

Pretty Owl Poetry

Issue 20 Winter 2019



Established in 2013, Pretty Owl Poetry is a literary shoe string operation in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where it sometimes hosts live readings through its Spotlight Series.



www.facebook.com/prettyowlpoetry



www.twitter.com/prettyowlpoetry



instagram.com/prettyowlpoetry



soundcloud.com/prettyowlpoetry



Pretty Owl Poetry
is an affiliate of Sundress Publications

If you would like to submit poetry, flash fiction, or visual art please visit prettyowlpoetry.submittable.com.

Editor in Chief
Kelly Lorraine Andrews

Art and Design Editor
Jessica Earhart

Fiction Editor
B. Rose Kelly

Assistant Editors
Chad W. Lutz
Alexis Olson

Artwork for the Winter 2018 issue was provided by
Laura Salgarolo

To find him [cover]
He left her a stain [page 11]
Untitled [page 26]
She wrote to her knight [page 35]

Contents

<i>Brian Clifton</i>	Out of the Skull	6
	X (In a Mirror)	7
	Sweetest Taboo	8
<i>ali lanzetta</i>	makers	10
<i>Nicole Oquendo</i>	The Antichrist and I, and the Book	12
<i>Hannah Kroonblawd</i>	A Certainty of Blue	14
<i>River Ian Kerstetter</i>	Everything you do when you're trans is a performance (honey water)	15
<i>Melissa Eleftherion</i>	from <i>Sutures</i>	17
<i>Trisha Kostis</i>	Bodies	22
<i>Kelly Boyker</i>	Be Kind to Animals	27
<i>Jenny Della Santa</i>	I Didn't Know I Wasn't a Horse	28
	Third	29
<i>Jefferson Navicky</i>	Ruth Moore Dreaming	30
<i>alex stolis</i>	The man on the radio says be the tenth caller to win	31
<i>Michele K. Johnson Huffman</i>	Excerpt from <i>Southbound Bride's</i> "The Newlywed Shoe Game"	32
<i>Kate LaDew</i>	The Promise	34
<i>Bo Schwabacher</i>	An Adopted Korean Girl's Poem about Female Friendship	36
<i>Dan Alter</i>	Silences of Isaac	38

Out of the Skull

Brian Clifton

I danced like a forked tongue
during my days and nights of fuck it.
Spinning from slicked curls, I traced

my index finger along
stomach flab stretched taut. I waited
for rupture—opened mouth brought close

without sound, a breathing
flame. I was a torch touched
to the hand. Like a poltergeist

I flapped dust from my ribs, then
I didn't.

X (In a Mirror)

Brian Clifton

I visit the grave

of someone I never knew. It cradles
a soft pulse

of light. How cartoonish, I think,
the day I sighed,

*it's time for radiation
to get handsy with my brain.*

I was not wrong

for wanting, for not wanting. *First*, I said,
we're going, and then, *let it go*.

In the graveyard, I hide
a flower in my pocket,

When I say I'm going to give it to you,

the gravestones say, *He is going to give it to you.*

Sweetest Taboo

Brian Clifton

—after Sade

Every day
slips into me
every night

Within
every
heart

A hot rain

The sweetest
storm

Slips into me

Every
day
I let slip

How
I feel

Every day

Is like
the whole
storm

Of hot rain
given
to me

I keep it
and I keep

Telling
you

How it feels

makers

ali lanzetta

if it snows, i'll be validated. i'll sit in the window, make a snow-cave in my body.
you should meet me there, and we can shove ourselves down under the soft surface of december.
the beautiful may be slight, may be round and wrong, may slide you off the side.
i am trying to elbow in, to elbow my way inside, but i can see you're not having it. that's fine.

how's the weather where you are?

just the other day, maybe someone mentioned me. then, of course, there was the weather
in your head. your finite heart, its clipped edge repeated like a paper doll, full of snowflake
holes. a wind picked up. maybe you started to sweat, just a little. the squawking bird-sound
your resistance makes. scavenging. that eye for dead things, like how an artist has an eye
for the shape of negative space. i was here, i was waiting for snow. sitting in the window, my
body a fossilized trackway. my longing a yellow dandelion, irrelevant except to spread. a sap,
a seed, a garden pest. when someone asked about me, and i wasn't there, and my longing was
snagged and shining like a bright balloon on a telephone wire.

when faced with perforation, do you still choose lack? oh *caro*, how could you.

i am weary of charlatans. i am sitting in the window, with nowhere left to look.
artificial sparkle in the gleam of the teeth, their moustaches so beautifully curled.



