

# KISSING DYNAMITE: A JOURNAL OF POETRY

## ISSUE 7 JULY 2019: "GLAMOUROUS LIFE"

Aren't we having fun now? In Issue 7 "Glamorous Life," follow poets through aspects of life that are less than glamorous: betrayal, anxiety, loneliness, hardship.

This month's featured poet is Ceinwein E. Cariad Haydon.

Issue 7 includes work by Trina Askin, Bronte Billings, Sasha Carney, Jerry Chiemeke, Jordan Hamel, Paula Harris, Ceinwen E. Cariad Haydon, Megan Neville, Deon Robinson, Danielle Rose, Lazarus Trubman, and Ellie White. And Gretchen Rockwell is featured in "Around the Moon" to make it a baker's dozen.

### Featured Artist

This month's featured artist is April Frances Federico who is pursuing her B.F.A in Creative Writing with minors in Sculpture/Ceramics and Arts Management at Roger Williams University. She has lived in New England her whole life (having lived in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island.) Given her major, she is a budding poet but also a journalist. She interned at *Rhode Island Monthly* magazine and has also been contributing editor for *Her Culture* and *The Odyssey Online*. Her artwork and poetry often reflect herself as well as her personal experiences but also likes to throw in issues of social justice into her works. She also pioneered her own magazine called [\*\*\*Bold Lips and Coffee Talk\*\*\*](#) in January 2019 in addition to a growing blog, [\*\*\*The April Diaries\*\*\*](#). She possesses an ardor for women's rights, fashion, coffee, and is a total foodie! You can follow her on Instagram @theaprilfederico or Twitter @AprilFederico.

### "Lost Nostalgia and How Your Voice Sounded in the Rain" by Trina Askin

I remember the year I rented a room from the sad opera singer.  
But the house had no music, so I rode the metro  
at night with the new youth's trance  
that felt like chlorine pool water and snow  
all at once going down my lungs.  
But somehow it was warm. Somehow, I could see it.  
I could see everything. I tried to read the majestic poets,  
but none of them knew your name.  
I tried to be young, but everything I found beautiful

in that world had to do with drugs.  
I remember things like giving you the number to my room  
and waiting and waiting until there was nothing  
to do but let myself soak in the rain, where I wept  
and wept because I was foolish and had no plan for anything.  
I only wanted to feel that you and I and the stellar  
in the liquid black of sky were of the same skin.  
Then later in the night shift of my work,  
the Afghani CNA who knew a lot about the real shit  
in this life—war and exile survival; a husband and a son  
shot in a car by soldiers—told me how good I was  
for not having a boyfriend, that I was pure and lovely like a horse.  
And the priest who fed me Christ in the chapel,  
my morning meal, said my worship was that of a saint,  
and that the mission train for Warsaw, Poland  
would be leaving Friday. But every city seemed so cold  
and unimaginable without being able to run into you.  
I was selfish as hell, though everyone thought  
I carried the Lord's heart because that is what it was  
to be so devoted to your beauty. I remember  
you were twenty years older than me and every new wave-  
moody song on the radio was a swell in my heart—  
a year that you had gone on living and I was too young  
to touch you. You looked so good in yellow and red rugby—  
your husband's faded jersey. You were every good  
and romantic notion I had about 1983.  
The year I still sucked at the milk of my mother.  
The year I waded in the innertube of the bathing pool—  
my father not yet cruel but tenderly washing me.  
There was a lullaby he sang to some new wave synth hit,  
over and over, and it stayed within my veins even years later,  
wandering those same row-homes faded from bronze to tan  
and graffiti wetted by drizzle dripping off sycamores  
onto the rusted metal of a broken carousel.  
And this is where you live—the wondrous world  
I opened my eyes to at the smallness of a child.  
And sometimes you would let me in. The only place  
I ever wanted to know. I must have been remembering you  
from a long time ago. I must have remembered your voice  
being let in through the screen with the feather tip  
of a robin's wing and the damp breath of that hazel autumn.  
I must have remembered you singing.

