

# KISSING DYNAMITE: A JOURNAL OF POETRY

## ISSUE 22 OCTOBER 2020: "DISRUPT"

Issue 22 "Disrupt" collects work that questions norms, challenges the status quo, lays bare the ugly.

This month's featured poet is Collin McFadyen.

Issue 22 includes work by Matthew J. Andrews, Dana Blatte, Emma Chan, Yong-Yu Huang, Jeremy T. Karn, Ting Lin, Lauren Mallett, Betsy Mars, Collin McFadyen, Ilari Pass, Cara Peterhansel, and Lindsay Stewart. And Haneefah Bello is featured in "Unseen, Unsaid" to make it a baker's dozen.

Finally, we're thrilled to announce our Best of the Net nominees for 2020! Join us down below and revisit the stellar work of these six poets: Kunjana Parashar, Robin Gow, Rachel Stempel, Gaia Rajan, Greg Gose, and Aaron Magloire.

### Featured Artist

George L. Stein is a photographer in the New Jersey/NYC area focused on street photography and more generally, art photography. He is most fond of interesting juxtapositions and strong contrasts. His work has been in various lit magazines such as *NUNUM*, the *Toho Journal*, and *Ember Chasm Review* and in group shows at the Down Gallery in Michigan City, Indiana and bG Gallery in Santa Monica.

### "Another Failed Prophecy" by Matthew J. Andrews

*"...a pyrocumulonimbus from the Loyaltan wildfire is capable of producing a fire induced tornado..." – National Weather Service bulletin, August 15, 2020*

It's almost too much to believe:  
that the sky – that black-mass congregation  
of clouds, that crackling communion  
of vapor and light; that thunderclap  
ejector of the uncontainable, the yearning

rebellion that drops in forked tongues,  
its path illuminated like a falling star's,  
it's collision birthing spark and flame;  
that dark courtyard pulsating with the fire  
of judgment – would reach back down  
and summon its outcast again, its wind fingers  
plucking and lifting the exiled inferno  
into the air, drawing it up in swirling dance,  
until the gap has been bridged again – heaven  
and earth reconciled with a Jacob's ladder  
set ablaze. And in the end, it is too much –  
when the morning comes, it's the same  
as it ever was: a molten hot sun hiding  
behind smoky skies, ash falling like manna.

“Idolatry & Other Crimes” by Dana Blatte

This is how you kill  
    a viper. How a uniform and a gun  
can change a man for better  
    or for worse. There is  
    no recoil to voice my death —  
I choke my opiates down and strangle  
    a serpent. Necklaced  
    and defanged. How a gun can free  
    a man. How a uniform can skip  
a stone. There is no way to hide  
    goodbye. Silenced yet full  
    of things to say. Drugs  
to make, languages to slaughter.  
    The man pulls the gun and there is  
    no sound. No funeral befit a viper.  
    I lose  
my fangs on a daughter yet  
    to strike. Here I am, angling  
a voice. Freeing a language  
    of blood and all the places  
where our wounds hold no stones, where we swallow  
    our tails and slick goodbyes. Silenced  
yet deathless — this is how  
    you change a man for good.

“why i don’t write anymore” by Emma Chan

simon says an immigrant mother, in slumber, has always wholed  
a transiting planet, her limbs a forearm of any shade

but preferably mango. more fish or fruitful than woman.  
if my bones are not picked apart from the flesh of motion

sickness they are not worth scattering. the only adjective  
i am permitted to deploy to describe my language is broken,

the only plates i am allowed to pray to ocean-opening  
air looms. yes, there is skin between my skin and listening

within my ears and maybe museums in my cupboards that hurt  
like it did when we scraped our backs with phoenix

feathers during our fall from myth. yes: i, like all the birds  
before me, stand heir to a land vast and riveted by rivers

with exotic names like a family pronounced *she* and exotic words filled with inside of a chest  
that is also fruit, hanging like hopeful melons for hire. my name remains

on the edge of a qipao sleeve: a surprise on my shoulders. man, do a people love  
surprises. and under our sun so sparing and silent

it does not know to subtract the weight of breath  
from the chokehold of a equal signed

story, i am an infinite flying daughter in love with sons so gorged  
on duck liver and boar heart and cat tongue and human home

you could milk us like dusk and we’d still drip culture. crippling. yes, a tongue  
swallowed by a row of throats is so eternal

that even Confucius’s thoughts could not touch  
my poems. our galaxies. yes, because i says. they would not dare.

