

CLR

CLACKAMAS LITERARY REVIEW



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Clackamas Community College
Oregon City, Oregon



CLACKAMAS LITERARY REVIEW

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Editors' Note

Here. Please, *sit*—

There's a place for you at this table.

We've been preparing everything for quite some time now—sorting through the harvest, taste-testing ingredients, charting brand-new flavor combinations, and reinventing familiar ones.

As first-time chefs, it's been an enlightening, bordering on slightly terrifying, experience; the dread of sharing an unsuccessful recipe is compounded, and then compounded *again* by our sincerest desire to impress your palate. But it's through this adversity, this honest-to-god fear of failure, that we've also realized something about ourselves—this direct confrontation with the unsavory is what has been the biggest motivator in our growth. And it's for this reason that we dedicate this buffet:

To those who have yet to dispel the aftertaste of grief, following the sweet dollop of daring-to-love; to those who have felt the weight of a world that never cared to slow down; to those who know loss intimately, in all of its many flavors—for anyone who has never quite felt like they've "gotten over it."

Because maybe getting over it *isn't the point*. Maybe there's purpose in sitting with the sanguine, the melancholy, and all the bittersweet in-betweens. Maybe an epiphany awaits us beyond the sanctuary edges of our favorite foods.

And so, we've set this table with hopes that you'll contemplate exactly that. And perhaps be inspired to bring a dish of your own to our next gathering.

For now—*enjoy*.

Thimbleberries

T. Clear

On an uphill slog and a trail
that seems to go nowhere: thimbleberries
at their peak, dangling like rubies
in the forest's green shade.
Berries so delicate that, despite my care,
the two or three seconds
from branch to lips is enough
to dissolve their sweet wonder
into drupelets, my fingers
sticky and stained.

Better to graze lips-first like a deer
without risk of bruising.
Quicker on the tongue that way.
Their not-quite boysenberry,
not-cranberry tang hints
of dusk, of sunlight diminishing,
bass notes that linger
long after this grey-haired poet
has groaned herself to standing,
continued on up the trail.

Instructions

—after Jeffrey Thomson’s “*The Tale of the Alphabet*”

Niccolo Bechtler

“*Language is a male discourse.*”

—Gloria Anzaldúa

Begin from a place of myth. After all,
this is where places come from.

Tell it clearly, starting with the basics:
who was there in that human world, what they said,

the stories told in their wake. When you use
metaphor, do it modernly, like a dial tone.

Write in paragraphs.

Foreshadow the conflict of your story
by introducing the presence of the gods,

the self-defeating nature of their gifts:
divine objects, all, that bring suffering.

Instructions

Remind your reader of whose name you sing,
on whom, in perceiving, you enact violence—

name her here.

Then admit conflict,
in this case, the gift of the written word.

Its incapacity to represent, its beguiling
facsimile of the landscape, how it hammered

the spirit into the shape of the psyche
and left us further from heaven than when we started.

Now, remember the irony of what you are doing
and try to phrase it, somehow,

as if you are not in mourning.

Listening to *Blood on the Tracks* at 71, I Decide the United States Needs to Acknowledge the Magic of Being and Be One Person

Roy Bentley

—for Al Maginnes

I first listened to *Blood on the Tracks* at Sherry Dixon's house. Her parents weren't home. We were alone together the first time. And it was as if This, All This made sense. Registered. Being alive. Like one's death and the pleasure and pain of just-existing counted the way a song can count, functioning mystically almost. And so, I'm remembering the first time Dylan sang *I can make it through, you can make it too* and I felt a coursing of confidence. A pride.

If not pride, then an epiphany. An OMG, regardless. I was sure I wouldn't be 21 forever, but I was going to remember it, by God. I'd remember the way Sherry unwrapped the record then put it on and let it register like years of practicing a skill and getting it right can register, sending shivers up the spine. So what's it like to be in the world? It's like hearing a remarkable record and feeling lucky. It's like falling in love with everything around you all over again.

