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HAMLET'S COOK'S SOLILOQUY

To soak, or not to soak: that is the question:
Whether 'tis browner in the pan to float on
the slips and slidings of a medium burner
or to fry hard amid a sea of butter,
to carmelize but yet stay soft in the center,
al hot and crunchy-chewy; to fry, sautée,
no, more – and by sautéeing say we end
the gooeyness and the thousand natural oozes
French toast is heir to, 'tis a consummation
devoutly to be wish'd. To fry, sautée,
sautée: perchance to burn: ay, there's the rub;
for in that heated pan what burns may come
when we have turned too high the electric coil
or gaseous flame that makes calamity;
for who would bear the sears and chars and scorches
before the late fork's prong's turning prod,
the hesitating wrist, the spatula's delay,
who would fingers bare and say ow! ow!
and grunt and suck their heated digits
but that the hope of something left,
the undiscovered middle from which burned
black flakes are rasped, and looks all right,
and makes us rather eat these ones we have
than mix another batch and start again?
Thus laziness makes scrapers of us all;
And thus the naive view of excellence
is sicklied o'er with oh it's good enough,
and meals of great taste and fond enjoyment
with this regard their currents turn awry
and lose the name of breakfast.

MARCUS BALES

HAMLET'S COOK'S SOLILOQUY
MARK MANSFIELD

The Last House on the Shore

There’s only one small room
upon its topmost floor,
the last house on the shore
out past the end of town.

From its white turret crown,
her small face peeks some days
to watch a sail or swan,
or ice stilling the Bay.

Mostly, its shades stay drawn
from year to passing year.
And what “folks say ‘round here”
much like the tourists’ stares

only comes so near
her room, since no one dares
to knock on her front door,
or likely even cares.
ANN KEITH

SONNET: “Love is the only object...”

Love is the only object. That is true.
And love is bliss. And severance is pain.
And one soul of itself may not attain
Forever to that goal. There must be two.

Each must seek out another being who
Has understood the dream and shares the same
Desire to be transmuted in the flame,
And to the same degree. Such hearts are few.

And hard to gauge. And difficult to meet.
So this is not an object we can seek
With conscious efforts, systematically –

Yet he who takes some other deity
And sets himself another lesser goal
Has lost that hope of heaven for his soul.
MARCUS BALES

The Feet

Retail salesmen on their feet,
   Painful feet;
Oh what a world of anguish comes from reinforced concrete.
   How they bitch and moan and squabble
   In the break room in the back
   Though no grunt nor groan nor sob’ll
   Pass their lips as off they hobble,
As you see them straighten, striding to attack,
   With their smiles smiles smiles
   As they walk their weary miles
Through a million I’m just looking’s from the customers they greet
   On their feet, feet, feet, feet, feet, feet,
On their archless, bunioned, corned, and callused feet.

See the salesmen on their feet –
   Well-shod feet –
With orthotics, gels, and cushions, some that cool and some that heat.
   See the salesmen as they’re feigning
   That their pain will go away;
   Watch the smile that’s slowly waning
   As the customer’s explaining
That the item is just perfect but it can’t be bought today.
   Oh how silently they curse
   As the client packs her purse
And repeats that she’ll be back because the salesman’s been so sweet
   On their feet, feet, feet, feet, feet, feet,
Their eleven-hour work-day aching feet.

Then they walk with lagging feet
   Laggard feet:
The manager has called them to his comfortable retreat
   Where they’ll find that he is docking
   Them, the thing all salesmen dread,
   When delivery went knocking
They had found the client balking
At the timing or condition or they’ve changed their minds instead;
   And the manager is yelling
   At such goddamned over-selling
And to get it back together or be put out on the street
   On their feet, feet, feet, feet, feet, feet,
On their over-promising under-performing feet.

Once at home they soak their feet
   Swollen feet
Then put them on the hassock while they find the strength to eat
   From the meal they bought while sitting
   In the drive-thru in their car –
   And they do not mind admitting
   That they know it isn’t fitting
But they just can’t stand to stand; another stride’s a stride too far;
   They don’t even walk upstairs
   They just fall asleep in chairs
While they dream they’ve got a job where they are working from a seat
   Not their feet, feet, feet, feet, feet, feet,
Not their not-yet-rested unrecovered feet.

