

Featured Poet: Charles Hansmann
Renunciation

Gulls crying out on updrafts,
sail-flying over dunes,
now trot the air like town dogs,
now blow bunched like litter.

Bluesy on guitar,
he couldn't play up-tempo,
but he could make his fingers hurt,
and every note he'd make us hear it.

(Breathtakingly sparse, these
new leaves at dawn,
claiming our view.)

The Pond

Rings in sand the fish
limned spawning
cast glimmers out of the pond
and into the morning's
bailing can, rimmed with rust and
floating at your feet.

A dragonfly depletes
the lily frond and alights
its iridescent rainbow
on your cane pole.
It's August, your bobber's
tugged toward mud -- you've got a bite.

(Near noon
withdrawn from the water
your shadow.)

Catch and Release

In a factory where nothing is done without asking,
in air so heavy metal filings can float on it,
we punch out at midnight for the two-week layoff.

We drive through the night and then through Minnesota,
which except that we don't live there
is just like Wisconsin. Then South Dakota,

the grass so little nurtured is seems we wear paths
just by pointing at the places we would walk to.
One long ride with tent and fly rods

till we camp in Montana. It comes down to what
we're doing this for: him to forget
the girl who wanted nothing

of his dreams, who had, I thought,
a need I knew -- so me
to forget her too.

(Trout stream abuzz
with insect hatch --
hand-tied, unbarbed flies.)

CHARLES HANSMANN has had work in *The Lilliput Review*, *Frogpond*, *The Wisconsin Review*, *Folio*, *Modern Haiku*, *Simply Haiku*, *Bottle Rockets*, and others.

Lauren Camp
Apple Wine

I want to touch grass, to crawl
into daylight slowly,
limbs emptying into each grain of sand,

want to seed my body into the earth
until autumn rises,
pick tomatoes,
peel the thin layer of promise to a center.

Behind me, I want you,
a handful of smoke,
a promise that whispers, a broken glass,
my pulse.

Do you remember the apple wine?
Twelve sips, someone else's yard.
I could wander forever, turning the forgotten
taste of sour green on my tongue.

LAUREN CAMP is descended from horse thieves and crazy Arabs. She was born in New York City and now lives on a dirt road in northern New Mexico. She won a 2006 New Mexico Discovery Award (given by the Southwest Literary Center). Her poetry has been published in *Southwest Women's Poetry Exchange*, *All as One*, *Central Avenue*, *Impetus*, and other journals. Her website is www.laurencamp.com.

R. T. Castleberry
Water at Stone

Bordered by cul de sac and river's curling wake,
beneath the shaded sweep of a summer oak,
night swimmers undress along the stony bank.
Halfway done with evening miles,
a runner pauses to consider
the passive lunar light.
On this Good Friday, this Easter weekend,
I'm in love, though it's useless to me.

Rains come at ten—
sly skirts that sheet the narrow lanes
between homestead Colonial and pre-fab mansion,
flooding cobblestone courtyards, brick turnarounds.
The sight of lightning strikes,
the scents of orange blossom and crape myrtle
seep through curtains and windows.
I cannot rest.
My bed is a drain for water pounding at stone,
a scale that will not bear the measure of a minute.

By four, rainfall has turned to runoff,
the light sleepers are settling back.
The view beyond the valley—
cobalt glaze of ocean
dream-sliced by lanes of rolling fog,
wake of tanker and fishing trawler,
binds me to every wave
ruined on the coastline shoals.

I can see the flicker of wreathed red eyes
as stray animals cross the beach.
I've lost my nerve.

R. T. CASTLEBERRY is the former co-editor/co-publisher of the poetry monthly, *Curbside Review* and a co-founder/director of *The Flying Dutchman Writers Troupe*. His work has appeared in numerous journals including *Green Mountains Review*, *The Alembic*, and *Texas Review*.

Michael Estabrook
Winter Turtles

We are in the deep
of winter so even though
the chunks of black rubber
alongside the road look
like lost turtles, I know
they are not. Yet I tap
the brakes anyway,
stare at them, searching
for the slightest signs of life.

Winter Walk

White cat sitting on a rock
in a field of dead grass staring at me.
Frozen brown-white ice floes,
water churning underneath.
Stark trees shadows in the dusk,
branches cracked and broken
from the storm.

Egret

Tall gray bird, an egret I think, standing
in the shallows of a small pond over in
the fields behind the high school,
poised, quiet, elegant, intensely
focused, his head with its long beak
snapping suddenly like a whip
into the water, stabbing at one
of the innumerable, plump, brown
tadpoles beginning to kick their frog
legs. But he misses, comes up dry,

his beady eyes staring down
into the dark water, incredulous
at having missed and,
if I didn't know better, a little
bit embarrassed about it too.