### “The Anthropocene Debate” by Bronte Billings

You beat your naked feet against asphalt and hot sand.  
You keep running. That’s the rule. You’ve loved five boys in your life  
with only two names. They were often the same with different hair and dark gap smiles.  
The swelling of your atrium against your cardiac notch,  
your organs are touching. You’re closer to the fraying layers of your skin.  
Look, the boys tell you it’s not about playing.  
Your very roots inflame, what did doctor’s call it? Bronchiolitis Obliterans.  
The scarring and bloating of the limbs inside your lungs.  
You’re breathing in chlorine no, sulfur, no oxides in all their nitrite forms.  
Your mother used to take her Marlboro lights in the garage, disappearing  
sometime in the afternoon to shed her rod burned stubs. It feels  
like that. Like seeing the dot of her burning in the garage.  
You can’t be here. You know that  
but you run your feet along those crust crushed layers  
the earth rejects you and all the boys bounding over manmade catastrophes crumbling  
at your weight. You can keep up. You can be destructive. You can be the whooping cries.  
The cyclical nature is never fair. An elbow clips your trachea,  
the force of your air smashed from your alveoli.  
Those tiny air sacs in your lungs press  
to empty tissue pockets. You are still,  
the stillness of crumpling salt heavy  
drops and your lips dry puckering around braces.  
You have nothing  
to show for yourself. The world keeps running without you,  
the ache of your feet, the pockets of blood  
blistering by the crooks of your toes.  
The boys, they never ask why you’re crying.  
You’re just so small.

### “Exoneration, Post-Exams” by Sasha Carney

the lighting through the staircase emulates  
an exposed spine, filtered, microcosm,  
a doll’s house with the skin stripped back  
irish literature, english class:  
*the unique catholicism of self-immolation*  
or something like that  
[fact: my taxi driver was adopted twice]

at the wedding, we paid penance as admission  
as though to smoke out the sins we’d smuggled in

under our tongues / her tongue  
has slipped under mine one too many times  
for *forgive me father* to be swallowed whole  
[fact: purgatory was abolished in 1532]

humility is muscle memory, sign of the cross  
proclaiming its absence, penance as performance art  
*hail mary* a thin film on my soft palate,  
comfort in familiar unease  
[fact: limoncello tastes sweet as pond scum]

there's a mania to picking up a pen again  
to pick yourself apart. as i scratch  
my way past certainties,  
the parking lot lampposts  
look like ghosts on holiday –  
no, spirits double-dipped in sunlight –  
no, casper with a tan  
[fact: I have all too much and all too little time]

["I'm Used to This Place" by Jerry Chiemeke](#)

I should not be blamed  
for thinking the war is over  
because long stretches of ceasefires  
have a way of causing deception,  
making me believe that  
the blues have run out of fabric  
to drape me like on nights prior  
and that rainbows have  
suddenly agreed to grace  
each break of my dawns.

Like a camera running out of film  
the colour slowly leaves the room  
and I lose the ability to  
tell magenta from turquoise  
because I'm submerged in greyscale  
and the shadows that  
I know so well  
saunter in like long-lost brothers.

I seek salvation in my drawers

but then I remember  
that day on many moons past  
when I flushed down my weapons,  
the pretty little round things  
whose presence I could really use now  
as the armies march loudly  
the way I was once used to,  
and the voices of black dogs  
are sure to drown out  
any light and warmth I cling to lately.

“Anxiety & Co.” by Jordan Hamel

*Is today the rain that drowns your field?*

Morning coffee, double shot,  
pick a mug with a playful slogan  
'Coffee because it's too early for wine'  
arrange you portions of sugar  
portion your empathy  
allocate accordingly  
taking into account  
Susan from HR's birthday

*Everyone is supposed to be here except you*

Unsettle a team meeting with silence  
pour indifference into your colleagues' cereal  
hide from their over caffeinated gaze  
sign Susan's birthday card  
'Better over the hill than under it!'

