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ASSISI

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LONG DAY'S WORK C. Evans Mylonas	COVER ART
REDWOODS AND RAIN Lucille Lang Day	1
FOREVER Phillip T. Egelston	2
ROUGHLY ABOUT A SENSE OF DIVINITY Rebecca Kylie Law	3
PEBBLES Alex Kustanovich	4
SUSTAINABILITY Noelle Adamo	5
A TREE, LEAVES THE COLOR Jeff Fearnside	6
BUTTERFLY Chrystal Berche	6
BELLEROSE Tim McLafferty	7
CRADLE Jed Myers	8
THE ASTRONOMER Anselmo Alliegro	10
TOYS IN MY HOUSE Lucille Lang Day	11
CIRCLES Tim McLafferty	13
BLACK-ASS PADDLE April Salzano	14

REDDING SUNDIAL Keith Moul	15
SIMILES BY DEVLIN, AGE FOUR Lucille Lang Day	16
BORN Kusumita P. Pedersen	17
CIVIC VIRTUE Howard Skril	18
TWICE DEAD Tim McLafferty	32
THE MYSTICAL KNIGHT Tim McLafferty	33
UNDERWATER VISION Tim McLafferty	34
ARTIST DELVING INTO HER CRAFT Ernest Williamson	35
THE EXECUTIONER Mark SaFranko	36
LYRA AT A REFLECTING POOL Anselmo Alliegro	45
JUST Tim McLafferty	46
CHILD'S GRAVE AND FINERY Lucille Lang Day	47
WE GO TO DEATH. . . Tim McLafferty	48
FROST KILLS LEAVES Jeff Fearnside	49
SEAGULL Douglas Garzon	50
TO AN ISLAND Kusumita P. Pedersen	51

SEA John Repp	52
AT THE BERKELEY ROSE GARDEN Lucille Lang Day	53
WHAT WILL SHE SAY? Kusumita P. Pedersen	54
72 ND ST. MARINA John Repp	55
HEAR MY ROAR Blaze Bernstein	55
JAGGED LITTLE SUMMER Pamela Langley	56
SUNSET Alex Kustanovich	61
X-RAY Tim McLafferty	62
OVERLOAD Jane Blanchard	63
DÚN NA NGALL Timothy McLafferty	64
VON NEUMANN'S DREAM Anselmo Alliegro	65
THE DRAGON Kusumita P. Pedersen	66
ANDREI RUBLEV Jeff Fearnside	67
CREATION STORY Noelle Adamo	68
THE VISION OF RABBI AMNON Kusumita P. Pedersen	69

A SAINT IS A SENTINEL Jeff Fearnside	70
APPLES Alex Kustanovich	70
WITH ONE HAND. . . Tim McLafferty	71
LOSS AND FOUND Joan Fiset – Poems Sabrina Roberts – Photographs	72
Sun	73
White Stairs	74
Wing	75
for Snow	76
Tomb of the Hill	77
Bandage	78
THE PLEASURES OF THE BOOK Wendy Galgan	79
INFORMATION ON CONTRIBUTORS	80

REDWOODS AND RAIN

I am redwoods and rain,
stomata like green lips opening
for a kiss on the underside of leaves,
a leopard leaping high as a house,
its fur glowing with black-gold roses.

I am untold generations of ancestors,
back to the ones who painted
with charcoal on the walls of caves
and hunted aurochs and mammoths
across vast, uncharted plains.

I'm also the grandchildren whose small
hands I hold, and the great-grandchildren
who might or might not be born.
My elements come from supernovae
blown light-years across space.

I am mostly water, an ocean
of matter and energy grown conscious.
The fate of the Earth is my domain.
I am slime mold and diatoms,
bluebirds and dolphins, daisies,
archaebacteria, redwoods and rain.

FOREVER

Forever the light is water,
and forever the light is fire and the glory of fire.

The light is a shining cloud,
and forever the light is falling rain.

The light that is water is life that is
a river of water and the river has
many streams and the streams are
many children and the children
are always laughing and running

And the laughing is a shining face
laughing in the rain
And the running is a joyous running
like coins dancing in the light

And sitting down from the running
is the rest that is the Center.

The light that will always be light - and is
always Itself Alone light - sends out invitations of
grace.

And the only love is the love that is love

Forever.

ROUGHLY ABOUT A SENSE OF DIVINITY

Periwinkle light behind the stained glass windows
drew out the interior light so that
the white hail-rocks I had watched
fall on the outside of my windscreen
were back in my mind, the beauty
of their shatterings when alone,

driving in night without music:
it was the sound of hardness to a
softness, of a petering out, the
whiteness too, bright as some bird
feathers have in their translucencies,
the egret or crane. And yet,

through the open door to my right,
half a pentagon view of a sloping
roof with slate tiles and gathering
moss, a sky still dayish in its
blue quality and something of a
cloud. The beige forecourt
and the antechamber. As though an interlude

driving back through the night
I watched lightning throw its
errant lines across the mountains
I called home, each time presenting
a trembling view of the landscape.
I was waiting for thunder, the argent
electric flashes appearing every fourth
beat of minutes. My brilliant

hail-rocks. The street lamps still
candant when I turned off road to
my street; and home where the
lightning had died, the thunder and
rain late or gone or
perfunctory. Throughout

a still night, past the netting,
the cry of maybe twelve gulls
in a wavering line of plangencies.
In my palm, a bottle-green
necklace of rosary prayers
I drew then, to my heart.

ALEX KUSTANOVICH



SUSTAINABILITY

Come to me all bud,
then open, already hot
enough in March to, you know,
slap me with a fragrance
to forego the freeze of January forever.
Give it to me all mixed up.
Call me out in search of snow
after years of nothing to bring us
to blankets and fire so I can find you
married by white and moonlight
after miles of walking south, or north,
the compass doesn't matter,
only my warm breath,
and the rose in your hand.
Pour on more waterfalls.
Let the fields flood again this Fall
and river the crops away.
Let us pretend we have nothing
to do with it and dive into a stream
of pumpkins to grasp the feel
of something round, like the earth,
that we can wrap our arms around
for dear life until we find land.
But then the earthquakes will begin,
and when the gardens overgrow
by June and the vines bind us
to each other and to the trees
we will learn of Wild again,
for certain this time,
and of connection, lasting.

JEFF FEARNSIDE

A TREE, LEAVES THE COLOR

A tree, leaves the color
of pomegranates,
not the skin but the fruit,
the juice
bursting from seed, staining
fingers, lips, everything
touched and tasted,
everything holy.
Life consuming life.

CHRYSTAL BERCHE



BELLEROSE

The seasons have lost their compass—once
solid, they've grown confused and inchoate.

The plane trees drop their leaves all summer
long, and the May plants have just begun by

August when the air dries and the south wind
desiccates the topsoil. Half-starts and no fruit

and not one flower from the wisteria—only
tendrils—reaching out in search of something

it can no longer find.

CRADLE

Last night, under the wide black sky,
the moon high in the east still near
full, and Jupiter a dimensionless bright
spot less than a thumb-span below,

I thought, *desireless*. But no—
though it was just that solace I sought,
though I'd pulled on my coat and gone out
to hear that silence, to bask

in the ungraspable distance, as if
to let my whirlwind of longings unravel
and dissipate into the dark, though there was
that great cradle of emptiness slung

between the mute moon and that planet
at its gravity-rope's end close
to a half-billion miles out—I knew,
even the vacuum bristles with want,

sizzles, every thoughtless thimbleful
of nonexistence filled with original
wish to exist, urgent each instant
to transmit the oncoming ripples

crossing in all directions at once,
the waves of attraction, neutrinos, photons
racing through their eternal present
genesis spark to absorption.... Yes,

I thought, even the cold void works
hard to belong, a desperate business
birthing the suns, pulling the moons
along in their orbits, keeping a giant

like Jupiter strung and hurtling round
its twelve-year ellipse. So I muttered
a personal thanks for the nothingness
holding us, returned, turned in....

This morning, snow out the window, under
a silver-white ceiling of mist, and though
I'll never feel all my own atoms jittering
in their molecular constellations,

nor will I shiver to my interior
storm of electrons caught in their spins,
I did breathe in more conscious keeping
with all those quiet crystalline forms

on the trees, over the grass, the rooftops
and street. I knew, they were not asleep
anymore than the moon or Jupiter, no
more than the scattering bones of the dead

in the floating crust under our feet. So close
and so distant, desire, everywhere
grasping and hauling—even the snow
and the souls of the saints are restless.

A bus came grinding slow to its stop
at the corner, swallowed two jacketed guests,
and grumbled off. The steamy exhaust,
suspended awhile in the cold air

like a protogalaxy, dispersed,
and I did welcome a shudder
up through my chest—it was the peace
of belonging, kin with disconsolate dust.



TOYS IN MY HOUSE

On the stereo cabinet in the living room,
a black metal steam engine
my grandfather—who came to California
from Paterson, New Jersey, by train—
played with in the 1880s, when
women wore bustles and every year
more and more tracks were laid

Eighty-four glass marbles
in multicolored swirling shades
in a handmade beige cotton sack
on which my dad neatly
printed his initials, R.A.L.,
before the stock market crash,
when the Charleston was the rage

Perched on a closet shelf,
the Keystone Televiewer I used
to see naked children in 3D
outside their treelike huts
in the Belgian Congo, back
when blonds were called dumb
and people still did the jitterbug

The Candy Land game whose
plastic gingerbread people
my daughter Liana pushed
through the Lollypop Woods
when Tricky Dick was President
and hippies danced to the Dead,
high on mushrooms or weed

A doll, once Swan Lake Barbie
with long blond tresses, but who
got tattoos and short, spiky hair—
purple, pink and green—thanks
to my daughter Tamarind,
when Pac-Man was new
and Michael Jackson ruled MTV

Buzz Lightyear, waiting
for someone new to come along,
flip up his helmet and hear him say,
“To infinity and beyond!” now
that my grandson Brandon,
almost twelve, would rather play
Jetpack Joyride on his iPod

The miniature horse ranch set
with white, chestnut, gray
and tan steeds whose jockeys
ride them over hurdles in
the hands of my granddaughters,
Autumn and Sabine, who still
are masters of make-believe

.
A plastic car that plays
the Mickey Mouse Club Song
for Devlin, my youngest
grandson, who scoots
around the living room, unaware
that the world will change,
just glad to toot the horn today

CIRCLES

In the amber tones of mid-November
and before the rain has beaten bare the

trees, the children play beneath cobalt skies.
Chased amid pine boles on earth soft with

needles, there's time and laughter; echoes from
behind an opaque scrim, and that was me.

A frayed thread, but holding, along which
my youth and years are braided into one.

As we share dark chocolate and black coffee
father, bed-ridden, speaks of eidolons.

Dementia, the nurse tells me. This is new.
His mind's running free as his body breaks.

He says he's been out in the fields all day
a boy ready to tear off, without me.

BLACK-ASS PADDLE

That was the name for the weapon he made
by hand, the one he would never use
on his daughters (the son was somehow born
exempt), but would threaten to. The board
had become a thing of beauty, too
precise to serve so base a function. Belts
and 2x4's were better suited to regular beatings.
He explained the physics behind the holes
he bore into the wood, to cut wind
resistance. The last word
was pure sugar on his tongue, a cause
and a punishment rolled into one word,
a position. If I were to see what happened
in that room, hear the screams in the early days,
the silence in the later days, would I
intervene? Or would I, like my mother,
go against the grain, resist
every natural splinter of instinct to protect
my children, turn tail and run
to save what was left of my own skin?



SIMILES BY DEVLIN, AGE FOUR

He says the new chandelier in my front hall
with its five wavy amber-colored shades,
each holding a candle-shaped bulb,
“looks like honey dripping from flowers.”

And the sound of tires on pavement
on a spring afternoon, as we drive
up the hill to Lawrence Hall of Science,
“is like the sizzle of pancakes cooking.”

When I’m on the phone with his mom,
discussing dinner plans and weather,
he wants to tell me something:
“I love you more than an infinity of houses.”

I think about that: the most expensive
and important thing anyone owns.
What can I say? Stars are too distant,
flowers too small and fragile. Stumped,
I reply, “I love you that much too.”

BORN

I was born, like most people,
From the body of a mother.
My eyes were horizontal,
My nose vertical.
I came into the world
Empty-handed:
Five fingers on my right hand,
Five on my left.
When I started to walk,
I put one foot
In front of the other.
When I started to speak,
I put one word
Next to another.
Is there a people anywhere
That does not walk –
That does not dance?
Is there a people anywhere
That does not speak –
That does not pray?
Adorning their bodies,
They dance the dance
Of every body.
In their own words,
They pray
The prayer of all words

CIVIC VIRTUE

Howard Skroll

[Dedicated to the memory of Jean Cabut, Georges Wolinski, Bernard Verlhac and Philippe Honore]

On December 15th, 2012, work crews assembled on a public plaza in front of Queens Borough Hall in Kew Gardens in order to truss up and lift ‘Civic Virtue Triumphant Over Unrighteousness’, an enormous marble sculpture, from its perch in a fountain between Queens Boulevard, the Van Wyck Expressway and Union Turnpike. Civic Virtue had occupied this spot for seventy one years. In early January 2015, I watched a YouTube video of the event made by an impassioned opponent of the work’s removal. The workmen labored into the night to secure the enormous monument into a cage constructed of steel girders that was then hoisted by a crane onto a flatbed truck that ferried it to Green-Wood Cemetery near my home in Park Slope, Brooklyn. I was struck by the image of Civic Virtue, in a cage and dangling in mid-air, resembling King Kong after his initial capture.



