

# NANO Fiction

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Cover

*they would tell each other you can live with this*  
Oil on Canvas over Panel, 66" x 90"  
2011

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*by the time I tell you it will all  
be forgotten*  
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## Flux

When the milk cow hadn't spared a drop even for the calving, when its udder shriveled like a rotting pawpaw, Ora carried sweet Lily, white as an onion bulb, for five days to that company doctor in his tie (all the miners paying \$2 for medical, whether sick or well, this being taken off the salary, the rest of the money going back to the company), and that doctor, in his tie, gave Ora the pills to crush up and put in sweet Lily's water, in sweet Lily's throat, so with sweet Lily on her hip, Ora walked five days home, hauled the bucket from the creek to her house three times a day, sweet Lily's head hanging back limp as a shot opossum, each day getting sicker than the day before, so when the doctor in his tie rode by on his horse Eli said, "Doctor, look at my child" and the doctor went to licking his thumb and wetting his scuffed boot and saying, "She's alright," and sweet Lily, each day shrinking down more behind her eyelids until on that Sunday, sweet Lily's funeral uncoiled from the church bells like a saw briar vine.

## Milk

Washing the udder first, warm water, not too hot, with a squirt of lavender Dawn dish soap, then gently drying with my t-shirt, Mom always says, "Vaseline on those hands." I sit on the stool, squeezing the bucket we got from Betty's Home-style Restaurant that reads "pineapples" between my knees, like the cellist we met in music class, how she swayed back and forth, the cello squeaking once and all the kids laughing but it was my favorite part, and breathing the sweaty, nutty cow smell, in through my nose and out through my mouth, now squeezing thumb and pointer finger around the udder, now adding all my other fingers, one at a time, pinky, release, start again, rocking and the milk spraying on my tennis shoes (Julie always says they smell rotten, but they smell fine to me) and into the bucket now, a pattering crescendo against the plastic sides—at Greenview Farms down the road, this is when they take out their machine, all metal, rubber and cold, attach it to every teat, like they showed us on that field trip and Robby said that his daddy has one just like it, squeeze and release and only ever get milk, missing this warmth, this quiet, connection, anticipation because there's a moment, every once in a while, the milk on my fingertips won't taste like milk but sometimes like burnt crème brûlée or sweet like strawberries and heavy whipping cream or today chocolate chip ice cream with real garden-grown mint.



*Nate Pillman*

## Our Minds Were Not Made

Our minds were not made to understand the time it took for reptiles to fly or for gas to form rock to form water. Hair fading, thanks to heat. Four legs to two, thanks to grass. Africa to Australia, Africa to Europe, Africa to Asia, Asia to here, thanks to protein. Just yesterday, I looked at a photo of my father at thirty and could hardly breathe—all that life, once vast, now shrunken, like hands designed for tools.

Rebecca Wadlinger

## The Beautiful War

The mocking bird outside my window has learned to imitate a car alarm, which in my opinion is the saddest repercussion of "the information age," a term I learned years ago when a ray of heated electrons traveled through a vacuum onto a screen so that my brain could rearrange dots into the human sent to inform me. And still, questions remain: Truth or beauty? The mind, can it be satisfied? I offer you half a sandwich if you'd like to think this out. No, my mind cannot be satisfied, not with this week's strange headlines: In remote mountains of Borneo scientists find an army of rainbow toads, last seen in 1924 and thought to be extinct. Earth may have had another moon, and in Sweden police arrest a man trying to split atoms in his kitchen. "It's just a hobby," he says. My hobbies are smaller and vanish mysteriously like moons. I like to walk and notice things. Front gates left open. The notch that stays knee-level even when the tree grows. In my pocket someone across town asks for me and has sent radio waves to the station to do so. This is the best thing about the information age. How everything is both far away and close. How I can take you with me wherever I go.

## The Enthusiast

Her favorite words were the ones that sounded dirty but were not. Masticate. Cul de sac. Angina. She used them often, delivering them with intense eye contact in hopes someone would catch on. No one ever did.

She liked to make words, too. She spent hours marking the covers of old books to fit her linguistic inclination—long ago, she'd scratched the "B" from *Madame Bovary*, added a "G" to the first syllable of *Don Quixote*.

Once an imitator scrawled an easy couple lines across *The Joy Luck Club*, but she pocketed that copy the moment she found it, repulsed by the cheap joke.

Sometimes it took days for her creations to disappear from the shelves, usually years. The books reappeared sheathed in new slipcovers, secrets tight beneath the plastic veneer.

But what did it matter? Thousands of books lined the library shelves. Her brain remained engorged with millions of dirty-but-not words. Cocktail. Kumquat. Pianist. Words that tickle the uvula. Words like a fire that she leaned in close to feed, the flames jumping at her touch.

Raul Palma

## Espuma

I was naked with only one man, Eladio. He liked my coffee, a *lo cubano*—the way I could turn powdered sugar into smoke. It's like he'd never seen someone make *cafecitos* this way—grinding sugar and espresso in a tin mug.

At the cafeteria I worked at, he'd meet me some mornings. I wore jean dresses then, thought they brought out the caramel in my skin. He was handsome, darker, hardly spoke English. He'd help me display day-old pastries under warming lights, restock cigarettes. Sometimes before the rush, he'd stare at me studying for class.

I didn't learn until later that he lived nearby. When I'd visit he'd toss my books on the bed, get me naked, press me into all those pages. After, he'd sneak into the shower behind me, lather my back with soap.

Nights we'd sit up in his kitchen, clean, sipping on *espuma* and caressing each other's skin. Nights rolling around in his bed, under the neon glow of a nearby motel, exhausted and intoxicated with caffeine. The way he'd lay and study me—that strange trimmed moustache, his dark penis limp against his leg.

Now my office window overlooks that tiny cafeteria. I wear suit dresses and pumps. I take cigarette breaks and drink caramel frappuccinos. But there are still some nights, who knows why, when I stand, groggy, grinding sugar into espresso, as if he's a thing I could conjure up—a veil of steam coming into shape in my hands.

## P E C F D

Today, I'm keeping my grandmother company. She's older; her renewal is on the line. My parents don't think she should be driving much anymore. She sits beside me, wearing cut-off pants, sandals, her feet swollen and caked in grass clippings.

Her car, a 1981 red Camaro, sits out on the lot, a headlight duct taped to the hood. She can afford to buy a new car. "You should buy a new car," I tell her, but she refuses. This is her lifeline, her one way of traveling between home and drug store, home and grocery store, home and bird store, home and clinic.

Sometimes, at night, she drives to drive, tired of sitting in her living room, staring into a dead television, tired of hearing the ghost of my grandfather's breathing from the master bedroom. She drives slowly, clipping mailboxes or garbage bins now and then, but thankfully avoiding serious accidents. She'll drive as far as South Beach, walk the pier, stare out at the darkness. She'll take all those back roads, the ones my grandfather showed her when he warmed up to the idea of her driving. But today she fails the test twice, confusing the E for a B, and later the F for a P.

