

KISSING DYNAMITE: A JOURNAL OF POETRY

ISSUE 8 AUGUST 2019: "TRESPASS"

Eavesdropping, intrusion. . .belonging. In Issue 8 "Trespass," follow poets through situations that shake our identity and make us question our sense of self and the safety that should surround us.

This month's featured poet is Eryan Roberts.

Issue 8 includes work by Leah Callen, Tiia Kelly, Sophie Laing, Sara Matson, Cate McGowan, Cyndie Randall, Juanita Rey, Eryan Roberts, Anne Rundle, Lannie Stabile, D. S. Waldman, and Mathew Yates. And Trina Young is featured in "Erasure" to make it a baker's dozen.

Featured Artist

This month's featured artist is Daniel Romo who is the author of *Apologies in Reverse* (FutureCycle Press 2019), *When Kerosene's Involved* (Mojave River Press, 2014), and *Romancing Gravity* (Silver Birch Press, 2013). He lives and teaches in Long Beach, CA. More at danielromo.net.

"Coligny Boutonnière" by Leah Callen

Two lousy cents
caught you stealing sun-

flower heads so they broke
your black neck, stem

bent, *the child* dead-
headed. Spit off

a speeding white truck
for a couple of bucks,

the price on your head less
than eighty rand,

they said. Sixteen years fell off
backwards, shocked petals

spilled, trampled in overexcited
dust. They love you not. The sun-

flowers stare at us, a plantation
of giant brown eyes

with golden lashes. Did they gasp
or laugh when your neck

cracked? Cashing in your eye
for some eyes, a life

for some sunflowers.

“Ant Farm” by Tiia Kelly

outside the theatre, you say:

let's discuss the movie in the car

pointing your keys into the distance, angling
at metal

your way of saying:

i want to know if this is something we can share

eyes like giant projections,
rectangles of light exploding
against the windshield. it is:

*let us have been changed in the same way, re-acquainted
by shared conclusion*

i keep wanting to love things in silence & have that
be enough. thinking talking
about the thing means there's less of it. want
ant farm passages curving & convening in
sealed glass like stoic structures of warmth

i keep rejecting language & then asking for it
realising myself in places you've spoken
dismembered reconstituted

saying:

i'd like to sit with it for a while, if that's okay. the problem is

i don't know if i'll ever stop announcing myself
to you. peering around doorframes &
shaping to the wood. always asking
at which point in the sentence we've arrived

to think of a word (only half of the world
it seeks out) & me (still shattering
the ant-farm to greet you). my fist perpetually
pummelling sand to recount you
my whole silence taken up

to keep seeing movies & sitting
in your car. clumsy in the idea I might be
earnest. asking how on earth to be clarified

premiering:

i can't love things within a description of their worth

always meaning:

there is no language for this

["Cooling Off When You Live in the Country" by Sophie Laing](#)

We're carefree teens, when summer comes
around. New drivers racing to the next person's house
after the last person's parents had their fill of us.
That meant going to K's, which meant going over
the Roe Jan kill, the mighty, meandering creek
on the outskirts of town. K and I say we almost died
one winter, trying to cross it. It was worth a lot of love,
between us, that near-death experience.

Whenever we drove over the meager bridge, someone in the car
would always yell out, as if the currents were moving
the words through their mouths: you can't swim
in the Roe Jan anymore! Didn't you hear?
Someone threw a TV into the water, and it landed
straight up so the antenna could slice you right

open. The thrill of speeding around country corners
was fear enough for us, so we'd just talk a big game
about how we *would* cannonball into that creek whenever,
but we were too cool, we had better things to do.
Recently, back home in the heat of the summer, I'm thinking
about how the currents have probably swept away the TV by now,
but even so I stick to running, taking a cold shower after.
But today, running past the school bus garage,
I slow down. There are a few workmen out, ones I'm sure
have worked there since we were racing
past the Roe Jan. They've probably been there
since no one had ever met a gay middle schooler,
since no one worried about global warming,
since it was more certain
we would all get out of this town alive. But anyway,
booming from the old pokey-antenna radio
that they're gathered around, is the president's voice.
He's delivering a speech, if you can call it that,
but really he's just yelling and stumbling into provocation.
They're playing it in celebration of this country,
probably of this town, too. They're having a good time,
slapping each other on the back like good country-men do
when they've known each other their whole lives.
I'm not feeling their thrill of small-town summer friendship,
not remembering I can just leave if I want to. Instead,
I feel as if the currents are moving words through my mind,
trying to convince me to run into the garage,
and grab that little radio.
Here's what I'm being told:
chuck it right into the Roe Jan kill
and the antenna will land straight up.
Then, if you're lucky, you can watch the men
jump right in after it.