“Elegy for Future Self” by Yong-Yu Huang

I confess that tonight, I am ignoring the crippled wings  
rustling in the marsh. All eyes on you. I do not have enough  
to offer as repentance. Ignore the funeral—they are mourning  
for that which has not yet come to pass, the aching of the river.  
Sometimes there is only the crowing before the dawn,  
or the beckoning of a mother. Her child crying for a self  
still pearling in her teeth. That is to say, I miss you like a becoming.  
Something I am forever seeking, slipping from my fingers  
and scattering in the wind—a tide lost before the first retrograde.  
How we could have been transcendent, lapping at every second.  
I am sorry that I will never know you, that I will know the taste of  
gunmetal cold in my mouth before I understand how  
I exhaled you. Every breath blinding white against the horizon.  
How strange it is that I know what I am seeking in the redshift.  
When the sun trembles, I begin counting backwards,  
tonguing a name for every heartbeat edging closer to yours.  
Consider this: a girl ankle-deep in still water,  
waiting for the land to flood in memory.

“This Is How You Know You’re a Stutterer” by Jeremy T. Karn

you’ll feel its beginning,  
                                in the deepness  
of your mouth like thorns nailed in the flesh  
wounds growing in the back of your throat  
like cobwebs  
                                that hang from there to here

it will make your mouth taste like silence,  
                                smell like the graveyard  
your grandfather was buried in

& sometimes,  
                                you’ll feel dislocated from your body  
like those giggles  
that are now lost in your childhood’s songs

you'll learn how some words swim  
    away from beneath your tongue  
& clog themselves in your veins,  
then you will take forever to have faith in your tongue

“A Purpose for Those Without” by Ting Lin

My mother carved out her ovaries  
the same August I lost my virginity to  
a storm of a girl, then told me  
I should bear a child by thirty.

In this family, our womanhood poisons us.  
Bitter are these pearls we inherited. So I understood:  
loss, so I understood barren.

My mother stares at period products on  
supermarket shelves. Something to stop the blood.  
I am seventeen but the years pass  
and they keep passing. Mama: my longing is the wrong kind.

I watch her bend over the sink,  
golden light streaming through the window  
illuminating her spine.  
Ting, she named me— means listen,  
to our rivers, our forests, our typhoons.  
She tells me to pray harder.

I'm leaving home as she teaches me our language.  
Lok yu daai, seui jam gaai. Heavy rain, drowning street.  
I can sing it but I cannot speak plainly, the intonation  
too brittle for my crooked tongue.

At Nanhua temple she burns her thin red incense year after year,  
and I love every child I see through the smoke,  
passing her by.

“Caesura in the Thoracic Age” by Lauren Mallett

I clean the bathroom. You sweep the floors.  
    You mow the lawn. I seal the windows.

You say, is the sun shining on you?  
I hear, is this song turning you on?  
You're the Philosophy. I'm the Letters.  
I watch you replace the suet. Shoo begone  
the squirrels. You don't believe in privacy.  
I've had my identity stolen. You don't believe  
in a rug unto carpet. I believe it has the potential  
to look nice. You unplug in a storm. I roll over.  
Say don't worry. You count the seconds  
between lightning and thunder. I'm looking.  
What at, you ask. The door. You frenetic  
you furrow. I ask, can we turn down the neuroses?  
You quiet. I see. I've gone and hurt you  
with my poem. I love your nose. What if  
our bed was a boat? You're the dog. I'm the cat.  
Are we on the Columbia? I'm curled  
in your haunch. You make a joke. I have a feeling.  
You're on trial. We the bundle of birds.  
I'm the tribunal. The apology.  
The party brought by seed.

["In My Dream I Enter the Bistro" by Betsy Mars](#)

& flawless French pours out of my mouth  
as I greet the maître d' who leads us to our seats,  
table laden with platters of "delicacies."

The staff watch proudly as I eye the nature morte  
tableau upon the table. I know I must try my best  
to eat, to take it all in – this nauseating feast.