Howard Skroll, Civic Virtue Triumphant Over Unrighteousness from Green-Wood Cemetery, Oil Pastel, Oil Stick, Pencil, Chalk Pastel on Paper, 14" x 17". ©2015

Green-Wood Cemetery is the final resting place of relatives of the sculptor of Civic Virtue, Frederick William MacMonnies, and of the individual who first proposed its creation, Angelina Crane. Green-Wood successfully petitioned to have Civic Virtue transferred on long term loan to the cemetery, where it now resides amongst Green-Wood’s many other concrete, bronze and marble monuments. The move from Queens to Brook-

lyn was not the first for Civic Virtue. It once occupied one of the most prominent sites in New York City, in a large fountain in front of the New York City Hall, before it was re-



Howard Skrill, Civic Virtue Triumphant Over Unrighteousness from Green-Wood Cemetery [View from Back], Oil Pastel, Oil Stick, Pencil, Chalk Pastel on Paper, 14" x 17". ©2015

moved to Queens in 1941. Civic Virtue was commissioned in 1909, completed in 1920, installed at City Hall Park in 1922. Nineteen years later it was packed off to distant Queens. A statue of Nathan Hale by MacMonnies from 1890 now occupies the spot that Civic Virtue left vacant, barred from public access by police sentries, iron gates and concrete blast walls. When I was eleven or twelve, my mother and I were exiled by collapsing economic fortunes from Manhattan to Queens. In the mid 1980's, newly graduated from

College, my girlfriend, now my wife, and I moved to Park Slope, Brooklyn. Manhattan to Queens to Brooklyn, a

trajectory taken by Civic Virtue and I, although Civic Virtue's path from borough to borough to borough was much more momentous than my own.

Another video shows workers removing Civic Virtue from its cage in Green-Wood and placing it just south of its Prospect Park West entrance at the intersection of Garland and Jasmine avenues.

During the last five years, I have been drawing public statuary in the New York region for the Anna Pierrepont Series. [To find out more about the series, please visit my blog, Howardskrill.blogspot.com.] Green-Wood Cemetery is walking distance from my home and I have visited it more than any other place since I began the series. The series is named for Anna Marie Pierrepont, one of Green-Wood's first and most noteworthy residents interred in a buff colored, Gothic filigreed sarcophagus on one of the highest

hills in the cemetery. During the past two years, and at different times of the year, I have rolled a blue Whole Foods cart jammed with a collapsible chair, a large Bristol pad, pencils, oil and chalk pastels and oil sticks to Civic Virtue, opened my chair, laid my materials in dirty piles on the ground, and wrestled the images accompanying this essay onto sheets of Bristol paper.

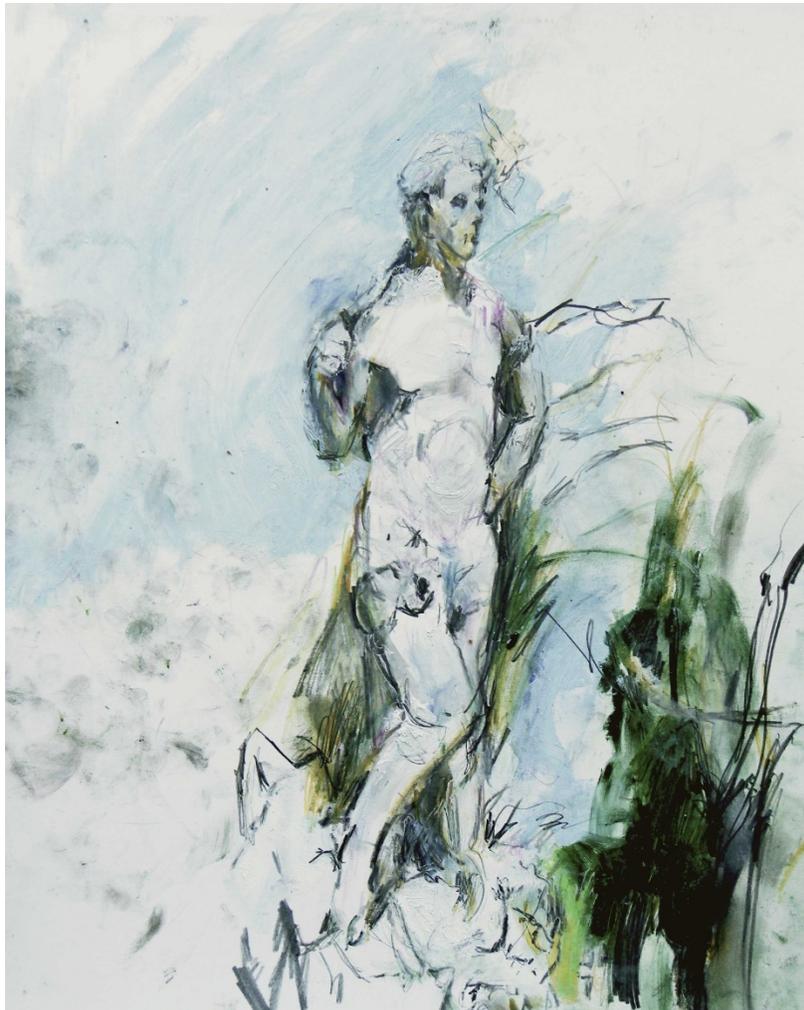
My first visit to Civic Virtue's new home was in the Winter/Spring of 2013. I entered the Cemetery through its enormous, Gothic filigreed front entrance on Fifth Avenue in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. I rolled my cart southward, up the gradual incline of Battle Avenue. Battle Avenue is named for the Revolutionary war battle between the American army and British troops in the Battle of Brooklyn. The battle took place in August 1776 in the vicinity of what would become Green-Wood Cemetery. I wandered past a mausoleum in the shape of a Pyramid flanked by sphinxes and the Virgin Mary with the Christ Child adorned in Egyptian headgear. I turned east onto Border Avenue with its expansive views of New York harbor and the skyline of Lower Manhattan. Border Avenue gradually descends into a clearing. On a pedestal rising above the low slung monuments stands Civic Virtue.



Howard Skrill, Civic Virtue Triumphant over Unrighteousness from Green-Wood Cemetery, Oil Pastel, [pre-installation view] Oil Pastel on Paper, 11" x 14". ©2013

Civic Virtue is a marble figure of a male standing in the midst of a large base comprised of a highly textured mound bearing the appearance of coiled seaweed. The figure is nearly nude, except for a tentacle of the netted seaweed rising towards its midriff,

wrapping around its hips and buttocks and flattening out to conceal the genitalia. The figure holds a sword behind its neck in its right hand. A small piece of the seaweed hangs from the tip of the sword's blade. The figure's left hand is behind its back and appears to be pushing the seaweed away from the buttocks. Thick waves of hair drape its forehead. The face is wide, the nose small and the chin squared. The right leg thrusts forward and bends awkwardly at the knee towards the side.



Howard Skroll, Civic Virtue Triumphant Over Unrighteousness [side view] from Green-Wood Cemetery, Oil Pastel, Oil Stick, Pencil, Chalk Pastel on Paper, 14" x 17". ©2015

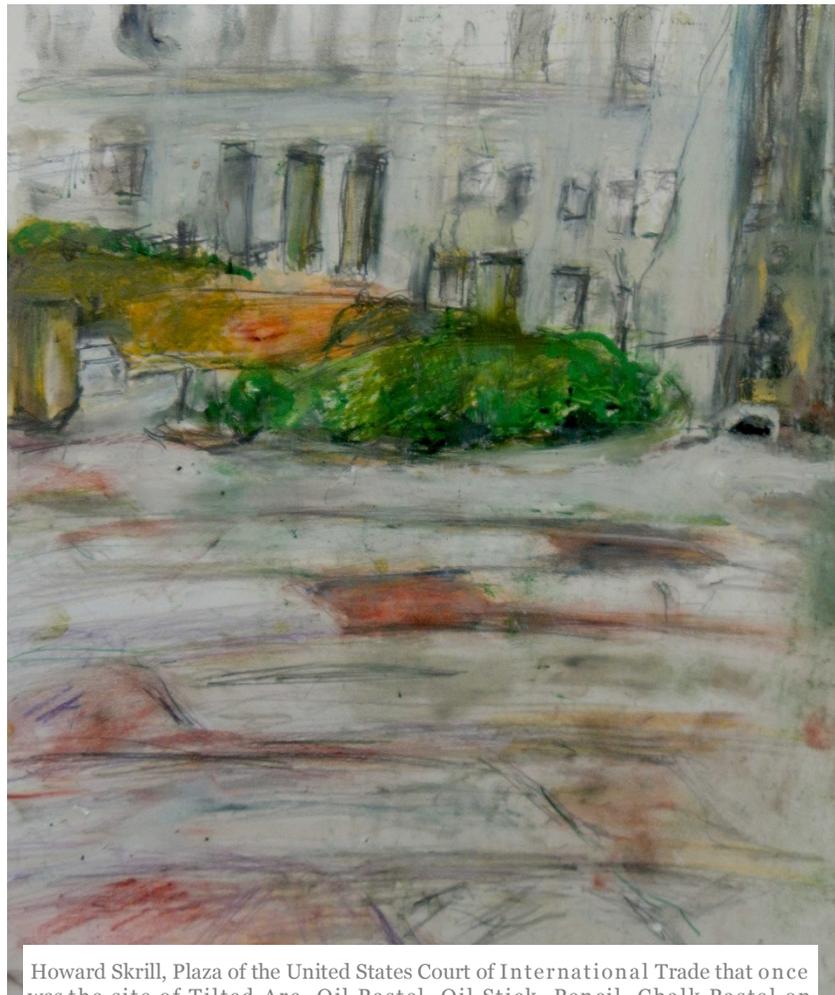
Laying at the male's feet are two nude females with scaly appendages extending from their lower torsos. Both figures are tangled in the seaweed. The figure in the front curls its torso around the male's left foot. Its lowered head is buried beneath a thick wig of dangling seaweed and behind a clenched right fist. The rear figure cranes its neck and torso upwards towards the male. Its head cradled in the crook of its right arm. Embedded in the seaweed are sculpted locks and chains and a slanted rock face upon which the male figure's right foot is resting.

The marble used to sculpt the monument has puckered and abraded considerably in the ninety plus years since its completion. The color of the sculpture has lightened to a bright white with little of the polished yellow glow typical of marble sculpture. The surface is puckered with the pores and the rough texture of sandstone. Sculpted details, including the male's face, have significantly abraded.

The first time I drew Civic Virtue, it had newly arrived in Green-Wood. The orange straps used to brace the work in its cage remained attached to the base of the sculpture. Its new perch was still under construction.

In March 1985, I sat in a paneled room in Manhattan along with other students from the State University of New York, College at Purchase and other local art schools, including my future wife. We listened to Richard Serra and a parade of his supporters testify at a public hearing arguing that Serra's massive Cor-Ten steel sculpture, Tilted Arc, not be removed from another public plaza in front of the United States Court of International Trade by Foley Square in Manhattan. The Court is a few blocks northeast of City Hall.

The Arc acted as a blind, blocking view of the rest of Foley square from the entrance of the Court building. The work was commissioned by the United States Government's General Services Administration as a part of a program to add public art to Federal government facilities. Visitors needed to circumvent the sculpture in order to enter the Court. The Chief Judge and many



Howard Skrill, Plaza of the United States Court of International Trade that once was the site of Tilted Arc, Oil Pastel, Oil Stick, Pencil, Chalk Pastel on Paper, 14" x 17". ©2015

office workers, at the court and in other offices surrounding Foley Square, demanded the Arc's removal. The public hearing featured speaker after speaker pleading for Tilted Arc to remain in place. The Arc was a site specific sculpture designed to interact with the triangular plaza in front of the Court as a visual and physical counterpoint. The bird's eye

views of the Arc, where its curves could be seen in their entirety, was visually compelling. The plaza was designed with red and gray bricks arranged to form a section of the rings of a transparent globe encircling and expanding outward from an unused fountain at the plaza's furthest end. The Arc's 122 feet expanse flanked the fountain and transected the globe across its circumference, arcing in an opposite direction from the globe's curvature. At ground level, the Arc, discolored with rust, smelling of urine in spots, stood 12 feet tall. Its undulating mass 'tilted' towards the building's entrance and those walking within the shadow of its bulk. The judges feared that the shape of the monument could direct the blast of a bomb in the direction of the building. In the pre-9/11 world, this fear reeked of paranoia. After 9/11, as the area around the Court has evolved to resemble a military encampment, such a circumstance appears increasingly plausible.

On that day in 1985, I listened to a succession of prominent artists, critics and museum officials arguing that the work was designed to interact with the plaza and that its removal would effectively destroy it. The public hearing did not stop the removal of Tilted Arc from the plaza and its eventual sale for scrap metal. The globe has been replaced by red rectangular tiles interspersed with white marble and the fountain by shrubbery. The Arc was replaced by rectangular and disc shaped marble that is used as seating.