MICHAEL ESTABROOK's words of advice: "Over the years I have published a few chapbooks and appeared in a few terrific poetry magazines, but you are only as good as your next poem and sort of like a surfer looking for that perfect wave, I am a student of poetry incessantly on the lookout for that next, hopefully perfect, poem. Fortunately there are many places to look such as family, work, nature, and in the daily life buzzing like bees in a bottle all around me."

M. J. Iuppa
An Offering

Trace the curve of the gibbous moon
Sip slowly a cold glass of water
Taste the first bite of autumn's apples
Breathe deeply— the air of one breath
Enter the cathedral of forever woods
Kneel between rows of the garden's raised beds
Smell the wet earth drifting toward sleep
Hold a hand that has been left empty
Look up to the sky and wonder
If this answers what you're waiting for.

M. J. IUPPA lives on a small farm near the shores of Lake Ontario. Poems forthcoming in *Tar River Poetry*, *Miller's Pond*, *Iconoclast*, *The Centrifugal Eye*, *Coffee House*, *White Chimney*, *The Hurricane Review*, and creative nonfiction appearing in *Short Takes: Brief Encounters With Contemporary Nonfiction*, edited by Judith Kitchen (Norton 2005). She has three chapbooks and a full-length collection, *Night Traveler* (Foothills Publishing, 2003), and is the Writer-in-Residence and Director of the Arts Minor program at St. John Fisher College.

Leland Jamieson
Taking Out the Wood Ashes

East Hampton, Connecticut. Winter, 2006.

I can't just throw away, and waste, the gray
wood ashes flecked with charcoal chunks that fall
down through our Jøtul's grate, their flame's ballet
too cool at core to dance the night's short haul.
When cold, I dump them in my woods. They sprawl
like atolls rising out of seas of leaves.

(The acid soil cries out, “Sweeten me! — please?”)

I muse: Should I screen chips of charcoal out
to start new fires with? Too dusty a chore.
Or spread the piles, plant seeds, and watch them sprout?
But I can’t cut down trees — just to get more
sunshine on garden rows I’d soon ignore.
I like to seed, but not to weed, or reap
its yield, or watch its frozen winter’s sleep.

If not to seed, what is it draws my mind?
To what felt need? It’s more than simple ashes
to be disposed. It’s that my heart’s divined
the gifts trees bear us — gifts that each one stashes
through capillaries, roots, and leaves sun splashes.
I feel I want to give a sweetener back,
not pilfer like a kleptomaniac.

LELAND JAMIESON lives and writes in East Hampton, Connecticut, USA.
Recent and forthcoming work appears in numerous magazines. His first book,
21st Century Bread: Poems, can be previewed and is available at
<http://www.lulu.com/lelandjamieson> along with a “Poem for the Week” feature.

Michael Johnson
House of Shadows

On a gametrail in a dying forest, you miss the point:
wonder, at seeing an insect big as your fists,
lianas roped through light pillars bracing
a greendomed heaven—this place’s laws
written in the aftermath of butterfly wings,
spun in the ghosttrails of fireflies.

You’ve come to see things like this carapaced beetle—
Goliath—flaunting his Rorschach complexion,
but you’ve lost your eloquence: silenced
by nakedness—Ituri, house of shadows, pygmy Eden.

It’s their finery, the scattershot canopy light, their
agility
and elusiveness—they don’t want to be seen.
Not sinister, just invisible, guardian, spirit.

People, yes, fleshed, if you ever see them,
but not like you and me. Light plays different music

on their skin, different, ancient games with their
bodies.

You might think them dreams, these little people,
and that they may be in time, that they may become.
The way some coins—pennies—can be dropped,
left aside, their shine gone, forgotten,
not worth all that much in the first place.

MICHAEL JOHNSON lives in Vancouver, BC, and work as a technician for Life Fitness. Work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Diagram* and the *Pedestal Magazine*.

Michael Jay Katz
A Warm Word in Fall

The leaf is red, stem turned down
September grades to fall
One cool morning Socrates
Checks the weather indices
The cord is taut
With moisture caught
Inside the spiral pipes
He wets a finger toward the north
I've monitored, says he
This flinty breeze and I'd advise
Warm breakfast against these greying skies
With their cirro-stratus ghosts ...
Look here my son, this wisp of wind
Peeking in the glass
A wisp from Homer's tongue
One spring the world was very young
When he intoned that breathy word
That warm and ancient springtime word
Still afloat but barely heard

MICHAEL JAY KATZ is a teacher living in Chardon, Ohio.

