

# KISSING DYNAMITE: A JOURNAL OF POETRY

## ISSUE 39 MARCH 2022: "COLLAGE"

Welcome to Issue 39 "Collage," in which our contributing poets examine the layers of our existence.

Issue 39 includes work by Jessica Dionne (our featured poet for March), Madeline Docherty, Makenna Dykstra, Kimberly Glanzman, Fiona Lu, Alix Perry, Zoe Reay-Ellers, Nicole Sellew, and Mikhaela Woodward, and Jared Beloff is featured in our Baker's Dozen spot "Char." Please view The Gallery below!

### Featured Artist—K.G. Ricci

K.G. Ricci, a self-taught New York City artist, made a collage on a file cabinet in 2015. The creative possibilities of the medium immediately inspired him. Fifty cut and paste panels followed, visual improvisations on 20" x 40" or 2' X 4' hardboard. Next, Ricci completed another series on 8" X 24" hardboard with implied literary reflections or narrative lines. He categorized hundreds of his panels in groups with names like "Femina Dilemma", "Hotel Kafka" and "3:43 A.M."

Recently, Ricci sustained his implied narrative focus in "Numbered-Not Named", a series of original pieces, 6" x 9" on black stock. His current project: "Random Thoughts in the Waiting Room," is a visual flash fiction series of books with a single word or a fragment of text in each collage composition.

K.G. Ricci has exhibited in 27 galleries including solo shows and many more online galleries. His collages have been published in poetry and literary magazines nationally and internationally online and in print.

### Poetry Gallery

#### "The Art of Bricolage" by Jessica Dionne, March's Featured Poet

I sort piles to the left and the right of me. I sort out  
the things that are useful from the things that are necessary,

what we cannot do without. I sift through the soil,  
shake out the raw and the scored and set aside what I can use.

Here is the assemblage I have wanted. Here  
is the craft I have earned from the earth.

Dried seeds make a necklace that can cleave  
to the collar. I am asking for something shaped true.

I tinker. The breastplate: tiled and teeming.  
The armor is only for words. It's for the birds.

Rusted fan blades become wings: the only way  
to impersonate the sparrow is to be lustful and endless.

I take red rock and grind it to dust for rouge. I take  
my time, I time my taking. Something's ticking.

The carapaces of the jewel beetle, the red weevil  
make a stained-glass window I can glance through, in time.

How many histories can sit in a grain of silt on the head  
of the penny I now use for a button? A dozen? A glutton

for stories will dig through, dust off, and reassemble.  
It's simple: take this and that. Take a pinch of this

and a smack of that. Amass it.

### **Jessica's Commentary on "The Art of Bricolage":**

"The Art of Bricolage" is part of a larger project which is in conversation with geographer Doreen Massey and her article "The Elusiveness of Place." In the article, Massey talks about her notion of layered histories—the many different histories that are stacked upon one another—and how any given place is a culmination of "stories-so-far." I was fascinated by this idea and wanted to explore it through the lens of a place I know well in North Carolina. While most of the poems in the project confront the specifics of this place, I wanted to write a few poems that addressed the work that goes into a project of this nature. "The Art of Bricolage" is a kind of *Ars Poetica* to the collection—thinking about the digging that is required to fully examine the layered histories of place.

When writing the poem I wanted to focus on the discovery and subsequent use of various objects gleaned from the earth. The idea of bricolage describes an assessment of each of the discoveries, and their potential usefulness to the speaker. The natural and the man-made, junk and treasure—all have a purpose in the eye of the speaker.

The workshop process was incredibly helpful to me in polishing this poem. Originally, the final two lines came at the beginning, which I saw as a kind of invocation to the process of both the work and the poem. A friend in my cohort suggested that moving the lines to the end of the poem, after allowing the reader to see the process unfold, allows the lines to act as an invitation to the reader to try the art of bricolage out for themselves. I think it was a fantastic call.

### **General Editor Shon Mapp's Commentary on "The Art of Bricolage":**

When I first read "The Art of Bricolage," I was immediately drawn to the precise language that echoed its theme. It ventures beyond mere existentialism and honors the complexity of our decisions. We are seekers of "something shaped true" and selectors from the sum of our experiences. With each successive read, I uncovered the nuance of what it means to carry on with the spirit of fortitude. In its final lines I found a new mantra, "It's simple: take this and that. Take a pinch of this and a smack of that. Amass it."