The Antichrist and I, and the Book

Nicole Oquendo

The antichrist smooths one hand over my forehead, and his other over my abdomen, while he leans over me on the bed.

I can't, he says. And I know. His talent is in burning lives down to their end, not mending what's broken.

The inside of my body is molten, and with every pulse, every beat, his eyes look up, then down. He pats soft, not once, but many times. Pain lingers.

Once, I had a roommate that looked younger than me, with curls that bounced out of her head like antennae. On our last day together, I woke to her gurgling, an open empty bottle where pills were on the ground next to her bed. She shook, and I called for help, and then held her while the life left her, until she stopped hurting.

He looks around the room and sits up tall, a cornered snake. I reach up and wind a piece of his hair around my index finger.

Don't. Lie with me instead, I say. And he does, warm, but stiff. I pull his body around mine. Michael, you don't have to fix me.

I can't, he says. And his eyes, his eyes are so red. I don't want it to hurt. Some sickness is for life. Some sickness burns until your last moment.

When the antichrist and I met, reaching for the same book, he had to see my body for what it was—skin wrapped around coals, sometimes on fire, sometimes just smoldering, and then bones.

But it's better now, I say. I don't have to burn alone. I have the antichrist to wait with me at the pharmacy, until there is no pharmacy. I have the antichrist to lay out six pills in the morning, and then six pills at night, from eight separate bottles, and on the worst days four more pills from two other bottles, in a straight line. I have the antichrist to walk at my speed, slow, and to lean on when the heat is too much, and to lie with me.

It's ok, I say, and rest against him.

I believe you, he says.

May we burn for life. May we burn until our last moment.

A Certainty of Blue

Hannah Kroonblawd

First, silver. *Calotype*, beautiful figure, dark hair a roofline across the sky.

Then, *cyanotype*, n. From the ancient κύανος, *kyanós*, from *shining light*, from *precious*.
From *struck*, *reflected*, *repelled*, an *impression*, a *picture*.

Innumerable, the ocean, both silver and blue. Yet not quite blue but green.
Yet not quite green but blue. Salt coating my skin, my skin like paper.

Salt and light and darkness and *look, there, is that a face?*

Or perhaps a battlefield, all those bodies on the ground,
blue shadows slowly bleaching in the sunshine.

The woman walks along the edges of a battlefield
not a battlefield, but a shoreline, cliffs like chalk

against a clear sky. The woman finds a feather, then a fern,
pressing them until vane and frond become bone-white.

A book like this can only be written so many times,

reading it like looking at death. Be prepared to bring the light
back. Go into a tomb, stand there for a while, contemplate

the body, shadows against the shroud. You won't forget this:
the tomb, its coolness on your skin, darkness an act of creation.

Come out and your skin, too, will have become a kind of telling.

Everything you do when you're trans is a performance (honey water)

River Ian Kerstetter

PERFORMANCE 1

A trans girl walks to the drugstore to buy makeup. She's been researching for hours. She finds everything on her list. She gets ice cream, too, because she feels like celebrating. When she gets to the cash register her card declines. She just checked, there should be enough. She asks if she can leave the ice cream. The cashier has to get someone to undo everything. She wonders if the people behind her are wondering why someone with a beard is buying makeup. She wonders why makeup is so fucking expensive. Her card declines again. Her insides collapse but she's practiced for this, she's been here before, she lifts her chin and tells the cashier she has to leave. The cashier calls her supervisor back, to undo everything.