“<fresh tattoo>” by Sara Matson

smoking blood
cigarettes

like fissures in the ice

somewhere
the bad haircut (of cropped sorrow)
a forlorn,
heaving creature w/
lacefront eyebrows
chockfull of matted teeth
crucial violin melody
violating foreseeable flesh

culture spilled
on magnified plush lip
overdrawn (an alien cruiser)
crashing into the most
elegant trophies
 hair // pressure // grief
swanforced photography
splayed out of our patent leather
curls
damp wrapped around jeweled wrists
since dyed, a vulnerable pink

thumbhole spitball
post punk sweetbabe
overserved w/
sticky eyelids

memories r split
1970s iconography a childhood that isn't mine
 cherry glossed album //
 pulsing neon firestorm //
 wood paneling, everywhere //

backlit 80s barbiturate slumber party snacking
on sushi plucked from a trembling
 lavender scented hip
quiver (if only ceremoniously)

perfunctory squares educate:
 suffering is fundamentally
 translucent
worn like cling wrap over
a fresh tattoo

“Mother Courage” by Cate McGowan

“Wherever life has not died out / it staggers to its feet again.”

— Bertolt Brecht, *Mother Courage and Her Children*

War-earned silence moves through
our house. All hope vanishes into closets.

The quiet drifts graceful as a canoe,
seaworthy, rotatable, but not overturned.

Soldiers’ apparitions haunt

our stairs—travel down, not up. And you
wear soft shoes on these hard floors.

On Sundays, you brush your blazer,
polish the brass buttons, an officer
with waxed whiskers.

I scrub the pots you brought me
from some far-off land, the copper sheen
of adventure dulled by tears.

Like a two-lane road or a traffic cop,
I’m out of my element here in this no-town.

Back in the city, I would awake
on garbage Wednesdays to men’s shouts,
to trucks burring and swallowing can-loads.

Outside now, along the cliff, a gale
rises. But God is not here, and you comb

your hair as you sit at my vanity.

The wick spits, and the light dies
as we push through evenings without
power, the tree limbs knocking, tapping
out three cheers for the troops.

“Adhesion” by Cyndie Randall

They took one out
The other is strung up
by a dense adhesion
to the posterior of the uterus
Hanging school bell with no ring

On Tuesdays this library holds reading time
for pre-schoolers and their stay-at-homes
There is always a syrup-fingered dreamer
who isn't listening
Threatening the propped up new releases
Lurking too near the romance novels
Leaving behind islands of cracker crumbs

No one ever brings the puppet show station to life
It's too much imagination and work
for people who've been awake since 4 AM
Children ram their hands through the curtain
Knock together the puppets' marble eyes
Makes me think of my kidneys
so full of stones
Do they float in there
I wonder

What am I even doing at the library

That's right
I'm here to get books for my leave of absence
For my laparoscopic train ride of pain meds
and hallucinated spiders
Pelvic scar tissue looks just like webs
It's all making sense now
There is nothing that isn't connected
to something else
And then that thing is connected
to something else
or to someone
Maybe they'll use birth cord scissors
to cut away the damage

Hey whose fucking kid is this
stumbling around in the adult fiction
Lady come get your kid
If he were mine
I'd never let him out of my sight
Listen to the story I'd say
You're missing all the important parts

“Opposites” by Juanita Rey

Hair, makeup and heels
meet the cabin by the lake,
the heads protruding from the walls:
moose and deer.

Within the confines
of his wilderness home,
we compare vanities,
his sure eye with a rifle,
my slinky walk,
the result of one leg
being slightly shorter than the other
and impossible to improve upon.

There’s nothing in common here –
my city world,
his rustic hideaway,
my Caribbean patois,
his Maine drawl –

unless mine is a head
he sees as a trophy,
and his are cold lips
hot for the loving tongue.

“As I Open Close” by Eryan Roberts, August’s Featured Poet

at your solar command
open and close
lay open, to watch the nectar dry

muscles, hushed, we carry you
from your grin
i wilt, as you whirligig days

these painful revolutions of nerves
beneath husked skin, like burning earth

holding your hurt, our fingers
weave together, cradling pain

two minds press gently forward
speaking to the quavering future
washed with smiles, as you're washed
with your tears

behind your drowned dutch blue iris
reveal how your hurt, hurts my matter too

splitting my folds open, close
at your solar command.

