

Miriam Barr
Dystopia

The coffee table is a chasm
they avoid gazes across.

No words make it over
& today their arms aren't long enough
because they do not touch.

There is a pillow on the couch.
A folded blanket.

The day is blue
but the night will not dissipate.

In between caffeine hits,
small talk fixes nothing.

Pet names remain
attached to his sentences
but they do not warm her.

MIRIAM BARR is a page and performance poet from Auckland, New Zealand. She is creative director for performance poetry group The Literatti, editor of the underground poetry zine *Side Stream* and one of the co-ordinators of NZ's longest running, weekly poetry event, Poetry Live. Miriam has published two collections of her poetry, *Tangents* (2006, The Backshed Press) and *Observations from the Poetry Factory* (2007, The Backshed Press). She divides her time between poetry projects ad infinitum and her work in the field of psychology and mental health. www.myspace.com/literartistmiriambarr.
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Pris Campbell
Grammar Schooled Lover

He parses ecstasy,
clutters delight with periodic stops,
elucidates the joyful syntax of romantic fusion,
punctuated by high expectations.
His grammar is precise
as he diagrams in pluperfect tense,
corrects love's fragmented sentences,
dissembles the heart of the matter

(in passive voice, of course).
While searching for sub textual synonyms,
nose stuck in Webster,
his beloved splits for infinity
with a grocer bearing roses.

Jane Crown
The Fatalists

The Jainists
possess these living flaws you see,

They sweep their paths with horsehair
brushes or brooms
to make sure not an iota of
life be slain.

They don their mouths
with masks,
for mosquitoes are rife as well in India
easily mangled by man and woman

They continue to shrink in numbers ever since inception,

Respecting life,
as they have.

The Birds

Travel leads to disembarking, so
keep your valuables with you
and never watch over your left shoulder

Bar the doors of the vehicle, even plane or bus
birds anywhere are evil
if they come in dead or otherwise, never trust wings

Beautiful as they may be,
never look for them or let them in willingly
poems regale white and yellow throats alike

Deny them entrance, I fear they will steal
more than a morsel of death
they resound with caterwauling and swoops

Not by train or eye or strange woman grieving,
should you easily trust them to be safely placed
bring your suitcase quietly and by foot.

JANE CROWN has been in journals, book collectives, and print magazines such as Denver Syntax, Gloom Cupboard, and Juice press. Jane hosts an interview based program on blog talk radio, where she interviews and compiles at least 50 sessions per year of American poets of all genres. <http://www.janecrown.com>

David Brendan Hopes
In the Café 1: The End of Composition

The man at the next table is writing
those hesitant stop-at-the-end-and-listen
lines of poetry. I hope the poetry is not good.
He is too handsome for that.

So, that other poet, the handsome one,
writes in a coil-bound, paper-covered notebook
you can get at the drugstore
with change back from a dollar

My black leather diary from
a street market in the Village
could have my name embossed, if I'd wanted it, in gold.
I had to use a credit card.

Let the gods decide which one of us
is serious, which one could raise his eyelids
at the counter girl and it be the
end of composition.

In the Café 2: The One Such Thing

Everyone comes to the café to build their houses,
Some in air, some on Chicken Hill
now that it's open to gentrification.
I have learned about the driving down of basements
on these steep hills, plumbing amid the
mercurial pressures, the improbable
and yet longed-for kitchen island,
the fixtures which are on order,
those that must be despaired of.

I would make pilgrimage. I would look upon
those bannisters saved from someone's mansion,
those dormers set just the way you wanted them,
after all the bad inspections, flaws, and quarrels, perfect.
The one such thing most of us will ever look upon.

In the Café 3: In a Summer of Cicadas

Above the café terrace, the chant of insects
fills pauses in the outcry of the traffic.

A many-jeweled cicada flops through heavy air
and lands on a coffee-drinker's purse.

She looks at it a little sadly, that Cartier body,
those Victorian fairy wings. She says,

"Poor thing. You are about to die." She leaves it
its fragment of solitude on the corner of her purse.

I look in my mug for my own surprise. No. Just
coffee and cream, the ice archipelagos of summer.

A strange question comes to me out of the pattern
of the ice and the Arab colored coffee.

What if there is a god whose eye every last cicada
of the myriad myriad follows to the ground?

What if there is a god who over the creature
on the woman's purse cried out, wept, turned back

to the descending cloud, crying out and crying out,
each one counted, noted, added to the lamentation?

I swivel to the tipped mugs, the sucked straws, the
down-turned, muffin-concentrated faces. Do you think so?