When I first contemplated a life in art in the early 1980's, the National Endowment for the Arts offered emerging artists such as myself a small stipend to enable them to launch their careers. I anticipated this benefit as I rested my arms on a banister and listened as New York's art community urged the Government not to proceed with the destruction of Tilted Arc. I did not know it at the time, but the controversy over Tilted Arc was an initial skirmish in what will eventually be known as the 'culture wars'. The culture wars escalated in 1987, when an orchestrated campaign was launched condemning the National Endowment for the Arts for providing financial support for 'Piss Christ', a crucifix photographed in urine, created by the artist Andres Serrano. A large scale print of Piss Christ had been exhibited in a New York City gallery in 1987 and Serrano had received an art prize from the National Endowment. After the uproar, artists receiving the grant I anticipated from the Endowment, were required to pledge that they would not violate 'community standards' in their artistic practices, particularly regarding sexuality. 'Civic Virtue Triumphant over Unrighteousness' could easily be a

personification of the values that artists, myself included, were required to uphold. If we violated these standards, the Federal government could and in some cases did, claw back its assistance.

The culture wars of the 1980's strangled government support for individual artists and for any art deemed as transgressing community standards. Consequently, many of my artist contemporaries and I, educated and of limited means, were denied the support that earlier artists had utilized in order to transition to being working artists. To survive, many of us took 'day jobs' unrelated to art. Decades later, I continue to work in non-art related fields. The Tilted Arc and Piss Christ controversies reasserted Civic Virtue in American social and political discourse in the late 20th century as a reaction to artworks perceived as antithetical or antagonist to these virtues.

George B. McClellan, Jr., the son of Civil War general and presidential candidate, George B. 'Little Mac' McClellan, was the mayor of New York City from 1904 until 1909. McClellan's mayoralty was noteworthy for its commitment to the eradication of immorality and irreligious behavior. The same values that motivated protests against Piss Christ decades later. McClellan selected the flamboyant MacMonnies to erect a statue of Civic Virtue for installation in front of New York City Hall.

My grandfather, Elias Skriloff, was born in the Bronx in 1908, the fourth year of McClellan's mayoralty and a year prior to the commissioning of Civic Virtue. The United States of America was established as a Republic founded on the democratic principles of majority rule. The United States is also blessed and cursed by its enormity. The sheer size of the nation requires an enormous population. The nation was established as a Republic by a tiny elite of Anglo-Saxon Protestant planters and businessmen. Republics require vigorous participation of a responsible citizenry upholding the cardinal virtues underlying Civic Virtue: prudence, justice, courage and temperance. The world simply did not possess a large enough population of virtuous Anglo-Saxon Protestants (or their African slaves) to fill this nation. The nation was thus opened to immigration from baser races of Irish, Germans, Italians, Jews and others, scattered in pockets throughout Europe. The largest Jewish settlements were concentrated in the Vale of Settlement that occupied the territory of modern day Poland, Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. My ancestors emigrated from this region.

When McClellan secured the New York City mayoralty at the turn of the Twentieth

century, the American Republic, preserved by his father in the Civil War, was experiencing rapid geographic and economic expansion during the industrial revolution. An enormous labor force was needed to work in nation's new mines and factories. Liberal immigration policies were enacted and millions responded, fleeing the poverty and discrimination that they had long endured in Europe. The Statue of Liberty, located on a small island in New York City's harbor, extends a lamp in its outstretched right arm, welcoming the new arrivals and offering them a share of the promise of 'liberty' the Republic offers to its citizens. New York City was the epicenter for the new wave of arrivals and many of them settled in the Statue's shadows. The soon to be parents of Elias Skriloff settled in the Bronx.

Male Virtue, in 'Civic Virtue Triumphant over Unrighteousness' vanquishes female vice. If Anglo-Saxons needed non-Anglo-Saxons to populate the Republic, it was essential that they virtuously resisted their races' natural inclinations towards lasciviousness. McClellan tapped McMonnies to sculpt a monument to this goal at the turn of the 20th century. MacMoinnes labored on the work for over a decade.

Civic Virtue demanded of foreigners, a transformation. In exchange for direct participation in the American Republic, they were obliged to conform to the model of virtuous behavior defined by their Anglo-Saxon hosts. The male figure 'triumphantly' resists the slivering mass of lustful ensnarements personified by the snakelike women at its feet. Civic Virtue, commissioned in 1909, embodies just one of the challenges posed to the newly born Elias Skriloff of 1908 as he set his path in 20th century New York City and his new nation.

In 1941, Civic Virtue was moved to Kew Gardens after a couple of descendants of immigrants, New York's first Italian mayor, Fiorello LaGuardia and its great Jewish builder, Robert Moses, objected to its remaining in such a prominent position in Manhattan. Civic Virtue also alienated women who objected to the monument's use of women as the personification of lasciviousness' creeping tentacles. Women had secured universal suffrage in the United States in 1920. Newly empowered, they had little use for a statue installed two years later in the shadow of City Hall, celebrating male triumph over his sexual impulses, personified as nubile temptresses writhing at his feet.

Queens, where the statue would languish for seventy years, would emerge in the Millennium as the most ethnically diverse county in the United States. Perhaps the elders

of Kew Gardens, by welcoming Civic Virtue into their midst were attempting to impart the virtues of temperance, prudence, courage and justice to newer and darker hued immigrants pouring into Flushing, Corona and Jamaica in other, later waves of immigration. These immigrants' disapproval may have motivated the removal of the



Howard Skrill, Fountain that once held Civic Virtue Triumphant over Unrighteousness, Union Turnpike, Queens, Oil Pastel, Oil Stick, Pencil, Chalk Pastel on Paper, 14" x 17". ©2015

statue to Green-Wood Cemetery on December 15th, 2012. Perhaps the only community that can bear the presence of Civic Virtue in its midst are those permanently at repose.

Serra, of Spanish and Jewish ancestry, was born in San Francisco at eve of the Second World War. MacMonnies, a Scot, was born in Brooklyn Heights during the Civil War. MacMonnies was a member of the Beaux-arts movement that was dedicated to neoclassical revival in arts and architecture during the late 1800's and early 1900's. Serra was a Post-World War II Minimalist. Minimalism celebrated the processes and materials

of post war industrial production by the creation and display of artworks using the materials and possessing the appearance and function of industrial objects. Minimalists often embraced steel and iron as materials of choice for sculpture, directly rejecting sculpture's traditional reliance on bronze and marble. Minimalists also rejected figurative sculptures in favor of simple geometric shapes that aggressively asserted themselves, as Tilted Arc did, in public spaces. Their work challenged the elitist grandeur of artists like MacMonnies. Serra's enormous walls of curved steel celebrate the monumental, quotidian things manufactured by industrial workers that hail primarily from the immigrant communities addressed by MacMonnie's 'Civic Virtue Triumphant over Unrighteousness'. Tilted Arc infiltrated a carefully designed plaza that had already been constructed and intentionally disrupted the physical and visual harmony of that plaza. If

the plaza was a product of a sensibility that embraces the prudence and temperance that are central to the ideals of Civic Virtue, Tilted Arc aggressively intruded into this carefully constructed order with 20 tons of rolled steel. The post-World War II era had witnessed these same plazas used as noisy gathering places for protestors demanding more equal standing for laboring people, women and ethnic minorities in the American social order. As with Titled Arc, these gatherings focused their attentions upwards towards those behind the towering glass walls of New York City's governmental and commercial towers. The targets of the protestors surely stared down upon them and continued staring as Tilted Arc transformed the Trade Court's plaza into one never empty of resistance.

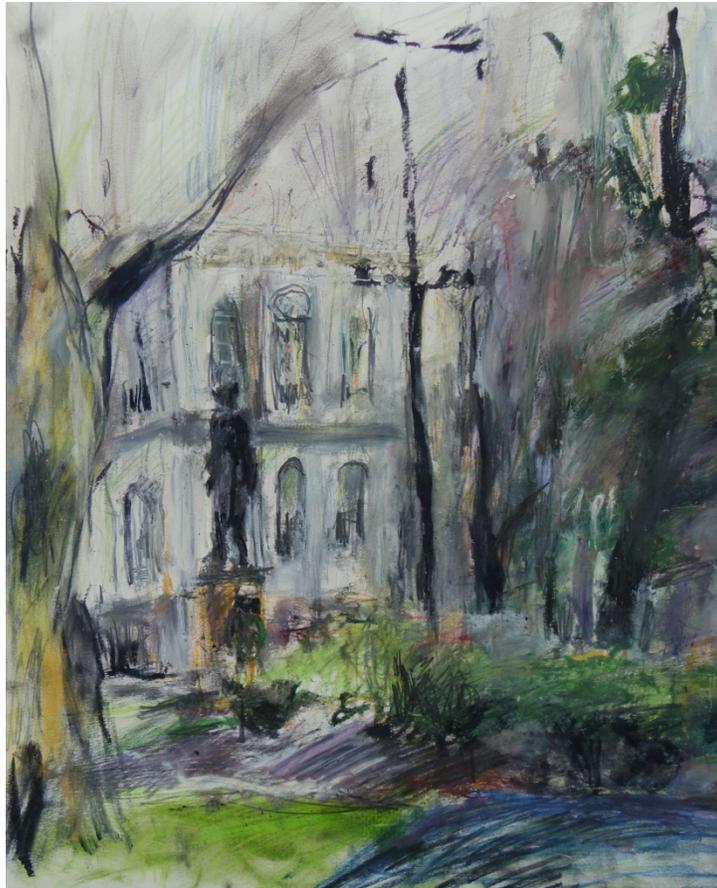
Federal funding brought Tilted Arc into being. It would be reasonable to assume that a government that funded Tilted Arc was providing tacit encouragement for a social order markedly different from a government that commissioned an allegory of 'Civic Virtue Triumphant Over [the] Unrighteousness' of lust. This altered power dynamic between art and political power would endure until the 1980's, when traditional American elites would aggressively reassert their values and Tilted Arc would meet a fate worse than that of Civic Virtue.

If banishing of MacMonnies' 'Civic Virtue Triumphant Over Unrighteousness' was a consequence of power devolving from traditional Anglo-Saxon elites in New York City to those groups addressed by the sculpture's admonitions, the destruction of Tilted Arc could be seen as cultural power being reasserted by traditional groups, achieving its apotheosis in the controversy over Piss Christ. '

Culture wars are not about culture. The things made by artists, such as MacMonnies and Serra, are proxies for wider battles between communities that must coexist but that possess different sets of values. Tilted Arc and Civic Virtue are manifestations of competing groups asserting their values on the other. Destruction or exile of objects or images that embody the values of a competing group is the premiere standard of victory in culture wars, a real life version of 'Capture the Flag'. Civic Virtue's banishment was a product of individuals and communities who felt insulted by the implication that their natures were fundamentally debased and in need of reformation and that the McClellans and MacMonnies of the world could point them towards a more virtuous set of behaviors. When members of these groups assumed the levers of power, they saw no need to abide MacMonnies or McClellan's implicit judgments of the moral

character of their races and genders and Civic Virtue began its journey from Borough to Borough to Borough, to the hinterlands of Queens and ultimately to reside amongst tombstones. Serra's work was eventually sold for scrap. Judges staring out of their windows and seeing the rusting hulk of the Tilted Arc curving beneath them or having to sidestep the structure as they entered and left their office building, recognized the work as inherently antagonistic to their authority. They insisted, successfully, that they did not need to abide Serra's aggressive assertion of his version of human relations into the universe they lorded over.

I began this essay on or about New Year's Day in 2015. This is the fifth essay that I have authored in the past year to accompany drawings that I have created for the Anna Pierrepont Series. I was working on 'Civic Virtue' in the first week of January 2015, when the culture wars turned deadly.



Howard Skroll, City Hall Park, Manhattan, with a Rear View of MacMoinnes' Nathan Hall at the Site of the Original placement of Civic Virtue Triumphant Over Unrighteousness, Oil Pastel, Oil Stick, Pencil, Chalk Pastel on Paper, 14" x 17". ©2015

On Wednesday, January 7th, 2015, hooded gunmen with automatic weapons interrupted an editorial meeting at Charlie Hebdo, a satirical magazine headquartered in Paris. The gunmen murdered writers, editors and most importantly for the gunmen, four artists. The gunmen were French born Muslims radicalized by the Jihadi ideology of Al Qaeda. Charlie Hebdo had repeatedly published cartoons by these artists and others featuring representations of the Prophet Mohammed, a practice forbidden by Islamic doctrine.



‘Civic Virtue’ considers the consequences for public monuments when they are perceived, fairly or unfairly, as an imposition of the values of one culture upon another. The violent end for the artists and their colleagues in Paris was similarly motivated. Typically, when culture wars are engaged, violence is acted upon the artworks that express the values of the opposing group. As I stated previously, the greatest victory in culture wars is a version of Capture the Flag. Your group wrestles control of the opposing group’s object and gleefully dispatches it, under the cloak of darkness to the land of the dead or to a scrap yard. Artists are the collateral damage in this version of the culture wars. The events in Paris grimly demonstrate that the battles of the culture wars are not always by proxy.

