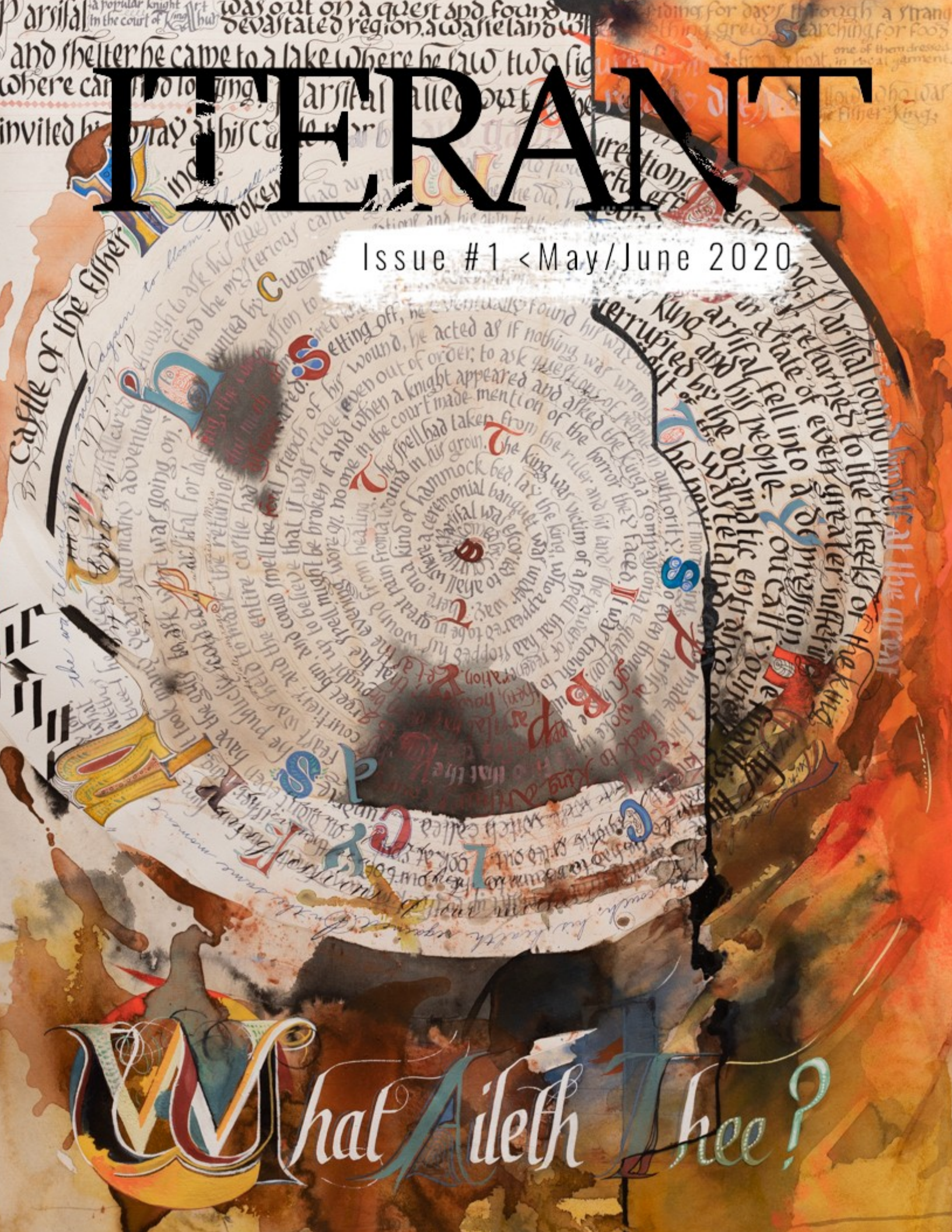


ITERRANT

Issue #1 < May/June 2020



What Aileth Hee?

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GAIA ILLUMINATION ROUNDS

CANDACE JENSEN

"The Gaia Illumination Rounds were produced at the Vermont Studio Center in Johnson, VT in residency, spring of 2019. The series consists of watercolor, herbs, earth pigments, gouache, gold leaf, and ink on recycled, deckled paper measuring approximately 8.5" in diameter. They feature automatic poetry in imagined landscapes, in response to essays on Gaia and globalism by the writer and cultural critic, Bruno Latour. The work 'Parzival' was also begun in residency at VSC, but later completed in the artist's home studio. The spiral lettering recreates exactly a pithy telling of the Arthurian grail legend by author and environmental activist Joanna Macy."

