



ENGLYN

Journal of Four Line Poetry / Issue One



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“I find myself making vessels that punctuate oceans, in the same way as a bird’s call will mark an internal landscape forever. The sound of a wind will describe a landscape and a vessel remembers it for me.”

Gordon Baldwin
Ceramic Artist

cold winter shadows
at my heels
bold in darkness
the shrieks of youths

Joanna Ashwell

There is no
nothing as I
sleep inside
your soul.

Charles Bane Jr.

i'm so alone

even the rock under which i hid
 has left me to fend for myself
& the birds call out nobody loves you
 nobody loves you & i know it's gospel

Robert Lee Brewer

Chaos Theory

Simplicity and complexity relate
In the fluctuating population of birds,
The propagation of impulses along nerves,
The inevitable surprise of change.

Niels Bohr, Physicist

A large dictionary in one pocket,
The complete works of Charles Dickens in the other,
A Danish man arrives in England
To unravel the universe atom by atom.

Outer Margin to Discall Cell

If a butterfly flaps its wings in Mexico
Will it cause a hurricane in Trinidad,
A tsunami in Hamamatsu,
Or a storm in my teacup heart?

Sophie Boyce

Identity

The British propensity for stoicism
Is excelled and exemplified
In a show of forced nationalism
Until I feel approximately nothing.

Sophie Boyce

red roses
born of spring rain
there's no silver lining
on a mushroom cloud

Anna Cates

Evening Commute

Silhouette: vermillion sky, India-inked wintery limbs...
An unknown artist must have magic in his ancient pen nibs.
Sitting in the twilight traffic, through my windshield,
I trace the strokes.

RJ Clarken

Blue is the Color of a Notion

“Every once in a blue moon, something new comes along that scrambles your preconceptions.” - Unknown

There was a time when I thought I knew
all the things one can know. Then the blue
moon came, scrambling my thoughts. Now I’m rambling...
Gone, my world view, by that blue-moon hue.

RJ Clarken

In this House of the Mind's Eye

In this house, creativity stirs
the pot, so discovery occurs.
A thought or kernel, sketched in a journal?
Imagination entrepreneurs.

I'm in love with the crack
of lake ice
when it breaks the news of thaw
to the fish

Jack Darrow

Bill Evans

a seven-layer bow
fingers curl on a flat nine
the doctor practices without a prayer
chromatic faith healing

Jack Darrow

Ice cream cone is warm and melting.
Shoes are getting quite a pelting.
Chocolate blobs are raining down.
Once-white shoes are turning brown.

Lori Degman

teeth and claws

At first, it reminded me
of a kitten with its claws
out, a pet pain that I thought
I could train to be gentle.

*I, too, thought it could be tamed,
named, and walked on a short leash
but time passed, it grew more wild;
no pet, it's the Devil's child.*

It runs at me, not away -
a sprawl followed by a fall -
master of bruise and bloodshed,
it sinks teeth into my bones.

*Friend, we must kill or be killed.
We will stand at the high bluffs
and hurl these rabid creatures
to their deaths. You bring the gin.*

She leaned over
and whispered
your face
is disappearing

Bruce England

Protest over -
the pretend dead
rise up
and mingle

Bruce England

Home

no longer loose, black boots
slap across the floor—

you are full, deadly:
all too human

Lisa Fusch Krause

Stir

She sits, quiet;
begs only
that wind will stir

the bamboo windchime

peering into the private mechanism of a watch
the sun sinks below the waterline
fishermen fish
sandpipers dance

Mark Gilbert

Love

A three-year old daughter about
Her five-year-old brother, asks
Mother: *Since Robbie's your son*
Can I be your moon?

Joan Hofmann

SURVIVAL SEQUENCE

Diagnosis

Struck by lightening -
my life sharply divided
into a before and an after
and the marks of the incision hurt.

Foe

A minuscule tumor
turns light into darkness,
like a small ominous cloud
threatening to cover the sun.

