

MICROW



*6: transport
Winter 2012*

Editor's Note:

Words move us.

They take us places where we are not.

Words have the ability to transport us – and often, when assembled in just the right order, they do just that.

They change foul moods to fair by making us laugh. They take us to imaginary destinations where we supply the scenery and context merely suggested by an author we may never know.

With words our institutions are formed and destroyed, our laws made and enforced, our lives documented rightly and with deception.

Transport is both action and vessel.

On the pages that follow, it is you, dear reader who will decide where to get on or off. In addition to the fine assemblage of words, your vehicle will also be found in the splendid imagery that accompanies this voyage.

Enjoy the ride.

*Michael J. Solender
February, 2012*

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A Boy's Bike
By Gabriella Bensus

There was a card
That changed his life
Altered his course
And muddled his mind.
It sent him far
It sent him wide
Following along
However he could.
When he came home
A different man
Less time had passed
Than he had thought.
His girl was still there
And his mama too
Waiting, waiting
But he still had the card.
He went away again
Married and hardened
Barking out orders
His paper in his pocket.
One day the world stilled
The cold war broke
He found his way back
He served no more.
He walked through the woods
Of childhood dreams
Found the bike that he'd left
Still chained to a tree.
He silently looked
At the broken metal
Twisted and rusted
He'd been gone too long.
The draft card fluttered
From between his fingers
And he left it there
With his bike in the branches.

In a Bottle
By Linda Wastilla

If you stumble on a message
in the bottle please, don't look for me,
I have escaped to an ocean isle with
water tepid as merlot, feather-soft sand,
sun hot as a slap

do not fret I shall fend for myself
(you taught me well) and feast
on coconut milk, guavas tender
as skin between thighs, and whatever
insects fail to eat me first

please, enjoy the Lean Cuisines
in deep freeze, the empty bottle
of Maker's Mark, the bitter-sweet bar
of Varhona stashed in the bedside drawer
where you once kept the Colt.



Metro To The City
By Linda Wastilla

They wear hoodies
and pants slung low,
teardrop tattoos
tumble down necks
like Chinese
calligraphs
their girls swagger
hard consonants
needling thin air
the train goes quiet

In a Café
By B.Z. Niditch

Voices lowered
all hands
on computers
Ethiopian coffee
moves as clouds
at the edge
of a clouded cup,
a ray of sunlight
through a fixed glare

of a window bird
searching for bread
and a cousin
thought lost
with a bass
on his shoulder
stops by.

WINTER BY OCEAN
By B.Z. Niditch

Waiting around
on silence

The sun turns
on our backs

Clouds hide
seabird voices

Stretching sailors
ice fish

A graffiti artist
at the lighthouse

Dunes breathe
an eternal winter.

WINTER GUEST
By B.Z. Niditch

On wintry nights
when conversation
like auspicious ivy
wears out
our hospitality,
and darkness
in the living room
exhales vagrancy,
as lamp lights
beneath a reflection
of elm and evergreen
cannot judge
our past cadences,
a cool silence spins
on our long day faces
until we recognize
the familiar steps
of belonging.

EINE REISE DURCH EUROPA

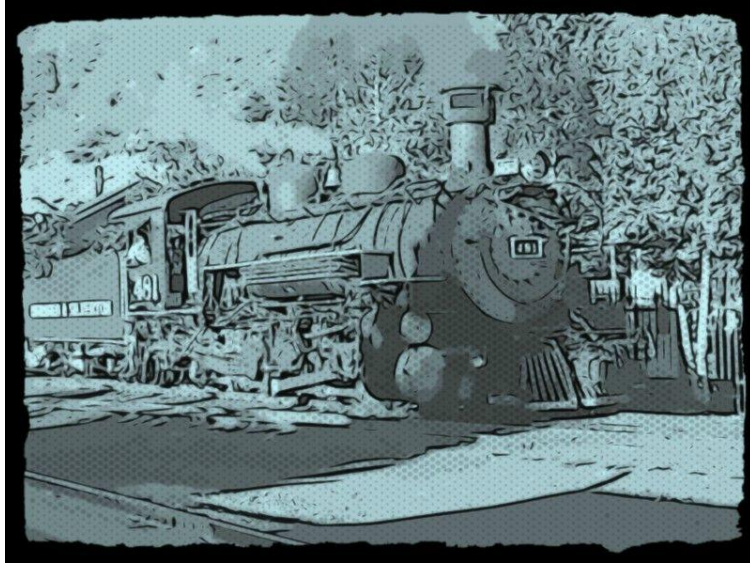
By Grace Andreacchi

Perhaps the Orient Express from Paris, stopping off in Wien, Budapest, Belgrade, or perhaps the Nordexpress all the way to St. Petersburg. Waiters in white jackets will carry silver trays of caviar and countless bottles of champagne to our compartment, where we watch the snow swirling by outside the window and make fierce love in time to the rocking of the train. Before dinner we sit together quietly in the yellow lamplight, you with your music and I with a book (something by Turgenev...), looking up now and then to exchange a quick, bright glance. Now when I look outside I see my face like a pale moon superimposed on the darkness. And you across from me, your dear head bent over a book, absorbed in your work. I get up to stretch, and sigh with contentment, like a cat, if cats could sigh - and dare to lay a hand on the back of your neck, just there, where your hair curls up at the collar of your coat.

Or shall we go the old-fashioned way, by horse and carriage? Rattling over the cobblestones, down muddy lanes and ancient highways, under the long straight allées of many continents – slim, wavy poplars in France, chestnuts in Italy, and apple trees, the small sober sentinels of our Heimat. Stopping at the little country inns just before sunset, there's still time for a brisk walk up into the meadows. You draw the sharp cold air deep into your lungs, stretch for the sky, then throw your arms about me, and we're rocking together like two children, for the pure joy if it, gazing down into a chasm filled with thousands of tiny, jewel bright flowers.

At each of the great cities we stop at a fine hotel (more waiters, more champagne), the rooms glitter and smell a bit sickly of orchids and perfume, and at night we go to the best cafés, where you are the star they have all come to see. I sit at a table near the back, but you know I'm there and there for you, and it is enough! And now and then you vouchsafe me a secret glance, so full of tenderness I feel my heart will burst – and I look back at you and smile - and it is enough.

But I think I'd rather go by foot. For I must make the journey alone, fate has separated us, and without Thee I've no taste for waiters and fine champagne. I'd rather walk, barefoot in the snow, the many many miles till I find you. Because if I can do that, why – do you know what happens then, little Brother? If I can do that, then at the end of the long road you will be waiting for me, your arms wide open to show me the hole in your side that is exactly my shape. That I may creep inside and hide myself, home at last.



Currents and Concrete
By Colleen McKee

Chicago where I met my hero
Chicago where I lost my lover
where today I am served
lemon drop cookies
chewing peacefully watching
beautiful black boys
fall in love
drinking with exquisite wrists
wide cups of tea
in the rain-running window
across from Hamburger Mary's.

*

From the bridge I watch the wind serrate
the river as straight as a street,
a suitcase handle
in each hand
on my walk to Union Station.

*

A life written in undercurrents,
grooves of streetlit water.
A life written in the whirr
of a thousand moving trains.

