutting doves, says  
"If you eat chicken, do you swallow chicken soul?"  
and I say "Harvey! Holy lion shit!"

We shake hands. His arm jerks at the elbow,  
loose-jointed. Grip firm.  
"I teach Theology at Long Beach," he says.  
"I fix houses," I say. "Rehab."  
"You remove the rot. Funny," he says,  
"how we become what we are  
before we even know we are.  
We are lions. All lions."

Joe Cottonwood has repaired hundreds of houses to support his writing habit in the Santa Cruz Mountains of California. His latest book of poetry is *Random Saints*. [joecottonwood.com](http://joecottonwood.com)

Up  
by Holly Day

You can't let the universe overwhelm you, can't let  
the infinite reaches of space intimidate you.  
You can't let the size of a star convince you  
that you don't exist, you don't matter, you do.

Even a tiny mote of dust  
floating in the air, pinned by a sunbeam  
occasionally reflects the light just enough  
to become the brightest object in the room  
a flash of unexpected brilliance.

The Lost City Next Door  
by Holly Day

I tell myself that just over the next hill, around the next corner  
is a world of magic, some proof of God, a rip in time  
something impossible is just moments away. I take one more step  
towards that impossible destiny, then stop myself because  
if it's not there I won't be able to go on.

I have turned my back and walked the other way  
from more miracles than I can count  
from time travelers asking for directions and the exact date  
from talking alley cats, holy gurus reincarnated as sparrows  
mysterious doorways that open into another world.

I know in my heart that they're there and that's enough, I don't  
turn the corner to confront the mystery and find out  
I've been deluding myself this whole time  
I don't want to know that there isn't actually something wonderful  
just over the next hill.

Shadows on the Wall  
by Holly Day

Just like in the beginning, it's people who have to do all of the grunt work.  
Baskets full of seeds and tubers are passed out with unnecessarily explicit directions  
for planting. Some of the seeds will grow into trees and flowers  
while others will grow into crops and animals. No one asks

where the people came from—they're just there, ready to take orders  
from the gods of creation, whether they be in the shape of giant spiders  
or wolf-headed men, or faceless commands from the void.  
It's people who always do the work in these stories.

When the world ends, perhaps these same people will materialize  
to wander through the wreckage, picking up the mess,  
carefully collecting seeds from trees, flowers, animals and buildings  
put each remnant into a plastic bag for storing, carefully labeling the future  
with the black Sharpie pen.

Holly Day has taught writing classes at the Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, since 2000. Her poetry has appeared in *Big Muddy*, *The Cape Rock*, *New Ohio Review*, and *Gargoyle*, and her published books include *Walking Twin Cities*, *Music Theory for Dummies*, *Ugly Girl*, and *The Yellow Dot of a Daisy*. She has been a featured presenter at Write On, Door County (WI), North Coast Redwoods Writers' Conference (CA), and the Spirit Lake Poetry Series (MN). Her poetry collections are *A Perfect Day for Semaphore* (Finishing Line Press) and *I'm in a Place Where Reason Went Missing* (Main Street Rag Publishing Co.).

Guilty a Heart  
by Edilson Ferreira

So many beauties spread by the way,  
I cannot pass without enjoying one by one.  
Indeed, there are some ones so beautiful that,  
besides to enjoy, should be also worshiped,  
tribute and respect to the Common Creator.  
Unhappily, I have amorous and stubborn a heart,  
perhaps a delinquent one,  
used to falling in love almost every day.  
Could it be hard and insensible,  
just as almost all of them,  
so I would pass fast and safe,  
impassible and passionless.  
But it usually picks up a song,  
from unknown a spell,  
fairy music of the wind, or, who knows,  
resurrected Ulysses' mermaids singing,  
that, poor me, I cannot resist.  
So I go, amazed and fascinated,  
sometimes in despair and strained,  
along with loving brothers and sisters,  
daily struggling to move hard  
and harsh the wheels of time.

Mr. Ferreira, 77 years, is a Brazilian poet who writes in English rather than in Portuguese. Widely published in international literary journals, he began writing at age 67, after his retirement as a bank employee. Has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize, and his book, *Lonely Sailor, One Hundred Poems*, was launched in London, in 2018. He is always updating his works at [www.edilsonmeloferreira.com](http://www.edilsonmeloferreira.com).