Howard Skrill, Civic Virtue Triumphant Over Unrighteousness from Green-Wood Cemetery [Frontal View from Back], Oil Pastel, Oil Stick, Pencil, Chalk Pastel on Paper, 14" x 17". ©2015

In Paris, Automatic weapons were substituted for blow torches. Bullets discharged into human bodies from those weapons replaced flames applied to marble and steel. Destruction of objects viewed as the offensive product of artistic imaginations were replaced by the silencing of the artistic imagination itself.

On Sunday, January 11th, 2015, hundreds of thousands marched in Paris including leaders of some of the world's great modern Republics. These individuals marched in support of the famous sentiment falsely attributed to Voltaire, 'I [may] disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.'

From my vantage point just north of Civic Virtue's place of exile, the events in Paris confirmed that battles that embroiled 'Civic Virtue Triumphant Over Unrighteousness' and Tilted Arc are far from academic. They are elemental to how art functions in human affairs and therefore subject to be resolved in clashes utilizing power-tools or bullets. Butchering or banishing of artworks is the indirect exercise of the butchering or banishing of the people who commissioned or created the artworks. The Jihadis simply removed the 'indirect' part of the equation.

This essay includes drawings of three emptied plazas. In the spring of 2015, and on three separate occasions, I walked over the Brooklyn Bridge from my home in Park Slope to document Tilted Arc's absence. Wandering past the Municipal Building and across Foley Square, I shoved my cart up a set of short steps towards the plaza, unfolded my chair and began drawing the reddish tiles and bright cubes that now decorate Tilted Arc's old home. I used a number of these cubes to hold my piles of pencils and pastels and recorded the emptiness left in Tilted Arc's wake and the vista revealed by its absence. My efforts received curious stares from passersby. One woman turned towards me and spoke approvingly of the scene that I was drawing. She had no idea that I was drawing a ghost.

In the seventy years since Civic Virtue's eviction, City Hall Park has undergone numerous renovations. After using Google Images to find the approximate site of 'Civic Virtue Triumphant over Unrighteousness', I endured a strong wind to draw MacMoinnes' Nathan Hale from the back. The statue is small in my picture because it is surrounded by a security cordon that barred my sitting in front of it or approaching it too closely from the rear. A police officer stood sentry duty in a small vehicle at the edge of the path that I set my materials down upon. A squirrel, believing my materials were food, repeatedly

harassed me.

Kew Gardens still bears the scars of Civic Virtue's 2012 exile. I visited the site twice to draw the dilapidated fountain that was its former home, behind the haphazardly erected chain link fence. The fountain has had a large piece broken off its front. It is covered with grime and weeds growing amongst the pebble stones at its base. On both occasions, Queens residents (I was one for over a decade) approached me to express their wounded pride in having their statue torn from their midst.

After visiting Civic Virtue multiple times in Green-Wood, I feel sorrow experiencing the banishing of that oversized and awkward piece of marble that figuratively buckled under so much political baggage. Decades after Tilted Arc's destruction, as I sat drawing the utterly banal plaza that remains, I shudder at the narrow-mindedness that led to the work's destruction and the indifferent treatment of the plaza it formerly occupied. No words can adequately address the murderous silencing Jean Cabut, Georges Wolinski, Bernard Verlhac and Philippe Honore and their colleagues at Charlie Hebdo.

I dedicate this essay and the pictures included in it to those four men of France and to the artists of all eras whose persons and/or works, including Frederick William MacMonnies, Andres Serrano and Richard Serra, have been exiled, mutilated, stolen, held up for ridicule or erased as a consequence of intolerance.

TWICE DEAD

Odilon Redon painted Saint Sebastian
many times, the standard image: bound to
a plane tree and bristling with arrows.

Left for dead by Emperor Diocletian
it was Saint Irene who carried him home
and nursed him back to health. Once mended, he

resumed his ministries, until one day
seeing the emperor pass by, he must have

shouted something like, *Hey, Diocletian,*
how do you like me now? with which he was
summarily and finally clubbed to death.

No one paints the beaten Sebastian, though
I like to think Redon later portrayed him
in soft pastel: a red smudge among the flowers.

THE MYSTICAL KNIGHT

charcoal and pastel, Odilon Redon

Angel, I gift you this fresh-severed head!

Human, thy flaw is common: see thee not
my sword? For I am thy creation—
warlike and righteous, a servant of God
who thou shalt never see. Even in
thy perfected and most profound darkness
of all senses, thou wouldst merely come to
know the place in which he dwells, yet you kill
for him and call him friend. Thou hadst brought thy
brother's head as a cat brings a bird.

UNDERWATER VISION

pastel, Odilon Redon

He descends crosscurrents in starlight bent
and fractured by fluid surface geometry.

Along the seabed, a nacreous mussel-wraith
skims the aragonite in a cloud of iron,

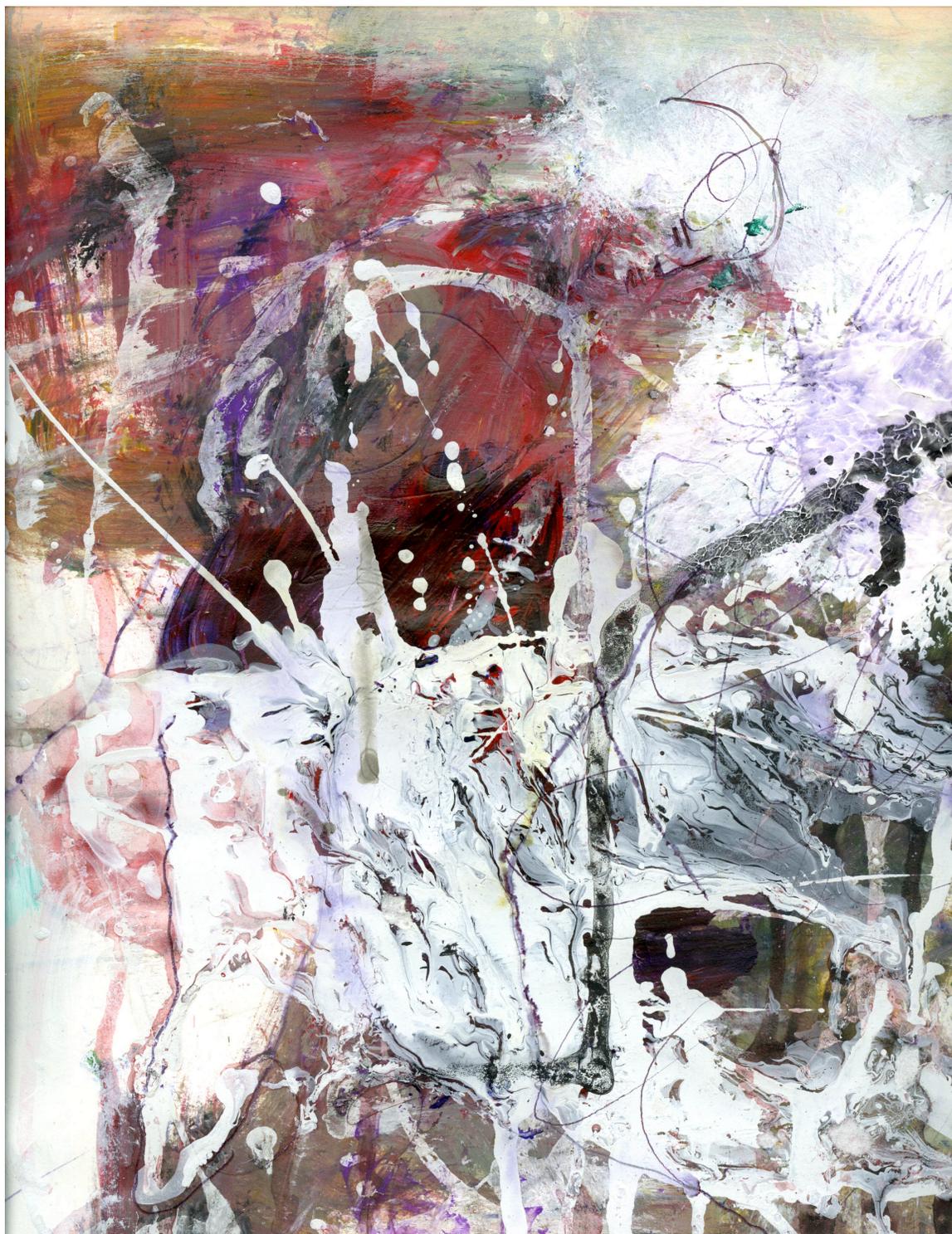
gold and amaranthine. The living mind
swims in color and motion. This is to

say that I will not seek transcendence
in a void made real by rejection

of the senses. Morbid reality
demands a death for a life. In that moment

I will know, if I will ever know.

ERNEST WILLIAMSON



THE EXECUTIONER

It was the start of trout season, early April, but the air was still more freezing than warm. Mack set out with a gang that included his good friend Frankie and a few others -- Eddie, Dave, Wally. Wally's father gave them a lift from the city to the banks of the Assumpink Creek. On the trip the car was filled with the acrid smoke from the old guy's cigarette. He didn't say a single word all the way out; it was like he really wasn't there, which was the fate of most grownups when they were in the presence of kids. Mack already had a nicotine habit and he wished he could smoke too, but he didn't have any cigarettes and he wasn't brave enough to ask one of the parents. Instead he stared at the weird short gray and silver hairs that stuck out of the back of Wally's father's monkey-like head. The sight was repellant and fascinating at the same time.

There was a sense of wild, electric expectation in the stinking air. They'd all been waiting for months for this moment. When you were young, the world was marked sharply by seasons born and dying -- baseball season gave way to football, which gave way to basketball, which gave way to fishing -- and so on. The trout season was the gateway to the warm weather, when they would all escape the indoor prisons of home and school and church after a boring, cruel, interminable winter. Finally there would be sun, and longer days, and, in the distance, baseball gloves and bats and the end of books and teachers.

Today they were all one year older than they were the last time they dropped their lines. The restrictions of the past no longer held. More of the boys smoked in the open now and used crude language without fear of being reprimanded. Frankie, with his slick, jet black hair and powerful build, was the acknowledged leader of the pack, and when they jumped out of the car and pulled their tackle from the trunk, they all followed him onto the big, sandy bank that separated the Assumpink from the Shabakunk, and before long everyone had a line in.

Despite the excitement there was no action whatsoever, and one by one the boys got discouraged and began to move around and spread out. Frankie disappeared over the bank to where the Shabakunk emptied into the Assunpink. Wally and Davey doubled back towards the road, where in the past they'd hooked painted turtles, which were considered nuisances and tossed out onto the road to be crushed by passing vehicles. Before long only Mack and Eddie were left on the sandy bank.

For a while Mack watched Eddie work his rig, but nothing happened. On a whim he decided to gather his gear and cross the frigid water to one of the islets that formed a small archipelago to the west of the big creek. After all, there was no one around to stop him.

When he reached the first link, he felt like he had to go further. He made it to the second, and then to the third, lifting his legs high and trying to land on flat rocks whenever he could in order to keep his sneakers dry, until finally he could no longer hear the voices of his buddies.

The islet was dry and verdant and something like a tiny garden of Eden. Mack wondered how many human beings had ever actually set foot on it. If you couldn't see it from the road, how would you even know it was there? He marched around the circumference and studied his surroundings. They were studded with early purple wildflowers, swamp maples and tilting birches, and on the north bank there was a huge weeping willow whose lush branches gently brushed the surface of the water.

From what he could see, there wasn't any wildlife, no skunks, raccoons, rabbits or groundhogs. He dropped his tackle and paper lunch sack on a mat of emerald grass. The water ran deep off the eastern bank, where the sun was still on the rise and beginning to thaw the earth, and it moved much faster there than in other spots. According to what he'd read in *Field And Stream*, this was where the trout were liable to be hiding.

Mack had never been good with tackle -- the slippery filament made it difficult to tie proper knots with -- but this time he'd used his head and set up his rig the night before so he wouldn't have to waste time fiddling around when he could be angling. He had a hard time twisting the top off a jar of salmon eggs -- it was the first time he'd ever used them, but they were supposed to be superb for nailing trout -- but finally he succeeded in impaling two of the small golden berries on his size 6 hook, making sure to cover the barb completely, as he'd been taught by his father. "If they can see the hook, the fish won't bite," his old man liked to say. The water was running strong, so he took two small split shots out of his tackle box, set them about ten inches above the hook and bit down on them with his front teeth until they were securely fastened to the filament.

Now he was ready for anything.

The next islet was too close, only ten feet or so away, for a full cast, so he flung the rig out underhanded and watched his line disappear into the black water. The first cast of the season was ecstasy, the fulfillment of something he'd dreamed about for months. He dropped onto the grass and prepared to wait.

His thoughts drifted. His mother and father had fought again last night. It was ugly and vile and he'd wanted them to stop, but when it got out of control like that, there was nothing he could do -- not that he ever could do much. Even though their battles were a common occurrence, he could never get used to them. They were filled with accusations and recriminations and curses. His parents hated each other and each other's families, they attacked each other's characters, each thought the other was stupid. Instead of ending in reconciliation, the outcome was a tense silence, and his father went and slept in another room.