Out in the Open

—*Guernica*, Reina Sofía National Art Museum, Madrid

Linda Jo Reinhard

In black, white, and gray
not a drop of red
Picasso renders eight figures

There is no need for blood
The broken sword, the screaming
tongues, the terrified horse, show all that is needed

After you see it no curtain can cover
the fallen man, the bellowing bull,
the stricken woman, the dead child

i american't right now

Abbie Doll

America now: / -adaze / a magic(al) place where guns grow
rights -&- / are more protected than / the average
american // anyway // the territorial turf
where kendrick *killed* / (a word i hesitate to use) / 'cause here
in this darkness / black men don't need / any extra ass -
ociation to violence / but it's true / he killed it
-&- good ol' uncle sam / -uel l. jackson
must undoubtedly agree //

—too bad some of y'all / are backwoods
bumpkins / stuck runnin' amuck / preoccupied by
totin' the trump flag / like the states have never flown
-&- never known any other //

y'all too busy denyin' history / to use your own eyes
to see: / what's really goin' down here
(it's **u.s.**) / yup, this here ship is sinkin'
-&- our democracy demo is done // game over //
now we demolish that which we used
to demonstratively democratize / but y'all
are so hellbent / on goin' down *with* it
despite the fact that: / y'all ain't never been captain

so why not / go on / -&- jump off
already // ! // geez, louise / why is that
the only pride you carry / god forbid you celebrate
any rational human-rights thing // -&- besides //
sam-uel francis smith already forbade
the tyrants / way back in 1831— // “america” //
check. it. out. //

look at you just sittin' there / waggin' your tail
waitin' on your tax-cut treats / loyal to a royal
fault. / where's our land of liber-tea // ? //
america don't gotta be / ((this))
dilapidated library— / condemned -&- tattered /
so ragged we'd set ourselves afire / if only
our skin were sewn / -up flags. // now // while
some of us saw / the writin' on the wall
some of y'all / never learned to read;
some of y'all / gouged your own eyes out
'cause the blind. follow. best. //

// -&- now // y'all pledge Allegiance to
the neo-Nazis of the AmeriKlan
to the violence / -&- hatred / for which it stands
/ one nation / divided by design
with pain -&- sufferin' for all

-&- to your crazy crusader / of a leader
literacy don't mean a thang
if it ain't got that (noose) swang

not when you're willin' to toss your own
department of education / down the mother-
fucking drain / —when will you sheep-
-le learn / the ignorance is precise
-ly what makes you *easier* to train
all aboard the trump train
/ *choo choo, baby* // ! //
a l l a b o a r d
the bigot express / all aboard
the *grab 'em by the pussy* posse //

// good. // god. //

-&- still / some of us cheered
like what we were gettin'
ourselves into / could have ever been / something
even. remotely. *good.*
don't y'all know / nothin' good can come
outta guzzlin' the Kool-Aid // ? //
how many times / can a cult convince us
their character carries camaraderie -&- community // ? //

sure / elon might make it to mars
but at what astronomical self-sucking cost // ? //
-&- besides / by the time he lands...
there ain't gonna be nothin' left
not here / just look:
at our shredded spines / our yellowed pages
our cracked lenses / weary from a lifetime

i american't right now

of patriotic strain / weary from
the expectation that good will somehow
p e // r (e) s i s t //

despite our evidence to the contrary / we are
weary from the futility of our overly polite
// p r o t e s t s //
ain't none of it come close / to bein' **enough**
not when we / as a cunt-tree
are wearin' down -&- fadin' away
not with these anti-democratic parasites
devourin' us all / well
past the point / of decline / well past
the point / of our own deterioration / well past the
point / of sickening shame / well past the point
of having the strength / to give a fuck
while the rest of the world / watches
shakin' their heads / wearily wonderin':

we really doin' this again?

Me gusta la lluvia. Me gusta el agua.

*(original poem from Piélago / Pelagic Zone,
Spanish language, Mexico)*

Irma Torregrosa

Me gusta la lluvia. Me gusta el agua.

Me gusta sentir mi piel bajo la piel del agua. Me gusta el mar. Me gustan los libros sobre el mar. Me gustan los animales del mar. Me gusta pensar que el mar termina cuando cierro mi libro de biología.

Aunque mi abuela dice que los humanos venimos de las manos de dios yo creo que, como dicen los libros, salimos a rastras de un mar prehistórico y caminamos sobre el tiempo hasta convertirnos en lo que somos. Sin embargo, miento cuando rezo y le doy gracias a un dios que no sé si existe, porque no me habla. El agua, sí.

El agua me dice cosas.

I like the rain. I like water.

(translated poem, English language)

Allison A. deFreese (translator)

I like the rain. I like water.

I like to feel my skin beneath the water's skin. I like the sea. I like books about the ocean. I like sea creatures. I like to think the sea disappears when I close my biology book.