*Everyone is succeeding in their endeavours except you*

Rome wasn't built in a day  
but you aren't Rome  
today you are Timaru at best  
with expired resource consents  
and an impatient local body

*Everyone is having sex and meaningful relationships except you*

Their touch haunts every newsfeed  
passing glances in digital corridors  
trace their longitudinal scratch marks  
arrange the skin remnants  
into a story too good for your own pen

*Everyone is losing weight and gaining knowledge except you*

Check your to do list:

1. Respond to Ben from accounts
2. February's Invoices
3. Think outside the box
4. Practice resilience
5. Consider a standing desk
6. If I screamed continuously right now how long before someone stops me?
7. Prepare for the diversity workshop

*Everyone is more at ease and socially cohesive than you*

Talk to your colleagues about their weekend plans  
'The thing about getting to the market early is  
the avocados aren't bruised from a hard days work  
you can't trust a two pm tomato'  
nod submissively  
let your eyes be seduced by the bottle of bleach  
ogling you from under the breakroom sink  
Lana Del Ray lyrics where  
the poison hotline number should be  
'I got that summertime  
summertime  
Seasonal Affective Disorder'

*Everyone is meeting expectations except you*

Everyone has expectations

*Write a list of people you saw today who are better looking than you*

Run out of paper. Give up.  
Smear yourself in Susan's birthday cake  
offer your body to the pigeons, still unemployed  
resting lazily in the park  
to pull cherry-chocolate sinew pore from pore  
an inside-out piñata, with white privilege.

*Everyone will be remembered except you*

Try to get sparser

sparser

the perfect poem is just blank space

the perfect office is just blank space

the perfect you is just

*Is this the tree that holds your rope?*

"the many ways in which our first date would be a disaster, and which we will talk about for years to come" by Paula Harris

you will pick me up wearing jeans, sneakers and a t-shirt, with a jacket over the top  
while I'll be wearing blue high heels and a top that shows off my cleavage and a skirt that  
used to be a dress but I didn't like it as a dress so had it cut down to just a skirt  
and I'll say "oh, am I dressed okay? should I change into something a bit more casual?"  
and you'll say "no no, you'll be fine"  
and in hindsight this will be a mistake

at dinner I'll sprinkle Black Death on your food which will possibly seem a little bit negative  
and maybe even excessively pessimistic  
but I want a man who's strong enough to deal with anything that may come,  
because if you stick around there will inevitably be things that will require some strength to  
deal with  
and this seems like a good way to see what you're made of

afterwards as we walk I will suck arsenic off your thumb, because I've always had a  
tendency to be a bit forward at times, and you won't stop me  
instead painting your other fingers with cyanide and mercury, offering them to me  
and while trying to kill each other is probably not generally considered a sign of a Date That  
Is Going Well  
still this seems like a positive sign and I lick and suck your poisoned offerings

you'll promise me a movie but take me to the morgue  
because you heard they're doing an autopsy and those always seem cool to watch on TV,  
but instead the morgue will be closed so we'll break in  
scrambling over a brick wall, which is hard to do in high heels,  
scraping skin off my knees and tearing the hem of my skirt a little as we do so;  
sitting inside on steel benches we will talk about previous relationships which is something  
You Absolutely Must Not Do On A First Date,  
we'll even talk about our worst dates  
and friends' worst dates  
and the worst dates of people we haven't met but which we have heard others talk about  
just to tempt fate

you'll take me to an absinthe bar which sounds cultured and French and classy but will in  
fact be  
a bunch of your drunk mates and some hookers they arranged for on payday  
all rolling around out of their minds on absinthe,  
although I suspect they'll just get drunk first and then start drinking Palmolive dishwashing  
liquid  
which is possibly lethal or at the very least a Very Bad Idea;  
I'll be shy and quiet because I often am around strangers  
but one of the hookers will put her hand up my skirt and grab my arse and pull me to her  
and kiss me with bubbly lips  
and you will catch my eye and we'll giggle at  
all of it

