

# BlueHouse Journal

issue # 5

STONE

JANUARY 2022



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[Dear Readers]

always in water and ever in stone  
I stand  
and I wait

Best wishes,  
Meredith Grace Thompson  
editor :: Edmonton, Canada, January 2022

please note::

BlueHouse tries to be as accessible as possible. Any concrete poems or artworks which have been displayed as images are available in accessible versions, including a brief description of the images. The links are located below the title of each piece, justified to the right. Any videos are closed captioned but also include a transcript. Accessibility is incredibly important to us! If you have any issues with accessibility in any part of our journal please let us know [here]

*JOHN WINDER*

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## Granite Obelisk



*photograph in black and white*

# Legananny Dolmen



*photograph in black and white*

## Weighted.

I am filling my pockets with stones  
that line the edge of the lake we walk along  
on a stolen Sunday afternoon.

We should both be working,  
our figures bent over screens  
in separate corners of the cottage,  
but even if it annoys us, even if  
we resent each other a little,  
we both agree.

To stop.

To walk barefoot.

The dog between us, barking  
if one of us strays too far off course.

If only it were all that simple.

I am weighing myself down with the stones.  
I try to name them as we turn them over.

The pink of feldspar rich granite,  
green veins in the unakite,  
the deep blood running through a banded jasper.

I want to ground myself in this moment,  
already past tense, already memory.

I pull from the receding tide  
a fossil soup full of tiny "O's"  
like the eyes or mouths of ghosts.  
Like the eyes or mouths of ghosts.

## **A Mystery Of Maps**

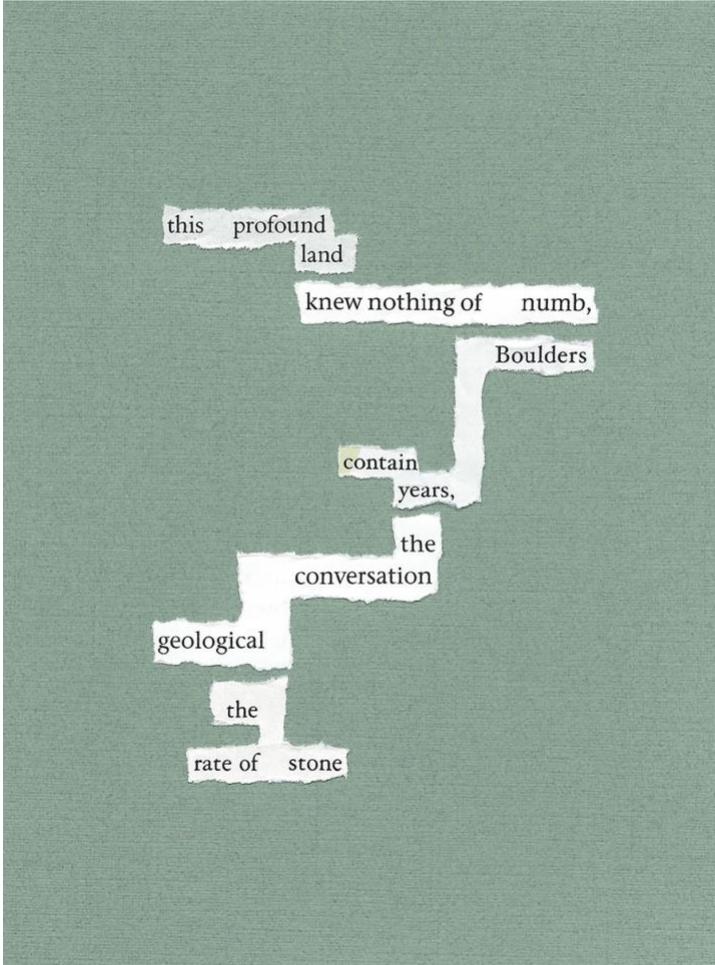
La La I can't hear you as whose wannabes these are I wouldn't care to know. The infinite regress a pyramid of human pyramids, a stack of stacks of hats, the physical dimension, envied, positively glows.

As from some cul-de-sac I come out blindly fighting, at each address is another address, so my mission is accomplished. She who hesitates to edit misses out. Potential may not exercise this mystery of maps.

The anarchist in me says nihilists are unreliable. What won't they renegotiate? For love they're looking where the light is bad and three days sober. What a luster on your flood plain, what an answer, what charisma!

We have ways of making you live in the present. Between the impossible and the unnecessary are the seven blessings.

## This Profound Land



## Reflections on Stone

Reflections on Stone The hard truth ... the unending and ever impending truth ... is that everything comes to an end. No matter how weathered, even stone is ground down by the erosive power of rain, wind, and time. Rock, pulverized over millennia, turns to sand that spills through your fingers.

Beware of the pebble in your shoe and a stone heart. The pain you live day in and day out, the hard knocks that grind you down that are hung like a millstone around your neck. Over and over again you call them to mind until they chill your bones. Those tectonic plates, the burdens upon burdens shift, leaving you tired and worn. You steel yourself and harden your heart, and weep behind closed doors or rail against all that is ugly, what others did to you; what you can't undo. Soften.

Stone is hard, ever enduring, patient and stoic. It doesn't matter what its size. Mountains are climbed, boulders heaved, rocks thrown. In ancient days, the Hebrews placed stacks of stones to commemorate the great things God had done for them, whether crossing into the Promised Land or thwarting an enemy or prayers answered. They commemorate promises, victories, loved ones. Around the world there are cairns and prehistoric monuments that catch the sun to tell the time, the season. Renew, refresh, and remember.

Balance your stones in artful ways. Along Lake Michigan,

stones wash up on the shore and are gathered in plastic pails. A beautiful stone, a colorful rock, holds enchantment. Paint them with what's on your heart. Stack them, balance them, remember them.