PERFORMANCE 2

You and your roommates decide to renew the yard. You begin to pull weeds out of the soil one by one. Music plays. It's a warm summer day. You three women speak about home. Of caring for things. Of how the soil in Chicago is too poisoned these days to grow food in. Of building a bed above the ground to grow food in. You pull weeds faster, loosening the dirt and cradling the roots like bones, like your mother taught you. Because if you just chop the tops off, the roots will keep living. You find a family of millipedes. You find garbage. You find a big red spider. You find lemon balm growing feral and it makes the air smell like medicine. The weeds pile up and one of your roommates builds a garden bed with a child-sized drill. Your other roommate tells you she's afraid of bees. The neighbor pokes his head over the fence. Tells you women that you shouldn't be doing that. It'll never work. The compost and the vegetables will bring rats.

He brings himself into your yard to tell more about the rats. Your roommate asks him to leave and he doesn't leave until he's done telling you about the rats. He leaves and the yard is quiet. *Look what we made*, your roommate says.

PERFORMANCE 3

You are walking home and thinking about the word *steward*. It feels old-fashioned and powerful. Like the words *witch* and *healer*. Under a lavender bush you see a worker bee on the ground. She isn't flying but she's still alive. She reacts to your presence. You rush home, thinking of what she might need. Water? Sugar? Honey? You get out the honey you've had for years, the ultrasweet kind that a beekeeper back home only harvests every few years from clover crops planted to recharge the soil. It's for when you miss home, or need recharging. You drop a blob of it into a jar of water and shake. You hope the bee won't get sick from this strange honey. When you get back to the lavender bush the bee is gone. You look everywhere. You wanted to help. You look at the jar of honey water in your hand and wonder, do *bees need rest sometimes*.

from Sutures

Melissa Eleftherion

Author's note: These are remixed poems. Source text: McGuire, Seanan. Indexing, North, 2013.

Third Suture

I didn't smile

I was busy

with my public

lips

my dominance

display

Temper my only

means

of agency

Fourth Suture

her axe fell
there were flesh and
dreams
my
blurred mouth
the sudden skin of words
the filling in of
footsteps
her hand exposed
a snapping crowd
world broke open the

Eighth Suture

The
girls

wore

their

skulls

like

a swelling bosom

Twentieth Suture

I

clamped

down

He grabbed my wrists

lips form the word no

bit by bit

instrument

I

birdcall

nausea

song

Bodies

Trisha Kostis

It was the rendezvous at the train station. I'm fairly sure you had prior plans, but, for the life of me, I can't remember what they were. Somehow, you found the time for depravity. You schemed and planned and got me ready with a phone call and a promise of a pleasure rush not all that different from that first flush of dope in the vein. It was strange and pitifully exhilarating to drive across town naked but for my leather coat and the heater cranked to keep me warm against the New Jersey winter cold. I couldn't smoke enough cigarettes on that twenty-minute drive.

You were fine-looking back then. You fancied yourself a Paul McCartney knockoff, but you were sexier than any anemic and anorexic Brit rocker. More than looks, you had moxie and swagger and the pulp inside to back it up. It's what supported your cool. It's what kept me pliable and bound to you.

It's irrelevant what I looked like because how I saw myself was never going to square with what you saw or what anyone else saw for that matter. But, evidently, I looked good enough to you. Good enough for what you had in mind.

You told me to meet you in the stall of the men's room.

"I'll be there around 12:00. Wear nothing but your leather coat. Wait for me in the last stall."

"This is a little unsettling," I said.

"Take another Xanax."

I chewed a few more Diazepam just to temper the crazy, thinking I might just have a seizure while waiting in that stall for you. There is arousal, and then there is the frenzy. That's where you took me.

I had to harness every spark of bravado to walk in that bathroom and past the sallow faces of the two or three underworld dwellers that haunted the train station men's room at midnight. I was counting on the impotence of junkies and drunks to keep me from harm—and your speedy arrival. I'd timed it so I wouldn't be in there more than a few minutes. One grizzled old bum looked mildly amused as

he washed his hands and watched me enter the stall. I locked the door behind me and leaned against the cold metal wall.