They will not admit defeat
   About their feet;
They massage and wash and shoe them whether plus-size or petite.
   As they limp about preparing
   For another working day
   With their rheumatism flaring
   You can hear them softly swearing
While they get their heads around another entry to the fray.
   When they get out on the floor
   You can’t even tell they’re sore
They’re so friendly, smiling, chatting, reassuring, and discreet
   On their feet, feet, feet, feet, feet, feet,
On their you would never know it hurts them feet.
The Song of the Lyre

Every bud, every blossom that swings
To the ripple of wind, every droplet,
That separately trembles and clings
At dawn to the strands of the cobweb
Or falls from the flickering wings
That rustle the leaves of the forest,
Every reed of the riverbed sings.
And the moon and the stars and the planets,
That move in their patterns and orbits,
Are lost in the webbing of voices,
Are lapped in the music that rings
And throbs through the fabric of things,
The shimmering song of the seven
Ceaselessly echoing strings,
The seven
Strings of the infinite lyre

For the voices and colours are seven.
Through snowflake and dewdrop they shine,
Reflecting the bands of the rainbow –
And the rainbow reflects the divine.

The colors of light and the voices
Are seven. The world is a prism.
And out of the coral and crystal
Is mirrored the snow and the star.

The arc of the rainbow that bridges
The earth and the sky is the image
And cosmical pattern all things
Above and below it that are.
Aunt Rose

Young ladies in their rubber bathing caps
swim measured strokes across the basement pool
of the Barbizon Hotel. Not an ear, not a curl
is visible. Their strong-legged kicks resound
as Aunt Rose shows me geometric wall tiles
and ropes of floaters bobbling between lanes.
We stroll next door where blue-clad Peter Rabbit
looks up at me from glossy-coated paper
pressed, bound, and cut. His mouse friends sort bright beads.
A kitten nearly gets baked in a dumpling.
With this month's new book in a crinkly package,
Aunt Rose takes my small hand and walks me back
to her own lobby shop, joining my mother
amid the shelves of thin-boxed shiny nylons.
The dried-off swimmers march in on high heels,
them out again. How straight their stocking seams!
Rose isn't my real aunt but one whose nephew
died in the Navy during World War II,
leaving a girl who would have been his bride.
The young girl pulled together, studied art,
got a job, went to a dance, and found a husband.
They had two baby girls whose ties to Rose
are echoed splashes, chlorine-rubber air,
mosaic tiles, beige silk, synthetic mesh,
and stubby books whose sweet aroma floats
through and around me as I fan the pages.
Parallel

To my brother

A skier like a poet fears and yearns
and onto white expanses casts his lot.
A poet like a skier carves his turns
and punctuates his progress dot by dot.
Like me you think the classic form is best
for sinuous resistance to decline.
Like you I leave behind a palimpsest
as each new version seeks the perfect line.
But while your runs bring you to level snow
with certainty that you will rise anew,
mine sometimes take me into depths below
where whiteness has a dread and lifeless hue
unless you catch me, stop my headlong fall,
and make me heed again the mountain's call.
LOIS WILLIAMS

Ceanothus

*If you see a tree as blue, then make it blue.* – Paul Gauguin

Bees love them. Some folk call them Californian Lilac, which sounds like a paint colour for upstairs and not the blue botanical stunner everybody doubletakes and rubbernecks and walks backwards from because you can’t help looking at this freakshow flowering / this landgrown undertow pulling you by the eyes to another Eden where it’s all Miles all the time. Kind of Blue but bluer: perennial melancholy with a cobalt lining, but it’s not all sad, it’s bluebirds updrafting the eithersides of storms, Biba disco eyeshadow, the blue wool in Neruda’s socks.

Best to see them early spring, big as gazebos on lawns the size of credit cards. Better still to sit under their leaves and stare up at a second sky. Even the painters put away their brushes, knowing barely how to start: what on earth could grow so lovely and so strange and live among us? Look: until there’s proof of heaven here’s the sun, each blue spark, chasing all the thunder.
CATHERINE CHANDLER

Ballad of the *Picton Castle*

– in memory of Laura Gainey

Captain’s Log, Barque *Picton Castle*, Tuesday, December 5th, 2006:
*Our first day at sea just fine, and while the moon leaves a wonderful sparkling light on the
dark sea we look forward to our sunny and warm days, not too far away anymore.*

The *Picton Castle*, built in Wales
in nineteen twenty-eight,
was a simple fishing trawler then,
though named for a grand estate.

Commissioned and refitted,
she would bear the Union Jack
and sweep for mines near Norway
where she drove the Germans back.