I turn the plate before me, examining the fare: a tentacle –  
one end open like a tube, suction cups along its grey length,  
a fishlike head on the other end with gaping mouth

and staring eyes. I spin the dish, wondering  
where I am expected to begin. Finally resigned,  
I lift fork and knife, approach the head

which begins to thrash, crying out  
through its big open mouth,  
*Je suis triste! Je suis triste!\**

I throw back my chair and run  
out the door, ashamed  
that I can't rescue or console,  
or even eat what is offered.  
There will be many more served.

\*I am sad

["Sparrows and Starlings" by Collin McFadyen, October's Featured Poet](#)

neighborhood regulars  
a welcoming committee with something to prove  
picking apart the untested hipster  
his tattoos of sparrows and the St. Johns bridge  
pretty and sharp, bright and clean

Where'd you go to school?  
What street do you live on?  
Where did you live before?

atop barstool perches, we sink our roots  
in lengths of months or years,  
not generations  
our white faces smug when he explains  
he's used to a "rough" neighborhood  
this neighborhood hasn't been rough in years  
not for us, anyway

we stumble North to the corner store,  
faded 7up sign glowing like mist in the dark  
window ads for Newport Menthols and Yerba Matte  
mismatched offerings  
us/them old/new black/white

like his parents, Charles likes to talk  
from behind the cash register  
family photos under the counter glass  
graduations and babies  
Black men in barber shops  
ancestors

Where'd you go to school?  
Where do you stay?  
Where did you live before?

do we all feel a twist of shame?  
standing in the beer cooler's spotlight  
name-dropping places  
knocked down and buried  
under hipster bars and coffee shops  
as we were moving in  
like starlings into stolen nests.

### **Collin's Commentary on "Sparrows and Starlings":**

Writing this poem felt dangerous to me, a letter of confession to my neighbors and Portland in general. Inspired by my own discomfort, I explored the themes of complicit guilt and gentrification. I live in a historically Black neighborhood that's been flattened by greed and racism for decades. Now on round three (four? five?) of gentrification, there's a sense of entitlement among the white people who moved here in the first wave. At our local bar, whites (like myself) who didn't consider themselves gentrifiers try to erase our guilt by pointing fingers at the newer white "invaders." While working on this piece, I realized I was participating in these conversations and trying to prove that I wasn't a "real" gentrifier. After writing this poem, I can no longer believe I am a blameless part of the neighborhood that used to exist.

### **Editor-in-Chief Christine Taylor's Commentary on "Sparrows and Starlings":**

My hometown is one that has seen shifting demographics for the past six decades, and I am fascinated by the causes of these shifts and the reception that people receive once they move into town. It is most often not a welcomed one. And people are quick to justify their prejudice by claiming ownership of the area. So these thoughts came to mind when reading Collin's poem. But I was moreso drawn to their work because of the brutally honest perspective it takes while still existing in beautiful, rhythmic language. I appreciate the questioning of the self, the challenging of motives, the exposing of hard questions. For these reasons, the editorial team was like, "THIS poem!" and we thank Collin for it.

### ["Air, Interrupted" by Ilari Pass](#)

My son practices somersaults on the lawn.

Beneath our feet the yellow stars' glimmer

lights the way. The sun still shines, though



it glistens just out of reach. For those damn dandelions  
unfurl; its hunger is another color.

Fists give birth to cells

Red-spiked, protruding polka-dots

Rose out of them as if there were candles

That is surprising us

They illuminate nothing

to an invitation. I watched him

expel from one strut to the next, cartwheeling

ungainly to crump on the earth. His tired

ears fell off at the sound of my voice

and we picked them up because our hands

were full of a thousand poems

that neither one of us knew how to read.

[“Futile Feet” by Cara Peterhansel](#)

*a pecha kucha after Amy Cutler*

[Futile Fleet]

We try to keep all the distance we can, but being  
tied together at the head, woven in a star of braids,  
we shuffle like one undulating creature. I watch  
my futile feet. Sometimes, I dream  
my braids fall out in clumps.