(P)lanes
By Dorothee Lang

We cross stones / water
Squared patterns of landscape
Framed by roads

The world from above:
Leading to somewhere
Else

Leaving it to us
to figure out
the direction
to



Sections of Today
By Dorothee Lang

Early morning flight
The stewardess hands out
Free newspapers

The man in the orange polo shirt
And the brown trousers
Goes through his, section by
section,
Opens pages too huge for plane
seats

With short pauses in between
He staples the finished sections
Global and national news,
disasters and wars,
Travel, culture, sports, jobs,
houses

Finally, after he reaches the last
page,
He leans back,
His face unchanged.

Sunday Afternoon at the Greyhound Bus Station

By Mather Schneider

The old Russian man
sits in his taxi 5000
miles from home.
He reads his bible.
A few of his friends from other cabs
try to talk to him but he
waves them away.
He sits with one leg out of his taxi
solid on the pavement
of downtown Tucson
watching the bus station for the busses to come in
with one eye
and reading his bible
with the other.
When the bus pulls up coughing and sighing
the cabbies scramble into their cabs
and head out to try to hustle up a fare
from the departing bus passengers.
The old Russian man sighs
shuts his bible
and starts the engine.
He's been reading the bible for a few months now
every day
trying to find some answers,
trying to find a way out of
this.
The old
fool.

Muni Sutra

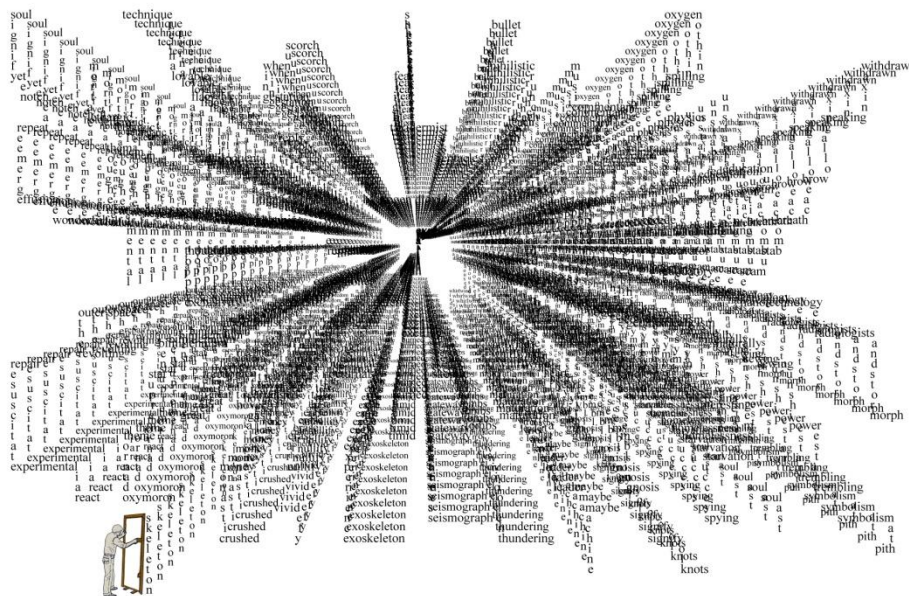
By Mark J. Mitchell

The Munidharma rolls
In fits and starts.
It keeps you off balance
But it is alive with electricity.

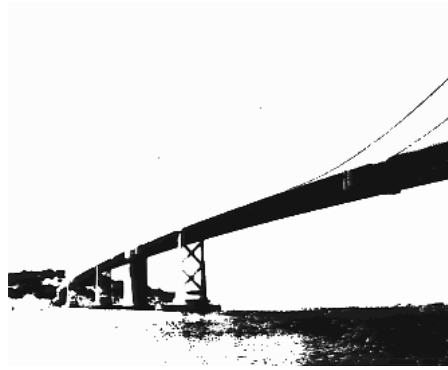
The Munidharma sounds
With a chorus of bells
Caused by tugged cords
Pulled by people as empty as you.

The Munidharma exhorts
You to count the loud
Exhalations of air brakes
And to notice the horn.

The Munidharma does its job.
It takes you from one place
To another. Once you're there
It leaves you behind.







Coracle

By Doug Mathewson

My workaday internal journey is long. In my seven to seven (do you remember nine to five?) I travel by tiny coracle from my right ear to my left. First I must shrink down from the towering size I imagine myself to be to the ever diminishing sub-atomic particle size the world perceives me as.

Being this small I am invisible even to myself! Then I can row my neutrino sized coracle with easy. Every day I drop one bottle over the side. They are filled with reports, requests, and memos containing my analytical insights and reviews. The bottles come in two colors, green and amber. I always alternate the colors. What happens to these encapsulated communications is entirely unknown to me. The A.D.D. afflicted, Blackberry addicted Poseidon who signs my check won't make eye contact.

Around me harpies shriek at writhing sea-snakes who hiss in return, but I just tip my hat and paddle by. Marketing nudibranchs in colorful jogging-suits speed-boat by constantly, each time with an amazing new plan. The sea churns with slowly with unemployed remoras hungry for a corporate host. Nemo's very own great squid was summoned.

It's management consulting prowess deemed mighty. Staffers were interviewed most sternly and called to task. Costs were upwardly up, profits were downwardly down, and heads were sure to roll. I must have been anchored midway, becalmed in the spot between maybe yes and maybe no for a year or three and wasn't missed.

Midpoint means half way home, the tide has changed, and the wind has risen. The setting sun shines through my left ear on the horizon. This provides a lovely golden aura for most the enchanting of mermaids who had arranged herself just so upon my worn ossicles. She brushes out her hair and smiles as she waits for me to come ashore. Ashore with my tales of a long day at work traveling to get where I began.

The Fires Of Evening
By Howie Good

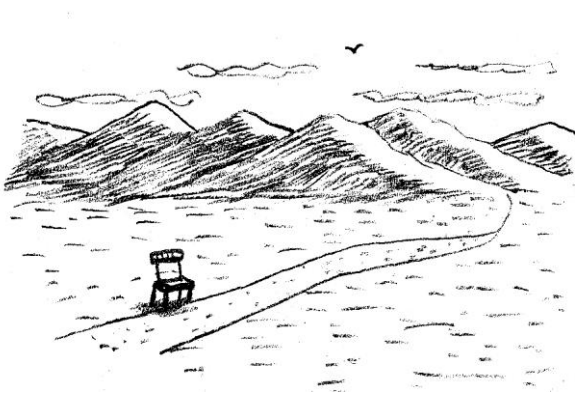
I like how your legs
wrap around me
like the last beautiful evening,

how I'm like the day world
delving into shadow,

how,

when we toss
like a small green boat
on a vast yellow sea,

everything is bathed
in red violet.



The Killing
By Howie Good
for Christopher Marlowe

The dagger entered
just above your right eye.

Mice-eyed spies
were everywhere.

Plague, too.

You heard many languages
being spoken at once,

you saw pink angels
in velvet and gold

swirling like clouds
against the ceiling.

A Delta to the Bay

By Matthew Muller

He had made it to the small bay in Yachats, Oregon, thick grimed canvas pants, and a long button down with blue stripes on grey-sleeved shoulders. A dull green river poured out into the sand. In time behind him, dark shadowed lines of Cedar and Douglas Fir witnessed out of the partly open sliding doors of the freight cars he jumped. Before that, the straight undulating lines of telephone poles through car windows on the prairies that folded over one another through the switchbacks up the mountains, straightened again across the desert, and fell down into the valleys. Between these, shiny wet rest stop parking lots.