## If We Were Someone Else

My father would've worn faded work-jeans: picking out a different pair every morning from his cycle of Wranglers, each of them bearing the circles of Copenhagen impressions on their back-pockets; and I would've called him 'Daddy' as we tipped our hats against the wind and walked through the pasture towards our cattle huddled by the bank of a small pond, their muzzles wet from the water.

Our lives would've been filled with rope and sharpened metal, with calluses growing thicker, every day, into our hands.

And whenever we saw, within our herd, the young bulls unsuitable for breeding—their little nuts and slim shoulders—it wouldn't have been ourselves we saw reflected there. Walking towards them, with our hands held out, we would've slipped ropes around their necks, one by one, before tying them to poles made of oak, thoughtlessly.

'We used to cut the nuts clean,' he would've said while showing me how for the first time, 'but there were risks: the poor thing might bleed out if you cut the cord wrong, and even if you didn't, there were still the flies. You'd slice the sack off nice and clean, only to come back and find a whole mess of maggots in the wound. I'm telling you, that'd get you upset. The sight of it.'

Never would he have worried about some unknown meaning within his words, 'Now we just wrap the nuts with a band. Much cleaner that way. No blood. Painless, too.'

And, while helping him wrap the bands, I would've felt a rush of nerves come over me whenever it was my turn to apply them all alone, and the steers would've jumped as I took them into my hand—would've fought against the rope, crying to nothing as the bands snapped to.

## Happiness

Anders Toff greased each soufflé dish, holding it lightly in one hand while the buttered fingers of his other hand moved across the surface in slow circles, these circles, his mentor/teacher Judith Mensch had assured him, were the key to success, the difference between a strawberry soufflé that rose delicately like a cloud or one that gelled like an overcooked egg white left on a plate all night, the remnants of a sloppily made late night feast that came after many vodkas had been drunk, songs sung, cigarettes smoked, all the appetizers depleted, the only thing left in the fridge a carton of eggs, some margarine, the lonely skillet waiting on the stove, everyone delighted to hear the sizzle, smell the fried egg smell of childhood, those egg whites a perfect late night feast, not a fit special dessert to be served to his mother, who Anders had not seen in ten years, escaping as she had to Italy with a podiatrist named Lars, who was rumored to be wanted in three states, something about Medicare fraud, his mother was always impetuous, exacting too, which explained the slow movement of his fingers, coating every inch, all the time thinking about his fourth birthday, the blue tricycle with a small horn that he tooted over and over again as he rode in circles on the grass in the front yard, his mother sipping gin tonics, refilling her glass from a sweaty pitcher, the same pitcher she used to refill her companion's glass, while Anders rode happily, watching the wind blow through the grass, small clouds float by overhead, he would come to recognize this total immersion as happiness, to see that it came unbidden, had little to do with the rest of the world, which receded as he pedaled, circling, circling.

Marvin Shackelford

## *This Holy Dear John*

Feet were the first I saw of her, the index wrapped over king toe and bobbing up to catch sun. I couldn't have seen that from the bridge, but I remember it. Then her long, stony legs rose from the water, the red panties everyone talked about for days after, her stomach and bare tits. She hadn't worn a bra, wouldn't, not even for Jesus. She looked like she was hand-standing into breath again, though her face never broke. I watched her body pivot from the river and roll under again, and when I returned to my car, drove away, everyone was rushing in their suits and Sunday bests to the other side, down to the bank, desperate to fish her out. I think some of the men had a chain, and I laughed.

That morning Brie had sat with me in our old apartment, and while I tied the belt around my arm she smiled and talked and smiled and thanked me for making leaving easy. She thanked me for saying I'd come watch her baptismal glory. She was country, so it had to be in the creek and everyone had to see. Brie was happy, the genuine kind. I'll give her that.

"Christ," she said, "lifts me up."

And I asked her, I asked what she expected to see, the other side of it. She asked for a cigarette, her last vice.

"I have no clue, Vic. Face of God maybe, but I've seen that. This is only a sign, I guess."

"We've all seen signs," I said.

"But we don't perform them. I'm sorry." Brie stood, started taking dirty dishes from the kitchen table and dropping them in the sink. Some cracked; the rattling, the faucet running. She said again, "Sorry."



Carrie Guss

## Ascension

I've been told my father was a dangerous man, wanted in forty-nine countries. He left us when I was five. I have only two memories of him and this is one: he is outside throwing knives at the side of the house, which is premium cypress. They spin through the air so fast I can barely see them once they leave his hand. One after another after another. It is rhythmic. He does not pause. Each knife hits the wood straight on, sinks in and stays there, quivering. When he is done there is a straight lineup of them that you could balance a level on and the bubble would stay exactly in the middle.

My family lives in tornado country. Once, driving on the highway, I saw a truck blow right off the road. Sometimes the sky between the wheat fields and the clouds turns a bright clear turquoise and the tornadoes are pale purple, and it's almost beautiful.

Recently my father resurfaced in Abuja, the size of a hot air balloon and the color of champagne grapes. Of course, he made the news. "Can you give us a statement," shouted a newscaster. "I'm coming home," he cried, drifting up and away.

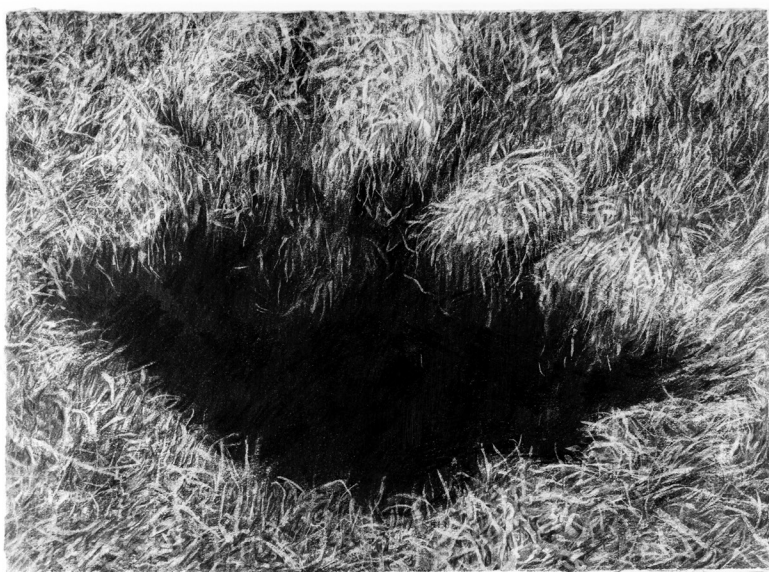
For weeks my grandfather and I crouched in the shadows of our family home, waiting. I had a machete, my grandfather a butter knife. When my father arrived we leaped out and sliced him open, right down the middle. Everything poured out: ceilings, kumquats, syrup, loose change, a sofa-bed, table salt, and then three mammals, one of them my mother cooking squash. That smells delicious, I told her, and we fed ourselves while my father sank into the ground, blood pouring out of our mouths.