[Embargo]

Together, we are a futile fleet, sailing towards  
each other. We are the masts, the sails, our own  
figureheads. Our trade is dolls, cloth replicas  
of ourselves. Sometimes, we'll sell any sea creatures  
we've been able to trawl from the floor of the ocean.

[Gorge]

The cliffs in the distance are strung with color—  
flags like paint spats on the face of the mountain.  
The women who put them there are long dead.  
How it must have felt to weave in and out of mountain goats,  
free and dressed in skeins of mountain air.

[Allopathy]

Some of the older women think they understand  
what it is in the air that makes it dangerous to breathe.  
Sometimes, it is enough to keep our hands busy,  
knitting, stitching, folding, braiding. Sometimes, it is not enough,

[Groomers]

Instead of sitting at a loom to weave, sliding the shuttle  
of the weft through woolstrands, my fingers find  
their wisdom weaving Margaret's hair into braids.  
A poet might say her hair is sunshorne wheat,  
but really, it is a breathing, desperate animal.

[Sugar Foot]

We pull each other like taffy— aerate each limb  
like the candy it is. This is the only way I know  
how to live— at the table, stringing sugar into  
delicate thread.

[Preceding]

We drag sleds behind us as we migrate to the wall.  
The days we work at shutting ourselves in are  
the days I wish to be dressed in nothing but my skin. At night,  
I run my fingers across the tender pads of my callouses,  
and wonder how long it will be before I can't feel her softness.

[Trial]

Not all of us are sisters, but some days it's fun

to play at sisterhood. We fly kites in parallel near the worksite. Margaret has cemented her dress into the wall, but the sky is collecting our kites in firm updrafts, so I might be the only one to notice.

[Realignment]

Our women used to tend to the aching backs of any creature who came across our fields. Not anymore. We still soothe each other's backs after a day of working at the wall. This way, we still pass down our traditions.

[Initiation]

When I was little, and we still took creatures in, I watched as my mothers ushered turtles into the tents of the dead. I don't remember why or where the turtles went when they were done with all our keening.

[Garnish]

Margaret told me a story once of how her mothers used to feed pink pigs with apples, overripe and red. What a serenade of sunset it must have been to watch their pink mouths foam with juice.

[Molar Migration]

Sometimes, when it is quiet, I convince myself there is a party right behind the wall of my forehead. Girls like us, dancing, in a room with no windows and fluorescent lights. There is a whole world, as closely knit as ours, rattling in my skull.

[Millie]

I'm not sure who named me, but I think they got it wrong. I am a sorceress of my own loneliness, Circe of my own soul.

[Cautionary Trail]

I catch a glimpse of my body in the mirrored walls of the house and realize that it's actually a mirage of my own limbs in the heat pool of another girl, wearing the same cornflower-dyed fabric.

[Elephant Ferries]

Margaret and I drape ourselves over large rocks on sunny days— let the heat wrap into our backs as if on some sweet and breathing thing. Warm sun like warm blood circulating through veins.

[Bionic Contortion]

One afternoon, Margaret and I pin fresh-dyed fabric to a clothesline. We sit in the shade of swinging dresses. They leak pigment on us— drops of dye like constellations on our skin. Her lips on mine turn our mouths into a secret tunnel of sacred breath.

[Waders]

Her body is a vast cavern to wade down. How had our fingers spent so long away from sinking in the mud of each other? We wonder this. I lift my head and study the imprint of my braids on her soft, bare skin.

[Viragos]

Later, alone again, all the objects in the house of my mind are strung on a line, dangling from deep-dyed clothespins. She is in every corridor, every cloth.

[Traction]

We try to keep all the distance we can, but being tied together, my futile feet find their wisdom. I aerate each limb of her, dressed in nothing but a serenade of sunset.

[The House on the Hill]

The skydust makes us cough when we get too close to the wall. Maybe, someday, when the wall is tall enough, Margaret and I will paint a mural. Our hands will be spattered with colors, and all we'll hear is the brushes against the brick, thick with lacquer. This way, we'll paint our home.

