

OpenDoor magazine

YOUR WORDS MATTER.



NOSTALGIA WITH

COLIN BUTCHER

Memories of yesterday

Freddie's fish finger

BOOKS TO READ!

AUTHOR

FEATURES

WELCOME TO THE OPENDOOR MAGAZINE JUNE ISSUE!

Without our memories, who are we? How do we know the actions of the present and future without remembering the past. At times painful, at other times with love. Our Yesterday theme represents any moments from the day before today to far in the past.

We are so excited to see what Yesterday means to our different contributors. The theme was inspired due to one past contributor, Colin Butcher, letting us know that he found his poetry written years before. It inspired him to share with us and us to share with the world. Please find his work as an intro to our theme section this month!

We continue to get more submissions each month and we are so thrilled and honored to continue to get and be trusted with your words. If we could, we would choose everyone and every piece. It is heartbreaking that we can't. But we ask that if you submit and are not selected – please keep submitting and sharing. Even if you aren't selected for a specific episode – your words don't matter any less.

Thank you for continuing to share our magazine with your friends and family and allowing our audience to keep growing.

- Kassie & Mel

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IN THIS ISSUE

YESTERDAY ISSUE

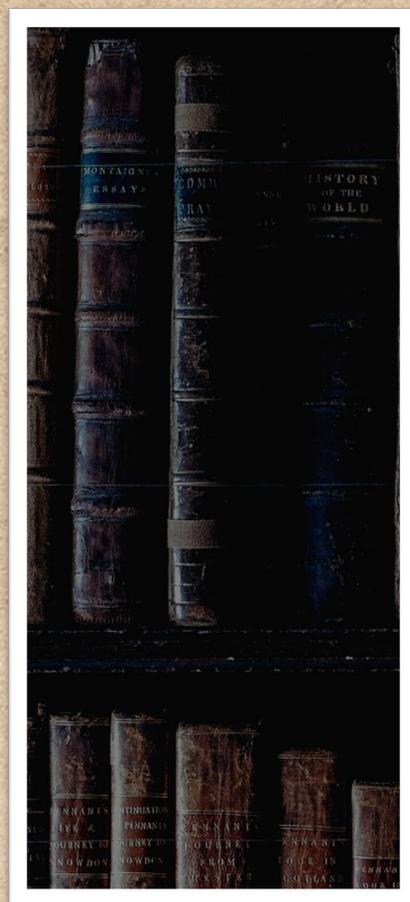
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What are
our co-owners
up to?



KASSIE J RUNYAN

Co-Creator



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https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvSEcLEfE196OE_Ya2LNNN3kjFp82Ktt2

ONE WEEK A YEAR

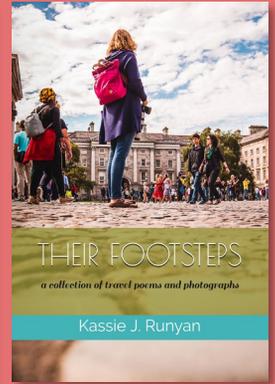
the sun is setting
in hues of purple and red.
your thin legs fold up
underneath your body,
trying to stay warm
in the cooling evening air.
it's hard to remember just
how your skin burned
earlier today
under the blazing sun
as you ran full speed
down the old wooden dock.
it creaked beneath your small weight
before you launched awkwardly into the water
trying to cool off.
dunking quickly under
just before your brother dove in
laughing and splashing.
mom looking up from her book,
the third one this week,
as she lay catching the rays of the sun
on the other end of the old dock.
looking anything but awkward,
a smile curling up the edges of her lips
that were spotted by summer freckles.
now the summer heat, a memory
as you push closer to the dying fire,
trying to stay warm.

KASSIE J RUNYAN – CO-CREATOR

licking the stickiness from your fingers,
the remains of melted marshmallow
that was cooked crisp over
the previously orange flames.
something buzzes by your ear and
you swat at the air
trying to shoo it away.
your eyes grow heavy
from content exhaustion.
i watch you from your future,
remembering the summer nights.
the promised week each year
where i felt more happy and childlike
than any other week.
i watch my young self
drift to sleep
in the memory of the past
just before dad leans over and lifts you
like you are nothing more than a doll.
snuggle in his arms
while he takes you to the safety inside
the small cabin
that sits next to the dying fire.
a loon coos in the distance.
you drift to sleep...
and dream
of what would come tomorrow.
where you will create more memories
just like this
to last the rest of your life.



**Purchase your
copy of This is
2020 [HERE!](#)**



**Purchase your copy
of Their Footsteps
[HERE!](#)**



**NEW BOOK!
This is 2020 Part Two [HERE!](#)**

MEL HAAGMAN

Co-Creator

WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM LIFE?

What do you want from life?

To be heard and understood.

What do you want to do?

Just be interpreted as good.

How do you want to be?

Calm, happy and true,

Not question every action,

Approach each day brand new.

Where do you see yourself?

Anywhere I feel at home,

What do you wish the most?

To never feel alone.

Are you happy right now?

It varies day to day,

Do you have any regrets?



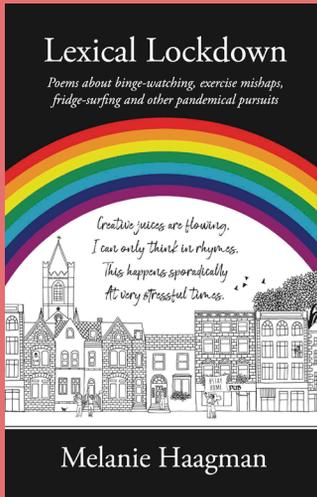
<https://www.Facebook.com/girlontheedge90>

<https://www.Instagram.com/girlontheedge90>

<https://www.Twitter.com/girlontheedge1>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjh8b4Y7gSFGKewzPKZH8lw>

MEL HAAGMAN – CO-CREATOR



**Purchase your copy of
Lexical Lockdown [HERE!](#)**



**Purchase your copy of Open
Heart Poetry [HERE!](#)**

I do but cannot say.
What do you deem as strength?
To be self-assured and bold,
How long do you want to live?
Until I'm very old.
Can money buy you happiness?
No, but it stops a lot of stress,
Unless you are free soul,
I'm not, I must confess.
What wisdom have you got?
To know things always improve,
When frozen with grief and pain,
You'll soon learn how to move.
What do you fear the most?
To be misunderstood,
To lack the tact I need,
To make the point I should.
When do you write the most?
When strong emotions pour,
The ones you can't keep inside,
Because they really roar.
Where is your favourite place?
In my dreams, the peace they bring,
And when I'm with the ones I love,
Who give me everything...

MY TEENAGE GRANDMOTHER

BY PHYLISS MERION SHANKEN

My little bitty slip of a grandmother giggled every single time she described her gorgeous eleventh-grade English teacher, Mr. Phillips. Now seventy years later, it was as if teenage Grammy had been caught in a time capsule and was just now emerging from a romantic dream.

Within the crowded classroom, Grammy — actually fifteen-year-old, chunky Gertrude —not the scrunched up old lady we were afraid we'd crush whenever we hugged her —had been assigned a seat that almost hugged the blackboard, with not much space between her desk and the bulletined wall.

In front of the class, Mr. Phillips, frequently leaned against Grammy's desk. The old lady, well, I mean, the young girl in question, was situated half-way below the tall man and in front of his mid section, his trouser zipper on display directly in front of her eyes. Grammy — her nickname was Gerty back then —studied the forbidden spectacle as if the tines of his fly were braces on crooked teeth.

Sometimes Mr. Phillips rested his chalky fingers on the edge of her desk, to balance himself, while she quietly sighed and tried to control her body's eruption of goosebumps. Most of the time, young Grammy forced herself to peer fixedly upward into his face, so he wouldn't catch on that she had been studying the forbidden terrain.

She repositioned her tabooed gaze toward his full, ruddy lips, and clenched her jaw muscles to camouflage her constant expression of "O". Gerty worked overtime to not "make eyes at him".

The original Grammy, that is, young Gerty, constantly ruminated as to why she had been planted in that exact spot in front of her well-built teacher. She had her theories, which she played out immediately before falling asleep. Gerty tittered aloud, her heart fluttering over the image of adorable Mr. Phillips, the Hollywood movie star: *Gerty and Mr. Phillips waltz around the dance floor like Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Mr. Phillips swoons, then suddenly stops to have a better look at her. He gently lifts her face with his hands and recites the inevitable: You are the most beautiful girl in the world!*

No doubt about it: Mr. Phillips had decided her desk should be placed in that location precisely because he was in love with her...

But Gerty was to learn that wishes don't automatically make dreams come true. This awakening was probably the reason she declined to offer us any follow-up to the story. We never learned anything further about Mr. Phillips...

So, why did *Old Grammy* repeatedly tell us this story about *Young Grammy*? Maybe she wanted us to finally acknowledge that she was once a young person — an impossibility in our minds.

More than once, and only after Grandpa died, she related the blushing tale to my brother and me, “Did I ever tell you about my crush on Mr. Phillips, my eleventh-grade teacher?”

“Yes, Grammy, you told us last Saturday.”

“No! It’s been my secret. I never uttered a word to anyone!”

“Sure, Grammy! Whatever you say!”

We had seen her old-time wedding picture when Grammy couldn’t have been much older than the high school girl with the fairy-tale love affair.

“Tell us, Grammy. What happened after Mr. Phillips was no longer your teacher?”

“Oh, nothing happened. I was innocent. Don’t tell my Daddy. He would kill me if he ever heard me say it!”

“But after you married Grandpa, did you daydream about Mr. Phillips?”

“Of course not. I was a good girl.”

Then Grammy’s face turned all shiny and red. For just a moment, we could almost imagine her as young and plump Gerty rather than the shrunken grandmother who sat in the cushioned, worn-out chair by the window.

It was like a time warp but too dissonant for us to fathom, given the wrinkly Grammy we were studying at this very moment.

We didn’t let on one way or another as to whether we believed or doubted her, but each of us, on our own, silently mused over the notion that any part of her account could have been true. We looked at each other, telepathically reading the other one’s eyes.

As if in a conspiracy, we simultaneously spewed forth our verdict : “Nah!”

Fortunately, Grammy didn’t hear our refrain because she had lost her hearing-aids that very morning.

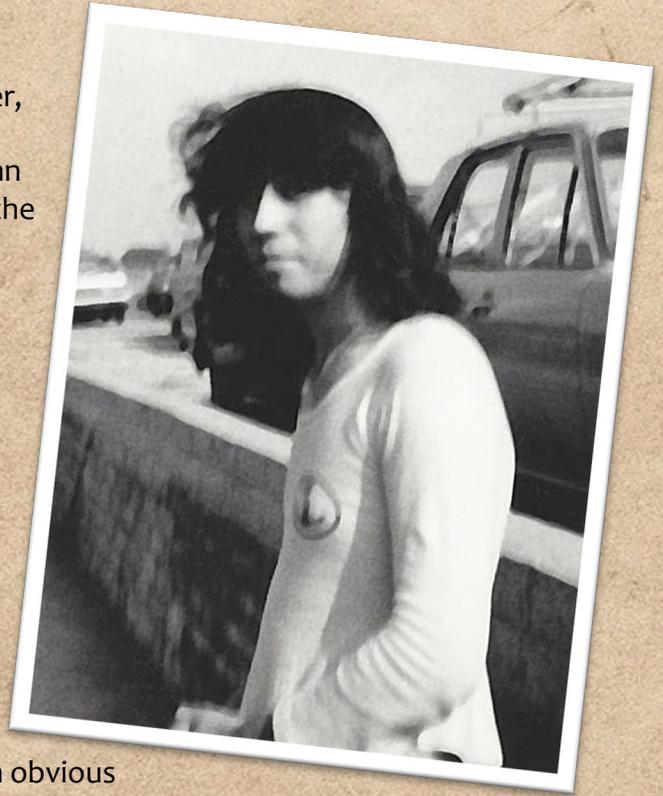
Words from
yesterday...



NOSTALGIA

By Colin Butcher

I first began to write poetry way back in the 1970's, when as a scruffy long-haired teenager, I was introduced to Thom Gunn, Ted Hughes, Dylan Thomas, Roger McGough and even John Betjeman, as well as the traditional poets of the romantic age, Tennyson, Barrett, Browning, Keats, Shelley and William Blake, which had been dunned into me from the age of 7. This new subversive incursion led me to Auden, Masfield, the war poetry of Sassoon, Rupert Brooke, et al and even the new breed of poets, such as the Barrow Poets and Ivor Cutler. This whole miscellany of fresh inspirational "noise" led me to try tentatively to write my own verse. The collection here is from the period, then it was fresh and sparky and naive, with schoolboy errors and a wanton disregard for form and span. However, it is mine and I offer it "as is". Some has been amended with obvious spelling errors corrected, but it is 100% me. It's funny how some of the poems I can remember vividly how they were written and when, others I think, did I do that? What was I thinking?



So here they are; join me a dip into the pool of nostalgia, to the days of carefree living, no mortgage, no children at times even no girlfriend. The days following decimalization, but before the three-day week. Before College, Poly's and Uni, before work and the weight of the daily grind.

Poem for a book

Hello book, I'm back again!
Ready and eager,
Greedy fumbling for you, slipping, "Oh so roughly" inside you.

Dipping, tripping, ringing a passage, flipping a page.
Carelessly bending the binding.

Sorry book,
I'm so used to doing it to people.

