

Featured Poet
Al Maginnes

Admission

Our end of the bargain was to arrive
 when the quick construction was done,
the rides all up and running, the booths lit,
 for what is a city, even one built
of pasteboard and illusion, without citizens,
 however temporary? If armies travel
on their stomachs, the small fairs that came
 each fall, artilleries of light and promise
ambushing, then dispersing like vapor,
 traveled on folding money, the prize
for tempting us with the romance of change
 or the possibility of getting us to buy
what we knew did not exist. The creature,
 half-child half-frog, born to a mother
who took LSD every day for a year,
 was not so frightening as the legless man
who took our tickets, one blind and milky eye
 untethered in its socket, even in 1970
post-Manson America, when we hallucinated
 blood drunk drug killers in every van
decorated by a peace sign. Illusion offered
 only a wilted defense that day.
The half-child half-frog floated in a jar
 of liquid so cloudy I couldn't see
any features at all. The largest snake in the world
 lay fly-bothered and listless. I'd seen
the woman who turned into an ape last year
 and I knew better than to try the ring toss
or the shooting gallery. Dark came quickly.
 Winter was falling. Six thousand miles away
a war continued, a President talked in his sleep
 and we walked through our waning days of belief.

The Last Dinosaur In Bartow County

The egg lay cracked at the border
 of pastureland, two enormous
reeking halves of a story
 whose beginning humans never witnessed.
Trackers and dogs would not follow

footprints that had torn
a cornfield into ribbons
before vanishing into a century
of rumor, salted by spits
of bone and fur hunters claimed
to find, by tree trunks tossed
by fury too great to blame
on a storm's ire. When the palms
of wind roughed the leafy domes
of trees, rogue uncles ruffling
hair combed for Sunday, rumor whispered
you might see the head surface
above a body that moved
with the slow majesty
of an ocean liner, its final
function to shiver boys awake
in the pre-dawn of their first hunt,
to make easy prey of deer
and game birds, trophies taken
in the shadow of a body
living outside time.

Bygones

Any credit we give past lovers
we balance with blame. But they were
flesh as we are flesh. Flesh,
but something else as well, something
shaped as we say their names,
each one, through time, reduced
to one image, a letter chipped
in stone, monument or marker
holding solid under the shifting
dapple of light webbed through leaves.
However many there were—the number,
like all historic fact, changes—
we needed each one in order
to ford some unnamed threshold
of body or spirit, that once crossed,
led only to one more threshold.
How many times, caught in the rhythms
of another body, did I believe
we were forever altered by this, marked
so our skins would always be stained.
Before I understood the dignity
of refusal flesh commands,

its endless ability to compose itself.
Years pass. Erotic trickeries,
careless rejections dilute, their power
to hypnotize and sting turned
to cobwebs, then memories of cobwebs,
pauses in the narratives
we continue although we hear our voices
and know how wrong, how irretrievably
wrong we are getting everything.

The Torturer's Alphabet

Start with a letter. Small sound.
Still seed of language pain knows
how to find. Electricity. Heat.
Letters vine with letters, their momentum
building syllables. Water. Blows
that bring no bruises to bloom.
This is eloquence no lover matches,
these sounds that will not marry
into sentences. Fricatives.
Sibilants. The consonant inhaled.
No tongue rests easy here.
Cattle prod. Forceps. Grammar
and its odd brother memory
leave the room. There will be
no description of faces. No account
of the radio in the corner repeating
its irrelevant news each hour.
When a final singing, glottal, forbidden,
begins, noise few human throats
have made, breath is allowed. Now,
at the edge of a dark and unnamed
plain, the body risks its story.
Believe nothing you hear.

AL MAGINNES's most recent collections are *Ghost Alphabet*, which won the 2008 White Pine Poetry Prize, *Dry Glass Blues*, a single long poem published as a chapbook by Pudding House Press in 2007, and *Film History* (Word Tech Editions 2005). He has poems appearing or forthcoming in *Tar River Review*, *Southern Poetry Review*, *American Literary Review*, *Terminus*, *Green Mountains Review*, *Cave Wall*, and *Grist*. He lives in Raleigh, NC and teaches at Wake Technical Community College.