## Bearish

My husband's granddaddy felled the bear upon the rangy earth of Wyoming—the grassy compass back of that American square, a spread-wide book of glory. I flirt with Granddaddy for the memory, the bearskin rug. I tap the bear's teeth and feel my fingernails echo. I stare into its nothing glassy-black eyes. I give the bear a Scottish accent. I am listening to an audiobook read by a man with a Scottish accent; the cadence of his voice is fuzzy paper crumpling and crumpling and smoothing out again. I take the rug home and lose my clothes, crawl naked under the hairy heft of it. Imagine the Scottish accent saying, I am a bear, too. *You are. A female bear is called a sow. A group of bears is called a sleuth.* I wait—stilly as the dead bear's heart—for my husband to come home from work. When he finds me, I growl. I grunt and howl like Tom Waits. He loves Tom Waits. My husband pets the stiff black hair on the bear's head. This is making up. *You have a devastating personality, Carrie. Absolutely crushing,* he says to me, deepening his dimples. I rise like the moon and open my slick strawberry mouth.















Angela Fraleigh

## by the time I tell you it will all be forgotten

In my current body of work each image serves as a character for a larger narrative, scraps of a past that I personally have little knowledge of—as a small child we lived in a trailer. We had a pet raccoon, my biological father had long blond hair, and my parents grew up in the swamps of South Carolina and smoked a lot of pot.

However, this work is less about a personal narrative but rather a prompt to consider how one constructs narratives and how personal and collective stories are concocted and conceived. It examines how fantasy lives often swirl up around the smallest of ideas, gaining force and power the more you ponder them, building in seemingly concrete details until they birth a life of their own, separate and unearthed from the “reality” that was just a flash in time. My work twists and exploits notions of fantasy, sexuality, and nostalgia for what never existed; when everything was seemingly possible—longing for an idealism somehow unmarred by defeat and failure. This lingering desire to hold sweet and superficial ideals collides with an unraveling discomfort and dissolution. There is an attempt to freeze the past, yet the future continues to creep in, distorting and disturbing the vision. These emblematic images oscillate between particular memories and universal ideals, both documenting fleeting moments from a borrowed past and mining the residue of a life left behind—before they slip out of conscious reach.

This work is a continuation of paintings that experiment with a range of narrative structures that draw upon and expose the fissures that occur when the ideals from one point in history are translated into another. Internal vs. external lives are merged and the past, present, and future slide and slip, creating blanks and hollows.

It is in this space between where meaning is formed.

Angela Fraleigh

## Image List

*the things we dare not say*

Graphite on Paper, 11" x 15"

2011

*you still love the ones you loved*

Graphite on Paper, 11" x 15"

2011

*splinter*

Graphite on Paper, 11" x 15"

2011

*sometimes it's the things*

Graphite on Paper, 11" x 15"

2011

*i believe in you*

Graphite on Paper, 11" x 15"

2011

*until what i love misses me*

Graphite on Paper, 11" x 15"

2011

*Georgie Hunt*

## Breakfast for Growing Girls

Sara cleaned her refrigerator on Friday nights when we were freshmen in high school. Cold cuts and condiments on the kitchen counter. She loved the smell of cleaning solution. How she could feel it in the center of her chest. She cleaned crumbs out of crevices, stray hairs, crusted ketchup stains. I was there the night her mother came home with blood dripping down the backs of her legs. Her jean skirt stained through the seat. In slurred speech, she said she'd stayed out longer than intended. Ran out of tampons. She opened the fridge, grabbed a jar of pickles, dunked her fingers into the lime green liquid. Juices dripped onto the floor. I caught Sara staring at the stains. She kept her body clean. Her mother took off her shirt to show me a pirate ship between her shoulder blades, bow to stern. One night Sara's mother left the door open and flies filled the living room where we slept. Clouds of them. That slow, fat kind of fly. Sara started killing them, her weapon a yellow flyswatter. She climbed on the chairs, crawled on the floor. I closed my eyes and covered my ears. In the morning, we made blueberry muffins from a mix and split the batch between us.

## The Broad

The broad was a bartender in Nevada, but not in Las Vegas. Not in Reno either. The broad didn't drink and didn't have to learn how to make a proper one because most of the men who came to the bar ordered beer, or liquor on the rocks or no rocks. One Tuesday the broad got released from jury duty when there were doubts her poor literacy could lead to proper judgments regarding the guilt or innocence of her peers. That afternoon a leather-wearing man came into the bar and ordered a Tom Collins. He didn't feel like telling the broad what was in a Tom Collins because he preferred to prolong the humiliation of others. The broad did not stand for these kinds of men and told him exactly where he could get a Tom Collins (his own ass). The leather-wearing man was offended and he stood up and slapped his hand on the counter and put his finger in her face and told her just what his ass was good for. The broad broke a beer bottle at the neck so it could be used as a threat as she told the leather-wearing man to leave. The leather-wearing man did not leave and instead proceeded to climb over the freshly waxed bar top. He slipped in a way that looked like a lunge and the broad murdered him in the neck with the broken bottle. Her loyal patrons were loyal witnesses when the police were called and all felt strongly she acted in self-defense. She felt grateful for everyone's cooperation and taught herself how to make a Tom Collins so no one would have to go through that again. Her loyal patrons drank the Tom Collinses because men will always rally around a good broad.

## The Playboy

The playboy decided to invite two women over for the evening. His simple belief system stated that competition was healthy and would provide the best outcome. Neither the blond woman nor the brunette woman knew the other was coming until it was too late, when they were both in the playboy's penthouse apartment. The playboy's calculations were correct and the blond woman and the brunette woman went to great lengths to outperform the other on the sex front. The playboy felt satisfied. The blond woman and the brunette woman felt exhausted from all their efforts and fell asleep curled up next to each other in the playboy's bed. The playboy stood over them and was overwhelmed with revulsion at the women. The blond woman's makeup had stained his pillows and the brunette woman had an unappealing wedgie. The playboy smoked his rolled cigarette and continued to look at them and then look away just to look at them again. He didn't understand how anyone could be so disgusting and think so low of herself. He smothered both of them with pillows at the same time, which was quite a feat. When he was done he knew that he had to get out of Dallas. He quickly left for Europe because he had the means and connections. The Swiss were in no hurry to deport him because Europe was in dire straits that took up a lot of diplomats' concentrations and thoughts. The Swiss people knew what the playboy was accused of, but this did not affect his popularity with women, for which the playboy was grateful and repulsed. Even though he never respected women, he didn't murder again. Murder made him feel bad for women, and he preferred the other feelings.