The Night of Wind and Stars  
by Charles Halsted

A towering cypress touches  
the morning star, stands guard  
over the sleeping town, its  
ancient church and steeple.

Whirling winds tearing across the sky  
command dominance over the scene,  
push the waning stars aside, threaten  
to obscure the brilliant moon.

Thoughts of suicide enter my mind while I  
paint the violent scene from my top-floor  
window in the asylum at Saint-Remy. Should  
my thoughts persist, I will walk to the field  
on the left, yield my life to a shotgun blast.



Charles Halsted is a retired academic physician who obtained his poetry education through twelve on-line classes from Stanford Continuing Studies and from six three-day retreats at Squaw Valley and Carmel CA, Fishtrap, OR, and Taos, NM. To date, he has published 57 poems in 32 different poetry journals as well as one chapbook, *Breaking Eighty*, and two books, *Extenuating Circumstances* and *On Razor-Thin Tires*.

Night Sweat  
by John Huey

I cannot turn, change position, or even move slightly tonight  
without my desire for you.  
Your every gesture, in your sleep, in these just changed sheets,  
breaks bright and clean.  
Even my old, overused hand, seems pure and without design  
when it touches you.

Years and years of movement and embrace have not here  
passed without notice or regard.  
The shadow of you, the mere outline, thrills me in my shame  
and glorious beginnings.  
I cannot do a thing near my best without you.

And damp, the nightshirt sticks to my summer skin as light  
traces of a dark illuminant, from across that far time zone,  
crosses the hill and meridian of you and shows the faint  
outline of your face now turned to me.

A somniloquist, you murmur, always murmur, in your  
exactitude, exactly what I need to know.

After a long hiatus and residence overseas, John Huey returned the United States and to writing in 2011. Since then, he has appeared in numerous online and print journals as well as three anthologies. A fourth anthologized piece will appear soon. His full-length collection, *The Moscow Poetry File*, was published by Finishing Line Press in 2017. [www.john-huey.com](http://www.john-huey.com) '

I Had A Dream Last Night  
That We Sat Together  
In Your Black Corolla  
By Kathleen Latham

graduation tassel newly hung  
from the rearview mirror,  
ready to say our good-byes,  
and there were words all around us.  
Eddies of words, currents of words,  
flowing through the car like water,  
spilling from the glovebox, the console,  
the tiny slot where you kept your coins.  
We were submerged in word-water,  
your car on the bottom of a word-water lake,  
word-fish staring through the windows  
waving their little word-tails,  
pursing their little word-mouths,  
waiting for us to choose, to speak, to act  
—word upon word upon word  
filling the space between us.  
If only we had seen

all the things we could have said.

You Only Come To Me  
In Dreams And Only  
Sometimes  
By Kathleen Latham

bobbing up and down  
into sleep  
up and down  
into sleep

kicking deeper  
to reach the depths  
of memory  
where I find you

among weeds of fear  
and desire—  
a bright coin  
on the ocean bed

which too soon  
slips  
between my fingers  
and disappears

Kathleen Latham's work has most recently appeared or is forthcoming in *100 Word Story*, *Bright Flash Literary Review*, *Boston Literary Magazine*, and *Fictive Dream*. She lives outside of Boston, Massachusetts with her husband and an ornery cat and can be found online at [KathleenLatham.com](http://KathleenLatham.com).

Visitations  
by Ron. Lavalette

Last night, sleeping, alone, I saw her once again,  
three times, as I'd often seen her in dreams before:

once at recycling, recycling bottles and promises,  
tossing the clatterous mass into the waiting container,

and twice at the Price Chopper: once in the lot,  
parking in her favorite space, her face a smile

like the store was hers alone, owning everything  
in it and around it, and loving everything about it;

and again in aisle five, buying toothpaste and  
mascara, aspirin and a brush, a bunch of stuff

(she would have said) she'd never need in heaven.

And even now, today, a Tuesday or a Thursday

(I can't remember which, have lost the knack  
for keeping track) I met up with her again

at the coffeeshop in the bookstore, saw her  
sitting across from me at our favorite table,

my disbelief suspended by desire for just another word,  
for one more moment, hoping she could see me too.