Rand Brandes
The Bolt

When the lightning unzipped our tree
The bark fell off like a new bride's dress
Sometime after clock-stopping mid-night
The flash and thunder blew us out of bed
Twenty-five years after we planted the oak
Thirty feet from the window we knew
Was too close, but we wanted to watch it
Grow until it blocked our view and cast
Its great shadow over the world below
In the summer and etched the earth in winter.
So we wait to see if it was a death-blow,
If the leaves will fade before the fall
If the birds will fill in for them perched
On branches and limbs. And yet
There's the outside chance that the bolt
Did not reach the heart of the tree
And that the sap just exploded in line
With logic and luck. Perhaps when spring
Comes new leaves will come too and all
That we'll feel is the long scar forgetting
The shock of that night, thanking the stars
For a second chance, for thick skin, and love.

RAND BRANDES is the Martin Luther Stevens Professor of English and Writer-in Residence at Lenoir-Rhyne University where he teaches creative writing and modern poetry. He has published widely on Contemporary British and Irish poetry, especially Ted Hughes and Seamus Heaney, including most recently *Seamus Heaney: A Bibliography 1959-2003* (Faber and Faber, 2008).

Pris Campbell
Original Sin

When Adam bedded Eve in these dark pines
I wonder if they laughed in their nakedness,
threw kisses at lopsided stars.
I doubt Adam searched for other Eves to ogle,
found fault or ignored her.
He likely never took joy in jabbing her
with sharp twigs or thorns.
I dream of them cooing blissfully,
serpent and apple still in their future.

Our boat swings with the tide, waking us.
He slides inside. My very own Adam,
already tainted by original sin.

PRIS CAMPBELL has published *Boxcar Poetry Review*, *The Smoking Poet*, *The Cliffs: Soundings*, *Chiron Review*, *Main Street Rag*, *The Dead Mule* and numerous others. She also has appeared in several anthologies. She was recently featured poet in both *In The Fray* and *Empowerment4Women*. Her third chapbook, *Hesitant Commitments*, was published by LummoX Press as part of its Little Red Book series, archived at Brown U. and SUNY. She was also nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2008.. The poem in this issue of *Wild Goose Review* comes from an in-progress collection of poems titled *Sea Trails*, drawn from her six month travels in a 22 foot sailboat in the late seventies.

Jessie Carty
The Wait of Atom

It wasn't that he wouldn't wait for her
or not even that he didn't want
to wait for her, he just couldn't
stand still. She couldn't stand *it*,
the way his eyes became nearly crossed,
how he jangled the change in his pocket.
She'd complained before.

To keep his face from registering
annoyance, he began mentally listing
the noble gases by weight: lowest to highest,
using his hands in his pockets to count each one.
He could do this without moving his lips.
His face relaxed even though she was still
transferring her personal items
from a brown purse to a black one.
She had explained, on more than one occasion,
how her purse had to match her shoes. How
his belt should match his shoes and he'd learned
to keep his eyes focused on a point
just over her shoulder while he let his brain
scan the periodic table of elements.

Gift Catalog

On top of the fridge is a carton
of cigarettes. I select a pack
and sit down at the kitchen table.

I pull the gold strip on the box.
The cellophane settles on the table
still holding its shape.

The ticket falls from the back
of the pack. I pick it up, place it
on the table for Mom to see.

How many tickets do we have, I ask
as I give her the box of cigarettes.
She hands me the coupon book,

165. I scan the catalog. I find
an AM/FM portable radio. I
hear a match scratch against

the edge of the table. I show Mom
the radio. She shakes the match
and puffs on the cigarette to start

its burn. As she nods, she exhales
a circle of smoke towards me.

JESSIE CARTY's work has appeared in journals such as *Margie* and *Iodine Poetry Journal*. Her first chapbook will be published by Puddinghouse Publications in 2009. Jessie is also the Editor of *Shape of a Box* (<http://www.youtube.com/shapeofabox>).

Terri Kirby Erickson
Assisted Living

Wandering through the door
of my grandmother's room, a woman
leans close to her and asks,

Have you seen Rose?

Thin as a sapling, robe
gaped open, revealing
bruised and mottled skin—

her eyes beseech, hands
wringing as if she were God
re-creating Rose

from a rib of air. Grandmother says *no*,
we're sorry—and the woman walks
out, moaning the way

the wind moans when it whips
around a house, rattling windows,
searching for cracks.