While hard, stones have purpose. The sculptor looks at the marble block and sees the shape of her vision. She taps and chisels and smooths the masterpiece into shape, creating great beauty that endures. In gardens and at intersections, pillars and arches of stone beckon the passerby to walk through.

Work with what is at hand. A wise bird who needed a drink from a skinny-necked water pitcher took pebbles and dropped them into the pitcher, causing the water to rise and the crow not to die of thirst. The anvil, they say, never complains. It may be beaten, but it doesn't relent. Decisions determine your destiny. Don't cast the first stone. While it appears that stone is unforgiving, it endures in strength as a cornerstone built as a memorial to your undying love.

## Deliberately Buried, An Object of Unknown Function, Substance & Origin

*after 2001:  
A Space Odyssey*

Six men stand on the lip of a  
hole dug in the moon. As they  
descend a slope, a requiem  
heaves, then swells. Tongues  
ululate, throats throb. The  
bravest man, a naked ape,  
extends a gloved hand, to  
touch the beyond come near.  
Nothing happens. It is still.  
Nothing but a slab. And then,  
being human, five pose  
proudly before it, to be  
carved into time by the sixth  
for the sake of vanity and  
fleeting glory, but the object  
objects, piercing the vacuum  
of space with a signal of  
unknowable purpose, only  
one possibility yielding a  
bedroom of white lit from  
below, with statuary. All  
others convey nothing but  
annihilation, just annihilation.

## **Amain**

No matter how tenuously  
time thins me, these toes,  
dirtily endured in,  
bedded by those levees,  
                    are evermore muddy

A prehensile safeguard  
against ever losing  
ground, of ever letting  
go—  
            even if, entirely,  
to my erosure

WILLIAM THOMPSON

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## Sea Creatures



*fish in soapstone*



*otter in soapstone*



*dolphin in soapstone*

## Sgeir Mhor

To the left of Portree Bay,  
just meters from the headland,  
lies Sgeir Mhor, the Black Rock,  
a proud, barnacled bolder,  
pockmarked by centuries  
and protected by the sea  
from unwanted intrusions  
half of the time.

I walked to this skerry  
at the lowest tide,  
stepped from stone to stone,  
balanced on slippery seaweed  
and played hide and seek  
with the carefree licks  
of the Atlantic,  
hungry for more.

I didn't get my feet wet.  
As I stood on the highest,  
the blackest stones,  
I wished I could reach  
the dark rocks in my heart  
just as easily, nimble,  
in a few confident strides,  
at the right moment of flow.

But my heart is not tidal.

MICHAEL BLACK

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## In Praise of Sandstone

*after W.H. Auden*

My desire line used to be formed on bay windows  
those ones wild at the backs of cityscape.  
At least I used to be formal there, since playing  
in condensation, I would draw lines for every walk, smiling  
to remember the fault lines of skimming stones.  
Medusa was and/or is never much remembered in this scene.  
My not science and my not theology would often  
get mixed up in a thing called family, doing its  
mental fight music to topple not differences of best and worst.

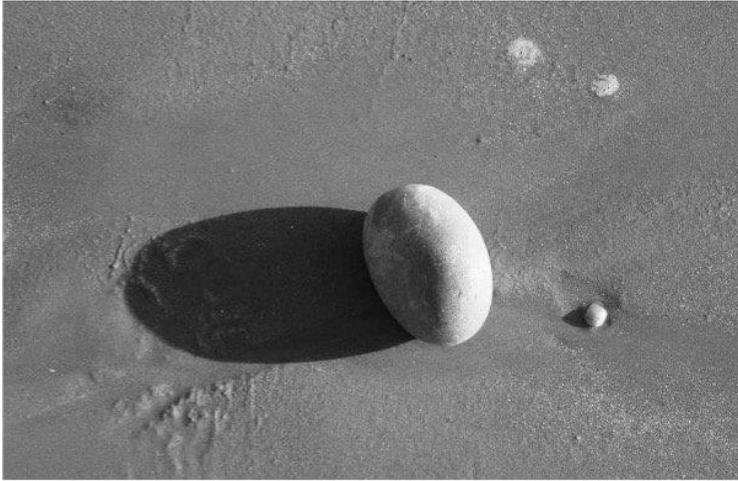
At the end of every walk, landscape waits stonily  
for it that cast the first tantrum in rapt clay to relax,  
admit some little inconstant complicity.

MIKE FERGUSON *and* NICK DORMAND

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## What a Stone Throws

*words by Mike Ferguson  
image by Nick Dormand*



*photograph in black and white*

Shadow elaboration: next time  
that hustler outside a Denny's in San Francisco  
bets you ten dollars

he can make a stone  
bigger than itself without touching.  
Power no more than a silhouette;

alter ego of a solid  
distance. Solstices and monsters are  
read from them.

It is a wordless play on the  
mythology of belief, as if magicians and  
heavers of heavy rock have such

long-term plans.

An overview of an overview is  
not necessarily tautologous.

Standing within its love  
may be hoping more of light and an  
object's disposition.

Back to perspective,  
we have no idea if it is only a pebble  
casting all this doubt.