You liked to fuck. And you were so very good at it. One of the only men I ever knew who didn't much care for blowjobs, you liked to quickly dispense with foreplay in favor of using your cock to get us both off. You were strong enough and big enough to hoist me and hold me and still easily ram yourself into me without ever losing your balance. You didn't make a lot of noise, but your shallow spastic grunts always made me swell and throb. When I got too loud, you placed your hand over my mouth but that never worked to silence me, and you knew it. It was merely theatrics.

You dug into me from behind, and my breath caught, and my legs buckled, and you knew I was coming so you pushed my face against the metal door and twisted my hair in your hands. You always came when I did. You said I vibrated and pulsed with such intensity that you couldn't hold back, even if you tried. I remember thinking that was love, that unique synchronicity. I thought we were special. I thought your cock and my cunt were meant for each other and surely your heart would follow.

But you peeled away from me quickly. You started talking about everything other than what had just happened. You gave me no time to languish in "afterglow" or post-coital euphoria. You would have thought that a romantic indulgence unworthy of us both, even after ten years. Mere minutes had passed before you were talking about your fiancé.

"I can't believe Hayley won't take my calls. She cancels on me all the time. I do it this one time, and she shuts me out."

You expected me to respond as the supportive friend and I switched roles quickly, knowing that we would not be engaging in any sentimentality. We were in "buddy mode," and I had spoken all these lines before.

I followed you out of the bathroom and through the train station. It wouldn't take you long to revive and once we reached the car and you remembered how naked

I still was beneath the coat, you would be ready to go again. You were indefatigable in those days, before cocaine or Viagra. It made me feel like medicine, like a remedy.

“Were you supposed to go out with her tonight?” I asked.

“I told you that yesterday. We had that thing with the priest; what’s it called?”

“Pre-Cana?”

“That’s it.”

“You blew that off?”

“No. I went to that. I blew off the dinner with her parents afterward.”

“I’m touched.”

“She’ll bitch for a few days, but she’ll get over it. She always does.”

Our rendezvous at the adult bookstore was seedier and infinitely more exciting. The three-way with Jane, our co-worker from the video store, feels like an old MTV video in my memory—all grainy and washed out. Somewhere tucked inside that memory is a ridiculous and inexplicable abundance of love and affection. I couldn’t trust you to not break my heart. I knew you would leave me off at my car that night and drive off to meet your Hayley. I knew all of this, and it hurt like a bomb blast.

But, I also knew you would always come back. You would always create and compose with me the little pieces we both lived to perform. I knew that even in your impending marriage, you could never duplicate what we had with her or anyone else and that much like our shared dependence on alcohol and pharmaceuticals, the gravitational pull of our increasingly disturbing couplings would not diminish or wane. You would think of me when such thoughts were most inopportune and find yourself distracted by real or imagined images bursting into your consciousness unbidden.

You would have to hide inappropriate tumescence and jerk off in secret places until you had beaten back the titillating memories.

It may have seemed, to my loved ones, a sad and tawdry excuse for a relationship. I would have proclaimed my love for you to anyone within earshot—and convinced them. But you were the one I needed to convince and, it turns out, I was using all the wrong body parts for that.



Be Kind to Animals

Kelly Boyker

She finally sleeps with her first meat-eater.
Her meat-eater is charming and tastes delicious
in only the way a body that consumes
the flesh of others can taste.

The hunger is reciprocal. She does not
second-guess his passion or doubt his mouth.
She does not cringe when he vanishes
between her legs. No picky vegetarian
even his apertures reveal claws.

Sometimes, as he sucks the marrow
from her bones, he states he “loves” it.
Not her, only the act. Just the verb
and not the noun. She, the noun
is interchangeable.

It is the action he desires
a motion that can be achieved anywhere,
with any number of nouns.

His breath sparks brushfires instead of lanterns.
The bed sheets reek of fever.