A Rancher Buries His Wife

They buried her in sun-baked ground, his wife
of fifty years.

A cowbird whistled from a crucifixion thorn,
and a freight train clacked

down the tracks. He stood apart
from the rest of them—folks whose names he

never cared to know, remembering of all things,
her hair haloed with light,

and the scent of her, still clinging to the clothes
she left behind.

He would die of it, this loneliness.
Already his hands were curling up, his fingers

turning blue. He used to be afraid of death.
Now he'd welcome it, like rain.

TERRI KIRBY ERICKSON is the author of a collection of poetry entitled, *Thread Count*. Her work has been published by or is forthcoming in *Pisgah Review*, *Blue Fifth Review*, *Dead Mule*, *Smoking Poet*, *Broad River Review*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Paris Voice*, and others. Her poem, "Bobbing for Apples," won second place in the category of "Light Verse" in a poetry contest sponsored by the *Poetry Council of North Carolina*, and has been published in the 2008 edition of *Bay Leaves*. *The Northwest Cultural Council* also selected her work in 2006 and 2007, for an international juried poetry exhibit.

William Keener
Refuge

When the gap from flash to thunderclap
is gone, I am caught on open ground.

Standing too tall in the marsh, I watch
a heron sail toward sheltered woods.
Geese lie flat in the grass, turtles
hunker in their shells, and a snake forks
the humid air before sliding to its burrow.

Gusting winds drive me from the water's
edge, as a red-headed woodpecker
stops drumming its drowned snag
at the crack of the bolt that almost
grounds me to an incandescent cloud.

Through boom and pour and fire
flicking from the belly of the sky,
I run straight for the trees and into
the arms of the ash, the oak, the elm.
But back by the lake, the blue flag iris

bloom, unflinching in the jagged light,
tongues wild for a taste of summer rain.

WILLIAM KEENER is a writer and environmental lawyer living in the San Francisco Bay Area. His poems are forthcoming in *The Main Street Rag*, *The Raven Chronicles* and *Caesura*. My chapbook of nature poetry "G old Leaf on Granite" recently won the 2008 Anabiosis Press Contest and is scheduled for publication in Summer 2009.

Kit Kennedy
Inevitable

cut away this square
that rectangle
from what was told
what you remember
replace the empty
with a flock of birds
so happy to be free
though they haven't a clue
about berries nesting migration
the innocent live on flights of fancy
you turn back

into the blood
of your mother
you have much to tell her
the dream will be long

KIT KENNEDY, a San Francisco based poet, has published widely in print and online journals including Bombay Gin, Karamu, Runes, Saranac Review, and Van Gogh's Ear. She hosts the monthly Gallery Café Reading Series.

www.authorsden.com/kitkennedy

Steve Klepetar

An Offering

Your father's soul is never easy.
Your father's soul would eat bread if it could.
Your father's soul curses barflies and spilled beer.

His anger smells of sweat and peppermint.
LifeSavers melt and corrode in the pockets of his coat.
When night rushes in he will hold one in his hand, an offering.

STEVE KLEPETAR teaches literature and writing at Saint Cloud State University in Minnesota. His work has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net.

Helen Losse

Recorded In Time

— November 4, 2008

For this occasion,
I'm going to call the roll,
and if you are present, answer.
If you've been waiting,
tell us how long, tell us
or show us how you feel.
After a while, this may
become a litany of *angels*
and saints, the quick and the dead,
who, in melody and harmony
in spirit and in truth, and with
thanks to *James Weldon Johnson,*
"lift ev'ry voice and sing"

There are *many slaves* here.
Some sold south.
Some who were beaten
after hiding in the woods.

There are men and women
and children. *Mammy,*
Jake, Jezebel, Chicken-Man
were not your real names.
Stripped of your natal pride.
Still, for this night, you have come.

I'm sure *Gabriel Prosser's* here.
Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner.
Your rebellions speak louder
of what you wanted
than the "here" of your swift reply.

This present freedom
depends on shed blood—
even blood from *John Brown's*
white body, so that dead, his
"soul [, too, still] march[es] on!"

Harriet Tubman, You were
"Moses" to your kin,
and you managed to smuggle 19
out to freedom in the north.

How loudly your actions speak.
Soujourner Truth.
What a fight for equality.
You two great women are here.