Evyan's Commentary on "As I Open Close":

I often grapple with my diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis. It's been three years since, and I'm still learning about my relationship with chronic pain. I question how others can do this and how others who hurt more severely survive their own skin.

Creating this poem, I was writing in this familiar space of tender anger. I rate because of all the things the physical pain can do to my body and the bodies of the ones I love. But charged with sentimentality; I cannot love someone out of that pain and no one can love me enough to alleviate my own, either.

Living in constant states of physical pain can muddle your emotions, manifesting into a transference; you and your beloveds are sharing pain in love. Which left me contemplating who are we when the physical becomes emotional and it overrides our most tender feelings between one another? What are our connections when we try to pretend we don't hurt?

EIC Christine Taylor's Commentary on "As I Open Close":

After Evyan's poem came over the transom, I read it several times, and each time I came away with a different interpretation. First, I thought of lovers trying to reconcile a hurt between them. Then I thought of one trying to navigate an oppressive society. Then I wondered if the poem were about one's own inner conflict with the mind and body. At that point, it occurred to me that this poem is special for the very reason that it does so much for the reader—almost like it meets the reader on their own journey, takes their hand, and says, "Yes, please come." And I suppose looking back that each time I read the poem, I was indeed struggling with some painful tension in my own life that Evyan's poem seemed to speak to directly. I was definitely eager to read her commentary so that I could figure out "what the poem was about," but ultimately, "As I Open Close" has a life that encompasses so much more than the space on the page.

["Snow melts" by Anne Rundle](#)

under the weight of today's rains
and I run away fast.

(A deer wading through a riverbed
leaves no prints.)

Puddles of mud hide my footsteps.
The river we live near pours over the banks.

I keep running, find myself within the raspberry thicket,
the deer's favorite spot.

Behind me, your flashlight scans the backyard,
I hide as still as a marble statue.

I was never fine.
I am leaving. I won't be back.

You keep pursuing, call out loudly,
as if you never hunted in silence and killed

the creatures we ate for dinner.

Children don't understand what venison is,
they just eat until they are full.

["And you unearth a photograph of your past and a stranger..."](#) by Lannie Stabile

You must have been
three or four years old
Pastel and towheaded

Your mother is there,
youthfully stoic
Your face registers distrust,
even while your tiny hand rests
deadenly on the shoulders
of a man in prison-issued khakis
His thin fingers choke your thigh
as he squeezes your body into
the cold space between him
and your mother

And you ask her who the man is

But she will only say
that's Ron Bailey

So, you Google the name
and learn the arms
that rocked you to sleep
once strangled two small boys

The thought doesn't invade
until the memories do
You remember lovers' necks
and the preoccupation of pulse
Your clumsy hips
toppling a television
onto a litter of newborn kittens
Claws hovering
over the unsuspecting back
of a friend at an intersection
As the truck lumbers by,
you shake your head and ask
what the hell am I doing?

You think of his captured
hands, pressing into the pink
ruffles of your flesh, and it is
in that moment you first wonder
about the transference of sin

"On Ego" by D. S. Waldman

Instead, let the wind take your name
a tress of someone else's hair

and rush out the dusking window.

Welcome the swollen evening
clouds crawling up the river

the chill that finds you in bed.

Miles into a stolid city
breath muffled between brick and steam

a mirror waits for you to pass,

to look or not look at yourself,
to sharpen or soften your eyes

or to glide past like a shadow.

You'll find it's not about the light
but how much it conceals from you

depending on where you stand.

You'll find a mirror is a choice
a reality to consider

a truth it's your privilege to ignore.

Did you feel it? — your name
vanishing from the language

exiting through the last wink of sun,

the transfer of enormous weight
from your cracked and crumbling plinth

to the globed shoulders of twilight.

You realize you've been drowning
in air, white and odorless

lungs glutted with that familiar silk,

a name you've been answering to
quietly panicked, grasping

for the taut rim of your mouth,

a sky livid with purple clouds
humming in and around you —

Do it! Pluck the guitar string

let it overcome your soft skull
the way starlight spreads like oil

across a wrinkled river,
all of your folds and crevasses,
 discovering the absences
 that disguise themselves as bone,
Chorus of watery moans
 stolen into the tissue
 of your ravenous longing.
And as the night draws into you
 drains you of your resistance
 a stranger will present himself,
a shadow in the mirror
 born from the delicate light
 of an infant constellation.
He will have your square jaw
 your broad chest, spacious posture
 he will have nothing but time.
Patient and bituminous.
 I wonder how long it will take
 for your gaze to melt towards him,
for you to raise your hand to his
 and see for the very first time
 that your bones glow in the dark.