NOSTALGIA By Colin Butcher

The poem on a wall

I saw a poem on a wall,
Normally, of course, I wouldn't notice,
But something made me look.
I tried to imagine who he was, maybe it was a
she.
Whoever it was, must have been an exceptional
artist.
Now that is real talent; so expertly painted,
It really was.
Perhaps, perhaps it's a new craze?
Well, it makes a change, it certainly beats
Dave4JuneOK.

Dear St Peter

My heart gave out on me, last Saturday, yes it
must be.
It took quite a while for me to realise, you know
how it is?
Anyway, I thought I'd better lie down. Eventually
I decided, well what else could I do? Basically, it's
why I'm here, can I come in please?

Raincloud

My own personal raincloud seems to follow me
about. No matter where I go, it's there.
Sometimes I feel like doing something to it. Pull
its woolly tail, prod it with a broom, a well aimed
rock or two. Oh, I know it wouldn't work; it'd be
back. Probably bringing a couple of friends,
Imagine that?
My own personal rainstorm...
Where's the broom.

Winter

Wild windless whirling dog, day, grieves, silently
sorrowful for the running cat silent night,
playfully rolling the skein of wool earth over
endlessly. Suddenly pouncing, night reaches out,
clawing day into the agonising might of winter.

Saturday

Plane screams, dawn flight, skywards into the
blue.
Down below, wakes another weekend; rising to
another cornflake and toast crunching, football
and beer swilling, sing-along Saturday.

And you go to work, and I,
I wait,
Why?
Because it's Saturday.

Day

Kidnap quiet, the soft pad of latent dawn, steals
headlong into the overburdened night.
Flowing, panther soft, around nights comforting
cloak.
Noiseless as a burglar, soft as a sunbeam. Dawns
token early light slowly glimmers, before
bursting loudly into sight.

Sun slowly soft, tracing taught arcs. Safe from
astral games. Burning celestial fingers reach with
warming flames.

NOSTALGIA By Colin Butcher

Peace

Soft safety, afforded by your breast, leaves me
sleeping, catnap quiet, in your presence. Home
in my Dreams.

A Reason

The poetry you give,
Is not the poetry of words.
It is the poetry of your heart.

Seven Weeks

Seven weeks tomorrow, my lady sighed, seven
whole weeks by your side.
I smile a smile.
Blush a blush.
Taking time, no hurry, no rush.
We sigh a sigh,
I held a hand,
Wandering on in wonderland.
Seven weeks tomorrow, I smile in reply.
Seven whole weeks, you and I.

Pawns

Life is like a game of chess,
With human souls at stake.
For only two moves remain
And both will lead to mate.

Mirror Mirror

Indulging, by reference to none,
Only adds to the pleasure and fun.
But the only way, to really say,
What's to be said,
in a way, that will not offend,
Can't be done.

Life below Kelvin

To take a 10p scenic ride,
Across the artice wastes of your mind.
To find a way to explain,
No! To reason.
Satisfy my curiosity,
Settle my doubts.
Can I be the odd one who's out.

Gripped in a numbing pain,
Life below Kelvin.
I may be fast, but my response is slow,
I wasted time, towed no line.
Still, I was wrong.
I agree.

My morbid curiosity satisfied.
I've travelled across your finite bounds. Explored
your inner space.
See, tragedies tear, worn once only, on your
face.

Was I really justified in two faced lies?
I accept no blame, I hold no ties.
I respected you, well once upon a time.

***k

A million murmured meanings,
Wrap'd in a sea of time,
Seven separate seasons,
Traveling in a line.
Two trusted tenses,
Repeated line by line.
One twisted mind,
Such a pity it doesn't rhyme.

NOSTALGIA By Colin Butcher

Starship

Soft sloe-eyed nocturnal star,
Feels a starship glistening by.
Who can tell the thoughts of your Cyclopean
eye.

Hypodermic probe, speed of sound, travels
parallel to unseen bands.
Inside your soul, a pilot feels for your promised
land.

Skipping through the sea of space,
Hydroxyl stream your only trace.
Not for you a stagnant Earth,
Carry your seeds to a new death.

Slowly sliding, heeling, dipping,
See a new moon, orbit gripping.
Tender touch, tacit trembling.
Life's new dawn is slowly ending.

I
A thought, a reason.
Unsure?
Why?
No Worry,
because?
Just because... I

I-2
The painted clown rose to be,
Something we all could see.
But no-one listened at all to me.
For they'd all slipped away.

Clapham hands

Nothing happens in Clapham,
But in Montmartre, well
That's the naughty partre.
I wish to be in gay Paree,
Instead,
I'm in bed,
In Clapham

Veldt

Tiger stood,
Sharp,
Sleek,
Flared nostril seeking, sensing,
Coiled compact, body carefully walking,
Pace amended by eye, alert now.
The final bounce, springs, bringing
antelope preying death.
Nurtured now by food, dozes, beside a wide
silken stream.

Where

An Elephant wallowed, wading innocent
mammoth. Trunk showering cool water. Hide
creased and rutted, scoured by time.
Water drips off of the armoured sides.
Lumbering through the ooze, back to the bank,
hardly disturbing,

The lazy, wrinkled, sleepless crocodile, eyes
wide, log-like it slides into the stream, beginning
to drift. Daydreaming of;

Juicy Antelope

Straying Gazelle Tender young
Wilbebeeste

Tall Giraffe

Even now, picking, skyscraper tall,
Succulent immature leaves, joints splayed,
smooth coated, then hoofing lightly over the
Veldt.

NOSTALGIA By Colin Butcher

Home sweet Home

Stunned silence followed the flow,
Startled statues, faces aglow.
Disbelief first footing without cheer,
The news too garbled, unsound, unclear.
Partisan proud, soft stumbling, the parents
numbly gawk,
The lovers wishing they'd gone for a walk.
But now is the hour, the price to pay,
"Mum, Dad, there's a baby on the way."

My God

Melancholy moods swept away,
On an oceanless tidal wave,
Brightest day on darkest night,
An insight into the inner light.
The coldness creeping as the gloom
Leaves only a figured room.
Floating motions of the tongue,
seek for the long-lost son.

Short Story

I think I'll go on back,
to the land of story time,
To mice and chocolate bars,
Princesses and dragons winged.
This is the way it is,
How it must always be,
I can't say I want you,
Do you really want me?
You say you'll give me pleasure, a place to store
my trust.
Your life and dreams are like an iron bar,
Dissolving into rust.

Metamorphosis

To give it one more try,
To laugh before I cry.
Must I always play to win? Will I sink before I
swim?
Metamorphosis, they assured me, can change an
identity, but can identity change me?

I smell with tears of rage,
I read, as none, a page.
Is He to blame for me?
Or am I alone justly?
How can I see fair play,
Is a rainbow tuned to A.

They say no tears can lie,
I may laugh, or I may sigh,
Is all Life just a change?
If so, then spread the word,
I trust and I am absurd.
I can only, of desire,
Free my mind
And as all your kind despair,

I change.

Homage

I dreamed of you,
clothed in a thousand twinkling hues,
Radiant as only you know how.
Swanlike among lesser beings,
That you should turn to me.
I crave but one brief smile,
wish for your very bidding.
Smile, show the birds the reason for song.
I humbly walk behind, your servant, shield and
guide.

NOSTALGIA By Colin Butcher

Thoughts

It takes two to decide, but one to lead.
It takes one to fly, but leaves two to grieve.

One plus one is two,
But that's a dangerous game.
For one plus one adds another one,
Again and again and again.

Wisdom is like insanity,
It seldom follows a pattern.

It's not civilisations destiny to be a whole,
Merely an interpretation of this.

The price of coal put us on the dole,
The price of bread will leave some dead.

Peace is the salary of life.
For contentment you've got to work overtime.

Waiting

Anticipation,
Elation,
Dawn brings the feeling of truth.
Can it last?
Time will tell,
Let's dream on,
For what of the world.
Leave them to their own devices.
Love is stronger than society,
And never so base as their coinage.

Almost entirely Friday

Face appeared, eyes wide in the dark.
Haunting her window, preying on the light.
The dying rays, the stray rays, curtained and
veiled rays, leering in the shadows.
Slavering in the ink black night.
Saw her,
Pawed her,
Enjoyed her.
Gutters down the street, swims past lamplight
lagoons of light.
Echoes dreams,
Satanic screams.
In rusted lust, the voyeur waits alone,
Until tonight.

A Venture

It was,
Ultimately a business transaction,
Money down,
Delivery on cash.
Half a pint and a vodka.
"Just to liven things up eh?"
Joke!

Her room,
Something died in the aftermath.
New deals, other lives, more customers,
busy day.
Futile embarrassment at the fumbled goodbyes.
Dazed by the daylight.
Setting sun memories and an unmade bed,
almost a trademark.
"Millions of satisfied customers."
Makes a great Neon,
"Still no time to lose,"
All's fare in lust and whores.

NOSTALGIA By Colin Butcher

Train-ing

Inter City Man.
Newspaper broad backside, cramped,
Within the confines of your First Class world.
Smug, among your season ticket cronies.
Snapshots of your Times and Telegraph bred
babies,
your privately educated, Eton equal friends and
Spain '74
The suburban Sultan,
Pride of a dozen semi's.
Among the no hawkers, no circulars, beware of
the dog, proud avenues.

Seven AM alarm crashes the bacon and egg,
toast munching morning alive.
Pinstriped, bowlered, broolly waving, crumb
spatter, train, sprinting, Homo Regularus.
Reveling in your increment impotent mind.

Dream

I watch the rain fall fast
Cross the valleys of my mind.
Drifting back to days got e past,
Remembering things I never find.

Chastened by cathedral chimes
I brush past forgotten souls,
Wandering in a land of time,
To find my only goal.

Now watching, now waiting,
Slowly a light Vries.
Tis the morning of my soul
And you, my dawn, arise.

Night

Bleak peaks sweep strangely past,
Silent smug, snuggling safe soft.
Crows cawed, cackling, crowing.
Trees tripped, tinkling tapping.
Snow sang.
Frost frolicked.
Rain ran.
Horses hoofed.
Sheep slept.
Owls howled.
Softly sighing, slowly slipping,
sunken Souls sang of the Night.

The Gift

Giving comes from the heart,
Not the purse.
Caring comes from the mind,
But the heart makes it work.
Loving lives in the soul,
For better or for worse.

Neuron

Truth, a badge of office, lies behind my mocking
gaze.
Sanity answers, satisfied.
I can give no love,
I feel only pain.
Past events, like a conveyor belt,
Pass by, in my mind.
I love, was loved, can love.
Who but my mind knows me?
Will I even lie to you?
If so, I am not worth the basest feeling of care.
Throw me to the furnace of life.
I have grown, will grow.
Because I love?
Only you know, tell me?
Let me into the haven of my mind.
I cry in the pit of my soul.
For lost innocence or lost love?
Who but you can tell,
For I cannot.

NOSTALGIA By Colin Butcher

Social Security

Dusty coat, evil eyes,
A bottle will anaesthetize.
Just a fag, a gobbing grunt,
Spilled your guts all down your front.

You revolt, you have no care,
Park bench sofa, easy chair.
Lift your soul, a plate of food,
Hide your head, your manners crude.
Lying in a pile so neat,
Lying dead at someone's feet.
Curse this world, for you no care.
Curse those bastards for being there.

Earth Seeker

Rambling broken, rotted with age,
A stinking hulk, of incalculable sage.
Once wise, wisest of three,
can I direct you, I cannot see.
Help for you ended ages past.
Help for me comes far too fast.

Seek on seeker, seek thy doom,
Perish, as we must, in your tomb.
Sigh as you slip away.
Sigh for life this earthly day.

For when the seeker finally falls,
Wait for the sound as heaven calls.
The seeker was the one who palls,
The seeker is you, the overlord.

Seagull

Seagull, winging skywards, cross my sky.
Tell me, why do oceans sigh?
Do they sigh, as I, for a faraway ghost?
The ghost of my love, for she is many leagues
hence.
Electronics, beamed, wired, amplified,
Cannot compare to the natural splendour, heard
with my ears, as my eyes gaze faraway towards
her.

Seagull, splendour of oceans, compare it thus, to
my own serene sea.
The tides of her arms gather and recede,
the waves of her mind, crash in my head.
The deep sea pools of her eyes, reflect her love.
As she nurtures her own sea harvest of dreams.

Darling

Smile, sweetly, gently sway,
Sideslipping years pass away.
Dream of the future, so do I.
Dream of a partner, you or I.
A dream harms no one, nor will I,
Let me stay, for you I'd die.

Midnight flight

Sadly absurd, the vistas of indulgent Pattered
poets, paternal son, henceforth decrees; Pay the
Piper, serve the bill. Give your due, as Shelleys
ghost quivers.
A winged pigeon carried the sacred burning
branch, neither the poet, nor his son, can handle
so solitary a duo.

NOSTALGIA By Colin Butcher

Interlude

A sense of devastation has entered my room,
since you left this morning. I found your left sock
on the floor, your ring and bracelet too. Funny
how personal they become.

I keep expecting you, through the door, nightie
nestling round your legs. Smiling and bouncing
into bed. It's a pity we don't... but there you go.
It's something to look forward to.

Remember our holiday conversations, face to
face, inquisitive, not a rude thought, or
advantage, taken. Mind you... Well you know
what I said this morning, well just enough to
make you sleepy anyway.

Love is...

Waiting,
Seeking,
Feeling,
Trusting,
Knowing,
Understanding,
Security.

The age of reason

Steps lightly across the river, into the forest of
the world.