Next, christened as the *Dolmar*,
she hauled heavy freight with ease,
and for the next five decades
worked the North and Baltic Seas.

Once more the *Picton Castle*,
after much cost and travail,
as a tall three-masted barque she’d teach
young mariners to sail.

The master had a business plan
and deadlines will not wait –
his ship must reach Grenada
by a predetermined date.
The long-range forecast wasn’t good —
although the sea seemed tame —
it called for adverse weather
but she made sail just the same.

She left the port of Lunenburg
with twenty-nine aboard,
December 5th, 2006,
advisories ignored.

There was a single lifeboat moored
yet not one signal flare;
a missing cook whose full-time tasks
the twelve-man crew must share.

No safety nets were rigged above
the bulwarks, for the swell —
the captain thought — though rough enough,
would only last a spell.

An inland soul can’t comprehend,
unless she goes to sea,
the pure exhilaration
of unbridled liberty.

And Laura loved to climb the mast
to watch the royal unfurl;
she’d finally found the joy in life
she lost once, as a girl.

Two days out, the winds picked up,
the Picton Castle rolled
and pitched in seven-meter seas.
Belowdecks, in the hold,
sixteen fearful trainees prayed
their lives would all be spared;
4 p.m., states Laura's log,

*The crew are sick and scared.*

The bo's'n later on declared
how, earlier that day,
he’d gripped the captain, whom a wave
had nearly washed away.

*In twenty hours, two hours of sleep,*

lead seaman Gainey wrote;
she’d lashed down sea chests, cooked for hours,
secured the storm-tossed boat.

At 8 p.m., amid the tempest's
howling, raging power,
Laura was told to rest, but also
ship checks on the hour.

The rear deck, as a rule, is safe
in wild, inclement weather,
and rarely will a deckhand wear
a harness or a tether.

But this was a mid-Atlantic gale
where Gulf Stream currents crossed
head-on with wind-blown waves until
the *Picton Castle*, tossed,

and rolling heavily to port,
took on a rogue so steep
that Laura, drained though dutiful,
was swept into the deep.
For hours they heard her cries for help, and nearly three days passed before Coast Guard and merchant ships gave up the search at last.

Many years have now gone by since that dark and fateful day; the *Picton Castle*’s setting sail from Wharengaere Bay.

She’ll head for Pitcairn Island, catch the South Pacific breeze; New Zealanders will wish her well: *Fair winds and following seas!*

But the latitude and longitude south-southeast of Cape Cod where Laura lies is known to none except Almighty God.
J. D. SMITH

Bocca della Verità

Though twenty years have passed, the memory still lingers of testing tourist lore. I really miss those fingers.
Suddenly

Suddenly the kids, the car,
the house, the spouse, the local bar,
the work, have made you what you are.
What doesn't chill you makes you fonder.

Should you stay or should you go?
The thrill you're looking for, you know,
could be right here at home, although
what doesn't thrill you makes you wander.

If, avoiding common truth,
you dye your hair and act uncouth,
will you find your misplaced youth –
really, will you if you're blonder?

It doesn't matter if you're strong
or if you sing a pretty song,
something, and it won't be long,
will come to kill you, here or yonder.

You're human in the human fray,
and choose among the shades of grey.
No matter if you go or stay
what might fulfill you makes you ponder.
BRIAN STANLEY

Fever

He sits there, past endeavouring,
his homework due at next day's bell
a tentatively started shell
on which his name, and mine, appears.

He's still there, hedged by fifty years,
his thoughts too atomized to jell,
his eyes closed as blue curtains swell
to let in sweet, confounding spring.
Dead Is The Dream

Dead is the dream of lady, picket fence and house, and children brought to bless at the baptismal font; of local royalty and loyal, loving spouse. Goodbye, gold girl. Farewell, beloved debutante. How many well-fit years have you now worn and wasted like gowns at Mardi Gras – gowns tailored to a 'T,' like king cake left upon your silver plate, untasted, all for a shallow show of vain sorority? How many scholars' hearts and hopes shall you now alter, as their equations multiply, but answers falter? I count them with his truant teardrops, while they pass as bachelors in your black-robed, graduating class, and wonder at how much we waste, ourselves, on schools of party politics, producing learned fools.
GAIL WHITE

If She Comes Back

It won't be like Persephone returning,
bringing fertility, the grass, the grain,
but just our old disasters back again,
the conversations that were so like burning

yourself with cigarettes, until you find
the places that were burned have lost sensation,
the everyday reminders that the mind
has marshes, tarns, depths beyond revelation.