I think it is possible. I think it is necessary.
I think it may even be me.

DAVID BRENDAN HOPES is professor of literature and language at the University of North Carolina at Asheville, an actor, painter, and widely produced playwright. He is the author of the Juniper Prize and Saxifrage Prize winning book, *The Glacier's Daughters*, and of *Blood Rose* (Urthona Press, 1997), the Pulitzer and National-Book Award-nominated *A Childhood in the Milky Way*

(Akron University Press), and the volumes of nature essays, *A Sense of the Morning* (1999) and *Bird Songs of the Mesozoic*, from Milkweed Editions. His latest, full-length poetry collection *A Dream of Adonis* appeared from Pecan Grove Press in 2007.

Irene Blair Honeycutt
Melanoma, Stage 4

Another pitch from the radio commentator
for a donation: *Ten dollars a month,*
and we'll send you Yo-Yo Ma playing
"The Appassionato."

Maybe T would like that CD.
She sends me energy and love,
wants me in her life again.
This can't be bought for ten dollars.
She doesn't invite everyone into
her life or her homes. In Minnesota,
you can step out her back door
and ski into the woods. A vacation
can't be bought for ten dollars.

When T flew to Charlotte
for a friend's surprise birthday party,
long-lost friends, we reunited over
garlic nan, navrattan curry.
She shared photos of the trips
she and her husband recently made
to Prague and Budapest, then told me
how their estate lawyer looked surprised
when he walked into his office
and saw them sitting there with an 8x10
photo of their cat between them.
Who do you leave an estate to?
We're both only children.

More pictures:
Sandcastle—the Marco Island home—
an iguana on the deck.
Day of the Iguana, she laughs.
We call him Tennie.

I cling to every word. She told
the surgeon who wasn't sure

she should make the trip to Greece:
*Hey. I have no compulsion to climb
to the top of the Acropolis. I've done that!"*

And when Nurse Ratchett droned on
about the tests they were about to administer,
T mentally envisioned herself away
from there and chanted:

*Soon I'll be swimming in the Aegean Sea
drowning out the Siren's calls*

In one week she was stroking icy blue
waters, thinking of Helen of Troy.

I love the way we laughed hard
at the Indian restaurant.
She was there, tasting the curry—
not needing a workshop
on how to be in the Now.
One of the few friends I have
who knows what she's dying of.

The Wife Speaks to Her Husband from Her Grave

It grieves me in a wicked way
that you painted the living room walls
green after I was gone.
Why didn't you tell me you never
liked gray?

And to think my funeral was marred
because your classmate's cell phone
went off, playing hip-hop of all things.
If I'd had a say in this, cell phones
would've been checked outside the chapel.
But what influence does a corpse have

except to frighten people into believing
for a day or two that there may be
a hereafter.

So you bought your first brand new car.
Why'd you wait till I was gone to show off?

Payback time! Just when you drummed
up courage to fly, your heart gave out.
Stubborn to the end, you kept telling
the stewardess it was only indigestion.
Did you eat at Taco Bell before driving
to the airport? Or did you take
the guacamole on board?

Would've been nice if we'd talked more,
you know, about things that *really* mattered.
Not just gossipy fritters over supper.
Strange, how all those years I thought
we were comfortable being together,
I find out after dying
that I never really knew you.

Well, your procession is arriving.
I hear the tires crunching gravel.
Bizarre, huh? We'll be like neighbors.
Never even touch.

IRENE BLAIR HONEYCUTT, awarded Teacher of the Year for Teaching Excellence at Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, NC, founded and subsequently directed the college's Annual Spring Literary Festival for 14 years. In 2006 the college established the Irene Blair Honeycutt Distinguished Lectureship. Irene's first children's book, *The Prince with the Golden Hair*, was published in 2006 by D-N Publishing. She has three published poetry manuscripts: *It Comes as a Dark Surprise*, winner of Sandstone Publishing's Regional Poetry Contest in 1992; *Waiting for the Trout to Speak* (Novello Festival Press 2002); and *Before the Light Changes*, released September 2008 from Main Street Rag Publishing. She now lives in Indian Trail, NC.

Oriana Backstitch

This pine village is so slow
that I permit myself to sew –
a patient stitch that imitates
the over-and-over
of a sewing machine.

What luxury, my hand my own
sewing machine, dipping back
before going forward –
stitching the moment that has passed
to the moment that is passing now.

