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Roger Dunsmore

And flutter a step or two

dozens of gulls
stand on the soft ice
of the lake

the crosses on the twin steeples
tell us
Christ has been here

all the gulls face the same direction
toward wind
toward open water

dark ducks amongst them
are facing the fountain
spraying water at the sky

the gulls' gray wings and backs
are the same color as the ice
their black wing tips, white breasts

a few open their wings
flutter a step or two
before settling down

they can be a raucous mob
stealing pieces of garbage, squawking
at each other

this morning they are silent
standing together on the soft ice
under the steeple-crosses

facing open water
dark ducks amongst them



Roger Dunsmore

For Big Ed (EDUARDO!) Lahey (1936-2011)

Poet Laureate of Butte, America

This isn't the first time I have found you
in the back ward of a local hospital, though I didn't know
it would be the last—behind two locked doors
naked from the waist up, dozing at the end of the hall.

(Once, decades ago, I fed you, shackled
legs and arms to the hospital bed frame,
with a spoon like a baby.)

Now, glad to see each other,
it has been weeks. The skin high up your
cheek bones is thick—mottled and yellowish.
You're doing "Not too bad" just now at dusk.
Did I reach out and touch you? I ask what word
I should carry to our old friend Dexter,
struggling with emphysema and heart disease
at the end of the Creek Road. You mumble
something—"Tell him to hang tough, I said."
On the way out, I tell the nurse
about the yellowy skin around your eyes,
the scabby, red patches at your hairline.

At the end of the Creek Road, Dexter,
his purple feet weeping water through
blisters—a heart that can't pump fluids
around the blood circle anymore,
is pleased with your message
though neither of us knows you are already
dead. I won't know until two days later,
after driving Chief Joseph Pass—
small elk herds and a pair of Sandhills
cruising above deep snow. Home,
I don't think you'll make it
through the coming summer.