Nephews (4/1/2020)

Lauren Hunter

*in the great green room there was a telephone
ringing*

i'm singing an aria of hope
and abundant love
in the next room, or
down the hall
across the country
which feels especially as vast as it is. today

is a very special day. one month of this
wonder on my mind. and it's april fools,
a day of my heart, bursting. i pick up my
guitar, i pick up several pens. a tiny paintbrush. i can't get it
out. i can't get this across. deep day of love,
i wanna leave a gift. what can i say?

*you will believe in love
because i love you fiercely
and sweetly and with a hope that never falters.
i aim to reach out virtually because i cannot
tell you this in person: the night we met, i knew i'd,
never let you go. i've gotta tell the world
my heart has altered, i'm so
brand new. i think that it is wonderful,
my world is full of you.*

pandemic dream #7

Lauren Hunter

watching an olympic-style broadcast but it's also a telethon. people are posing as "unicorns" to raise money to save new york. the child in the house is watching and has a favorite contestant. we're busy cooking, so we aren't paying attention when she needs us to call in. we take too long while the child insists and whines and then we realize that it's a trap, and more calls release these "unicorns" from captivity. her favorite is screaming and crying on the telecast, and i suddenly hear scratching coming from under the cabinet. open the door and see the favorite, dead, just as the curry soup boils over on the stove. we can't let anybody know we're murderers.

from THE TALENTS

Lauren Hunter

&&

on tuesday i pull the knight of wands and pack my tiny suitcases. he's sure i can go the distance, dragging my luggage behind. what a hawk will tell me about moving in the world. i answer the phone but don't keep any reservations. how do i gather your ears close? hold your hands and guide reflection? i tried to beam myself to detroit from the bed this morning. a brown bird crossed my window and laughed. seemed to say, give up while you're guiltless. seemed to say, never let go of your heart.

&&

on tuesday i lose my nerve and stop calling my favorite voices. the two of cups spilling down. who am i to say what needs saying? a tender feeling i want to fight for but don't own. a gentle moment filled with barbs. what can my hands do with a tactless keyboard? who can i reach with my insignificant reasons? i empty a coffee cup, a water bottle. a jar of leave-in conditioner. please, give back the soft you had. please, love us for exactly who we truly are.

&&

on monday they tell me every cloud has a silver lining but it's just the three of swords. the shine of the blade crossing another. we clash together and part. we battle and hum. some glory in the inevitable but i am focused on the newly minted memories of my life instead. vibes on deck and a salty sea breeze—i don't have a way to say this terrible thing. you're right, and you're right, and everybody's sad. maybe it's time to get wrong and happy again.

Plague Blessing

Mark Leidner

Panicked disorientation in the predawn gray.

We steep the tea three times before throwing it away.

It is certain
every landscape vanishes into uncertainty.

It is impertinent
how therapeutic sunlight feels on your face.

The original purpose of a countdown was letting observers know when to cover their ears.

The last generation to remember life before the internet
giving birth to the last generation to remember when strangers could touch.

The worst thing I can think of is that as long as suffering gets worse in the future, the suffering of the past becomes instructive, even something one can be glad of having happened, since without its lessons the suffering to come would be even more painful, perhaps even unbearable; and yet, if suffering doesn't get worse than it currently is, then the current and past suffering (or whenever suffering was at its climax) becomes comparatively pointless. If life is good and only gets better, then one would have been better off without having suffered beforehand, and one is doomed, it seems, to drag the negative fruit of that suffering endlessly forward, sullyng the absence of suffering the future would otherwise be made of.

Every day you die a little bit, but up until the moment you're done dying, you're infinitely young.

Poetic language coalescing on extremities of feeling like frost on a window you wouldn't otherwise realize floated between you and the world.

"Since I am not connected to or affected by their suffering, I will go out and spend time among them." vs. "Since I am connected to and affected by their suffering, I will not go out and spend time among them."

Grief doesn't break your heart; it expands it. It breaks your brain; nature's whispered gibberish is suddenly intimate.

Every movie is the sequel to the movie you last saw and the prequel to the movie you see next, regardless of quality, regardless of genre. One cinematic saga per person per lifetime is created, curated continually with each movie you view no differently than a poet choosing the word that comes after the previous word and before the subsequent word to make a poem.

May wisdom's sweet resplendent light sweep the darkness and pain from the plain of your striving cognition.

May the cradle of nothingness hold the wilderness of you in its furious sway.

May you weep with the numinous delirium of those reborn who were born before.