Of course, the meat-eater leaves her.
She tells him she “loves” him and the air fills with ash.
They have been living in two different stories.
She is the calf fattened in the barn
he is the farmer who strokes
but never names.

She opens the oven and inhales thunder.
Later she grills a short loin to rarity
on the fire irons as she recites his crimes.
She is nameless. She is coal and smoke.
She is pure verb.

I Didn't Know I Wasn't A Horse

Jenny Della Santa

I left hoof prints in the garden gravel

I had a thoroughbred figure
coat-worn & unbrushed

I wasn't ill, just failing
meat-weak
malnourished
temporarily unsound

I never bucked a saddle
No one broke me
I was gentled instead

Soft in the rein
twirling the bit
with my wide pink tongue

A slender braided lock
across my forehead
I bent my neck
into the turns

I grazed, carried
the ache, half-lidded
against sun-blush days
I held my gait

Third

Jenny Della Santa

I refused her a shadow once
& lay down my apology
in looped lullabies
a chain of beads, strung tightly
a curtain of bone on bone

I placed her, little sticky ball of gum
inside a pocket
until she hardened into rust

I traced her, jagged curve of scar
under my finger
until she rounded into pearl

I sent her out on the backs of birds
Eyelet wings sifting her scent
until the trail of her was lost

& when I escaped the darkness
of the girl I had been
I called her back into me
a long bright limb unfurling

Ruth Moore Dreaming

Jefferson Navicky

She surprised herself with how easy it was to lie, and how good she was at it. She'd come up with it all on the drive, and she stuck to her story: she was Tina Gillis's grandniece and she was going to stay the winter on Gotts Island in the family house, the Ruth Moore homestead; yes, the family knew about it; yes, she was good with a boat; yes, she knew about the tides; yes, yes, and more yes. It wasn't all lies.

She arrived on a slate gray November day. The grass paths of the village had died back to brown. She'd been rash to leave little Richie with his father, she knew, but in order for her to have done it, the decision had to be impulsive. Joe could learn, Joe had to learn, Joe needed to know what it was like.

She needed silence to fall around her.

She'd heard the Gillises left the Ruth Moore house open, as almost all the houses on Gotts, and indeed it was. She ascended the steep stairs to the room above the kitchen with the view straight down to the dock, Ruth Moore's former bedroom. Maybe they'd find her here, frozen to death, when the Gillises opened the house in June (she smiled at the Grimm version of Goldilocks). Maybe Joe would find her and come out to get her (she wouldn't go back with him). Maybe she'd drown in an ill-advised crossing (that would be a shame and a relief). Maybe they'd track her and send out some bounty hunter (she'd make him her lover. Or she'd kill him). All the possibilities began to wear her out, so she sat down at the desk in that small room, and waited to see what would come.

The man on the radio says be
the tenth caller to win

alex stolis

Thought I knew where I was: in bed, warm under covers,
asleep but not quite. It was a dream. I was watching some
one who looked like me. Watched someone who looked like
you wrap her arms around me, kiss my shoulder; watched
what looked like the sky turn a brilliant blue; the almost me
and the almost you made love. The brilliant blue turned into
a seascape. The phone rang, an old school rotary, the almost
me ignored it. The almost you smiled, said it was time to go.
I wait to wake up, patient, certain in my unknowing.

Excerpt from Southbound Bride's "The Newlywed Shoe Game"

Michele K. Johnson Huffman

20. *Who is a better dresser?*

The silverfish in your mind tries on *fishmoth*, *sweet scavenger*, *flat gleam*, *lepisma saccharina* turning in the looking glass of your thoughts as each name is pulled up around the shoulders and then discarded. If we could only understand, name the thing, we could outfit it with a pair of wings.

9. *Who is more creative?*

instead of saying *this is how it is* we
explicate translate
throw a little light on
shed some
inner layer of crisp shell

linger over mixed
media depictions of *going*
all the way and bend our necks
tilt our heads back
take in the known glint

wipe sand from our eyes

41. *Who is funnier?*

I like platitudes, you like plateaus. I like punctuality, you like puns. I like to hear you laugh until your breath is weedy and your cheeks ache and I raise my eyebrow to ask *are you finished* and you cannot nod just yet. I like this. You like this.