Then I mention certain
former slaves, who have recorded
their stories in the government
project that created jobs after
the Great Depression. I will call
only a few of you by name.
Ben Horry. Sarah Gudger. Aunt Lucy.
And you will answer, "We are here,
after waiting a long, long time."

There are *many others with you.*
You know who you are.
Frederick Douglass. In 1872,
you were nominated for Vice-
President by the Equal Rights Party.
You're here, right?
You're watching what's being called

“historic.” Watching the votes come in
for America’s first Black President,
you look happy.

*A. Philip Randolph. You, and
the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.*
You who formed a labor union and
fought Jim Crow and marched in ’63.
You are here? You say, “yes,”
and that you believe in Main Street .
George Washington Carver.
Phillis Wheatley, Mahalia Jackson.
Septima P. Clark.
The writers of the Harlem Renaissance.
*Booker T. Washington. “I Too Sing
America,” answers Langston Hughes.*

I am calling *Martin, Malcolm X, Medgar Evers.*
Ralph Abernathy. Bayard Rustin.
James Farmer. Andrew Young.
And *John Lewis*, the “Boy from Troy ” who
marched with you, spoke at the Lincoln Memorial.

Many of you are dead now—“free at last.”
Lewis breathes, votes in Congress, took
a “bunch of flack” in the present election.

Let’s not forget Rosa . *Rosa Parks*,
so much more than any symbol.
Ella Baker. Jo Ann Robinson.
*All of you women behind the scene,
who typed and organized and walked.*
I call on the beautiful *Fannie Lou Hamer.*
How I hope your answer comes in song,
for my “little light” so wants to shine,
with your light. How many voters did
you bring, Fannie—“sick and tired”
to the bone that Freedom Summer?

I am calling *the girls who died in Birmingham.*
Coretta Scott King. Maya Angelou.
Alice Walker. June Jordan.
Nora Zeale Hurston. Toni Morrison.
Nikki Giovanni,
Gwendolyn Brooks.
And *Viola Gregg Luizzo,*

the only white woman to die
in the movement of the 60s.

I call on *Jackie Robinson*.
I'm recalling your sacrifice, when someone—
forced to pee behind the bus and to eat at
the back window—calls out, "Here!"
Here. Now.
You may now go where you will.
I'm saying "Hey" to *Willie Mays*,
Hank Aaron. *O.J.*?
O. J., How did you get here?
Your silence speaks volumes.
Volumes. What about *Tupac*?
Perhaps some others will surprise.
But remember who we are.

Ralph Ellison. *Lerone Bennett*. *John Hope Franklin*.
Duke Ellington, *Louis Armstrong*.
Minister Louis Farrakhan

and a *Million Men who went for a March*
in the '90s. *Tony Parent*? *Alton Pollard*?
John Mendez weren't you there? Yes,
I'm calling you, too, *Carlton Eversley*.
And *Jesse Jackson*. Oh, Jesse, Jesse—
I know why you cry. You who were
there when King died,
shot, falling backwards, blood spilling
onto the hard cement at the Lorraine .
Didn't we all go backward for a while?

Barack Obama. President Elect.
Elsewhere, the leaves ride
autumnal air waves; it is fall.
But not here. Not now.
No, here the air is still.
As still as it was in the swamp
where the runaway slave hid,
then "st[ole] away to Jesus."
A great cloud of witnesses
have come for this night.
This time is recorded.

Many who have known the dream
“see the glory” that King saw
on the top of a mountain.

-----first published in video format in *Shape of a Box*

HELEN LOSSE is a poet, free lance writer, and Poetry Editor of *The Dead Mule School of Southern Literature*. Her recent poetry publications include *Lily*, *Ghoti*, *The Centrifugal Eye*, *Right Hand Pointing*, and *Blue Fifth Review*. She has two chapbooks, *Gathering the Broken Pieces*, available from FootHills Publishing and *Paper Snowflakes*, available from Southern Hum Press.

Joanne Lowery
Mermaid Forsakes Her Rock

Loneliness has nothing to do with the decision
to slither down her solitary slope and swim away.
She doesn't like being conspicuous, part of a promontory
where she's expected to be lounging. Gulls squall no news.
Dolphins somersault by, gabbing their private babble.
Latitude and longitude have crucified her to one coordinate
day in and day out, sexy hip jutting the same breeze.
If earth is 70 or 80 percent water, then islands
are no way to see the world. Endless knots
of water wait to untie themselves, revealing blue
in all its variations as they divide around her tail.
Ocean to sea, she's on the cutting edge now.
Her blond head loves being an occasional bump
confounding periscopes and radar.