SEE THE VALLEY AND NOT THE MOUNTAINS
GAIA ILLUMINATION ROUND

LOVE & WORK

—a song for all the tired people

Sampson Starkweather

Love and work is all we do
Work and love is all we do

There are so many kinds of love, hallelujah
There are so many kinds of work, hallelujah

Love and work is all we do
Work and love is all we do

There are so many kinds of love, goddamn
There are so many kinds of work, goddamn

Love is work
Work is love, sometimes

Even now
Love and work is all

POEM LIKE NOBODY'S WATCHING

Sampson Starkweather

light is the OG poet
lying and telling the truth
at the same time
like that
hope the future
is pleased
with these bleak leaked dreams
or so-called songs
to ease its erasure
ash-angels and all
love too cools
like an apple pie
on a windowsill
eat slow
sip your coffee or tea
let the concepts
that threaten your soul
wither and fall
away
okay
oblivion pie
is delicious
here
have a slice

THE DISTANCE

Sampson Starkweather

between us
love and violence
and misunderstanding
are the measurements
and occasional lack
of—
yet here we are
in these impossible bodies
wanting
whether we want it or not
to be held
and held and
cannot
be—
if we
were a song
we would sound like this
break break break break break break break break break break

BREAK IN CASE OF EMERGENCY POEM

(a remix of Ancient Capitalist Proverbs)

Sampson Starkweather

time to burn the banks
our life is a life
of forms & acquiesce
break muse
to dream
a droned-drenched world
where even the stars
are laid
off and hammered
a severance of sitting
in little lawn chairs
watching our dumb-show
fail & flail & fall
labor & loneliness & love
so insist on bliss
cultivate your rage
build a boat to carry your victims
in the wake of a kiss
feathers blood & glitter
disown your phone
disarm the state
write poems for your self
obliterate the cake
travel light
keep some songs
for your soul
and the after-after life
because the stars
have no idea
what they're missing
and writing is not resistance
it's just writing
taxies are green
and birds sing
car alarms & ambulances
in the last century

let the record show
these small animals
who forage and hopelessly
have hope
surveilled
doubled-over
who sang and wrote and wailed
let the record show
in a strange time
we loved

Medevac

Chard deNiord

Off to the east above Monadnock, the speck
of a chopper between the clouds. I watched
from below like a child in my yard, knowing
in the time it would take to sharpen my saw
it would return with a victim inside. So, I prayed
as I waited for the thrum of its blades blending
the sky to a deeper blue on its return,
and when it did, I prayed again until the silence
resumed across the sky that was so vast
but also small, I could feel the hurt of the patient
inside—a woman I learned the following day;
someone I knew, still hanging on.

MOTH

Chard deNiord

“Now you are no longer caught in the obsession with darkness,
and a desire for higher love-making sweeps you upward.”

—from *The Holy Longing*, Goethe

Out of nowhere, which is every-
where, a leaf sings to you
in the air as you fall asleep:
“My love, my soul, my vermin,
the sky is your chrysalis, so lie
inside its blue and darkness
long enough to feel the bones
of your wings begin to grow,
then grow some more until
they’re long enough to form
a thin prehensile frame
for the delicate veil that spans
their arc with a fabric that seems
too frail to lift a body up
but does somehow, infused
as it is with a tensile strength
that starts as a dream inside
the dark in which you fly
and land, land and fly in the over-
story that bedights you
with leaves that wave like hands
until the day they cast the spell
that opens you as a book
whose pages flutter as a spectral
text for children to read and then
remember, and a chorus sings:
‘Bless the air beneath your wings.
Bless the flight that seemed absurd
when you were larval, self-
consuming, and bound to Earth
by a thousand legs.’”

LAST GOODBYE IN THE TIME OF CORONA

Chard deNiord

"He died alone, and he will be buried alone." —Der Spiegel

The darkness arrived without your voice
or touch, my love, and yet I heard
your voice and felt your hand in mine.
Nothing in the end, not even death,
can loose my grip from yours.
What can I say that echoes here
and beyond? Just this:
you were always so contagious, dear,
my hazelnut, my vast,
but unlike this germ, you infected me
with a love that made me better
than well, that was a gift of bliss
I didn't deserve.
So take these words that are not mine
but the ones you gave me
in the silence of this room
and I return.
You were there, I tell you.
You were there when I was crossing
from there to here,
and you are here as well, right now.
No absence—yours or mine—
can fill itself with itself anywhere
when two have loved
as we did love, if only for a time.



UNTITLED #1
GAIA ILLUMINATION ROUND

THE MUSIC OF BEING, A SONG OF PRAISE IN A TIME OF PLAGUE

Chard deNiord

“By this time, we are both an open secret.”

—James Wright

“He also showed me a tiny thing in the palm of my hand, the size of a hazelnut. I looked at this with the eye of my soul and thought: ‘What is this?’ And this is the answer that came to me: ‘It is *all that is made*.’”