Though my grandmother says we humans were created by the hands of god; I believe what my books say: that we crawled out of prehistoric oceans and walked through time until we became what we are today. Still, I tell lies when I pray and give thanks to a god without knowing if he exists, because he never speaks to me. The water does.

The water tells me things.

Contributors

Chris Anderson is an emeritus professor of English at Oregon State University, a Catholic deacon, and author of a number of books, poetry and prose. His latest book of poetry, *Love Calls Us Here*, was published in 2024 by Wildhouse Publishing.

Diane Averill's first book, *Branches Doubled Over With Fruit* (University of Florida Press), was a finalist for the 1991 Oregon Book Award, as was her second book, *Beautiful Obstacles* (Blue Light Press). Her latest full-length book is *Among Pearls Hatching*, by Dancing Moon Press. In addition, she has had three chapbooks published. Her work appears in numerous literary magazines and anthologies, including *Clackamas Literary Review*, *CALYX*, *From Here We Speak: An Anthology of Oregon Poetry*, *Midwest Quarterly*, *Poetry Northwest*, and *Tar River Review*. Diane is a graduate of the M.F.A. program at the University of Oregon, where she won the annual award for the best poem by a graduate student. She taught in the English Department at Clackamas Community College from 1991 until her retirement in 2010. She has won an Oregon Literary Arts Fellowship.

Nicholas Barnes is a poet living in Portland, Oregon, whose work has appeared in over eighty publications including *Redivider*, *HAD*, and *Baltimore Review*. His debut chapbook, *Restland*, was published by Finishing Line Press in 2025.

Niccolo Bechtler is a poet and teacher from New Jersey. He received his MFA from the University of Washington, Seattle. His work has received the Joan Grayston Poetry Prize and been published in *Glassworks*, *Superpresent*, *Barely South*, and elsewhere. During the academic year, he teaches high school English. When he is not writing or teaching, he enjoys being outdoors and making music.

Roy Bentley is the author of *Walking with Eve in the Loved City*, chosen by Billy Collins as a finalist for the Miller Williams Prize; *Starlight Taxi*, winner of the Blue Lynx Poetry Prize; *The Trouble with a Short Horse in Montana*, chosen by John Gallaher as winner of the White Pine Poetry Prize, and *Boy in a Boat* (University of Alabama), which was selected for the University of Alabama Press. Poems have appeared in *The Southern Review*, *RATTLE*, *New Letters*, *Laurel Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Shenandoah*, *Crazyhorse*, *Pleiades*, *North American Review*, and elsewhere. He has received a Creative Writing Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, six Ohio Arts Council fellowships, and a Florida Division of Cultural Affairs fellowship.

Alexandra Bergmann is a writer, educator, and scientist from the San Francisco Bay Area. They hold an MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop. Her poetry has appeared in *The Madison Review*, *Black Warrior Review*, *Mantis*, and other publications.

Bob Blatz is pursuing a Creative Writing Certificate at Mesa Community College where he teaches Human Development and Marriage & Family Studies. His writing and artwork have appeared in two anthologies and *What is This? A Conversation Between 10 Poets*.

After three decades in corporate America, **Linda Blatz** is enjoying retirement and seeks to gain wisdom and promote kindness.

Ace Boggess is author of seven books of poetry, most recently *Tell Us How to Live* (Fernwood Press, 2025) and *My Pandemic / Gratitude List* (Mötus Audāx Press, 2025). His writing has appeared in *Indiana Review*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *Hanging Loose*, and other journals. An ex-con, he lives in Charleston, West Virginia, where he writes, watches Criterion films, and tries to stay out of trouble. His first short-story collection, *Always One Mistake*, is forthcoming from Running Wild Press.

Daniel Brennan (he/him) is a queer writer and coffee devotee from New York. Sometimes he's in love, just as often he's not. His poetry has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize/Best of the Net and has appeared in numerous publications, including *The Penn Review*, *Sho Poetry Journal*, *Puerto Del Sol*, and *Trampset*.

Gerri Brightwell's fourth novel, *Turnback Ridge*, was published in 2022. Her short work can be found in *Best Small Fictions 2023*, Flash Fiction Online, *The Best American Mystery Stories 2017*, *Alaska Quarterly Review*, and many other venues. Her flash has been on Wigleaf's Top 50 Very Short Fictions in 2021 and 2025. She teaches at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Sara Burge is the author of *Apocalypse Ranch* (C&R Press), and her second book, *Sexy Fish*, is due out from Cornerstone Press in 2027. Her poetry has appeared in or is forthcoming from *Virginia Quarterly Review*, *Willow Springs*, *Pleiades*, *Prairie Schooner*, and elsewhere. She is the Poetry Editor of *Moon City Review*.