## Rubric for Your New England College Experience, 1998

Your gay friend introduces you to Adam, a blonde German with a last name that sounds like a torture weapon. Together they convince you to joyride with them to the frozen lake a few miles from your college.

All three of you strip to your birthday suits and skate in sneakers on the dense ice of Lake Champlain. You have not shaved your legs or bothered with your bikini line in weeks. Still, you love nothing more than being nineteen and believing your life is a string of epiphanies.

On the ride back, you all drink from a three-liter bottle of Pepsi and play Truth or Dare. Your gay friend dares Adam to drive with his eyes closed for a full minute. When he accepts, you lie across the backseat and pretend to be nestled inside a metal cocoon.

Later in his dorm, you and Adam strip again. You tell him too much about yourself and your family. It's been ages since you shared such intimate details with anyone except your gay friend. Adam caresses your cheek and tells you about his ex named Story. You have no right to be jealous, but you flick his hand away and wish your name were equally as imaginative. After kissing you passionately for a quarter of an hour, Adam tells you his housekeeper and your grandmother are from the same country. Although he says this factually like a phone number, you are deeply ashamed. You should have shaved off every whisper of hair. Your clothes are flipped inside out and the glow of the moon outlines them like scattered index cards. If you're taking notes, remember this mistake, and never repeat it.

Caitlin Corrigan

## We Are All Of Us Winning Now

The main thing we were known for before our team won the big game was the rain. The game didn't stop the rain, but the main thing became something a little harder to name.

The main thing was this: we couldn't stop watching it. The game. A few of us had recorded it, and a few more of us made copies, and copies of copies, and we played the game on our TV screens in our dark living rooms, and it got so nobody asked anyone anymore if they wanted to see it again because they were already seeing it again and again and again.

The actors in the commercials between the plays became the people our family and friends used to be. She always laughs for exactly four seconds, we said. He always spills the spaghetti sauce because he is too sloppy with that spoon.

The food trucks circled our houses and we walked back and forth until the food truck workers came inside to watch with us, until the animals grew bold and took our food from the trucks and into the woods, until the trucks were near empty and foul smelling, and the rain came in and sprouted sunflower seeds moldy in their plastic tubs.

We were surprised. It was just a game, we said. It wasn't like we all started hibernating or eating our own young. It's not like a big snake slithered up from the sea, or a giant man fell down from the sky. We said these things but we could no longer tell if we made noise when we said them, so hoarse was our breath in our throats, so deafening were the sounds we made when we watched ourselves winning over and over and over again.

## Runt

In the kitchen Lloyd is wringing its neck like a wet washcloth. Seconds ago, the cat was smug. It hooked the bacon frying on the stove with its paw, meeting Lloyd's eyes with derision. Lloyd always considered cats to be pretentious. He kept the killing clean, painless.

When he was nine, his father killed the dog with the exactness of a slaughterhouse worker. Tall and husky, he whipped around with the grace of a ballerina, squeezing the dog's throat then snapping its neck. The steak it had stolen from his father's plate hung from its mouth like a limp meat rag. The dog lay between them like a sacrificial offering. Lloyd did not finish his supper that night. At first he felt disgust—a coil of rancor unraveled in his gut, up his throat. He despised his father's weathered flannel shirts, how he never tried to get the dirt out from under his nails, the vein throbbing in his neck. His mother: a cowering animal. She played hide-and-seek with the light. She blinked at the sun glaring outside the windows. Lloyd was forgotten, pushed away from her breast the way an animal snubs the runt of the litter. They all lived in separate corners.

Lloyd is massive now, two of his father smashed together. The cat, lifeless, peeks past him with a flaccid, dull look. Pleased, he steps over it and picks the bacon out of the pan, pushing the strips of fat belly into his mouth. His son gapes up at him, two soggy egg yolk eyes and a picture-perfect O mouth, begging for a piece of the kill. Lloyd wets his lips and finishes the last wave of curling fat, wiping his mouth clean with the back of his grease-smeared hands. His son is licking the air.



Marsha McSpadden

## Some Say Fire

The maze of yellow tape: *Caution. Caution. Keep out.* Posted on the door: *Unsafe.* Underneath, the paint blistered, rough to touch.

He should be in a field pitching rocks, kicking butterflies, tormenting the neighbor girl.

Instead, he slips inside. The walls scorched and split, alligator skin. He reaches out with healing hands. Each time expecting a burn. Supposing a hotspot survived. That it relit in the night. Ready to gobble him up, too.

But no, it's cool. And the coolness leaves his fingers blackened.

He moves from room to ruined room. The floorboards give, still wet, hose soaked.

They could give way—swallow him, snap his leg, sever the skin. The air burdened with his mother's calls. Hot at first. Worried, then, growing dark. Not knowing the whereabouts of her boy—the only one left.

If. If she called. If she'd made dinner. If life beat on as before.

But no. Grief holds his mother bedbound, ghost-ridden.

Either way his life's wrecked. Just like the furniture black beyond memory.

No one knows what to do with him. The school stuffs his backpack so there's hardly room for guilt. All day, he draws. Everything flame-licked. The playground ablaze. The cemetery, red and furious. Bouquets of ash and cinder.

At every lunch table but his, the sound of laughter. Deafening. He sits alone, a pile of extra cookies and brownies before him.

But here, in Paul's room, where the floor is softest, the windows melted, where Queen Anne's lace pushes up like night stars against burnt boards, the roof gone, the sky whispers of loss. He leaves a brownie. His hand itches and aches. And he picks at the new skin. There, in the wreckage of brother's bedroom, the panicdies. He curls up, waits for something to spark. Some way to belong to what has burned.

Ian Golding

Veteran's Day with the Bacon Babes  
Brought to You by The HamTech  
Processing Plant  
God Bless America  
Amen  
Freedom

First the marching band and the Veterans with their burnt limbs—hardly the chiseled imagery of recruitment ads—then, finally, the Bacon Babes. Perched atop a decommissioned Humvee, they threw pork rinds for the HamTech Processing Plant, and now suddenly *everyone's* a fan of meat slurry. Sure, people supported the troops and blah, blah, blah, but seriously, those girls...

*Whoa.*

*Wow.*

*Wu-du-du-du-du.*

Who would have guessed this place could cultivate such raw consumer-friendly sexuality? One half spandex, one half glitter, and another half of pure country charm for good measure all culminating in the impossible mathematics that made dads blush. They ruled over the parade with their taut bodies and Day-Glo smiles.

Whenever a veteran's prosthetic leg wobbled off, a Bacon Babe popped out the top of the Humvee. Her hair perfect, fluttering like the flag atop Okinawa, she gripped the gun and aimed at the crowd.

*USA*

*USA*

*USA*

Thanks to a Defense Department grant, the .50 cal was swapped out with a 670psi Hot dog Launcher. It was beautiful, capable of launching a frankfurter with the speed of an MLB changeup.