He found a place to sit near the rocks, dropped his backpack, and patted his black lab on the head. The tide was just going out. His canteen held water and whiskey, just that. The gulls stood in congregation, facing out to sea, waiting for the beach to clear, but looking over the water west. It was beautiful there. He kept drinking. The clouds were low and fat in the sky, nothing above them, splintering radiant blue. He ran out on the wing of beach, throwing the stick for his dog, his canteen clanking. Kept opening it, drinking and squeezing it shut, trying to fill himself with all of that cleanness and beauty around him, trying to make it sink, and continue soaking, until he became sloshing full with it. His head would spin, the yellow world of sunlight and waiting congregational gulls turning like a plate around him. He'd stop, let it hit, and stumble back as he received it, sure of something smattering to beauty past the sky, the sun hanging in an orange orb just over the extending horizon line.



The Spark's Advance
By George Moore

Be sure to mark
all your parts.
Holley 4-barrel
intake manifold,
slightly warped
casting ridges that disrupt airflow
varnish and grime
the metering blocks and bowls soak
high-performance calibrated
built single- and multiple-bore
carburetors primary for
maximum throttle response
and fuel efficiency
and larger secondary bores to
meet the overall flow demands
under full-throttle conditions.
Components that controlled
the spark advance
and fuel curves
throughout the operating range,
forward-facing fuel inlets,
separate fuel-metering circuits
and a variety of vacuum
demands, plunger-style fuel valve
and secondary-air-valve dash pot
assemblies for smaller floats,
relocated fulcrum increased
float-bowl volume and pressure
on the fuel needle
for that better control.
Maximum compression ratio
unburned hydrocarbon
and oxides of nitrogen emissions
low-lead or unleaded fuels,
basic functioning, modifying
performance applications,
custom tuning for street,
racing, off-road, turbocharging,
economy, and other uses,
and still the spark's advance
puzzles me, the man
where the boy still stands,
the rod hyper stylized
retreat into that old insouciant
world of sleek steel.

Jerry's End
By George Moore

Most spoke of the man in glowing terms.
He was a great fisherman, an unmatched angler.
And I wondered, is this how it goes?

The organist banged out a muddled medley,
a self-composed mysterious musical reference,
a hidden hymn, searching for his own redemption.

The great cathedral rained with notes like arrows
against the pinkish stone. And I thought
is this how it goes? The life tucked into a kernel

of winter corn, hung before the vanishing fire?
And the organist banged on, oblivious to all
but his song, beating his demons on ivory bones,

worn smooth with the weekly emergence of the Lord
overhead. Had he been more than a fisherman,
there might have been a choir. But in the end,

it is the fish that win. The last cast a long
whip of wind through the chapel, the music rising,
startling in their nests, the resettled peregrines.



Atlas bluffed
By Timothy Bearly

Who is John Galt?

John Galt is a trust fund baby. I know this, because I grew up with him.

In school, I remember his disdain for the pauperized, and how he frequently scoffed at the "societal parasites who receive free lunches"

"I provide for myself," he indignantly pronounced
"I refuse to rely on the nanny state to pamper me"

He spoke of how they are suckling on the teat of government, as he unabashedly suckled the lactate from the uchi-bukuro teat of his opulent mother.

He received a weekly allowance of 200 dollars, and was the only kid in school with a brand new car, but he never had to work for it. Seemingly unaware of his own hypocrisy, he jeered with enmity at the analogous prototypical welfare mother.

"These lazy free loaders don't want to work"

I remember how he pretended to be a "self made man"—at the age of just 18. But in reality, he was born into a golden cradle, and fed—by the live-in nanny—with 24k golden utensils.

Like the sanctimonious—closet homosexual—priest, who condemns homosexuality, I remember how he incessantly projected his own ignominious lackadaisical disposition onto all of the destitute.

"they want handouts, and wealth distribution so they can sit on their asses"

"Socialists!"

"Communists"

"Fascists"

(Blah blah blah. . You've heard all the rhetoric and epithets before)

Decades later, after taking over the family construction business and becoming a self proclaimed "entrepreneur", Mr. Galt became even more disgusted with egalitarianism and the welfare state.

Indeed, he did not inherit the family fortune just so he could be excessively taxed on his "hard earned" riches.

And so he helped to foster "the tycoon rebellion", an uprising of the so called "productive class". The revolt was supposedly composed of creators, philosophers, and inventors, but in actuality it was merely the fortunate sons, stock jobbers, wall street crooks, charlatan merchants, and real estate investors, who were all masquerading as the former.

"We are the backbone of society, and we carry the weight of the world on our shoulders, lower our taxes or else. . . "

But the revolution was fleeting, and it quickly became aware that this was simply group of well-to-do businessmen—who were pretending to be innovators like Henry Ford and Thomas Edison.

Galt himself, was about as innovative and unique as his first name (and the reductio ad Hitlerum arguments he used), and it was just the same with all of the other adherents of the anti-collective-collective. They had not produced or created anything other than their rags to riches myth.

Contrary to the fallacy propagated by the affluent John (Oedipus) Galt and his true believer disciples, the genuine creators were often the ones who were impecunious and languishing in obscurity—as no one understood their outlandish theories and propositions.

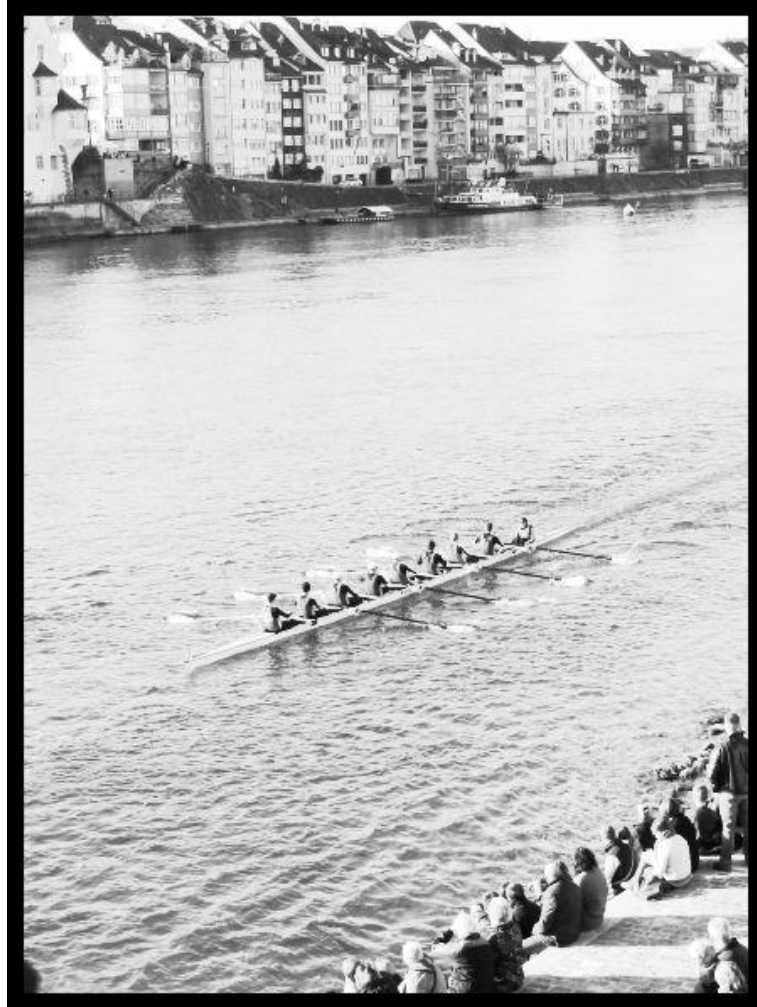
Using fear tactics, the Galt-cult hoped to scare the people into "voting more responsibly," which essentially meant protecting the interests of the plutocrats. If the people chose to not yield, and the suffrage of women, blacks, and the poor, resulted in a desire for agrarian redistribution, then the indolent magnates would fulfill their promise to deliberately crash the economy.