His mother had retreated into the master bedroom, slamming the door behind her. For hours on end no one in the house spoke, and once his mother decided to clam up, it could go on for days, as he knew from experience. There was something incredibly hostile and mean-spirited in their wars, and the long silences between fusillades chilled Mack. The sound of his parents' voices raised in ire and hatred made him take to his bedroom and sink into a corner or bury his

head under a pillow. At those moments he wished that he could die, but he didn't know how to make it happen, and besides, according to the Church, suicide was a mortal sin that would only result in more pain in the everlasting fires of hell. It would be better if his parents died -- well, at least his father -- but he wasn't supposed to even think that. But both his parents seemed oblivious to the effect their vicious enmity had on him.

Mack sometimes wondered if his friends' parents battled like his did, but they never let on. He suspected that they didn't, that there was something unique about his home, something contaminated, but maybe he was wrong. Frankie's father was dead, and his mother worshipped him, and when he quizzed the others about their family situations, they seemed to not know what he was talking about.

Mack felt utterly alone on the little island, perhaps more alone than he'd ever felt in his entire life. He often wanted to be by himself, but he knew that something wasn't quite right about it. Today he tried to imagine himself in the wilds of Montana or Colorado or Idaho, where the trout were native and not "stockies," and not just outside the city limits of New Jersey's capital, but the drab factory buildings and belching smokestacks in the immediate distance subverted that fantasy whenever he looked up. He shivered with cold and wished he'd had a jacket instead of just a sweatshirt, which, before leaving the house, he'd insisted to his mother would be enough. Once or twice he thought he might have heard a yelp from one of his companions: maybe someone had gotten lucky and caught a fish, which made him feel envious....

He pulled on his line, felt nothing and reeled in. The salmon eggs were mysteriously gone and the hook was clean. How had they disappeared when he'd been holding his rod the entire time and felt nothing except for the gentle tug of the tide at the other end? Maybe he should have been more vigilant. But he'd never been lucky when it came to fishing. He liked being out of doors, he loved trying, but he rarely, if ever, caught anything. When he did, it was usually something worthless, like a carp or a catfish or a sunny, never anything valuable

like a bass or a pike. And he'd never in his life hooked a trout, the most highly prized of all freshwater fish.

He twisted the top off the jar and smelled the eggs, which had a peculiar scent, like fresh gasoline, then dressed the hook again. If he kept losing his bait, he'd have to switch to worms, which he'd brought along in a small tin can, or, as a last resort, a spinner. For some reason, the flashing silver spoon was always considered the last resort.

When he got used to being alone, the islet was a good place to be. Here he could let his mind wander and he wouldn't catch hell for it. His father always angrily accused him of being a "daydreamer," which meant that he wasn't focused on the here and now, on the practical things like mopping the floor or mowing the lawn. But Mack couldn't seem to help himself. Walking around with his head in the clouds was just the way he was. Maybe there was something wrong with him; he had to consider that possibility because he so often felt different, and he was afraid of feeling too different. Maybe he needed to "get with it," as the nuns at school always admonished him. Maybe that was why he was such a failure in life. He didn't understand why he was already a failure, but he was convinced that he was. If he forgot it, his father or someone else would be sure to remind him.

"Kid, you're as worthless as a tit on a bull!" His old man had accused him of that once, when he couldn't get the fender of his car to sparkle and shine.

Then, like the April breeze, his thoughts meandered in another direction altogether -- to Sheila Grady. Sheila, with her platinum blond hair and cornflower blue eyes. They were in the same grade together at school. She was the love of Mack's life and he wanted to spend the rest of it with her. How that was going to happen, he didn't know since he'd never really even spoken to her. In his fantasies it would though, his reasoning being that if he was in love with her, she must logically then be in love with him. Whenever he thought of Sheila Grady, something inside of him swelled, like a balloon being pumped full of helium. Sheila felt like his future, the single part of his life that would turn out right.

Then his brain shut off and he wasn't thinking of anything. His mind had been blank for a minute or two when he noticed the tip of his rod bending and straightening, bending and straightening. Heart pounding, he grabbed for it and set his hand on the handle of the reel. It was the ultimate thrill, knowing that something mysterious was on the other end of your line, it was miraculous even, like stumbling on a hidden treasure.

He'd been taught as well by his old man to yank sharply on the line when you think you've got a bite, but not too hard, in order to set the hook. The objective was to make sure that the fish didn't escape, but not pull so hard that you ripped the hook out of its soft mouth.

But he didn't have to do anything now. Whatever it was down there in the depths tugged back, fighting for its life. Mack reeled and jerked, reeled and jerked, until he maneuvered the flailing creature onto the grass.

He knew exactly what it was from the photos he'd seen in the outdoors magazines: a rainbow trout, one stunningly beautiful fish. The crimson streak slashed across the center of its body was the giveaway, and besides, he'd never caught a fish like it before. There was nothing else it could be except for a rainbow.

Mack swelled with pride while the magnificent animal flopped around on the grass. It needed desperately to find its way back into the water, but it couldn't. Mack felt a pang of guilt that the trout's life was in his hands. It was helpless, and he had no desire to inflict more pain and torture. But fish were caught for a reason, weren't they? Weren't they to be kept after you'd gone through all the trouble to capture them? He'd never heard of anyone tossing a trout back into the water, even if it was as small as this one. At five or six inches long, it might even be too small to keep.

What he would do, he decided, was take the fish home, show it to his folks. They couldn't help but be impressed. Maybe it would even get them talking again. Or maybe they would do something with it -- like cook it. Trout were for eating, that much he knew. On the other hand, in the past he'd offered them other

catches from the Assunpink and they'd turned them all down flat. His mother had declared once that she'd never eat anything that came out of that "mud hole."

Maybe his trout would be different.

Before too long the fish ceased moving. Max studied its terrified eye for any sign of life, but there was nothing except for a blank stare. He went back to casting, curious to see whether his good luck would hold, but he couldn't stop thinking about the rainbow trout lying at his feet. It seemed a horrible shame to have cut its life short for nothing, nothing at all, and perhaps he'd done just that. He was suddenly filled with remorse, like an executioner who regrets having done his duty by throwing the switch on a condemned prisoner.

But if he hadn't caught the fish, one of the others would have. If the fish didn't perish at his hands, it would be eaten by a bigger fish perhaps, or it would eventually die anyway.

He went on casting, but his luck had vanished. Or maybe his heart just wasn't in it anymore. He switched to worms, then to the lure, but nothing worked. He didn't get even a single nibble.

Weary and bored, he laid his rod down and peered into the cloudy water. If he hoped for some kind of revelation, he was destined not to get one because the murk would serve nothing up. This was his life, too: opaque and difficult to understand.

Though Mack wasn't much interested in food, he munched on a dry ham and cheese sandwich and a small, tasteless apple. When he was through eating, he dumped the rest of his worms into the water, then picked the dead trout up by the tail and lowered it into his paper sack. He'd show it to the others; maybe they'd be impressed.

But when he got back to the sand bar, it was deserted; everyone was gone. He hauled his equipment down the road to the bridge under which the Assunpink flowed on its way into the city. His father was waiting for him in the car there. As usual, he wasn't pleased.

“Where the hell you been? Why didn’t you come back home with those other knuckleheads? I don’t have all day to sit here and wait for you, kid!”

“Sorry.” Mack knew that any attempt at an explanation would be futile. Once his old man was pissed off, it didn’t matter what he served up.

“Know what sorry did? He shit himself,” snapped his father, ramming a gnawed, pulpy cigar back into his mouth.

On the ride back to Indiana Avenue Mack’s father remained silent, but Mack knew what was on his mind: that fight with his mother yesterday, and the fact that he was worn out from working two jobs, and all of his other travails in life. He’d already heard everything a thousand times. What he wanted to ask his father was, “If you hate it all so much, why do you do it?” But he was afraid to.

When they pulled up to the house a few minutes later, Mack told his father to bring his mother around to the backyard because he had something to show them. He ran down the narrow alleyway, turned the bag over and the rainbow trout tumbled onto the grass. Its skin had dulled and the corpse itself had stiffened into a curve, like a boomerang.

“What d’you expect me to do with that thing,” snorted his mother, who appeared inside the back door screen in an apron next to his father.

“I don’t know,” answered Mack honestly.

“Well, make sure you keep it out of the house. I don’t want a bad smell in here, not after all the cleaning I did today!” She turned and disappeared into the shadows.

Mack glanced at his father.

“Want to eat it?”

“Get the hell outta here, Mack! Go get the shovel and we’ll bury it. That’s fertilizer for the tomatoes.” Then he walked away too.

Mack had never heard about fish as fertilizer before. But he did as he was told: he fetched the spade out of the garage, then sat in the sun next to his dead conquest waiting for his old man.

It was going on late afternoon. The setting sun had poured a fiery red refulgence over the rooftops of the city. The day had begun magically, but something had happened to change everything, and it had all started when he'd caught that fish. Now Mack had lost everything. Worse, he sensed that he was going to feel the loss in one way or another for the rest of his life.

A couple of minutes later his father threw open the door.

“What the hell you waitin’ for, kid?” He picked up the spade and headed for the staked plants at the rear of the tiny yard.

There was a rock in Mack’s throat and tears in his eyes, but he blinked them away. He reached for his trophy and followed.



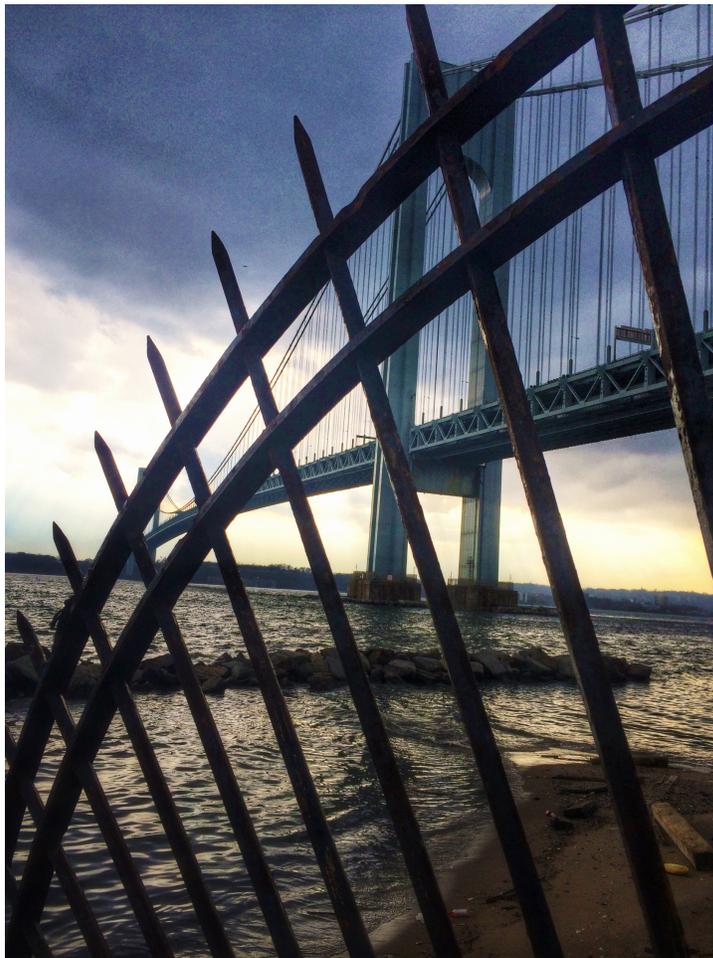
TIM MCLAFFERTY

JUST

Not enough whisky tonight when there's death
in the morning. It's not the snapping rope
but men from boys who've learned taking from books:

monkey-bars to heaven— this paper horn
is to bent celebrations, low and bleat
a mourning, we will maintain our virtue.

ALEX KUSTANOVICH



CHILD'S GRAVE AND FINERY

A ten-thousand-year-old grave
of a child about three years old,
covered with ochre dust
and marked with three stones,
nestled in a rock shelter
under an overhanging cliff
in southern France. More
than fifteen hundred beads,
carefully carved from seashells
and animal teeth, adorned his neck,
wrists, elbows, ankles and knees.

Marks inside the beads show
a needle passed through them:
they were sewn onto clothes
that disintegrated long ago.
Scratches and nicks on the outside
imply the child wore these beaded
clothes when he was playing.

Anthropologists say this finery
must signify hereditary social status.
But maybe he was an only child
whose grandmother polished
the beads and sewed them
onto his clothes while his father
hunted and his mother gathered
berries, the way a grandmother
today might knit or crochet
a sweater or blanket. Or maybe
his parents were so broken
by his death that they sewed
all their own beads onto
his burial clothes, so anyone
finding his grave would know
how much he mattered.

We go to death with nothing in our hands
as if we could not, or cared
not to carry one thing from a house on fire.

What strange cargo, then: the self
but we wish it: enduring.

Strange indeed, that we append objects
with ruin, yet, in their lack, insist
a self from whom without they lie inert.

FROST KILLS LEAVES

Frost kills leaves,
frightens sap inward,
but without it,
how else would the soil grow?

Frost frightens sap inward
and kills, but without it,
how else would the soil grow?

Frost kills
what cannot pull its essence inward
and feed itself through hard times.
Plants drop, leaves fall,
but how else would the soil grow?