**Ron. Lavalette** is a very widely published poet living on the Canadian border in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom. His premier chapbook, *Fallen Away*, is now available from Finishing Line Press. His poetry and short prose has appeared extensively in journals, reviews, and anthologies ranging alphabetically from *Able Muse* and the *Anthology of New England Poets* through the *World Haiku Review*. A reasonable sample of his published work can be viewed at EGGS OVER TOKYO: <http://eggsovertokyo.blogspot.com>

Daydreams  
by Michael J. Leach

daydreams of distant suns  
daydreams of dear loved ones

daydreams of yellow fields  
daydreams of better yields

daydreams of tractor tyres  
daydreams of fading fires

daydreams of kangaroos  
daydreams of open zoos

daydreams of summer sports  
daydreams of her in shorts

daydreams of beachside caves  
daydreams of crashing waves

**Michael J. Leach** is an Australian academic and writer. His poems reside in literary and scientific journals, such as *Cordite*, *Red Wolf Journal*, and *Medical Journal of Australia*, as well as various anthologies—*Still You* (Wolf Ridge Press, 2019), *One Surviving Poem* (ICOE Press, 2019), and *No News* (Recent Work Press, 2020). Michael’s debut poetry collection is *Chronicity* (Melbourne Poets Union, 2020). He lives on unceded Dja Dja Wurrung Country and acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land.

Fretted Puppet Strings

by John Maurer

Oh damn it, I'm dead again  
Or being dead is on my head again  
Which is a paradox to a dead head

A vignette around the sins I haven't gotten around to yet  
Put that on the shivering wall next to my frigid bed with no duvet  
Delete phone numbers of friends who fucking died  
Don't need those; I talk to enough ghosts

God can say that I'm not allowed the host  
But he's a loud host, telling me the broken glass carpet  
was just installed and he'd like me to take my shoes off  
before coming inside

I will just stand outside and smoke illicit and play Tetris  
Is it raining? Isn't rainwater water? Am I not water?  
Water you not seeing here? Maybe that I am blind  
Maybe that I am a seeing eye dog good at playing visionary

## ACRNYM

by John Maurer

Happy photos of us make me so sad  
Now I know how it feels to wear a smile like an accessory  
I know what it feels like to wear it like blood on my chest  
And my heart is finally bleeding

Everywhere, in buckets and puddles,  
I am a nesting doll that strips down bigger and bigger  
A platelet paradox, a dead fox; the reddest of all  
The ripest for the picking if your fingers are fragile  
And I grind mine down to the bone on notepad pulp  
Until the colors would complement well on a wheel

Spin it and throw knives at me if you're drunk enough  
The reason I overthink is that I once under thought  
But now I fall under the weight of them; the pace of their ripping hems  
Too weird to die, too rare to live; I am the acronym for acronym

Parental  
by John Maurer

I know our father is the father of hours and  
I'd rather run from the bulls than cow tip like a coward

Saturate in Saturn's return trying how to relearn how to do the same  
You would eat all of Eden except the fruit with the  
knowledge of how to leave

The boys been dead out in Boise, Idaho  
And I'm still a young dumb hoe, like I don't know

What can you expect when you call the antidote poisonous?  
Don't teach us how to run and then say it's our fault when  
we are run down

They didn't teach me to swim  
but I held my breath so I didn't drown

John Maurer is a 26-year-old writer from Pittsburgh that writes fiction, poetry, and everything in-between, but his work always strives to portray that what is true is beautiful. He has been previously published in *Claudius Speaks*, *The Bitchin' Kitsch*, *Thought Catalog*, and more than sixty others. @JohnPMaurer (johnpmaurer.com)

Dreaming of Yoga  
by Joan Mazza

I'm back at yoga class in Fort Lauderdale,  
early, as usual, to stake out my place with a towel,  
discover I've forgotten mine and choose one  
from a closet—damp and flecked with glitter.  
The phone rings and no one's there to answer,  
so I do, say, *This is Joan*, realize I should have said,  
*Yoga Today!* in a cheery voice. The caller is distraught,  
speaking in a code I understand. His wife is pregnant;  
they're pondering abortion. I tell him not to wait  
too long, but don't advise. *What does your wife want?*  
He doesn't answer. I'm sorry I've answered the phone,  
am out of my league. When I turn, the whole class  
has arrived. Someone has taken my space. The room's  
too crowded, the teacher/owner schmoozing,  
holding forth with narcissistic nonsense tales,  
not directing postures. He promises refunds  
for everyone who stays, but not to those who've  
left already. I want to leave! Here comes that old  
dream cliché without lucidity. Where's my purse?  
The women at the desk won't let me look inside  
their cabinet, say it's not in there. I don't remember  
where I placed it when I took that call. I step outside  
to find large shelves with towels, clothes, and purses,  
but not mine. They're on the street, unprotected. Won't  
someone snatch a purse? Distressed, I wake. As usual,  
I've identified another flim-flam and must escape. But  
it's just my daily Trumpmare. No need for alarm.