Why do I feel enduring so much grief
is just a privilege I gained by living
with someone shining like a lost belief
with love she seemed just on the verge of giving –

Unendingly she haunts my heart, my head.
Unlike Persephone, she isn't dead.
QUINCY R. LEHR

Mouvement Collectif

Elated, though I kind of feel like hell
on the 747 bus
winding through overpasses coiled as tight
as an electric magnet. Just as well
I'm leaving now. I might have stayed for years
in partial wish fulfillment, each of us
living in graffiti exile, fears
of new expensive jackets taking flight
like I am now, faithful, reluctantly,
to lease and love, to grocery bags and mail,
to bleatings of alarm clocks on my phone,
to staying off the pipe and out of jail,
to struggling toward the man I want to be
at home, with things to do, but not alone.
STELLA NICKERSON

Orange

He loves her like an orange bird that sings too early in the day. She checks her phone for other calls and swipes his messages away until her thumb is stained with white electron light. She thinks she may grow old and never be a bird – unfeathered, grounded, die that way.
GEORGE SZIRTES

Mottoes from Schnitzler

1
Talking is negotiation. Strike the deal
and go your way. Leave no grounds for appeal.

2
Innocence is a form of nagging. Lose
the pathos but be careful what you choose.

3
Sweet young bodies. See how they revolve
in the firmament. Zoom in and dissolve.

4
Cruelty is inevitable in the end.
A lover once can never be a friend.

5
What goes around comes around then goes.
The other side of your face. Your eyes. That nose.

6
Cynical? Me? Is that my eyebrow raised?
Certainly not. It’s just me looking dazed.

7
Would you prefer desire? Or call it lust?
I call it vertigo, or plain disgust.

8
Let’s break up the line. Let us instead stroll
around the park and talk about your soul.
9
I prefer a motto to a top hat. I prefer
an indiscretion. Leather perhaps. Or fur.

10
I’m going to sleep. I’m off to dream the light
inside my head where it is never night.
CONRAD GELLER

Let Me Be Old

Let me be old. There is no need to stay
beyond the welcome of the springing years,
and time's strict mandate warrants no delay.

Enough of anger at the world's foul play,
the bill for justice always in arrears.
Let me be old. There is no need to stay.

Enough of pious schemers. They betray
the easy fool who trembles when he hears
that time's strict mandate warrants no delay.

The feast is ending. Soon all guests will pay
for what they got, and what they lost, in tears.
Let me be old. There is no need to stay.

Enough of love – yes, even that. They say
that moonlight deepens when the morning nears,
but time's strict mandate warrants no delay.

Enough of language, too. There is no way
to make a liturgy from fading cheers.
I will be old. I do not want to stay
when time's strict mandate warrants no delay.
JOHNNY LONGFELLOW

Like Normal People Do

Ya’ ever wanna go someplace?
I mean...jus’ disappear.
Leave ev’rythin’. But, leave no trace.
Git your ass out o’ here
To somewhere – could be far or near –
Where you’re no longer you.
Where you can dwell, year after year,
Like normal people do.

Ya’ ever stare at your own face
But still can’t see it clear? –
Ya’ struggle hard jus’ keepin’ pace,
While neighbors, they all steer
‘Tween college, marriage, an’ career,
‘Til – somehow coastin’ through –
They barbeque, an’ drink col’ beer
Like normal people do...

Ya’ ever think they won that race,
But still, fall prey to fear
Them dreams ‘n’ rainbows they all chase,
Once gone, won’t reappear?
Or, do they jus’ choke back each tear
As one beer turns to two,
Findin’ it’s Hell to persevere
Like normal people do?

Ya’ see? You ain’t the first to veer
Off course. That much is true.
Or, last to lose all you hol’ dear
Like normal people do.
To an Abandoned Euphonium Case

for Don

You once held yards of shiny looping brass along with breath-defying aspirations to play somewhere besides the halftime grass – but no Wagnerian reverberations attest to the fulfillment of such dreams. Instead, a whiff of Sousa-weary sweat infests your once-plush lining, where extremes of still-bright red and moldy black have met, naïve ambition stalked by time and weather within a rotting shell that cannot say why instrument and case are not together, or if there’s anything still left to play. It’s obvious that you don’t know the score; you’ll soon be tossed out, noteworthy no more.
GEORGE SZIRTES

Illicit: A Dream Story

by way of Arthur Schnitzler

1

The mouth is cruel but the eyes are open.  
The eyes drink as the mouth speaks.  
The hands are busying themselves elsewhere.  
This is the way things happen.  
This is the way a morning breaks.  
This is night. Here is the ambient air.