## Poetry As Sculpture

(begin at any point and continue)

Select

Imagine

Examine

Touch

Sense

Caress

Aim

Incise

Chip

Persuade

Accelerate

Drive

Dip

Curve

Shape

Polish

Stand

Look

Consider

Think

Reflect

Sigh

Frown

Surmise

Sit

Ponder

Muse

Consider

Draw

Wonder

Plan

Debate

Retreat

Refresh

Forget

Dismiss

Breathe

Enjoy

Love

Live

Return

Perceive

Believe

Accept

Approach

Apply

Focus

Communicate

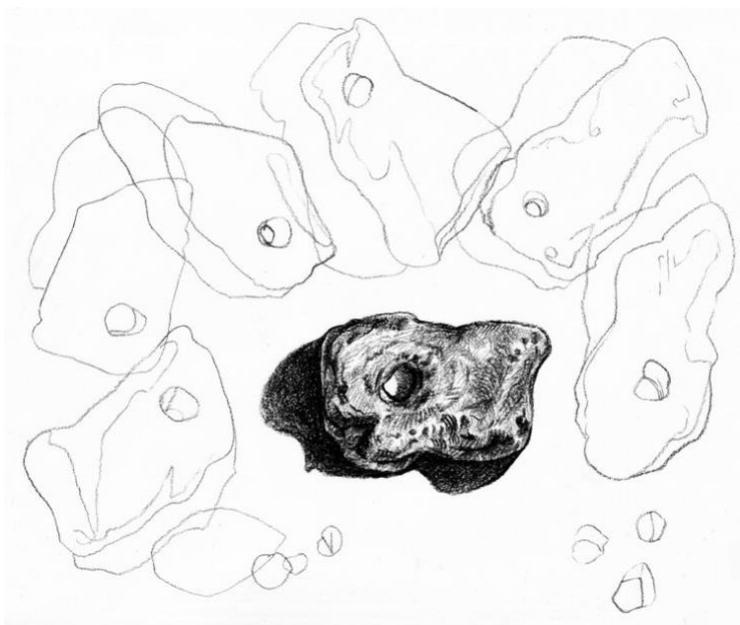
Measure  
Aim  
Strike  
Remove  
Reflect  
Decide  
Delete  
Demolish

Speak  
Grow  
Tell  
Know  
Flow  
Show  
Share  
Give

FIONA GLEN

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## Through Hagstones



*sketch in black and white*

## Cleft-split Rock

1.           Walking here  
              on these narrow  
              strands  
  
              of clean air  
              and imagination  
              only.
  
2.           Delight entering  
              despite sorrows  
              that already  
              call me  
              away.
  
3.           Eased by  
              this rising moon,  
              the tide's darkening  
              stain surges

onto wet  
waiting sand  
thrust inward  
toward the yielding  
reluctant shore.

4. Tentative, at first,  
this receding  
inflowing discourse  
of wave and  
cleft-split rock:

5. The ambiguous edge  
barely perceptible  
now against  
the sea's  
widening urge.

Memory out there  
like a pulse quickened  
to the heart.

## Aggregate

towards, a flock,  
herded together,

of one or more mineral crystals,  
a cluster of particles varied in

shape, size, smell, a considered  
basic structural unit of soil,

sand, gravel, slag,  
any hard inert materials,

for concrete, mortar, plaster. Gathered  
with cement, Wickes, Travis Perkins,

sand and gravels, B&Q,  
Jewson's chippings and ballast.

Crushed, reinforced, fine, coarse,  
rock, stone, synthetic, MOT Type 1.

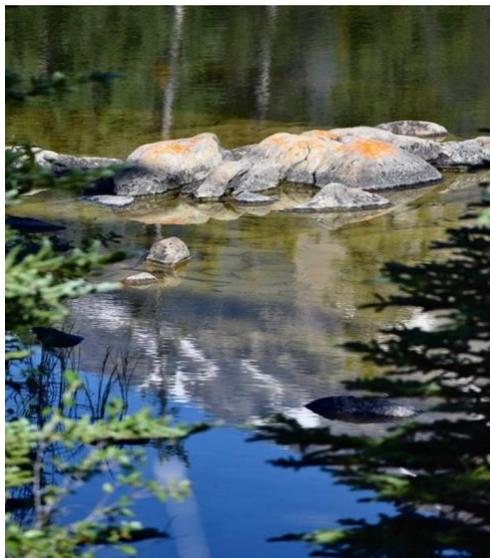
Galloway Grey, Moorland Black,  
Plum Slate, Shierglas Silver,

award winning Golden Amber.  
Soft and robust,

self-binding, setting,  
settling, versatile, dynamic,

pathways, cycle ways, canal towpaths,  
bridle paths, golf courses, petanque pistes.

## A story of many stones



*photograph in colour*

This is how it begins, gravity  
on earth then water and the music  
water makes when it moves  
up and against something.

Make a mountain, put it exactly in the way.  
How people react will  
tell you everything about them.

This is how it ends, music  
up and against stone.

## **Breakwater**

Perched upon a plinth of rock, decades old,  
Crafted from a mixture of mortar and stone,  
Craters and cavities are hollowed just below  
The waterline, form a brittle honeycomb,  
Which tongues of salt exposed

In the going out of tides. Designed  
To separate earth from water,  
It's a barrier near free-fall, inclined  
To lean hard into sun, eastward,  
Structural integrity's undermined

And no longer plumb. Pressed  
From behind by earth and gravity,  
A constant, irrepressible caress,  
Subverting with stealth, relieving  
The structure of heft and ballast.

Opposing forces work in cruel device  
To crater, topple and eventually swallow  
And return wall to water. So it is with a life  
Tending to a state of perpetual repair, knowing  
It will end in a loose uprooting and indifference.

HENRY HU

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## **lapis\_00**



*collage photograph in high resolution colour*



*collage photograph in high resolution colour*



*collage photograph in high resolution colour*

## Strength (Reversed)

Evident that the wood is rotten  
in places. Smell of cat piss  
overpowers any other, mold  
or gas or more horrid possibilities.  
Dark basement fit only  
for the homeless, roaches, noise  
kids who need to book a show. Static  
and squeals of dust cannot permeate  
concrete, the neighbors undisturbed.