T. Clear is a founder of Floating Bridge Press and an EasySpeak Seattle facilitator. She has been writing and publishing since the late 1970's, and her work has appeared in many magazines and anthologies, including *Poetry Northwest*, *The Rise-Up Review*, *Red Earth Review*, *Terrain.org*, *The Moth*, *Common Ground Review*, *Crannog*, *The American Journal of Poetry*, *Verse Daily*, and *Take a Stand: Art Against Hate*. Her books are *A House, Undone*, the 2021 winner of the Sally Albiso Award, and *Egg Money*, both from MoonPath Press. She is an Associate Editor at *Bracken Magazine*.

Carina Cooper is an artist and writer who lives in Milwaukie, Oregon, with her husband and their two cats. She is a non-traditional student earning her associates degree at Clackamas Community College. She enjoys drawing, painting with watercolors and acrylics, writing fiction, and spending time with her family.

Allison A. deFreese has previously translated work by poets and writers from the Yucatán Peninsula including David Anuar, Ileana Gama, Karla Marrufo, and Janil Uc Tun. She has published two books of poems and is a part-time instructor in Clackamas Community College's English Department.

Abbie Doll is a Columbus, Ohio, writer with an MFA from Lindenwood University. Her work has been featured or is forthcoming in places such as *Door Is a Jar Magazine*, *The Journal*, and *3:AM Magazine*, and has been nominated for The Best Small Fictions, Best Microfiction, and the Pushcart Prize, as well as longlisted for The Wigleaf Top 50. She serves as a Fiction Editor at *Identity Theory*.

Ann Farley, an only child of two only children, learned at a very early age to entertain herself by making up stories and playing with words. Her poems have appeared in *Peregrine*, *Timberline Review*, *Third Wednesday*, *Gobshite Quarterly*, *Willawaw*, *VerseWeaver*, and others. Her chapbook, *Tell Her Yes*, was published in 2022. She lives in Beaverton, Oregon.

Ben Fowlkes works as a sports writer covering the world of professional fighting for Yahoo Sports and Uncrowned. His writing has appeared or is forthcoming in *Split Lip*, *Glimmer Train*, *Best American Short Stories*, *Eunoia Review*, *Pinhole Poetry*, and elsewhere. He's worked as a sports journalist for nearly 20 years, writing for outlets such as *The Athletic*, *Sports Illustrated*, *USA Today*, and others. He lives with his wife and two children in Missoula, Montana.

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Maryam A. Ghafoor is a queer Muslim Pakistani-American poet from Illinois. Her poems appear in journals such as *American Poetry Review*, *Foundry*, *SOFTBLOW*, *Barnstorm*, and *Mid-American Review*. She was longlisted for the 2025 Granum Prize and currently works at Purdue University.

Tim Gillespie at 18 uprooted himself from Los Angeles and after some detours found his way to more fertile ground for repotting in Portland,

Oregon. A proud public school teacher of many decades, he let his students teach him much of what he knows about writing. Recent poems have been in *Rise Up Review*, *Willawaw*, *Passager*, and *Abandoned Mine*. His collection *Old Stories, Some Not True* was published by MoonPath Press during the pandemic.

E. Laura Golberg's work has appeared in *Rattle*, *Poet Lore*, *Barrow Street*, *RHINO*, and the *Journal of Humanistic Mathematics*, among many other venues. She won first place in the Washington, DC Commission on the Arts Larry Neal Poetry Competition. Her chapbook *The Terrible Man on the Plane and Other Poems about My Mother* is available from Bottlecap Press.

Dariana Guerrero (she/her) is a writer, activist, educator, and spoken word poet from Lawrence, Massachusetts. A graduate of Smith College and current M.A. student at Salem State University, Dariana's poetry has appeared in *The Core Review*, *Caustic Frolic Literary Journal*, *Exposed Brick Literary Magazine*, *Glass Poetry Journal*, *Voices and Visions*, *Women: A Cultural Review*, *Witness Magazine*, *Death Never Dies: Mourning 2020 Through the Lives and Deaths of Public Figures*, Bailey Sarian's *The Dark Side of History*, and *The Bread Loaf School of English Journal*, *Mass Poetry's U35 Series*, *Boston Poetry Slam*, and the Button Poetry Publisher's Slam at The Roxbury Poetry Festival. Her artist book, *The Sancocho Shuffle: !Cartas Con Sabor!* can be found all over the world.