Fortunately the nefarious scheme did not work. The people knew that the threat of "shutting off the motor of the world" was based on the false premise that the fat cats were the ones in possession of the key.

The Coin of the Realm

by Joseph Grant

Go outside and play, Alistair's harried mother yelled, her head throbbing from another late night being a volunteer at the London Stage Door Canteen and then pub crawling with her girlfriends and some GI's they met; *heavens those Yanks could drink and dance*, she thought as the backdoor to their Surrey garden slammed much to her derision. Outside young Alistair climbed the garden wall, pretending to hide from Nazi spies, went into the garage where Father's motorcar, a 1937 Bentley Coupe gathered dust while he was fighting in North Africa and young Alistair battled the metallic monster with a stick that was his sword until he grew jaded and ran around the grounds with his terrier, Winston and when *even that* bored him, he made believe he was Howard Carter digging amongst the tombs for treasures like he had read in the aging back issues of *National Geographic* at his auntie's flat. As he dug deep into the garden dirt, Alistair turned up some worms, an empty milk bottle filled with the same dirt, a few squirming pupae and a curious small round pebble that would be perfect for his growing rock collection, but much to his dismay, no mummies. He cleaned the pebble with water he pulled up from the well and was elated to see that this was not a stone but a silver medallion of some sort and then it became clear to him it was actually a coin, a very old coin in fact, dating from Phillip II, A.D. 244, he imagined himself and his mother very rich from his find. Excitedly, he pictured taking the coin into his mother and her being happy with him for once and all of their money troubles solved, so as he rubbed the dirt off the coin again and again in order to make it gleam for her, a flash encircled him and he found himself transported back to ancient Rome instead of present-day 1942 England. Unbeknownst to Alistair he had found The Original Roman Coin of the Realm, becoming the most powerful person in the entire known world, but also he had created a significant enemy in the *now second-most powerful* person, Emperor Phillip II and all of this had to be completed before he got home in time for dinner or he'd *really* be in big trouble, he grumbled to himself.



Chopin Girl
By Neila Mezynski

Chopin Liszt. Sweet note. Back straight forehead too far. Note. Touch.
Cherish piano player. Brush hair from behind. Sweet sound. Go. Don't.
Squeeze. Hand.

Postcards From the 104

By Gita M. Smith

We were small, patient children, able to entertain ourselves with word and spelling games while waiting for the 104 bus to lumber down Monkland Avenue and carry us to class. Jackie Ruth and I were students at the Morris Winchefsky Yiddesheh Shul two days a week after regular Anglo school. There, because our parents said it was “important,” we learned to read and write Yiddish, from right to left, and speak in a dying tongue from Eastern Europe. We bent over our exercise books with care, forming the unfamiliar Hebrew-like letters that aren't quite Hebrew, adding this lexicon to what we already knew of French and English, the two official languages of Quebec.

Later, riding home on the 104, around us swirled the glottal stops and wide open vowels of a dozen other languages that we had yet to learn, that we had yet to dream of.

I saw my first dead person on the 104. Madame Louise Chevalle was the landlady over three short, shitty-brown apartment buildings that formed a U-shape at the corner of Fielding and Montclair Streets. She was a pinch-faced, almost-bald bitch of a hag, notorious for crowding newly-arrived immigrants into airless, dark rooms at exorbitant prices.

The buildings were hot in summer and ice cold in winter; more than half the electrical circuits hadn't worked since Louis St. Laurent was prime minister (think Truman-Eisenhower). If a tenant fell behind on the rent, Mme. Chevalle would send her three sons in to “correct the problem.”

On the coldest day in recorded history, at 7:45 a.m., the 104 pulled up to its Montclair stop. There lay the good Mme. Chevalle, flat on her ass on a sheet of frozen blood for all us riders to see. Her mouth had frozen open in a puckered O, and her arms and legs were splayed apart in a position I myself had often used to make snow angels.

Police investigations later showed 17 stab wounds in her back and neck from several different blades, most likely made by people of different heights. But the perps were never found, as no one in that U-shaped hell-hole had witnessed a single thing.

The following week, more trouble. The man was nondescript in every way except one: his penis was out of his pants and standing at attention *right there* on the 104 bus! What on Christ's home planet was the man thinking? And how come I was the only rider who saw it?

Later, between Latin and history, I told Annie Shapiro. She said that I should stop looking at men's crotches if I didn't want to see flashers.

"They're *everywhere*," Annie said nonchalantly, as if men routinely opened their overcoats to just air out their genitals, to just treat them to a nice, warming blast of bus fumes, to just share a special moment with a puzzled high-school girl in her navy-and-white uniform.

Eventually, like rivers to the sea, all city buses ended up at The Forum, which was okay by Montrealers, since that's where the hockey games were played. One evening when I was in college, and I don't remember how, I was in possession of a ticket to see *Les Canadiens* play the ill-tempered Boston Bruins.

I rode the 104 downtown to the terminus, and because I had an hour to spare, walked to a tavern next to the hockey rink. The 104 bus driver was taking his dinner break in there, too. I realized with a jolt that I had been riding *his* very bus throughout my childhood *and* high school years, and now I was old enough to go sit in his lap and legally cadge a drink.

I wanted to tap his shoulder and say, 'You drove me to music lessons and Yiddish school and to every day of high school, and I laughed and cried on your bus, which makes me almost your own child.'

But his eyes were dull and his uniform had a wet-wool-sour smell, so I let him be and took my story away.

I have a memory of my mother on the 104, her 90-year old body bent into a question mark by rheumatoid arthritis. She lived alone, taking buses to her many doctor appointments: the one for her heart condition, the one for her deafness, the one she talks to about her depression.

She had not yet asked if she could live with me, had not said the words, "I cannot remember what I am supposed to do, today, or how to do it," which she said, eventually. She was still fending for herself with a kind of courage specific to the very elderly, carrying her groceries on the 104, her footing not so sure and her bones as hollow as a bird's.

On the day that my mother gave up her independence, she rode the 104 one last time to pick up her medical records, a stack of files that required their own suitcase when we journeyed to America.

Now, many years later, I hold onto a small red leather change purse of my mother's in which there is one Loonie, a safety pin and a senior's bus ticket.

Rubbing Against the Hull

By Aleathia Drehmer

The sun beat down on him. The boat rocked gently in the ocean's mouth as he stood on the deck listening to the hull rub against the dock. Darell felt like he was drifting already despite being moored. He wanted to put an end to this day almost as much as he wished he had her back.