we'll walk along and talk and at some point I'll comment that we're walking past my  
favourite restaurant  
you'll grab my hand and pull me around to the back, where you'll jump into the dumpster  
while I stand there, feeling a bit awkward, while you scuffle around inside it



emerging with a slightly dented disposable container of what was once three éclairs  
but are now a bit smooshed  
and as you pull yourself up and out of the dumpster, a police car will drift by  
and they'll notice you and come over and talk in Stern Voices and ask Serious Questions  
while I stand there, feeling a bit awkward  
and eventually they'll let us go, after a warning Not To Do This Kind Of Thing Again  
and as we walk away you'll tell me that one cop groped you a little while patting you down  
and I'll think "lucky cop"

we will sit on the cracked lino floor of a laundromat  
eating smooshed day-old éclairs with our fingers  
with a cold breeze coming through the window beside us where a baseball bat has knocked  
out a corner of the glass  
and a guy, who smells of dead sheep, will be masturbating while watching someone else's  
clothes in the third dryer from the left,  
which thumps with each turn,  
and I will shiver a little from the cold and you'll wrap your jacket over my shoulders

you'll walk me home through drunken crowds that push and pull us with them and I'll  
realise that at some point during the evening  
one of your sneakers has gone missing and instead you've just got one sneaker and one  
sock,  
which fortunately doesn't have a hole in it,  
and at some point you'll hold my hand and my scraped knees will still hurt and then after a  
bit you'll turn to me and kiss me  
but we'll be off just a little bit, so your kiss will be awkwardly only half on my mouth and  
we'll laugh and rest our foreheads together and you'll try again and this time the kiss will  
work

but we haven't even met yet  
so here I am sitting,  
waiting for you to ask for my number  
and then come knock on my door

["Shipwrecked Anchor" by Ceinwen E. Cariad Haydon, July's Featured Poet](#)

barnacles seal your metal curves  
freighted on the seabed under weight of water

strands of colour-muted seaweed  
washed by waves in percolated light

and sluiced by currents  
tangle fronds upon your thrust  
your rusted arrowed spear

fish blow bubbles turn and twist  
ballet between your old tines

where I stay skewered

### **Ceinwen on "Shipwrecked Anchor":**

I don't want to dissect the poem since I believe that once a piece is published it is 'out there' and must speak for itself (and have an independent relationship with each of its readers). In a sense, it is like a young person going out into the world and establishing her independence; parental interference is redundant and potentially destructive. However, I am very happy to explain the context from which my poem arose.

*Shipwrecked Anchor* was initially conceived from notes that I made during a poetry workshop run by the poet, Kris Johnson. She led us to engage with ideas about anchoresses, and anchors. We also read excerpts from Annie Dillard's *Holy the Firm*, (I went on to read the full text). Following the session I considered ideas of attachment, both healthy and unhealthy forms, with a specific focus on female experiences. In response, I wrote a small number of poems. All explore psychological landscapes, material circumstances and the interplay between power and impotence in an implied gendered context.

In my poetry I am concerned with women's lives, the stories so often ignored in '*history*'. My reading includes confessional poets such as Sharon Olds and Anne Sexton, but I also love the work of Mary Oliver and Elizabeth Bishop who filter experience through Emily Dickinson's *slant* lens. I don't intend my work to be polemical but try to ease open doors and air neglected spaces. During my MA course I was taught by Tara Bergin and Jake Polley, two inspirational but very different poets. They both encouraged students to identify places that we felt we should not visit and go there anyway. This is some of the best advice I've ever received.

I came to writing in 2014, when I was sixty-two years old, very much a late starter. Since then it has been my main endeavour and, with the pressure of time at my back, I need to write every day. Sometimes, in my eagerness, I submit work before it is ready, but I am attempting to improve my editorial awareness.