We pass the night withdrawn to silence.  
Each time I see you at the bar,  
on the couch, I long to offer you  
my jar of honey, dipper of sticky  
sweetness for your tongue to complement  
the walls of static, the haze of August heat.

I go outside and sit on the curb  
between bands and have a few  
smokes with Pat and argue  
about whether Capitalist Casualties  
is a better band than Zeni Geva  
and when I go back in you've ghosted  
and I toss the honey in the garbage  
can and reach for the whiskey.

FABIO SASSI

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## Rock Art



*photograph in colour*



*photograph in colour*



*photograph in colour*

## Sestina

‘A small mouse-like child came into my practice today,  
complaining of heartache.’

That’s what the doctor said,  
When she examined my hair for grease  
And told me that I might get hurt  
But it was going to be okay.

It might have been okay,  
I felt the strands of my ache pull apart one by one today.  
The doctor said my insides would turn into a puddle of grease  
If I kept up my current habits, heartache  
among the activities I practiced daily— that hurt.  
Anyway, things will fester if they are un-said.

It was once said,  
That Lancelot would’ve been okay  
If he hadn’t betrayed Arthur, caused the King to hurt.  
‘I slept with the queen, your wife, today’.  
He might’ve fessed up; too great was the potential heartache.  
That shameful slick, a yard of grease

seeping out over the flagstones. But the grease  
ate them all up before Lancelot could slip. You said  
You didn’t want to watch yourself cause me heartache  
Well look at me now, I want to say, do I seem okay?  
I went for a walk today,  
Like a dog taken by a sudden illness dashing from room to room,  
trying to escape the hurt.

I chased every step with the resolve to do better, hurt  
Less. Smile more. I almost slipped in a monstrous puddle of grease,

nondescript city liquid. Today,  
as I walked, I said,  
to myself aloud, in an incantation: it would be okay.  
In the future, it might terminate, this heartache.

I want to drench that heartache with a pint of grease,  
suffocate the hurt part. I said:  
‘Today is a new day’. I’m going to stop loving you now, okay?

## Shadow Play

“Wo viel Licht ist, ist starker Schatten.” (Johann Wolfgang Goethe)

In Nantahala gorge  
the river’s pulsive table saw  
leaving jagged, craggy walls  
tantalizingly close  
caressing, hugging  
keeping out direct rays

No gentle glints of sunlight  
slowly shifting asterisked  
ebony

No glimpses of  
gathering at dusk  
collective action.  
threatening disruption

Thick, towering boles,  
throw shadows, even  
when buds and leaves  
with frost and lost promise,  
hurl slick spray,  
grinding fallen stones

– Cherokee for “land of the  
noonday sun”—  
slices through harsh stone,  
soaring steeply,  
to tickling,  
one another,  
almost always.

teasing us awake,  
to dawn to day.  
stuttering starlings,  
to murmurate, to demonstrate  
No matutinal thunderheads  
or promising welcome downpour.

Nantahala’s old growth trees  
at midday, even midwinter,  
are memories, and earth shudders  
when icy, churning rapids  
and whirlpools tapdance,  
to silt.

No darksome devouring,  
with covering wings,  
shading the gloom,  
chuck holes and wrong  
scarred bark and  
long traversed

Not stygian foreboding nor absence,  
is defined by it, its spindly  
catching on the past,  
as we step out

shadow protects us  
contours and down  
wiry plumage hiding  
turns, masking missteps,  
narrow, twisted pathways  
and abandoned.

shadow craves brightness,  
filaments flagging,  
reminding us what we've learned  
into the light.

FABRICE B. POUSSIN

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## Gateway to Better Things



*photograph in high resolution colour*

## Grace



*photograph in black and white*

## Thoughts on a Stone

The stone thrown at the uncle  
who turned the house into a volcanic  
eruption washed up by his feet  
several hundred miles away. A hard  
speckled egg shaped by the sea's hands  
and tossed and turned until ready  
to be thrown by a eight year old boy  
who understood for every action  
there is an equal and opposite reaction.  
The stone knew this. Carried the maths  
in its slippery surface. Understood  
how it would bounce back across time  
to ripple more than seas. When it returned,  
it slipped through his fingers, making him trip  
on the shingle beach and feel the battalion  
of stones attempt to carry him off  
like a quarry for the sea to judge on his usage  
of their creation. The water wouldn't understand  
how the uncle's violence permeated  
like cigarette smoke, lingering in the corners  
like a dustbunny pinned down by some immoveable  
force. It wouldn't understand every insult,  
demand and threat. The stone might. It might  
bend its trajectory in the air to hit the uncle  
at the back of the head before diving away.  
Perhaps the stone wasn't a stone but a volcano  
in disguise, determined to avalanche the man  
with a fury of his own making.

## Memorialize, Loss

*A found poem with lines from  
“It was Snowing on the Monuments” by Gordon Henry (left) and  
“For Ilya at Tsarskoye Selo” by Caroline Forché (right)*

Innate dreams of permanence.

*Man is like the statue whispering about the marble chiseled from  
his mouth.*

Unequivocal history, so we can hurry up establishing who  
we are now,

can you hear the chisel now? Fracturing, sutureless  
futures?

*There where so many lies remain lost to winter,*

the winter when bronzed confederate armies were  
strung, hung, dragged,

defaced, drowned, they, the immortalized ones—they  
never look down, now,

dumpsters dedicated to the decapitated busts of child-lore  
“creator” Christopher Columbus,

*a procession of memory,*

disrupted when smoke of Manuel de Borba Gato reached  
each window of the city and

in the stoic faces told and retold, in each city now it grows  
cold,

*Snow falls from here into the past and vanishes on golden minarets,*

ride reverse hoisted on a flatbed truck contentious parade  
of one, cheering? parading?

