

Poets' Corner

2017 Chapbook Vol. 2

Poems by

vol. 1

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Trina L. French

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Ray Janes

Paul McFarland

vol. 2

Joergen Ostensen

Jim Ostheimer

Meredith D. Overstreet

Jon Potter

Susan R. Taylor

Joan Vose

Dana Wildes

Cover Photo

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See Vol. 1

for poems by

Lois Anne, George S. Chappell, Catherine Dowdell, Bill Eberle, Trina L. French, Eileen Hugo, Ray Janes, and Paul McFarland

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As the Storm Gathers

by Joergen Ostensen

A storm gathers on this windless eve,
Even as embers smolder at the bottom of the sky,
Their fire overshadowed the coming clouds,
A sunset from a Renaissance painting.

Colors scattered across the canvas of the coming night,
Pale blue and gray the shade of asphalt,
A yellowish hue on it all,
The color of a sickly man;
All strokes of a mysterious brush,
Never content and always moving at the whim of their master.

Clouds and stories of forgotten sunny days,
When December was an afterthought,
Slowly moving, gathering,
As night makes ready to fall upon poets, jesters and kings.

Rising above the hazy glow of the streetlight,
The pale church is luminescent against its gray field,
A steeple pointing at a dark cloud that hesitates,
As the wind arrow rests.

Some clouds hide behind the mountains
That have already gone black;
Out of sight for all yet still as dark as ever;
Laden with tears they have held
For you
And me.

The roadway luminescent,
Struck by the rays of lights trapped in boxes,
A gold line in the center stretching,
All the way to somewhere.

As the clouds sway a little,
Their darkness fluttering like curtains in the breeze,
The first star
And brightest
Pierces through the shade and winks at the poet.
Yet the jesters
And the king
Pay it no mind.

The poet tries to find the fire with the cold clinging to him,
As a blanket might,
Protecting him from the beauty of the coming night;
Yet hot blood still swirls in his veins,
For now the color of the sinking sun.

The poet finds the lake as he has a thousand times before,
On the other end of the road from the church;
Tonight a sheet of glass,
Even though the ice of February remains a faint remembrance.
A lake that becomes a canvas
For water colors.

All the story,
All the mystery,
All the beauty of the night,
All is mirrored on the swollen pool.

Dark swirls of a tawny gray
Clear away to let the moon into the lake;
A thin crescent,
Barely more than a nail clipping;
God's fish hook in the universe
That catches the earth's shine
In the evening.
Beauty for a moment obscured by the darkness
Of clouds and storms.

The stars come out and tell the poet secrets
As he crouches in front of the glass;
Imagining a story from a book
Of a bearded revolutionary,
Whose footfalls did not shatter the panes
On Galilee.

Here He is;
With the moon and the star too bright to be star,
He is on the edge of existence,
The man who walked on glass.

He is the spirit in the night,
A soon forgotten and overlooked miracle;
That no parable can tell,
That no jester can mock,
That no king can rule.

Here on the edge of the land,
On the edge of the night;
There are only poets.
Poets and lost souls,
Rocks and ripples,
And beauty;
As the pale blue dissipates and blurs gray with the evening,
As the night comes,
As the storm gathers.

Baltimore: The Never Ending Storm

by Joergen Ostensen

Thunder in Baltimore,
The storm floats in
Like the cruise ships at the inner harbor.
Rain follows thunder
Even as lightning precedes it.

But the downpour will not end the reign of heat.
Hot nights and hotter days,
Pools full of people packed together
Like the stone-faced sharks in their prison with glass walls.

Other prisons are glass-less;
Few can see in and less care to.
Edifices of crisscrossing steel overflowing with sad stories.
Yet those that enter usually return.

Thin streaks of pale blue descend from hazy heavens;
For fleeting moments the gods can see this strange town of sand.
A black land ruled by blue people.
Crossing streets and battered city blocks whose favorite son was Gray.

But no god gazes on these rows of houses holding hands;
Here the jails are crammed like swimming pools while the churches stand
empty.
Thin blades of grass grow out of cracks under crosses;
Shards of bottles broken like the dreams of their drinkers litter the
sidewalk.
Where grandma would have strolled on a Sunday in a forgotten time.

The rain has come.
Sheets of tears falling from somewhere,
All is wet
No discrimination
There's enough of that everywhere else.

The city that can't clean itself takes a shower.
Waters from the sky clear away the blood from the playground;
Tomorrow the children will play there after work.
After the corner slows down.

Electricity pours down from the heavens,
On the school by the park.
The place no one will pay for at City Hall.
Where the pupils were never told the name Benjamin Franklin
And will never hold his picture in their hands.