**Joan Mazza** has worked as a microbiologist and psychotherapist, and taught workshops on understanding dreams and nightmares. She is the author of six books, including *Dreaming Your Real Self*, and her poetry has appeared in *Rattle*, *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Poet Lore*, and *The Nation*. She lives in rural central Virginia. [www.JoanMazza.com](http://www.JoanMazza.com)

Waking Dream in Alesund, Norway  
by Karla Linn Merrifield

When moon casts shadows on castles,  
quoth then old raven to young raven,  
*There is something I know.*

Troll-men may ride hard their wolves,  
snapping a bridle of braided snakes.  
So it is. But so it once was

eagles screamed in the rain  
and a heroine was born  
to slay snakes, wolves, trolls

of our imagination.

Karla Linn Merrifield has had 900+ poems appear in dozens of journals and anthologies. She has 14 books to her credit. Following her 2018 *Psyche's Scroll* (Poetry Box Select) is the 2019 full-length book *Athabaskan Fractal: Poems of the Far North* from Cirque Press. She is currently at work on a poetry collection, *My Body the Guitar*, inspired by famous guitarists and their guitars; the book is slated to be published in December 2021 by Before Your Quiet Eyes Publications Holograph Series (Rochester, NY).

Second Guessing  
by Kate Meyer-Currey

Pointless to speculate why  
you were not there yesterday  
when we planned to meet. I  
saw the warning signs when  
WhatsApp displayed its grey  
noncommittal ticks. It's quite  
normal for you to be hijacked  
by life's sudden convulsive  
chaos. I don't imagine the  
worst anymore as it's already  
happened; several times. It  
might be your phone broke,  
you had a fight with your  
other half, or you fell back  
into it or simply had no credit.  
I still went to your address  
as it was on my way home.  
I looked into blank windows  
and rang the dead doorbell.  
I sent you a photo of your  
front door so you know I  
tried. Right place, wrong  
time, I guess. I know there  
are places no friend can  
follow because I've been  
there too. You'll come  
back online when you are  
ready. Experience belies  
all second-guessing when  
silence has its own subtext.

**Kate Meyer-Currey** was born in 1969 and moved to Devon in 1973. A varied career in frontline settings has fuelled her interest in gritty urbanism, contrasted with a rural upbringing. Her ADHD also instils a sense of 'other' in her life and writing. She currently has over forty poems in print and e journals. 'Gloves' recently made top 100 in the UK's 'PoetryforGood' competition for healthcare workers. Her first chapbook, *County Lines*, (Dancing Girl Press) comes out later this year.

Voluptuous Innuendos  
by Michael Minassian

When I first met you  
in the coffee shop  
along the shore,

I felt the coast merge  
with underwater reefs  
until the boundaries blurred.

You were looking for a sign  
and spoke in too many syllables,  
as if your teeth were ice cubes  
melting in a pitcher of ice tea:  
*click clack, clack click.*

On the wall I spied notes  
stapled on a bulletin board  
warning of chance encounters.

Your voluptuous innuendos  
never matched  
my dream of you—  
still you remained insistent.

Outside, on the sidewalk,  
your family approached,  
pressing their faces on the window,  
leaving smudges like erased poems.

You asked me not to write this down  
but I couldn't help myself—  
my words blurred by the glare  
of the setting sun on water's edge.