### **Assistant Editor Jason Bates on "Shipwrecked Anchor":**

Ceinwen Haydon's *Shipwrecked Anchor* is compact, calculated, and captivating. Anyone who has ever talked poetry with me knows that I am adamant about carrying the metaphor. Haydon does that beautifully here. Every word fits the metaphor. Every word is intentional and carries its own connotation. There is a melancholic elegance to the anchor becoming part of the sea,

and the last line leaves me wondering what has held the narrator skewered to the ocean floor for so long? Haydon has done a masterful job of capturing the universal feeling of being surrounded by a comfortable sadness while also being held down by it. The reader is allowed to bring their own reasons. Allowed to apply their own story.

“Party Game” by Megan Neville

FUCK:

Colliding stars swallow each other;  
turn inside out & light into lead.  
On earth, I catch only shudders  
of sense, fold them into my chest  
amidst our limbs braiding together.

MARRY:

We are hallway footsteps at dawn,  
the same floorboard always complaining.  
We are terrycloth & cotton batting  
against skin, lotioned & shaved.  
We are honey-smell bulging into every  
corner as bread rises in the oven.

KILL:

When you slice & crunch apple flesh  
in my ear, I know it is time:  
the bread burned, the lead poison.  
I pitch you to the sky & a new  
star holds fruit in its mouth.

“a monochrome boyhood” by Deon Robinson

*Madness, too, can be accumulative.*

—Hieu Minh Nguyen

I can't remember if I am remembering right  
but I do remember Ian,

the impatient bus ride home  
where he showed us his sharp secret,  
stolen steel from his own kitchen.  
A wasp's nest of knives hidden in his backpack,  
nestled in the front pocket.  
He behaved fatherly towards them,  
the way all boys are with hand-me-down weapons,  
protective of his violent golden ticket  
or I guess silver.  
A monochrome boyhood  
all because Uriel stole his phone  
and we too grown to ask  
when we got our short tempers,  
when we can smile at the dirty work  
that is none of our fault  
and yet all of our consequences.

\*\*

Ian is walking through Webster one day  
only to have his lower leg bone shattered  
by two men with baseball bats, but Ian is the kind  
of guy who rehearses knife attacks to rock music.  
He comes to school limping gloriously,  
we open doors for him and help him up the stairs.  
A war hero in the street's clothing,  
how broken bones have always demanded attention,  
a marriage of paparazzi and triage.  
Suddenly, I want to be a murderer.

Suddenly, I want to join the crucible.

Suddenly, I press my hands to my chest cavity,  
and hear a wasp's nest.

[“On the Creation of New Language from the Reading Lists of the Dead” by Danielle Rose](#)

after a death / when i taste my own need like unpleasant iron bleeding behind a bad tooth /  
this is when we become like blankets in winter / it is how loss reveals a new language / & why  
at night i wonder why the sound of a running faucet brings panic / or why the sight of an owl in  
flight / makes my heart race with joy / there is small magic in how suddenly my kitchen feels  
like a different home / and where the rough edge of that chipped dinner plate becomes a  
flowerbed & then blooms / there are even discarded bits of paper raining like poems / raining  
like so many useless poems / because grandmother you read “ulysses” when you were sixteen  
but you will never read my poems / so i can only believe that soil is just one way to cover a  
grave / & that burial is ever-present

in the graveyard / three men in yellow reflective vests / heap dirt into an open wound

[“Camp in Northern Russia” by Lazarus Trubman](#)

Stocky, forsaken barracks forming a perfect square.  
Deadly forest around as far as the eye can see.  
Survival is not an option and frankly a useless thought.  
The world is a narrow tunnel with no proverbial light.

And even if there is a light – the tunnel will never end.  
And time isn't passing, no – it's us, I believe, it's us.  
Leaving signs of existence on the unsullied snow.  
Tiny signs of existence... Non-existence perhaps.