“Maybe Medusa was my eleventh grade English teacher” by Lindsay Stewart

People talk about heroes using past tense

when there are thousands of teenagers who have hung on the word of a woman  
at the front of an ordinary room. No matter the sound of the bell

no matter the shit that went down in the comments last night  
no matter the page count we made ourselves new each day

in a den of her nesting. She did it like I could do it too, no makeup,  
attire irrelevant, her body made of many mighty

mouths: loud, and sometimes angry. I wanted to do whatever  
she asked of me, wanted to be like her: a monster, so many sets of eyes,

always watching. Her voice would build and we, in desks,  
enraptured, held our breath until our notebooks filled,

wanting something bigger, and  
terrifying. We watched in awe, sick with laggard

curiosity, as she rendered the boy with the Bieber cut immobile. Though  
he was back the next day because, like the best of monsters, she was

merciful. But there was that one Monday, when she brought  
her daughter to class. Until then, it had never occurred to me that she

could also be a mother—a mother to someone  
else, a woman who waited in the same traffic I did

to get here, a woman who made the world she is standing in.

## “Unseen, Unsaid”

When confronted with tragedy, how do we react? Do we accept the role that we possibly could have played in the matter? In "The man," **Haneefah Bello** questions our reaction to suicide.

### “The man” by Haneefah Bello

We found him in an embrace  
with the ceiling,  
body bent that way like a mutiny.

All is fair in love and war.  
All was fair

when he washed ashore as a  
seashell  
bearing lacerations of a former  
salty life.  
A Jonah, whole again.

Inhaled enough seaweed in his gills  
to buoy him into the sun.  
That skin, until it caught fire  
& all that was left was anthracite  
stillness.

His body bleeds the sound of  
fossils singing a dirge,  
faint applause, tongue leaking  
saltwater.

Cut him down, hush. Now,  
a prayer.  
Pay close attention to our lips  
stumbling across overgrown  
pikes.  
We sound like dogs dying a blue death.

**Haneefah’s Commentary on “The man”:**

I've always questioned how we, human beings, react to issues regarding suicide and depression when we're not the ones experiencing it. This poem, too is a question. In it, I have tried to be a witness, recording our typical reaction to suicide; we're sad it happened, we say a prayer for his dear soul, but we wonder what went wrong when we've been the ones ignoring or justifying his depression and all the signs all along. But what has happened has happened, so all our wondering and finger-biting is pointless.

### Best of the Net Nominees 2020

We wish these six amazing poets luck! Their work is quite deserving of recognition, so please revisit their poems and sing their praises.

### “Love in the Time of Climate Catastrophes” by Kunjana Parashar (Issue 10)

We have some time before the permafrost all melts: *stay*.

I know the smog will make apparitions of our unborn child and

the lantana will try to take root from the cleft of our thighs.

But until the adjutants still have our bones to eat, won't you stay?

Forget how we couldn't help the electrocuted bodies of bustards

lying on dusty field roads, forget our loss of language for that

special grief reserved for bird-deaths. That dark night when the burnt  
smells of brown plumages filled our dreams and we kept sweating.

So what if we can't hear birdsong again – look how the inky-blue

grandalas sing from your collarbone still, how constant their wingspan

on the landscape of your neck – like the only music we need.

And look how from the pipes, the moray eels enter our kitchen like

swimming in a calm tidepool. We will go that way too – sea fans

escaping the palms of our cold, wet hands – us – ebbing and ebbing.