Michael Minassian's poems and short stories have appeared recently in such journals as, *Live Encounters*, *Lotus Eater*, and *Chiron Review*. He is a Contributing Editor for *Verse-Virtual*, an online poetry journal. His chapbooks include poetry: *The Arboriculturist* and photography: *Around the Bend*. His poetry collections, *Time is Not a River*, *Morning Calm*, and *A Matter of Timing* are all available on Amazon. For more information: <https://michaelminassian.com>

Musings of Odysseus

by John Muro

Honey locust leaves, delicate as fingers,  
Draw fog through their branches in a slow  
Drag of wind, and once again I dream of you  
And how well you carry the burden of age  
And our name, while waves quietly recede  
Then return, bearing sorrow upon sorrow,  
Turning minutes into days and days into  
Years and steadily wearing down memory,  
Though I still hunger for home and carry  
You in my heart. The tides have succumbed  
To darkness now and their sound and splendor  
Remain another obstacle to overcome,  
Pondering how I might yet return to you  
And find the true purpose of this odyssey.  
Today the water was as clear as the air,  
And I dreamed I saw you falling to our bed  
Beneath the plaintive tongues of leaves  
Murmuring, in wind-rustle hush, how  
Those things we cherish most in life  
Often remain apart from us and how the  
Weight of time helps to make the past  
More bearable even as distant currents steer  
Things towards new beginnings or their undoing.

A life-long resident of Connecticut, **John Muro** is a graduate of Trinity College, Wesleyan University and the University of Connecticut. His professional career has focused on environmental stewardship and conservation, and he has held several volunteer and executive positions in those fields. *In the Lilac Hour*, his first volume of poems, was published last fall by Antrim House, and it is available on Amazon. John's poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Moria*, *Euphony*, *Third Wednesday*, *Clementine Unbound*, *River Heron*, *Freshwater* and other literary journals.

A Dreaming Tree  
by Heather Sager

One afternoon last year,  
in a drowse in my window chair,  
I dreamt my body stood as a tree  
in a green forest.  
My body's torso, legs  
and arms  
raised foliage and chattering crows  
with my soft skin.  
I stood tall as the other trees,  
the real ones.  
My skin turned cold  
with the change of the season.  
Icicles hung from my elbows and knees.  
The crows fled my hair and arms.  
I shivered with loneliness.  
Soon, the warmth of a new season came.  
Green foliage returned to decorate  
my solitary arms and shoulders.  
The birds flew back.  
Despite the warmth of spring,  
an overwhelming  
lonesomeness filled me.  
The need to be touched by hands.  
I quivered.  
Then, a wind in the trees shook me  
and my eyes opened.  
The sun streamed through my window,  
warming me where I sat,  
in my dreaming chair.

**Heather Sager** is an Illinois-based author of poetry and short fiction. Her most recent writing appears in *SurVision*, *The Fabulist Words & Art*, *Words & Whispers*, *Door Is a Jar*, *Fleas on the Dog*, *Sein und Werden*, *DM du Jour*, *Bluepepper*, and other magazines.

Our Story  
by Tricia Sankey

I dreamed I bought our story in an old  
bookstore yesterday,  
the book smelled of vanilla,  
an odd mustiness, that only comes with age  
and marination,  
like the seashell you found  
that day we sailed away,  
held it to your ear,  
and heard such secrets,  
old words,  
glue, paper, ink, fibers,  
the smells unravel,  
long walks with the dog,  
days sick in bed,  
the flowers we planted,  
the cookies and tea.  
This book read like the Bible,  
right before judgement falls,  
the pages rolled back,  
like the sun  
across our wooden deck,  
battered and worn,  
marked up by three kids,  
chasing butterflies,  
catching frogs...  
It ends like  
the beginning,  
adrift on the waves,  
rocked back and forth  
we managed to sleep.

**Tricia Sankey** has traveled the United States as an Army wife while blogging and writing poems at [www.triciasankey.com](http://www.triciasankey.com). She managed to obtain an MFA in Writing from Lindenwood University along the way and enjoys tweeting her micropoetry @triciasankey. Her work has been published in anthologies and online poetry journals.

I dreamt I was a butterfly  
*(with apologies to Zhuangzi)*  
by Emil Sinclair

Once I dreamed that  
I was a butterfly  
playing Scriabin's  
piano sonata  
number four  
in a concert hall  
of great renown.  
All the other butterflies  
flapped their wings in joy  
and deep appreciation,  
as the bumblebees  
hummed along in unison,  
and a lone ladybug  
danced a solo jig—  
mad dance!  
mad dance!  
—up and down  
the center aisle;  
back and forth,  
back and forth,  
to the amazed delight  
of the fireflies,  
their bright bellies pulsing:  
estatico, estatico.  
I was the star  
that night,  
burning so fiercely  
that I singed the wings  
of the dragonflies,  
in shimmering iridescence,  
who buzzed the stage  
in homage to me.  
Then I took my bows,  
and thanked the ladybug  
for my wish fulfilled  
and her eternal  
dance of glory.