The storm will pass on before The Sun has been delivered.
Tomorrow the sun will bake west Baltimore again;
And the heavens will empty of dark clouds...
And yet...

Long has a darkness clung to these streets unhindered;
Staunchly waiting like the glass in the crevice where Winchester meets
the curb.

Just Balloons On A Bridge

by Joergen Ostensen

It will be a hot night;
They all are in August
On the West Baltimore streets.
Where people die and rats live.

The sun is setting;
Reds and deep purples
Like a Ravens jersey painted over.
Exhaust and tobacco smoke fill the air.

Cars line the curbs in all directions.
Broken down Toyotas from another century;
A beaten up Chevy that remembers every crash like it was
yesterday;
And a sleek new Mustang in a deep scarlet
The color of blood.

Lafayette off Bentalou
Over the bridge with no water underneath.
To the left a sign reading FOOD MART.
Maybe once but no more;
Only an empty lot with a pile of trash.
Probably a grocery store run by the rats.

On the other side, kids play on the playground
Slides long and hot from a day in the Maryland oven.
A game of hoops has started
Teenagers call out insults and challenges.
Somebody gets hot;
The beautiful swishing of nylon that has yet to rip.
A brand new car speeds past;
The music blares,
A rapper's raspy voice permeates from the custom speakers.
Everybody sees him but nobody witnesses his passing.

But the bridge like the city is filled with sad stories.
On the white siding there's a shrine
Not ten feet away from the court where the kid steps back for a J;
He's money from outside even though his family is broke.

The wind tosses the red balloons;
Catching the eye of the passerby.
The balloons are the same shade as the Mustang;
A tinsel cross sparkles in the sunset.
It's not Christmas.

R
I
P

letters that tell a story.

"We love you."
Inscription on the white siding
A fading photo touched by days in the heat
Discolored like the slides where the kids always play.

A boy in a photo on a bridge,
Dark skin and darker hair;
Dread locks cut short;
A shadow of a smile;
On a shadow of a man who couldn't have been twenty.

His name is written in magic marker
TAVON
The fallen angel who should have gotten a bronze star.
Everybody knows what happened and it wasn't a car crash.

Once he was a smiling boy
Who slid the slide and shot the three ball
He probably laughed and cried like all the rest.
He probably dreamed of a future
But there is no future on the white paneled bridge with no water
underneath.

All that's left of him now is balloons in the night;
The plaything of the wind.

“Next point wins.”
A cry from the players on the blacktop.
A drive and a kick and shot from the wing.
That one didn't miss but I pray the others do.

The kids run home;
On sidewalks that have been broken for decades.

Someday

by Joergen Ostensen

A Wednesday feeling of a falling people
Once we were great...
When?
What everyone says must be true.

We wake to a television screen
The morning after
We killed the revolution
Others decided for me.

A week or so of arguments over plastic trays
People with different color necks
The happy ones a sanguine shade
Under their buzz cuts.

Laughter from people who hate poetry
And this poet.
Loud pronouncements of superiority,
A kind of orange validation.

Tomorrow the earth will spin
As it has
But will it look the same?
That's a question that a duck will decide.

Snow will fall as the seasons rotate
As they have,
As they will—
For now.

Yet for all the pessimistic prognosticating
I wonder
I really do,
Who are we in the icy glance of the blinking stars?

I stand by the river
In the river
The water lapping aimlessly
The clay oozing between my toes.

I dip my fingers into the inky flood
Trying to grab hold of a lost poem
Broken and scattered
Like our glass houses.

I see the heavenly dipper
Far greater than I,
The ethereal poet
After a fashion.

A guide to freedom in days when that mattered
Maybe a moment left for me.

A poet in a river
Dreaming of the world of Someday.

Someday We will be great
Someday We will fall in love with our beautiful distinctiveness
Someday We will be at peace
Someday We will be free.

I plunge beneath the surface
As the ink engulfs my fragile form
My eyes open and close beneath the tireless current
Darkness for the eyes.

Yet
never
can
it
touch
the
soul.

I twist back toward the lighter darkness
Where the stars shine as campfires of a fallen army
Turned to ghosts
Never to leave their posts.

I see each star in the absence of a moon
Their fire reveals their brilliance,
Their omniscient observance
Of a god's ant farm that must have fallen from the ether
To the fertile crescent of the universe.
Sporadic blotches on a canvas painted black
Their beauty too great to shine on a broken world.
A hunter, a pair of lost twins, a scorpion
And a blaze on the trail to Someday.