His sisters made small talk as they moved out to sea, but Darell couldn't really hear what they had to say. Their lives together were briefly intertwined both by blood and time and though he was happy to know them it seemed like the loss of their one connection might lay a heavy hand on their relationships. He let them talk while he nodded his head at the right times. His silence was understood and they didn't push him.

Darell smoked long on his cigarette letting the sea spray her rejections on his face; the sun drying the salt to his skin and pulling tight the few memories that lingered. His life hovered there...all those nights lost in worry; all those times he knew he was abandoned by unconditional love. "How does a man grow up to be a man," he thought to himself, "when you know you weren't worth being around as a child?"

Cradled in his other arm was the urn filled with his mother's ashes. It was all of her, for better or worse. It was all they had left. It was all he could hold onto it and yet here he was speeding across the sea to find a place to set her free knowing she had abandoned him again. This time she reopened the wounds he thought had scarred up nicely with plasters of sarcasm, anger, and hostility. This time hurt. This time there was no asking why. This time he was left holding the bag for the rest of his days.

Darell choked it back. He wasn't going to break down in front of his sisters. He didn't want them fawning all over him and treating him like a baby. He felt the cigarette burning between his fingers, the filter on fire, and smelling like the end of something he might never put his hands around again. Darell flicked the dead nail into the ocean against his better judgment. He didn't care about the environmental repercussions right now or its rippled effect on history.

The boat skipped over the waves like a jammer and part of him wished it would knock him overboard; part of him wished his feet were anchors that would drag him into the dark depths. But the fading tread of his sneakers gripped the deck and his body swayed in one motion with the vessel and he knew it was all over right there. This life he was living had changed. The course of his existence marred in such a way that he couldn't put his head down and ignore the world around him any longer. And in the end, maybe his mother had done this one great thing for him....given him the opportunity to remove his burdens from bent back and heavy mind.

The sun beat down on him. It evaporated everything he had ever known and sent it cursing into the piercing blue sky. It was all done. It was gone. She was lost to him again, this time forever, and he had nothing to say. Darell lit another smoke and stared off into the future.



The Tourist's Gaze

By Kawika Guillermo

In Kerala an elderly Sikh invites me to his home, feeds me Tandoori chicken, egg curry and scrambled eggs and tomatoes. He doesn't speak a word of English, but we drink whisky and speak in our mother tongues and it feels that we understand each other. We watch Triple H take down Mysterio.

Of Chennai, the Guidebook says "the city still has many slums but is also developing dynamic new-town suburbs, a rash of air-conditioned shopping malls and some of the best restaurants in India." "but?" Why not "because of," "due to the fact," or "with shocking indifference to," or, at least, "giving up any notion of responsibility over its inhabitants, the government of Chennai..."etc.

Bangalore, aka ITocracy, aka calltopia. Known for having one out of every three office buildings in India, for obesity and diabetes, for drinking at 3am, when the American workday ends. Bangalorians are emancipated into jam-packed pubs, the chaotic night markets and the large strip halls, to rooms of belly dancers.

HITECH City, Hyderabad, where the IT revolution has perhaps hit hardest, is not filled with young Indians in collared shirts jabbering on headset headphones. It has few long streams of electric wire weaving about from iron statue to statue, and the glossy, posh buildings, are almost entirely absent. It is a surreal desert of nascent buildings still undergoing erection, and the only movement comes from migrant workers living in tent cities on every roadside. Our multinationals aggregate into Industrial parks, casting foreboding shadows from incomplete buildings that stretch from the rocky hills of High Tech City, onto the city of Hyderabad.

We enter Hyderabad in the Islamic holy month of Ramadan (Ramza), a time when rickshaw drivers sway their bikes, enervated by lack of water and over-exposure to the sun, and when every night becomes a festival of cheap chicken and lamb kebabs, only to end abruptly with each sunrise. Here women are dressed in the latest foot fashions, their fashion fetishism limited by the burkas enshrouding the rest of their bodies.

Sixteen hours on the train, sleeper class, I lie on the upper berth of a crowded cabin, my arm suspended at head level like a crane. I easily grasp onto passing soft drinks, samosas, or the heads of children with sticky fingers. Outside the train, the sunset straddles the horizon among rice fields, lines of trees and electrical towers that look like steel angels in the dark.

In Delhi Avisha and I chase the bureaucratic fairy around the train station from one ticket counter to another, filling out forms, getting things stamped, carrying our luggage on our backs with the body-heat of the Indians in our nostrils. The bureaucratic and taxonomic obsession with getting things right. The denouement of our confusion and utter exhaustion is only to discover that there is no train left for Jaipur.

In Chandigarh two high school boys meet with us; their questions are typically high school. She your girlfriend? You kiss her? You sex with her? How many girls you do this with? Very common in America? They are obsessed with white women. Very naughty, very sexy they say. I ask them about Indian women. Very naughty, very sexy, they say. The first boy tells me he has proudly slept with seven to eight Indian girls, all of them his friends, though the second boy tells me they are all prostitutes. The second boy has a meeker sex life however, at “two to three” women. Ambiguous numbers.

In Amritsar recumbent pilgrims lie scattered on the white marble of the Golden Temple. They look identical: long dark beards, white turbans, aged soles of their feet. Here we are far from the anomic lifestyle of Las Vegas, the bathetic pathos of casinos and slots. Here people must have touch, must express total equality even in their style of eating, must cover their heads in humbleness not only to an imaginary God, but to each other. In a state of quiescent repose, we face each other as beings of the same universe. We love everyone in the way you and I once loved each other.

The first night in Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan, a fuse blows at my five dollar hotel. We move to another room and that fuse blows out. The next day we relocate to another hotel for three dollars a night. It is ridden with ants, spiders, fleas, mosquitoes, cockroaches. The mattress is a cot on wooden planks. It reminds me of living in North Las Vegas. We wake up with new places to scratch.

I rid myself of the tourist monuments like passing difficult excrement. To find myself in a new city, one must survey the perimeter, as a canine around his new home, before he can take in the pleasure of the streets. As soon as I am released from the injunction to see the tourist sites, I perambulate towards whatever seems exigent or within my proximity—a broken down building, a gathering of Indians around a well-lit street, a strange figure in the dark. Very often I simply float within the crowd, an unthinking and unassuming flaneur, imbibing in the aura of the city and its people, retreating from certainty, trusting the void wherever it leads.



Borders

By Maude Larke

So I said to them,
“Ohio is the closest
I’ll ever get to Kentucky.
I should try to go down
to have my one real
mint julep.”
They nodded, downed
their Jägers, changed
the subject.
I never did go.