Tentative ten-toed footsteps, echo into the
magma.

Gaily first footing, the error of her ways.

Who'd be a Teacher at Christmas

Johnny said, "My Daddies dead, but Santa's on
his way."

Whatever can I say?

"Dead?"

"In Heaven."

Walks to the door,

"But!"

Smiles,

"Mum says if I'm good, I'll get a new daddy one
day.

Do you think Santa will bring me one?"

Frowns, rushes off,

"Oh Johnny, Johnny, Santa's dead too."

Seasons

Low sweet songbird sings, high melodic
motions.

Touching tender, the sad sunset of the hills.

Passions passed, in splendid gold.

Seasons virtues, all are told.

Summer passes, as the moon Winters tricks
betray.



Come
together

June Theme: Yesterday

MULTIPLE AUTHORS

RECALLING MEMORIES

Dimithri Wijerathna

Sri Lanka

On a lazy sunset noon; recalling
memories whirl up the mind
the fairytales you chattered with sweet wine
the sandcastles we built up; with shining sand
matters most with nostalgia
your blinking eyes recall our "secrets"
seashells collected; with bonds of promises
the fragrance of you; still up in the air
it was "Yesterday" we attached to our hearts

THE TENANT'S FARMHOUSE 1908

Antoni Ooto

United States

<http://www.ooto.org/blog/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/antonioto>

With windows open,
the smell of manure from the tie-up
passing; an accustomed announcement of
hardship through bad times.
It spoke for all who slept there, and an acceptance
of those who express pain by shrugging
shoulders.

Poverty— a sore they wore, had only a few
words.

I have little value,
but I always show up.

PORTRAIT: MAMA OCCLLO HUACO, FIRST COYA

Catherine Lee

United States

<https://catherinelee-65222.medium.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Jazz-Ovation-Inn-207063645983338/>

<https://soundcloud.com/jazz-cat-lee>

<https://vimeo.com/jazzovation>

She wears alpaca wool against Andean chill, layers of handwoven *melkkhay* skirts. Unique Peruvian genealogy is told, anonymously painted, worn as patterned prayers embroidered into *puyuta* bands. Her richness, village residence is known by how she wears her headdress, wields her power. Daughter of the Moon, portrayed as Spanish royalty, is she goddess, queen, or consort? All, or which, depends upon who postulates her genesis. Unknowing *conquistadors* tell theirs in masquerade. She does not carry food, nor warm her baby boy, in *K'eperina* shawl, but bears in *tupo* pin a scepter, mirror of her mama's face. Smug, smiling, burly youngster shelters her, this Mother, who lives to gossip his maturing personage to leadership, distorted Old World vision of intrigue awakens.

<http://nationalclothing.org/america/27-peru/31-peruvian-national-costume-woven-clothing-from-alpaca-wool,-unique-patterns-and-bright-colors.html>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pollera#/media/File:Pollera_d_e_Pomabamba.jpg

http://www.myperu.org/traditional_clothing_peru.html

<https://theculturetrip.com/south-america/peru/articles/a-brief-history-of-traditional-cusco-dress/>

I REMEMBER YESTERDAY

Julie A. Dickson

United States

<https://www.facebook.com/julie.dickson.94/>

Once I sat with glee on Grandfather's knee
as he told me stories of yesterdays
I listened intently and then inquired,
"Yes, but do remember tomorrow?"

He smiled a knowing grin at me, a child.
Thoughtfully he pondered and finally spoke,
"Tomorrow will be a time to wander."
Grandfather wove me a yarn of intrigue.

My eyes opened wide, and I could not hide
the surprise at hearing what life might bring.
"You'll grow and learn, perhaps even explore
far off lands where mountains touch the sea."

Shifted my eyes to a window, I drifted.
I'd journey to the north to see glaciers
or south to Galapagos to find turtles;
I turned back to hear his tales of Mexico.

Years have progressed since Grandfather professed
his wisdom, dancing eyes opening paths
I did not follow, never saw his mountains;
Galapagos turtles long forgotten.

Reading to my son, leading him through geography,
to ask me questions – we explored maps.
my thoughts returned to Grandfather's stories,
Places like Mexico I'd never gone to see.

We talked over the atlas of far-off lands; my son
asked,
"Do you remember tomorrow?"
I saw my Grandfather's smiling hazel eyes and
hoped my son would see his mountains.

UNFORGOTTEN

Kathleen Chamberlin

United States

It's not hard to close your eyes
And find yourself a child again
Small and insignificant
In a world of adult voices
Carrying on conversations
Literally and figuratively
Above your head.
Someone asked me once
What my earliest recollection was
There are three or four
I don't know which came first.
All are of the apartment my parents had
In Astoria, where they and I
And my brother were born.
The apartment was at the end of a
hallway
On the right-hand side
Of the first floor
The kitchen sink was a large white
porcelain farm sink.
It doubled as my tub
Sitting in it, I listened to the comic strips
Read aloud: Blondie, Lil Abner, the
Katzenjammer Kids
joined Prince Valiant, Dick Tracy, and
Little Orphan Annie
While my mother scrubbed my back and
washed my hair.
Our two cribs were on either side of my
parents' bed.
One night,, when we refused to go to
sleep,
My grandmother threatened to leave us
alone
If we didn't stop taking.

We didn't. She did.
Or so we thought as she walked
Loudly to the door, opened it and shut it.
My brother cried but I was unafraid
Telling him we'd be safe in our cribs
Until our parents came home.
Discipline was different then.
Traumatized children wasn't even a
remote concept.
I can still recall my grandmother's voice
And the smell of the food we ate.
I spent the first four years of my life
there.
I don't remember many things, but I have
seen the photographs
Black and white and gray and glossy.
I remember Steinway Street and the
walks on
Sunday afternoons, window shopping
after midday lunch.
On quiet evenings in summer's soft
breezes
Or in winter's shrill howl,
Something will remind me of what my life
was
What used to be
What remains somewhere I suppose
In an incomprehensible universe
Time may be a continuous loop
Where my family lives in the places I
remember
Eats those Sunday meals after church
Hears those dear voices
Stilled now for decades.

IT'S THE GLOWING LIGHTS I REMEMBER FIRST

T J Barnum

the way they sparkled in a semi-lucent ball
around each streetlamp soft rain-spattered dirt
steam rising from hot sidewalks in the dusk
horns blaring spray from impatient cars

too late for our shoes we hugged the shops
hoping to spare our jeans water dripped
down the sides of our faces and we
shook it from our hair like dogs

in and out of shops we followed a steady
flow of people aroma of alcohol and coffee
you held doors for me dim lights in local eateries
good beer soft jazz overpriced sandwiches

then the long walk-through sweltering streets
everything damp and strange from infrequent rain
laughter from hard partiers I'm waylaid
by a bedraggled mongrel matted fur weighed down
by rain and abuse the dog too frightened to come near
we were quiet after that I was slightly drunk and sad
you squeezed my hand until I could find my way through
thoughts of abandoned animals abandoned people

after town center we walked faster porch lights
shining on painted doors gloom surrounding dark houses
as if civilization ended a mile back with honking horns
and drunken laughter in bars

then we were walking on the cracked sidewalk
up to my bright red door light shining
from the stairwell window we stepped into cool dry air
removed wet shoes I brought you a towel
you found two beers in the fridge

I remember we stood in my tiny kitchen
just looking at each other then you reached for me

the full beers gone flat sat on the kitchen counter
the next morning

WHEN LIGHT FALLS ON A PHOTOSENSITIVE SURFACE

**Janette Ostle
United Kingdom**

Half-filled pages
of time-worn photographs;
cherished images
in monochrome
capture the colour
she needs
to remember.

SWEET MEMORIES OF YESTERDAY

**Kathy Jo Bryant
United States**

Sweet memories of yesterday
How they in my mind, replay
Now I keep them in my heart
And never let them e'er depart

Simple childhood pleasures grand
Are flowers fragrant, in my hand
Stamped forever upon my mind
Are the precious moments of past time

Stories I remember well
That happened long ago, I'll tell
I hold them dear, and always will
Circling my mind, like a merry windmill!

I REMEMBER YOU.

Keith Phillips

United Kingdom

when i was little. i remember you. and some of the things that you used to do,
we would play "buckaroo" and you were our horse... i would
hold your belt tight... but soon fall of course.

onto the pillows of the sofa, you made... you could make anything. that was your trade x
we all laughed so much and waited our turn...

each of us having energy to burn... you were so patient giving us go after go. the bucking would "stop" only
when mum had said so!!!

you took and gaz and me fishing for our very first time... two 'proud young anglers' preparing our lines x
we caught rudd and roach one after the other... it doesn't get better than this i said to my brother x
it was a day i will never forget we just kept on landing them, and half filled our net...
we both carried on fishing all through our lives... and our sons do it, so the family tradition still thrives x

going to work with you was always such fun... and that's were my being handy with tools had begun. now this is
a hammer "don't" hit your thumb!!

this is a saw. let "it" do the work... a nice steady rhythm. no do go berserk, that's why the blade is starting to
jerk.

you're not in a race... just take your time, it will come out just perfect.

ah there you go, looks exactly like mine x

i have vivid memories of the pram race... you and your friend colin "always" came in first place x
dressed up like babies and wearing a nappy x seeing you win it, always made me feel happy. from the red lion
pub. then to ten others, downing a pint pot in each and beating the others x
once i recall you throwing up... then you gathered yourself before lifting the cup x the trophy was yours when
you won it three times, i was boasting in class!! so, teacher gave me lines x

we both love our foot ball both playing and watching and playing, duck under the turnstile a can still hear you
saying.

you sneaked me in free quite un-ceremonial as we went to see alan mullerry's footballing testimonial.

an old england eleven against eleven old scots... the ref, i remember pointing to both penalty spots x

it was friendly but i didn't look that... against our old foes is always a scrap x

the holey grail was when you took me to wembley.

against switzerland... again, it was only a friendly.

that did not mater is saw kevin keegan can't remember the score , but i think it was even.

being played under floodlights was the high point for me... never seeing them before really filled me with glee x

riding the tube train with you, i think that was the best. we had to walk the rest of the way home, when we
hit hounslow west x

i have many memories together with you, dear old dad

mostly all happy not many are sad x

so, enjoy this poem that i've penned for you ,

this talent i have is also from you!

like many things that i poses , you gave them to me ... now you know the rest x

THE RATTLE OF THE DOOR

William Wren

Canada

<https://billwren.com/>

Some call it the wind but I know it is ghosts.
That clatter of plastic cups
spilling like dominoes onto the floor—
that's not the wind. That's Randy,
Randy always coming home drunk.

The rattle of the door, the endless rattle of
Marianne
who never was able to master the house key.
And the rustle you say is the wind in the drapes?
That's Grandma in her gown, because she was old
and just couldn't sleep so she wandered the house
looking in darkness for people she'd lost.
Looking for ghosts.

There's a very soft padding you're not sure you
hear.
That is your cat, the one you called Trixie
whom you loved with no reason, whom you loved
just because, and hasn't been with you for such a
long time.
She, too, is a ghost you think is the wind.

She isn't the wind. She is a ghost.
She's the sound of balled paper; a swish in the dark
that moves down the hall as you lie in your bed
trying to sleep. The sound of a cat as it plays in the
night.
It isn't the wind but the slipstream of ghosts;

currents of yesterday. Ghosts of those loves we
never forget.

Those loves that we loved and went into the night.
Those loves that we loved, who live in the wind.
In the rattle of the door. The rustle of drapes.
The clatter of cups that always is Randy coming
home drunk,
and the hardly-there padding of paws.

The swish of balled paper as it moves down the hall
when you can't get to sleep because you are old,
and that's very hard. Old is so lonely.
It is filled with those ghosts that some call the wind.

SAUDADE....

Madhu Gangopadhyay

India

<https://www.facebook.com/madhu.gangopadhyay>.

5

On that afternoon standing by the Sein
When the pale pink cherry blossoms swayed:
And the vernal breeze brushed against her cheeks.
She vacantly gazed at the Bateaux- Mouches
Submerged in the waves of saudade profuse!
How a place, a person, or an event,
Teleport one to a certain time frame!
And all those moments of the past
Stand in front and squarely cast:
An inexplicable feeling so intense and deep,
The desire to rewind those hours as reminiscence
seeps!
Sometimes an empty wrapper of chocolate
Can revive those cherished childhood bit!
The days of Noddy and Famous Five:
Into them the heart plummets and dives!
Those days of budding adolescence when Nancy
Drew was a constant friend!
The fervid desire for a Darcy or a Lochinver!
All those moments of impish fun and cheer!
How the yearning for yesteryears erects like a
mountain huge!
While listening to the most favourite songs, the
mind behaves and waltzes like a stooge!
At times, a novel may fly you back to your exotic
days
When melting in his arms, passion blazed.
Amazing how man engages himself where the days
of glory repose.
Time over time hopelessly for the lost hanker and
grope!

ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED

DS Maolalai

Ireland

<https://twitter.com/diarmo1990>

I feel life setting,
and very deliberately,
like a barge hooked against
a canal. the dirt
of the motors. the rising
of pondweed. the slow
cautious ingress
of rats. engaged
to be married. an apartment.
a dog. all things which,
younger, I said I'd
never do. this evening
I picked out
a font for invitations.
what ever became
of that courageous
young man?