She put a hand up to her left ear

The crowd on the left went wild

She put a hand up to her right ear

The crowd on her right went wilder

*Floom!*

The aluminum wrapper glistened in the sun like an Apollo shuttle. The crowd clambered for the hot dog, clawing away at one another until the asphalt was littered with shattered dentures, and then, once the Bacon Babe finished reloading:

*Floom!*

So thank you HamTech Processing Plant and your meat slurry, and thank you Bacon Babes and the little sequined flags sewn on your keisters. And to the troops with their blown off legs, thank you, for without your sacrifice none of this would be possible.

*Rosemary Royston*

## Ben Affleck is My Lover

Not really, but close, because my lover has a long face like Ben's. It's not too long, not long like a horse's, but just to the edge of longness. His legs are long, his torso is long, and his fingers are long. And when he grins it's like Ben's grin and when I'm home alone and watch a movie with Ben I get distracted and have to turn off Ben because it's not Ben I want but my lover, my lover whose grin, like Ben's, is always there, hiding on the edge of longing.

## What My Couch Smells Like

When I go to someone's house for the first time, I can't help but wonder how many times someone has fucked on the couch where I'm about to sit and how many times it was good. I can't count how many times I have fucked on my own couch, which isn't really mine but my 82 year-old landlady's. Once my ex-boyfriend went down on me while I watched *The Dog Whisperer*. It was good. I came twice. I think about it sometimes when I have people over—the intimacy that all of the inanimate objects in my house have witnessed. I used to think about it, too, when I would hand back piles of student papers—papers that I had inevitably fucked in front of or sometimes on. How much those papers had seen of me, how little the students. I have twice in my life told male friends with twin-sized beds that they would never get laid in something that small, which is a lie. I would fuck a guy in a bed that small. But better yet is the couch, which is more absorbent. I am afraid to take off the cases of my couch cushions. What they must look like underneath. I used to turn them over afterwards, leaving the wet spots to dry in the dark. It reminded me of a guy I knew in college who would, after doing his laundry, promptly remove it from the washer and stuff it dripping into a duffle bag that he would throw in the back of the closet. He smelled bad, but my couch doesn't. It doesn't smell like anything.

## Margarita Terrace

On the terrace where the parents drink margaritas there's a tiny radio. The sound is quiet against the sea noises taking up all the rest of the space. They are giddy with their neon green slush, poured carefully in glasses with tops like tires. They swing each other's wives around, barefooted and snagging cheek kisses. Sometimes someone's dad will catch someone else's mom's side-mouth. They exchange a giggle and call it a margarita accident.

On the terrace we get hot tortilla chips and watered-down pink salsa. The parents love Jimmy Buffet and plastic Hawaiian leis. Mom likes to shake her boobies in her loose top with her bikini strings dangling like a tail. She wears sandals with rhinestones before she kicks them off to wave her arms freely and wiggle up on the other dads.

When the sun is gone, they get wild. Their day-scorched vacation faces are raw and red, and they let us sip their drinks. The salt is enough to keep us away and we think they'll die from being so drunk. And when it finally starts to cool down, the parents realize they don't serve dinner on the terrace. We get an appetizer platter adorned with leafy things, fruits and sauces to dip all the tortilla chips we can eat. In the morning our stomachs are aching and the parents drink tomato juice on the beach. Mom asks me to fetch the tiny radio.

Dan Townsend

## I Would Prefer You Not Contact My Previous Employer

Costco policy says bakery personnel have to put on gloves before using a serrated knife. It's a safety issue, and Costco supposedly places top priority on the safety of its employees. A serrated knife, just to be clear, can take off a pinkie like it's nothing. I've seen it happen, so I am absolutely in favor of hand protection with serrated blades. Sometimes, however, the gloves aren't as available as they should be. The day I was terminated is a good example. What happened was, LaTara—*assistant* bakery manager—had shouted for me to get my ass in gear with the Italian Feast Loaf, which I had not yet sliced. Calmly and professionally, I told LaTara I would be happy to prep her Feast Loaf once I recovered the safety gloves, so as to be in compliance with our policy. At this point, LaTara stated that I worked in her motherfucking bakery and if I didn't get to cutting the Feast Loaf then I should go find myself another bakery in which to work. I asked if she understood that the blade used to cut the Feast Loaf was serrated. I regret that I raised my voice. I told her I needed the gloves. I only picked up the knife to show her. I thought maybe she wasn't seeing the teeth on the blade. They're small. I stepped closer. I asked her to take a good look so we could be on the same page. I warned her that a knife such as the one I held would cut through pinkie meat like room temp cheddar. Had she ever seen a severed pinkie? I had. I had seen a severed pinkie or two in my day.

## Koinonikos

The god of social media was born after Zeus came in a piece of papyrus featuring an undesirable sketch of his face. *I could do better!* he roared while tossing the soggy scrap into the fire. As his neglectful father left to go knot high-pressure systems into low self-esteem ones, Koinonikos crawled his way from the flames and into the clouds. To avoid Zeus, he step-stoned the air from Olympus, searching for a safe spot until he eventually found a Wi-Fi hot spot. He scrolled down to the humid Greek coast where the briny smell rubbed his healing burn wounds with a vengeance and the humid winds melted his hair unphotogenically. But the beauty of it all captivated him. In his short time on Olympus, he had only witnessed placid pools of fresh water where no laughter swam and no fingers clicked. But down here on the earth, where wireless internet soared through the sky like swan songs, he saw no need for the gold ink and marble communities from which his ashamed father would easily banish him. Why—down here—waves of people and shores of touch screen phones surrounded him. He knew they would all be nothing but eager to hear about his Phoenixesque birth, his escape from Olympus, and, most importantly, what he had for dinner, daily.



Kevin Adler

## *Pieces for the Left Hand* by J. Robert Lennon

212 pages, Graywolf Press

Graywolf's 2009 reissue of J. Robert Lennon's collection of literary anecdotes, *Pieces for the Left Hand*, seems to have found its niche as one of those hushed recommendations pressed reverently among writers working in short form. In fact, this review was delayed while I waited for the return of my copy from a writer who had brought it out of state for the holidays. I don't blame him. With each piece rarely longer than two pages, it's an agreeable travel companion. More importantly, though, the stories strike that animating spark writers seek in their reading selections: they make you want to write. These quirky, luminous pieces remind us how much of the vast material of experience can be fashioned into fiction. They explore narrative possibilities, act as launch pads, springboards for the imagination. While Lennon may be better known for more structurally conventional novels—*Mailman* (2003) and *Happyland* (2013), which made a lot of press for its serialization in *Harper's Magazine*—*Pieces for the Left Hand* earns its place on the shelf beside contemporary short form classics like David Markson's essayistic montages and Thomas Bernhard's *The Voice Imitator*.