Probabilities

Compelled to speculate:
How many more birthdays?
Will I be there when...?
What are the odds?

Battleground

My body a combat zone
with parts missing in action,
the scars - inscribed memorials
to all that was lost.

Surgery and Beyond

On the operating table,
I die a little. But waking up,
I greet the blue sky
with new clarify.

Healing

Life is pulling me back -
whispering in its alluring voices:
Come back... Come!
There's more.

Nurit Israeli

You begin to dream
those dreams

then winter comes
all intimate with snow.

Bauke Kamstra

A gentle deer
might be a troll

breaking twigs
in the dark.

Bauke Kamstra

Sometimes ghosts come as crows
re-scavenging the same crusts
all over again

a futility of need.

Bauke Kamstra

The wind chanting
slow circles
about my grief

mistaking tears for rain.

Bauke Kamstra

Storm puts its knees
on the field
laying down grain

an unwelcome lover.

Bauke Kamstra

October Day

Not minding the wind,
a spider weaves its silver spell.
Starlings murmur in the sweetgums.
How long it takes a single leaf to land.

Debra Kaufman

Early Warning

Her eye's been keen since childhood to detect
the slight shudder before the slap. So naturally
they found each other, her with her what's wrong?,
him with his sullen nothing, neat scotch.

Debra Kaufman

September, 6 a.m.

All summer the maracas of cicadas in the trees
as mate found mate. Last night only one sang,
then hushed. Today autumn snaps its crisp sheets,
delivers the fiddling of crickets: time to wake up, time.

Debra Kaufman

The Ice Queen said that she was cold
to a Knight fresh from the fray,
so he took the maiden in his arms
and she melted clean away.

David J Kelly

Are we alone? Is life a road?
Is love a cup of tea?
I don't need to know the answers
while you're travelling with me.

David J Kelly

There's something missing, I just can't find it,
I don't know what to do.
What is missing? I am missing!
I am missing you.

David J Kelly

Amherst

again, lining the street,
crabapple blossoms
the color of raspberry sherbet -
I never tire of them

*cheap whiskey
in the basement bar at Psi U
Jim Steinman on piano
Robert Frost old and asleep*

Larry Kimmel & Joy McCall

high wires

high on a hill
two wires sing, wind or no –
at dusk it's worth the climb
to listen

*why can't I be a wire
strung tight
singing and feeling
the slight weight of swallows?*

Larry Kimmel & Joy McCall

diminuendo

the longest day begins
with grey skies and pain
the year and me
winding-down slow

*once so loose and easy,
my grip tightens
as the long
diminuendo narrows*

Larry Kimmel & Joy McCall

tracks

the gleam
of trolley tracks
under winter streetlights ~
a cigarette's orange glow

*night train beside
the empty platform
a man steps
out of the shadows*

closed

afterwards –
her battered mind
like a bruise on the thigh
of intimacy

*his tears fall
on his own hands
his fingers his only lovers
behind the cell door*

Larry Kimmel & Joy McCall

here be dragons

screaming
the marbled linoleum
with unfocused eye -
a cloud-like-morphing bestiary

*April sky sailors' warning
of hailstorms
the clouds shapeshift :
dragons, breathing fire*

Larry Kimmel & Joy McCall

At the Funeral

Rivers of light circle the grieving,
but like a cat in the underbrush
flicking its tail, darkness
tenses it haunches to spring.

Richard Krawiec

4AM

The crows call light from the sky;
still it's hard to see past
my reflection bouncing back
from the black panes.

Richard Krawiec

Aging

Above the futon, my sons'
cabbage patch doll sits preserved
inside a zip-lock freezer bag.
The past I can't release.

Richard Krawiec

Today I'd come and declare
my undying love for you
I am not scared of your dad
But then that pitbull!

Shrikaanth Krishnamurthy

Seeing you walk down the road
swaying your hips today
I fell in the rubbish heap.
Indeed love is blind!