["POV: you have a migraine" by Madeline Docherty](#)

there is a video essay playing on the TV / it is an analysis of the programme house m.d / in house m.d characters are only sick for one episode / dr house always thinks they have lupus / they never have lupus / he writes conditions on a whiteboard in black pen / the video essay tells you dr house is based on sherlock holmes / you think but sherlock holmes wasn't a doctor / dr house takes vicodin which is american for hydrocodone / you take hydrocodone to copy him / you and dr house both understand pain / if you met you would probably fall in love / opioids modulate the way you emotionally react to pain / you used to cry / now you watch house m.d / dr house reacts to pain by being a dick all the time / lin manuel miranda starts rapping / he is not supposed to be here / there is only dr house / you sit up and feel your head full of gloop / maybe pus / maybe bugs / maybe mayonnaise / you can't open your eyes / you say out loud was lin manuel miranda in house? / he says yes / lin manuel miranda is mocking you / you think of your jade roller in the freezer / how you roll it on your forehead / cheeks / jaw / so icy / no more lin manuel miranda / it will stick to your burning face / your body has forgotten how to digest food / you think about tiny white pills resting on the soil of your stomach lining / if you water them maybe they will grow tiny opiate trees / water tastes like smoking a cigarette / you resolve to water them later / maybe they are like cacti / maybe they thrive in barren landscapes / the world has a pee yellow filter / your brain is a scrabble bag with no word tiles / you ask lin manuel miranda to let you go / he asks you if you have seen his award winning musical hamilton / you say no you only watch house m.d / he says eliza eliza

eliza / his voice is breaking like a prepubescent boy / you tell him he doesn't understand what you need / he starts to cry / when the pain lifts you are ravenous / your body has run a marathon from the sofa / you take a bite out of a block of cheese / you tear through a slice of bread / deconstructed cheese sandwich / break bread with your enemies / your lin manuel mirandas / you look up house cast on imdb / lin manuel miranda had a two episode arc on season 6 / he is a young boy in a psychiatric hospital / house beats him up for fun / he moves to arizona with his cousin / maybe that's where he wrote hamilton / you look up are there cacti in arizona / maybe you will visit

["dawn at various states" by Makenna Dykstra](#)

i'm learning the mornings / of various midwest states / and the way each pre-dawn / colors the crust softly / like the slow boil of lobster pot / and i don't realize / i've stopped breathing / until i'm choking / on negative space and cornfields // for the first time in my life / i remain gloriously still / in the absence of an engine burning / and listen with eyes closed / as i read a love letter / to my body // it will start with the horizon's curve / into oblivion / and it will end / with the universe's unquenchable craving / toward newness // i wonder / if i can remember / the way i screeched / and jumped / from the peak of the swing's arc / landing in the sand / face down / not once will i mention flesh on bone / because who the fuck cares about that / except against their better judgment // when i promise i'm smart / i always mean against my better judgment // i'll write about the holiness of liminality / how my touch remains / but light and saccharinity / of the moments before waking / that same still golden pink that scalds / morning drivers and fills / the space between two open palms / afraid to touch // we're in the birthplace of audacity / of blinding human breath / tearing the leaves from the trees / in fistfuls / just to have confetti spill / on our skin / squatting bare-ass / on the strip of cement beside the highway / to pee / bending in prayer / to sip at the riverbed / when our water runs out // i'm not sure who / first condemned hedonism / but there is something miraculous / in sheer pleasure / remind me of the wonder / that undergirds insanity / in bliss / and in beauty / and in the bliss / of beauty / before winter strips / the world naked / shaking / and in the beautiful wondrous bliss / of transformation // to criminalize pleasure is to condemn life itself / for what are we / but hungry / and horny / and hoping / for one more / morning hungover / still bloated / with the sublimity of presence / which only remains / unadulterated sensation in the face / of decay // i'll sit calmly / as the car rolls backwards in neutral / down the gravel driveway / towards a turned over recycling bin / reversing the hour of the sky // somewhere in the hereness between then and there / lives the simplest miracles / and so i've learned to drive / with the windows down / and let the air curl inward // that's why i prefer cold weather / my breath in the air / proof / of my onward heart's diligence / a simple miracle in the prairie lands // listen to me / sing softly / the dialect of our laughter in water / like tidal forces / bound by the moon / wade barefoot / jeans rolled up / into the river //