The undoing of transgressions back the way you came  
through the capitols, indescribable,

irrevocable legacies,

*It was snowing on the monuments,* trying to erase our  
monuments, trying to memorialize loss

instead.

Sources:

1. Manuel de Borba Gato, colonizer made his fortune by hunting indigenous people across the backlands for enslavement. Statue in Museum “Museu Paulista,” also a large monument measuring ten meters high, weighing 20 tons in the Santo Amaro neighborhood. São Paulo, Brazil, July 24,th 2021. From @indigenouspeoplesmovement Instagram video post.
2. “Many Statues of Christopher Columbus Were Targeted” Confederate General Stonewall Jackson in Richmond, Virginia on July 1st, 2020. In Frankfort, Kentucky, a statue of Confederate Pres Jefferson Davis is removed from the capitol building on June 13th, 2020. Confederate General J.E.B. Stuart in Richmond, VA on June 22,nd 2020 an attempt to topple. Charles Linn, facedown, a city founder in the Confederate Navy in Birmingham, AL on June 1st, 2020. Headless C. Columbus, in Boston protests June 10,th 2020. A Confederate statue is seen hanging from a street post in Raleigh,

NC on June 19th, 2020. A confederate soldier and plinth removed on June 21st 2020, after others toppled. Splashed paint on Jefferson Davis memorial in Richmond, VA, June 7th, 2020. Confederate monument from Decatur Square in Decatur, GA on June 18th, 2020. Houston, TX city removes Confederate Dick Dowling from Hermann Park June 17th 2020. C. Columbus in St. Paul MN facedown on June 10th, 2020. Protesters pulled down Confederate General Albert Pike during a Juneteenth event, June 19th, 2020—Washington D.C. set on fire, rope around its neck, spray-painted. Former VP and slavery advocate John C. Calhoun is removed from the monument in his honor in Marion Square, Charleston, South Carolina, June 24th, 2020, by city. C. Columbus facedown in a shallow pond in Richmond, VA on June 9th, 2020. Red face C. Columbus Bayside Marketplace in downtown Miami on June 10th, 2020. A replica of Thomas Ball's Emancipation Memorial erected in 1879, stands in Park Square in Boston down voted for removal, depicts Lincoln standing over a slave with a god-like hand over him. Robert E. Lee Richmond VA. June 8th, 2020. BLM painted on it.

3. *The Statues Brought Down Since the George Floyd Protests Began* by Alan Taylor, *The Atlantic*, July 2nd, 2021.

KARLA LINN MERRIFIELD

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## Vulcanization

Sea-lashed at cliff base, Pacific-battered,  
mine also is a Kona *stone swept smooth* to hold,  
born of molten center Earth as magma,  
now blushing iron-laden *pahoehoe* lava.

Swept away, I am Kona's smooth stone to lose.

## Looted Stone Carvings

Two vast and trunkless legs of stone stand in the desert *Shelley*

Taphian raiders longing to rob them *Apollonius Rhodius*

As 'twere a tree, its ripened fruit to take *Victor Hugo*

I look on chiselled histories, *Walt Whitman*

Carved stones of the abbey ruin in the park *Tennyson*

And robber bands infest the mountains foot *Robert Browning*

to take at night the image of a dream. *Victor Hugo*

O, well beloved stoncutters, *Walt Whitman*

buried in the ruins, on Urthona's dens, *William Blake*

buried in the ruins, on Urthona's dens, *William Blake*

it is the pearl she loves, not cutting gems. *Victor Hugo*

A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house. *Tennyson*

Rome's ancient genius o'er the ruins spread *Alexander Pope*

and 'twere a sin to rob them of their might. *Alexander Pope*



## **The Ziggaret of Burgh St. Peter**

This is not your sky, this milky mist,  
yours is the fierce deep blue  
of an ancient land between two rivers.  
These mild marshes of coot and damsel fly  
should be the haunt of leopards and eagles,  
only the long slope of yellow thatch beside you  
echoes the rolling dunes of your true home.  
Yet here, in five-tiered exotic splendour,  
you command a country graveyard  
sheltered not by cedars but English oaks.

Built in that Age of Reason, were you  
met with shock, or awe, or a small nod,  
the Broadland sign of firm assent,  
a red brick change from round flint towers,  
a sign of fortification while we fought the French.

Now in this Age of Wonder when all is shown  
at a click, your weathered strangeness  
still makes us gasp, reflect and marvel.

*RUTH MAINLAND*

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## **gargoyles would do great on instagram**

Gargoyles seem happy. First off, they have a role.  
BIG utility.

Gargoyles got faces like they own the place. They  
probably don't even hate

the buildings that keep them, don't even think about their  
master's precious

walls after they've clocked off for the night, pint after  
blood-pint

after glorious blood-pint

being swilled back down into their mouths by angels

or something gothic and fluttering nearby,

their faces back-lit by lights of cathedral-level importance.

There are some other things that are the same as gargoyles

-

the sound of the glass when you drop bottles into the  
bottle bank.

Blusher. Plastic pointed teeth. Each of these live their  
lives

as tiny omnibuses of hyperbole.

Imagine holding that much emotion in your body.

Gargoyles, through open smirking mouths, spew all our  
intensities back up

and make us look at them while they do it, until their  
stony throats erode.

I would like to be them, but I am definitely the building

big and stammering, saying nothing,

hoping someone puts the work in so all those walls do not  
fall down *ahabab*

and *dear god don't look at me look at this cool thing I own look at  
what it does with*

*its face*

## Fragments

### *Beach*

As a child, I created my own beach in our inland garden, a collection of the stones I picked up and clasped in my tiny palm wherever we went. Sparkling fragments of quartz, chunks of black basalt, slivers of grey slate. The beach is gone now, the bigger pieces lining paths and the smaller ones sunk into the soil. The garden itself is built atop a maze of grey limestone, water suddenly disappearing into the earth through unseen swallow holes and into caverns below.