2

Walking at night you catch a glimpse of calf  
and suddenly you are away, riding a carriage  
to the enchanted mansion with its crew  
of phantoms. You have failed at marriage,  
you have to construct another you  
to contend with. You are not your better half.

3

Who has not dreamt of a realm beyond  
the provisional, a nether region where things  
remain suspended for ever? You wake  
in the morning and it’s there before you, an ache  
that is not purely light, where nothing sings,  
where you touch the world and it doesn’t respond.

4

Your cupidity betrays you with its puns.  
You go out with a sabre fearing guns.  
Your pride is flagging, whip it into shape!
You contemplate a courtship but it’s rape.
You are both your own self and a slip
in language, a tongue without a lip.

5

You can turn the form round and see it
from all angles. It seems perfect does it
not? You can contain your senses in it.
What is bothering you now? What is it?
It won’t let you sleep? You are hot? It
is normal. Touch yourself. You’ve earned it.

6

We have delved ever deeper into the psyche. Consider
the evidence. This is a brittle time. The pavement
is cracking, the walls fragile. You have no heart
to speak of. Do you insist on talking of the heart?
Do you sincerely imagine that there is pavement
under your feet? Isn’t it time to reconsider?

7

The place goes mad as language. What is that noise
you keep hearing? Are people talking? Is the cafe
a hubbub of conversation? Is that a cliché
emerging from your mouth? What is that bubble
you keep blowing, the speech that annoys
and delights you? Are you well? Are you in trouble?

8

Everyone is suddenly desirable. The opposite sex
is something you dreamt up when you were unwell
one steamy night. The sexual engine is always
cruising the streets, it simply requires fuel.
You watch your fingers move and your mind stray
down a blind alley. It’s not your fault. It’s complex.
I am through with courtesy, he declared and made a rough move which she shut off with a sweep of her elegant hand. She touched him somewhere. She should take off that mask. He had played his hand, now let her play hers. It was unfair having to play this game while half asleep.

Act without passion. Move your cold desire into gear. Be vulnerable to the moon or what stands in for moon. Betray the confidence you promised to keep. Trust the finger-sense that negotiates both ice and fire. Let your eyes wander but keep your mouth shut.

Lie down on that couch and speak to me. Tell me anything you want. I’m listening. You don’t know me nor do I need your name. Let your mind roam the feral dark. Feel free to swear. Is that your sweat glistening in the dark? Is that shadow there your shame?

It’s time to pack away the uniform you’ve been wearing. Are you a medical man? Is that your rank? Are those your vital organs? This is your city. Here is the street plan of your desire. Here is the fierce storm of passion you’ve been saving. Invent a title.
JEAN FREE

Frankensonnet

Heavy misfortunes have befallen us, but let us only cling closer to what remains and transfer our love for those whom we have lost to those who yet live. – Mary Shelley

How would I reattach a love that’s yours
to someone else? Like plucked-off wings to stones
or puzzle pieces where they don't belong –
an oil sun jammed in a starry sky.
Our patterned certainties become unknowns:
I'd end another's sentences all wrong,
sing unrhymed untimed lyrics to a song
composed too late to memorize with you.
To transfer love is something I can't do.
I choose to love with no recipient –
an empty space I'd rather mourn than fill.
So maybe I'm the one who's Frankensteined,
numb parts of me assembled with a drill
and bolts, the heart beyond repair, resigned.
We draw constellations, not the stars. Strung up, they die for myths we’ve now grown distant from, but we trace them with our fingers anyway.

It’s meteors that shoot across, not stars: compulsive whims burn out. I cast my wishes there, as if the dying carry anything.

Our backs against the grass, you say the stars are stuck like pushed-in tacks and fall asleep. I watch a vicious line of fire cut the sky.
ANDREW PIDOUX

Homecoming

The garden’s quiet and furnished
With night’s upholstery.
The tree sleeps in its branches,
The branches in the tree.

It’s just as I remember it,
Before I caught the plane
Whose cockpit was this bedroom,
Whose runway was this lane.

When I closed these yellow books,
My adolescent eyes
Were caught between the pages
Like bloodless butterflies.