Jaguar Dreams  
by Emil Sinclair

I think we we're having  
a conversation;  
when suddenly I realize  
you'd left the room  
years ago—  
slammed the door  
on your way out,  
in fact—  
to go and keep  
promises  
you'd already broken;  
left me standing there  
in a cold and empty  
box;  
thinking  
wondering  
hoping  
you'd come back.  
But you never did.  
You'd send me telegrams,  
from time to time;  
bulletins and postcards  
of your journeys  
to conscience  
and duty  
While full of rage,  
I tore up the syllabus  
of our crash course  
together,  
and tossed out all  
the souvenirs  
of our brief safari  
to the heartland:  
wooden dolls  
and painted boxes;  
mementos of nothing.

Then one night  
in a fitful sleep  
I dreamt that you'd  
come back.  
"I never left,"  
you whispered,  
as you gently slipped  
in my sleeping hand  
a Jaguar's tooth,  
you said—

the hardest fang  
of any cat,  
a shaman's talisman.  
I could not move,  
or open my eyes,  
but felt your warm breath  
brush against my ear.  
When I awoke,  
I searched the house,  
so sure you'd really  
been there.  
Then I looked down  
at my clenched fist,  
and opened it to find  
nothing—  
except the impression  
in my palm  
of a crescent moon;  
made by you,  
before I was ever  
born.

Dream Miner  
by Emil Sinclair

“We are lived by powers we pretend to understand.”  
—W. H. Auden

I am a miner of dreams,  
at work in the deep dark  
perilous shafts  
of the Underworld;  
searching for the gold  
and silver,  
and the uncut gems  
of meaning  
in the nightly  
carnival of souls,  
the parade of the dead,  
the freakish side-shows  
of strange, inexplicable  
things and places  
I cannot describe  
by the light of reason.  
Until one night,  
I saw her standing there,  
arms folded,  
gently laughing at me  
as I toiled away,  
sweating profusely,  
cursing the darkness,  
swinging the pickaxe  
of my sharp intellect  
at my intransigent dreams.  
Then suddenly,  
in a flash,  
I saw clear through  
the great lie:  
They are not mine;  
I am theirs.  
The meaning  
of a dream  
is in my end.

**Emil Sinclair** is the pseudonym of a sometime poet and longtime philosophy professor in New York City.

Time Strolls  
by Ivor Steven

I am no sleepy koala  
Nor a pretty brolga  
I am stoic and ancient, like Mount Olga  
An old scribe from Tullawalla

You cannot feel my heart  
Nor can you see my star chart  
I am an astronaut without a spacecraft  
An old pilot from the lost Ark

I am not flying alone in the dark  
Nor will I swim among the hungry sharks  
I am a dreamer fishing for humanities restart  
An old disciple waiting to disembark

Cascading Snowflakes

by Ivor Steven

A morning blizzard of hailstones  
Smothers my old frozen bones  
Polarized, I am shivering head to spine  
Chilling my chasms of hard lines

Daily coldness unwrapping  
Mid-morning thawing, eventually happening  
Melting, my eternal iceberg breaks  
Into an avalanche of cascading snowflakes

Covering me in a white blanket of crystal firestones  
Gradually warming my lonesome bones  
Turning my purple blood into glowing red  
Clearing heavy fogginess from my head.

**Ivor Steven** was formerly an Industrial Chemist, then a Plumber, and has been writing poetry for 19 years. His book, *Tullawalla*, was recently published. He has had numerous poems published in anthologies, and on-line magazines. He is an active member of the Geelong Writers Inc.(Australia), and is a team member/barista with the on-line magazine, *Go Dog Go Cafe* (America).

Wrinkled Dreams  
by Debi Swim

What will I dream now that I am old  
Now that I've seen them come and go  
What will I feel now that my dreams  
Have floated along on ruffled streams  
What will I long for in my old age  
At this last, lingering, lonesome stage  
Warm summer breezes during the snow  
Custards and ice cream under willows  
Dead-heading blossoms drooping and brown  
and turning the seeds back into the ground  
Maybe I'll live to see another spring  
With kites of all shapes on taut cotton string  
Maybe there are still things to be desired  
and like small shaky embers will burst into fire.