YESTERDAY

LaVan Robinson

United States

<https://www.instagram.com/lalathepoet/>

<https://twitter.com/robinsonlavan1>

<https://lavanrobinson1968.wixsite.com/lalathepoet>

Today is pretty much just like yesterday as nothing much has changed. Racism, prejudice, and hatred against members of humanity continues to be the narrative of the life we chose to live. The senseless deprivation of resources and dreams to all is a travesty to the positive advancement of humanity. Yesterday like today is pretty much the same. Embattled citizens are taking it peacefully to the streets protesting this form of brutality. They are equally met with the same force imposing their validity. Members of a certain ethnic group, background, and skin are persecuted just like back then. Yes, today seems just like yesterday and it seems like nothing has changed. Political leaders still busy lying in the embittered citizens faces while behind closed doors in the sacred halls of justice devise laws mainly to oppress the inferior races. The same people that they consider inferior, they want to fight. Their wars have motives of evilness, subliminal, and ulterior. The same United States that flooded neighborhoods with the fire water and dope which broke up families and took away a whole generations' prosperity and hope. Yes, today, and yesterday are pretty much the same and nothing or little seems to have changed. There's so much in comparison to that of both yesterday and today. The solution to the problems is that we need to live together in love, peace, and unity. We need to forgive and move on to a better place and not end up in the never-ending stagnation and vortex of our yesterday.

NEXT FATHER'S DAY

Thomas Elson

United States

He handed the thick envelope to the man he had not seen in thirty years.

"Before Sunday. Agreed?"

"Yes. Agreed."

There, it's done.

He'd never have to buy another Fathers' Day card.

BROKEN LAUGHTER

Matt Cummings

United States

<https://trappedpoet.wordpress.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Trappedpoet/>

Sitting on the bench
Barren park beyond my view
The clearest picture I could see
Dying trees, scorched grass
I wanted to laugh although
It's the greatest pain I could feel
I found my soul, wandering around
I tried to ask, all I got was mocking-jay
The game is on again
My sanity or my emotion
Broken laughter
Tell me what's it like to survive out there
Without me steering us together
When I was born, we were one and eternal
Broken link, my insane self
Put the wall up between us, I feel empty
I miss being in your arms
Being able to laugh
All I wanted to do is to bring life
Into my mind, to feel things
I want to laugh without feeling empty
Emotionless emotions, to feel full
So my world can light up again

LACUNA: YESTERDAY

Jyoti Nair

India

Those mornings enveloped...
In ivory dripping tenderness...
She would wait for his words,
After cleansing herself as a cerulean sky.
She wouldn't let anyone intrude
into their hallowed confinement.
Albeit the fencing was done using
shreds procured,
From those frayed clandestine knots,
That she stealthily kept knitting.
Those that none of the velums
sighing in her knew...
She is still bewildered...
How such willowy motifs could excavate that deep.
That it created a lair there...
Somewhere there, that she still can't fathom.
Since then, her lungs feel mowed under a
combustible iron box.
Since then, her gullet is parched,
Even as she is bathed in pummeling deluge.
Since then, even her neutral neurons have begun to
palpitate.
Since then, it feels as if...
Graphite clumps crawl from her arteries instead of
blood.
Wrung and vanquished, she is now being skewered
in that lacuna.

HIGHWAY OF LIFE

Heather C Holmes

Canada

<https://heathercholmes.medium.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/heathercholmesauthor>

Blue '46 Mercury
barrelling down
black asphalt.
Carefree,
young love,
feet on the dashboard.
Holding hands at the
Drive-in on a
Saturday night.
White '57 Thunderbird
cruising
down the freeway.
Two kids,
one puppy,
loving parents.
Hugs from grandparents
and laughing with cousins,
during cherished
Summers by the shore.
Green '65 Galaxie 500
Top down,
Sunglasses on,
Herman and his Hermits
wooing Mrs. Brown's
daughter on the radio.
Son heading to Vietnam.
Daughter protesting it.
Older dog missing them both.
Worry, love, pride
crowd the heart while
anxiously waiting for letters home.

Burgundy '77 Lincoln Continental vinyl bench
seats,
8-track player,
grey everywhere.
Ashtrays full of
memories and ash.
Son suffering battle fatigue.
Lawyer daughter
championing the underdog.
Grandkids spilling ice cream. No more dog to
bark.
Big house,
empty nest,
emptier arms.
Brown '86 Tempo
cranking the engine,
tan interior,
fragile gearshift,
Tougher than you think. Like the
owners.
No more kids
to taxi around.
Grandkids too busy to visit. Lonely.
Yearning.
Needing more time
to make memories.
Blue '46 Mercury
Cuddling up
on the drive.
Dreaming of a
Life together.
Carefree,
Young love
Stars in their eyes,
Love in their hearts.
Partying over the
County line,
Delivering
tomorrow sooner
than expected.

DOGTOWN VILLANELLE

—after a walk through fifty abandoned acres in the center of Cape Ann, Massachusetts

Suellen Wedmore

United States

Sometimes even a town falls in upon itself,
but in spring, when the dead wander at night,
you may find its abandoned heart, toughened

by tears; women defeated by hunger, by grief,
a war hero bleeding in a harbor's August light;
sometimes even a town falls in upon itself,

in the shadows of a glacier's rocks and rifts,
where cellar holes and silent roads are anyone's right.
Here now, in spring, find this town's heart, toughened

by recalcitrant fields and a battlefield's slight,
men scraping by on berries, on waylaid wildlife.
Sometimes even a town falls in upon itself

and cries: a granite doorstep worn by life's
fickle tread, prosperity gobbled by blight:
come spring, you may find a town's heart, toughened

by ridicule and scorn, by history's rebuff.
Time, please bless us now, as is our right,
for even a town may fall in upon itself.
Open this once noble heart for us, softened.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Agnieszka Filipek

Ireland

<https://www.facebook.com/polmnieapoltobie>

on the edge of yesterday
I stood at the crossroads of my heart
and killed two loves with one stone
God has forgiven me
you would forgive me too

on the edge of today
I forget myself
I cut my hair and shamelessly
put on a white dress
the priest forgives me

on the edge of tomorrow
the sea of sadness
will come under my feet
I will turn my back on memories
God will forgive me

on the edge of life
in a black dress
I will finally
remember
and forgive myself

GLIMPSES OF MY MOTHER

Deborah L. Staunton

United States

My mother met fear in the devil on a store window in the Bronx.

And scared my grandmother to death in a bungalow in the country, when at four, she wandered down the road and disappeared.

Later, her older brother taught her to throw fistfuls of watery mud at frogs in a misguided attempt to catch them.

And convinced her to let him carve her initials in the back of her neck in case she got lost. She changed her mind at the bottom of the first line of the "B."

Back in the city, she cried tears of disappointment into her pillow when a baby doll vanished from another store window, until she felt the small foot of the doll beneath her head

That summer at the bungalow, he cut her hair with six-year-old abandon. My grandmother, her eyes swollen shut with a trio of poison ivy, oak, and sumac, was left to feel the devastation with her hands.

When rain pelted the city skyline, she coaxed her baby sister into the closet hiding together as the sky lit up the world outside their fifth story window.

She snuck drags of her mother's cigarette behind her brother's back at a wedding and hid from his disapproval.

At seventeen she hid from herself at her own wedding to a boy she thought she could save.

Seventeen years later she came out of hiding to save herself.

SPRING OF DECEPTION

Brittney Marie

United States

<https://www.facebook.com/therealBrittneyMarie/>

<https://www.instagram.com/brittneymariz/>

Seasons come and weeks go
Yet time begins to rainbow.
Warming hours and no more snow
Help the trees and flowers grow.
Nature awakens, and songs echo
Around the frozen scarecrow.

A reminder of yesterday's Eskimo
Smothens the green and yellow.
It's Spring and yet a dark shadow
Covers the freshly sprung willow.
The temperature swings mild to low
Keeping us in this wintery limbo.

Here today, and gone tomorrow
From the numbing and the sorrow.
The icy grasp had one last show
Killing things from down below.
The sun shines with its bright halo
Blooming to Spring's ebb and flow.

GHOST MAIL

Mike Ball

United States

<https://www.facebook.com/harrumph>

<https://twitter.com/whirred>

Both SENT and INBOX are cluttered.
SENT nags the most, with its corpses.

More than a decade after her death,
my mother is not likely to read email.
Nor are other friends and relatives who,
as we are wont to blather, have passed,
joined the angels or other euphemisms.

The alleged afterlife appears without
laptops and email. Yet somehow...

I cannot bring my mouse to highlight
and to delete those ignored messages.
I also lack the sangfroid to winnow
my contact lists to remove the dead.

Sometimes, auto-fill pops in one of them
and I confess I like seeing the familiar,
if unreachable — deaf and blind to me.

FROM WHEN I WAS TWENTY-ONE

Bilkis Moola

South Africa

<https://www.facebook.com/Poetic-Shores-103759598212110/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC78xK4tUFoITRG7APfkm9vw>

You were my yesterday -
from when I was twenty-one.

You wove a gold thread around my neck,
wrapped a bracelet of charm on my wrists.

I return to when I was twenty-one -
my future when you promised yourself as my love.
Then -
you left.

I did not know the landscape of memory
where you would float in a cloud -
a fog, a mist from my past.

Your eyes still stare into mine
with a love that I believed was true.

From when I was twenty-one
when you were my yesterday -
I remember you.

Life surpassed my yesterdays
in a frenzy -
a career,
more of you in everyone I met -
I looked but you had gone.

It is twenty-five years since those yesterdays
when you cast your spell of promise.
I never saw you again.

All my yesterdays and tomorrows
circle in what could have been.

The twenty-one when you promised a future of love
-
was not to be.
My passage of youth has faded
for the twenty-one years that float in a frenzy of
tomorrows.

You were my first poem -
the shock of abandon,
sudden -
oh, so sudden!
tore my heart for a
what could have been if you remained.

Your bewitching eyes as hazel drops -
crooked smile.
The rose that you laid at my feet
in a yesterday -
from when I was twenty-one.

A kaleidoscope of colour
whirls from yesterdays of love lost -
betrayal.

I am no longer twenty-one -
you remain a memory of melancholy
for a future that could have been.

I said, "Goodbye" -
bid you farewell from my heart.

Regret taints yesterdays
for the future of tomorrows
when for all my past years
rotate with each day,
revolve around a sun
when every year of my yesterday
is locked in a memory of you.

YESTERDAYS ARE REAL

Alan Bedworth
United Kingdom

They generally say yesterday has gone,
look forward to today and the future.
But surely things of yesterday
shape your future.
That's where all your memories are.
Forgetting yesterday can't work
how do we learn from our mistakes.
Perhaps those not wanting yesterdays
have ulterior motives for not
advocating past memories.

I'm sorry I am who I am
due to my yesterdays.
Understanding memories of family
and friends have developed
the person you see in front of you.
In my conclusion memories
and yesterdays have a place
in our society.
How to love and forgive was
learnt in all our yesterdays.

TWISTY SMILE

Frank Modica
United States

<https://twitter.com/fcmodica53>

I've grown older
since he died,
married and moving on.

I try to let go
of so much sorrow,
focus on better
memories of a lifetime.

From his wedding pictures
he looks back
at no one in particular,
his sad, ambivalent smile.

**THE DAY AFTER THE CLOCKS GO CUCKOO IN
THE FALL OR THE UNEXPECTED
INQUISITION OR WHAT A DIFFERENCE A
DAY MAKES—25 LITTLE HOURS**

Ken Gosse

United States

<https://www.facebook.com/ken.gosse/>

The throng implored in earnest
as they stalked me to my chair,
why supper wasn't ready
(they were feeling rather heady
and their legs became unsteady);
at this hour it should be there.

I pointed to the grandpa clock
which stood watch in the hall
and to the cuckoo which would mock
from high upon the wall,
then to the lady, very bare,
whose clock obscures her groin
(a gift my mom-in-law put there,
which she was told was very rare—
the one for which we still don't care—
a fire-sale in Des Moines).

Three clocks concurred, one more, one less:
there was an hour to go:
the first was just a trifle fast
but by the morning came in last;
the third was always rather slow
(its second hand swung to and fro);
but in-between I'd always seen
the cuckoo clock would hold the mean—
a drop of oil mixed with caffeine
ensured a finely-tuned machine—
before their food arrived at mess
come rain or shine or snow.

I had no choice and so I changed
our clocks the night before:
just yesterday I rearranged
our lives forevermore—
that is, until some months from now
we'd move them back again,
or is that forward?—anyhow,
it's odd that we, such mortal men,
have magic which can move the sun
upon our will, and fast,
though none of us, alone, can shun
the laws which men have passed,
demanding that we change the hour
our minds and bodies sense,
by means of some uncanny power,
to thither from its whence.

But dogs and cats and chickadees,
the aardvarks, rabbits, bumblebees,
all snarks and sharks and chimpanzees,
and every camel and its fleas,
plus alligators, manatees,
the gentle cows who give us cheese,
our poltergeists and families
are made to feel quite ill at ease—
the Universe itself agrees—
when mealtime brings them to their knees,
delayed, in spite of earnest pleas
by whims of their trustees.

And so, in comfy chair's embrace,
assuming the position,
I sink into profound disgrace:
another hour I'll watch them pace—
an hour which I cannot replace—
the longest hour, in which I face
my spaniels' inquisition.

YESTERDAY

Zhivanka Morris
North Macedonia

We talked
About the moon and the stars,
Over late-night dinners
When you smiled.

We drank whiskey together
And talked about the sunsets
When you told me that you like me.

So we became the Moon
And the Stars.
Inseparable, stronger,
Addicted to each other.