Now threadbare stairs go up to bed
Before me every night.
But I can’t sleep on pillows
That always dream of flight.
CHARLES HUGHES

October 1958

The Braves were in Milwaukee. Warren Spahn
Was a new name to me – I still can see
Him kick his right leg toward first base, then on
To home (“the prettiest delivery!”):

Left-handed; overhand; high kick but smooth;
Same motion every time; and finishing
(As if the hitters all outhit Babe Ruth)
Squared up, knees flexed, ready for anything.

Love – caught mumps-like in second grade. It was
Because of Spahn – because of Lew Burdette,
Hank Aaron, Eddie Mathews – and because
Miss Loomis idolized the Braves and let

Us listen to the first few innings of
Games one and two – that I willed a Braves win
That year. But no, they weren't quite good enough:
Yankees in seven. Back to class discipline.

This was the Cold War era. The next day,
Science had aged: we learned the atom bomb
And fission (in an elementary way).
The end of World War II could not have come

As early otherwise, Miss Loomis stressed;
Plus deaths were therefore fewer in the war,
By millions. “Everything is for the best,”
She said (comfort I hadn’t heard before).

That day, we also had an air-raid drill,
Involving crouching underneath our desks.
Recess redux – which, with its real-world thrill,
Dropped discipline in favor of burlesques.
Desks tipped and shoved to giggles. A soft rain
Of paper bombs (each shrilly marked by, “Boom!”).
Miss Loomis trying gamely but in vain
To squeeze herself into too little room.

She obviously felt a deep sense of duty.
She is – I’d say today – one reason I
Appreciate a kind of baseball beauty
And recognize a kind of grownup lie.
His commentary lacks the resonance that more mature sportscasters can project, but he knows all the stats, and has a sense of how timing and drama intersect. His observations are precise and clear, if sometimes less than true: he leaves out how the runner steals third oak, or has to veer around a sagging sugar maple bough. A hit to “right field” really lands next door; the pitcher waves off cats, not catchers’ signs; and games are called because of lunch. The score reports no siblings, so he redefines team spirit: makes the plays, and calls them, too, all by himself – and wins by making do.
The High and Clear

The mountain held us up into the high
and clear, where dying yellow grasses shook
and aspens hooked their branches in the sky.
The six of us, connected by a look,
said "La-de-da" or might as well have done.
The sun as weak as water on our bare
unbroken necks, we let our laughter run
up to the thinnest reaches of the air.

I'm somewhat older now and far less wrong
about most things. And yet I'd give my dour
and my dearest expectations, my strong
and struggling hopes, and these few scraps of power
if I could rip the weave of time along
a seam and step into that yellow hour.
CONTRIBUTORS

Not much is known about Marcus Bales except he lives in Cleveland, Ohio, and his poems have not appeared in Poetry or The New Yorker.

Mark Mansfield’s poetry has appeared in numerous journals, including Bayou, Blue Mesa Review, The Evansville Review, Fourteen Hills, Iota, The Ledge, Magma, Orbis, Salt Hill, and Unsplendid. He holds an M.A. in Writing from Johns Hopkins. Currently, he lives in upstate New York where he teaches.

Ann Keith’s poems have appeared in various magazines (Orbis, Eureka, Byline, Acumen and over eighty others) as well as in a number of anthologies.

A 2014 finalist for the Howard Nemerov Sonnet Award and 2013 semifinalist for the Anthony Hecht Poetry Prize, Claudia Gary writes, edits, sings, and composes tonal chamber music and art songs. She is author of Humor Me (David Robert Books 2006) and several chapbooks. Her poems appear in anthologies such as Forgetting Home (Barefoot Muse Press 2013) and Villanelles (Everyman Press 2012), as well as in journals internationally. Her articles on health appear in The VVA Veteran and other magazines. For more information, see http://www.pw.org/content/claudia_gary.

Brian Stanley was born in Madrid and educated in French until high school. His poems have been longlisted for The Montreal International Poetry Prize (2011) and published in The Literary Review of Canada and Encore. He lives in the Eastern Townships of Quebec.