### “the robots who suggest Facebook ads are just ghosts” by Robin Gow (Issue 11)

a friend's mouth is moving but the room is so loud

it's like there's no words coming out. i miss  
my bed room & i missing having a window. Facebook suggests  
i buy a window & i know yes that's what i want  
i want it right now. Facebook suggests yes i should buy  
a very small night light just like the one i had  
when i was six or seven years old—the one in the shape  
of saint mary glowing blue & mom plugging in  
the night light & saying that i won't have to be  
scared anymore. we don't have to be scared anymore.  
my smart phone knows who i am & this proves to me  
that maybe i am knowable. that maybe there are  
formulas floating around under my skin. or yes  
the truth is i've always thought that maybe  
there's a sea of ghosts working long hours  
to pick the right ads that i want to see. i get one  
about discount hotels in new jersey. i want to leave  
this city i want to lay on the ocean. no i want  
to go farther. i get an ad for the rocket to mars  
& i scroll past. yes, they know me too well.  
no i can't go that far. i want small actionable items.  
a rainbow tooth brush. a trans flag.  
yes, my phone sees me. face recognition. this isn't  
a poem about disconnection. the room is loud  
i told you & there are items to make me feel  
more tangible. an electric tooth brush.  
a pair of soft pajamas. download a new design program.  
i want to design a new skeleton. the ghosts  
are passing me notes. they're saying  
*we know you need this* & i do need all of this.  
not just the items, but the attention. the ghosts  
endlessly working to find what i need. in the room  
we're all sitting with our ghosts & the haunting  
is thick in the air. i speak a word aloud  
& it turns into a screen. a brilliant lovely screen.  
i text the person across from me that i love them.  
she loves up & smiles, puts her foot on top  
of mine underneath the table. the ads tell me to buy  
her something beautiful. the ghosts perch like  
eagles on our heads. my mouth is full of light  
so i don't open it & the room thrums until we leave  
& step out onto the open street where silence rushes  
long & black as the asphalt.





I closed every window. The mouths of tulips  
broken. Beneath every oak, a lost limb.

I folded hundreds of pigeons, mangled paper into a beak  
and a body. This poem is for how his voice cleaved the air  
into feathers, how I took a knife to the wall after,  
until a moon of light shone through the apartment,  
until my knuckles bled like his.

Suppose I woke and saw only lightning.  
Suppose the birds burned their songs  
that summer. Suppose I speared sharks  
in the river. I screamed *Peter*  
which meant *pray* which meant *please*. How a name can sound  
like a clock. A grave in a field full of ticking. Week-old  
feathers. This boy, this bird-- too human  
for this earth. Which is to say: sometimes, I don't exist  
except in the universe where everyone stays alive, where wings sprout  
from our spines, where we have more to give  
than prayer. Which is to say: the morning after,  
I gave my bones to the water. Feathers wavering  
in the river.  
A blackbird in the oaks.

[“In This One, I’m the Dead Cosmonaut and the Multiverse Both Exists and Doesn’t Exist”  
by Greg Gose \(Issue 17\)](#)

I spent a lot of time wondering what it would be like to die  
before looking at the Milky Way split wide on the horizon  
or the moonlit silhouette of an airplane over

wheat fields carving the blue-black skyline with all those souls  
headed to Chicago Thanksgivings, or Detroit, or maybe a place not like this one:  
where there are no ghosts of middle school gymnasiums

or a father’s fists smearing holes in speckled drywall homes;  
where there are no feral regrets nestled into the fibers of a suit and life  
isn’t where breathing becomes an exercise in slow asphyxiation—

no more drowning, or cracked skin swathed in capillary roots,  
no dry-rot embraces in a hammock out back of a rented apartment:  
this is a place where all the colors of the world are the deep cedar

of your irises reflecting the sunlight on an August afternoon—

a place where dreams don't bleed around the edges of miscarriage,  
and the lung-stitched cough of waking slowly is only temporary;

I wonder if dying between these stars could cascade into that impossible  
timeline where I'm not consumed by the remains of a damp sidewalk kiss,  
where all the doorways of the world are condensed into one

moment: we're together and hoping for beach-dream futures, or love  
under a lighthouse beacon, or the one where it's just us, laying together  
in the sand, the dark of skin touched with perspiration,  
caressed fabric and wind observing the stars and planes  
overhead: I know there's a version of me alive with you there  
the other side of Orion, one that never left Earth. That never lost a child

and could wake any Thursday afternoon to a face so familiar, and I want it so badly  
but this is not that reality. This one is me orbiting the beautiful collapse  
of neutron stars until there is no air left to breathe.

["Not a Poem About Ahmaud Arbery" by Aaron Magloire \(Issue 18\)](#)

I am loading the dishwasher,  
stacking china white  
like bones  
like flags  
like teeth, bright  
in a fleshy black head.  
I am not thinking  
about running.

I am watching the red-winged blackbirds  
perched on edges of wheat  
before ascending  
synchronized, swift,  
those red feathers from afar  
like still-dripping wounds.  
I am not thinking  
about running.

I am done memorizing  
names  
faces  
mothers.