—Julian of Norwich

Hold a hazelnut up to your eyes
as a lens for seeing through,
then wake to a katydid and say its name.
Stand in a room and stare at the wall,
then ask yourself what exists between
you and the wall. These are the ways
for seeing the *distillation* that turns
your blood to the color of a maple leaf
in autumn. Know each living
and inanimate thing as a prescription
for “seeing blindness,” then see
in blindness how suddenly visible
are the things you couldn’t see before
when you were only seeing. Behold,
how mystifying then is the world
and also risible, no matter how ugly
or deadly: a bobfish here, a viper there.
Hear how they cry in silence, as if silence,
too, were a word stripped of sound,
so only those who crave the secret

of the Hand above the dark and bottomless
waters can see and hear the cloud
that's also the palm of the Hand
that passes over the waters. So holy,
whole, and beguiling is each enormous
tiny thing that when you see them all
together through the lens of a hazelnut,
you feel so shriven you speak their names
in the dark until each thing becomes
your name as well—mullein, elder,
pokeweed, and elm; each one a synonym
for the other, despite their differences;
such is the blessing of irony in every thing,
as well as nothing; each name so true
and therefore original you revel in them,
including your own, the one you were given,
no matter how plain or unusual,
no matter how difficult or riven.
Such are the notes to the music of being
that plays each time you carry its tune.

DRAWING AGNES

Emily Pettit

Agnes Belair is no more than a glance over there. Sometimes she's huge. Come on, Agnes Belair is a woman who is an animal and a little sad. Agnes Belair invisible like a breeze. Agnes Belair blinks, breaths, is around—and the answer is: no. Agnes Belair knows how to hide. Agnes Belair lives in a reply. Agnes Belair is moving. Looks at herself upside down. Looks at you upside down. Agnes Belair, the writer. Agnes Belair, the one without words. Agnes Belair, who fails. Who fumbles. That's right: Agnes Belair commotions. Agnes Belair is tired! Is still. Agnes Belair the small stone on the windowsill. Agnes Belair is lonely. There are all these markers of time. The significance of the sky comes to mind. Agnes Belair is thinking about death. Agnes Belair is feeling pain. There's the concept of a chorus. Agnes Belair is still her. Agnes Belair wanted to finish something with you. Agnes Belair is grieving. Agnes Belair is going to say something. Agnes Belair doesn't say anything. Do our secrets always make us lonely? A canary in your sightline. Agnes Belair is not a photograph. Agnes Belair draws Agnes Varda 100 times. Agnes Belair is being carried on a glance. Agnes Belair is blown away. Agnes Belair by the ocean.

SKULL

Emily Pettit

A sudden strong wind is real enough. Enough to knock Bertrand Browne down. That's enough. A hoarse raspy *kraaa*, a harsh *crr-eek*, clear whistles and bursts of warbled notes, a fast series of *tseee* sounds descending in pitch. The song ends as a trill. Bertrand Browne doesn't know what this means, but that does not detract from his pleasure or displeasure. The condition of the noise spread the news like a context. Anything from which something may be learned Bertrand Browne loves like night falling over and over again. Loves like exaltation. Without looking Bertrand Browne describes these scientific experiments. Describes a plant in which growth stops because its growing point is damaged. Like when hail hits, he can do this. Bertrand Browne recommends the pursuit of special knowledge as the central goal of life, though it is typically depicted under the governance of forces of which we are not aware. Hopefully Bertrand Browne can balance on what he does know. The head always had something to do with the skull.

THERE WILL BE SORROW

Emily Pettit

The imagination bodies forth. The imagination makes a memory. There will be sorrow in a strong imagination. The imagination goes still further. Much is maintained by the imagination. Sometimes the imagination will dip. The imagination is good for calling forth curiosity. The imagination can burn. An animated imagination does scatter. Bea Tatar's imagination did scatter.

MERCY

Major Jackson

Funny how I carry them with me,
the boys I punched in a scuffle
and got the better of. Who knows
now why or for what reasons
we approached each other,
fists protecting our doughy
almond-colored faces, arms
like two upright praying mantises
set to tangle: Darren who, to tell
the truth, backed away and slipped
on the curb at the corner of Master Street
just as I swung and grazed his left
temple so that it looked like I possessed
the fierceness of some Sugar Ray
whose timing my grandfather praised
as elegant, a thing of beauty;
or Wilbur who was so slow and timid
I punched again and again in the nose
between closed hands until his face
resembled crushed tomatoes. Who lives
most in memory is Greg and that time
his older brother forced him to fight
after we both jumped for a rebound
and my elbow struck his mouth,
and his lips ballooned like two
connecting soap bubbles. We circled,
this kid who in third grade I gave
daily half my peanut-butter & jelly
sandwiches, who traded Topps
baseball cards: my Pete Rose for his Willie
Stargell, and when we finally decided
to breach our fear, I struck
in the stomach, so that he keeled
over hugging himself, leaving him
open like a cash register. But I couldn't do it.
I dropped my fists, opened my fingers
slow as petals and walked away ashamed.