Shrikaanth Krishnamurthy

old bent woman
climbing the stairs
stops, sits and sighs
head in her hands

Joy McCall

She finds it difficult to know
whose hand to take, which way to go.
She throws the coins, they fall: hold fast.
The choice is made, the die is cast.

Joy McCall

The child falls from her sullen womb,
thrown in the bin; no grave, no tomb,
no priest for prayers, crosses, or creeds.
She picks at her skin until it bleeds.

Joy McCall

knotted

I stare into space
while the crazy wind tears
the leaves from the trees
and the people from prayers.

Climbing the ladder
to the top of the wall,
the higher I climb
it's the further to fall.

The well is too deep
for the bucket to reach.
Sinners don't listen
when it's sinners who preach.

And something keeps pulling
at the knotted string, tied
and tethering down
the dreams that have died.

on the morning table
a frail hyacinth
you bustle around the kitchen
your thoughts scattered

Matsukaze

in this extended midnight
learning that Ryuka was composed
in reaction
to tanka

Matsukaze

yellow saffrons or some type of flower
that punctuated Mokichi's grief
deciding to send him
a tanka or ryuka

Matsukaze

such tender feelings
revealed in those letters
from a man
who stepped into death

Matsukaze

a gift from the Muslim man
wrapped in brown satin
a shofar -
a new chapter of life begins

Matsukaze

i have watched my daughters grow up
become women and marry...
i fold memories
deep into myself

Matsukaze

kaleidoscope
a crowd of people
scurrying about on a pier
folding into themselves

Don Miller

in the dark trees
coyote moon song
the last night
of late September

Lynda Monahan

fifty tiny buttons
down her back
the slow undoing
of her wedding dress

Lynda Monahan

she took up running
until she realized
it wasn't getting her
anywhere

Lynda Monahan

must be October
fat yellow moon
riding the horizon
combines churning the night

Lynda Monahan

A stack of postcards
ephemeral
like beach sand
and freckles.

Wendy Oldenbrook

Patterns of abandonment
A bottle of red wine
She feels it coming
A matter of time.

Wendy Oldenbrook

her mama says,
“Close your eyes, baby
and that highway sounds
like a River”

Wendy Oldenbrook

My dimpled son
Off to capture the world
Armed with a lunch box love note
and a glue stick

Wendy Oldenbrook

He arrives with demons
he can't share
worry lines
fine brown hair

Wendy Oldenbrook

The Dream

The kids

Gather tiny pebbles.

In the evening they return

With streams of dream.

Pravat Kumar Padhy

Saddened

Silently the tree
Sheds drops of rain.
She wasps her eyes
Over the melting edge of grief.

Pravat Kumar Padhy

Similar Harmonics

Beach balls bouncing on the beaches
bring to mind the languid reaches
of the swells in the Atlantic
when the shoreline makes them frantic.

William Preston

The Widow Ponders

A lone chickadee
is lonesome, yet free;
I join you to be
alone, chickadee

William Preston

The Rhyme of the Ancient Pensioner

Now that I'm old, I pray for two gifts
more precious than riches, more useful than pluck:
a thimble of octogenarian wisdom;
a bushel of abecedarian luck.

William Preston

unlocking
the mystery
of failure
your fragile hands

Ernesto P. Santiago

the free will
of the wind
the kindness of a colleague
I hardly know

Ernesto P. Santiago

winter rain...
the urge to create
nothing
out of nothing

Shloka Shankar

summer beach...
I wait for that one
stray metaphor
to be washed ashore

Shloka Shankar

He Walked Away

The trail along the creek crackles, the water's edge laced with ice. Our boots leave wet prints on frost, evidence of a long search for something small and quiet as a fawn, frightened as a child.

Jane Shlensky

One Better

While we puzzled over the perfect
birthday gift for our father,
he packed up his fishing gear and
a few clothes and bid us farewell.

Jane Shlensky

Caged

My sister collects instruments to hang upon the wall.
So beautiful, the workmanship, mother-of pearl, rich wood,
and strings. She does not wish them played.
They stand like wax tenors, song-choked.