["all the stories about twins are about us" by Kimberly Glanzman](#)

and every story lies in wait.  
you and me: dolls with lungs.

father raised us onto the mantel,  
screwed our feet in place,

our lips painted closed. my hair:  
bone straight, your knees: unscraped.

we were never young, I suppose.

among the scent of paper, we traced,  
we tracked, we chased our tales.

we failed to find the forest path.  
in the story, brother

and sister eat gumdrops  
off the walls, but our house:

cricket song and hunger. our heartbeats  
and the oven – so very small.

every page has weight.

the moon rose the size of our horizon  
until it hung above us the size of my thumb

and I squeezed it between my palms.  
just once, I wish it might have exploded

like a plum, burned my tongue, sung  
brighter on the inside, or tumbled

down the gutters, a storm  
of stony breadcrumbs.

the forest hid the forest.

the witch cackled and crackled  
as she burned. I peeled the flesh

from her armbone, sharpened it  
into a lockpick against the fireplace brick,

freed you. the front door lumbered open  
in the hot dark; splinters threaded my feet.

her spell still held me but you crossed  
the threshold first and let go my grip.

I hacked my hair off at the chin.  
I tore my dress and peeled my skin.

the oven yawned behind me.

I climbed in.

[“Persephone” by Fiona Lu](#)

(There’s a violence to the way he sleeps.  
The way every word turns to blunt edges  
in his mouth.) When I first arrived, the city  
bared its teeth, peeling the seasons from  
my throat. There were clouds bleeding  
wine & forests thick as marrow. A funeral  
hearse in his driveway, though he told me I’ve  
got better coffins to die in than his. Already,  
I’ve forgotten the taste of his fingers on my  
tongue, forgotten that I can never meet  
the gaze of his sunken cheeks. So I dream  
myself into the pomegranate in his fist: seeds  
lining the insides of my breasts, his touch  
cold on my skin. (Guts stare back at me  
from the tiled floor, grinning. Something  
about them reminds me of me.) Tonight,  
I paint a portrait of my body as the only sin  
grief cannot absolve. When I was a little girl  
Mother told me my body was a temple.  
& like a temple, I will not open my doors  
for the unholy. (Later that night, I found him  
at the kitchen sink. Baptizing his fingers  
over

& over

& over again)

“You Can Be Wrong” by Alix Perry

The sidewalks  
here are  
lined with  
sewing needles,  
three-inch  
fence posts to keep  
us on the  
righteous path.  
When lavender  
flowers in the final  
weeks of spring,  
I pick a bundle  
and rub  
the sprigs  
under my arms  
and against my  
gums. I have  
lost all other  
means to  
feel clean.  
A stranger  
outside the library  
is yelling  
to no one, maybe  
everyone,  
*good and bad  
are not  
the only things  
you can be.*  
I retreat south  
to avoid forming  
an opinion.  
The houses  
get bigger  
in the hills,  
the grocery stores

smaller and fuller  
of those meat  
alternatives that  
mimic bleeding.  
I pass on food,  
leaving me  
just enough cash  
to buy the  
burnt out body  
of a car and  
three bald  
tires from a  
freelance mechanic  
on 45th.  
All of his  
reviews are  
five stars—  
they say he's  
the only one  
still selling  
affordable parts.  
No matter their  
functionality is only  
imaginary. I want  
everything that  
forces me  
to believe.  
I am still working  
out what it is  
I want  
to believe.  
From 3 to 4 am,  
the transit center  
always smells  
of redwoods,  
the scent waiting  
for me to ride time  
back around.  
I see the stranger  
just past  
midnight,  
there to



catch a bus, or  
maybe just  
a whiff of  
the coast.  
*You can be good, or  
you can be bad, or  
you can be  
patient, I tell her.  
Or you can  
be wrong, she says.*  
On the way  
home, I take  
the train tracks  
instead of the  
sidewalk, write  
the names of  
my own stations  
on the web  
of the rails.