### *Long Meg*

In the summer I went to see Long Meg and Her Daughters, a wide stone circle at the end of a long boreen. Long Meg is tall and made of red sandstone with a smattering of blue grey lichen. She was sun-warmed with a rough texture as I traced her mysterious markings, gently following the spiral in and out with my fingertip. The only other visitors were a small family sitting in the shade of one of the stones, three generations of women. On the ground near Long Meg, there was a bird's foot bound with white string.

### *Equinox*

To celebrate Spring Equinox, I went to a rushing burn in Edinburgh. The paths were busy, the ground covered with bright wild garlic shoots. I took off my shoes and socks and

forded the burn, wading through the icy water. Under my feet, thousands of stones, each step a delicate balancing act. Amid the slippery green algae, I spotted two tiny pieces of white quartz and fished them out. Once across, I scrambled up the muddy bank back onto the path and dried my cold red skin as birds sang overhead.

### *Collection*

Deep in the right-hand pocket of my winter coat there is a smooth black bean of basalt, gathered on a gusty October walk on the beach. A buttery yellow lump of quartz is carefully placed on a shelf in my bedroom, found on a perfect summer day. Beside my bed sits a small pink glass bowl from Ikea, full of crystals. Some come from my childhood collection – lavender amethyst and navy sodalite. The triangular green moss agate holds a tiny forest, and the sunstone glows like the sun in the heart of the winter.

### *Chipped*

Years ago, when I worked unsociable hours in a nightclub and struggled to pay my bills, I got a taxi home one night. The taxi driver told me to buy a piece of yellow citrine and put it in my purse to attract money. When I think back now, there is a dreamlike quality to the memory and I remember feeling compelled to take his advice. I bought the crystal in a museum giftshop and it has been in my purse ever since, pale gold fading to cloudy white at one end and covered in tiny chips from living amongst coins for so long.

## Beaming Down to Cappadocia

The door opens with an angry cat hiss and the air con  
cool  
fades back like a retreating wraith.  
Outside swaddled in furnace air,  
you step down onto a stark cornflour surface,  
yet fertile, in your imagination.  
Like alien guardians, giant stone mushrooms  
slouch on slopes below rocks flowing like wind-blown  
curtains,  
frozen in time.

Fairy chimneys wear stone berets  
at angles as jaunty as on any beatnik.  
Back-dropped by mighty buttes rising in fissured terraces,  
fluted layers of strawberry and lemon stone.  
Shattered rocks are crystal sugar glittering,  
in the sledge hammering sun.

As you turn a sun-blasted corner,  
Captain Kirk is karate chopping  
and tumbling with anthropomorphised aliens.  
Spock turns to you, twitching a single quizzical eyebrow.  
And a bad tempered Bones shotguns his incredulous gaze  
at you.  
“Dammit Jim, I’m a doctor,  
not a poet;  
it’s landscape,  
but not as we know it”.

---

## mouthpiece

flavour can be read

as distance

between what the mouth  
is and the food is

fry the stones in  
hungry water

the mouth is skin  
the food is weight

*KATE MEYER- CURREY*

## **Tor**

my granite heart  
endures winter  
outlasts obdurate  
clouds that seek  
to dampen its fire  
under their cloak  
of sullen mist to  
veil my craggy  
face scarred by  
past seasons my  
boulders have  
lost their smooth  
contours as my  
bent shoulders  
hunched in the  
wind under the  
drenching rain  
that makes my  
stone joints ache  
and fissure with  
chilblains as I  
wait for another  
spring too long  
in returning the  
iron wind grates  
my cold bones  
so they grind  
and creak like  
rusty gates as

icy air corrodes  
the tarnished  
bracken over  
peat numbing  
my clenched  
root toes but  
my mica flecks  
hold the glint  
of deep set sun  
that melts my  
blood and sparks  
the gorse alight  
into gold-flamed  
grass as coiled  
ferns explode  
like fireworks  
and the purple  
heather smoke  
hugs my knees  
and warms the  
grit huddled at  
my rocky feet

## *contributors*

SHINE BALLARD, the cachinnating choplogic, currently creates and resides on this plane(t). [@xShine14](#)

BRITTA BENSON is a circus skills instructing German, a writer, performer and linguist thriving in Scotland, her chosen habitat since the year 2000. She writes a daily blog, Britta's Blog - Letters from Scotland [brittasblog422041504.wordpress.com](#) as well as the poetry blog, Odds & Ends [oddsends707138946.wordpress.com](#). She also stares out of her window a lot and drinks far too much tea. Her story 'Mum's shoes' has been published by the Scottish Book Trust as part of the Book Week Scotland anthology and was also featured in The Scotsman on 13th October 2021, her story 'The Lioness' was shortlisted for the Bold Types Story Competition in November 2021. She regularly contributes prose and poetry to online literary magazines, runs a creative writing group and is currently editing the first draft of her novel about a dragon on the Isle of Skye.

ROBERT BEVERIDGE (he/him) makes noise ([xterminal.bandcamp.com](#)) and writes poetry in Akron, OH. Recent/upcoming appearances in FEED October Series, Breathe, and Passager, among others.

MICHAEL BLACK lives in the south of Manchester in the UK. His poems and poetry reviews are hosted in online places like: Adjacent Pineapple, Re-Side, -algia, Beir Bua, Osmosis Press, Ink Drinkers, the Babel Tower Noticeboard, and SPAM 003. Twitter: [@beakyblack](#).