In nature, the dead always
rise victorious.



TO AN ISLAND

My eyes hunger for your green,
My ears for the sound of water.
My fingers long to touch your moss,
My palms to feel your rough granite,
My cheek your bark, grey and brown,
My feet to press your gravel paths.

Let me breathe in the air
That the trees out-breathe.
Let me drink pure water
From your hidden spring,
Clear and cold, stone-surrounded,
Deep in your woods where
Sunlight falling through leaves
Pervades the space of silence.

SEA

Sprint off the cliff, arms flung wide,
legs whirring in blackberry air

so the deep blue sea won't swallow
but cradle you like the mother

due everyone in payment for being
yanked here. Her voice in sickness

mists your eyes. The mere thought
of her mouldering dress. Notes plunked

on the warped piano. Leap when Lucifer
thrusts his skull from the surf

so the salty tongue rolls you in.

AT THE BERKELEY ROSE GARDEN

A stone path shows the way
to a wooden bridge shaded
by two young spruces.
A creek splashes over a waterfall,
then curls below the bridge.

On the railing, generations
of lovers have carved their
names and initials: Kat and Reg,
RH and DP, MO loves LR.

A breeze brings the scent
of Sweet Afton, Lucky Lady,
Gold Medal, Amber Cream,
Picasso and Shining Flare.
They wait in silks and armor.

Some have numerous small petals
like chrysanthemums,
others fewer, broader ones
that open to reveal anthers
dotted with black or red.

I will follow the stones
away from the bridge to touch
the corollas and give myself over
to the mindlessness of roses—
their perfumes, scarlets, golds
and electric jolts of pink.

WHAT WILL SHE SAY?

Jerusalem –
I have never seen you,
But when I do,
When my feet touch your stones,
When my heart breathes your earth,
When my eyes see your air,
Your sky, your light,
Then
A soul of mine,
Now sleeping, will wake up.
What will she say to me
From the well of years?

JOHN REPP

72ND ST. MARINA

Cats catching shad.
Oh, I know it's impossible,

but there they are:
Cats. Shad.

BLAZE BERNSTEIN



JAGGED LITTLE SUMMER

My brother calls me saying my father gave him a tattered box with instructions for us to figure out who got which contents. I drive an hour through a gauntlet of jammed freeways to meet him at his home. He pours me a glass of wine, and uncaps a bottled beer from which he takes swigs as we dump the innards of the box onto his dining room table. They turn out to be pictures and mementoes of our family unit, right up until the summer of 1995 when it all splintered. Together we sift through the thin papers of our history. I lift a glossy black and white and see my parents still beautiful, unscathed. In a faded Kodachrome, they seem wrecked—my mother’s eyes narrowed with resentment, my dad leaning away from her looking at something just past her. In a family portrait we are all stiff as papier-mâché.

The summer before I got married, my dad left my mother, his wife of more than thirty years, for a bleached-blond pet sitter he’d met at a bowling alley. Until I heard about the scandal, I was unaware that my father bowled. All that tumultuous summer the saga played out: Dad leaving and returning, Mom shattering and regrouping, my brother and I, adults yet again trying to navigate their perpetual dysfunction.

Juxtaposing my parents’ rupture was my own personal upswing. I felt valued at my job, rented a cottage on a storybook street in Pasadena, California, and was newly-engaged and in love. Contrasting my parents’ acrimony, I had a new normal—happiness.

This was the same summer that Alanis Morissette’s “You Oughta Know” pummeled the airwaves, demonstrating that women were as capable of aggressive backlash as men. The former child star had a cupcake smile, and cage-fighting lyrics. I bought *Jagged Little Pill* and howled along with her as I drove, exorcising the angst of my accumulated knowledge of relationships. Alanis was

empowering. When I coincidentally pulled up beside an ex at a stoplight, I stared him down, then flipped up my middle finger when he looked my way. I told my boss I deserved a raise—and got it, I removed my therapist from speed dial.

Things were happening along the gender continuum that chaotic summer. Shannon Faulkner battled to gain entry to the all-male Citadel in South Carolina and prevailed. She entered the Citadel campus in August, requiring U.S. Marshall escort. Women everywhere felt a shift, then the rebuttal when she dropped out before the end of the first week. Vacating the institution in the wake of victorious yells from the male cadets, Shannon bowed her head in the rain. I remember watching her interviewed on TV, her knees facing Oprah's, defending her decision—shimmying off the cloak of obligation.

The woman with whom my father was having his affair would sometimes call my mother. I once heard her raspy voice on the answering machine taunting my mom. I couldn't grasp her impulse. What more was she seeking? Are we not sisters on a gendered team competing in a sphere where another sex still enjoys the overall advantage?

Knowing these things about my mother, my father, and the pet-sitter created an ugly space from which to plan a wedding. The details—flowers, a menu, the vows—felt insignificant. Traditions seemed absurd. I thought about Shannon bullied from the Citadel, and understood her flight. I heard echoes of colliding expectations in Alanis Morissette's lyrics. When considering our ceremony, I vacillated between ritual and open rebellion. Maybe I would wear a mini-dress, walk alone down the aisle, or choose "Welcome to the Jungle" for our first dance.

My dad was a dead ringer for either Anthony Quinn or Saddam Hussein, depending on how you viewed him. He told me that Richard Nixon was a king among men, that his fearless father had been murdered by Pancho Villa, and that if I didn't behave like a lady I'd be checked by roaming demons. Turns out these were all lies. He declared things that grew me into a conflicted adult. "You better be nicer, Pamela," he'd caution, "or no man gonna like you," or, "The man is the

boss, period.” One of the few gifts he ever gave me was a used copy of Dale Carnegie’s *How to Win Friends and Influence People*; he didn’t think women like me, those with our own way, had a lot of hope.

During the summer months of 1995, Louis Farrakhan organized the Million Man March. The point was for African American men (presumably *all* men) to unite in order to present a positive, centered image, one which interrogated negative, high-profile representations. The Million Man March was specific, but I felt it expressed a gender reaction as much as a racial one. Women were redefining and men were countering.

My father disliked Louis Farrakhan. “The guy’s a radical,” he said, shaking his head and switching the TV channel.

That summer my soon-to-be husband and I lived apart. We gave up the rented house to save money, and I moved into a bedroom in a friend’s condo so small that my clothes hung on a bar above my head, floating like ghosts in the nighttime Santa Ana’s. Sometimes I returned home from work to hear a reconciliation between my roommate and her on-again, off-again boyfriend. Later, he’d sit in his boxers, stuck to an over-sized vinyl sofa eating straight from a carton of ice cream I’d purchased. While she showered, he explained to me that he couldn’t commit to her because what if someone like Demi Moore or Alanis Morissette would want him? Why shouldn’t he preserve his options? With Ben & Jerry’s pooling at the corners of his mouth, and a band of belly bulging at the waist of his shorts, he declared that he’d surely feel short-changed. He set the chilled spoon down on his thigh and asked me how I knew Aaron was the right guy for me. I told him these aren’t things we can know, these are chances we take because the alternative is like *Waiting for Godot*.

On June 15, 1995, the O.J. Simpson murder trial had its seminal moment when Simpson tried on the leather gloves presumed to be worn by the murderer of his estranged wife, Nicole, and her friend, Ron Goldman. The motive was thought to be jealous rage—but O.J. was a man many of us could only picture smiling. We called him “the Juice.” When Simpson pulled on the gloves, he

performed gyrations meant to demonstrate how they did not fit. He rotated his athlete's hands, fingers splayed for all to see, his fleshy palms peeking out the bottom of the gloves. Johnnie Cochran claimed that a man "would be a great actor if he could act his hands larger." But it's no feat to act something bigger than it actually is. We all hone our illusions.

The summer my dad was leaving my mom and I was planning my wedding, he requested a father-daughter conversation. When we met I noticed that he'd gone ashy, his blue-black hair turned dull and peppery, his skin sagging like sheets hung to dry. What he wanted to tell me was that he wasn't to blame for the current predicament. It was my mom, she'd been challenging him. He suggested she was a lesbian. I asked him to stop. I said that I hoped that my husband would never understand so little about me. My father went quiet, then got up and left.

Summer drew to a close and events congealed. My father moved without a forwarding address to a double-wide somewhere in Oceanside, California. My uncle walked me down the aisle on a September afternoon that cast long, fall shadows in our photographs. My mother wandered through the event on auto-pilot. There was never a word from my father about my marriage, or anything.

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It's been twenty years since the release of *Jagged Little Pill*, my parents' divorce, the day I got married, and the events of the summer of 1995. My marriage survived. My ex-roommate and her skeptical boyfriend married too, and had three children. We lost touch, but I sometimes wonder if he feels he settled.

My father married the pet sitter, and my mother was happier alone than she ever imagined.

Marriage as I envisioned it, as a seamless storyline of enduring passion, emotional security, and checkmarks on a To-Do list, is a myth. We don't expect childlessness, devastated finances, more sex, less sex, sex with imperatives, illness, monotony, or the sedative effect of familiarity. I didn't predict that I'd write this from the suburbs where the silhouettes of hundreds of homes are identical to mine, where my joy rides on the flying ears of my dogs released to chase the birds from our feeder, or echoes in the sound of distant children playing at recess.

The cover of Alanis Morissette's follow-up album, *Supposed Former Infatuation Junkie*, shows an overblown photo of Alanis' mouth, superimposed with text from The Eight Precepts of Buddhism. I remember looking up the precepts back then, and grappling with the meaning of one: "I undertake the precept to refrain from taking that which is not given." *That which is not given ...* the dynamics of give and take generate such confusion.

We assemble our families when we are naïve enough to handle the existential output. Then the yield hurls toward entropy, subject—like everything else in the universe—to chaos. We enter our domestic pacts shackled with gender differences, personal baggage, racial and cultural narratives, arriving at either harmony or impasse.

My brother and I sit talking about the years since the summer of 1995—our own marriages, roadblocks, our aging parents, and how we finally forgive them. I sweep my selections from the box into a haphazard pile, spinning certain artifacts with the tips of my fingers, examining others, seeking insight. My brother unconsciously sorts the piles by type and size. I watch him and see my father in his gestures. My husband and his father are not physically similar, at least three inches differentiate their height, yet in shadow I can't tell them apart.

We empty our drinks to lube the razor's edge of memory. My brother tells me for the umpteenth time that my father intends to call me, wants to make

things right. I cannot take that call until it is given to me, so I wait for the giving. The years have amplified my need. I've suffered the bleeding out of my dreams without a father to apply a tourniquet. I suspect, though, that he passed along the photos in an effort to divest himself of this burden.

ALEX KUSTANOVICH



X-RAY

He walks his father in, needs
a chest x-ray, like I do—
Dad's slow with his cane, slower
still with paperwork—keeps his

prescriptions written out on
a sheet in his wallet, just
like my father did— I want
to tell them that, but I don't.

OVERLOAD

It was the last straw—
on top of everything—
that kept anything
from feeling or being
the same again.

This very last straw—
insignificant
in and of itself—
made the whole load
weightier and worse.

This was the straw
that broke the back
of the camel bending
to pass through
the eye of the needle.

If only the beast
had hurt its hoof
under a lighter burden
and had been unavailable
for the unbearable.

DÚN na nGALL

So long our fields lay fallow,
alone to watch the wobbling

of the heavens—knowing no
footstep snapping dew, no hearth

fire lit in our quartzite ruin.
As mourning doves sense black earth

shrouded beneath the road-bed—
asphalt, curb, and tar are mine,

the thick d on the dull tongue,
the crush of many bodies,

engines, and stink of exhaust.



THE DRAGON

A white-haired old man
Stepping slowly, carefully, and stooped
With a vague fond glance
As if walking with a grandchild.
One does not picture such a one
On the throne of the Empire.

He raised his head.
I noticed his skin was smooth
And fresh, unlined like a baby's.
As I met his gaze,
I felt shame and dread, then love,
Like stepping through the curtain of thought,
Onto a vast, still, empty plain,
Something without a name –
Until I remembered,
“Grandfather” is a name for Heaven.

He said, “What do you seek?”
To advise the King.
“What advice do you give?”
The Way of the Sages.
“Abandon learning and craving for rank.
The idea of virtue fosters pride.
Hide. Become nothing.
The Sage is never seen.”
He was silent, words vanished.

I had thought there were no more Sages,
But today I have seen the Old Master.
To what can I compare him?
He is like the dragon
In the clouds and mist
Who climbs into the sky
And rides the wind.

*Based on the legend of the meeting
of Confucius with Lao Tzu.*

ANDREI RUBLEV

Where have you gone,
Andrei Rublev? A cloister
turns its lonely eyes to you,
this cloistered world
with its mendicants swinging
censers, seeking inspiration.

The waft of centuries-
old incense a film
over your tempera, you
a celluloid hero.

Tarkovski's masterpiece about
you, your vision was censored;
even in black and white
color is light. Censors understand that.
They try to suppress nature.
Nature always rebukes
in color.