It's backstitch, a friend explains.
Thirty years I worked that stitch
without knowing its name.
I learned to sew long ago,
in a faraway language –

silence and I in life-and-death
race to see who'll say it first:
in sun-flood of a California summer
stitching to where the past and now
fall together in seamless snow.

Oritsegbemi Emmanuel Jakpa
Sculptor

He saw on this tree
all sort of people have seen before
a flawless split on the bark
caused by too much sun
or too less rain.
He hurried home, and brought tools.
Saw off the portion,
5ft long and 2 ft wide.
With the slow pace of
a man pulling truck,
he wheelbarrows it home
and spend an entire month there,

Oritsegbemi Emmanuel Jakpa was born in Warri, Nigeria, studied at the University of Iowa, and is currently living in Ireland where he is pursuing an MA in Creative Writing at the Waterford Institute of Technology. His poetry has been published in a number of online and print journals and an Irish-Canadian anthology.

Kathleen Kenny
Goose Warrior
(Guggenhiem, Bilbao)

Within my beak
I squeeze the head of Man

who disguises himself
to explore the tree-tops of the world.

He walks them, from Portugal to the Pyrenees ,
inventing flags, all their colours and symbols.

He is identifying mountains,
claiming dominion, changing the landscape.

Soon Mexico itself will not be far away.

I have his feet sticking out.
See, I have his puny arms.

He has my secrets,
my stolen feathers.

KATHLEEN KENNY lives and writes in Newcastle upon Tyne, England. She works as a part-time creative writing tutor at the Centre for Lifelong Learning. Her latest collection of poems: *Firesprung* was published recently by Red Squirrel Press.

Helen Losse
Queen Anne's Lace

Yearly, above the right of way—
late-summer-evening,
air stagnant and dusty—

Queen Anne's Lace continues
blooming. Blackberry bushes
produce under-sized berries,

if any at all. Evergreens sprout
beside *Daucus Carota*, whose
flowers grow in clusters:
white and delicate wonder,
sacred wild carrot. The tap root
of the young plant is edible, used

for jelly or cake. Beauty like
heaven, abundant like legends
of England 's Queen Anne,

who tats delicate lace or dons her
queenly headdress. When taken medicinally,
sometimes it's for contraception,

other times fertility. Perhaps,
it's named for Saint Anne, who
was barren, but—after the angel's visit—

bore Mary, the Mother of God.

Susan Meyers
Dear Beggar's Lice,

I have taken you on
as mine
without knowing—

hitchhiker, stickseed, chain
of loose fruits,
cure for colic, kidney stones—

closer than all my kin
but one
and more tenacious

like homesickness
like love
like grief.

SUSAN MEYERS is the author of *Keep and Give Away* (University of South Carolina Press, 2006), which received the SC Poetry Prize, the SIBA Book Award for Poetry, and the Brockman-Campbell Book Award. Recent poems of hers have appeared, or soon will appear, in *jubilat*, *Ekphrasis*, and *Solo Cafe*.

Janice Moore-Fuller
Laundry Day

On the clothesline in the back
freshly laundered shirts and blouses
talk together, shyly try to hold hands.
One fellow stands on his head
his ankles grazing the rope.
A lean girl vaults the trapeze wire
catching a breeze as she goes.

They will not come inside or even
onto the terrace. They dance
and tumble in the morning.
After naptime they are gone.

The tall one has left a sock
behind, a long black one, toe
pointed toward the pebbled road.
Someone must have chased them
with a muslin bag. I can see her
limping after the others—one foot
stockinged, the other, bare to sharp
marble, tin lids. Still she goes on.
No one will fold her like a handkerchief,
flatten her deep in a drawer.

On the Bevel

“A body is not square like a crosstie.”
--Cash Bundren, *As I Lay Dying*

The steeples seem tall enough,
grey stones stacked above the soil
slanting toward blue's edge,

the highest tip so small
it could be a child's finger
pointing at something it can't have.

The unknown left my father frayed.
Just level work for him—seams
straight, right angles more perfect

than the railroader's box he carried
from project to project—rabbit hutch,
dog house with hinged door.

Yesterday, the Virginia Creeper
beveled into red and gold,
released its leaves into glowing piles

on the ground, a sun not quite set.
Gravity takes the rain straight through
the body, if someone doesn't slant

the lid at just the right angle.
Coffins know the remains don't fit but lift
their walls in welcome, just the same.