32. *Who has a better sense of style?*

it may be the weather wears me

the brain buzz of green the hum
of a low-slung cloud

we can hold it up
see ourselves
and nothing else

27. *Who is the bigger homebody?*

Two moths on the porch, stout, fuzz-mottled, call you to witness their haphazard flapping.
The crook of my arm fills with your own. We say we should shoo them away, stay their buzzy
execution, but (you would say *there's always a but*) instead you turn, incline your head, and
aim your lips to brush my neck.

42. *Who is a better dancer?*

summarily we jive we cast it out there
and hope to bring each other in
what you ask *is the difference*
between bait and chum
and *why* you ask *did we come*
to the water

The Promise

Kate LaDew

“You must be very, very quiet here, people are reading,” said the old woman to the little boy.

But the little boy’s shoes squeaked and everyone in the library turned to look at him. And all the words in all the heads of all the people reading jumped into the air, and the pictures the words had drawn lit up the room, flashing them like blinking Christmas lights on the walls and the ceiling and all the pictures moved and lived and breathed together and became a giant world tumbling around itself, spinning faster and faster. Ten times faster than the earth and in no time at all the little boy was an old man and all alone in the library. 100 years had passed before he blinked his eyes and finally stopped all the Christmas lights, freezing them mid-breath on the walls and ceiling.

And a young woman walked into the library with a little girl by her side. And the old man who had once been a little boy put a finger to his lips and kneeled on his creaky knees next to the little girl and said, “You must be very, very quiet here, though no one is reading. The words that used to live are waiting for you to dream them back to breathing. Take off your shoes and follow me.”

And the little girl put her hand in his and they walked to the bookshelves and picked up the first book they found and when the first sentence of the first page entered the little girl’s mind it walked down to the edges of her heart and its beating flung the words up onto the walls and the ceiling and the old man who once was a little boy said, “Don’t forget. Tell everyone who opens that door.”

And the little girl nodded in her bare feet and said, “I promise.”



An Adopted Korean Girl's Poem about Female Friendship

Bo Schwabacher

— *For Amy*

Reclaiming

a love for
friendship

and making
envelopes,

we sparkle
just a

little. Talk
to me

about Vietnam, the
forgiveness and Pho.

My little
girl invites

you into
Cedar Cafe.

Survivor of my childhood,

I stand
for a

photo
under

a sign
for brown
rice. I'm thinking of

how
vulnerable

we are. There's an orange kite
floating closer

towards us.

Silences of Isaac

Dan Alter

& how am I after all these years a father
when I wake up Rain not falling pollen drifts
the city settling over what I can't say

A bus sighs past The clematis has climbed
my neighbor's roof all night Its silence reminds me
of calling all morning but can't get through

The strategies of ants too come down to this
way one continues within the many & I
got up early enough to still not say it

Humans squandered in increments of stop & go
Mold whitens shrivels leaves of what is that tree
called each suspended as daylight arrives

What could Isaac say after the machine of that
story used him Some silence is not God it's just
being locked up in your head Before dawn our

ancestors are already working In that
version Ishmael this one Isaac Either way
a shrug stone-colored footsteps the sun coming up

Contributors

Dan Alter's poems have been published in journals including Burnside Review, Field, Fourteen Hills, Pank, and Zyzzyva. He lives with his wife and daughter in Berkeley and makes his living as an electrician. He holds an MFA from Saint Mary's College. He can be found online at <https://danalter.net/>.

Kelly Boyker's poetry has appeared or shall appear in many places, including Waxwing, PANK, Prick of the Spindle, FRiGG, Opium Magazine, and others. Her work has been included in print anthologies in the U.S.A. and Canada. She was nominated for Best New Poets and has received Pushcart and Best of the Net Nominations. Her chapbook *Zoonosis* (Hyacinth Girl Press) was listed as one of the best sixteen poetry books published in 2014 by Entropy Magazine. In her free time she enjoys tending to and baking with wild yeast, and gaming.