CREATION STORY

Before the stories
were told by men
Sita wanted Kali
and Kali wanted Sita.
Before Tara was green
she danced with Kwan Yin.
Aphrodite and Artemis
Isis and Athena all celebrated
that which could not be tamed
and the world was created.
Now they are carved in stone,
still, but their eyes still speak
of the ocean, of the leaps
they took and the dives,
when they were dolphins.
They stare but their eyes touch,
but swell, surge, move
amidst people who crush
and destruct. If you notice.
Under the surface they are fluent
in silence but crumble,
as wind wears down both silence
and stone with breath, and time,
and the drum on the shore
that carries one stone to another.
One child clutches a piece
and another child throws one
while neither understands
under the stone is the song.
The bombs fall and the drills dig
but the Mother trembles
louder with volcanoes,
and all that is red, pours.

THE VISION OF RABBI AMNON

Today

In heaven God opens the Book of Remembrance.
The shofar sounds and a still, small voice is heard.

Even the angels tremble, saying, "All will be judged:
Those who walk the earth and the heavenly hosts."

Now before Your Throne passes all that lives
Like a flock of sheep gathered in by the shepherd.

Your all-seeing Eye discerns their life and death.
The destiny of each is written by his own hand.

Compassion and truth are Your foundations.
Your wait with justice, and with forgiveness.

Therefore

In our death, still
There is Your Life.

In our ashes, still
There is Your Presence.

In our anguish, still
There is Your Hope.

In our dust, still
There is Your Breath.

*Based on Untane Tokef,
Liturgy for Yom Kippur*

JEFF FEARNSIDE

A SAINT IS A SENTINEL

A saint is a sentinel
ever watchful of life,
ever hopeful for death.

Sleeping is but a death
when green limbs explode
in color. There can be no mourning
in this. What joy, this sainted
stripping for the season's evening.

What joy to await, naked,
the next morning.

ALEX KUSTANOVICH



With one hand you dip for stars
the old songs frozen in your throat

you sift this coral and shell the way
all mass apprehends its void

each bowl scraped to the sound
of cells eating— nothing

will attach, the moon won't pilot
and not one bone stays quiet.

JOAN FISET
SABRINA ROBERTS

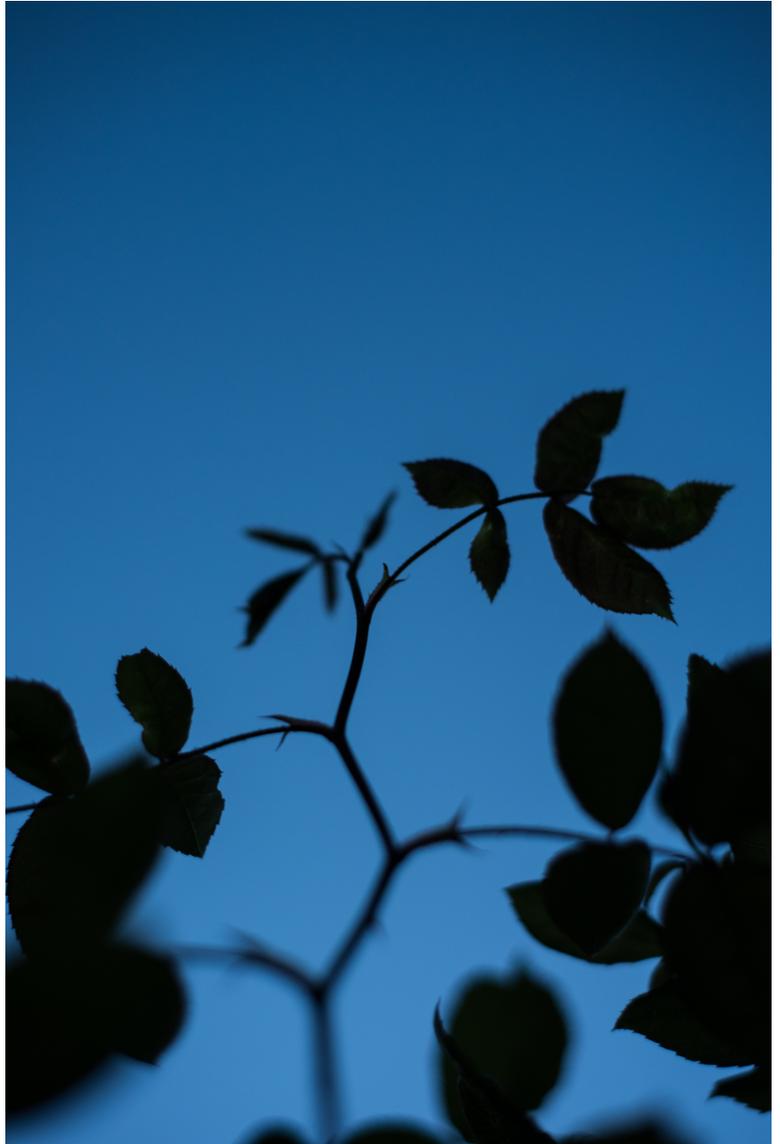
LOSS AND FOUND

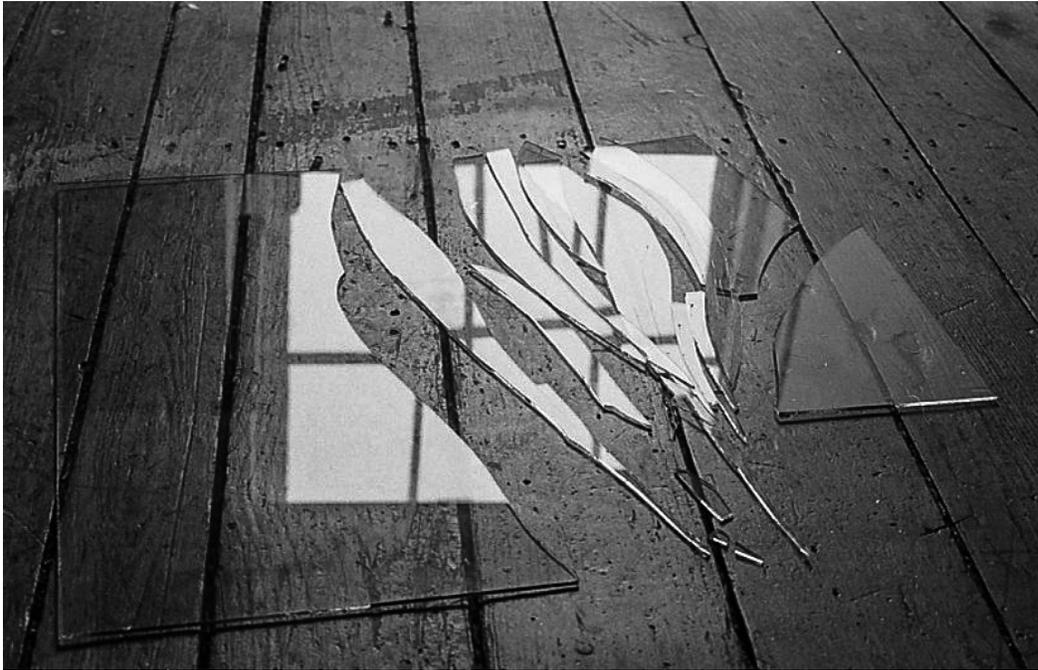
**POEMS BY JOAN FISET
PHOTOGRAPHS BY SABRINA ROBERTS**

SUN

soon the day where once a turn
became the here until retreat

still the blue behind each star
beloved promise incomplete





WHITE STAIRS

past hope arrival stabs the light
outwits the turning wheel

stasis' prayer an echo
abundant souvenir

then free this sudden fish
regardless of the spear

WING

a gentle source beholds the day
collects belief and then

invites the throngs who wait --
curious shadows wanting in

snowbound fragments overwhelmed
tattered ribbons in the drawer

to home



for SNOW

except for illusion
the white horse breathes

the winding way
fetlock deep





TOMB OF THE HILL

acquire a thought
what's lost speaks otherwise

less sturdy now
the antique day surrounds

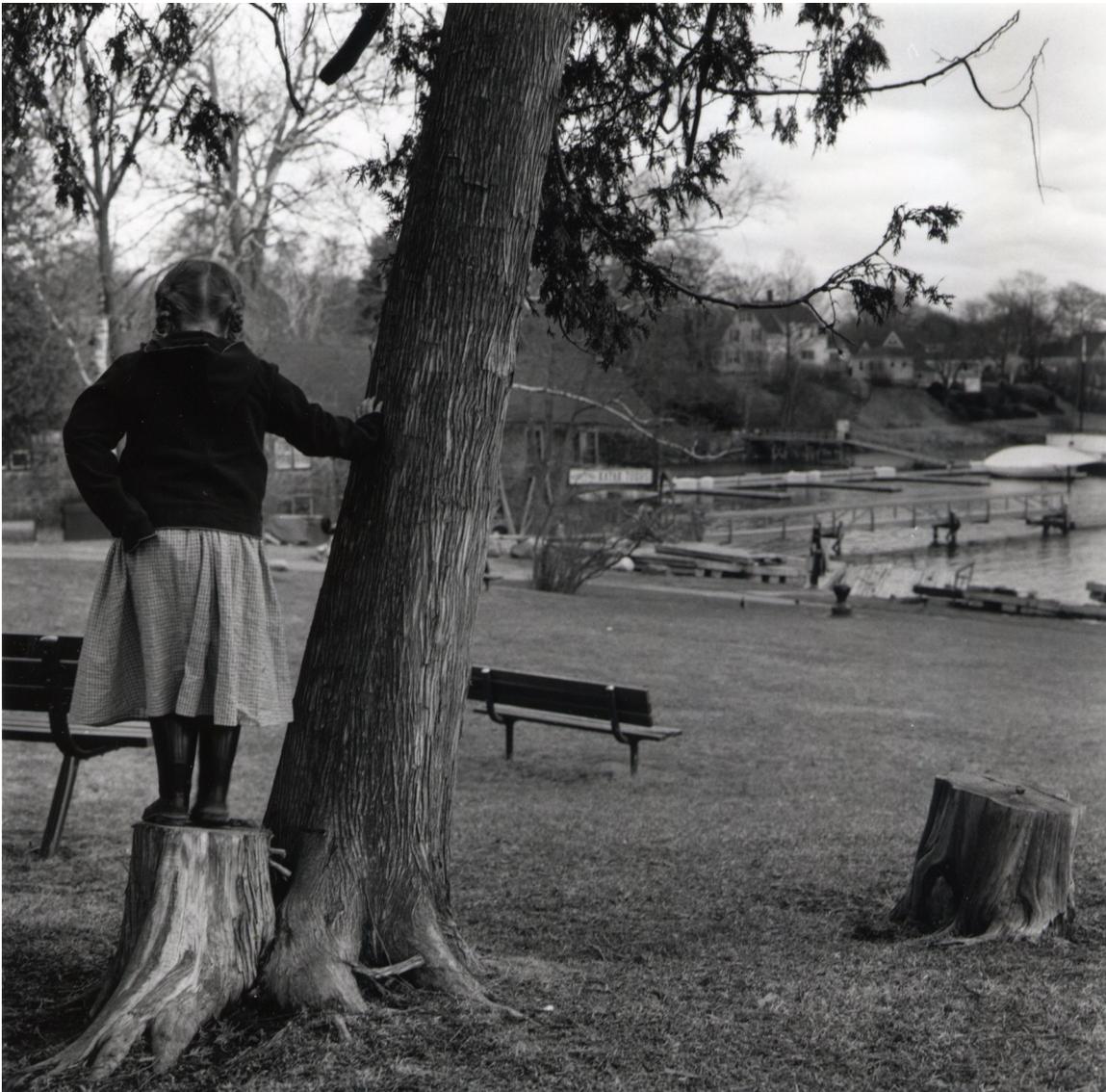
BANDAGE

lights from a carnival percolate
at home across the road

dark will carry songs we hummed
backwards into faded news

landscape we envision
cockeyed roots and trees too singed

to blossom when we order
baton in hand within



THE PLEASURES OF THE BOOK

[This essay is adapted, in part, from my introductory comments at Evie Shockley's reading at St. Francis College in October 2014. She was the featured poet in the Spring Reading Series sponsored by the college's Women's Poetry Initiative, of which I am the director. Shockley's most recent poetry collection is *the new black*, published by Wesleyan University Press.]

There is a beauty and a lyricism to Evie Shockley's work that often belies — or, rather, complements and enhances — the subject matter of her poetry.

Language is gorgeous and supple in Shockley's hands. It provokes, amuses, angers, grieves. Sometimes she works in received form. Sometimes in free verse. Sometimes (as with "soundtrack for a generational shift," for example) in verse that appears free yet has a hidden form or structure (read the first words of each line of that poem and think of Diana Ross and the Supremes).

Shockley will use quotidian details as the starting point for poems that examine, that problematize, the question of what it means to be a person in the world. How is identity constructed? What work does the culture we come from, and the culture around us, do to help form who we are? What do we owe those who came before us, and those who come after us?

Shockley faces the world head-on, fearlessly. Her poems have strength and integrity. They never flinch. They ask us to enter her world, to see things through her eyes, while also prodding us to question our own assumptions, our own complacency.

There are playful poems, angry poems, political and personal and universal poems. The poems ask us to examine, to become involved in questioning, issues of gender and race and class, of wanting and needing and working and dreaming.

Shockley's poetry has a great compassion, which is not to say that she forgives and forgets. No, she remembers, and in that remembering renders beautiful, and beautifully engaging, poetry.