[“Out of all the Richard Siken poems that I show you” by Zoe Reay-Ellers](#)

You like “Little Beast” best. It is  
summer and you used to think  
about suicide. We rub up against that  
late at night sometimes and I wonder  
who you were before June and me,  
computer keys sticky with popsicle  
juice. I can’t remember what kind  
are your favorite. I won’t ask. To me

memory is every couch I’ve met,  
roadside or otherwise. Conversations  
are motorways, the stereo is on. You’re  
in the passenger seat: six-three but curled  
down. Heart as close to your chest  
as it can be, knees pulled. I call you  
tall, dark, and handsome but not out  
loud. I am trying to learn how to be

seen and not heard because you  
demand docility from a girl that shivers

keys into claws at night and bears them  
at the ground. You are overgrown eyes,  
hunted or haunted. We both expect undoing  
so let me be yours, a gentle-handed  
apocalypse that bares waxing crescents  
from beneath your chest. Tell me what I am

to you, tell me again. Tell me the truth  
about December and airplanes and  
double eight. The jagged-toothed trees  
beside us are just a mouth, roll down  
your window and let the wind turn you  
wild, carve your face with cold. Look in the  
rearview at the road passing beneath  
the taillights, isn't it fast and beautiful?

["like u mean it" by Nicole Sellew](#)

I hooked up with a guy a few years ago who told me I was sexy but not pretty and I never really think about him anymore but I think about that; but What Did He Know he rode a Razor Scooter around campus and sometimes he let me borrow it and everybody knew I was scooter guy's girl, and you can be smart or sexy or pretty but at the end of the day we're all just scooter guy's girl or crazy eyes' girl or mullet guy's girl and you can either be okay with that or get worked up about it and I'm so sick of getting worked up about things all the time, I think when guys offer to pay for things for me I'm just going to let them, free coffee, free sushi, freedom, free dumb, dumb bitch, guy I've been seeing loves to say bitch like he really means it and every time I flinch, now he doesn't do it around me so much but when we stop sleeping together I bet he'll pick it up again, it's the kind of thing I'd get worked up about if I cared to get worked up about things, that and he doesn't use a condom, never has, not with me

“After disease, I’m afraid to take up all the air in the room” by Mikhaela Woodward

In the place I left my keys is a mummified bee, so I ask him  
what he’s done with my car. Angry weedwacking  
outside, the confused groan  
of my heater.

He is dead and silent.

I do not believe in gendering bees but I think he might  
respond to tradition  
in the same way I am conditioned  
to say sorry for daydreaming,  
only to get out-  
feministed by recent high school grads with green hair.

Thank you.

I didn’t mean it literally. I promise  
I am not ashamed to exist. I’m sorry— it’s just—

Everything that begins is raw and mostly  
water. Sorry’s all  
dried up and feels good in my hands, like  
when I pinch his wings and lift  
and it takes no effort at all.  
Empty

his scab-like body on a wet leaf,  
wish him to life, tell him  
I don’t wanna die, tell him sometimes  
I think sorry  
just means wait. I’ll get there when  
I get there. Will you stop? Will you  
listen when I take the first breath? Will you—

My keys are on the windowsill,  
apparently. Nothing is where I left it. My body  
is like a ghost  
stepped through me and shuddered. Everything  
is ominous

until proven funny. I go out,  
start my car, stick my tongue out.  
*I am hilarious!* I say.  
Hit the gas, enter the world singing  
funeral hymns.  
Scraping my name  
into darkening sky.

## “Char,” Our Baker’s Dozen Feature

In "The World is a Burning Haibun We Sing to Ourselves" **Jared Beloff**. . . explores the magic of erasure.

“The World is a Burning Haibun We Sing to Ourselves” by Jared Beloff

after t.a. greathouse

once, you could search the air on any given Tuesday and your eyes would settle on the nearest cloud, formless and lonely, pulled at the ends like taffy or a marshmallow from a stove aflame before blowing out. once, we poured gasoline on our wounds, gouged our fingers in the dirt hoping we might sink and rot before we could wither. I asked your mother to dance with me one night as the sky glowed orange, street lamps winking like faerie lights. we went to bed sharing stories about your day, how your teeth had fallen out, how you held the white stones in your palm, a small river of blood wending through each valley and fold, your gapped smile a dark reminder of our growing.

you could search the air  
the end  
we poured gasoline on  
as the sky glowed  
your teeth  
like  
settle on  
aflake  
the dirt

one night as the sky glowed orange, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] we went to bed [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] held [REDACTED] your  
palm, a small river of blood wending through each valley and fold

### Jared's Commentary on "The World is a Burning Haibun We Sing to Ourselves":

About a month ago, my five year old daughter woke us up with her face and mouth covered in blood. She had bumped her mouth against the wall somehow, and her loose tooth was bleeding at the gums. Maybe my brain wasn't fully awake, or maybe it was because this wasn't the first early morning bloody face I had woken up to, but I didn't react much. I wiped her off and helped her back to sleep. It was absurd. It was normal.