**Debi Swim** has had poems published in two anthologies, online publications and in the *Bluestone Journal* for Bluefield College. She is a persistent WV poet who loves to write to prompts.

Earth Bound  
by Alan Toltzis

One night, I will swap pillows  
for rocks and dream  
of angels, God, and heaven.  
For now, the sky is heavy  
with fret. The weight of earth  
falls from invisible cracks  
feathering my ceiling. Plaster dust  
rims my eyes most mornings.

Song Without Moonlight  
by Alan Toltzis

I try to overcome  
my natural reticence  
but words stick in my throat.

For two months  
the moon hasn't found me.  
I've stopped looking for her.  
Is it low clouds,  
the angle of the eaves,  
a skewed viewpoint?

The ocean rocks uneasy tonight,  
uncertain when to rush the shore,  
when to cower and hide.  
Drizzle settles on shriveled wild plums,  
dotting the dunes. It's six months  
until fresh ones take their place,  
a mixture of ripe and rot  
abuzz with flies.

A trickle of salty, silvery mist  
beads up on resinous clusters  
of poisonous bayberries,  
redolent with temptation.

Tonight, I will become a warbler  
and choke gray-green berries  
down my throat whole.

The True Nature of Imaginary Things  
by Alan Toltzis

Imaginary rats lurk in my kitchen.  
These rats lack something:  
Guile. Purpose. Intent.  
I worry I'll tread on one in the dark.  
I flick the lights and bristle,  
sensing a rat, slick with sickness,  
in the corner.  
A ridge of fur stiffens and glistens  
along the curve of its spine.  
Early one morning, I startle another one.  
Tiny feet click-click-click, like gravel  
strewn across tile, when it tries to dart  
under a table.  
There is no table in my kitchen.  
The rat freezes midway across the Saltillo tile floor.  
It means no harm. Imaginary evil never does.  
Rats are too busy with rat business;  
with being a rat.  
Once, a friend caught one in a trap,  
drove to the lake, submerged it for 10 minutes,  
and left it there.  
The rat beat him home.

**Alan Toltzis** is the author of two poetry collections—*49 Aspects of Human Emotion* and *The Last Commandment*—and two chapbooks, *Nature Lessons* and *Mercy* (forthcoming). His poems have appeared in numerous print and online publications including, *Plainsong*, *Grey Sparrow*, *The Wax Paper*, *Black Bough Poetry*, and *Anthropocene Poetry*. Alan is an editor of *The Mizmor Anthology*. After a lifetime in Philadelphia, he now lives in Los Angeles. Find him online at [alantoltzis.com](http://alantoltzis.com); follow him @ToltzisAlan.

Mary of Old Las Palmas  
by Mark Tulin

You feel so human to me,  
yet I see you are divine,  
a figment of feminine glory,  
hands open and receiving

I know you are the true mother,  
the only nurturer,  
a dream that moves with clouds  
while I am sleeping

My secret messenger  
who perpetually blooms  
from the heart,  
prayers and intercessions  
that flow like waves of virtue

Come, in your blue and purple robe  
to the daylight of my desert,  
with your compassion,  
your maternal imagination  
Touch me in sympathy  
and give me your blessing.

Blue Sky Over Chavez Ravine  
by Mark Tulin

Back in '65, I dreamed of Koufax  
I mimicked his windup  
and delivery  
I wore his baggy Dodger blue,  
and kept digging my heels into the mound  
I imagined throwing to  
his catcher,  
a big overhand curve,  
a fastball that popped into the mitt

I imagined being Koufax  
in a pitchers' duel  
The blue sky hung over Chavez Ravine  
with the palm trees  
that swayed like Hawaiian girls  
in grass skirts

I loved Koufax back then,  
pitching for my team  
In dreams of west coast landscapes  
Inside of a baseball diamond  
A warm California afternoon  
The love between a boy and his baseball idol.

Sunflower Poetry  
by Mark Tulin

I dreamt that sunflowers grew  
on the Ventura beaches,  
by a nurturing lifeguard,  
barefoot and bronze,  
gardening with love

My dreams are like flowers  
of Emerson and Frost  
that suddenly appear  
from my lips  
in unexpected places

I touch their gentle petals  
trying to understand each one  
For it is in nature  
that poetry evolves,  
giving us such pleasant surprises.