LUSCIOUS SLIGHTS
GAIA ILLUMINATION ROUND

SOFT POEM

Ana Božićević

I came
I slept
I came
I looked up
The sky was the blue
Of a baby powder bottle
From a country
That no longer
Exists
The softest breeze
Touched the
Honeysuckle perimeter
I was feeling a
Little nice
Current in my body
Nikola are you with me
Gods of thunder
Ancestors
If I called out to you
Would you answer
In this land

MOONRING

Ana Božićević

While I sit here thinking
Of the apocalypse
Leaves are bouncing
Moonbeams against my window
Like heartstrings
Did they always know
This song?

After all the shows
I've watched and stories
I read
After what I saw my family
Survive will I stand and
Fight
Fight against what?

Tell me, moonbeams
Little fists
Smacking the window
Which way to turn and in
What language to say
What thing
And to whom.

I keep thinking
I don't deserve to be here.
Not in this body
This family
Not in this country or the other.
I keep thinking
I need to do something

And I do all the things
With the dread and joy
Of someone cursed hoping.
Eyes in my fingernails
Stare me in the eye
When I type
They are my honor

Every word a nail
Holding a promise to
A wall... will it be full
In the end of desperate notes
Crafted by moonbeams
In seasickness
Or totally empty?

This time of month
I leave myself a ring
On a beam of moon
That I can wear again
When I'm small enough again
To bear the weight
Of my name.

Classical

Karen Gottshall

*No one could be found whom, in such a time of calamity, neither disease,
nor death, nor mourning, nor the loss of friends, had affected.*

Lucretius, "The Nature of Plagues"

Today is more ancient than the oldest poem.
It's full of stones and the ancient gods,

visiting earth to act out their jealousies
and lust. In the face of such forces, such classical

antipathies, it is safest to stay indoors—
near the fire, the kitchen, with only the company

of dogs. Safest to keep very still.
These ancient days echo forward in time

like empty amphitheaters wept into, echo
backward like rivers flung against mountainsides.

All my life I've lived in the present, where I hoped
for ordinary things: love and touch and the comfort

of conversation. The segments of an orange
freed from their acrid peel. Time is a thing tasted

more as texture than sweetness or salinity. But today
there is no present to inhabit: it passes

over the contours of my city, cold and dry.
It leaves behind ruins and broken armor.

In the Future

Karen Gottshall

We will recognize the wind as our common ancestor.
Silence will have substance, and its invasion will be the work of exterminators.
Touch between unlicensed individuals will be outlawed.
Everyone will be a double agent.
I will paddle a canoe through the former rooms of my house.
Empty palms will become the universal currency.
My mother will finish the painting she began just before she died.
Abstractions will be mass manufactured.
Childhood will be an opera that ends with a mushroom cloud.
The internet will abandon earth for another star system.
Love will be powered by electricity.
We will learn the names we have been given by the grasses.
Regret will be a safer home than you ever imagined.
The engineers of the apocalypse will decompose into soft loam.
Sleep's embassy will be situated near the ruins of academia.
My robot lover will not be afraid of my tears.
Whole cities abandoned to the dead.
We will give up tobacco and learn to smoke our own shadows.
The song of the hermit thrush will be the new national anthem.
Beauty will be dismissed as a myth of the past.
My body will invite itself into the poisonous sea.
Time will again be a refuge.



CASTLES IN THE SKY
GAIA ILLUMINATION ROUND

Lockdown

Karen Gottshall

I'm afraid of this, and I'm made
for it—the skies so quiet, empty

of air traffic, my house retreating
into the ridge. I hate that I'm able to endure

what others find intolerable. There are days
I worry the sickness will find me

and I'll need someone. Other days
I worry it won't, and there will be

no need to ever leave. When I was little
I wanted to run away, and live

in a shelter I'd make for myself
in the woods behind the library—the most

remote place I knew. Now I live
in the cold territory my longing has become.

I always knew I'd finally arrive.
It's lonelier than I let myself believe.