You would hold my hand
And tell me all about
The universe, the planets,
We will count the stars and make wishes.
I liked that.

The people around us
Were like the rain,
They would try to flood us,
But we would swim our way to the shore,
Underwater, with one single breath.

One night, one dire night, the doorbell rang.
There was no more moon and stars,
There was no more us.
Only pain, excruciating pain.

Pain that indicated you were real.
Lingering pain, till today.
All because yesterday you chose her.

THURSDAY

Jane Fitzgerald

<https://www.facebook.com/JanesPoetry/>

[https://www.amazon.com/Jane-H-](https://www.amazon.com/Jane-H-Fitzgerald/e/Bo1MSW2FLO)

[Fitzgerald/e/Bo1MSW2FLO](https://www.amazon.com/Jane-H-Fitzgerald/e/Bo1MSW2FLO)

I wish it was yesterday
When I was with you
It seemed as though
I'd arrived
at fields
distant
far too long
Touching you is
surrounding gentleness
My heart alive
in your eyes
Hours on time of
just being
Feeling the closeness of
possibilities
without many words
Waiting for
tomorrow
When you will come
again
Longing for yesterdays

MY MOOSE

Sharon Cote

How not to remember that August day,
the wild lake lined with spruce?
A time can come to reject the tether
of parents and brothers, worn paths, shared air.
I was twelve. My parents had sensed
that they should let me loose.

I'd entered a cabinless cove of what
was to me an enormity of lake.
Before this sharp turn, I'd braved subtler ones,
following the reedy curves of shoreline.
Few boats marked this first solo cruise, just one
or two drifters catching sweet-fleshed lake bass.
The lake shimmered in fickle shades of blue.

My outboard motor coughed its soft putt-putt,
echoing in the cove, as I piloted
slow (slow, in case of shallows), watching the
water more than the woods. Muddy swirls, gold
glints of bait-stealing sunnies. Yes, not deep.

Then to my right, some movement more steady
than fitful gusts of summer breezes.
My eyes were pulled to shore and to the log-
long
nose of a grown female moose.
I stopped the boat (near sure I could restart).

She froze, ears flicked, then stepped again.
I traced her outline in the shade. I was
but yards of lake from her half ton of life.
The trees were less tall in her presence.
We were breathing together there, staring,

and I wanted to tell her that it was
wonderful, and frightening, just a bit,
to share this sharpened moment with her
the trees, the sunnies, the lake. Ah, that was
what she wanted, of course, the cool lake water.

I nudged my motor into hushed rebirth,
suddenly thirsty myself, gentled out
of that cove, sped towards our cabin dock
still feeling a commingled life in me,
the lake, the sky—and wondering too if
maybe we'd all toast marshmallows that night.

WASH, RINSE, REPEAT

Judy Taylor

Wash, rinse, repeat.

I follow the rhythms of the day.

Is today yesterday or tomorrow?

Each day's footprint the same.

The rhythms of the day follow me.

I run from them, but

my foot prints, the same each day,

like assembly line snowflakes stamped in stone.

So I'm running away

to a place where the days can't follow me,

where the stamp of days become like snowflakes

etched in ice, glittered with sun,

where only you can follow me,

where today is neither yesterday, nor tomorrow,

where each day is etched in fresh, glittering icicles.

Wash, rinse, repeat.

YESTERDAY IS YESTERDAY'S NEWS

(Yesterday, 1143 W. Addison Street.)

Mark Hudson

United States

In Chicago, there was a yellow shack,
in Wrigley Ville, since 1976.

It's been demolished, not coming back,
it's been torn down brick by brick.

It was originally owned by an 88-year old,
Tom Boyle, who died in December.

Sports memorabilia and antiques were sold,
replaced by a three-flat, who will remember?

Just one block from Wrigley Field,
the store was known for top-notch collections.

Something for everybody there appealed,
now it is just a saddening reflection.

Sports memorabilia is worth a lot of favor,
but it's the memories themselves that we savor.

YESTERDAY

Mowmita Sur

India

<https://www.facebook.com/mou.sur>

It's like yesterday,
When you were here Papa.
Holding my hands in immense care.
Who knows, there will be a chapter
Called sinister!
Who knows there will be trauma & tears!
As we pray to God,
To wipe away all your pain,
To enfold you, embrace you,

Comfort and bless you in heaven.
I succumb to the feelings of extreme agony and
despair,

As you are physically not here,
But blessing me in abundance from above.

When I completely unfazed by the events,
Happening around me,
And fail to realize,
The bitter yet eternal truth of life,
That death is inevitable.

Today I can feel the wisps of hope,
Fluttering into my heart.
You taught me how to start,
When you are apart.
Take the words that they say yesterday.
I still want you back today,
I know, you are looking upon me.
With a grin on your face.
When the brightest star shine
Up above the sky,
I know, it's you
That similar smile,
You smiled yesterday.
You were the phenomenal father!
That I will remember.
Letting the embers,
Of my fire, fly away to you,
How I miss you,
My prayers for you.
Letting your divine love,
Be my guiding light,
On the path of spiritual quest and salvation.
It was like yesterday,

When you were here Papa.

NEW JERSEY YESTERDAYS

John Laue

United States

After eastern cold,
Warm west coast winter. I miss
Writing on windows.

Beside a west coast
Pool, I remember fireflies,
Their lit reflections.

I shot targets at
Kid's camp, then in the Army.
No more shooting now!

Nanny's twenty-two
Still in my closet after
Sixty silent years.

I turn the key, put
It in gear, begin to move.
Ice slides off the roof.

Ice coated tree limbs
Littered the town's central square.
Our hardest winter.

I don't miss those cold
Dark days coal slid down loud chutes
To dusty basements.

No one wants coal now.
What will idle miners do
If they don't read well?

I remember the
Carnival, Merry-go-round,
Ferris wheel, her lips.

Milk bottles froze on
Porches then. We skimmed from the
Necks. Voila! ice cream.

Delaware River,
Rocks, hellgrammites, mussels,
Trout, bass, sunfish, fun!

Perfectly smooth stones
Lined the riverbed, I'll bet
Most were once sharp-edged.

All around the church
He chased me with his Christmas
Bow. Minister's son.

The plane fell among
Cows. Behind an electric
Fence we watched it burn.

When freighted limbs dripped
Melted snow, we kids threw hard,
Defended our forts.

Lovers kiss on the
Dark footbridge. Frogs below croak
Hopeful mating calls.

In a wooden box,
All that's left of a childhood--
Camp medals, small stones.

Summers I recall
The long days when little boys
Could play forever!

I meet three young boys
With long reed spears they blithely
Hurl at each other.

Walden Pond larger
Than I thought. Then the light touch
Of inspiration!

I lie in this canoe
Gazing at a calm blue sky.
Water's slap, slap, slap.

In a blue hammock
Viewing stars, the moon, sudden
Bright meteor trails.

Delaware River
Where I used to swim. Mussels,
Turtles, pollution.

Hercules Powder Plant.
Every floor had escape chutes.
Sometimes I wish that.

Somewhere under this
Snow there must be a stream. I
Hear a faint gurgle.

Please don't disturb that
Harmless blacksnake sunning. He's
Sooo comfortable!

I remember Dad,
His unsurpassed strength.
Five handfuls of ash.

Mother's window to
The world open. But I saw
Dead bees on the sill.

New Jersey fireflies
Blinked on and off, on and off.
Her transient love.

I know there's a white
Rabbit in this morning's snow.
But where can he be?

Fall colors the most
Beautiful of all. But where are
The oldtime scarecrows?

GONE

Laura Glaves
United States
Gone

I lay in bed unable to sleep, feeling lost and bereft.
A childhood memory plays over and over in my
mind.

I'm five years old in a motel room with Mom and
Dad.

I lie in bed and touch the nubby texture of my
teddy-bear, Ted.

I stare at the coarse black threads crisscrossing his
back,
a gaping wound Mom has closed.

We wake early the next morning and pile into the
car.

Miles down the road, I realize Ted is gone.

*He must be at the bottom of your bed, Mom says.
The maid will find him
and give him to her little girl.*

I toss and turn, touching Ted's texture in my
thoughts.

My wound grows wider.

I yearn for comfort.

Mom is gone.

RESTLESS

Kate Meyer

United Kingdom

Yesterday was the restless
First of a week off, where
I had not yet detached
From preoccupations;
Work still nipped at my
Pyjamaed ankles, as I
Yawned and blundered
In the fug of fatigue from
Sofa to kitchen, toking
Coffee, in a smoky haze
Of half-formed poems
That smouldered in my
Ashtray brain, like spent
Cigar-butts. I could not
Light up and inhale their
Potent vapour, or draw
Upon cogent thoughts
Sharpened by the tang
Of coffee. I had not written
For a week and it left a
Bitter aftertaste; an
Uncertainty that the
Urge of ideas and clarity
Of focus were lost forever
In the fog of tiredness:
Even by mid-morning where
I was reproached by my
Cluttered rooms and a
Slumped body that was
Just a couch-potato, still

Muddy in its unwashed
Skin, shoots of intention
Sprouting sluggishly
Towards the light, lost
Behind grey sky and
Blustering, chilly wind.
But it was still the breeze,
Slicing through the
Open window, which
Chivvied me to act; to
Martial drifting scraps
Of thought into gradual
Actions which spoke
Forth as words on the
Day's empty page.

FREDDIE'S FISH FINGER

BY DEBBIE HEWSON

Yesterday It was all going so well. My life was happily dull. I have never understood why people complain about routine.

I had volunteered, as I did every time it had to be done, to clean the deep fat fryer where I worked. Nobody else liked the job, but to me, there was a joyful rhythm in the emptying, cleaning, scrubbing, and finally refilling, alone in the shop, with the radio playing quietly. It took time, but it was wonderfully satisfying.

I started early in the day, because it had to be completed before the fryers were needed for lunchtime. I wore my work overall, the really thick one. It would be a dirty job, and I always ended up getting splashed with the oil. The first job was to drain the huge vat. The hose slipped and slopped easily into the first empty can. The others were lined up and ready. The smell of used oil, dirty in the air made me wrinkle my nose.

Once the can was full, I stopped the flow and hefted the heavy can out of the way. The flow began again until the fryer was empty. The filter was next. It sat at the bottom of the fryer in a few inches of oil, and caught the bits of chicken, fish and stray chips that were missed, and bits of batter and breadcrumbs. I pulled out the filter, and slid it into the tray, where it would drip while I cleaned everything else. I was nearing the halfway point, so I made myself a cup of tea. The radio was playing a gentle love song which I half remembered from when love songs mattered to me.

My back ached a little, the big cans were heavy. I rested back against the counter and smiled at my distorted reflection in the stainless steel, while I sipped. I loved the shop when it was quiet like this, no customers shouting their orders, nobody pushing and shoving to get the orders out. People walked past the big window, bent into their umbrellas against the weather. It was dreadful yesterday.

I fetched the degreaser and pulled on my rubber gloves and washed and scrubbed, rinsed, scrubbed, rinsed again, until the walls and the base were clean.

The roll of kitchen paper was on the side, and I grabbed it and wiped the surfaces dry, leaning deep and wide across the fryer. The stainless steel shone in the overhead lights. The covers which sat over the top of the fryer sunk below the soapy water, and I moved on to the filter. It should have dripped through by now.

The drip tray was full of oil, dark and thick with the food that had bubbled in it, which needed to be tipped carefully into the last empty tin.

I was nearly there. My tea, when I tasted it was cold. I made a face. I would make a fresh one when the job was finished.

The filter was the last job. It was full. I was surprised, every time I did this job, how much fell off and floated away, over cooked dark brown pieces of batter, and nearly black chips. The food that slowly rots in the oil if left and turns it rancid and sour.

The filter needed to be emptied into the food waste, and it would be too heavy to do it in one go. Using the chip scoop, I shoveled the smelly mess into the food waste bin. If I could have done it in one lift, I suppose I would not have spotted it. But I did. It was lying on the top of a glistening mound of dark brown scraps.

I backed away, feeling sick. We had sold food from that fryer. How long had it been in there, floating around with the chips? Perhaps, more importantly, where had it come from? My phone was where I had left it, and I picked it up, dialing my boss. His phone went to voicemail, and I sat back against the counter.

“Freddie! Call me back, it’s important. I’m in the shop. Please hurry up.” I tried again and again, but there was no answer.

I wanted to run, to be out in the rain with the rest of the world, but I was fascinated. There were plastic bags on the side, so I pulled one off the roll and picked it up with the bag.

It was a finger, a human finger. There was no way we could open for lunch now.

My boss lived upstairs from the shop, he still had not answered the phone, so I would have to go and bang on the door and wake him. I tucked the finger under a dishcloth, it felt wrong to leave it exposed. I slipped out through the back door into the alley, and stood under the cover of the porch, banging on the door to the flat. Nothing. He must be dead to the world.

Then I saw the blood splashes on the door frame. If there had been no porch, the rain would have washed it away. There was a tremor in my hand when I pulled it back from the door. I needed help.

The man standing in front of the counter was almost as wide as he was tall, and he was very tall.

“Sorry we aren’t open.” My eyes ran over the dishcloth under which there was a fried finger. “Cleaning the fryers today.” His eyes were very still, and he watched me with an intensity I found very difficult.

“Freddie worked for me. He’s gone.” His voice was low, but clear.

“Gone?” I heard the wobble in my voice. If I did, then certainly he would have.

“Very conscientious, coming in early to clean the fryers. I like that in a potential manager.” I stood very still. Did he just suggest I might be the manager? Where had Freddie gone? Or did he mean gone as in dead?