Brian Clifton drives an hour to campus. He thinks traffic can be soothing. His work can be found in: Pleiades, Guernica, Cincinnati Review, Salt Hill, Prairie Schooner, The Journal, Beloit Poetry Journal, and other magazines. He is an avid record collector and curator of curiosities.

Jenny Della Santa has an MFA from Mills College. She writes, works, lives and swims in Oakland, CA, with her husband and young daughter. Her work can be found in ROOMS and Palette Poetry.

Melissa Eleftherion grew up in Brooklyn. She is the author of *field guide to autobiography*, & six chapbooks: *huminsect*, *prism maps*, *Pigtail Duty*, *the leaves the leaves*, *green glass asterisms*, & *little ditch*. She lives in Mendocino County where she manages the Ukiah Library, teaches creative writing, & curates the LOBA Reading Series.

Michele K. Johnson Huffman completed her MFA in Poetry from George Mason University and has a BA in English from St. Mary's College of Maryland. She currently teaches Literature and Writing at High Point University in North Carolina. Her poetry has appeared in Flock, OVS Magazine, THRUSH Magazine, the Ampersand Review, the Ucity Review, and elsewhere.

River Ian Kerstetter is a non-binary, queer artist and writer of Onlayota'a:ka (Oneida) and European-American heritage, who grew up in central New Mexico and now lives in Chicago. River received their MFA from Columbia College Chicago, and they are a co-founder of the art collective PansyGuild.

Trisha Kostis is a writer and Chef who spends the bulk of her time running a misfit crew of cooks and servers in Seattle.

Hannah Kroonblawd is a PhD student at Illinois State University, where she teaches creative writing and composition, works in the Publications Unit, and tests out an abundance of slow-cooker recipes. Recent poetry and prose can be found in Blue Earth Review, Outlook Springs, South Dakota Review, and Radar.

Kate LaDew is a graduate from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro with a BA in Studio Art. She resides in Graham, NC with her cats Charlie Chaplin and Janis Joplin.

ali lanzetta is a woolgatherer, writer, and bookseller who lives between trees and sleeps under blankets of books. Her publications can be found at alilanzetta.com. ali is enamored with giraffes, whose hearts are over two feet long, but she currently lives in Vermont, which is mostly filled with little birds.

Jefferson Navicky is the author of *The Book of Transparencies* and *The Paper Coast*. He works as the archivist for the Maine Women Writers Collection, teaches English at Southern Maine Community College, and lives on the coast of Maine with his wife and puppy.

Nicole Oquendo is a multimodal creator, editor, and witch. They are the author of five chapbooks and a hybrid memoir, as well a visual poetry collection that's looking for a home. They are dealing with this prolonged moment of crisis by writing thinly-veiled speculative fanfiction. Follow them on Twitter @nicoleoq.

Laura Salgarolo is an illustrator, bookmaker, printmaker, and storyteller. Much of her work draws from fairytales, mythology, and fantasy, and the transformations of those stories across time and culture. She collects elements of familiar tales to rework and retell through a balance of words and images.

Bo Schwabacher's poems have appeared in Cha, Eleven Eleven, Foundry, Pretty Owl Poetry, The Offing, and others. She teaches at Northern Arizona University.

alex stolis lives in Minneapolis; he has had poems published in numerous journals. Recent chapbooks include Justice for all, published by Conversation Paperpress (UK) based on the last words of Texas Death Row inmates. Also, Without Dorothy, There is No Going Home from ELJ Publications. Other releases include an e-chapbook, From an iPod found in Canal Park; Duluth, MN, from Right Hand Pointing and Left of the Dial from corrupt press. The full length collection, Postcards from the Knife Thrower was runner up for the Moon City Poetry Prize in 2017. His chapbook, Perspectives on a Crime Scene was recently released by Grey Border books. <http://greyborderbooks.jigsy.com/alex-stolis>