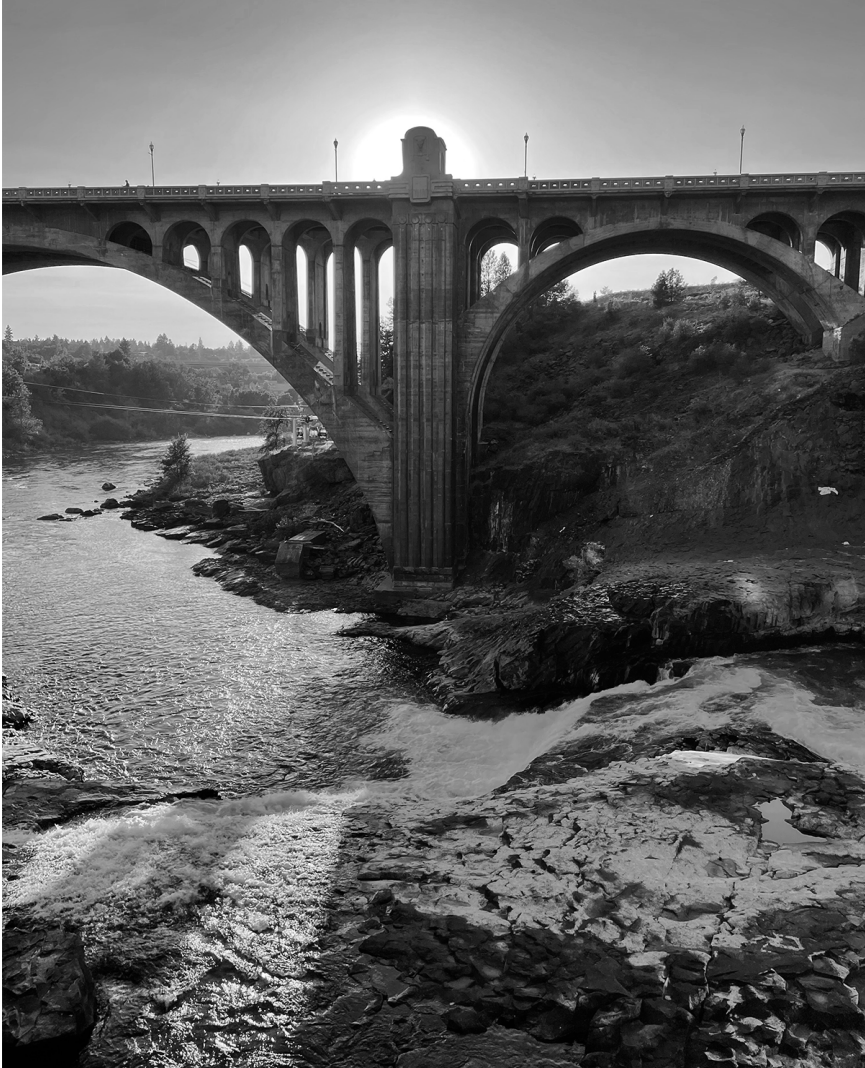
Roger Dunsmore

Just these scraps of memory
from a last, belated visit
before you choke on a piece of meat
lodged in your wind pipe
alone at the end of the hall.

No more words
so I dig out the Irish green
sweater you gave me when you grew
too big, dig it out of the the smelly laundry pile;
it's covered in wood chips from my chainsaw.
I wash its black wool knots and Celtic puzzles,
spread it wide open on Nina's pale blue blanket
with flower designs, fold it carefully
and place it in the hall cupboard atop
a stack of flannel pajamas.
Did I reach out to touch you?



Lucia Gregory





Allegra Armstrong

Evergreen State

My editor asks me to contribute a poem to a collection about the Pacific Northwest.

The collection is published every year.

Last year's poets wrote about the majesty of the Cascade Mountains, of hillside flowers that open up in spring, of the swoop and dip of the Columbia River Gorge—unbeatable.

But when I picture the Northwest, I see the church on my block that holds a food bank every other Friday, and the children who run to collect food for their parents there, who bring a box to my house in case I have been too ashamed to ask for it.

I think of the year my grandfather died
and my friend was shot to death
and the graduate school professor who told me she was sorry to hear it,
but deadlines were deadlines, and really, some of the greatest art had been crafted under duress.

Her eyes were blank as she spoke to me,
serene like the lake she'd said her house looked out on,
and any time I hear a poem about the mountains,
I see her calm face again
hurrying past our children, their arms full of dented, donated cans,
her eyes unseeing, her eyes fixed on the landscape.





Allegra Armstrong

Good Bones I

People say our house has good bones.

They mean our house would be nicer if we cleaned it more.

I say, yeah, our house is awesome.

By this I mean, I wish my depression weren't so obvious from the outside.

In my fantasies I sweep the clutter from the good bones
like gnawing the meat off a chicken wing.

I imagine my house as a dazzling glory,

like a drinking glass, or a looking glass,

polished, impersonal, so sparkly you see yourself here.





Allegra Armstrong

Good Bones II

People say our house has good bones.

They mean they would be jealous of us if we didn't live in such a shitty neighborhood.

They say, you live on a surprisingly nice block.

They say, are you afraid to walk home at night?

I'm not afraid. I know the cats on all these porches for a clear half-mile around.

People say, it's a shame no one knows their neighbors anymore,

but I know my neighbors fine.

They bring me small carcass offerings and scramble possessed, vertical, up into the trees to hide.

They deposit the bones, licked clean by our doorstep, dart off to kill and collect more.

You say that this is a smart neighborhood to invest in, and their eyes glint red.





Jessica Raetzke





Allegra Armstrong

Industry

The editor wants to publish a poem about a tranquil cat
who snoozes and dreams in a scrap of window light,
his feet twitching against an idyllic backdrop of green wallpaper
dotted by cornflowers. She loves it, she says.
It feels so real.

My cats fall asleep in the soft soil by our garage,
the patch that they also use as a litter box.
They dream of unspayed females in heat,
thin city mice beaten down by industrialization
growing fat once more.