JANICE MOORE-FULLER Writer-in-Residence and Professor of English at Catawba College in Salisbury, North Carolina, Janice Moore Fuller has published three volumes of poems as well as poems and essays in numerous international magazines, including *Magma* (London) and *New Welsh Review*. Her most recent book from Iris Press, *Séance*, was awarded the 2008 Oscar Arnold Young Award from the Poetry Council of North Carolina. Her plays and libretti have been produced at Catawba's Florence Busby Corriher and Hedrick theatres, BareBones Theater's New Play Festival, Minneapolis Fringe Festival, Polli Talu Arts Center in Estonia, and Rendez-Vous Musique Nouvelle in France.

Diana Pinckney
Killdeer

Here on the edge
of the world we give
way to the tide
that takes us out
beyond the familiar,
past what is never
past, the undertow
under the moon
carrying us over
a horizon where
we swim, turning
and turning
our bodies into
the cries of birds.

Clapper Rails

Thin, dark flitting invisible
through reedy creeks, these

calls and cackles gleeful
the sun has seeped into trees. A raucous

crowd, near, but not of
the ocean. Who cares if your eyes

ever glimpse a flurry, one
or two fluttering their wings, less

graceful than chickens careening
old barnyards. Marsh

hens natives called them, tracked

and trapped, such

poultry made a foul
meal. So tough no one

dares fry or bake. They ride
tides, float eggs in pluff-mud and shrill

black waters. You know
they are close, answering each

other over oyster
beds, blue crabs, every

scuttling appetite, the night
grasses alive with hoots

rising, a party you love
to be near, not of.

DIANA PINCKNEY has published poetry and prose in such journals as *Cream City Review*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Iodine*, *Green Mountains Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *Sow's Ear Poetry*, *Calyx*, *Cave Wall* and other magazines and anthologies. She has three collections of poetry: *Fishing With Tall Women*, Winner of South Carolina's Kinloch Rivers Chapbook Contest and North Carolina's Persephone Book Award, Persephone Press 1996, *White Linen*, Nightshade Press 1998, and *Alchemy*, Main Street Rag Publishing Co. 2004. She is currently working on a collection of poems about mermaids, of all things, and other fascinations of the sea.

Pat Riviere-Seel
After Solstice

Wind shakes the house. Windows chatter
like teeth against the cold,
clouds cover the mountains,
the stove still warm, red coals waiting
to be coaxed into flame.

Apples, potatoes, jars of beans fill
the cellar. Bags of strawberries, blueberries,
pints of pesto pack the freezer.

I've waited all year for winter, the long
hunkering in, silence of snow falling,
the beautiful violence of sunlight

battering ice sheathed branches —
the snap, the slow melting.

February Bear

Today's predicted ice storm never arrived.
But a yearling did.

Casual as a hiker, he strolled
down through the woods, stopped
to claw larva from a dead pine.

Solid as a boxer, graceful
as a ballerina, he swayed
past the house, blue-black fur

luminous with afternoon sunlight
until his great rear end disappeared.

PAT RIVIERE-SEEL lives and runs trails in Asheville, NC. Her second poetry chapbook, *The Serial Killer's Daughter*, was a finalist in the Main Street Rag Publishing Company's 2008 chapbook contest and is scheduled for publication in early 2009. Her first collection of poems, *No Turning Back Now*, was published by Finishing Line Press in 2004 and nominated for a Pushcart Prize. New poems are forthcoming in *Tar River Poetry* and *Solo Café*.

Tammy Robacker Lea & the Trampoline

There is no trick
to her flying
she's simply free
not flung or cast off
she being born
loved and honey blonde
as summer Lea teeters
footloose and fearless
from the edge
of a trampoline
of being thirteen
tall and sprung
green as sapling
but grown strong
as Annie Oakley
aiming and shooting

herself sharp off
those tree lean legs
that will one day
overrun this lawn
outgrow our home
trample hearts
kick down doors
march up an aisle
barrel through
the wild wild world
locked and cocked solid
in her stocking feet.

TAMMY ROBACKER is a poet and writer living and working in Tacoma, WA. Her poetry has appeared in *Stripped*, *Plazm*, *Women's Work* and the *Allegheny Review*. She received her B.A. degree in Creative Writing from The Evergreen State College in Olympia, WA and did her post-graduate Master's work in Communications and Mass Media studies at the University of Wyoming in Laramie, WY. Currently, Ms. Robacker runs her own freelance writing and marketing communications company, Pearle Publications, in Tacoma, WA, and loves being able to work in her pajamas.

Reviews

Pris Campbell's *Hesitant Commitments*

Suzanne Frischkorn's *Lit Windowpane*

Dannye Romine-Powell's *A Necklace of Bees*

Paul Nelson's *Sea Level*

Glenis Redmond's *Under the Sun*