Thomas Martin
New Smyrna Beach, 1989

How the strands of footprints
mingled along the shore

resemble the zippers
we fastened over our jackets

before heading out to the beach
before sunrise. High tide.

We walks toward the jetty,
rods whistling.

How the clasp of each zipper
as we now slide them open

out on the tip of the jetty
resembles the dorsal fin of the bottle-nosed dolphin

trolling the swells.
How the dolphin's hide

flashes in the moonlight
where the shallows are

festooned with shells that
prickle our soles. How shallows

mirror your doubts
that you are doing the right thing.

How starfish resemble wheels,
minnows sparks.

How sandpipers resemble pedestrians
scurrying across the street.

How pelicans resemble judges,
presiding from weather-split posts.

THOMAS MARTIN finished his PhD in English at Western Michigan University and is now teaching modern English and American literature at James Madison University.

Peter Francis Lankarge
A Boston Goose Harmonica Solo

Taught myself the harmonica today
And hearda Charles Coe
And he's a waxin bout my city
Neatha blanketa new snow
Cause the tramp was a lady that day.

Uh huh.

And I'm a watchin the Sun
Go down on Chandler Pond
Where same time day b'fore
I saw three solemn geese
All facin the sundown
Jus sittin there on a rock
Stickin outta the pond

And a one by one a takin off
Real low n straight n flappin
Slappin their wings on the water
But playin wait a few
Fore you go too
Cause ya dont wanna look
Like yer chasin her tail.

No suh.

PETER FRANCIS LANKARGE has spent most of the last year traveling around the United States. He is living in Boston for a second time after a five-month stay in Eugene, Oregon where he performed his poetry at the Eugene Poetry Slam. His chapbook, *The Hey-Roberta Bum's Tune*, is currently awaiting publication.

Sally Allen McNall
Seize the Day

Coastal weather has moved inland.
It's as if I'd never left the ocean, returned to tall pines
waiting for dry storms and wildfires.

On a sunless day, the brutal headlands near the mouth
of the Russian River were gates, swung
and fixed into place against loud cold sea.
The fort was built there anyway.

Trees upriver were here before Spain,
and the scarlet ice plant and lichen
against many-angled gray stones. Now they too
will be counted among our casualties.

The more reason to hold them,
next to this madrone, its wet trunk and branches
great arteries lifted out into the still air.

SALLY ALLEN MCNALL has lived and written in Kansas, Ohio, New Zealand
and California. Her chapbook *How to behave at the zoo and other lessons* won a
State Street Press award, and her first book, *Rescue*, won the Backwaters Press
award. She more recently published another chapbook, *Trying to write a poem
without the word blood in it*, and a full length book, *Where Once*, is in
preparation.

Jody Nash
Eighteen Redwood Trees

Less than a thousand days pass
Three bridges fall, one twice
Crumbling unexpectedly
The earth's appetite for drama
Drops you on a street that goes nowhere
Clenched fists dangling
At the end of your arms
Like pull cords: that's how I find you
I find you on the lip of the land you love
Had to be that one house
So close you bite into it
Breath shallow, quick
The place shrouded in the shade
Of eighteen redwood trees

A great nest pushed up hard
Against a sunny hill
Crisp white trim lining the windows
A bride's mascara
Fertile bees hum, circling
Yellow jackets, wasps
Returning the way a motor spins
The way the hours return
Bored and golden on August afternoons
Campaigning a sacred silence
Hush! Sickness sleeps
The disease: you can smell it
At the top of your belly
No explanations, the longing for home
Cancer dressed for a wedding
The old carpet ripe with children
The kitchen still warm
The hammock swinging in the sun
Where I lie like a survivor

JODY NASH currently works as a Registered Nurse specializing in telephone triage. She received a BFA in Studio Arts from UC Davis in 1996 (with a focus on printmaking) and an MS in Nursing from University of Phoenix in 2004.

Ashok Niyogi
Outside the Krishna Temple with a Texan Devotee

doughty cow
dusty red road
afternoon sleep
sagging rope cot
fallen autumn leaves
rot

a bucket of
left over
rain water
to cleanse
a miniature udder
thin wind shudders
tamarind trees are
taut

leave some sweat
for the new calf
please

camp followers
thread garlands
with small flowers
purple patch and
pious pink virgin
knot

like clouds loaf
about a done sun
lord at play
cymbals clash
fervent call
the despair
of compressed air
beneath a canopy
of wire mesh
in which
monkey paws are
caught

you missed
an orgasm
in return
for nothing
now pregnant with
clarified butter
on cotton wicks
with devotion
dazzling light
with blindness
fraught

thin mongrel licks
blistered bare feet
black smoke
from bullying lamps
lord revels
in stifling smell
of too much incense
and buffalo musk
to entice again
to tease a
lot

run away
from all that contradicts

all that is new
from the darker side
of the enticing moon
the lord was born
in a tempest
on a moonless night
hold tight this
is the realization you
sought

ASHOK NIYOGI, author of *Tentatively*, is an Economics graduate from Presidency College, Calcutta. He made a career as an International Trader and has lived and worked in the Soviet Union, Europe and South East Asia in the '80s and '90s. At 52, he has been retired for some years and has been cashew farming, writing and traveling. He divides time between California, Delhi, and the Indian Himalayas.