I have been working for the past year on a manuscript of climate poetry, much of which projects into the future in order to think about a past that is our present. The changes we are living through, grieving over or selectively ignoring highlight the ways our normal is unrecognizable, fraught with elements of the absurd.

I have been trying to write about the midnight orange skies on the west coast, a result of intense forest fires exacerbated by extreme heat. It wasn't until I started teaching t.a. greathouse's amazing poem "Burning Haibun" which reimagines the haibun through diminishment, the black char of erasure, that I found a way to capture the surreality and loss of living our lives, especially parenting, in the face of our current moment.

## Poet Biographies

**Jared Beloff** is a teacher and poet who lives in Queens, NY with his wife and two daughters. You can find his work in *Contrary Magazine*, *Rise Up Review*, *Barren Magazine*, *Bending Genres*, *The Shore* and elsewhere. He is the editor of the Marvel inspired poetry anthology, *Marvelous Verses*. His work was nominated for Best of the Net and the Pushcart Prize for 2021. Find him online at [www.jaredbeloff.com](http://www.jaredbeloff.com)

**Jessica Dionne** is a PhD student at GSU and the production editor of *New South*. She received her MFA from NC State and an MA from UNCC. Her chapbook *Second-Hand Love Stories* is forthcoming from Fjords Press. She was a finalist in *Passages North's* 2021 Elinor Benedict Poetry Prize, *Arts and Letters'* 2020 Poetry Prize, and *Narrative's* 2019 30 Below contest. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Southern Humanities Review*, *The Moth Magazine (IE)*, *The Fourth River*, *Meridian*, *Narrative*, *Rust + Moth*, *Mascara Literary Review (AU)*, and others.

**Madeline Docherty** (she/her) is a Scottish writer based in Glasgow. She is currently enrolled in the Creative Writing MLitt at the University of Glasgow with the aim of developing her creative practice. Her work deals with themes of illness, perception and human connection through the medium of prose, poetry and creative non-fiction. She also works as a freelance transcriber and communications manager for Scottish mental health charity, Mind Waves. Find her on Twitter @maddydocherty or Instagram @madelinedoc\_

**Makenna Dykstra** (she/her) currently writes, reads, and scours for bagels in New Orleans, LA. Her poetry has been featured in *Anti-Heroine Chic*, *Sledgehammer Lit*, and *The Madrigal Press*, among others. Her roommate recently remarked that she's never met someone who loves

sunsets as much as Makenna, which can be interpreted in various ways, depending on the day. She can be found on Twitter [@makdykstra](#).

**Kimberly Glanzman** (she/her) has work published in or forthcoming from *Harpur Palate*, *Iron Horse*, *Electric Lit*, *Puerto del Sol*, and *perhappened*, among others. She writes words in various shapes and sizes, which you can find on her website [kimberlyglanzman.com](#) or by following her on Twitter [@glanzman\\_k](#).

**Fiona Lu** (she/they) is a student from the San Francisco Bay Area who loves storytelling, no matter what form it may take. In her free time, she likes to read YA novels and think about the stars. She hopes you have a great day!

**Alix Perry** is a trans writer living in Western Oregon. Their poetry has been nominated for the *Best of the Net Anthology* and can be found in *Rogue Agent*, *Maw Poetry*, *Defunkt Magazine* and elsewhere. They are neck-deep in writing the fifth draft of their debut novel. More [@\\_AlixPerry\\_](#) and at [alixperrywriting.com](#).

**Zoe Reay-Ellers** (She/her) is a writer from Washington State. She edits for a host of literary magazines, and her work has appeared in a number of different places, including *The Blue Marble Review* and *The Eunoia Review*.

**Nicole Sellew** (she/her/hers) is a writer currently based in Scotland.

**Mikhaela Woodward** (she/her) is a weepy, snail-filled writer from the top of a tree in Western Washington. She currently lives in Denver where she writes fairy tales and practices telepathy with her partner and their two cats, Cricket and Luna. Her writing can be found in *Black Moon Magazine* and *Sledgehammer Lit*.

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