Suzy Harris lives in Portland, Oregon. Her poems are forthcoming in *Triggerfish Critical Review* and *Consilience*, a Canadian journal of science, art and poetry. Her chapbook *Listening in the Dark*, about

hearing loss and learning to hear again with cochlear implants, was published by The Poetry Box in 2023. She is a retired attorney who is grateful for ripe pears and the end of August.

Angela Heiser lives near Raleigh. She is an alum of Writers in Paradise and reads for Abode Press, *Wildscape*, and *Libre*. She is writing a book of docupoems on American women in aerospace.

Madronna Holden won the 2022 Kay Snow Poetry Award and she is delighted to have “After Thunder” join the five of her poems previously appearing in the *Clackamas Literary Review*. Over seven dozen of her other poems have appeared in literary journals and anthologies such as *Verse Daily*, the *Bitter Oleander*, *Cold Mountain Review*, *Equinox Poetry and Prose*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*. Her poems authored as duets with paintings by David Wolfersberger have appeared in *Puerto del Sol*, the *Slippery Elm Literary Review*, the *Santa Clara Review*, *About Place*, *The Chestnut Review*, and elsewhere. She is the author of the chapbook, *The Goddess of Glass Mountains* (2021). An award-winning film documenting the community production of her play in poetic text, *The Descent of Inanna*, has been aired several times on Oregon Public Broadcasting.

Jennifer Randall Hotz’s work is featured in *Orange Blossom Review*, *Red Rock Review*, *Whale Road Review*, *Rust & Moth*, and *The MacGuffin*, among other publications. She won 1st place in poetry for the Virginia Writers Club 2023 Golden Nib Awards.

Scott T. Hutchison’s work has appeared in *The Georgia Review* and in *The Southern Review*. New work is forthcoming in *Atlanta Review*,

Arkansas Review, *Kestrel*, *The Fourth River*, *The Opiate*, *Trampset*, and *The Razor*.

Ellie Lange is a fiction writer from Boston. She holds a BA in creative writing and is currently pursuing an MA in English at Boston College. When not writing, she can be found playing the violin or listening to her favorite classical music pieces.

Celia Lawren is the author of the poetry chapbook, *Among Dead Things*, a chronicle of tragedy and resilience, published by Finishing Line Press. She is the winner of the 2021 Poetry Prize awarded by the Knoxville Writers Guild. Her poems have been published in *Catamaran*, *Caesura*, *Tule Review*, *She Speaks: An Anthology of Women of Appalachia*, 2021–22, and *Colossus: Freedom: An Anthology of Voices Across the Carceral Wasteland*, 2022. Lawren resides in Knoxville, Tennessee, after living many years in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Jessica Lawrence has an MFA in fiction writing from Lesley University. She received an honorable mention from *Glimmer Train* and published a creative nonfiction piece in *Poydras Review* before those publications closed their doors during the pandemic. She is currently writing a novel that explores the good, the bad, and the very ugly of her British expatriate childhood in Saudi Arabia. She lives in California, where she supports her writing by managing the Sociology Department at UC Santa Cruz.

Sydney Lea is a Pulitzer finalist in poetry, founder of *New England Review*, Vermont Poet Laureate (2011–15), and recipient of his state's highest artistic distinction, the Governor's Award for Excellence in the

Arts. He has published two novels (most recently *Now Look*, 2024), eight volumes of personal essays (most recently, *Such Dancing as We Can*, 2024), a hybrid mock epic with former Vermont Cartoonist Laureate James Kochalka called *Wormboy* (2020), and sixteen poetry collections (most recently *What Shines* 2023). His new and selected poems is due in 2026.

Ita Lenane is a translator from Old English, Italian, and Puget Sound Salish, and has worked for thirty years in a tribal language revitalization program. Many of her poems are inspired by things that her native colleagues have said to her in the course of this work. She is currently working on a book about remarkable episodes in the history of the Italian walled city of Lucca.