Our neighborhood is a haven for detritus.
Skinny, unwanted strays and beat-up cars
that run loud and whining or not at all.

I imagine tabulating all these half-running cars together into
a vehicle that will finally take me somewhere.

Our cars with patched up windows
and near-dead engines hobble around the block
past the men in the sober house across the street.
They inhale 7-Eleven cigarettes and cough and inhale again,
an unbroken chain, and dream that this winter the ambulance might not come,
siren turned off and unhurried, to collect the home's overdose victims,
men succumbed to Spokane's damn darkness,
its winters a tunnel too long to see the end of.





Jessica Raetzke



Kansas

I went to Kansas to kiss my lover good-bye. My parents drove me, disapproving in their red sedan, down from my mountains, across alien acres, surrounded by an endless horizon, exposed.

He lived with his mother in a grand hotel thrusting up through the cornfields, as cold and unknown as the missile silos sunk in the earth around them. The mother owned the hotel and lived in the lobby, kept a suite of rooms for each child. The rest of the building echoed, vacant, kept free for wanderers and strays who came to the door and refused to be sent back into the corn. She slept on a sofa the color of oatmeal, with soft hidden lighting and the keys to the suites always behind her. Her teeth were shiny and white, pointed and shark sharp.

We arrived for the manic last half of a party. Fifty or a hundred souls lost in the throes of their middle years, dressed in their polyester best, line-danced in tiny steps between the towering rows of corn. As each sequence ended, they reached through the stalks and introduced themselves. Women stumbled, their spike heels stuck in the soil; men caught them, leered apologies, waited for them to stumble again. The cornstalks rustled in time to the dance.

A crusted old man took charge of the car, gave me balloons, and waved me away. He lived in a tiny trailer in the parking lot, took his meals in the hotel but was not allowed to bathe there. He spread plastic over the seat and drove around back, leaving my parents dazed in the dust. A jet touched down across the road, its engines drowning out the sounds of the party. I walked to the hotel and went inside.

The lobby was cool and quiet. The mother waited for me, watching the dancers through the patio doors, drinking something that smelled of dish soap from a crystal highball glass. A cigarette smoldered in the ashtray beside her. She smiled, hungry and gloating. "He's in the basement, the Caesar Suite. It's not locked." I didn't answer, and as I stepped into the stairwell, my balloons caught on bent nails where molding had been torn from the doorway. They burst. I let go of the strings and went down.

The Caesar Suite had thick marble pillars and a black-and-white tiled floor. The younger children used it for roller skating and left black scuff marks everywhere: circles and figure-eights. A large, hard couch covered with purple linen served as a bed, and a refrigerator hid behind palm fronds in a corner. The fridge hummed and crackled and pissed minuscule streams of rusty water over the tiles and into the swimming pool. My lover rose to meet me as I walked across the room. His toga was a dirty sheet; his feet were bare and wrinkled and bluish. Incense burning in gilt censers didn't cover the smell of his body, wet and unwashed and desperate.



Kansas

I reached out, my hands steady and strong, and pulled his head down to mine. I bit his lips, then his tongue, and his hands were tugging and tearing behind me. In a moment he was inside me, and in another wrenching, numb moment, it was over. We lay on the couch, purple linen rumpled and bunched beneath us, and he smiled like a wicked child who gets his way. I covered myself with the rags of his toga and reached for him again.

“I can’t do it, cupcake, I’ve been having too much fun. I was having fun all morning before you got here. You’ll just have to wait.” He smiled, pleading and clever, and tried to take my hand as I stood and walked away. I stopped at the stairs and tied the corners of his toga over my breasts. When I looked back, he was curled on the couch, purple linen clutched to his chest, watching me with wounded, sleepy eyes. He might have cried or smiled when I left.

Balloon strings brushed my face like spider webs as I reached the top step, and shreds of latex hung from the nails like the empty blue and yellow and green carapaces of insects. The mother was laughing, and I heard the scratch of a match as she lit another cigarette. “Stop by anytime, Cupcake. Any friend of my son’s is a child of mine.” Eyes on the floor, not wanting to see the glints of saliva on her teeth, I walked across the lobby. Her laughter cut off as the door closed behind me.