G. H. Smith
Labor

We worked deep in the woods,
a place all but foreign to the world,
autumn leaves plummeting earthward,
a rank and nagging chill
sown before the wind.

Our footprints had already vanished;
how could we hope to retrace them?
I kept looking up, thinking
someone else was there, watching,
waiting to applaud or slay us.

Man needs labor, its perpetual volley
of lost causes, its conundrums and thinking
through, the way the hours orbit
well-meaning hands, the necessary
fiction holding impermanence at bay.

We need to feel the weight
of the hammer falling,
to witness the glint
of the blade brought to bear,
even if it slashes us,

even for the scars
that inscribe our flesh,

hearts' percussion strained to bursting.
We need all this and more,
though what's *more* we must not mention.

When the whistle of
darkness began to blow,
I pulled on my coat,
and gathered what I owned.
There was nothing useful left to do,

if indeed there ever had ever been.
The woods in their unholy seclusion
reached out as we began to run,
tempted us with graves to toil,
the lavish wages of a night without end.

G. H. SMITH has published in *The Atlanta Review*, *Chicago Quarterly Review*,
and elsewhere.

John L. Stanizzi

The Back of My Hand

A few wax wings tossed into the
lungs of a winter tree
this gray afternoon.
The backs of my hands like
the lungs of a winter tree,
the backs of my hands which,
I've been told, I know
as well as anything.
And maybe it's true.
I know that my hands
cannot stop this cloudy shank
of afternoon from seeping into
the high gloss of night,
cannot keep at arm's length
the storm resonating on the horizon,
cannot tell you where to look
to find the right kind of light,
the light that will whisper to you
things you know
like the back of your hand.

Fall

after Robert Frost

Show me where to begin this morning,
how to sit with the overcast dawn,
and consider what has been said
and what will be said
waiting patiently for the rain.

Soon the birds will make their voyage.
This morning's silent valley reminds us of that.
And the leaves will burn their *smokeless burn*,
leaving a landscape of bare bones,
each one distinct, each one with story...
here there was a nest,
there a fledgling wobbled,
and the branches with the gentle arch
are the ones that bent for the wind,
moved aside to let it pass.
And the fallen branches,
the ones face down on their bellies...
those are the ones crawling
ever so slowly
back to where they started

Front

Disastrous drought they're calling it,
nothing more than a trace of rain in two months,
but yesterday's rumor of showers crackled
over radios and televisions,
and in anticipation, the ordering of things began;
gather up the stray tools, put the tractor away,
tell the geraniums that soon, soon it will be all right,
and go to bed with one ear open, listening
for the sympathetic whisper of rain in the trees,
and the silent sigh of the landscape
and everything hidden there.

The pacific hiss of morning rain,
sun held down under clouds and fog,
and the rooms of the house soften with dusky shadows.

May it rain all day long and never brighten,
not even for a moment.
And may the plants lift their faces,
streaked with dusty rain water,
and like children running around the yard,
catch the drops in their open, smiling mouths.

JOHN L. STANIZZI's first book, *Ecstasy among Ghosts*, was published by Antrim House Books (www.antrimhousebooks.com), and he had a second book, *Sleepwalking*, to be released soon. Stanizzi was awarded the New England Poet of the Year (1998) by the New England Association of Teachers of English.

Jampa Naphtali Williams
But First This Gorgeous Song

There was a whistle, and a cough of rain
approached from the trees. There might
have been menace, or redemption, to come,
but first was this gorgeous song
and the long huddling movements
of nickel and blue dragonflies pursuing
their skip of a day as the sun resurrected itself.
Warm light precipitated dreams from my skin.
I was tethered, loved, away from the
hollow world where nightmare lay
like a ruined beast and left its shadow of grief,
I was fetched towards the breeze off the stream,
the sun plowing hope into the earth.
I breathed through your hands,
a bud opening to the arch of the lover's gate.
I say this now with your dream arousing me again to life.

JAMPA NAPHTALI WILLIAMS is an abolitionist poet in New England, writing in the faith that eventually reverence for all beings will blossom across the globe.