WINTER RULES

by Jim Ostheimer

Remember to follow these rules until spring.
If there is snow to shovel, go slow, you are not sixteen.
Driving your car, slow for turns, brake gently,
THINK AHEAD, protect your life: winter rules.

Open your eyes to the beauty of trees,
feed and enjoy birds, keep your dog warm and exercised.
Stay off thin ice. Hold your love in bed: winter rules.

Continue walking, if nervous , use a cane.
Better to be safe than injured.
Always walk facing traffic, naturally, yield to cars!
Obey all of these to be safe: winter rules.

TWO WEEKS AWAY*by Jim Ostheimer*

We have no chimney for old Santa,
his arrival won't surprise us, betcha.
There is plenty to do each day,
before we celebrate this holiday.

A wreath out-door to show our spirit,
carols playing inside for all to hear it.
Our stockings in place in a chair,
in hope that Saint Nicolas will soon be there.

Presents to wrap but four fewer than once,
a roast beef to cook and to smell every ounce.
No table to set, we plan to go away,
not far, and only for the day.

Merry Christmas to everyone,
we love you a ton.
May we live in peace forever,
Where strife visits us never.

TWO LOVES

by Jim Ostheimer

Howls of hunger from the desert before dawn.
Warm in bed we listen in darkness
as coyotes circle close to our home.
Newlyweds lovingly encircle
for a few more precious moments.

Shiny gold bars adorn khaki shirt,
Breakfast, and embrace, then into
cold, dark and lonely night to
reach the airbase and gray silhouettes
of aircraft in stark hangar light.

Salmon rays of dawn
follow briefing for our flight.
Aircraft engine vibration
and anxiety precede
my tenth training ride.

Back on the ground my instructor
blithely waves goodbye, calmly walks away
saying, *don't kill yourself*.
My boyhood dream of flying
now completely up to me.

Hands encircle stick and throttle.
I leave the ground behind.
Adrenaline blinds my vision
of sun blanched mountains.
Profound silence in the cockpit.

Checklists in my brain

while I feel I
must maintain calm,
to report how
easy this has been.

I always dreamt of flying fighters.
Loved the idea of roaming high
above the ground. Now I had
two loves to manage and
get the damn aircraft down.

SAILING LESSON

by Jim Ostheimer

My auburn haired love and I
step into our waiting sloop.
Dawn sweeps the bay,
its rays a golden treasure
sprinkled across the harbor.

Together we hoist sails,
my arms surround her as we
alternate with each halyard.
A soft breeze encourages us
to drop the mooring which she
does by walking aft
into my waiting hands.

She sits close to me,
the tiller by our sides,
quick to grasp a gentle push
moves the bow off of the wind.
We sail slowly toward open sea.

Together we trim sails,
gather speed beneath
a sky no bluer than her eyes.
She smiles at me as the sun
smiles at us.

White caps spoil the sea
as northerlies build to twenty knots.
We lower sails, reef the main,
in spite of her concerns.

When the sky grays and water
turns to silver, we are drawn
to our mooring, certain
we have sailed far longer
than can be remembered

Ice Fishing*by Meredith D. Overstreet*

Have you sunk line beneath the ice,
 Cast light on wriggling scales,
Been thrust into the bracing dark,
 To only catch good tales,
Fought elements of a wintry world,
 As well as beasts below,
Have huddled close in epic wait,
 Quietly draped in snow?

A Master's Ballad

by Meredith D. Overstreet

We came to moor and feel the shore,
To warm our hook-scarred hands,
To rest our heads in linen laps
And walk our fathers' lands.

We left to win, harvest again,
Wet gold from sea and whale.
A heaving life of hard days rife
With pitch, harpoons, and sail.

Caught in squall they quickly hauled
The sheets from low to high,
They braced her spars and mustered tars
At orders I let fly.

The winds had come and dark set in,
The Sea, she spat and curs'd,
She bucked us up, then took us down
Till all our lungs did burst.

I woke on sand with gasp and roar!
Bound fast in line and weed,
My woolen coat ripped knee to throat,
No ego left to feed.

My men all gone to siren song,
The ocean's pull on sailor.
Expelled from death, dealt extra breath,
Survival now my jailor.

A churl in summers bright and fair,
I glow'r at spring gales' rain,
And welcome winters fiercely harsh,
To blunt fall's lonesome pain.

Now bound to sound my worth through ice,
I cast from frozen swell,
It's solace slicked in flashing scales
That dulls this earthly hell.

I wake alone to wrap fur round,
Don boots of seal and wax,
To walk on tide held fast to land,
Ballasted pail with axe.