Cabrillo 2010
By Maude Larke

shadow of a baton
shadow of a microphone
more than a shadow
of intensity
in alert underscored eyes
inpressed Dr. Seuss lips
a hand that halts

ephemerality plus solidity
plus unbuttoned white
in the heat and dark

a wonder how
the very image can resist
the impetus it holds
and not burst into gesture

to that degree
something vibrant
marches out
from upraised arms
intense face
and unbuttoned white
glowing between shadow and light

Paneless Windows

By Alex Chornyj

Travelling on the open road affords one the luxury of observing life from a still picture. I always liked to ponder possibilities from scenes that remained etched within the confines of my endless hour glass. Such was the inspiration I always derived from seeing antiquated, dilapidated ruins of family homesteads. This simple exercise of creative impulse caused my imagination to return as if by way of a time machine to when these buildings were in their former glory. It was like when as a child I would hold an old coin and think of all the people who had come into contact with this relic. To me history held a romantic kaleidoscope through which images appeared recapturing the essence of the original transpiring moment. Some houses were mere shells, yet this did not detract from the passion each one in me instilled. There was a story behind the paneless windows. The voices that used to fill the rooms in a wondrous splendour I could somehow detect in their pristine element. These lives used to interact in an array of emotions and circumstances that painted an accurate portrayal of life's sweet and bitter struggles. Many of these homes I understand lacked running water utilizing outhouses and hand pumps. It was the other textures that exuded a personality unto each domicile. This charm or charisma left an indelible mark whose revelations would reveal themselves to me in a telepathic manner.

In my favourite stately manor I envisaged a three bedroom home with three children and two loving parents. The remnants of an extensive garden, a tree fort, two paths leading to a still glistening lake and of course a continuing serenity were yet perceptible to a clairvoyant soul. I could clearly hear this laughing and at times crying, but always within an atmosphere of unconditional love. Their little feet tramping across the hardwood floors combined with drafty windows and a cozy fireplace created an ambiance of memories still circulating in spiritual form. There was one old philco radio which the family relied upon for entertainment with suspense filled drama stories each evening at precisely eight o'clock. This was their relaxing and bonding time. The days were a mixture of chores, work and school. The clothesline sure got a good workout in those days as did the dated scrub boards before the advent of the first washing machine. The two brothers were as inseparable as two crows, but the daughter found ways born out of necessity to be friends with birds and

animals. It was no wonder to her parents or surprise for that matter that she had an affinity with nature that led her in a chosen direction. Constance always said she wanted to be a veterinarian and a good one so became. Her brothers pursued careers in plumbing and teaching which would take them far away from their cherished homestead. The father passed away early on due to an accident at work which had left his wife alone in the house. The children had grown into adults and were dotted across the landscape having gravitated to urban centres in search of employment. Constance had her mother Martha move in with her which turned out to be beneficial for both. They had always been best of friends so the arrangement was like a flower blossoming from a limb of its origin. The family home bore the marks of a weather beaten landmark so it was one in a line of abandoned sites. It still to this day is a cause for reminiscence from a maturing fondness whose sentimental attachment causes deep feelings of endearment.

One other spot that touches me every time I drive by is the shadowy, yet magnificent estate with the cylindrical spirals. Almost looking more like a daunting castle from a fable, this place combined a majestic grandeur with a haunting air about it. As the story goes, one of the couple's children fell from high up in a tree and succumbed to their fatal injuries. A normal ,happy and extroverted social family became lethargic, melancholy and withdrawn. There was a heaviness with an enveloping mist that was slowly siphoning the very light out of their day. It was the suddenness and resulting shock from the tragedy that led to a compounding of issues. The abruptness of the separation was painfully excruciating. A friend of the family offered assistance through facilitating a spiritual communication between the son departed and the rest of his family. This seemed to stretch their belief system, but once a line was established there was a strengthening resolve evident. This occurred gradually over time, but a healing and homeostasis did find its way back within the confines of a once placid family. A predominant belief of everything happening for a reason was the foundation upon which a re-centering commenced. The house though was vacated in favour of one in the distance. The property was never sold and neither occupied ever again. It is on dismal, rainy days when passing by this mansion that an eerie sensation like a chill running down one's spine can be detected.

There are a host of other such empty structures along what can be described as an otherwise barren stretch of highway. Each has its own place within the winds that etch the surface in a destined detailing. As a

picture is worth a thousand words, a walk of consequence reflects the trials and tribulations endured by each family. Some particular histories gain greater notoriety than others. It all depends upon the given circumstances surrounding the transformational frequencies that exist within each continuum. At a glance from one's peripheral vision, there are certain grounds which attract us with their radiant pulse. This signature remains even after human habitation ceases. Some such stories are written about, whereas most are passed from person to person whose translation only adds to the colour of its rainbow. This radiance reflects the constant oscillations of an evolving synthesis.



If We Don't Think, We Will Sleep

By Timothy Gager

I reread The Little Prince last night when I couldn't sleep, the world being too large for me. I tried to relate to the book, but since there was no princess in the story, I just wanted to smack the little guy upside the head, I mean, who falls in love with a flower?

Somewhere, someone once said that "love is a rose", so using basic logic, the Little Prince was falling in love with love. Now that's a bad idea as is talking out loud to a book after midnight, when instead I should be trying to sleep. The only thing more frustrating than lying in bed wide awake would be standing up and trying. I was in love with someone who stood pat, so in that way, I fell in love with love as well. That's no good in any book.

Yes, I thought about the time she told me she didn't want kids but I told her that she'd be such a good parent. She asked me if I really thought so, but I chickened out and said that I hadn't really thought about it much, but I didn't want children myself.

She said, "You're hiding boy and soon you're going to be found out," but I told her that she thought too much about thinking and I knew by giving her that extra fact to think about, that all the energy would build up in her brain and it would be enough to power a few large cities.

Or, at least, that energy would help keep me awake. When I spoke to my therapist about it he told me that therapists are the worst over-thinkers in the world. "That's great," I said. "Because I'd like to work on being more reserved."

"Would you like a sleep aid?" he asked, but I said, "No, I can get much too reserved that way."

So now, I still don't sleep. Maybe it was I was thinking too much about the note she wrote, which said: "I thought you were pulling away from me so I'm pulling away first. I love you forever." It was a glorious note because of the basic construction of the message and also its honesty. I checked for punctuation and grammar errors and that too was perfectly spot on. I also checked the rest of the house and she left her closet bare all except for a

pair of heels, one spike broken the other standing strong. She owned a lot of shoes, much better than that.

When I walked through the house, I wondered why hadn't I noticed that she took the sofa but left the loveseat. People in love fit better on a sofa anyway, because at least they can lie down together. Only the dust which formed a large rectangle was left behind but that can be blown away quite easily if I left a window wide open.

Again tonight, awake, I will lay down and rewrite The Little Prince in my head. I will rename it, The Little Princess and when the phone rings at 3 AM, it will be her asking, "Can you sleep?"

I'll just say, yes, because I know I *can*.