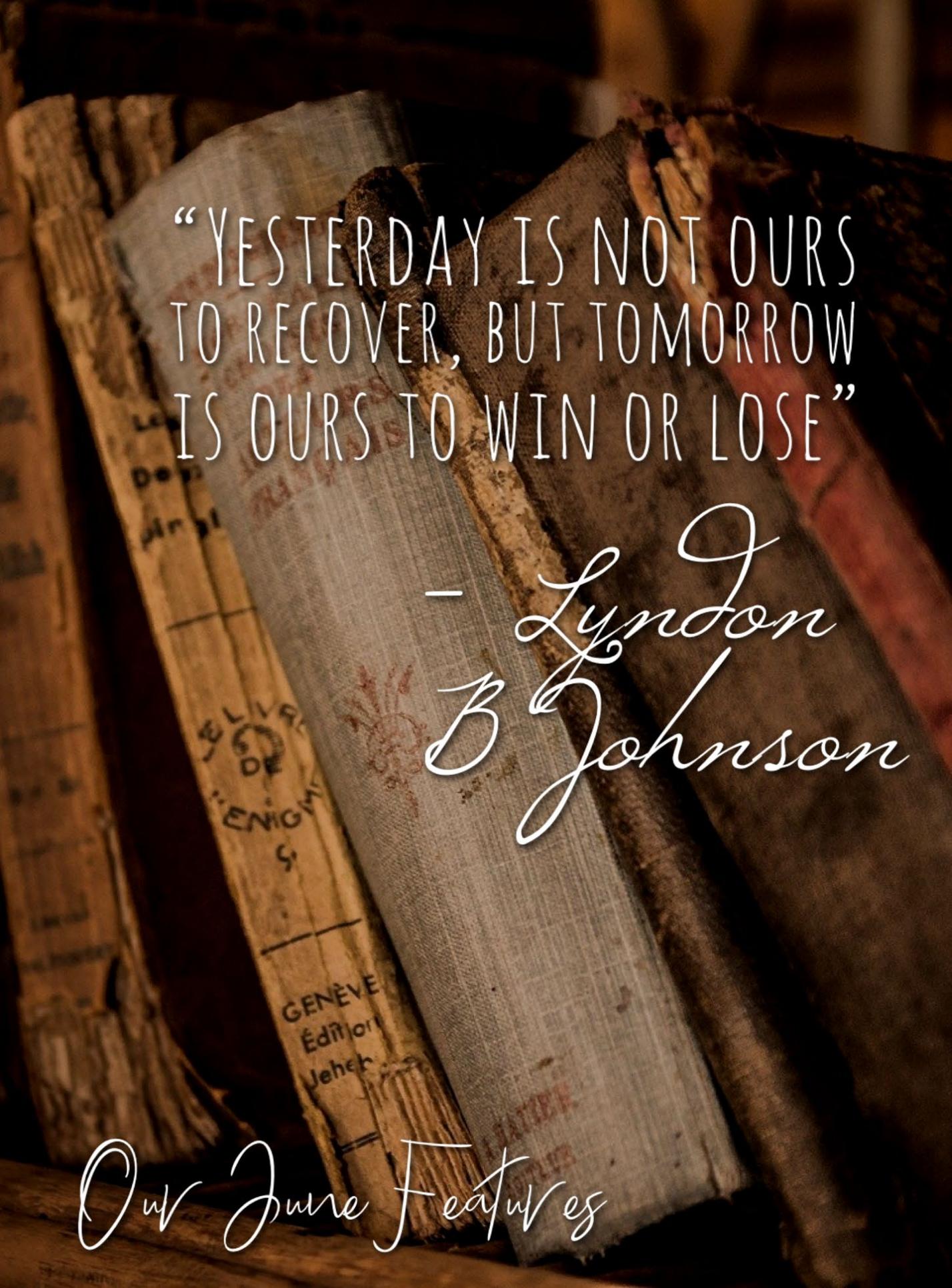
“I have always liked to clean the fryers. I know that’s a bit odd.” He shrugged.

“I can see how it would be satisfying. Do you want the job, Janice?”

“Do I get a pay rise?” He nodded.

“Yes. Quite a good one. You just need to have the money you have taken through the till ready every Friday, and the till rolls. I do the books, everything else. OK?” I nodded. He smiled. “There is one other thing. Freddie left something behind. Did you find it?” The intense stare was back. Did he want me to tell him I found the finger? I lifted the dishcloth, revealing the tip of the finger, and checked his expression. He nodded. “Yes, that’s what I’m looking for, and you’ve put it in a bag, how convenient.” He held his hand out and waited until I dropped the bag into his hand. “Good luck in your new job Janice. Nice work on the fryers.” He slipped the finger into his pocket.

The clean oil glugged into the fryer, and I checked the time. I had an hour. The oil would be hot enough for lunch.

A stack of old, worn books with a quote overlaid. The books have various titles and markings, including "LE LIVRE DE L'ENIGME" and "GENÈVE Édition Jehet". The quote is in white, uppercase letters.

“YESTERDAY IS NOT OURS
TO RECOVER, BUT TOMORROW
IS OURS TO WIN OR LOSE”

- Lyndon
B Johnson

Our June Features

CELIA

Author Feature

LISSET ALVAREZ



Celia Lisset Alvarez was born in Madrid, Spain, while her Cuban parents were waiting for their visas to come to the US after having lived 10 years under Castro's communist regime. Educated entirely in the US, Alvarez received an MFA in fiction and an MA in English from the University of Miami in 1995, where she also met her husband, fellow Cane and poet Rafael Miguel Montes. She worked for many years as adjunct English faculty at St. Thomas University, Miami-Dade College, and Florida International University. Tired of only finding part-time employment, she accepted a full-time position teaching English at Our Lady of Lourdes Academy, an all-girls Catholic prep school, in 2014. She left Lourdes in 2018 to take care of her children. In 2006, she published her first chapbook of poetry, *Shapeshifting*, winner of the 2005 Spire Press Poetry Award. It was quickly followed by another chapbook, *The Stones* (Finishing Line Press) later in 2006. She did not publish her first full-length collection, *Multiverses* (Finishing Line Press) until 2021. In the intervening years, she published many poems in journals and anthologies such as *How to Live on Other Planets: A Handbook for Aspiring Aliens* (Upper Rubber Boot Books 2015), *Obsession: Sestinas for the 21st Century* (Dartmouth UP 2014), and the *Iodine Poetry Journal*. *Multiverses* is a speculative memoir in verse narrating five years of the poet's life during which she suffered several hard losses, including the death of her newborn son at just 26 days old. The book uses the theory of multiple universes as a device to weave the memoir with a series of speculative alternatives to the same tragic events: two miscarriages, the death of a beloved grand-uncle, her son's death, and finally her father's. Alvarez is now the editor of the journal *Prospectus: A Literary Offering*, and lives in Miami, Florida, with her husband, daughters Lucy and Sara, her mother, and their dog, Maggie.

<https://celialissetalvarez.com/books/>

<http://prospectusliterary.com/index.php>

<https://www.facebook.com/Hobomok>

<https://twitter.com/CeliaLisset>

<https://www.instagram.com/hobomok/>

CELIA LISSET ALVAREZ – AUTHOR FEATURE

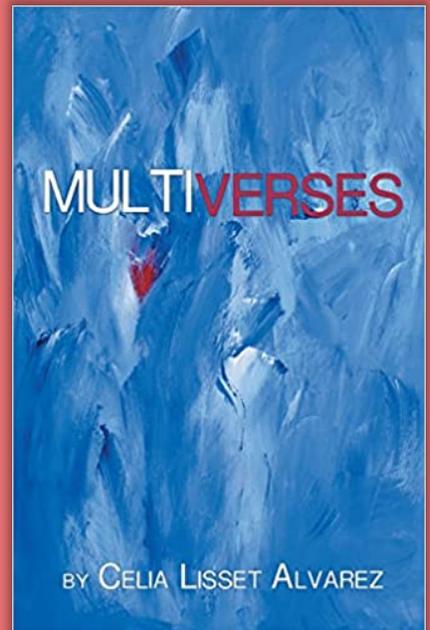
VERSION 1.00

In the NICU,
they try to reassure me
with stories of babies
born at 23 weeks
who have survived
just like you and I,
no mark of this struggle
of wires and buttons,
dials and digital heartbeats.

Born at 27 weeks, Arturo
is more fetus than baby.
I gasp the first time I see them,
my twins, Arturo and Sara.
In the violet light of the incubator,
I struggle to make out the color
of their hair or their eyes.
The only way I can tell them apart
is that Sara's hat has a jaunty bow.
Try to remain positive, they say.

They let me change their diapers.
Arturo's eyes slit slightly open,
flash of black, amphibious.
I give him the tip of my finger
and his hand curls around it,
like a kitten's paw. He is intubated,
the tape covering his lower face
like a mask. His chest is covered
by sensors. Even the premie diaper
reaches to his armpits.

All that I can see,
because they cannot cover it
in order to have a place from which...



In her exploration of the multiverse theory, Alvarez deals with several griefs created by the loss of two pregnancies, a beloved granduncle, her infant son, and finally her father, in the span of just four years, by constructing multiple alternate realities in which one or more of these people survived. In this process, Alvarez deals frankly and sometimes even starkly with death and its consequences on individuals and families. The book directly addresses the questions that plague many people who grieve: What if I had done this instead of that? Would it have mattered? Is there such a thing as fate?

<https://celialissetalvarez.com/books/>

CELIA LISSET ALVAREZ – AUTHOR FEATURE

to draw blood, is his left foot,
a bulbous big toe standing straight
up in the air, just like mine.
Just like mine. This is my son.

Even when the crash cart comes in,
even when I can no longer tell
which doctor can save him,
I believe that things will turn around.
When the beep of his heartbeat
goes silent, I clutch my husband and
watch my son turn purple, beginning
with his toe. This is my son,

I say to myself, when I
can finally hold him, free
from tubes and tape. I think
of the multiverse theory,
wondering what version of me
can hold him alive and breathing.
what version of me
can take him home,
can watch him grow.

Sara's hair is golden,
her eyes a streaming blue river.
She squeals with laughter
as my mother makes her
airplane sounds with her spoon.

I think of that version of me
where there are two toddlers,
skin so white you can see
their map of veins. I trace
Sara's blue highways to her
big toe, bulbous, alert, ready
to spring into action.

VERSION 2.10

My father holds his grandson
for the first time.
Afraid of hospitals,
he did not witness
the terror of the machines
that one must watch,
constantly,
as if the watching
could somehow control
the readings.

No, he wasn't there
when the tube went down his
grandson's throat, when I
was taught to feed him
through his nose with a syringe.

The boy that he holds now is
small, but perfect, and though
his eyes are blue my brown-eyed father
sees himself in those clear eyes,
sees himself live on now
into a fuzzy future
where flying cars and computers
whizz his grandson to his job
as a lawyer or a doctor
quite frankly anything other
than what his only child became,
a poet he could not understand...

CELIA LISSET ALVAREZ – AUTHOR FEATURE

In his arms he finds release.
Now living or dying is the same.
Should he live, he'll live to see the day
Arturito—as he will of course be called,
the Spanish diminutive that plagued
my 97-year-old uncle to his grave—
he'll live to see the day Arturito
throws his first baseball. Or,
should he die, there will be baseball
anyway. Perhaps tennis.
He is free to do as he pleases.

They look into each other's eyes. There
is an instant bond that leaps far
over my head into the world they
happily belong to, the inaccessible
world of men another version of me
was perhaps able to puncture, my father
and I jumping to the beat of the dog races,
the clack of dominoes on the table,
the shots of the jai alai ball on the wall.

VERSION 1.21

I catch my father giving Lucy
a bite of his ham sandwich.

*Papi! I scream, how many times
must I tell you we are vegan
and plan to raise the girls to be as well?*

*It's just a little piece, he says,
and I go on a rant: it's a matter of respect,
you don't respect our choices
just like you don't respect our privacy.
(He's been peeking through the curtain
on the French door that separates
our side of the house from theirs,
trying to get a glimpse of the girls
when they are with us.)...*

Meanwhile Lucy chews and smiles
at her Pop-Pop as I whisk her away,
furious, too furious really, this one
piece of ham carrying the weight
of my whole upbringing, of an
entire lifetime of peeking through
my curtains and questioning my choices.

Just before I get to the door,
I put Lucy down and easily rip
off the curtain, a flimsy, dirty thing
I had once helped my mom put up
myself with two simple rods
and four small screws.

*There, I think,
now there'll be no more peeking,
no more pretending that there's
some kind of boundary to our
daily lives.*

I put Lucy in the crib next to Sara
and cry miserably on the bed
just like I did that night when I
was fifteen and they wouldn't
let me go out with Jorge Guerrero.

I marvel at the time tunnel I've
created, the Charybdis that has
swallowed me, the open maw
of the NICU doors.

You try to swim against the current,
exhaust yourself, and die.
Lucy's large enough to scramble
out of the crib. I find her face and hands
pressed against the door, my father
on the other side, blowing kisses
at each other while Lucy cries,
Pop-Pop. Pop-Pop. Pop-Pop.

WAYNE NG

Author Feature

Wayne was born and raised by Chinese immigrant parents in downtown Toronto who fed him a steady diet of bitter melons and kung fu movies. He's been a social worker for over thirty years, but lives to travel, write and eat, preferably all at the same time. His ideal world is just and driven by compassion, filled with exhilarating travels, interesting eats, and locked in writing. He's inspired by unforgettable personalities and diverse characters, many of whom dot his two published novels, and a third in the query stage.