School is out for the summer  
and June is on the horizon,  
quiet fire coming  
to burn what has been lost.  
I am not thinking  
about running.

I am thinking  
four days ago  
my father drives two hours  
to bring me my guitar.  
I tell him leave it in the driveway  
because virus still raging  
because people still dying  
I tell him leave it in the driveway,  
watch him from a distance,  
say, through wind,  
that at least with everyone inside  
we haven't seen any black men  
dying on the television.  
And we laugh,  
guitar as our witness, breathing  
in its beat black case.  
I am thinking  
if nothing else  
like we always have  
I will music.  
I will sing.

*Be safe* I tell him  
when he turns to his car.  
From the porch I watch  
his broad black shoulders  
steady in that lifting wind.

### Poet Biographies

**Matthew J. Andrews** (he/him) is a private investigator and writer who lives in Modesto, California. His poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *Funicular Magazine*, *The Inflectionist Review*, *Red Rock Review*, *Sojourners*, *Amethyst Review*, *The Dewdrop*, and *Deep Wild Journal*, among others. He can be contacted at [matthewjandrews.com](http://matthewjandrews.com), or on Twitter at [@2glassandrews](https://twitter.com/2glassandrews).

**Haneefah Bello** (she/her) is a Nigerian poet who is currently obtaining a degree in law. Her works have appeared in *Nantygreens*, *Ripostes of Locked Down Voices* anthology and *Praxis Magazine*. She is @HaneefahBello on Twitter and @ha\_neefahh on Instagram

**Dana Blatte** (she/her) is a sixteen-year-old from Massachusetts. Her work is published or forthcoming in *Fractured Lit*, *Parentheses Journal*, *perhappened mag*, and more. In addition to writing, she is passionate about language learning, illustration, and taste-testing vegetarians snacks. You can find her on Twitter @infflorescence.

**Emma Chan** (she/her) is a junior at Kent Place School. She is the founder of a mental health publication called *The Hearth* (<https://www.thehearthstories.org/>). She hopes to pursue history, philosophy, and literature in college. Her work has appeared in *Blue Marble Review* and *Eunoia Review*.

**Greg Gose** is a writer from Phoenix, Arizona. He is a McNair Scholar and was the Editor in Chief of *Eclipse Literary Journal* for three years, received a residency for the Martha's Vineyard Institute of Creative Writing in 2016, and is currently an MFA candidate at Northern Michigan University and an associate editor for *Passages North*. He loves space, sad things, and cats. Find him on Twitter @thedeadechoes

**Robin Gow** (they/them) is the author of the chapbook *HONEYSUCKLE* by Finishing Line Press. Their poetry has recently been published in *POETRY*, *New Delta Review*, and *Roanoke Review*. Robin is the Editor-at-Large for *Village of Crickets* and Social Media Coordinator for *Oyster River Pages*. Their first full-length poetry collection is forth-coming with Tolsun Books.

**Yong-Yu Huang** (she/her) is a Taiwanese teenager who has lived in Malaysia for most of her life. Her work has been previously published in *Sine Theta Magazine* and *Hominum Journal*, among others. In her free time, she can be found humming the Doctor Who theme song.

**Jeremy T. Karn** (he/him) writes from somewhere in Liberia. His work has appeared in *20.35: Contemporary African Poets Volume III Anthology*, *The Whale Road Review*, *The Rising Phoenix*, *Kalahari Review*, *African Writers*, *Praxis Online*, *Shallow Tales Review* and elsewhere. His chapbook *Miryam Magdalit* has been selected by Kwame Dawes and Chris Abani (The African Poetry Book Fund), in collaboration with Akashic Books, for the 2021 New-Generation African Poets chapbook box set. He tweets @jeremy\_karn96

**Ting Lin** (she/her) grew up in Guangzhou and Toronto. Her poems explore themes of queerness, femininity, and migration. She is currently an undergraduate student at Stanford University studying Anthropology. You can find her on Twitter @imtootiredfor where she posts about her dog too much.

**Aaron Magloire** (he/him/his) hails from Queens, NYC and is a rising sophomore at Yale University, where he's had the indescribable privilege of studying poetry under Emily Skillings and Claudia Rankine. He's a big fan of nighttime car rides, cherry tomatoes, and overusing the word "maybe" in his poems.