**Mark Tulin** is a retired therapist who lives in California. His books are *Magical Yogis*, *Awkward Grace*, *The Asthmatic Kid and Other Stories*, *Junkyard Souls*, *Rain on Cabrillo*. Mark has appeared in *Amethyst Review*, *Strands Publishers*, *Fiction on the Web*, *Ariel Chart*, *Life In The Time*, *Still Point Journal*, *The Writing Disorder*, *New Readers Magazine*, as well as podcasts and anthologies. Mark's website, *Crow On The Wire*.

Yoga Nidra  
*for my daughter*  
by Alan Walowitz

Most nights we descend to a meadow  
but tonight she forgets I'm afraid of heights  
and the holes a ladder makes in air  
and I look down and fear I'll fall  
through to the dizzying ground  
so I dare not move up and into the ether.

But each step is a color, she insists,  
and sounds so sure I want to believe  
though both color-blind and fearful,  
I reach for insight, but find  
only lack of will, when I rise against both  
my terror, and my better judgment.

Aliyah, I recall, is the name of the voice  
I hear in my sleep and she means to move up,  
same as her name, though sideways and spinning  
is the way she travels early mornings, howsoever  
much I remind her, and with great portent,  
that up and awake are not one and the same.

She hears me clear but stays locked  
in that space she's carved  
between wake and sleep,  
entwined in the covers that might even catch her  
if she happens to fall, meantime thinking  
who dares allege this is not the way to live?

Once out of bed she says to me,  
*You don't know shit.*  
And, as she peeks over my shoulder  
where I'm writing about our journey,  
*You don't even know what a poem is--*  
*And this is the proof,* she dutifully submits.

Process: This was mainly written during one of my attempts to meditate. Yoga Nidra tries to help us tap into that magical place between wake and sleep. During that meditation, I was hearing the voice of my daughter. She was in high school at the time, and she was impossible to wake up. Apparently, she either didn't think much of my poetry then, or she just wanted me to know how she felt about being awakened at some ungodly hour, let's say, like noon.

Census of Dreams  
by Alan Walowitz

*The dream is a lie, but the dreaming is true.*  
*Robert Penn Warren*

Where are you calling from tonight?  
Another place I haven't been awake,  
but play the perfect host  
adrift in a world I claim I never made:  
I nod, tip my hat, and soon I'm gone.

Sure, the dream feels real--  
enough to wash me from the first of dawn,  
through day's uneasy peace,  
till creak of porch in stale night air  
stills an unrequited yawn.

But end of another endless day,  
brings no rest I dreamed  
and fills my head like a waiting room  
where lost friends are counted  
for the long journey home.

Instead, all peace I sought gets dashed  
on a jagged thought, skipped breath,  
late night call and no one there.  
And you, last dream to the door,  
ask nothing but to leave alone.

**Alan Walowitz** is a Contributing Editor at *Verse-Virtual*, an Online Community Journal of Poetry. His chapbook, *Exactly Like Love*, comes from Osedax Press. The full-length, *The Story of the Milkman and Other Poems*, is available from Truth Serum Press. Most recently, from Arroyo Seco Press, is the chapbook *In the Muddle of the Night*, written both trans-continentially, and mostly remotely, with poet Betsy Mars.

Tenaya Moods Shared  
by Robert Walton

Does freeze in dawn's light,  
Backlit, poised to leap away  
Should sunlight strike  
Amber shards  
From lions' eyes.

Jade eddies bow  
Above obsidian deeps  
As noontime wavelets  
Roll across hot sands  
Like children's laughter

Owls drift above pines at dusk,  
Their wings silent as moonlight;  
Sweet sage burns yellow,  
Lifting slender arms of smoke  
To stars just risen.

**Robert Walton** is a retired middle school teacher, rock climber and mountaineer with ascents in the Sierras, Yosemite and Pinnacles National Parks. His published works include science fiction, fantasy and poetry. Walton's novel, *Dawn Drumswon*, the 2014 New Mexico Book Awards Tony Hillerman Prize for best fiction. His "Sockdologizer" won the Saturday Writers 2020 Everything Children contest.

<http://chaosgatebook.wordpress.com/>

Which is the dream and which the journey?

—Stephen Dobyns, “Ebb Tide”