Lennon's collection situates itself as a writer's journal—even its size and design suggest an arty Moleskine notebook. The introduction, in third person, suggests that the anecdotes that follow result from the author's ambles through the pastoral countryside of small town Upstate, New York:

Every day, for months, he sifted through the growing pile of memories, until he had begun to tell them to himself, as stories. I once knew a man, the stories began. A woman I know. In our town.

Many anecdotes share this tone, the wry nonchalance of overheard stories, conversations, bizarre coincidence, and the curios of the local news section, many bearing conspicuous relation to news events and geography of Ithaca, New York, where Lennon lives and teaches.

The book's 100 anecdotes are loosely grouped into themed sections, each opening with a micro-narrative that establishes the tone, such as the opening to the section titled "Parents and Children":

When my wife was pregnant with each of our children, I imagined clearly their future appearance and demeanor. It was young men that I imagined, but my wife gave birth to daughters. Today, when I see my grown daughters, I often have the strong but incorrect impression that I have someone I would like them to meet, and realize that it is the imaginary men I thought they might become to whom I want to introduce them, and with whom I believe they would really hit it off.

Whether isolating a fleeting glitch of thought or chronicling a university's sabotaged plan to cool its buildings with lake-bottom water, Lennon's gentle nudging of credible premises often reveals the compromised architecture of narratives generally as well as the profound strangeness inside the humdrum heart of life. Still, many of these one-page narratives manage to achieve startling moments of beauty. A group of foreign tourists in "Twilight" asks for directions to the toilet, which the narrator mishears as "twilight," and so directs the tourists to the best place for watching sunsets—a lakeside pier, where "a marvelous palette of colors would be cast onto the bottoms of the clouds and reflected on the water below." The confusion is resolved when a more skilled speaker steps forward. Yet later in the evening, as the narrator walks home, he sees the same group of tourists standing at the pier's end, watching the prescribed sunset. Readers share something in common with these tourists. Lennon focuses our perspective in unexpected directions and, at his best, catches us wonderstruck by the reflections cast between these splintered stories.

Just as often, however, the complexity of a piece folds in on itself. A character confronting a multifaceted reality becomes a meditation on the cognitive process of determining which reality to choose. Years after moving to a new town, the main character in "Switch" discovers that his cat's nameplate is engraved with another cat's name. Additionally, the listed address hails from the same neighborhood where he lived before the move. Confronted with this mildly disturbing anomaly, he has to decide which version of reality is more plausible:

I realized how very unlikely a prank the switching of collars was; and simultaneously I began to recall changes in our cat's personality around the time of our move which, quite naturally, we assumed to be consequences of the move itself, but which now suddenly seemed like the consequences of his not being our cat.

One of the greatest pleasures of these stories is the invitation to turn inward with them. They're not considerations about what one would do—in the case of the above cat, for example—but meditations on how one concludes anything about one's reality, how it's shaped by one's motives, desires, fears, and the difficulty of delineating these influences at all. The left-handedness of Lennon's anecdotes reveals itself in the practiced dexterity of crafting stories with this double-edged ambiguity.

In the way of craft, there's everything to admire. Personally, I kept returning to Lennon's last sentences. In "Coupon," a comatose mother wills herself back to health after overhearing a tender exchange between her daughter and son in the hospital room. The siblings decide not to tell her that the conversation she later described never occurred. Later, after the mother has died of unrelated causes, the son happens upon a detergent commercial in which the dialogue bears uncanny resemblance to the exchange the mother attributed to him and his sister. The anecdote might have ended here, with the droll realization that she'd appropriated this curative dialogue from the hospital television set. But the virtue of Lennon's endings are their avoidance of tidy narrative twists in favor of spare slack for readers to knot themselves: "I promptly wrote a letter to the detergent company, telling them the entire story. Not long afterward I received a coupon for a free box of detergent. No other reply was provided."

Here are some final sentences I returned to more than once: "For some time now, townspeople have been reluctant to take anything at other than face value."

"Our friend takes a perverse pleasure, he tells us, in dropping these people off at an inconvenient place, such as over a steaming subway grate or directly in front of a street vendor."

"This suits us well, however, as it seems possible that our friend, if given the opportunity, might kill us."

It seems excessive, even in a review, to reduce these stories to summaries. They've already been condensed to their maximum potency. Lennon, too, is conscious of the writer's obsession with abbreviation in the collection's final piece, "Brevity," about a novelist consumed with revising her 1,000-page novel. She hacks away until the novel becomes a novella, a short story, a paragraph, a sentence, and finally a haiku: "Tiny Upstate town / Undergoes many changes / Nonetheless endures." It's a summary broad enough to suit the collection it concludes. Thankfully, though, Lennon knows exactly how to scale his anecdotes, to distill their complexity without reducing them to archetypal templates. These are rich desserts, best enjoyed (I think) in small sittings: on busses, trains, in elevators, waiting rooms, anywhere a reader can occasionally look up, as the last sentences of these pieces so often prompt, and glimpse the underlying wonder of common experience, and be moved to make something of it.

Mark Elberfeld

## *Brushes With* by Kristina Marie Darling

50 pages, BlazeVOX Books

Urging the poet to be concrete and specific, William Carlos Williams says, “No ideas, but in things.” This became my mantra as I read and re-read Kristina Marie Darling’s *Brushes With*, which suggests through haunting paragraphs of prose poetry, footnotes, and even photographs, the violent demise of love between a husband and wife. Love has ended and I as a reader am left with the seemingly disjointed shards. Repeated imagery of physical things, however, gradually served as clues, particularly as I began to re-read the book several times in an attempt to create a gestalt picture of the bits and pieces I’d been given along the way.

The table of contents is equally elusive. A list of nine sections hints at what’s to come: Cartography, Migration, Feminism, Antarctica, Landscape, Martyrdom, Utopia, Spectacle, and Appendix A: Illustrations. These provide a barebones route through the ensuing text. Formally, each section is structured similarly to its eight counterparts. Following the title is a few lines of prose poetry told from the point of view of the jilted woman. Almost halfway through the book in the “Feminism” section, this poetic voice mentions, for the first time, a divorce and a mistress. A few pages later in “Landscape,” we learn that the speaker is a poet herself, for she says, “You told me, tilting your pretty head, how my pastoral elegy failed to move you.”

At the end of this exchange, the man mouths the word *melancholia*, which initiates a footnote: “A state of mourning for the lost object.”

The book itself is a compilation of lost objects: A compass gone awry, a map of constellations (of dead stars, no less), an unraveling dress, a house fallen into disrepair, statues of martyrs, frosty windows, ashes. These images recur in Darling’s scant fifty pages, woven into the counterpoint of poem and footnote into a third, unwritten narrative. Some of these objects appear in the relatively direct tone of the speaker of the poetic paragraph. Others are hinted at in seemingly unconnected footnotes, many of which are not even signaled in the primary text.

They stand alone, many on otherwise blank pages, suggesting a narrative to which we are not entirely privy. The last several pages of the book consist only of such notes.