**Lauren Mallett's** (she/her/hers) poems appear in *Salamander*, *Passages North*, *Fugue*, *RHINO*, and other journals. She lives on Oregon's north coast, formerly the land of the Clatsop people. Find her at [www.laurenmallett.com](http://www.laurenmallett.com).

**Betsy Mars** is a poet, photographer, and occasional publisher. She founded Kingly Street Press and released her first anthology, *Unsheathed: 24 Contemporary Poets Take Up the Knife*, in October 2019. Her work has recently appeared in *Verse Virtual*, *San Pedro River Review*, *Sheila-Na-Gig*, and *Better Than Starbucks*. Her chapbook, *Alinea*, was published in January 2019 by Picture Show Press. *In the Muddle of the Night*, with Alan Walowitz, is coming soon from Arroyo Seco Press. In 2020, she was a winner in Alexandria Quarterly's first line poetry contest series.

**Collin McFadyen** (she/her/they/them) is a former owner/chef of a busy little diner, and the rhythm and patter of daily life influences their work. By focusing on the small moments around them, they're often lead to explore challenging topics, emotions, and the occasional bursts of humor and joy. They have been published at *Subjectiv* and *Tealight Press*. Happily, they live in North Portland with their wife, two sons, and a wicked cute terrier. Follow them on twitter @crayonsdontrun

**Kunjana Parashar** (she/her) is a poet from Mumbai. She holds an MA in English Literature from Mumbai University. Her poems appear or are forthcoming in *Lammergeier*, *UCity Review*, *The Hellebore*, *Riggwelter*, *Camwood Literary Magazine*, *The Rumpus (ENOUGH Section)*, and elsewhere.

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/wolfwasp>

**Ilari Pass** holds a BA in English from Guilford College of Greensboro, NC, and an MA in English, with a concentration in literature, from Gardner-Webb University of Boiling Springs, NC. She was a finalist for the 2019 Ron Rash Award in Poetry in *Broad River Review*; an Honorable Mention in the 2020 Spring Issue of *JuxtaProse Magazine*; the 2020 *Cream City Review* Summer Poetry Contest finalist, and a Runner-up for the 2020 Doug Draime Poetry Award in *The Raw Art Review*. Her work appears or forthcoming in *Brown Sugar Literary Magazine*, *Red Fez*, *Unlikely Stories*, *Triggerfish Critical Review*, *Rigorous Magazine*, *The American Journal of Poetry*, *Drunk Monkeys*, *The Daily Drunk*, *Free State Review*, *Common Ground Review*, and others. Find her on these social media handles:

Instagram.com/@ilari1969

Twitter.com/@IlariPass

**Cara Peterhansel** (she/her) is a poet from Connecticut. She is an MFA candidate in Poetry at Sarah Lawrence College. Her work explores the intersections of invisible and visible illness, injury, queerness, and art. She explores how the space we occupy, in the body and in the physical world, shapes the people we become. She lives in New York with her husband Julian and their rabbit Simba. Her work has previously appeared in *The Jet Fuel Review*, *The Laurel Review*, and *Alexandria Quarterly*. She can be found online at [carapeterhansel.com](http://carapeterhansel.com).

**Gaia Rajan** (she/her) is a writer and high school sophomore from Andover, MA. Her work has been recognized by *Eunoia Review*, *Creative Minds Imagine Magazine*, Best in Teen Writing, Write the World, and the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers, among others. In her spare time, she loves listening to electro-pop, hanging out with her sister, and drinking far too much tea.

**Rachel Stempel** (she/her) is a queer poet originally from the Bronx who now larps as a Long Island townie. She is an MFA candidate and adjunct instructor at Adelphi University. Her work is forthcoming in the spring issue of *The Nasiona*.

**Lindsay Stewart** is from Glen Ellen, California. Her second home is San Diego, where she is currently pursuing a master's degree in American Literature at San Diego State University. Her work has previously been featured in *The Los Angeles Review*, *What Rough Beast*, and one of her poems was recently featured on the Poetry Foundation's VS podcast. She has work forthcoming in *The I-70 Review*. Visit her website: <https://lindsaystewart.weebly.com>

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