“when the sky goes twister-green” by Mathew Yates

a brick hum

 the hum of a brick building
up against a wind

a wind hung up high
& let loose like a pendulum

the old dog can hear it too

a thick hum

measurable like color

not water

not a hum you can hold

like the hum of life

the thin & hollow

hum of life

which fills right up

as easy as it depletes

that curls around your heart

& shrinks around your feet

nor the hum of fate

which, as if it matters,

sounds exactly like the rain

but a thick hum held

in the air around the building

on the hill behind the trailer

which warns the boy & old dog

of a storm around the corner

an elegy for shelter

“Erasure”

From EIC Christine Taylor: But he was writing from the perspective of. . . . **Trina Young** explores the insidiousness of racism in "A Sort of Horror"--an erasure poem.

“A Sort of Horror” by Trina Young

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
He [Redacted]
[Redacted] mouth
like Etna burning
[Redacted]
[Redacted] left behind
[Redacted] light and reason; [Redacted]
[Redacted]
He [Redacted]
slowly [Redacted]
deliberately
[Redacted]
[Redacted] violent [Redacted].

[Text of visual poem reads:

He
mouth
like Etna burning

left behind
light and reason;

He
slowly
deliberately

violent.]

Trina’s Commentary on “A Sort of Horror”:

This was originally an erasure written when I was in college 5 years ago, from a chapter in Tony Hoagland’s *Real Sofistikashun: Essays on Poetry and Craft*. This book was part of the class readings, and the erasure was an assignment during that unit. Titled “Adam & Eve in Exile,” it was a cheeky imagining of them enjoying sex after being cast out of Eden. Recently I have not

been writing as much new material, and so to make myself feel less depressed over that and more productive, I've been taking a look at past writing of mine to play around with and possibly submit. I found this old erasure and felt it still held up, but I had this weird feeling coming across the author's name again, like I'd heard something sketchy in the years between then and now. I Googled "Tony Hoagland controversy" and found Claudia Rankine's response to Hoagland's "The Change" first, and then read said poem myself. After, I did not want my original poem existing in a way that did not address this knowledge I now had. As a mixed race Black woman, I was uncomfortable and mad to read his words, whatever the intention or persona used. I've read his (very white, cis, male) explanation in his response letter to Claudia, and it only made me more upset. So I made further erasures to the poem to honor that, resulting in this. The title "A Sort of Horror" is a phrase in one of the blacked out lines that I feel sums up perfectly what I'm trying to express about the insidiousness of racism.

Poet Biographies

Leah Callen is an emerging poet with an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Victoria, BC. Her work has appeared in *The Malahat Review*, *Barren Magazine*, and *Vallum Magazine*. She was longlisted last year for the Vallum Award for Poetry. She is also a contributing poetry editor for *Barren Magazine*.

Find her on Twitter handle @LeahJCallen

Tiia Kelly (she/her) is an emerging writer and editor from Melbourne. She is currently completing her BA in Creative Writing and Screen & Cultural Studies at The University of Melbourne, where she volunteers as a Creative Subeditor for *Farrago*. Her work can additionally be found in *Guided Mag* and *Farrago*. She enjoys tabbouleh and dancing in people's kitchens, and thinks a lot about how identity is negotiated through cultural consumption. You can find her on Twitter and Instagram @tiiakel.

Sophie Laing has been writing poetry for a few years now. When she's not writing or reading, Sophie also takes on amateur sewing projects and makes her way through law school. Her work has also appeared in [Shards](#), and you can find her on Twitter @sophalinalaing.