Family Drama
By Gale Acuff

Miss Hooker's my Sunday School
teacher but
almost every night she's my wife, I
mean
in my dreams. Last night we were on
the couch
watching TV. I had my arm around
my dog on my right side and her on
my
left, so she was closest to my heart.
That's
love. *Bonanza* we watched, those
Cartwright boys,
Adam, Hoss, and Little Joe, and
father
Ben, of course, and when we have
kids they'll be
sons and we'll name 'em for them,
unless they're
daughters, which are as good though
we'll need new
names but Miss Hooker's smart,
she'll think of some.
I don't know where babies come
from yet but
she's a good teacher and can
demonstrate
and I'll take careful notes and use
them 'til
I've got the procedure memorized.
Then
I'll throw the notes away. I think it
helps

to sleep in the same room, like my
folks do,
and in the same bed, and to close the

door,
then lock it, and put something over
the key
-hole so nobody can see in. It must
be dark, too, even nighttime, and
you'd be
surprised at how much just one eye
can take
in squinting when the whole house is
dark, not
that I ever really tried. I take it
back--lying's a sin but to be fair I
couldn't see anything. But my ears
did
and it was laughter, Mother giggling
or
maybe it was Father. It's a good
thing
I didn't ask them about that next day
or I'd have given myself away. I
guess I just want to know where I
come from.
If I'm going to marry Miss Hooker

I need to know. Some dreams you
can't trust so
if I dream again tonight we're
married
and she shows me how to make a
baby
how will I know she's not putting me
on?
Then sooner or later you fall asleep
after you shake hands and kiss each
other's
lips, all four of them, not once or
twice
but half a million times is my best
guess.
Then I guess the sun comes up and

you wake
to the sound of someone crying and
that's
the beginning of your family. Funny
how it commences with crying.
Maybe
death ends it that way, too--I know
even
less about that but I will in time but
first I have to be old enough to be
too old to live and that's only if I
don't die some other way before
then, get
run over or struck by lightning or
choke

on a corn dog at the county fair.
When
Bonanza's over we ride off to bed,
my dog and Miss Hooker and I. I get
as far as turning out the bedroom
light
and trying to find our bed in the
darkness
but before I can shake her hand
good night
let alone kiss her it's morning and
she's
gone and just my dog lying beside
me.
It's like we're separated once a day,
I mean Miss Hooker and me. It hurts
but
at least it isn't real, only the ache.
One day I'll be old enough to have
both.
Then I'll be grown up. I'll drive and
shave, too,
and have a deep voice and a lot of
hair

in goofy places. I hope she won't laugh.

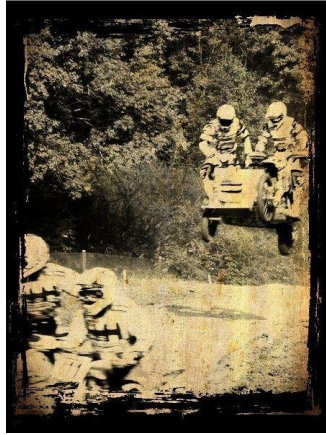


The Other Side of Living
By Samuel Cole

No hope remains in the bedroom door, a wooden shell to the tomb inside. Nightly, he looks away to the bathroom, the office, the hallway linen closet, taking down towels, putting away papers, cleaning the tub every Saturday afternoon at 2pm, the only time to clean, really. But the door begins to fade, crack, and bend, as if calling out for attention. I'm starving; that's what he thinks the door is trying to say, but he doesn't answer for fear the door will get worse if he does anything to try and make it better.

So the door creaks, pops, and shifts. He can hear it so well. Like a spirited child restless in bed. He touches the door, not to leave fingerprints but to hear with his bones and see through his veins and swear by the lines weaved across the palms of his hands.

The door opens, a feeble swing, crying all the way to the wall. Light streaking in from the windowpane magnifies the autumnal-colored silk flowers and lucid craft pebbles freckled around the carpet, except for the body-size-length patch of concrete hiding in the corner, blood red, jaggedly wounded, still trying to connect the dots.



MICROW
6: transport
Winter 2012

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Contributor Bios

- **Gale Acuff's** poetry has been published in *Ascent*, *Ohio Journal*, *Descant*, *Adirondack Review*, *Ottawa Arts Review*, *Worcester Review*, *Verse Wisconsin*, *Maryland Poetry Review*, *Florida Review*, *South Carolina Review*, *Carolina Quarterly*, *Poem*, *Amarillo Bay*, *South Dakota Review*, *Santa Barbara Review*, *Sequential Art Narrative in Education*, and many other journals. She has authored three books of poetry: *Buffalo Nickel* (BrickHouse Press, 2004), *The Weight of the World* (BrickHouse, 2006), and *The Story of My Lives* (BrickHouse, 2008). She has taught university English in the US, China, and the Palestinian West Bank.
- **Lynn Alexander** is the producer and managing editor of [Full Of Crow Press And Distribution](#), which includes *Full Of Crow Online*, *Blink Ink*, *Fashion For Collapse*, *MICROW*, *On The Wing* and more. You can find out more at her website [here](#).
- **Grace Andreacchi** is an American-born novelist, poet and playwright. Works include the novels *Scarabocchio* and *Poetry and Fear*, *Music for Glass Orchestra* (Serpent's Tail), *Give My Heart Ease* (New American Writing Award) and the chapbook *Berlin Elegies*. Her work appears in *Horizon Review*, *The Literateur*, *Cabinet des Fées* and many other fine places. Grace is also managing editor at [Andromache Books](#) and writes the literary blog [AMAZING GRACE](#). She lives in London.
- **Timothy Bearly** currently resides in Sandpoint Idaho where he likes to eat worms and sing songs. According to his teachers he has an insubordinate attitude

(because he questions them). According to his family he is a communist (because he doesn't believe in laissez-fairy tales). According to his fundamentalists peers he is the antichrist (because he named his dog darwin). Notwithstanding his frustration with the relentless and groundless ad hominem bombardment, he kind of enjoys his status as persona non grata, he contends that ostracism helps one to write unfettered. Ironically, personal attacks also inflate his ego, it helps him to realize that he is on the right track. He can be lambasted via email (thebearlys@hotmail.com).

- **Gabriella Bensus** A life-long and proud resident of Steeler Country, Gabriella Bensus is currently studying Philosophy and Government at Cornell University. She has been writing passionately from a very young age but has never attempted to share this passion in the past. She hopes to one day be a criminal prosecutor.
- **Steve Cartwright** It's well known that an artist becomes more popular by dying, so I'm typing this with one hand while pummeling my head with a frozen mackerel with the other. He has done art for several magazines, newspapers, websites, commercial and governmental clients, books, and scribbling - but mostly drooling - on tavern napkins. He also creates art pro bono for several animal rescue groups. He was awarded the 2004 James Award for my cover art for Champagne Shivers. He recently illustrated the Cimarron Review, Stories for Children, and Still Crazy magazine covers. Take a gander (or a goose) at his online gallery: www.angelfire.com/sc2/cartoonsbycartwright
- **Alex Chornyj** is a Reiki Master, poet, writer and spiritual being. His writing reflects the energy and light that surrounds his spirit.
- **Samuel Cole** lives in Woodbury, MN. He loves to run, STEP, photograph pencil sharpeners, hang with friends, boo bad movies, and of course, write. Check out his website: www.maneuverableword.com .
- **Aleathia Drehmer** is the editor of the microzine Durable Goods, poetry editor at Full of Crow and editor of the flash fiction website, In Between Altered States. Her work can be found in various places around the web and in print. Aleathia's latest collection of poetry called "You Find Me Everywhere" is available from Propaganda Press. Her previously published work can be found at: www.myabdication.blogspot.com
- **Timothy Gager** is the author of eight books of fiction and poetry. He lives on www.timothygager.com
- **Howie Good** a journalism professor at SUNY New Paltz, is the author of the 2011 poetry collection, Dreaming in Red, from Right Hand Pointing. All proceeds from the

sale of the book go to a charity, which you can read about here:
<https://sites.google.com/site/rhplanding/howie-good-dreaming-in-red>