I cut t'ward tree and broad white lake,
Slip canvas flap and sit
On wooden chest, a well-worn rest,
And work to keep pipe lit.

My soul sinks down 'neath gelid pool—
At home in waters blue—
And guarded grit brought quick to mind
With weight joins me to crew.

“Down. Down.” I hum to myself, then
“Up. Up!” I sing— to bring
A choking life from grave below
Redeems this salty king!

Fleeting Introspection

by Meredith D. Overstreet

This culture soaked in vanity
 Years end in insanity
 In wolfish snare of neglected restraint

So The First brings resolve
 Feeling past sins absolved
 To shed specious images of self and wealth

A New Year reveals
 Gluttony to the word,
 Gluttons gorging on input from minds middling
 Greedily grazing saturated fields of weedy information
 Indiscriminately spewing forth theses undigested
 Fertilizing the next cycle of ever-degraded crop

A New Year reveals
 Avarice for a screen,
 Leeches laughing at content shallow
 Languidly launching updates to their minds
 In steady-state download of social themes evolving
 And affecting new behavior in salute to a host

A New Year reveals
 Sloth for novelty,
 Wastrels wanting biases confirmed
 Wistfully wishing after dreams packaged
 Too insular to recognize themselves in the machine
 Remain torpid pawns indifferent to self-actualization
 through exposure

A New Year reveals
 Lust for the common,
 Braggarts boorish one-up in exploits offensive, destructive, disgusting

Brazenly building snares for the pliant rabbits they taught to breed want
 Sliming social norm towards the perverse and base
 in addictive race
 to the bottom

A New Year reveals
 Anger in slights,
 Figures falling, or failing even a jot of expectation fires a judgment cocked
 Finely fusing fingers, in time, to the triggers of weak wits slung low on fragile hips
 Churning disappointment presumes purposeful trespass—
 again and again—
 And offense becomes a state of existence

A New Year reveals
 Envy of image,
 Scrollers scathing steal from earned beauty, intrepid friends, trappings of wealth
 Snidely snipping wings to feather their own nests
 Victims of a veiled reality vicious for its deceit and creative cultivation
 Turned predators denying their stake in the fallacy

A New Year reveals
 Pride misconceived,
 Bantams basking in a supercilious tango
 Boastfully breaking rank with brothers equal
 In striving for a cleverness newly idolized by the flock
 They trade honor, dignity, and respect
 in pursuit
 of what they cannot comprehend
 Even with thick flaws suspected
 And a willing ego unprotected
 Few meet with success in their scheme

For it's finely honed logic that serves its master year 'round—
 Success as applied science—
 Success meted from a plan well plotted

Revealed in blueprinted stages
Freed with sweat, time, and a rock-ribbed will

Self-motivated visionaries, introspective missionaries
The walking resolute deaf to faddism,
That turnover truths of past, present, and future
Then act, with grit
every week, every day, every hour
for their future

The majority?
Woefully unequipped, or
Wishfully naive
But most times, merely devoid of the spirit

And so,
inevitably,
will again slip
toward December's hedonistic grip.

Winter Renga 2

by Meredith D. Overstreet

*wood behemoths bare
stare to stars in deep black clear
sway their patrons sweet*

*shield fur from criminal cold:
villain to paw, thief of chick*

*bringer of ice slick.
sickly limping, anemic,
toothless winter chill*

*bides a warmed Earth's flaxen hours—
whispered verse in season's wail.*

*a month stale to stout
fishers, skiers, blue bleeders
Children of the Frost*

*grip tools hot to slice liquid
frozen fast or fluffed thickly.*

*now, brace for salvo.
violent gift breaking backs
oaks recrowned in white*

*scourge thrilling rime-hungry hounds
battered wilds sing with extremes*

*enlivening bold,
entombing insentient.
sublunar moonscape*

*seizes all in wondrous
horror for wrecked land's beauty*

Outsides

by Jon Potter

It's outside our core.
We dress to show a facet
Of ourselves inside.

Ripped jeans, scuffed boots,
A faded t-shirt: that's one.
Social uniform.

A crisp, fitted suit
With smooth high-glossed leather shoes
Seizes most respect.

Paint on houses
Will push responses this way,
Ignoring what's inside.

FALL, 2016 (Pun)
by Jon Potter

The dark and muscled branches, empty now
All shift and sway in breezy rapids—wind.
Their leaves now flutter fast as they all bow,
All free to sidle swift, undisciplined.
Leaves once gave power to now naked trees
But now they scurry into crusty piles,
And wait, impatient for the winter's freeze,
Turn brown—reject their brilliant color styles.
They split from glory, rustle into heaps—
Seems quite familiar: rulers choose new wiles
Which whisk beyond our lives in sudden leaps.
View empty trees: their welcome trashed and gone
Their energy and elegance withdrawn.