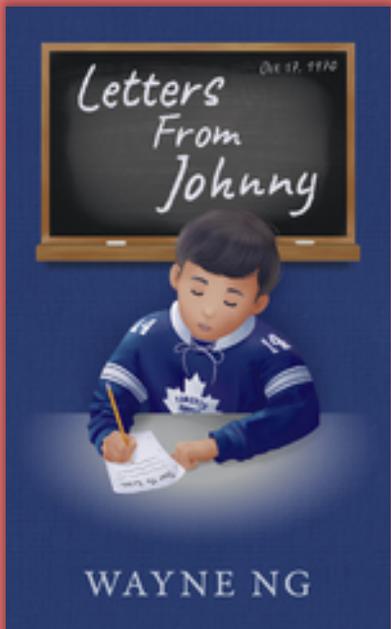
<https://www.facebook.com/WayneNgWrites/>

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<https://www.instagram.com/waynengwrites/>

https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/17769524.Wayne_Ng

WAYNE NG – AUTHOR FEATURE



Set in Toronto 1970, just as the FLQ crisis emerges to shake an innocent country, eleven year old Johnny Wong uncovers an underbelly to his tight, downtown neighbourhood. He shares a room with his Chinese immigrant mother in a neighbourhood of American draft dodgers and new Canadians. In a span of a few weeks his world seesaws. He is befriended by Rollie, one of the draft dodgers who takes on a fatherly and writing mentor role...

<https://www.guernicaeditions.com/title/9781771835770>

September 21, 1970

Dear Penpal

My name is Johnny Wong I am in grade 5 and go to Orde street public school and I live in Toronto. Mrs Clover is my teacher. She said I have to do a riting project like rite to a pen pal. She said a pen pal is like a best friend in a far away place. She said she will exchange these letters with a grade 5 class in Idaho every month. I am sorry but I have a for real friend now. His name is Rollie. He rents a room beside us except we have the biggest room in the house and we share the washroom and the kitchen with him and two youniversity univercidy students in the rooms down stairs. Rollie is rich. He says he is in the awqwasition ocwasition of fine things and buys and sells and trades shiny things like forks and jewals and really old money. My mother likes that I have a friend who does not tease me. Rollie is very kind. Some times I want to call him dad but my for real father is in Vancoover. It was Rollie who gave me my first pack of hockey cards. Now I have 90 cards. Some day I hope to get a Dave Keon rookie card. So I do not need another friend. Unless you can make the new student Barry Arble stop calling me names and getting me into trouble.

Your friend,
Johnny Wong

WAYNE NG – AUTHOR FEATURE

September 25, 1970

Dear Penpal

I do not know what to write. Mrs Clover said I could write anything. She said why not write about ~~Kebec~~ ~~Qebec~~ ~~Qebec~~ Kebec. But I know nothing about Kebec except that some body is all ways blowing up bombs there and wants to go away. So I picked writing about my favorite hockey team the Toronto Maple Leafs. My favorite player is Dave Keon. He won the award for fairest and hardest working player two times and one for being the best player in the play offs. What is your favorite team. Please do not say the Montreal Canadians. I asked Mrs Clover if Dave Keon could be my pen pal too but she said no because hockey players treat woman like ~~cattel~~ ~~cattell~~ ~~cattle~~— cows. But I have never seen any cows at hockey games. Or woman neither. ~~Except~~ Except in the stands.

Your friend,
Johnny Wong

September 28, 1970

Dear Penpal

Mrs Clover said I have to write enough letters to fill a yellow envelope before she sends them to you. She said I should write about my home and family or our friends and what it is like in Canada or else I get another detenshin. We live near the university of Toronto beside queens park and near china town. Do you have a china town in Idaho. We are on Henry street where many chinese live. There are many gwhy low on the street too. gwhy low is what my mother calls white people but she never says that when Rollie is around. Many of them are rich and have houses all to them selfs. My biggest enemy Barry Arble moved into the house at the corner of Henry street and Baldwin street. He said he was in jewvee for beating up people but he was not afraid. He said if I dont smarten up he will get them to send me to jewvee too so I pushed him then Mrs Clover came over and made me stand by the wall even though it was his fault. That made me wonder if he could really get me sent to jewvee because it would be bad being away from mother plus how will father find me. The Catwoman next door to us is the scariest gwhy low. Rollie is my favorite gwhy low. He has a beard and mustash and side burns. He says it is his Castro look. He is from Mane, United States. That is beside New found land. Is Mane near Idaho. My mother said he is a draft doger. But I have never seen him run. He has lots of friends down the street. They play gitar drink beer and smoke until very late at night. One time Rollie thru his cigaret into Meany Mings garden. She got real mad and began to wave her skinny bean pole arms at Rollie. He worn his make love not war t shirt and pretended to be her by skwinting his eyes and swearing with fake chinese words. But I know he really likes chinese people because he said Mao was a groovy dude and a friend of people everywhere. That made me think that if the bombers from Kebec attack Canada China will come to our rescue. I told this to mother and she agreed.

Your friend,
Johnny Wong

CANDACE MEREDITH

Author Feature



<https://www.facebook.com/candace.meredith1>

Candace Meredith earned her Bachelor of Science degree in English Creative Writing from Frostburg State University in the spring of 2008. Her works of poetry, photography and fiction have appeared in literary journals Bittersweet, The Backbone Mountain Review, The Broadkill Review, In God's Hands/ Writers of Grace, A Flash of Dark, Greensilk Journal, Saltfront, Mojave River Press and Review, Scryptic Magazine, Unlikely Stories Mark V, The Sirens Call, The Great Void, BAM Writes, Foreign Literary, Lion and Lilac Magazine, The Green Shoe Sanctuary Literary Journal and various others. Candace lives in Virginia with her son and her daughter, her newborn baby and fiancé. She earned her Master of Science degree in Marketing and Communications from West Virginia University. Candace is the author of various books titled *Contemplation: Imagery, sound and Form in Lyricism* (a collection of poetry), *Losing You* (a novella collection), *Winter Solstice* (book 1 of a 4 book series): *The Crone* (book 2), *The Lady of Brighton* (book 3), *Summer Solstice* (book 4 in progress) and her recently published first children's books *A-Hoy Frankie Your Riverboat Captain!* and *Matilda Gets Adopted*.

CANDACE MEREDITH – POET FEATURE

IN A DAY DREAM

A dream, or a mirage –
A landscape above
The horizon
That is low

She twirls her fingers
Into strands of hair
As she waits
Beneath the morning

Light, then a flash
Of somewhere else -
She turns right
To find him

Finally, walking.

ALWAYS IN MY LIGHT

Do not mourn over
My body, my love

For now I am a dove
That takes flight

Like a crow is to the dark
I am to the light-

The essence of being
An energy that is unyielding -

It was maddening to see you
Lost, in a daze, always

Having been lucid like
My crutch when I leaned

On you, too heavy to topple
You were balanced, poised,

And lean. My rock, my love,
Keep your chin above your

Slender beautiful neck
I am now forever behind

You, where you stand
Ready to put up a fight.

I love you.

CANDACE MEREDITH – POET FEATURE

ALWAYS IN MY LIGHT

Do not mourn over
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You, where you stand
Ready to put up a fight.

I love you.

THE END OF THE BEGINNING

A pair of eyes peer
Into her like squashed
Peaches on a flat surface

Her face is coy
To the touch
Leaving never so good

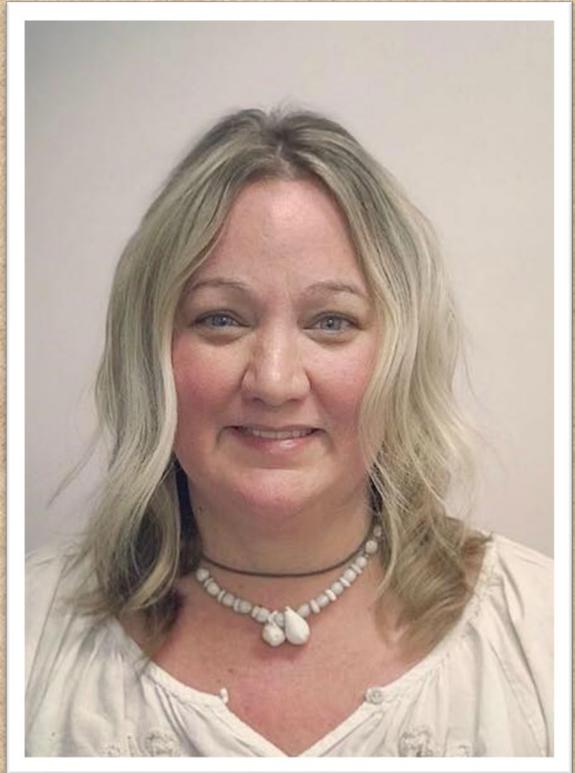
And when he tastes
Her fingers he finds
The fruit of their marriage

Was the end of a beginning
That couldn't be them.

CHRISTINE BROOKS

Author Feature

Christine Brooks is a graduate of Western New England University with her B.A. in Literature and her M.F.A. from Bay Path University in Creative Nonfiction. Her series of vignettes, *Small Packages*, was named a semifinalist at Gazing Grain Press in August 2018. Her essay, *What I Learned from Being Accidentally Celibate for Five Years* was featured in HuffPost, MSN, Yahoo and Daily Mail UK in April 2019. Her first book of poems, *The Cigar Box Poems*, was released in February 2020. Her second, *beyond the paneling*, is due out in April 2021.



<https://www.facebook.com/ChrisBrookswriter>

<https://www.christinebrookswriter.com/>

<https://www.instagram.com/hangtennut/>



beyond the paneling

POEMS BY CHRISTINE BROOKS

beyond the paneling is a life transformed into poetry. Christine Brooks lives in the words she strings together soulfully and skillfully, revealing a lifetime in unforgettable memories captured perfectly. Whether it's in the vision of a soggy cocktail napkin, a House of Beauty, barking dogs, a stranger on a train, or a date with the Lord, each poem reveals a slice of life worthy of becoming a work of art, meant to be transformed into poetry.

beyond the paneling is a memoir of powerful poems revealing the heart and soul of a poet who excels in transforming unforgettable experiences into works of art. Add Christine Brooks to the list of "Poets to Follow."

[https://www.christinebrookswriter.com/
books](https://www.christinebrookswriter.com/books)

INSIDE THE PALE

if you're going to notice me,
notice me in a place
that strums & dances at will
along Grafton street
where flowers and fortunes are
bought & sold
for a song

if you're going to sit with me,
sit with me on a sunbeam
along the green
where Chaffinches sing &
verbena flowers bow to
the Trinity bell tower

if you're going to love me
meet me on Westland Row
downstairs from the bakery
by the staircase, at a small
table for two
and tell me how we
died

CHRISTINE BROOKS – AUTHOR FEATURE

THE LADDER

she drips, crying
still for that last night
outside
when it was warmer than it
should have been for a
November night
and they sat outside, sipping cocktails
and changing floodlights
while they still could, before
the snow and darkness came

the broken-down wooden ladder
wobbly at best
had her closer to heaven than she had been in so
long
so long in fact that she forgot how it felt
to be up there with him holding
her, as rickety as it was
he held on tight as she stretched on tippy toes for
the
light

now his chair leans against the shed
still
and the old ladder is back in the garage
and she sits alone and the grand tree who had
always
been alive
could do nothing
but weep
because she did not
understand

FISHING WITH CORN

I remember fishing with my father not
in the way most would, at least
I don't think
so

*No, don't hurt the worm, I said please
don't hurt the worm
it's okay, he always said, even though
we both knew it wasn't
as he did his best to tie the worm in a
knot
around my shiny hook instead of
piercing his small body
knowing that he would drown
anyway*

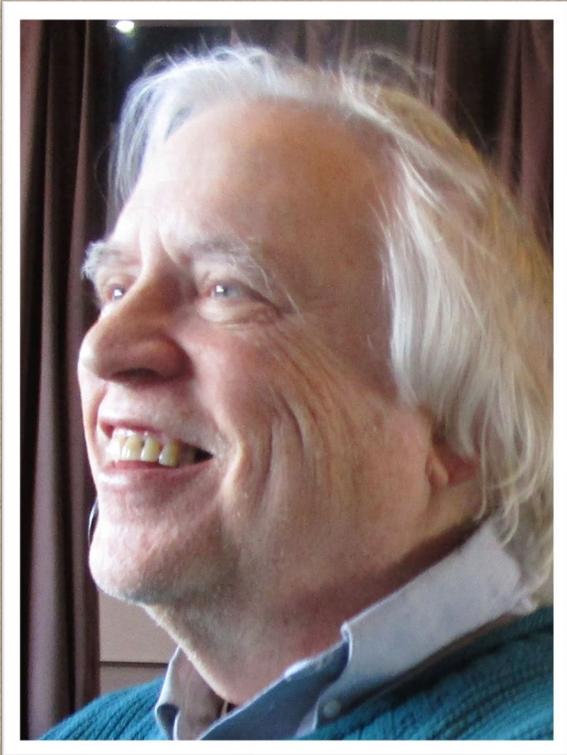
I wasn't the son he wanted if kids were
even
in his dreams
and I certainly wasn't the fishing
buddy
he could have had

but still,

when we fished with corn
on the banks of a tiny pond in a small
town
that no one ever heard of
and allowed ourselves to be small
like the corn niblet on my silver hook
we were
— happy

MARTIN WILLITTS, JR

Author Feature



Martin Willitts Jr. is a retired Librarian living in Syracuse, New York.