There, behind our backs - darkness from all four corners.  
A lonely acacia tree, ridiculously bent.  
Under the endless sky, covered with grayish clouds,  
Hundreds of faceless humans, unknown, nameless, unknown...

What are we dreaming about: tears of abandoned wives?

An unforgettable midday? Rumbles of a distant thunder?  
Chamber, where we were tortured? Self-satisfied warden?  
Guard who is constantly licking his weather-beaten lips?

This road is a deadly spiral and sometimes an endless ring...  
But after a supper - watered potatoes and nameless fish -  
The history of mankind, until uneventful end,  
Everybody is passing, everybody is writing...

We waking up early, coughing. Have our coffee and pills.  
Walking, love our women – the only remaining light...  
It's rubbish that we are dying – we're just getting awfully tired  
And moving aside in silence... One after another... Gone.

[“There is no version of this story in which you are okay” by Ellie White](#)

The first time, it was a coworker. She jumped you. You dragged her by the hair into the parking lot, slammed her head into the pavement till she stopped moving. The next morning, a pool of blood appeared beneath the drive-thru window. You put in your two weeks' notice.

No, the first one chased you through the city at night, white smoke rising from the manholes. Cornered in an alley, you grabbed a section of pipe. One swing, and you were sifting through the gravel for her teeth. You wanted to put them all back, wanted her to be pretty at the funeral. Three days later, you bit into a blue jelly bean and cracked a molar.

So many dreams. One pillow smothered, another sink drowned. You begin to believe what people have always said about you, that one day you'll snap. “It's the quiet ones,” they say. As if screaming were a choice. As if you haven't been screaming all along.

[“Around the Moon”](#)

From Assistant Editor Jason Bates: What's it like to be an integral part of one of the most extraordinary moments of human history? **Gretchen Rockwell** explores this in *Everybody Remembers Neil and Buzz* - a well-conceived quartet that sails us around the moon, lonelier than anyone has ever been but no less important.

[“Everybody Remembers Neil and Buzz” by Gretchen Rockwell](#)

but who remembers  
the third man left  
without video feed

that solitary orbit  
circling the Moon  
perpetual night

no voices joining his  
check-ins come like  
brief coronas winking  
—gone all he can do is wait

except for when  
circling into sunlight  
in and out and  
darkness falls again

he floats weightless through  
the black with only stars  
for company he doesn't  
talk about the feeling of being  
slowly pulled into darkness  
wobbling slightly before  
waking up and radioing in  
to see if they had landed

the void of space around  
the dark side and a shuttle  
try to describe the sights  
the solitary body circling  
without rest or disaster  
righting course one time—  
ask about the astronauts  
see if they made history

### **Gretchen's Commentary on "Everybody Remembers Neil and Buzz":**

The seed of this poem came from the wonderful recent documentary about the Apollo 11 mission—a timely release, as the 50th anniversary of the Moon landing is this month. At one point in the documentary, I was struck by some statements about the third man on the mission, Mike Collins, who piloted the command module *Columbia* around the Moon while Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed in the *Eagle* and made history. The narrator mentioned that as Collins orbited, he was unable to communicate with NASA or the lander. As the documentary continued, I couldn't stop thinking about how lonely and intense that solo journey might have been, and knew I wanted to write about it (and him) in some way.

As I sat down to write, I realized the "quarto" form I invented would be the perfect one for the poem. The quarto is named after the old printing style (best known to me from Shakespeare) where four pages were printed on one large sheet of paper, then folded into a pamphlet or book. Thus, in my quarto form, there are four stanzas (ABCD): each standalone, yet part of one unified piece.