Dreamstore

Karen Gottshall

At midnight we made it
To South of the Border
I wanted to enter that spaceship
Rising from the interstate
Supplant every human fear
Of a zombie rush in the parking lot
With hope
That I could make something
More of love if I saw it being dragged
Away, saw it actually leaving, to know
The future like that, to feel myself
More complex
Backed up against a pure dystopia
To live, me and the store clerk—
With whom I'd also fall in love
Having fled to her side
Just as a groping arm came lashing at her
Face. Anyway, standing under all that neon
Cradling the glorious print work
Of wolf with feather
I felt my legs tingling with the actual event
The zombie onslaught, the total love.
Later somewhere in Florida
Two dogs tried to maul our car
I asked you to circle back on that dirt road
Even as I felt the terror of intense mania
Charging us again, I saw something in the eyes
Of those dogs, the flood of love compelling
their likely death
Something about understanding the length of a rope—
How in actual events, little can bind
The extent of which we choose
To protect one another.

Every word a nail
Holding a promise to
A wall... will it be full
In the end of desperate notes
Crafted by moonbeams
In seasickness
Or totally empty?
This time of month
I leave myself a ring
On a beam of moon
That I can wear again
When I'm small enough again
To bear the weight
Of my name.

SOME BIRDS DON'T SING

Alison Prine

Or barely. The rasp of a stalled car. Some
have a call and a song.

Alarm. Simple, clear, piercing the air.

The scientists in the media recommend
social distancing. COVID-19 spread
through nearness, wetness, breath.

Deep from the lungs, a song. A cough.
The sun suggests we reveal ourselves
to each other. New fears. Listen.

Most female birds do not sing. Most
scientists do not study the female bird.

The virus is killing more men,
the scientists said.
The male bird sings to say
this place is mine

We hesitate to fly,
to gather, to touch.
Strange loosening as time blocks open,
commitments and obligations
slough away.

Usually our worries are personal,
but this one crawls through one body
and into the next
across a whole planet.

Suddenly we are so human, physical
and not far from one another
even as we learn
new ways to distance.

Vultures and storks can't sing.

A female cardinal trills her simple song.
She is not red like the male,
but has reddish tinges.

She won't migrate. I hesitate
to leave the house. I do not
touch another's face. My own face.

AUDIO ONLY

Alison Prine

we tire of pixelated heads
I quantify what I believe
can't travel through the machines
20% I think
is lost but we are all trying
to compensate
leaning harder on words
like a second language
I imagine his face
in the soft blue twilight
I know what he doesn't
how it feels to speak with a man
I once held as a red-faced infant
whose cries gripped my chest like a fist
I say I am grateful
he says he is grateful and yet
it doesn't stem the tide
uneasy about going
to his next infusion
it would be good to talk
about something else
we admit to one another
but we can't

GLOBAL REACH

Alison Prine

deer walk carefully toward me
on the border of my lawn
dark eyes locked to mine
in a dream
there was a kind neighbor
a broken fence and a forgiveness

at 8pm last night we went outside
applauded someone rang a bell
someone shouted
clapping my hands together
I felt near tears

I felt near to no one and every one
messages scribbled in chalk
in the crosswalk we give a wide
berth and a sad smile

there is a story I can see
but cannot read feels personal
like my own susceptibility my insomnia
like you dear
washing your hands
til they crack

Dreamstore

Leanne Ruell

At midnight we made it
To South of the Border
I wanted to enter that spaceship
Rising from the interstate
Supplant every human fear
Of a zombie rush in the parking lot
With hope
That I could make something
More of love if I saw it being dragged
Away, saw it actually leaving, to know
The future like that, to feel myself
More complex
Backed up against a pure dystopia
To live, me and the store clerk—
With whom I'd also fall in love
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Charging us again, I saw something in the eyes
Of those dogs, the flood of love compelling
their likely death
Something about understanding the length of a rope—
How in actual events, little can bind
The extent of which we choose
To protect one another.

Coming out of it

Leanne Ruell

After the ceiling landed on my head
and you left out the bedroom door
I unfolded the sound my body felt—
the long drone of an accordion
exhaling the wreckage.
TNG was still playing and it seemed
I had been asleep for a century
lost in the sexless shape
of my brain.
I yelled at the quivering oddity of my
smashed in head
Round out, Round out!
Reckon with the disappearance
of feeling full.

*

I ate some sugar and opened the window
for the first time all year.
Sometimes I can't access god
so I do aerobics
for 3 minutes
and think of swallowing
the voice of Donald Trump
because tenderness is always my aim
and I want to love him.

*

The earth is singing wryly
at my window about its death, I can't focus.
It feels like a ghost
tap dancing, trying for some fun
but with no skin in the game. The earth doesn't care
what happens to it, really.

Sometimes all we can do
is take on one another's transgressions
and when guilt shoots through
the core like a spring crocus
we'll pile on top of one another
at the foot of the bed and lie there
until god's like, hey is your soul still viable?
We'll start laughing nervously
& that's enough
to show how capable we are of living.