Sonnet

WHEATHER/WEATHER*by Jon Potter*

The floods that float the homes and cars this year
Are more dramatic than our warming air.
We focus on the anguish, loss, and fear,

Then stare, quite puzzled at thin snow. Unfair!
The ski resorts just blast their hills with more,
So addicts, athletes, we'll forget to care.

The weather's curve slips past its corridor.
It's based on what we float into the sky-
The growing chaos simple to ignore.

We focus on the human pain; deny
What science shows that we must quickly do,
Or as a species, grimace, say goodbye.

Broad thinking's rare for all but very few
The shift's not common yet - ignore it now.
So many will be quick to block the view.

The tragic views of victims disavow.
It's just the weather. It'll shift somehow.
And hey! Those science jerks cause quite a row.

WINTAH*by Jon Potter*

We love our winters here in frosty Maine:
The icy air, the settled warmth of stoves—
We strap our skis on; snowshoes entertain
Us as we pad through silent, snow-filled groves
Or through the brilliant sunlight of the coves.
Sometimes we skate on ponds or frozen lakes
Where early darkness shadows reds and mauves.
We leave our tracks, which look like arcing snakes.
Our winter helps us wander: Mainer's flakes.
We're freed in ways which Southerners don't get
And celebrate the season as the weather wakes,
(Though not this year, to our profound regret.)
So don't forget the glitter and the glow.
The frozen joy we celebrate is snow.

Spencerian Sonnet

A Caution to Cuba*by Susan R. Taylor*

Be wary.
Insidious decay
Will seep from our bankrolls,
Creep into your soul.

Don't let us bulldoze
Bougainvillea-cracked walls
To replace them with glass condos,
Cold corners entrapping
Your easy intimacy of family,
The generosity of amor latino
That wafts from open windows,
Rumbas down sidewalks,
Envelops every soul.

Don't clothe your sweet toddlers
In our seductive style
Or stuff their bellies
With heaping spoons of hormones,
'Til they turn on each other,
Spew obscenities,
Eat you alive.

Abuelita will no longer
Season your rice
With her grandmother's touch,
Or nurture and scold the children
Who cuddle in for comfort.
She'll stare at the wall,
Idle hands on her lap

Among white haired strangers,
Pleading to go home
From some sterile day room.

We're coming,
Pockets lined in green
To purchase relief
From what we've become,
To fill our emptiness
With a taste of Cuba.
Let us learn from you,
Not you from U.S.

Leapfrog

by Susan R. Taylor

My four-legged friend and I
Walk for miles each afternoon,
Leapfrog down country roads.
He thrusts his snuffling snout
Hungrily into tufts of dry grass
Hoping for the prize
Of a juicy field mouse.

Reveling in his wild side,
I object too late,
Double over at the waist,
Scream “No, Buddy, No!”
But dark little hands wave frantically
Out the corners of his mouth
And my fuzzy-wuzzy predator
Raises warm brown eyes to me
And chomps down.

I quicken my pace to flee the scene,
Shudder to dislodge the image.
Tolerating only a certain distance between us,
His thundering gallop catches him up.
Bunching muscles propel him past me
Until another story on the wind
Yanks him, nose first, off his course.

I turn ahead into the hayfield
Where up on that grassy hill top,
A dark coyote statue
Comes to life as Buddy streaks past me
To greet his kind.

Reunited after millennia,
They bow playfully, tails fanning the air,
Make their intimate introductions,
Circle, spar, race away gleefully,
Buddy alongside his cousin.

Reveling in his wild side,
I object too late, double over at the waist,
Scream, “No, Buddy, No!”
But together they fly across the field’s edge
Into the dark woods.

My panic cuts through the silence,
Pleads in every nuance,
Commands, coos, threatens,
Tearfully promises cookies.
The field stands empty and still,
The heaving of my chest the only movement.

Then, from the darkness of the woods,
A cacophony of coyote calls,
That serves to bond the pack
After snarling mealtime competitions,
Drowns out my rising wail of grief.

Sheets

by Susan R. Taylor

After the morning wash,
I place the lawn chair just so.
Feet cooling in the grass,
Ice cubes clinking in my tea,
I revel in the dancing of sheets.

The dazzling whites
Iceberg blue in their folds,
Billow up, up into pregnant bellies,
Swell to a fall,
Lift loftily with the next gust
And wind-whipped to attention,
Snap sharply against the cerulean sky.