The dance in the corn field changed, stumbling to slower rhythms as the sun faded and new dancers joined in. I saw my parents, holding hands and stepping in time. The red sedan waited in the back lot, keys in the ignition. I got in and started the engine. Ahead of me, a thousand miles to the west, I could see mountains, clear, soft green, warm. Another jet touched down as I pulled onto the highway. My parents poked their heads through the shuddering stalks. They smiled and waved as I drove away.





Jessica Raetzke





Jessica Raetzke





Danielle Estelle Ramsay

The House Always Wins

The atypical antipsychotic burns a hole in its bottle.
I don't take it because there is no surgery tomorrow.
His heart is not a leaky faucet.

My psychiatrist cuts the dose instead of tripling it.
There's no need for constant sedation.
My parents walk backwards
out of the doctor's office.
They have never heard the odds.
(They were bad odds, a losing hand
in a game no one asked to play.)

My browser history
no longer includes the Wikipedia pages:

Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement
Cardiopulmonary Bypass Machine
Bioprosthetic Valve
Aortic Insufficiency

The purple links for the articles
on mortality rates turn blue again,
still bruise-colored like oxygen-starved blood.
My computer no longer feels sorry for me.
I stumble around MultiCare Deaconess Hospital.
I have not memorized the route
to the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit.
I forget how to pray
because there is no begging to do,
no bargaining chips to play.





Danielle Estelle Ramsay

No blood is rerouted
through the bypass machine,
or it is someone else's father on the table.
I wish them good odds, a royal flush.
I am not rolling the dice. I am unafraid
and need no one's pity.





Danielle Estelle Ramsay

Pantoum for My First Attempt at Her Eulogy

I don't know where to begin
so I begin with a poem.
The therapist says to start writing the eulogy,
even if my grandmother isn't dead yet.

I begin with a poem,
in usual fashion, because words are difficult.
Even if my grandmother isn't dead yet,
I'm planning the prayers, the funeral outfit.

In usual fashion, words are difficult
to choose. How we honor the dead or dying
requires planning the prayers. The funeral outfit
should be a clerical collar, but black is all I have.

To choose how we honor the dead, dying
slowly is the best gift we can offer.
Should it be a clerical collar if black is all I have?
Pick a white stole or buy the collared yellow dress?

The best gift we can offer is to slowly
forgive the ways we do not prepare.
Pick a white stole or buy the collared yellow dress.
This is how you can begin.





Jenni Fallein

The Upper Hand *for Tiffani*

If you're eight and a half
on a breathing machine
in a wheelchair heavy as a baby elephant
with Nemaline Rod Myopathy
and No Code your default prognosis

you can write the story any way you want.

We hang out in the mall for easy entertainment,
school, after all, inconsequential at best
and a fierce breeding ground for germs.

A particular mannequin on the third floor of Penney's
seems peculiarly suspicious—fiery orange hair,
rude lipstick, nail polish the color of vampires.
We call her Flamboyella, and it soon becomes known
she is the Cause of Everything Evil in the World

cleverly disguised as a model in Women's Lingerie.

On a Tuesday afternoon, duty-bound,
we roll stealthily through rows of brassieres.
Her wrist breaks off much too easily
attached by devil-made magnets
leaving her an amputee in unfortunate underwear.

The prized body part slips easily
into the medical bag where we keep
sterile gloves and suction supplies.





Jenni Fallein

Ordinarily, people glance
at the poor dying girl with blonde curls,
note the corrugated tube attached at her throat
tied with ribbon that matches her dress,
the humph-ho rhythm of her life support,
and they quickly turn away,
called by a sudden impulse to fidget.

Today is no different.
You suggest I sit in the chair
me at the controls, you on my lap

all the better to hasten our getaway.

Laughter is a reckless driver
but who cares?

For now, we've got the upper hand.