He was nominated for 15 Pushcart and 13 Best of the Net awards. Winner of: the 2012 Big River Poetry Review's William K. Hathaway Award; 2013 Bill Holm Witness Poetry Contest; 2013 "Trees" Poetry Contest; 2014 Broad-sided award; 2014 Dylan Thomas International Poetry Contest; Rattle Ekphrastic Challenge, June 2015, Editor's Choice; Rattle Ekphrastic Challenge, Artist's Choice, November 2016; Stephen A. DiBiase Poetry Prize, 2018. He won a Central New York Individual Artist Award and provided "Poetry on The Bus" which had 48 poems in local buses including 20 bi-lingual poems from 7 different languages.

Martin Willitts Jr. has 25 chapbooks including the Turtle Island Quarterly Editor's Choice Award, *The Wire Fence Holding Back the World* (Flowstone Press, 2017), plus 21 full-length collections including the Blue Light Award 2019, *The Temporary World*. His recent book is *Unfolding Towards Love* (Wipf and Stock, 2020). He is an editor for The Comstock Review, and he is judge for the New York State Fair Poetry Contest. This is his second book with Deerbrook Editions.

<https://www.facebook.com/martin.j.willitts>

<https://www.instagram.com/mwillitts01/channel/>

<https://nyq.org/poets/poet/martin-willitts>

MARTIN WILLITTS, JR – AUTHOR FEATURE

ON A NORMAL RAINY DAY

Spinning clay into pots,
shaping what is in my mind,

the kick wheel music,
rain on leaves, dreams molding
a pot out of nothingness,
by the urging womp, womp
of the kicking wheel.

If my project doesn't match my vision,
I'll let the clay collapse like rain clouds.

In the soundlessness,
dripping leaves or hiding sparrows
shaking brown wings,
the wheel kicking slow
and fast,
my mind elsewhere, guiding the clay.
What will it be?

After the kiln, the clay dries on a rack.
If unhappy, I'll smash it into the trash.
Perfection makes a terrible taskmaster.
Anticipation can cause a let-down.

If satisfied, I'll sit in a craft fair until the pot sold,
hoping for a sale, a connection,
people imaging filling its perfect emptiness.
Buyers flying off like excitable sparrows in rain.

The quiet fills the room.
But I place inside each pot
a song, the patter of rain, a leaf rustle.

Harvest Time



POEMS

Martin Willitts Jr.

A voice that gathers in the reader and turns the lines from prose to poetry in an unexpected moment. Those twists are something I've tried to encourage in many poets. And Martin Willitts Jr. does them so well. Willitts' *Harvest Time* is born of "barn light"—in those moments "when the sun finds its way through wood cracks and dust." From the outset, peering through such a crack, we readers arrive with Martin, then a boy, at his grandparents' farm in spring. We watch his world of hard work come alight as boy turns poet with his tongue on fire, even as he must politely sell produce from the roadside stand.

<https://www.deerbrookeditions.com/harvest-time/>

MARTIN WILLITTS, JR – AUTHOR FEATURE

WINTER BEGINS

At sundown, the vermillion sky
and the blossom of solitude opens moonlight.
Branches slow down the flow of geese.

The blossom of silence opens,
stamping feet in snow.
If all goes well, we should return in time.

The woods are vast and quiet. It's dark earlier
than we expect. Somewhere behind
is home. Home is both near and far.

We are not lost. We've misplaced our steps.
It is closed-in quiet in these woods.
Snow speaks in soft whispers.

THE BALANCE OF THE UNIVERSE

A collision of matter began
the universe on its long,
inevitable journey in darkness,
totting along balls of heated light
like glow sticks

and gravity, soon attracting planets
and moons enraptured
by the invitation, finally
settling on a pattern of rotation
like on a slow, tedious
merry-go-round,
like Calder mobiles.

My friend circles the edges of a crowd,
peering for a likely date,
discarding some
as inappropriate,
weighing options or fruit,
and some seem out of reach,
unapproachable.

Choice ones become quickly snatched,
taken by other explorers
marking their discovery,
planting invisible flags.
And when my friend moves in,
a woman separates from the herd, flees.

In my garden,
a manifestation of bees
finding the patch of fresh, spring flowers,
hum with mutual pleasure.

Moth collide with suns of lightbulbs.

The running woman spits into infinity:
several fragments of ideas,
none of which belonging to here anymore.



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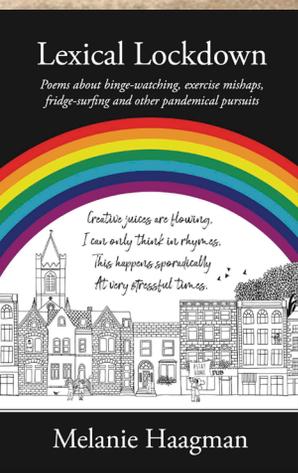
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RECOMMENDED BOOKS

On the following pages – please find our recommended books by our featured writers for the current quarter. All previous book recommendations are available on our website. Join us in supporting these amazing authors!

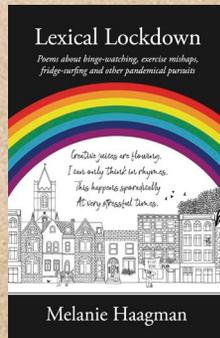
Below you can find the current books out by our co-creators, Mel & Kassie, and go find purchase links on <https://www.opendoorpoetrymagazine.com>



RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Lexical Lockdown

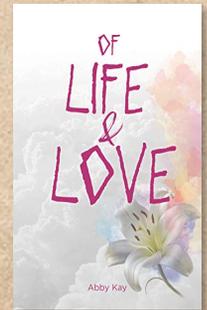
It's the year of 2020 Which no one will forget, When we fought a lethal virus That posed a deadly threat. Mel rhymes her way through lockdown, It enables her to cope, And in her witty verses Spreads positivity and hope,



https://www.amazon.co.uk/Lexical-Lockdown-binge-watching-fridge-surfing-pandemical/dp/1913567257/ref=sr_1_1?crid=3E27QHDCWSJHW&dchild=1&keywords=lexical+lockdown&qid=1599247906&sprefix=lexical%2Caps%2C221&sr=8-1

Of Love & Life

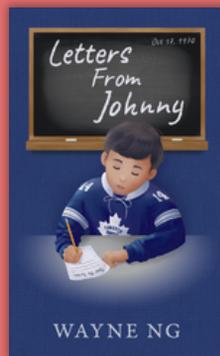
Of Life and Love is the debut collection of poetic works by Ms. Abby Kay herself. Touching on Life's good, bad, and everything in-between as well as delving into the heartaches, intimacies and lust-fueled moments of Love, this collection is everything a hopeless romantic at heart would crave to put words to emotions like never before.



https://read.amazon.com/kp/embed?asin=B08T85GDDQ&preview=newtab&linkCode=kpe&ref_=cm_sw_r_kb_dp_4YoQJXMNC6FXE366Ko15

Letters from Johnny

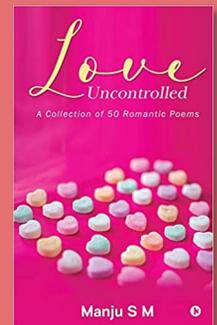
Set in Toronto 1970, just as the FLQ crisis emerges to shake an innocent country, eleven year old Johnny Wong uncovers an underbelly to his tight, downtown neighbourhood. He shares a room with his Chinese immigrant mother in a neighbourhood of American draft dodgers and new Canadians.



<https://www.guernicaeditions.com/title/9781771835770>

Love Uncontrolled

'Love Uncontrolled' is Manju S M's first poetry collection. The collection contains heart-melting poems based on several relatable life experiences. The poems ooze love and depict the beauty and the complexity of love using several scientific concepts like diffusion, latent heat, catalyst, etc., throwing a different light on both science and love.



https://read.amazon.com/kp/embed?asin=B08W26478Z&preview=newtab&linkCode=kpe&ref_=cm_sw_r_kb_dp_PVHYA8Q5ZZP3XS7ABQTP

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Multiverses

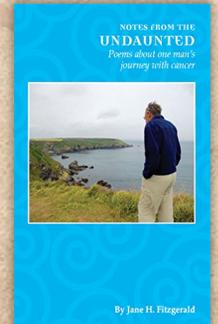
In her exploration of the multiverse theory, Alvarez deals with several griefs created by the loss of two pregnancies, a beloved granduncle, her infant son, and finally her father, in the span of just four years, by constructing multiple alternate realities in which one or more of these people survived. In this process, Alvarez deals frankly and sometimes even starkly with death and its consequences on individuals and families.



<https://celialissetalvarez.com/books/>

Note From The Undaunted

A strong, healthy man has a routine chest x-ray and a terrifying result is discovered. Not only does his body harbor cancer, but it is stage four metastasized melanoma. How will he handle this deathly diagnosis emotionally and physically? The safe life he knows has suddenly vanished. Is death imminent? Can revolutionary treatments save his life? Every excruciating minute holds an unknown fate. How do his wife, children and friends react to this unexpected life changing threat?



https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B077THGG29/rf=defs_a_def_rwt_bibl_vppi_i2

Open Heart Poetry

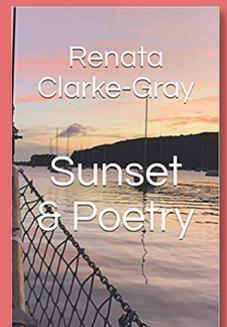
Open Heart Poetry is filled with poems about pain, determination, hope, anxiety and humour. Part One delves into my daily battle with OCD and the impact this has on my life. It encourages others to speak out about invisible pain and spread the word. Part Two contains light-hearted, humorous poems about relatable experiences.



https://www.amazon.co.uk/Open-Heart-Poetry-Melanie-Haagman/dp/1527238407/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=open+heart+poetry+melanie&qid=1599401368&s=digital-text&sr=1-1-catcorr

Sunset & Poetry

Sunset & Poetry is a book, where I share the collection of sunsets that I captured through photographs on my trips and combined it with my poetry.

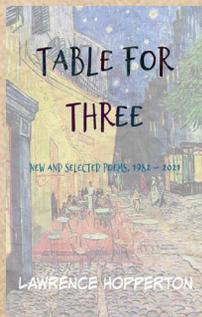


https://www.amazon.com/Sunset-Poetry-Renata-Clarke-Gray/dp/B08PJPQLBW/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=renata+clarke-gray+sunset+and+poetry&qid=1617151250&sr=8-1

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Table For Three

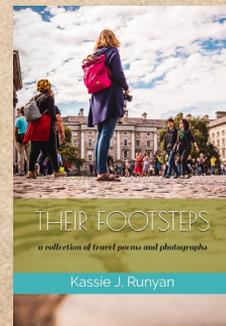
The spirit dwells among us in the people we love, in the things we do, and in the places we hold dear. There are numerous memorable poems in Table for Three such as "Twenty-four Line Loaf," "Ordinary Sunday," and "Barra." Hopperton proves that love endures in the face of loss and joy prevails against the challenges of sadness.



<https://enroutebooksandmedia.com/tableforthree/>

Their Footsteps

This poetry collection follows Kassie through her own travel adventures. Written in the moment and on the road so that the experiences wouldn't be forgotten. Combined with a few of her favorite photos from those travels to further drive the imagery that is created with the words. Follow Kassie, from the coast of Oregon to the Himalayan Mountains, as she shares her experiences in the same way she fell in love with it; through the written word.



<https://www.kassiejrunyan.com/their-footsteps>

This is 2020

Explore the moments of 2020 as we pass through each month together. Kassie paints the world as it happens through poetry and provides a perfectly biased view into some of the impacts across America and beyond. The widespread effects of Covid-19 and the continued fight against racism are rhymed hand-in-hand with the SpaceX rocket launch and the passing of time in quarantine.



<https://www.kassiejrunyan.com/this-is-2020>

This is 2020 part two

<https://www.kassiejrunyan.com/this-is-2020-part-two>

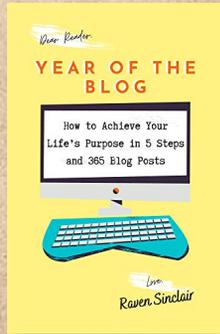
<https://www.kassiejrunyan.com/shop>



RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Year of the Blog

Blogging is your vehicle to happiness. By accepting the “365-Day Blogging Challenge” and committing yourself to write a blog post every day, you can discover your “a-ha” moment and begin living your best life. “Year of the Blog” is an uncomplicated step-by-step guide to help you pursue the things that make you happy and live a purposeful life.



https://read.amazon.com/kp/embed?asin=B08S7QG R39&preview=newtab&linkCode=kpe&ref_=cm_s w_r_kb_dp_ECB3QK89A6Z1DQ5D73YF

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We recently started a patreon page for additional support and we are so excited to be able to help cover some of our monthly expenses but also see light at the end of the tunnel to hopefully start to open up even more opportunities for artists, poets, and authors! We are so incredibly grateful for your support and can't wait to see what else we can start to do. Patrons get some exclusive gifts based on levels, access to future quarterly Q&A on publishing and poetry and open mic (starting late Q2), and a say in future themes and subjects! If we had a wall where we could put plaques or pour them a beer daily – we would do that too!

Our Wonderful Patrons

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John Johnson



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DESIGN AND LAYOUT BY KASSIE J RUNYAN**