There are four ways to read a quarto: A/B/C/D, AB/CD, AC/BD, and ABCD. That is, the AB/CD (horizontal pairs) and AC/BD (vertical pairs) are about separate (but related) topics, and you must ultimately be able to read across each line of the entire poem so the entire text forms one cohesive poem. The final stipulation for the quarto is that it must be "for" someone—the "I" can be a part of the poem, but it must not be the focus. (I've had a few other quartos published; they're on my website if you'd like other examples of the form.) I love both the challenge of quartos and that the point is to write them for other people. Certainly, they're about and for me in some ways, but every quarto is inherently a gift, and I love how that shapes the way I approach both the writing process and the poem.

Given these elements of the quarto—being 'for' someone, the form balancing between

isolation and connection, the aspect of each piece fitting into a whole—it seemed like the perfect way to write about Mike Collins, both an integral person to Apollo 11's mission and the person who was so disconnected from the most memorable event of said mission that he is sometimes referred to as "the forgotten astronaut."

## Poet Biographies

**Trina Askin's** poetry and fiction have appeared in *Trampset*, *GNU Journal*, *Qu*, *Voices of Eve*, *Pennsylvania Literary Journal*, *The Meadow*, *Pleiades*, and elsewhere. Her work has also been nominated for Best of the Net and a Pushcart Prize. She lives in Northern Virginia.

**Bronte Billings** lives in Northeast Ohio with her not so balding black cat beauty. She earned her MFA in poetry through the NEOMFA. Bronte is the recipient of the 2015 & 2016 Academy of American Poets Prize and the 2017 Leonard Trawick Award. Her work can be found or is forthcoming in *Barnhouse*, *Bone Bouquet*, *Pussy Magic*, *Pinwheel*, *Anti-Heroine Chic*, *Jenny Magazine*, and *Salt Water Soul*.

**Sasha Carney** (they/them) is a poet and student from Ottawa studying English and Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies at Yale University. They are a former recipient of the Foyle Young Poets of the Year award in 2015 and 2016, and have had their work published by The Poetry Society and The Yale Herald, with upcoming work in *Nightingale & Sparrow*. You can follow them on Twitter @sashcarney.

**Jerry Chiememe** is an editor, culture critic and lawyer. His works have appeared or are forthcoming in *Agbowo*, *Inlandia Journal*, *The Question Marker*, *Bone and Ink Press*, among others. A lover of long walks and alternative rock bands, Jerry lives a secluded life in Lagos, Nigeria. He is in the process of publishing his poetry chapbook, "The Vanilla Verses".

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**Jordan Hamel** (he/him/his) is a New Zealand-based poet and performer. He grew up in the South on a diet of Catholicism and masculine emotional repression. He is the current New Zealand Poetry Slam Champion and has performed at festivals across Aotearoa. He is a poetry editor for *Barren Magazine* and has work published in *Ghost City Press*, *Mojave Heart Review*, *Glass Poetry*, *Queen Mob's Teahouse* and elsewhere.

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**Paula Harris** lives in New Zealand, where she writes poems and sleeps in a lot, because that's what depression makes you do. She won the 2018 Janet B. McCabe Poetry Prize and the 2017



Lilian Ida Smith Award, and her chapbook "i make men like you die sweetly" will be published in September 2019 by dancing girl press. Her poetry has been published in various journals, including *Berfrois*, *Queen Mob's Teahouse*, *Barren*, *SWWIM*, *Glass*, *The Spinoff* and *Landfall*. She is extremely fond of dark chocolate, shoes and hoarding fabric.