Jane Shlensky

Easy Things

I'm getting old, in love with easy things,
ideas like laughter and losing weight, waking
fluent in languages and instruments, energy settling
over me like a cotton gown, lilting like praise and grace.

Jane Shlensky

What Lies Beneath

Beneath the snow lies possibility tucked into earth,
rebirth of seed or bulb awaiting sun to stun pods
housing hope. Nature unfolds as we do, infinite
layers rising to light.

Jane Shlensky

If/When

If we eroded down to dirt, becoming over time
wild ground, amazed with random flowers, nothing
nature did not found, would you be happy then,
raising your petaled face to sky?

Jane Shlensky

Identity

Sometimes I'm fisherman, sometimes fish
Or snap of line
Or rippling chill
Or morning mist burned clear

Jane Shlensky

Lily

Lillian hitched her way to LA
bought a Harley during her stay
changed her name to Lily one day
texted her mom everything was okay

Listen to the heartbeat
of the waking cosmos,
the sky, the land,
the nurturing ocean.

Richard St. Clair

Old stale memories
plague my overcrowded brain:
I push and pull,
but images won't leave.

Richard St. Clair

The last leaves of autumn
are sighing, sighing.
I sigh, too, when I think
of all the times I should have let go.

Debbie Strange

The silken water slips quietly
over stone shoulders.
If you listen deeply,
you will hear the night undressing.

Debbie Strange

The great blue king on unfurled wing,
sails through mackerel sky,
to alight once more upon shingled shore,
with strident, raucous cry.

Debbie Strange

At the dentist's office,
collywobbles distract me
from the war being waged
in the blood of my mouth.

Debbie Strange

She is Sweet Sixteen.
Wherever she goes,
bouquets of small children
cling to her like butterflies.

Debbie Strange

Abundance

The brass rose sieves single drops—rain
from the belly of the watering can.

The bride's crystal sash circles her waist
on silk threads knotted at her spine.

Exuberance

The silver flute answers Purgatory
Brook, feral and tumbling downstream.

The groom's peach-dotted, pink bowtie
undulates on the apple of his throat.

My head aches, my eyes are heavy
Sharp shingle worries beach my mind
Is it really the year's last day
That shakes these bones awake?

Liam Wilkinson

Listening to Coleman Barks reading
The evergreen lines of Rumi
I become a small white pebble
On a long stretch of sand

Liam Wilkinson

First Weaponness Winter

Cacophony of silences
Fat flakes falling into the sea
At the break of dawn I discover
A new kind of blue

I wish to live out a life here
On the slopes of this small mountain
Sailing out these tiny vessels
On the snow hardened sea

Night snow falling on Weaponness
The moon a blur behind the mist
For the first time in eighteen years
I am invisible

Liam Wilkinson

Oak, ash, birch, beech
the young forest
breathing, growing
passing on life.

Steve Wilkinson

A gentle breeze
sways the branches.
Long shadows shrink
across the lawn.

Steve Wilkinson

You in my thoughts
on this cold day.
The path ahead
covered in mist.

Steve Wilkinson

Thinking of you,
I watch the sky
let out its tears.
Alone again.

Steve Wilkinson

on the morning rooftop
the crow's stretching echoes

across
commuting drivers

Joshua Eric Williams

back porch
music

thundering
through woods

Joshua Eric Williams

a delivery
leaving the door

as it was
September winds

Joshua Eric Williams

flowers waving

concentric
rings after

the crane fly

Joshua Eric Williams

the darker ground
in circles
under an oak—
her breath and mine

Joshua Eric Williams

warmest winter
yet a mantra drips
from upstairs
and out of my dreams

Joshua Eric Williams

A Carnival of Butterflies

The stillness
of the orange leaves...

The orange grove
studded with butterflies

Sudden Strike

what an idea!
the sudden strike
of a sparrow's beak
on his forehead

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