Ode to Futureless-ness

Leanne Ruell

I must be loved quickly before the legs become too strong-looking
before the silk flower wreaths appear on the door without irony
I tell you, as I crawl under the rug lying on the lawn. Goodbye
I say, and disappear under it. I'm under it eating grapes
frantically and think today, if I could lasso you
with a grapevine and make you look
at me like you used to, I'd do it violently—
but later instead we watch a fine Russian film in sepia and dream
each of us is in our own tiny car riding
the vacant and weeded rails into the cannibal future.
My head moves through one grape and then another. The mole rises
from the ground, looks at my grapes with longing.
Somewhere some moon is starting life
and no satellite will ever know. Somewhere in some small space-motel
something has a poster of me on the wall and has no idea
what I am or why, but I will be wearing a grape-stained lip—
rocketing into a perfect and dense futureless-ness with no clothes on
and I will look like nothing but like gorgeous TV. snow



UNTITLED #3
GAIA ILLUMINATION ROUND

Panpsychist with Ax

Candace Jensen

Splitting
wood
I break the amber gray log
apart
in a clean stroke, grunt
and find
beetle grubs slumbering
amid
2 hidden branches
neatly 90° skewed
and,
I know so little

that I cannot say
if they were half formed things, babes held to the heartwood breast,
then dead
in the womb.
Or,
old, broken and
enveloped scars
the tree held within her
long
even months after she was felled.

Wait long— the day is long!

See the flickering lights in a coming dark suede and I
know so little
cannot nod to Venus,
or galaxies like M81 and M82
(a categorical nomenclature that denies the personal or
personable).
Those poor,
bright beings
I forget their names, and in a fit of social anxiety
to avoid embarrassment,
contamination,
I pretend I don't see them
and hurry inside.

Days away from society and strife
6 feet apart at home
waiting for trilliums, waiting for
suet consciousness
and waiting
to get good
with my ax.

SECOND MOVEMENT

Ruth A. Rodriguez

Your mother is blooming in the periphery of a dream.
She's in the fruit pyramids of your first memories.
How to make the right angles of your childhood
right again. If you eat a grapefruit compartmentally,
flesh by flesh. If you see an iridescent stop sign.
If you look back and only see a river.
The flower of that tree.

PATTERNS ON ANATHEMA

Ruth A. Rodriguez

My grandfather walks into the yard with a machete.
I draw our last name all over our body.
My eyes are like flowers.
My arms not my arms.
A scorpion portioning out artificial light.
Once I was held at gunpoint.
Mi corazón que lleva nuestras muertos.
Then once again.
Gold is in our hair, spheres,
each smaller than red ink,
particles and atoms, their own wavelengths.
Ways to direct a circle through space.
The archetype is on fire.
Your disambiguation, your dead
make a shape you can not hear.
When one thought hides another
will you help the hands.
Your mother is dead yet she is still
telling you something you can't hear.



UNTITLED #4
GAIA ILLUMINATION ROUND

AUTHORS

Ana Božičević was born in Zagreb, Croatia, Božičević emigrated to New York City in 1997 and studied at Hunter College and at The Graduate Center, CUNY. Her first book-length collection, *Stars of the Night Commute* (2009), was Lambda Literary Award finalist, and her second book, *Rise in the Fall* (2013) won a Lambda Literary Award. Of her third book, *Joy of Missing Out* (2017), *Publishers Weekly* writes: “Poet and translator Božičević follows *Rise in the Fall* with another plaudit-worthy collection that is even more humorous, complex, and responsive to the world. Božičević easily harnesses her position as a poet of quiet social revolt, writing in a contemplative voice that questions contemporary powers: the government, the police, the Internet.” She received a “40 Under 40: The Future of Feminism” award from Feminist Press and a PEN American Center/NYSCA grant for translating Zvonko Karanović’s *It Was Easy to Set the Snow on Fire* (Phoneme Media, 2017). Božičević has worked for the PEN American Center, the Center for the Humanities of the Graduate Center, CUNY, and the Bruce High Quality Foundation.

Chard deNiord’s poetry collections include *In My Unknowing* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020); *Interstate* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015); *Speaking in Turn*, a collaboration with Tony Sanders (Gnomon Press, 2011); *The Double Truth* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011); *Night Mowing* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005); *Sharp Golden Thorn* (Marsh Hawk Press, 2003) and *Asleep in the Fire* (University of Alabama Press, 1990). DeNiord has also authored two books of interviews with renowned American poets, *Sad Friends, Drowned Lovers, Stapled Songs: Reflections and Conversations with Twentieth Century American Poets* (Marick Press, 2012) and *I Would Lie To You If I Could* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2018). DeNiord is currently a professor of English at Providence College and the former Poet Laureate of Vermont. He lives in Westminster West, Vermont with his wife, Liz.