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**Ceinwen E. Cariad Haydon** lives in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK. She writes short stories and poetry. She has been widely published in web magazines and print anthologies. These include *Fiction on the Web*, *Literally Stories*, *Stepaway*, *Flashback Fiction*, *Ellipsis*, *The Cabinet of Heed*, *Three Drops from the Cauldron*, *Snakeskin*, *Obsessed with Pipework*, *The Linnet's Wing*, *Blue Nib*, *Picaroon*, *Amaryllis*, *Algebra of Owls*, *The Lake*, *Ink*, *Sweat and Tears*, *Riggwelter*, *Poetry Shed*, *Southbank Poetry*, *Smeuse*, *Bandit Fiction*, *Atrium*, *Marauder*, *Prole*, *The Curlew*, *Dodging the Rain*, *The Galway Review*, *Confluence*, *The Foxglove Journal*, *Barren Magazine*, *Selcouth Station*, *Nine Muses*, *Ofi Press*, *Reach*, *Peeking Cat*, *Boyne Berries*, *Porridge Magazine* and *Dawntreader*. She was Highly Commended in the Blue Nib Chapbook Competition [Spring 2018] and was shortlisted for the Neatly Folded Paper Pamphlet Competition, Hedgehog Press [October 2018], won the Hedgehog Press Poetry Competition 'Songs to Learn and Sing'. [August 2018]. In 2019, she is proud to have poems included in the '*Planet in Peril*' anthology [Fly on the Wall Press] and the '*Bollocks to Brexit*' anthology [CivicLeicester]. She has an MA in Creative Writing (Newcastle University, 2017), and she is now developing practice as a creative writing facilitator with hard to reach groups. She believes everyone's voice counts.

**Megan Neville** (she/her) is a writer and educator based in Cleveland, Ohio. She is the author of the chapbook *Rust Belt Love Song* (Game Over Books), and her work is forthcoming in or has been published by *Noble/Gas Qtrly*, *Split Rock Review*, *Belt Magazine*, *English Journal*, *Whiskey Island*, and others. She tweets @MegNev and blogs at [www.MeganNevillePoetry.com](http://www.MeganNevillePoetry.com), usually with a cat on her lap.

**Deon Robinson** is a writer from Bronx, New York. He is a Junior at Susquehanna University, where he was the recipient of the Janet C. Weis Prize for Literary Excellence for his writing. His work can be found in *Glass' Poets Resist Series*, *Homology Lit*, *Honey and Lime Lit*, and *Occulum Journal*, among others. Follow his misadventures and let him know what your favorite poems are on Twitter @djrthepoet.

**Danielle Rose** lives in Massachusetts with her partner and their two cats. She is the managing editor of *Dovecote Magazine* and used to be a boy.

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**Gretchen Rockwell** is a queer poet and supplemental instructor of English at the Naval Academy Preparatory School in Newport, RI. Xer work has appeared in *Glass: Poets Resist, Into the Void, Noble/Gas Qtrly, Crab Fat Review, and the minnesota review*, as well as in other publications. Xe enjoys writing poetry about gender and sexuality, history, space, and unusual connections. Find xer on Twitter at @daft\_rockwell or at xer website, [www.gretchenrockwell.com](http://www.gretchenrockwell.com).

**Lazarus Trubman** is a college professor from the ancient land of Transylvania and a labor camp survivor, who immigrated to the United States in 1990. In 2017, after teaching the Theory of Literature and Roman languages for twenty-two years, he retired and settled in North Carolina to devote his time to writing. He is the winner of the Bartleby Snopes 2018 Dialogue Contest. His poetry has appeared in literary venues across the United States, Canada and the UK, among them *The New Reader, Forge, Lit Mag, Bending Genres* and others.

**Ellie White** holds an MFA from Old Dominion University. She writes poetry and nonfiction. She has won an Academy of American Poets Poetry Prize, and has been nominated for both Best of the Net and the Pushcart Prize. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Crab Fat, Up the Staircase Quarterly, The Columbia Review, Foundry* and many other journals. Ellie's chapbook, *Requiem for a Doll*, was released by ELJ Publications in June 2015. Her second chapbook is forthcoming from Dancing Girl Press in 2019. Her first full-length collection is forthcoming from Unsolicited Press in 2019. She is a nonfiction and poetry editor at *Four Ties Literary Review*, and a social media editor and reader for *Muzzle Magazine*. Ellie currently rents a basement in downtown Charlottesville, Virginia.

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