Crone Poem

Every village has one,
or given time, will.
A beautiful girl ages, dons fifty years
like a head-to-toe gorilla mask,
all folds and flab, excess dangling.
What is useful on a camel
has no purpose bending her back.
Her steps mince, she leans on a cane
carved from a fencepost, her voice
becomes barnyard, and her cataract eyes
make every day cloudy, no chance of rain.
Who betrayed her to stereotype?
Once a maiden skipped among flutes
and flowers and friends. What she was

seemed ordinary and eternal.
The years became a harsh school
in which she failed to learn change.
It crept up on her one wrinkle at a time,
licking her shank and puckering her arms,
her pudenda become an unvisited temple.
The hoots of children swirl around her
as she limps toward her hut.
One boy throws a stone.
It rolls to a stop in the dust.
She is not too old to howl
and fling it back.

JOANNE LOWERY's poems have appeared in many literary magazines, including *Birmingham Poetry Review*, *Eclipse*, *Smartish Pace*, *Cimarron Review*, *Atlanta Review*, and *Poetry East*. Her most recollection is *Jack: A Beanstalk Life* from Snark Publishing. She lives in Michigan.

Greg McBride
Shadows

*Daddy, I wish it would go
like this—that we would be
forever and ever.*

I close our place
Where the Wild Things Are,
flick off his cowboy lamp.

A kiss to one bulging cheek,
a hug in eiderdown dark,
door swung to a wink

of sleepy light, and he's off,
into the forest night,
too small, too young—my son,

my son—to wander
this forest, these shadows,
disarmed, naked as I.

GREG MCBRIDE won the 2007 *Boulevard* Emerging Poet prize. His chapbook, "Back of the Envelope," will be published in the spring of 2009 by Copperdome Press. He was runner-up for the 2008 Portlandia Prize in 2008, and his poem, "First Rites," was a finalist for the Guy Owen Prize. His poems have also received three nominations for the Pushcart Prize. His work appears in *Bellevue Literary Review*, *Connecticut Review*,

*Gettysburg Review, Gargoyle, Hollins Critic, Salmagundi, Southeast Review, Southern Poetry Review, and elsewhere. He began writing after a 30-year legal career and now edits *The Innisfree Poetry Journal* (www.innisfreepoetry.org).*

Susan Meyers
First Song

True, the quick complaints
that nearness provokes,

as when the mother bird
approaches the nest

or the father bird
wings from the woods and clings

to the side then the front
of the house on its pole, flitting

closer and closer to the warm
once-silent cavity

where the chorus whines
at mere possibility

with such vigor, such disharmony
that the first song—for what

is complaint if not a hum
of longing for the one thing

that would set the world aright?—
the first song learned is lament.

Highway 61, after Dark

Topography is the best guide.
Memorize each dip and curve,
each ribbon of repair
across this narrow wish leading home.

What you can't see with the low beams
could kill you,
if you don't kill it first.
Live oak, mailbox, deer—

each sketched in night's charcoal.
Curtains of moss, dingy and torn,
frame a smeared windshield.
Tomorrow, new wiper blades.

Passing headlights, another reason
to tighten your grip, to look beyond
what's nearing, one more glare
you've learned to turn from.

SUSAN MEYERS, of Givhans, SC, is the author of *Keep and Give Away* (University of South Carolina Press, 2006), winner of the SC Poetry Book Prize, the SIBA Book Award for Poetry, and the Brockman-Campbell Book Award. Recent poems of hers are forthcoming in *Cave Wall*, *jubilat*, and *Linebreak*. Visit her blog at <http://www.susanmeyers.blogspot.com>

Paul Nelson
In Passing

*"I never made the mistake of thinking that I
owned my own strength, that was my secret.
And so I was never alone in my failures."*

Nanapush-Louise Erdrich

I twist my neck in passing
an emerald field lying out
beyond a narrow, tannic, probably toxic river.
It's been a long day; my eyes ache
for the softness, the dusk of it.
Figures in motion there, but I U-turn anyway,
what I do lately,
across a concrete bridge and rumble strip
into the park.