Then the appendix provides two photographs: one of a burned room and another of dead stars. The photos reiterate the recurring imagery in a different medium and add a new dimension of temporality to the book. It felt almost like a literary Hail Mary: the speaker/poet/author makes one final attempt to provide evidence of moments that transpired either directly or indirectly over the course of the overall narrative.

Awash in imagery but adrift in the narrative, I found myself temporally disoriented, clinging to each and every word as a hint. What should I make of the recurring motifs? What about the photos at the end? What am I supplying in the vacant space created by the footnotes that refer to a lost text, or to a text never written?

Yet I think that is Darling's point here, for us to attach our own meaning and experience to this suggestion of a story. It is a phenomenological exercise to read and reread this book, searching for meaning within the text but more importantly supplying meaning from without.

One line stood out over my many readings that served as a map to deciphering the book. The speaker of poetry in "Feminism" says: "What is love but a parade of memorable objects, a row of dead butterflies pinned under glass?"

Darling suggests this parade of objects in her fragmented, skeletal narrative. The reader's job, then, is to flesh it out, to look at those butterflies pinned under glass, and to construct a story even more whole than the sum of its parts by connecting those objects to the ideas they are suggesting. The brilliance of Darling's form and structure in *Brushes With* is the freedom she gives us to do just that.

Jody Brooks

## *Liliane's Balcony* by Kelcey Parker

208 pages, Rose Metal Press

In Kelcey Parker's cleverly woven novella-in-flash, a group of tourists arrives separately at Frank Lloyd Wright's iconic architectural masterpiece, Fallingwater. As they listen to a tour guide praise the house design each tourist suffers a personal crisis, most unaware that the house they have come to admire is flooded with painful memories. Surrounded by a design that hinges on the idea of falling and the constructed attempt to stay the inevitable effects of gravity, these strangers use their present moment in a timeless house to explore pasts and futures. This nicely constructed work refocuses the story of Fallingwater, a story so often about the obsessive architect, on Liliane, the woman who suffered in one of America's most beautiful homes.

Liliane Kaufmann, first matriarch of the famous house, serves as the genius loci of Parker's intertwined narrative while multi-voiced flash stories swirl around the building like eddies in the river below. Each tourist learns about the house while reflecting on an inner disharmony. Janie struggles with a husband she's lost connection with and a pregnancy she cannot achieve while Amanda floats through the tour under the weight of her father's death. Josiah, "a man of high culture and Harley Davidsons" has found himself awash in feelings for the woman he met at a bar, and The Daughter, her ghostly intuition tuned in to the sorrowful structure, can feel the ever-present pain of Liliane Kaufmann, who suffered quietly through her famous husband's infidelities. This is a layered story about the stark contrast between inside and out—one soft and warm, one cold and hard—as architect, owner, and tourists attempt to reconcile the two in emotionally complex ways.

The overarching question, the theme, according to Liliane as she stands on her famous cantilever: "if one is on the balcony, is one inside or outside?"

And she answers, "The breeze says outside. But the balcony is not an exposed rock's edge; it's part of the house, designed by the architect. Behind her is her room, its warm glow. The French doors are open and the light spills onto the stone patterned ground. The architect had been so clever at dissolving the boundaries of the two."

Through this lens, the story comments on the distancing between self and façade, inside and out, and relationships that cannot blend the two like Fallingwater does. The house has brought these tourists together to show them how they've been torn apart. Its famous design promises the harmonious union that each yearns for.

But even in this harmonious building, ghostly echoes of Liliane's drowning pain send pills cascading down her throat. She lives always on the precipice, looking down at cascading falls, their ever-present voice tempting her into the depths. Like Liliane, the tourists hope to reinforce their lives, the goal always to stay afloat, to hang on like the reinforced concrete on Liliane's balcony which is supported, seemingly, by air.

This is a story full of ghosts and memories of lost love. Stories, layered like the house itself, with echoing proportions and reconciling opposites, connect voices which are continually drowned out by the white noise of loss and the white foam of the falls. At any time, the house can serve as a microcosm or a macrocosm—"the grammar of the Earth in a particle of stone"—of the troubled lives within. Outside, the slow, ancient erosion of rock parallels the slow interior erosion of life, marriage, and hope. All victims to the ever-moving water, this group of characters meditates on the steady ebbing away of time. Fallingwater emerges as a character itself, simultaneously a brain, an eye, and a cave-like womb, the water running through it lifeblood, soul, and memory.

Parker never forgets the churning waterfall as it echoes the primordial churning of the soul—wild and unfettered. Throughout each storyline is the unspoken temptation to jump from the rigid structure on which the tourists find themselves and into that rush of freedom. Liliane's balcony serves as metaphor, character, and place as the tourists' personal struggles culminate on the fateful ledge alongside Liliane's ghost.



As the stories come together, we begin to realize that the permanent distinction between the inside and the outside, between the constructed and the natural—no matter how much work goes into blending them seamlessly—will always show. The threshold, the stoop will always mark the divide. Liliane, along with the tourists in her home, realizes that it's not emotional turmoil that plagues them, "it is the contrast between inside and outside that [they] can no longer abide."

These stories explore the fine line between respecting the forces around you and being determined to defy them, no matter the cost. Parker's book offers a lovely tribute to a building so often coupled with its famous architect, and to a forgotten matriarch, a brave and sorrowful voice lost in the noise of falling water.

## Contributors: Volume 7 Number 2

Kevin Adler lives in Atlanta, GA. His fiction has appeared in *The Chattahoochee Review*, *The Brooklyn Review*, *Confrontation*, *Badlands*, and others. He recently received his PhD in English with a concentration in creative writing from Georgia State University and cobbles together a teaching schedule of writing and literature at local universities.

Maggie Bohara is an MFA candidate at Emerson College and part-time ceramicist at Feet of Clay Studio in Brookline, MA. She's studied fiction writing at Bryn Mawr College and the University of Pennsylvania. When not writing or potting, she spends time with her husband, two cats, and Drizzt (their dog).

Jody Brooks lives in Atlanta, GA. Her work has appeared recently in *DIAGRAM*, *The Florida Review*, *South Dakota Review*, *Hobart*, *KneeJerk*, and *Hot Metal Bridge*.

Amanda Nicole Corbin has had her short fiction published in journals such as *Thrice Fiction*, *Superstition Review*, *Thin Air*, *The Vehicle*, *decomp*, and others. She uses writing to make sense of things but usually ends up doing the opposite.

Caitlin Corrigan earned her MFA in fiction from Rutgers-Newark in 2014. Her writing has appeared in *Word Riot*, *Necessary Fiction*, *selfiesinink*, *The Review Review*, *Monkeybicycle*, *The Nervous Breakdown*, the *Tin House Open Bar* blog, and elsewhere. She can be reached at [caitlincorrigan.com](http://caitlincorrigan.com).