INFORMATION ON CONTRIBUTORS

Noelle Adamo is a stay-at-home mother with a master's degree in social work from Columbia University. She enjoys the rural upstate New York life and all the activities that come with it - hiking, splitting wood, etc. - and keeping a house full of family and friends.

Anselmo J. Alliegro's art experience includes the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and he was awarded a scholarship to Parsons School of Design in New York City. He has exhibited in galleries and benefits in the US and internationally. Publications include *Mo: Writings From the River*, *The William & Mary Review*, *Paumanok Review*, *Flashquake*, among others.

Chrystal Berche dabbles, lots, and somewhere in those dabbles blossom ideas that take shape into images. Many of her current pieces of artwork start out as three minute gesture drawings and eventually get paired with still life photography and a lot of playing in Photoshop. She loves to take pictures, especially out in the woods, where she can sit on a rock or a log and wait quietly, jotting notes for stories until something happens by. A free spirit, Chrystal digs in dirt, dances in rain and chases storms, all at the whims of her muses.

Blaze Bernstein was born in Orange County, California and has lived there all his life. When he's not busy taking photos of the world around him, he enjoys writing, having been published in various places including the *Bangalore Review* and *Inkblot* literary magazine, and playing the piano.

Jane Blanchard studied English at Wake Forest before earning a doctorate from Rutgers. She currently lives and writes in Georgia. Her work has appeared previously in *Assisi* and recently in *Concho River Review*, *The First Day*, *Mezzo Cammin*, and *Penwood Review*.

Lucille Lang Day has published eight poetry collections and chapbooks, including *The Curvature of Blue*, *Infinities*, and *The Book of Answers*. Two more are forthcoming in 2015: *Dreaming of Sunflowers: Museum Poems*, which won the 2014 Blue Light Poetry Award and Chapbook Contest, and a full-length collection, *Becoming an Ancestor*, from Cervena Barva Press. Day's first poetry collection, *Self-Portrait with Hand Microscope*, was selected by Robert Pinsky for the Joseph Henry Jackson Award. She is also the author of a memoir, *Married at Fourteen*, which received a PEN Oakland Josephine Miles Literary Award and was a finalist for the Northern California Book Award in Creative Nonfiction. Her short stories, essays, and poems have appeared in more than one hundred literary journals, such as *Atlanta Review*, *The Chattahoochee Review*, *The Cincinnati Review*, *The Hudson Review*, *The MacGuffin*, *Nimrod International Journal*, *Passages North*, and *The Threepenny Review*. The founder and director of a small press, Scarlet Tanager Books, she holds an MFA

in creative writing from San Francisco State University and a Ph.D. in science/mathematics education from the University of California at Berkeley. For more information, see <http://lucillelangday.com>. Twitter: @LucilleLDay.

The poems of **Phillip Egelston** have appeared in *Folio*, *The Cresset*, *Limestone*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *RiverSedge*, *San Pedro River Review*, *Homewood Review*, and other magazines. New poems will appear in the 'Poets of Faith' special issue of *Rattle*, in *William And Mary Review*, in *Plainsongs*, and in the *Anglican Theological Review*. He is Advisor on Creative Writing and Visual Arts to the Shawnee Hills Arts Council in Southern Illinois. He won the *New Vintage Northwest* first prize for poetry in 2001.

Jeff Fearnside's poetry has appeared in literary journals such as *Permafrost*, *Qarrtsiluni*, *Blue Earth Review*, *Clackamas Literary Review*, *The Los Angeles Review*, and *The Fourth River*, among others. His chapbook *Lake, and Other Poems of Love in a Foreign Land*, winner of the Standing Rock Cultural Arts Open Poetry Chapbook Competition, was published in 2011 and additionally won the Peace Corps Writers 2012 Poetry Award. Other honors for his work include nature writing residencies at the Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest and the H. J. Andrews Experimental Forest. He is the recipient of a 2015 Individual Artist Fellowship award from the Oregon Arts Commission. He lives with his wife and their two cats in Corvallis, where he teaches at Oregon State University. For more info: <http://www.Jeff-Fearnside.com>.

Joan Fiset is a psychotherapist in private practice. Her publications include *Now the Day is Over* (Blue Begonia 1997) winner of the King County Publication Award, and *Namesake* (Blue Begonia 2015). Her work has appeared in *Trickhouse*, *Tarpaulin Sky*, *Kudzu*, *Calyx* and others. She lives in Seattle, Washington with her husband, Louis. <http://www.joanfiset.com>.

Douglas Garzon writes: I am freelance photographer living in the Philadelphia metro region. My interest in photography started when I was about ten years old. That was when I meet my stepmother who is a professional photographer she opened my eyes to the world of color and to see the world through a different filter. I can be contact via email at douglasgarzon@gmail.com

Alex Kustanovich is a Digital Services Librarian whose interest range from existential syncretism to behavioral patterns for albino chinchillas. He can eat three chili peppers without breaking a sweat.

Pamela Ramos Langley pokes away daily at her second replacement keyboard in an inland exurb between San Diego and Los Angeles. She earned her English Literature & Writing degree from Marylhurst University in Portland, OR. Her work has been published in *The Santa Fe Literary Review*, *Literary Orphans*, *The Writing Disorder*, *MARY: A Journal of New Writing*, *Hippocampus Magazine*, *The Story Shack*, *Drunk Monkeys* and elsewhere. She won the 2015 editors' prize for non-fiction over at *MARY: A Journal of New Writing*, has been

nominated twice for Best of the Net, as well as a Pushcart Prize in 2014. She is Fiction Editor for *The Writing Disorder*, and a reader for *Hippocampus Magazine*. (She has not, however, mastered the art of writing a clever bio.)

Rebecca Kylie Law is a Sydney based poet, essayist and reviewer. Published by Picaro Press, her poetry collections include *Offset*, *Lilies and Stars* and *The Arrow & The Lyre*. Other publications include *thewonderbook of poetry*, *Notes for The Translators*, *Poems for the Young Chinese Adult*, *Best Poem Journal*, *Virgogray Press*, *Australian Love Poems 2013*, *Southerly*, *Westerly*, *The Australian*, *The Euroscientist Ezine* and *The Lake*. She is currently completing her Ph.D. at the UWS and her fourth collection of poetry (by Interactive Press) *In My Days and In My Sleep* was released in May 2015.

Tim McLafferty lives in NYC and works as a musician. His poems have appeared in *Assisi*, *Crate*, *Crannóg*, *Barrow Street*, *Painted Bride Quarterly* and elsewhere. He is the poetry editor at *Forge Journal*. timmclafferty.com

Keith Moul's poems and photos are published widely. Finishing Line Press will release a chapbook called *The Future as a Picnic Lunch* in 2015.

Jed Myers is a Philadelphian living in Seattle. He studied poetry at Tufts University, then trained in medicine and psychiatry. He maintains a private therapy practice and teaches at the University of Washington Medical Center. He began seeking publication of his poems following the events of September 11, 2001. Two of his collections, *The Nameless* (Finishing Line Press) and *Watching the Perseids* (winner of the 2013 Sacramento Poetry Center Book Award), were released in 2014. He won the 2012 Mary C. Mohr Editors' Award offered by *Southern Indiana Review*, and received the 2013 *Literal Latte* Poetry Award. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Prairie Schooner*, *Nimrod International Journal*, *The Tusculum Review*, *Sanskrit*, *Briar Cliff Review*, *Quiddity*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *The Ilanot Review*, *JAMA*, *Painted Bride Quarterly*, and elsewhere. <http://jedmyers.com/>

C. Evans Mylonas is a volunteer working in Namibia. The country's unique landscape and culture is often reflected in her work. She is a recent winner of the Skeleton Coast Post photo contest. She is a contributing writer for the *Oshana Regional Library Newsletter* in Oshakati, Namibia.

Kusumita P. Pedersen is Professor Emerita of Religious Studies at St. Francis College. She joined the faculty of the College in 1995 as Chair of the Department of Religious Studies, which merged with Philosophy in 2007. Before coming to the College she was Executive Director of the Project on Religion and Human Rights and Joint Secretary of the Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders on Human Survival. She also taught at Brown University, Swarthmore College and the University of Notre Dame. Dr. Pedersen received the Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies from Columbia University in 1976. Her research interests include environmental ethics, the interfaith movement and human rights. She is

the co-author of *Global Ethics in Practice: Historical Developments, Current Issues and Future Prospects* (Edinburgh University Press, 2016), co-editor of *Earth and Faith: A Book of Reflection for Action* (UN Environment Programme, 2000), and edited a special issue of the journal *CrossCurrents* on “Asceticism Today” (2008). She has also compiled and edited two librettos for works by Philip Glass, *Symphony No. 5: Bardo, Requiem and Nirmāṇa-kāya* (2000) and *The Passion of Ramakrishna* (2006). She has been involved in the global interfaith movement for over thirty years and is Co-Chair of the Interfaith Center of New York. She is also a Trustee of the Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions and Chair of its UN Task Force. She has been a student of Sri Chinmoy (1931-2007) since 1971 and has published a number of essays on his philosophy and poetry.

John Repp’s latest collection of poetry, *Fat Jersey Blues*, won the 2013 Akron Poetry Prize from the University of Akron Press. Alice Greene & Co. published *Music Over the Water*, his most recent chapbook, in October, 2013. Information about these and other publications can be found at www.johnreppwriter.com.

Sabrina Roberts lives in Bothell, Washington. Her photographs have appeared in *Trickhouse*, *Shots Magazine*, *Washington English Journal*, and *Press*. Group exhibitions include: Photographic Center Northwest, 10th Annual Photographic Competition Exhibition, *Opus, Maine*, University of Maine at Augusta, and the Maine Photographic Workshops, Rockport, Maine. www.sabrinaroberts.com

Mark SaFranko’s novels – which include *Hating Olivia* (Harper Perennial, 13e Note Editions), *Lounge Lizard* (13e Note Editions, Murder Slim Press), *God Bless America* (13e Note Editions, Murder Slim Press) and *Dirty Work* (13e Note Editions) – have collected rave reviews and a cult following in Europe, especially in France. His stories have appeared in 70 magazines and journals internationally, including the renowned *Ellery Queen’s Mystery Magazine*. In 2005 he won the Frank O’Connor Award from *descant* magazine for his short fiction. He was cited in *Best American Mystery Stories 2000* and has been nominated twice for a Pushcart Prize.

Recently nominated for two Pushcart prizes, **April Salzano** teaches college writing in Pennsylvania where she lives with her husband and two sons. She is currently working on a memoir on raising a child with autism, and several collections of poetry. Her work has appeared in journals such as *Convergence*, *Ascent Aspirations*, *The Camel Saloon*, *Centrifugal Eye*, *Deadsnakes*, *Visceral Uterus*, *Salome*, *Poetry Quarterly*, *Writing Tomorrow* and *Rattle*. The author also serves as co-editor at Kind of a Hurricane Press (www.kindofahurricanepress.com).

Howard Skrill writes: *The Anna Pierrepont Series*, my drawings of public statuary in NYC, is plein air appropriation. Plein air drawings come into being through visual encounters with the constant changes of light and color in things ideally encountered out of doors. I roll a blue whole foods cart behind me, jammed with a folding chair, pencils, oil and chalk pastels, oil sticks and a pad of paper. I encounter a statue I wish to draw, unfold my chair, lay out my materials and struggle to represent the object emerging from the light and shadows of its surroundings onto a sheet of paper. The drawings are appropriation because the subjects I invariably select are public monuments created by other artists. In 2014, I began to augment the drawings with pictorial essays, such as 'Civic Virtue,' that enable me to explore beyond the plein air limitations of sight. The essays enable me to explore how the monuments came into being, their connection with their surroundings and their fate after installation. I have named the entire project after Anna Marie Pierrepont, a grand dame of 19th century Brooklyn interred in one of the most magnificent tombs in Greenwood. I named the work in her honor as a comment on the gap between my silent and anonymous wanderings and her exulted self-presentation. I teach studio arts and art history lecture in the Fine Arts Department at St. Francis College and drawing at Essex County College. I live in Brooklyn with my wife and two sons.

Dr. Ernest Williamson III has published creative work in over 600 national and international online and print journals. Professor Williamson has published poetry in journals such as *The Oklahoma Review*, *Review Americana: A Creative Writing Journal*, *Pamplousse* (formerly known as *The Gihon River Review*), and *The Copperfield Review*. Some of his visual artwork has appeared in journals such as *The Columbia Review*, *The GW Review*, *New England Review*, and *The Tulane Review*. Dr. Williamson has published articles on comparative education in the academic journal *Academic Exchange Extra* (University of Northern Colorado), and his research has been cited in journals such as *The Urban Review* and *The Public Purpose* (American University). Many of his creative works have been published in journals representing over 70 colleges and universities around the world. Dr. Williamson is an Assistant Professor of English at Allen University, self-taught pianist, editor, poet, singer, composer, social scientist, private tutor, and a self-taught painter. His poetry has been nominated three times for the Best of the Net Anthology. He holds a B.A. and an M.A. in English/Creative Writing/Literature from the University of Memphis, a Ph.D. in Higher Education Leadership from Seton Hall University, and a certificate from Harvard University's School of Education.