Pewter light welds the chain link fence, man high,
beyond which, on the turf, children
commit every sin known to man: side-swiping,
baiting, poaching, fouling, coveting,
spitting and tearing at each other's clothes ...above all,
the insanity of laughter.

Simple things, lately, simply transmogrify,
as if all it takes is a ball, any cool spring evening

and a strong fence to invent a game,
any game, The Game, to inspire a local crowd,
the rictus of which drives me
restless into solitude.

One of the boys looks something like me at that age,
so much so he stalls my sidelong
yearning for his mother
sipping a beer in the splintery stands,
laughing, yelling at the boy to haul up his pants
that keep falling over his half-back hips.
And the wild girl with the mismatched socks,
snaggle-toothed grin and incendiary hair
who must also be hers, though Mom's
tinted to the dark side now.
I think to say something.
But it is so dangerous today
to speak to children.
Or women.
See, I had an original thought,
once, that things were imperfect. That notion
keeps rolling through the world like a ball
that hits the wire, springs back, always in play,
just beyond my feet ...the half-back slicing by, kicking it without a glance my way. She
wouldn't
teach him otherwise. But he will wander.

I don't know if I've truly loved; she
was the only one, ten million years
before troubadours, when we left our footprints
in the clay.

O, I bumbled, rambled for æons, intuitions
snarled as caducei, hearing rumors.
She hadn't burned in Carthage; I merely
smelt smoke, astern. She lived among women
on Ithaca. She consorted with Cain.
Washed feet with her hair. Chewed her
fingernails in a convent. Married a local.
Her little boy dodges by, yells "Freak Head" and
runs beneath her, under the stands,
kicking trash.

But, it's a nice evening; I merely need
to stay calm, all of them safe as they can be,
on the soft ground, the chilly grass,

the kids slipping, sliding into it, hilarious.
She stretches, yawns, just beautiful,
teeters for an instant on the bleachers,
the grass blackening, and because I am a stranger,
one of those dreamers in her narrowing,
harrowing eyes, an aspect of dusk,
I sidle to my Outback before my fingers,
hooked in the wire, do the helix thing,
turn to ivy.

Preparation

Walking carefully, quietly, upstream
then down, worn as stones in the brook
we used to leap, we peer, if blearily
at the bottom of things,
for anything.

A mosquito fish holds in the mild,
tidal current. Translucent shrimp,
sand fleas flick like nail parings.
Purple mussels huddle and periwinkles
glide slowly over stones, thick, green
heads of hair that stream erotically
from granite skulls, the brook
rinsing the meadow into the bay,
the tide returning the swell
nearly to the freshwater spring
while the beach reshapes, the brook
shifting gravel and sand, young curves,
thighs, shoulders.

Often as not she forgets, walks off
ahead of me, absorbing the saline,
amniotic light of morning. I am slow,
my knees taking pains to get along,
carping like gulls overhead, insulted
by our presence. So hard to walk
in unpredictable certainty.

Sometimes she'll turn to find me
stalled by the utter horizon
and knowing me reconciled
walks on as I recollect myself

to this understanding, old as salt,
the shore's wash, the wedding.

PAUL NELSON, originally from Maine, was once Director of the Creative Writing Program at Ohio University. He is the author of six collections of poetry, most recently *Sea Level* from Main Street Rag.

Jeannine Pitas
Things to do in June

Pretend to clean, but don't really do it.
Open old boxes, empty your drawers...And then just
put everything back where it was. You'll need those
socks and ticket stubs eventually. Leaf through old
yearbooks, but don't go to high school reunions.
One shot of nostalgia is more than enough.
Try on bridesmaids' dresses. Listen as your friends
discuss baby names. Already all hopes are on
the next generation- Yours just didn't come through.
They'll find the world peace that you didn't bring.
Meanwhile, cut your own piece of the world.
Let a stray dog lead you into the forest. Don't attempt
to stay on the trail. Fall into the river and
come back mud-covered, your boots and socks
completely soaked through. Look at the ocean-
that listless swaying. No one asks the sea
where it's going- Who said they could ask you?
Muse on past lives: Perhaps you were
a mendicant seagull? No, no -That's what you are now.
Resolve next time to be a turtle. Try to hold
your house on your back. Don't ask why
summer happened so soon; don't attempt
to stay out of the sun. Walk in bare feet,
even on blacktop. It'll feel better
when you get to the sand.