Lynn Levin is the author of nine books, most recently the short story collection *House Parties* (Spuyten Duyvil, 2023) and the poetry collection *The Minor Virtues* (Ragged Sky, 2020). Her poems, essays, short fiction, and book reviews have been published in *Smartish Pace*, *Hopkins Review*, *Southwest Review*, *Caveat Lector*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Cleaver*, and *Boulevard*. She lives in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

Lisa Lewis has published eight collections of poetry, most recently *Taxonomy of the Missing* (WordWorks, 2018) and a chapbook, *The Borrowing Days* (Emrys, 2021). A ninth collection titled *Present and Future Storm* is forthcoming from WordWorks. Recent work appears or is forthcoming in *Dialogist*, *Action*, *Spectacle*, *New Letters*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Cream City Review*, *North American Review*, *Agni*, and elsewhere. She teaches in the creative writing program at Oklahoma State University and serves as editor-in-chief of the *Cimarron Review*.

Mazie McNamara is a Washington-based poet and journalist. She received a bachelor's degree in English writing from Gonzaga University in 2025, where she was an editor of the *Reflection* literary journal and winner of a Michael Gail Gurian Writing Award. Her work has also appeared in the *Midwest Quarterly Review*. She was born and raised in Oregon.

Judith Mikesch-McKenzie is a teacher, writer, actor, and producer living in the Pacific Northwest. She has traveled widely, but is always drawn to the Rocky Mountains as one place that feeds her soul. Writing is her home. She has recently placed/published in two short-story contests. Her poems have been nominated for Best Of The Net and the Pushcart Prize and have appeared in *CALYX, A Journal of Art and Poetry by Women*, *Plainsongs Magazine*, *Clackamas Literary Review*, *Monterey Poetry Review*, *Cirque*, *Wild Roof Journal*, and over 40 others. She is a wee bit of an Irish curmudgeon, but her friends seem to like that about her.

Susan Melinda Morée's series of poems, *Wolf + Mythologies*, was published by Grandma Moses Press in a collection called *Cacti Fur Collective, Volume One*. She received a grant from New Mexico Writers to research *Wolf + Mythologies*. She has also received support from the Montana Arts Council and the Society for Environmental Journalists. Her fiction and poetry have appeared in anthologies and online literary journals. Her plays have been performed in black box theaters around the U.S. She has taught for Chicago Dramatists, Rutgers University, and elsewhere. She studied literature at Columbia University and theatre and performance at the City University of New York. She stage managed plays in Prague, Czech Republic. She has been the man-

aging editor of a monthly arts magazine and now hosts All Things Considered for KRWG Public Media.

John C. Morrison's most recent book, *Monkey Island*, was published by redbat books. His work has appeared in numerous journals, including the *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Cimarron Review*, *Poetry Northwest*, and *Rhino*. He leads poetry discussion groups for Soapstone, teaches as an Associate Fellow for the Attic Institute, and is an editor for the *Comstock Review*.

Vivienne Popperl's poems have appeared in *Clackamas Literary Review*, *Timberline Review*, *About Place Journal*, *One Art*, *Heathentide Orphans*, *Willawaw Journal*, and other publications. She received several awards from Willamette Writers and the Oregon Poetry Association. A retired lawyer, she recently participated in a multi-media production featuring senior, "seasoned" poets called "What We Hold and Leave Behind," part of the Portland, Oregon Book Festival. Her first collection, *A Nest in the Heart*, was published by The Poetry Box in April, 2022. A transplant from the Southern Hemisphere, she now revels in the moody fog and mist of the Pacific Northwest.

Paul Rabinowitz is an author, photographer, and founder of ARTS By The People. He is the author of six books. Rabinowitz's photography, prose, and poetry appear in magazines and journals including *The Sun Magazine*, *New World Writing*, *Arcturus-Chicago Review Of Books*, *Evening Street Press*, *The Montreal Review*, *Stone Poetry Quarterly*, and elsewhere. Rabinowitz's poems and fiction are the inspiration for eight award-winning experimental films, including Best Experimental

Short at Cannes, Venice Independent Film Festival, Oregon Short Film Festival, Florence Indie Film Festival, and Paris Film Festival.

Linda Jo Reinhard started writing poetry daily during the 2020 pandemic. Trained as a scientist, she delights in paying close attention to the natural world. Linda Jo enjoys connecting with other writers through poetry groups and readings. Some of her recent work has been published by *Wordpeace* and *Spank the Carp*.