The sun lowers and calls the wind home.
I pinch the weathered clothes pins,
Pull the sheets from their gray lines.
Dropping fragrant heaps in the wicker basket,
I bury my face, inhale,
And carry summer in
Through the screen door.

Spring Harvest

by Susan R. Taylor

When the snow berms shrink
Into the wall of naked trees,
They expose along the roadside
The annual spring crop.

Sown through the winter
By a hungry culture,
And disdained by coyotes and deer,
The cornucopia awaits my walks.

Colorful candy wrappers,
Cups, straws, sacks,
Grease-stained pizza boxes,
Cigarette packs.

Tiny Schnapps bottles,
Bud and Blue Ribbon
Tossed by secret drinkers
Driving home to deception.

I gather it all
In worship of Nature's glory,
(But did avert my eyes
From that soggy brown diaper.)

By winter's snowfall
I have learned the lesson well,
The planters and the gatherers,
There is room for us all.

But come the next spring harvest
Bent over, gathering bag in hand,
I hiss "Blasphemer!" through my teeth,
And begin the learning again.

HAIKU*by Joan Vose*

Man of Dementia
Memory so far away
Two worlds colliding

A fresh morning breeze
Tenacious fern's fronds in sway
Nature's abundance

Changes changing change
Transformations circle round
Or possibly not

A gold finch fills up
A feeder loses its stash
Any bird's delight

A bird in the bush
Singing to you and to me
Good morning to you

Incognito*by Joan Vose*

Sink deep for authenticity
Uncover masks you find
Surrender entrapments
You so pride in your mind.

Can you hear hear nature's music
Unique in sounds and song
Calling -
"Open, let go, learn to sing your own song
Spread your wings, create your myth
As you go bumpity bump along."

Shadow Talk

by Joan Vose

“Open your senses
To your childhood within.
Let her speak as she will
With a playfulness again.”

Childhood innocence,
Imagination and wonder,
Discovering the magic
Of daydreams.

I am skipping down a path
On this warm and sunny day
With my shadow close beside me,
I can hear her say, “Come play with me
Come catch me, if you can.”

I start to run and jump and twirl
Trying all my tricks to catch this girl.
I stare her down with my magic eyes
To make her disappear. Instead she laughs
And says “surprise, don’t you know
I am always near?”

It is magic how you grow so tall,
At other times so very small and
Sometimes when I look for you,
There is none of you at all.

I can’t catch you Shadow, but this much
I know is true. You will always be a part of me
As I am of you. As I grow older and understand
There is much more of you to see. I hope to hear
“Hello again, I’m here for you, come play with me.”

The Seduction

by Joan Vose

You Delicious Love in my life
I find I must hold you at bay.
In my hunger to taste you
My desire to embrace you,
All restraint simply fades away.

I scoop in your tawny textures
Your sensual touch lingers long.
With excitement my juices salivate
Courting wild instincts strong.

Your seduction so entices me
I scoop and scoop again
Oh, sweet luscious cream my dream
This love affair must end.

For you my Starbucks ice cream
Every spoonful so divine,
To have you near I lose control
Succumbed, impassioned, every time.

And so dear Classic Coffee
We must become just friends.
Still, let's cuddle on occasion,
For our bond will never end.

Bells for Aleppo*by Dana Wildes*

The bells are ringing for Aleppo
in chapels, all around the world.

In churches, the bells are ringing,
tolling hours, reporting suffering;
sounding aloud funeral processions
for dying men, women, and children
of a Syrian city; a people under siege.
A fortress where all living souls grieve,
and only the dead can take their leave.
Where clanging bells cannot be heard
over falling bombs, screeching shells,
and the din of incessant explosions.

Holy bells will not ring inside Aleppo
until the devils finally let this city go.

No one can fully tell this tragic story,
but sacred bells tell all symphonically.

Through the globe the bells are ringing.
In choir spaces, angelic bells are singing
the song of all human hearts and souls.
The lyric of common yearning for truth,
a rhymed quest denied in dying Aleppo,
rings out a sad lamentation we all know.