- **Joseph P. Grant** is a Pushcart Prize nominee, whose short stories have been published in over 200 literary reviews such as *Byline*, *New Authors Journal*, *Underground Voices*, *Midwest Literary Magazine*, *Inwood Indiana Literary Review*, *Hack Writers*, *Six Sentences*, *Literary Mary*, *NexGenPulp*, *Is This Reality Zine*, *Darkest Before Dawn*, *strangeroad.com*, *FarAway Journal*, *Full of Crow*, *Heroin Love Songs*, *Bewildering Stories*, *Writing Raw*, *Unheard Magazine*, *Absent Willow Literary Review*.
- **Kawika Guillermo** is currently finishing his doctorate in Seattle, where he teaches college-level writing and writes fiction and poetry. He has been published in journals such as *Annalemma*, *The Monarch Review*, *Unlikely 2.0*, *The Houston Literary Review* and *Danse Macabre*. You can find more of his published works and his blog at <http://kawikaguillermo.weebly.com/>
- **Linda Hofke**, a native of Pottstown, PA, has spent the past decade living in Germany. When not teaching EFL or writing, she takes time to enjoy the beautiful landscape, culture and culinary delights of Europe. Notorious for dropping tiny handheld digitals, this butter-fingers can be spotted pulling her Nikon Coolpix P500 out of an over-sized handbag or bicycle bag just about anywhere, even at the local Biergarten. Prost!
- **Dorothee Lang** is a writer, web freelancer and traveler, and the editor of *BluePrintReview*. She lives in Germany, keeps a sky diary, and always was fascinated by languages, roads and the world, themes that reflect in her own work. For more about her, visit her at blueprint21.de.
- **Maude Larke** lives in Dijon, France. She has come back to her own writing after a career in the American, English and French university systems, analyzing others' texts and films. She has also returned to the classical music world as an ardent amateur, after fifteen years of piano and voice in her youth. She has several short stories and poems, three novels, and two screenplays to offer so far. Publications include *Naugatuck River Review*, *Cyclamens and Swords*, *riverbabble*, *Doorknobs and BodyPaint*, *Sketchbook*, *Cliterature*, *Short, Fast, and Deadly*, and *The Centrifugal Eye*.
- **Doug Mathewson** is a mutt-faced fellow who imagines he lives in an ancient Gothic tower that looming high over bleak northern sea. In reality he lives in coastal Connecticut and spends his time at Full of Crow Press and Distribution. He is the editor of www.blink-ink.com, and a contributing editor of the street zine *MUST*. He also melts crayons on his radiators and dares to call it art.

- **Colleen McKee** is the author of two collections of poetry, *My Hot Little Tomato* and *A Partial List of Things I Have Done for Money*. She is also co-editor of a collection of personal narratives, *Are We Feeling Better Yet? Women Speak About Health Care in America*. She lives in Oakland, CA and teaches at the Academy of Art. She enjoys aimless wandering, pointless chattering, and watching the movements of insects. She does much of her writing on trains. You may visit her at colleenmckee.blogspot.com, or read her poems about rivers and spies at elevenelevenjournal.com.
- **Neila Mezynski** is author of *Glimpses from Scrambler Books*, a pamphlet from Greying Ghost Press, chapbooks from Patasola Press and Radioactive Moat Press (Jan 2012) and chapbooks from Folded Word Press (Jan 2012), Mud Luscious Press and Deadly Chap Press.
- **Mark Mitchell** studied writing at UC Santa Cruz under Raymond Carver, George Hitchcock and Barbara Hull. His work has appeared in various periodicals over the last thirty five years, as well as the anthologies *Good Poems*, *American Places*, *Hunger Enough*, and *Line Drives*. He lives in San Francisco with his wife, the film maker Joan Juster. Currently he's seeking gainful employment since poets are born and not paid.
- **George Moore's** fourth collection of poems, *Children's Drawings of the Universe*, will be published by Salmon Poetry Ltd. in 2012. His work has appeared in *The Atlantic*, *Poetry*, *Antigonish Review*, *Dublin Quarterly*, *North American Review*, *Colorado Review*, and *Blast*. Nominated in the last year for Pushcart Prizes, Best of Web and Best of the Net awards, The Rhysling Poetry Award and the Wolfson Poetry Prize, Moore teaches at the University of Colorado, Boulder. His website, with links to publications, is: <http://spot.colorado.edu/~mooreg/Site/About.html>.
- **Matthew Zanoni Müller** was born in Bochum, Germany and grew up in Eugene, Oregon and Upstate New York. He received his MFA from Warren Wilson's MFA Program for Writers and teaches at his local Community College. His work has appeared in various magazines and journals. To learn more about his writing, please visit: www.matthewzanonimuller.com
- **B. Z. Niditch** is a poet, playwright, fiction writer and teacher. His work is widely published in journals and magazines throughout the world, including: *Columbia: A Magazine of Poetry and Art*; *The Literary Review*; *Denver Quarterly*; *Hawaii Review*; *Le Guepard* (France); *Kadmos* (France); *Prism International*; *Jejune* (Czech Republic); *Leopold Bloom* (Budapest); *Antioch Review*; and *Prairie Schooner*, among others. He lives in Brookline, Massachusetts.

- **Mather Schneider** is a 42 year old taxi driver. He was born in Peoria, Illinois and now lives in Tucson, Arizona. He has 2 full length books available http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=Mather+Schneider and has had hundreds of poems and stories published in the small press since 1993.
- **Gita Smith** experienced indescribable joy when, as a small child, she was warmly praised for her writing. In true Skinnerian fashion, she keeps pushing the lever with the hope of more rewards. She knows Canada is a saner country, but she lives in Alabama with her artist husband, Mike Handley. She blogs at: <http://ohfinejustfine.blogspot.com>
- **Michael J. Solender** is the author of the short story and poetry chapbook, *Last Winter's Leaves*, published by Full of Crow Press. His essay, *Unaffiliated*, is featured in the anthology, *Topograph: New Writings From The Carolinas and the Landscape Beyond*, published by Novello Festival Press. His crime/noir drama, *Pewter Badge* won the 2011 Derringer Award for Best Mystery Short Story and he is a two-time Pushcart Award nominee. He is the [City Life Editor for Charlotte Viewpoint](#) and his work is found at michaeljwrites.com and his blog, [NOT FROM HERE, ARE YOU?](#)
- **Eric Suhem** lives in California and enjoys the qualities of his vegetable juicer. He can be found in the orange hallway (www.orangehallway.com)
- **Andrew Topel** does really cool work.
- **Linda Simoni-Wastila** crunches numbers by day and churns words at night. Her writing explores health, in particular the societal and personal facets of medication and medicating. You can find her poems and stories in *The Sun*, *Thunderclap!*, *Monkeybicycle*, *Eclectic Flash*, *Pure Slush*, *Every Day Fiction*, *Blue Fifth Review*, *Tattoo Highway*, *Camroc Press Review*, *Right Hand Pointing*, *Blueprint Review*, *Istanbul Literary Review*, *The Shine Journal*, and *Boston Literary Magazine*, among others. She lives and loves and mothers in Baltimore, a town where her Northern birthright and Southern breeding comfortably comeingle. You can find her online at <http://linda-leftbrainwrite.blogspot.com>.