JEANNINE PITAS is a native of Buffalo, New York and a 2005 graduate of Sarah Lawrence College. Her work has appeared in *The Buffalo News* and *The Looking Glass*, Sarah Lawrence's undergraduate literary journal.

David Rigsbee
He Wondered about the Women

He wondered about the women,
and it seemed to him the past
was like a well in a child's dream.
How was it they managed to keep falling
never to land, never to be stopped,
only getting smaller and smaller?
He was lying on the floor curled up,
his hands holding on to his kneecaps.
"Raise first the knee," the instructor said,
"then the foot higher than the knee.
What does the head do, relative
to the hip?" Peering through
his legs he noticed the instructor
had gone unshaven for several days.
Then everything was quiet, as though
the floor had revealed what it really was—
a wall fallen many years ago
when the people gave up its defense
in order to become just another city.

DAVID RIGSBEE is the author of seven collections of poems, including *Cloud Journal* (2008) and *Two Estates* (forthcoming, 2009) and *The Red Tower: New and Selected Poems* (forthcoming 2009). He co-edited *Invited Guest: An Anthology of Twentieth Century Southern Poetry* (University of Virginia Press, 2001) and is the author of critical works on Carolyn Kizer (1990) and Joseph Brodsky (1999). He is the recipient of grants and awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Virginia Commission on the Arts, the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, and the Academy of American Poets. Rigsbee is also a contributing editor at *The Cortland Review*.

Patricia Riviere-Seel
Purpose

It has no purpose, this
sitting for hours curled
on top of my oak desk
beside a rain plashed window
at dusk peering through
binoculars at a black bear
sleeping on the mulch pile
beneath a wild cherry,
a volunteer, trash tree,
that also has no purpose.

I could be cleaning house,
doing laundry, writing
socially responsible verse
or soulful sonnets
that would make readers weep
or even think.

But here I sit with no purpose
other than to watch this bear lift
a round ear, shift position, rise,
and sniff the air. I want
to go out in the drizzle, stroke
his damp fur, nuzzle
into that oily coat, and breathe
the scent of the whole wild world.

Wild Turkeys
(Meleagris Gallopavo)

It's easy to forget
they're wild, lose myself
in iridescent plumage,
shimmer of emerald, copper sheen.

Regal as runway models,
long-legged and limber,
they stroll about my yard,
roost in oak trees.

I sing to them, believe
they recognize my voice.
I've read they like
their feathers stroked,

but they've yet to let me.
Who could blame them
for resisting the bargains
domesticity demands.

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*.

M.S. Rooney
A House Finch,

head red as flame, lands
in the woven wooden pot
of scarlet fuchsia
on this city patio,
watches us through glass
as if we were wicks
in an unlit lantern
awaiting evening
and friction
and sulfur
to give us flame.

M.S. ROONEY lives in Sonoma, California, with her husband, fellow poet Dan Noreen. Her work appears in many journals, including *Clare*, *The Comstock Review*, *The Laurel Review*, *Other Voices* and *3AM Magazine*.

Joseph R. Trombatore
Brown, Blue, Brown on Blue
after Mark Rothko's painting, 1953

We crawl out of our caves
at night
feeling electrical
& hungry

Fly
after traffic lights turn colors
from our childhood's
crayon box

We crave music
soft saxophone
& a silk tie

Silver brush on cymbal
the road-side flares
of clarinets

Long stems dance
with shadows, candles
on tables

Highball glasses
of burgundy & brown
like old friends

Blue, jolts down our throats
like bombs

Eden

after Helen Frankenthaler's painting, 1956

This is where everything
begins to fall
lush growth become weeds
oriental carpets, now threadbare

All the animals
are ravenous, rabid
they keep their language
to themselves

Feed on fear
instinctively familiar
as the sound of waterfalls

Rust becomes
per square inch
the common palette

This new taste
isn't half bad

The Man standing
beside the Woman
wipes his mouth

For the very first time

JOSEPH R. TROMBATORE's recent poems have or will soon appear in *Babel Fruit*, *Clean Sheets*, *JASAT (Journal of the American Studies Association of Texas)*, *Origami Condom*, *Right Hand Pointing*, *Spoken War*, *Oak Bend Review*, *Dead Mule*, & *Ken Again*. Editor/Publisher of the online *Literary Journal of the Arts: Radiant Turnstile*.