Lois Williams is a writer and conservationist. Her poems and essays have appeared in many venues on both sides of the Atlantic, including Verse Daily, New England Review, Antiphon, Mslexia, and Granta. She lives in
Catherine Chandler was born in New York City, raised in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, and has lived and worked in Canada for many years. She has held the academic appointments of Spanish lecturer at McGill University's Department of Translation Studies where she also acted as International Affairs Officer. Winner of the Howard Nemerov Sonnet Award, she is the author of five books of poetry, including *Lines of Flight* (Able Muse Press, 2011) and *Glad and Sorry Seasons* (Biblioasis Press, Windsor, Ontario, 2014). Catherine currently divides her time between Saint-Lazare, Quebec, and Punta del Este, Uruguay.

J. D. Smith's third collection, *Labor Day at Venice Beach*, was published in 2012. *Notes of a Tourist on Planet Earth*, a humor collection including both poetry and prose, came out in March, 2013. He holds an M.A. from the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs at Carleton University.


She has received awards from The World Order of Narrative and Formalist Poets, and from *The Lyric*. She is the former editor of *Iambs and Trochees*, and was a mentor on faculty with the West Chester Poetry Conference. She lives in southern Louisiana with her husband, fiction writer Jason Reeser, and their children. Her website is located at jenniferreeser.com.

Gail White has appeared in several previous issues of *The Rotary Dial*. She is
a regular contributor to formalist poetry journals and has twice won the Howard Nemerov Sonnet Award. Her new book, *Asperity Street*, is now available on Amazon.

**Quincy R. Lehr**'s poems and criticism appear widely in North America, Europe, and Australia, and his most recent books are *Heimat* (2014) and *The Dark Lord of the Tiki Bar* (forthcoming, 2015). He lives in Brooklyn, where he teaches history.

**Stella Nickerson** studies engineering in Arizona. Her poetry has appeared in *Cicada, Strong Verse*, and *Strange Horizons*, and is upcoming in *Mezzo Cammin*. Links to her work can be found at stellanickerson.com.

**George Szirtes** was born in Budapest in 1948 and came to England as a refugee in 1956. He was brought up in London and studied Fine Art in London and Leeds. His poems began appearing in national magazines in 1973 and his first book, *The Slant Door*, was published in 1979. It won the Faber Memorial prize the following year. By this time he was married with two children. After the publication of his second book, *November and May*, 1982, he was invited to become a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. Since then he has published several books and won various other prizes including the T S Eliot Prize for *Reel* in 2005.

**Conrad Geller** has published more than a hundred poems, electronically and in print. His awards include the Charles E. Tuttle Prize, Bibliophilos Prize, and several awards from the Poetry Society of Virginia. A Bostonian, he now lives and writes in Northern Virginia.

**Johnny Longfellow** is a U.S. poet. Previous publications include *The Barefoot Muse*, *The Five Two*, and *Ppigpenn*. The editor of the online street-poetry site, *Midnight Lane Boutique*, he has served for nearly two decades as a mentor to Newburyport, MA, high school students through the Poetry Soup reading program and print journal.
**Jean L. Kreiling** is the author of the recently published collection, *The Truth in Dissonance* (Kelsay Books, 2014). Her work has appeared widely in print and online journals, including *American Arts Quarterly, Angle, The Evansville Review, Measure*, and *Mezzo Cammin*, and in several anthologies. Kreiling is a past winner of the String Poet Prize and the Able Muse Write Prize, and she has been a finalist for the Frost Farm Prize, the Howard Nemerov Sonnet Award, and the Richard Wilbur Poetry Award.

*Jean Free* lives in Baltimore, Maryland, with her nine-year-old daughter, and works at Johns Hopkins University where she earned a master’s degree in poetry. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in publications including *The Sewanee Theological Review, String Poet, The Raintown Review, Lines + Stars*, and *Contemporary Verse 2*.

**Andrew Pidoux** is the author of *Year of the Lion* (Salt, 2010) and winner of an Eric Gregory Award from the UK’s Society of Authors. Recent poems of his have appeared in *African American Review, Descant*, and *Punchnel’s*, stories in *Litro, Pennsylvania Literary Journal*, and *Stockholm Review of Literature*, and comics in *Forge, Star 82*, and *Wilderness House*.

**Charles Hughes** is the author of the poetry collection, *Cave Art* (Wiseblood Books, 2014). His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *America, The Anglican Theological Review, The Christian Century, Iron Horse Literary Review, The Rotary Dial, The Sewanee Theological Review, Think Journal*, and elsewhere. He worked as a lawyer for thirty-three years before his retirement and lives with his wife in the Chicago area. “January Evening, 10 P.M.” is reprinted by permission of Wiseblood Books; all rights reserved.