Lee Rossi is a winner of the Jack Grapes Poetry Prize and the Steve Kowitz Prize. His latest book is *Say Anything*, from Plain View Press. Individual poems have appeared in *The Southwest Review*, *Rattle*, *Spillway*, *The Chiron Review*, *The Southern Review*, and many other venues. He is a member of the National Book Critics Circle and a Contributing Editor to *Poetry Flash*.

Yvette A. Schnoeker-Shorb is the author of the chapbook *Shapes That Stay* (Kelsay Books, 2021). Her poetry has appeared in *Slipstream Magazine*, *New York Quarterly*, *Weber: The Contemporary West*, *Camas: The Nature of the West*, *The Midwest Quarterly*, *About Place Journal*, *Terrain.org*, and elsewhere. She is co-founder of the late 501(c)(3) nonprofit Native West Press (2005–2025) and has a special fondness for anything in the Corvidae family.

ire'ne lara silva, 2023 Texas State Poet Laureate, is the author of five poetry collections, *furia*, *Blood Sugar Canto*, *CUICACALLI/House of Song*, *FirstPoems*, and *the eaters of flowers*, two chapbooks, *Enduring Azucares* and *Hibiscus Tacos*, a comic book, *VENDAVAL*, and a short story collection, *flesh to bone*, which won the Premio Aztlán.

ire'ne is the recipient of a 2025 Storyknife Writers Residency, the 2021 Texas Institute of Letters Shrake Award for Best Short Nonfiction, a 2021 Tasajillo Writers Grant, a 2017 NALAC Fund for the Arts Grant, the final Alfredo Cisneros del Moral Award, and was the Fiction Finalist for AROHO's 2013 Gift of Freedom Award. Her second short story collection, *the light of your body*, will be published by Arte Publico Press in Spring 2026.

Dana Stamps, II. is a bipolar poet and essayist who has a bachelor's degree in psychology from Cal State University of San Bernardino, and has worked as a fast-food server, a postal clerk, a security guard, and a group home worker with troubled boys. A Pushcart nominee, poetry chapbooks *For Those Who Will Burn* and *Drape This Chapbook in Blue* were published by Partisan Press, and *Sandbox Blues* by Evening Street Press.

Scott T. Starbuck's *Trees, Fish, and Dreams Climateblog* has over 200,000 views, and readers in 110 countries. It was praised by editors Adeline Johns-Putra of Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, China, and Kelly Sultzbach of University of Wisconsin, La Crosse in *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and Climate*. He taught eco-poetry workshops the past six years at Scripps Institution of Oceanography in the UC San Diego Masters of Advanced Studies Program in Climate Science and Policy. His book *Bridge at the End of the World, New and Selected [Climate] Poems*, won a 2023 Blue Light Book Award, and his *Hawk on Wire*, chosen July 2017 as "Editor's Pick" at Newpages.com, was selected from over 1,500 books as a 2018 Montaigne Medal Finalist at Eric Hoffer Awards for "the most thought-provoking books." His newest poems are "Beached Whale"

in *Traverse: Literature, Arts & the Environment* at Western Oregon University, and “River Reflections” in *Unearthed Online Literary Journal* at The State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

J. A. Stein’s works include a novel, *Rachel’s Tomb* (New Issues Press, A.W.P. Award Series Novel Prize Winner, 2019), a forthcoming memoir, *Afterlight* (Galileo Press), and three creative nonfiction chapbooks: *Desert Castles* (*Southern Indiana Review*, Wilhelmus Chapbook Prize Winner, 2019); *Northern Cowboy* (Green Rabbit Press, Wilt Chapbook Prize Winner, 2021); and *Glass Essays* (Variant, 2023). His stories and creative nonfiction have appeared in *The Kenyon Review*, *The Threepenny Review*, *Boston Review*, *CutBank*, *Chicago Quarterly*, and *Washington Square*, among others, and garnered honors at *The Atlantic* and *Crab Orchard Review*. He is an associate professor of English in the Center for Writers at Southern Miss and lives with his wife and three children in Hattiesburg.