Joannie Stangeland
The Morning Is a Wing

When she sleeps, she is rowing.

Light washes like water.

The water plays light
and green. The wind washes her

in spring. The wind plays light,
a taste of apricot.

A mallard glides onto the lake,
settles with a flutter, splash.

The morning is a wing.
Oars feather the water's sky.

The sunrise lasts for hours.
She sleeps through the night.

Early Sunday

The dog Friday waits by the door.
The spider spins and spins.

A morning of wind chops the lake.
buffets the birches.

She can feel the gusts ricochet.
The sun is a memento.

The window is a movie.
The door is her way out.

Half of her wants to go
and half of her wants to sit

and watch. Just watch.
Just for five minutes.

Until the dog barks or the sky clears
or her daughters come down for breakfast.

JOANNIE STANGELAND's work has most recently appeared in *Illya's Honey*, *The Cape Rock*, and *Pinyon*. Her first chapbook, *A Steady Longing for Flight*, won the Floating Bridge Press Chapbook Award. Her second chapbook, *Weathered Steps*, was published by Rose Alley Press.

Mark Vogel
Judgment

"If you think you are not a stranger here you've got a big shock coming."
Bob Dylan

They know my resume,
but I don't know theirs.
In weathered denim they play with hats,
shift in boots, test the ground,
judging this pasture where they've
seen owners come and go.
Before us flourishing elderberries,
sneezeweed, wild mustard,
even locust sneaking in the lowland.
I listen as they pass tobacco and smile,
their laconic words hanging isolated and local.
They know the chainsaw, bush-hog,
herbicide, the hard scrabble for hay,
the dumbness of outsiders.
Before squinting eyes I ask about wild flowers,
property lines, and making do.
They note the Joe Pye growing purple,
the maples hanging over the creek,
berries black and blue
and willows in the pasture,
the briars bullying flourish.
On land no longer asked to produce,
they nod at the wild taking control.
An endangered species,
their eyes on the tree-line,
they take turns spitting at the dust.

MARK VOGEL has published articles on adolescent literacy in numerous journals for the past fifteen years. Recently, he has focused on writing poetry and fiction as well. Stories have appeared in *Cities and Roads*, *Knight Literary Journal*, *Whimperbang*, *SN Review*, and *Our Stories*. Poetry appears in *Poetry Midwest*, *English Journal*, *Cape Rock*, *Dark Sky*, *Cold Mountain Review*, *Broken Bridge Review* and other journals. He has directed the Appalachian Writing Project for ten years. He is currently Professor of English at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina.

Harry Youtt
Finbarr at the Edge of the Sunny Sea

Finbarr squints, holds a flat hand up to visor his eyes
and looks down the cliff at the sandy strand
to where the waves are foaming to a stop
before surrendering back to the blue sea,

wind blowing fresh
and whipping up the rollers
into white breakers
that gong the bell buoy
once every ten seconds or so
just before each crash of surf,
as if a church were slowing down
on a feasting day and finding the rhythm
of what really goes on around it.

And the sun shines down especially bright
with wind whooshing up the cliff
to the place where the man brings hang-gliders
down to the shore on rolled poles,
furls them out to flutter in breezes
and wobble on wired struts
like the legs of tamed birds.

Finbarr closes his eyes now
and sees the gliders fly one by one
in his own mind's eye,
sees the people strapping into harnesses
and then sailing out, up and over the sand
for sometimes a long drift down shore
with fluttering flap of giant bird wing,
legs stretching out straight behind
like a bird's tail, soaring and swooping,
and then legs only dangling down,
becoming human again
as landings approach, inevitable,
down to where feet contact the soft sand, running,
and everyone laughing or
gasping deep breaths of sea air,
ecstatic, and bringing the bird to a stop,
and joy is everywhere
at that very moment, everywhere.

Finbarr gazes out and into that over-bright sunlight
framed against the deep blue of ocean
into the strong wind that gongs the buoy
over and over and over
the whole afternoon long.

HARRY YOUTT is a frequently published poet and fiction writer, whose work has garnered a Pushcart Prize nomination. He teaches fiction writing and creative non-fiction classes in the UCLA Extension Writers Program, where he also conducts poetry workshops.