NICK DORMAND is a photographer and artist who captures images on his daily walks at the seaside of East Devon in the UK. PAULETTE DUBÉ was two years old when she watched her third sister come into the world via the kitchen table. She has been

hooked on creation, and miracles ever since. Today, she relies on the good fortune of living in Jasper National Park for her daily dose of magic realism. Her poetry and prose have garnered a number of rewards and short list nominations including the Milton Acorn Memorial People's Poetry Award, the CBC Alberta Anthology, the CBC Literary Awards, the Alberta Writers' Guild Best Novel Award, the Starburst Award, the Exporting Alberta Award and the Fred Kerner Award. You can find me on twitter [@paulettedube](#) on FB and on instagram [@pauletteblanchettedube](#) and [paulettedube](#)

MIKE FERGUSON is an American permanently resident in East Devon, UK. His most recent publications are 'And I Used to Sail Barges' (The Red Ceilings Press, 2020) and 'Drawing on Previous Learning' (Wrecking Ball Press, 2021).

JEFF GALLAGHER is a poet and playwright from Sussex, England. His poems have appeared in a number of magazines including Rialto, One Hand Clapping, The Journal and Spellbinder. He has had numerous plays for young people published and performed in various locations nationwide. He has also appeared in an Oscar-winning movie. He has no social media 'handles' but runs an occasional blog called 'The Poetry Show With Gally G.'

FIONA GLEN is a writer and artist from Edinburgh and currently based in London, where she graduated in 2020 from the MA Writing at the Royal College of Art. Bridging essay, poetry, script, and fiction, her writing explores messy embodiment, unruly ecologies, and how human beings understand themselves through other beings and things. Glen's work has been published in anthologies from Dark Mountain to Letters to the Earth, and in periodicals including 3:AM Magazine, MAP Magazine, and Aesthetica online.

KEVIN GRAUKE is the author of *Shadows of Men* (Queen's Ferry Press), winner of the Steven Turner Award from the Texas Institute of Letters.

ED HIGGINS' poems and short fiction have appeared in various print and online journals including: *Monkeybicycle*, *Danse Macabre*, *Ekphrastic Review*, and *Triggerfish Critical Review*, among others. Ed is Asst. Editor for *Brilliant Flash Fiction*. He has a small farm in Yamhill, OR, raising a menagerie of animals—including a rooster named StarTrek.

In a past century HEIKKI HUOTARI attended a one-room school and spent summers on a forest-fire lookout tower. He's a retired math professor and has published poems in numerous literary journals, including *Spillway*, the *American Journal of Poetry* and *Willow Springs*. His fifth collection, *When Correlation Is Causation*, is in press.

Exercising through various mediums, HENRY HU's (born 1995 Hong Kong) emerging practice commits to an infusion. An exchange. An immediacy. A link between the interior and the exterior — of a self, a being, an identity, a consciousness. Each individual series offers an overarching narrative, steps away from the present for a spell: tasked with casting new perspectives, fresh air to breathe, a spiritual relief. Often juxtaposing the past with the future, differing forms of surrealistic fantasies unfold across his works; along with a recurring structure, the heart of all series rests in harmony.

XINYI JIANG was born in China's Qingdao and studied in Nanjing and Shanghai. She taught in Fudan University before moving to the UK. She had lived in England and Wales before settling in Scotland.

SCARLET KATZ ROBERTS is 23 years old. After graduating from her English degree at Oxford University, she has now begun

an MA in Poetry at UEA. Her work is often concerned with figures from medieval literature — she is interested in how their emotional range interacts with modern landscapes.

J.I. KLEINBERG's poems have been published in print and online journals worldwide. An artist, poet, freelance writer, and three-time Pushcart and Best of the Net nominee, she lives in Bellingham, Washington, USA, and on Instagram [@jikleinberg](https://www.instagram.com/jikleinberg).

TERESA H. KLEPAC enjoys writing poetry and fiction, and has been a journalist, corporate editor/writer and magazine designer for many years. Most recent publications include: *Vagrant Magic in Blood and Bourbon Issue #9*; *American Ramble in Pure Slush* Sept. 2021; *Catbird Seat in StillPoint Arts Quarterly* March 2021; *Counting Stars, Counting Crows in ArtAscent* Oct. 2020. Her fiction *Safe Person* was included in the *Hard Times Happen Anthology 2021*, and *Heirloom Rocker*, a poem, was featured in *TigerShark*. She is a member of The Merry Bombadils chapter of the MSPS and Columbia Writers Group.

ELIZABETH JOY LEVINSON teaches and writes on the southwest side of Chicago. She has an MFA in Poetry from Pacific University and an MAT in Biology from Miami University. Recent work has been published in *Whale Road Review*, *FEED*, *Tiny Spoon*, *Floresta*, *SWWIM*, *Cobra Milk*, and others. She is the author of two chapbooks: *As Wild Animals* (Dancing Girl Press) and *Running Aground* (Finishing Line Press). Her first full length collection, *Uncomfortable Ecologies*, will be published in the fall of 2023 (Unsolicited Press).

NASIMLUCZAJ is a Glasgow-based poet, translator, DJ and life model. She is the author of *HIND MOUTH*, a pamphlet for the *Earthbound Poetry Series*, and her work has appeared in the anthology *the weird folds: everyday poems from the anthropocene*. Her new pamphlet *Enskymment* is forthcoming with OrangeApple Press.

RUTH MAINLAND is a native Shetlander living in Glasgow who works as a Primary Teacher in Paisley. When she isn't tying wet shoelaces, she writes poetry and short stories. She was awarded the Grierson Verse prize for her writing, and has been published in Gutter magazine, The Island Review and Culture Matters, among others.

FERN MARSHALL is a writer based in Edinburgh, Scotland. Writing is a source of solace and escape for her, with a focus on nature and mental health. Her work has appeared in Little Livingroom. She is on Instagram [@fermarshal](https://www.instagram.com/fermarshal).