Lauren Hunter is the author of *HUMAN ACHIEVEMENTS* (Birds, LLC 2017). She lives in Durham, NC.

Major Jackson is the author of five books of poetry, including *The Absurd Man* (2020), *Roll Deep* (2015), *Holding Company* (2010), *Hoops* (2006) and *Leaving Saturn* (2002), which won the Cave Canem Poetry Prize for a first book of poems. His edited volumes include: *Best American Poetry 2019*, *Renga for Obama*, and *Library of America’s Countee Cullen: Collected Poems*. A recipient of fellowships from the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, Guggenheim Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, and the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University, Major Jackson has been awarded a Pushcart Prize, a Whiting Writers’ Award, and has been honored by the Pew Fellowship in the Arts and the Witter Bynner Foundation in conjunction with the Library of Congress. He has published poems and essays in *American Poetry Review*, *Callaloo*, *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *Paris Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Poetry*, *Tin House*, and included in multiple volumes of *Best American Poetry*. Major Jackson lives in South Burlington, Vermont, where he is the Richard A. Dennis Professor of English and University Distinguished Professor at the University of Vermont. He serves as the Poetry Editor of *The Harvard Review*.

Candace Jensen is committed to realizing a culture profoundly informed by deep ecology. She is a visual artist, writer, calligrapher, letterpress printer and tantric, as well as a budding herbalist and gardener. She has exhibited her artwork in California, New York, Philadelphia, Vermont and also Belgium. Jensen is currently working to establish an artist and writers’ retreat and residency space in rural Vermont with her partner, the mathematical artist Owen Schuh. In summer and fall of 2020 she will lead a poetry chapbook printing project at the Putney Public Library (VT), including numerous American poets from New England and elsewhere. Jensen lives in Southern Vermont, part of unceded traditional lands of the Western Abenaki Peoples, N’dakinna. <https://www.candacejensen.com/>

Karin Gottshall received a BA with an emphasis in creative writing from Sarah Lawrence College and an MFA in Writing from Vermont College. Her first book, *Crocus*, won the Poets Out Loud Prize in 2007 and was published by Fordham University Press. Her second book, *The River Won't Hold You*, won the Ohio State University Press/The Journal Wheeler Prize in 2015. She is also the author of three poetry chapbooks: *Flood Letters*, *Almanac for the Sleepless*, and *Swan*. In 2015 she was honored to receive a Margaret Bridgman Fellowship in Poetry at Bread Loaf Writers' Conference. Recent poems have appeared in *The Kenyon Review*, *Colorado Review*, *Crazyhorse*, *FIELD*, *The Gettysburg Review*, and elsewhere. Her poem *More Lies* is included in the Poetry Out Loud online anthology, and memorized and performed by dozens of high school students from all over the U.S. each year.

Mark Leidner's most recent book is the short story collection *Under the Sea* (Tyrant Books, 2018), called "virtuosic" by the New York Times. He is also the author of a book of poetry *Beauty Was the Case that They Gave Me* (Factory Hollow, 2011), a book of aphorisms *The Angel in the Dream of Our Hangover* (Sator, 2011), and feature films. His latest film, *Empathy, Inc.* (2019), a sci-fi fantasy, earned rave reviews in *Variety*, *The Verge*, and the A.V. Club and is currently viewable on iTunes, Amazon, and Shudder.

Emily Pettit is the author of *Goat In The Snow* (Birds LLC) and *Blue Flame* (Carnegie Mellon University Press).

Alison Prine's debut collection of poems, *Steel* (Cider Press Review, 2016) was named a finalist for the 2017 Vermont Book Award. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Ploughshares*, *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, *Five Points*, *Harvard Review* and *Prairie Schooner* among others. She lives and works in Burlington, Vermont. Visit her at alisonprine.com.

Ruth Antoinette Rodriguez is a poet and bookstore owner at Antidote Books. Her poems have appeared in *jubilat* and *b l u s h*. She's an associate chapbook editor at BOAAT Press.

Leanne Ruell is working as a poet and mother in the wilds of Vermont where she lives with her husband, son, dog and sundry spiders.

Sampson Starkweather is the author of the do-si-do double chapbook for the end of the world, *A Week in Late Capitalism / Ancient Capitalistic Proverbs* from *b l u s h*. He is also the author of *PAIN: The Board Game* from Third Man Books and *The First Four Books of Sampson Starkweather* as well as many chapbooks with dangerous small presses, most recently *Until the Joy of Death Hits*, pop/love audio-visual GIF poems from Spork Press. He is a founding editor of *Birds, LLC*, an independent poetry press. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.