Jeanine Stevens is a California poet by way of Indiana. She has been actively writing poetry for a number of years as well as journals and nature sketches. Jeanine studied poetry at U.C. Davis and CSU Sacramento. She has nineteen books and chapbooks and is a Pushcart nominee. Books include: *Left Handed Hummingbird* (Clare Songbirds Publishing House), *No Lunch Among the Day Stars* (Cold River Press), *Limberlost and Inheritor* (Future Cycle Press), and *Sailing on Milkweed* (Cherry Grove Collections). Award-winning chapbooks: *Gertrude Sitting: Portraits of Women* (Heartland Review Chapbook Contest), and *Brief Immensity* (Finishing Line Press Prize). Other awards are from The McGuffin Poet Hunt, William Stafford Award,

and The Ekphrasis Prize. Jeanine's poetry has appeared in *Evansville Review*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Chiron Review*, *Comstock Review*, *Rosebud*, *Two Thirds North* (Sweden), and *Muse*. She is Professor Emerita at American River College.

Molly Best Tinsley left academia and the east coast to write full-time and wound up co-founding a small press, *Fuze*, as well, which published 23 titles pre-Covid. Her own published work includes five novels, a memoir, and the creative writing text, *The Creative Process*. A collection of her stories, *Throwing Knives*, won the Sandstone Prize and the Oregon Book Award. Her novel, *A Modest Trumpet Fanfare*, is coming out in May.

Irma Torregrosa holds a degree in Social Communication from the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán. She participated in the Fundación para las Letras Mexicanas / Foundation for Mexican Letters in 2011, 2012, and 2015. She is the author of *Pielago /Pelagic Zone* (Cuadrivio Ediciones, 2020), which won the Premio Hispanoamericano de Poesía San Román/San Román Hispano-American Poetry Prize and *Lugar de taxidermia/ The Place of Taxidermy* (Esdrújula, 2024). In 2020, she was awarded the Premio Estatal "Tiempos de Escritura" (Poetry Prize) in the poetry category from the Yucatán's Secretary of Culture and the Arts. She is currently the recipient of a grant from the Yucatán's Secretary of Culture and the Arts Programa de Estímulos a la Creación y Desarrollo Artístico/Program of Incentives for Artistic Creation and Development (PECDA).

Grace Whitmore is a novelist and short story writer, as well as founding editor of *Parcel Magazine*. Her work engages with disability,

animals, and existentialism in the American West. She lives in the Columbia River Gorge where she runs a horse riding school for children.

Lindsay Wilson is an English professor in Reno, Nevada, who has been awarded a Silver Pen from the Nevada Writers' Hall of Fame. His two full-length collections are *No Elegies* and *The Day Gives Us So Many Ways to Eat*, and his writing has appeared in *The Colorado Review*, *Fourth Genre*, and *Narrative*.

Heather Hallberg Yanda teaches in the English Department at Alfred University, in the hills of upstate New York. After many years of sending poems out, some getting rejected and others, published in such journals as *Barely South Review*, *Comstock Review*, *Tar River Poetry*, and (forthcoming) in *The Yale Journal of Medical Humanities*; and in the midst of the pandemic, her first collection of poems, *Late Summer's Origami*, was published by Ashland Poetry Press. She is looking for a publisher for her second collection, *What the Stones Borrowed*.

Joshua Zeitler is a queer, nonbinary writer based in rural Michigan. They received their MFA from Alma College, and their work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Ploughshares*, *Foglifter*, *Pithead Chapel*, *Pine Hills Review*, and elsewhere. They are the author of the chapbook *Bliss Road* (Seven Kitchens Press, 2025) and the poetry editor of the Substack-based literary journal *The Long and The Short of It*.

Division and Divergence, an interview with Evan Morgan Williams, author of *The Divide: Stories*

The Divide: Stories, Cornerstone Press, February 2026

Date of Interview: February 21, 2026

Conducted by Maria McLeod, associate professor of journalism,
Western Washington University

Maria McLeod: The title of your newly published short story collection, *The Divide*, represents a central theme, divisions and divergences most often related to romantic relationships in conflict due to affairs, threats of an affair, or a previous relationship that seems unresolved. Also, many of the stories take place in or near the Rockies, a physical divide. I'm curious, how did this issue of division—fidelity versus infidelity—become central to the collection? Was this thematic an intentional choice that you wrote toward as you composed your stories, or did it surface more unconsciously?

Evan Morgan Williams: Those unifying themes are definitely there, but they were not planned. I didn't compose the stories towards any theme. That surfaced later. What the stories did have in common, though, was, for lack of a better word, a Hemingway voice; they're straight-up realistic fiction, with spare language, broken dialogue, and a flow in real time. The length of the time it takes you to read the story is the length of time of the action of the story. They also contain a big Hemingway trait which nobody talks about: a self-contained set of symbolism and imagery within the story that generates the possibili-