Across earth memorial bells are ringing.
Listen... hear them sighing and singing;
peeling, reeling, ringing, rolling, tolling on.
Bells are clearing the air of all reasons why
devils alone drone in the sky above Aleppo.
Bells remind... God arrives on the 'morrow.

find me a special reader*...a letter to the editor**by Dana Wildes*

dear editor -

please
 find me a special reader
 to whom I can speak
 directly

find me a reader
 for whom words
 spoken or sung
 in beloved mother tongue
 hold meaning fast
 within the heart

find me a new
 reader -

free
 to listen
 attentively

hoping
 to engage
 in conversation

wishing
 to create
 communication

could you
 find me a reader
 new
 to reading
 poetry

find me a child -
 a happy young
 school
 girl

I once knew
 put me
 up in chalk
 on the board
 close
 to her seat
 in class

take a chance -
 leave me
 there
 all school year

this bright girl
 may one day
 idly
 read
 my poetry

and if
 she
 never
 glances
 my way
 if she
 never

reads me...

we can rest
knowing
you found me
a reader –

able to ask
innocent
questions

able to feel
real
emotions

able to be
open
momentarily

you found me
a true
reader

there are not
many –

for whom a poem
might become
a cherished
memory

a reader
who reminds me
of my darling
daughter –

with whom a poet
might
relate
lovingly

if she
may
simply
read
poetry
tenderly

sincerely
d. wildes

Eclipsed

by Dana Wildes

Having summoned an ancient evil
from the depths of darkest doom;
the sky is ink. The sun limply sinks
beneath the moon rising in gloom,
glowing as a dim sinister reflection
of day; eclipsed, forlorn, forbidden.

How long this unnatural night light
will be cast in surreptitious shadow
cannot be said; it is not known. Nor
can we pause to query the 'morrow;
encroaching fast are the dogs of war.
Men hasten to bar their home doors.

It is more than an army approaching;
it is a tremor that will quiver the core
of a people, a nation, and of our race.
The demons unleashed are still dead,
and the death they spread is undead;
living in the hearts of men as a dread.

Fear has set its nets around our heads.
Terror has strangled our stricken souls;
stealing air from the filthy atmosphere,
here, where we strolled atop this knoll
sharing pastoral days brilliant and clear,
before sheer fear shook our soft throats.

Fear itself is predator; and we the prey.
Our composure melts in dismal dismay;
memory won't recall recent lighter days.
Gathering to emit silent primal screams;
we picture skeletons in sickened dreams;
traversing the perverse long night of day.

Night and day; night and day; day to day;
no relief breaks abysmal pattern of grief.
Terrified, humiliated, our pain is related
to an owl and a tiny mouse in the forest,
behind the house. Swift bird's fast strike
kills softness; devoured on return to nest.

For owl, food; for mouse, a frightful night.
For craven canines, raging savages of war,
victims are not sought as a source of food;
nor do war dogs drink bled blood of dead.
Instead, they ingest the spirit as they spill
the innards of the hunted they thrill to kill.

Dogs are coming now, but it is not them -
it's the ghastly mob of ghosted dead men
who embody the decadence of the devil.
These men were killed in battles before.
They have fallen in war after war, when,
the devil called on them to die yet again.

What we now face is the evil of our race.
Pent-up, stored, purported to be erased;
quickly, we see we've lost our sanctuary.
Whatever it was we saw as our security,
proved illusory, bedeviled by absurdity;
consuming us all in sacred inner spaces.

Earth, wind, deluge, and especially, fire,
advance apace, and we can find no place
offering us shelter from this cruel storm.
Dogs accompanied by hoarded dead men,
massive movement of immortal hellions,
surges ahead; attacking in blind rebellion.

The bonds of civilization bend and break
beneath the weight of this disintegrative
pestilence, and god forsaken, disruptive
negation of all that men benignly create.
Corruption, destruction, famine, and loss,
demean, dam, damn fading intent to live.

Having summoned an ancient evil
from the depths of darkest doom;
the sky is ink. The sun limply sinks
beneath the moon rising in gloom,
glowing as a dim sinister reflection
of day; eclipsed, forlorn, forbidden...

FIRE DOVES ON THE WING*by Dana Wildes*

There are brick walled buildings

Main street defining
Be-siding the harbor
Along the inner shore
Housing town stores
Two to four stories high
Shoppers draw nigh
Basking in the twilight
Early on Sunday night

There are sea gulls soaring

Above the rooftops
Through the treetops
O'er massed sail tops
Sharply calling
Slowly stalling
Whilst whirling
And abruptly
Down-falling

There are doves on the wing

Careening gently
Floating effortlessly
In peaceful unity
Alighting silently
From time to time
Perching in rhyme
These doves only
Seem to be
Defying gravity

Revealing quietly
For all to see
Profound beauty
Of rosy sky light
Fading sun setting
In rusted red hues
Reflected celestially
As doves glowing
Like flames in flight
An ethereal delight

It is quite an uncommon thing
To see fire doves on the wing

It was a rare sight to share
I was so glad you were there

My hand reached out for you
Sensing what felt true to me
Must feel equally true to you
As you took my hand sweetly

About the poets in this volume—

Joergen Ostensen

Joergen was born on a torrid Baltimore day in the last year of the twentieth century. His parents moved away from the city and its myriad of troubling realities. Last summer, he returned and witnessed the world he was spared from calling home. He is a senior at Camden Hills Regional High School who plans to study journalism at Fordham University, starting next fall. He began writing poetry this past year and fell in love. He plans on continuing to write poetry in the lifetime ahead of him.