Sara Matson's poetry can be found in *The Journal Petra*, *DATABLEED*, *Ghost City Review*, *Theta Wave*, *Pulp Poets Press*, *Dream Pop Press*, and elsewhere. Her chapbook, *electric grandma* is available from *Another New Calligraphy* and her chaplet, *Forgotten: Women in Science* is available from *Damaged Goods Press*. Sara lives in Chicago with her rad husband + cats, and Tweets as @skeletorwrites. More of Sara Matson's poems can be found at <https://neutralspaces.co/saramatson/>

Cate McGowan is a fiction writer, essayist, and poet. Her work appears or is forthcoming in Norton's *Flash Fiction International*, *Glimmer Train*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Tahoma Literary Review*, *Crab Fat Magazine*, *Ellipsis Zine*, *Barrelhouse*, *Shenandoah*, *Into the Void*, *Louisville Review*, *Atticus Review*, *Vestal Review*, *Unbroken*, and elsewhere. A native Georgian,

McGowan's an Assistant Fiction Editor for *Pithead Chapel* and is pursuing her Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Studies. She won the 2014 Moon City Short Fiction Award for her debut short story collection, *True Places Never Are*, published in 2015, and her debut novel, *These Lowly Objects*, will appear in early 2020 from Gold Wake Press.

Website: <https://www.catemcgowan.com/>

Social media handles:

- https://twitter.com/cate_mcgowan
- https://www.instagram.com/cate_mcgowan/
- <https://facebook.com/catemcg>

Cyndie Randall holds a BA in Creative Writing/Poetry and an MA in Counseling. Her words have appeared or are forthcoming in *Love's Executive Order*, *Okay Donkey*, *Whale Road Review*, *Boston Accent Lit*, *Ghost City Review*, *Yes Poetry*, *Barren Magazine*, and elsewhere. Cyndie works as a therapist and lives among the Great Lakes. Connect with her on Twitter @CyndieRandall or at cyndierandall.com.

Juanita Rey is a Dominican poet who has been in this country five years. Her work has been published in *Pennsylvania English*, *Harbinger Asylum*, *Petrichor Machine*, and *Porter Gulch Review*.

Evyann Roberts (she/her) is a queer, fat, black, femme who is deeply committed to intersectional feminism and #blackgirlmagic. She holds a BA in English, with a concentration in Creative Writing, from Wells College and was a recipient of The M. Helena Zachs Prize in Fiction. Her writing has appeared in *Ithaca Lit*, *Not Your Mother's Breast Milk*, *Rogue Agent* and elsewhere. She lives in Maryland and is currently pursuing a Masters in Social Work.

IG: @writing.femme

blog: killjoyfemme.wordpress.com

Anne Rundle's poetry has appeared in *Coffin Bell Journal*, *Artful Dodge*, and *Common Threads*. She has a Master of Fine Arts from Ashland University and a bachelor's degree in English from Allegheny College. She taught high school English for seven years, but now works for a local community college. Her poem "Now the Teacher Becomes the Student" won the 2017 Ides of March contest. Anne resides in Westerville, Ohio. Follow her on Twitter: @writerundle.

Lannie Stabile (she/her), a queer Detroiter, often says while some write like a turtleneck sweater, she writes like a Hawaiian shirt. A finalist for the 2019/2020 Glass Chapbook Series and semifinalist for the Button Poetry 2018 Chapbook Contest, she is usually working on new chapbook ideas, or, when desperate, on her neglected YA novel. Works can be found, or are forthcoming, in *Glass Poetry*, *8 Poems*, *Monsterring*, *The Hellebore*, *Honey & Lime*, and more.

Lannie currently holds the position of Managing Editor at *Barren Magazine* and is a member of the MMPR Collective.

Twitter handle: @LannieStabile

D.S. Waldman is a writer, painter, and wanderer based in the foothills of the Los Padres National Forest in Ojai, California. Finalist for the 2019 New Writers Story Prize, his work has appeared in the *Tulip Tree Review* and the *Mojave Heart Review*. He holds a B.A. from Middlebury College and will be enrolling in the MFA program at San Diego State University this fall.

Mathew Yates (he/they) is queer, disabled a poet and artist from Kentucky. His work can be found in *Barren Magazine*, *Epigraph Magazine*, *honey & lime lit*, *Rhythm & Bones Lit*, and more.

Trina Young is a poet in Chicago and recent Best of the Net 2019 nominee. She has been published in Afterimage Online's *Inklight Gallery*, *Superstition Review*, Burning House Press, Rhythm & Bones Lit's *Dark Marrow*, Kristin Garth's *Pink Plastic House*, *Moonchild Magazine*, and placed third as a Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Award Winner in the Illinois Emerging Writers Competition. Her writing themes often include mental illness, marginalization, and the absurdity of life. She can be found defiantly tweeting about depression and snacks @tcyghoul.

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