Leesa Cross-Smith's debut short story collection is called *Every Kiss a War* (Mojave River Press, 2014). She and her husband run a literary magazine called *WhiskeyPaper*. Find more at [LeesaCrossSmith.com](http://LeesaCrossSmith.com).

Having grown up in Missouri, Kentucky, and Virginia, Mark Elberfeld earned a BA in English and Art History at the University of the South in Sewanee, TN. He holds an MA from the Bread Loaf School of English at Middlebury College in Vermont, and an MA in Creative Writing from Georgia State University, where he served as fiction editor of the student-run journal *New South*. Mark taught sixth grade in suburban Washington, D.C. and in Budapest, Hungary. Now residing in Atlanta, Mark serves as president of the nonprofit Gabriel Center for Servant-Leadership and as board member and trainer for the Center for Emotional Intelligence.

Angela Fraleigh is known for monumental canvasses that explore fantasy, sexuality, and nostalgia. She is represented by Inman Gallery in Houston, TX and has exhibited at such venues as P.P.O.W Gallery, New York, NY; Mark Moore Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art; and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Fraleigh received her BFA from Boston University and her MFA from Yale University.

Ian Golding's work has appeared in *CutBank*, *Mid-American Review*, *Hobart*, *PANK*, and other journals. He is currently working on a novel.

Carrie Guss is a freelance writer and independent artist living in Toronto, Canada. Her work in illustration and photography has appeared most recently in *Lucky Peach*, *Smokelong Quarterly*, and AOL News Online. This is her first fiction publication. You can find her online at [carrieguss.com](http://carrieguss.com).

Georgie Hunt holds an MFA from the University of North Carolina Wilmington. She currently lives on the banks of the Westport River in southeastern Massachusetts. Her work is forthcoming in *Prick of the Spindle*.

Hillary Leftwich is a fiction editor at *The Conium Review* and was recently interviewed by *The Missouri Review* for their Working Writer Series. In her day jobs, she has worked as a private investigator, maid, and pinup model. She can be found on her blog [nanotwit.wordpress.com](http://nanotwit.wordpress.com) and Twitter @HillaryLeftwich.

Jane Liddle grew up in Newburgh, NY, and now lives in Brooklyn. Her work has appeared in *wigleaf*, *Heavy Feather Review*, *alice blue*, *Thrice Fiction*, and elsewhere. She has recently finished a collection of short stories. You can find her at [liddlejane.tumblr.com](http://liddlejane.tumblr.com) or on Twitter @janeriddle.

Lupe Linares was born and raised in south central Pennsylvania. She received her PhD in English from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She currently lives in Lincoln, NE, but hopes that will change soon.

Sarah McCartt-Jackson is a Kentucky poet and folklorist. Her most recent work can be found in *Inch*, *Indiana Review*, and *Journal of American Folklore*. She has been honored by the Academy of American Poets, Kentucky Women Writers, and as *Tidal Basin Review's* inaugural Poetry Series Center Feature poet.

Marsha McSpadden lives in Tuscaloosa, AL, where she teaches English composition and creative writing at the University of Alabama. In between football seasons, she writes small fictions. Work has appeared in *Shenandoah*, *SmokeLong*, and *matchbook*, among others.

Chrissy Van Meter received an MFA from The New School and is a journalist in Los Angeles, CA. She is the co-founder of *fivequarterly.org*, an online literary project out of Brooklyn, NY.

Ellen Birkett Morris's fiction has appeared in *The Antioch Review*, *Notre Dame Review*, *South Carolina Review*, *wigleaf*, and *Paradigm*. Her story "The Cycle of Life and Other Incidentals" was selected as a finalist in the Glimmer Train Press Family Matters competition. Morris is a recipient of a 2013 Al Smith Fellowship from the Kentucky Arts Council.

Raul Palma is a PhD student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Winner of the 2012 Soul-Making Keats Mary Mackey Contest, and a four-time finalist in *Glimmer Train* contests, his work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Saw Palm*, *Midwestern Gothic*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *NEAT*, and elsewhere.

Nate Pillman was the first place fiction winner of *The Puritan's* 2012 Thomas Morton Memorial Prize and a finalist for *The Tusculum Review's* 2013 Poetry Prize. His work has also appeared or is forthcoming in *PANK*, *New Ohio Review*, *Bayou Magazine*, and *Mid-American Review*. He lives in Tucson, AZ.

Rosemary Royston is the author of *Splitting the Soil* (Finishing Line Press, 2014) and holds an MFA in Writing from Spalding University. Her writing has appeared in *Southern Poetry Review*, *Alehouse*, *Comstock Review*, *Coal Hill Review*, and several other journals. For more, visit [theluxuryoftrees.wordpress.com](http://theluxuryoftrees.wordpress.com).

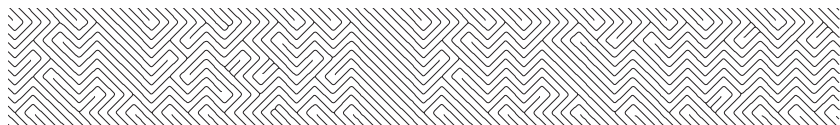
Marvin Shackelford holds an MFA from the University of Montana. His stories and poems appear in such journals as *Confrontation*, *Cimarron Review*, *burntdistrict*, *Beloit Fiction Journal*, *Southern Poetry Review*, and *Armchair/Shotgun*. He lives in the Texas Panhandle, earning a living in agriculture. Aimless tweets @WorderFarmer.

Dan Townsend's fiction has appeared in *Barrelhouse*, *SmokeLong Quarterly*, *Drunken Boat*, and other publications. In recent years he has been a summer camp director, a college English instructor, a UPS delivery helper, and a debt collector. He lives in Birmingham, AL.

Travis Vick's poetry and fiction have appeared in *Booth*, *Burningword*, *Eunoia*, *Gone Lawn*, *H\_NGM\_N*, *Out of Our Sand*, *Whiskey Paper* and others. He currently works in a diaper factory, volunteers teaching adults how to read (mostly using the poetry of Roethke, J. Wright, and Oppen as material), and lives alone in Texas.

Ursula Villarreal-Moura earned her BA from Middlebury College and her MFA from Sarah Lawrence College. She was the winner of the 2012 CutBank Big Fish Flash Fiction/Prose Poetry Contest and her writing has appeared in *Emerson Review*, *Vol. 1 Brooklyn*, *Lunch Ticket*, and elsewhere. She tweets @Ursulaofthebook.

Rebecca Wadlinger is a writer living in Portland, OR. Her translation of Norwegian Poet Gro Dahle's *A Hundred Thousand Hours* is available from Ugly Duckling Presse. Rebecca earned an MFA at the Michener Center for Writers in Austin and a PhD from the University of Houston's Creative Writing Program.



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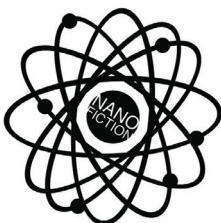
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