RODDIE McKENZIE lives in Dundee and is a member of Wyvern Poets and Nethergate Writers. He has published short stories in Nethergate Writers anthologies since 2006 and recently his poetry and prose have appeared in: "Tether's End Magazine," "Lallans", "Seagate III", "New Writing Scotland 35", "Northwords Now 36", "50 Shades of Tay", "Writers Cafe Magazine 16" and "Rebel". His poetry explores journeys, both physical and internal, whereas his stories favour the anti-hero or underdog. He is working on a novel composed of interlinked short stories based on his ten years living in Canada. For further details see: [www.nethergatewriters.com](http://www.nethergatewriters.com)>

KARLA LINN MERRIFIELD has had 900+ poems appear in dozens of journals and anthologies, with 14 books to her credit. Following her 2018 Psyche's Scroll (Poetry Box Select) is the newly released 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). Web site: <https://www.karlalinnmerrifield.org/>; blog at <https://karlalinnmerrifield.wordpress.com/>; Tweet

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KATE MEYER-CURREY moved to Devon in 1973. A varied career in frontline settings has fuelled her interest in gritty urbanism, contrasted with a rural upbringing, often with a slipstream twist. Since September 2020 she has had over a hundred poems published in print and online journals, both in the UK and internationally. Her first chapbook 'County Lines' (Dancing Girl Press) comes out this Autumn. Her second Cuckoo's Nest' (Contraband Books) is due in February 2022.

A resident of Connecticut, JOHN MURO is a graduate of Trinity College, Wesleyan University and the University of Connecticut. In the Lilac Hour, John's first volume of poems, was published last fall by Antrim House, and it is available on Amazon. His poems have been published or are forthcoming in numerous literary journals, including River Heron, Moria, Sheepshead, Writer Shed, Euonia, Third Wednesday and the French Literary Review. John is also a two-time nominee for the 2021 Pushcart Prize.

SHARI LAWRENCE PFLEEGER's poems, inspired by human, technical and natural interactions, are published in several literary journals, including Thimble Literary Magazine, Green Light Literary Magazine, Blue House Journal and District Lines. Her first chapbook, Yorkshire Sonnets, is available [here](#). Pfleeger's work has won awards at several Ripon Poetry Festivals, and she read most recently at Ripon and for Poets vs the Pandemic. An enthusiastic board member for Alice James Press, Pfleeger lives, writes and rides her bicycle in Washington, DC.

FABRICE POUSSIN teaches French and English at Shorter University. Author of novels and poetry, his work has appeared in Kestrel, Symposium, The Chimes, and many other magazines. His photography has been published in The Front Porch Review, the San Pedro River Review as well as other publications.

IAN RICHARDSON lives on the East coast of Scotland. He was overall winner in Scottish Borders 'Waverley Lines' in September 2015. In November 2015 his postmodern poem 'Notes for my Frankenstein Film' was published and performed at The Poetry Club Raum 2, Glasgow's international poetry magazine. In 2016 Ian was presented with the Anstruther Writing Award and was a regular contributor to 'Lies, Dreaming' spoken word podcast. More recently his poetry has been published in several places including [blackboughpoetry.com](http://blackboughpoetry.com). In 2019/20 Ian studied haiku and micro poetry, many examples of which can be found on Twitter [@IanRich10562022](https://twitter.com/IanRich10562022)

MARKA RIFAT lives in north-east Scotland. She writes stories, poems, plays and articles. Recently selected for the Lancaster 1 Minute Monologue booklet, awarded 3rd in the inaugural international Saki short story competition, commended in the Toulmin and Janet Coats Memorial prizes and featured in the John Byrne Award, her work appears in more than 20 North American, UK and Australian anthologies.

FABIO SASSI makes photos and acrylics using whatever is considered to have no worth by the mainstream. He often puts a quirky twist to his subjects or employs an unusual perspective that gives a new angle of view. He really enjoys taking the everyday and ordinary and framing it in a different way. He also likes the imperfect in things and believe that those imperfections add a lot of value. Fabio lives in Bologna, Italy. His work can be viewed at [fabiosassi.foliohd.com](http://fabiosassi.foliohd.com)

WILLIAM THOMPSON is totally blind, and he teaches children's literature for MacEwan University in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. His work appears in journals from both North American and the UK, including Hippocampus Magazine, Penmen Review, Ponder Review, COB Magazine, Literary Orphans, and Firewords Magazine. He has two collections of

stories  $\neg$  The Paper Man and Other Stories and Fractured and Other Fairy Tales.

CHRISTIAN WARD is a UK-based writer who can be recently found in Red Ogre Review, Discretionary Love and Stone Poetry Journal. Future poems will be appearing in Dreich, Uppagus and Spillwords. He was recently shortlisted for the 2021 Canterbury Poet of the Year Competition and the 2021 Plough Prize.

COLE W. WILLIAMS is the author of Hear the River Dammed: Poems from the Edge of the Mississippi (Beaver's Pond Press, 2017) as well as several books for children. Her poems are forthcoming in About the Art, FERAL, North Dakota Quarterly; and found in Journal of Compressed Creative Arts, Intima: Journal of Narrative Medicine, Martin Lake Journal, Indolent Books online, Waxing & Waning, Harpy Hybrid Review, and other journals, as well as in a number of anthologies. She recently attended Rockvale Writer's Colony and graduated from the MFA program at Augsburg University in Minneapolis.

JOHN WINDER is a landscape and creative photographer working in both colour and black and white. He began photography many years ago and enjoys trudging around outdoors, hauling camera gear, and spending time behind the camera lens. He has been developing his abstract landscape imagery more recently using unusual viewpoints and long exposure techniques. He has art work previously published in The Bangor Literary Journal and The Fly on the Wall Press.

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