Jim Ostheimer *Cofounding Member*

A Yale graduate, Jim has been a writer for many years; he won the Thoreau Medal for writing as a freshman at the Middlesex School, and won a large number of awards in the Arizona state poetry contest for his free verse. Jim was a pilot in the U.S. Air Force and New Hampshire and Pennsylvania Air National Guards. Jim has been a long-time competitive one-design racing sailor, qualifying for the Olympic Trials in Solings. Jim also played lacrosse for thirteen years, eight years in schools and five in Clubs. He lives in Rockport where he serves on the Planning Board. He and his wife Cornelia have been married for 60 years and have four children and eight grandchildren. He founded the Rockland Poetry Workshop and has published three books: *Blue Yonder, Witness, and Harbor Lights*, (available through Barnes and Noble and Amazon.com).

Meredith D. Overstreet

Meredith completed her BA in International Studies at the University of Alaska Anchorage in 2010 and graduated with an ALM in the field of Sustainability and Environmental Management from Harvard University Extension School in 2013. She has been a U.S. Coast Guard Reservist since 2005 and spends her civilian life researching and writing in the science of ecological conservation. Born in North Carolina, Meredith has since lived up and down America's stunning east and west coasts, on Great Lake shores, bordered four Canadian provinces, and had the privilege to travel and work across all the amazing

places in between. She moved to Rockland, ME, in October of 2016 with her husband Michael and their gregarious black cat, El Bandido, and joined The Poets Corner in December to explore creative writing, learn the art of poetry, and connect with Midcoast locals.

Jon Potter

Jon Potter, who lives in Rockport, has been writing for many years, principally for the theatre, and has published over sixteen plays. He has written two textbooks, one for new English teachers, and one for producers of *Commedia dell' Arte* comedies, and a novel called *We Will What We Will*. He has also published some poetry, in *Maine Stance and Stanza*, (Julie Bragdon, ed.), the *Goose River Anthology* and the *Courier-Gazette*. Jon has found the inspiration of working with other poets at The Poets' Corner remarkable, challenging, and enormous fun.

Susan R. Taylor

Susan Taylor grew up as a third generation Army Brat and lived in Germany, Colombia, Alaska and many states in the eastern U.S. In 1984 she moved with her family to Liberty, Maine where she felt immediately at home. She is now a retired teacher from the Belfast school district and is currently living in Knox, where she is a professional organizer with her mid coast business, Restful Nests. She is a great-grandmother of four, along with having lived the parenting and grand parenting that title implies. She and her family have an affinity for all things Hispanic, and in addition to speaking and having taught Spanish, her life keeps taking uncanny turns toward people and places Hispanic. She was inspired to write poetry after the death of her mother from Alzheimer's Disease and by her own aging process and resulting growth spurt during her 50's and 60's. She hopes to publish that collection, called *Unpacking for the Trip*. In the meantime, she enjoys active membership in the Poets' Corner and Woodshed poetry groups.

Joan Vose

Joan is a graduate from the University of Maine, Orono, ME and a graduate of the University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO. She is also a graduate of The Down East School of Massage, Waldoboro, ME. She attended a meeting of Poets'

Corner in the Fall of 2016 to explore a new adventure. She enjoys the diversity of poetry shared by others who express a passion and commitment to the work. While a neophyte in the art of poetry, Joan's deep interest is in listening, seeking the wisdom that is spoken through the inner voice of poetry.

Dana Wildes

Dana Wildes is a retired account executive sales representative who worked in printing and advertising sales roles for both national and regional firms for forty years. While poetry has always been a serious avocation for Dana (he was the editor of his high school newspaper and a founding editor of the Colby Echo literary magazine) his business career left him limited time for creative writing. That is why Dana is so happy to be retired in Rockland, Maine where he has found many like-minded writers and friends of the arts, all of whom are an inspiration to him. For example, the Rockport Poet's Corner poetry group is a welcoming and interesting collection of poets whose interactions are uplifting and positive, and Dana is proud to be associated with them.

Thank you