Lucia Gregory





Mery Smith

Genesis 2:4 and then God rested from all the work he had done.

A descent through the throat slipped into tendon
become the shape of your clavicle puttering the long hallway of your soul

came to slowly kept my motor turning

a soft rumble made a wake with ritual for
living
lift water just to walk upon

then slip through again

planning to visit your earlobe in the spring passover
ribs blessed bone

rungs to
descend from which by the moon's moon

slide deeper into slumber where from flesh made flesh a sacrifice

inside your womb a sacrament oil perfumed

our mouths anointed
two altars laid wide

made for communion





Mery Smith

Planet Penance

Cannot imagine
a place where you exist and I am
free
to
spin.

You a Universe
a world kept
orbit me like a:
lap dog
locket
house plant

resentment like
an asteroid
cry out to cosmos
petition them for
[space]

try to fathom some existence
beyond

blazing

combustible comet
and you're heading
straight for me

[And yet]

squint my eyes microscopic
imagination





Mery Smith

light years away furthest from
the sun

icy blue orb
giant of the unimaginable
vastness

Out here in this
circumstellar happenstance

[here]

the sun
does not depend
on my rotation

my own resplendent star
this constellation reads:

to love you
does not mean
to burn



Jessica Raetzke





Elizabeth Mathes

Multiple Choice

In a room off the school office
they set her up
to take her missed achievement test.

Whispers through walls.
They said he used a gun.
How could anyone with kids
do that?

Against an oversized table
a small rib-cage crushed.
She drills pencil lead
into a field
of relentless eyes.



Jessica Raetzke



Looking for Metaphor, Here

Denny Way climbs like a coarse vein from South Lake Union to Capitol Hill. We walk it together, fast at first and then more slowly as you get winded. We pass apartments and restaurant back doors. We pass dog walkers and cigarette smokers. You are glowing. Your cheeks brighten and the sparkled threads in your hat catch the headlights whirling up from the city. Around your nose and your perfect mouth, the skin peels in soft flakes like wrinkles in a swooning desert. Until a few months ago you went for Botox twice a year to keep your forehead smooth. People still ask if we are sisters. And walking Denny Way in the cold leftovers of a clear winter day in Seattle, I feel sisterhood toward you, my mother. Or maybe motherhood.

I ask you if you need to rest. No. Are you sure. No. Sureness is something that eludes us here. You are six months into a cancer diagnosis that cannot be cured. At least that is what we are told by the oncologists, the pamphlets, the online articles, the medical journals. It is not what we are told by the exaggerated support group leader, diagnosed stage IV lung cancer fourteen years ago. He says there is nothing that is certain, but then hugs us a little too long when he says goodbye. We've learned there is a word more terrifying than cancer. *Metastasized*. That there is such a thing as praying you can have surgery. We have learned to speak the language. Mutations. MSI stable. Second-line chemotherapy. Nadir. Immunotherapy. You have a little tag on your car keys, next to the fitness club memberships, to declare you have an implanted intravenous port catheter that sits under the skin of your chest like a bug. Its single antenna extends eight inches into your artery to deliver chemotherapy every second Wednesday.

Now we have come to the top of the hill. A mile from the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance House where we have a room with a view and neighbors with heavy hearts.

We are standing next to a large brick building. It is old and weathered and I know I've seen it before, the summer I was twenty-two and took the ferry south from Alaska, fat with cannery cash. A sailboat carpenter bought two whiskies every night on the ferry, and we would sit on the red velvet piano bench in the lounge while he tapped out cruise ship numbers for the rain-heavy windows. In Seattle, he dropped me at the Greyhound station. Plan-less, I started walking. Day people dissolved from the streets. Night emerged, thick with noise. I found the wide expanse of the University of Washington campus and bedded down in a pocket of ivy beneath weeping hemlocks. All night bird dreams cut the chill, and I woke to doves shuffling the early sidewalk. I crouched and peed and stood, walking without pause to this corner, where I stand now, in the winter with you, mother.



Looking for Metaphor, Here

I had stepped into the wide freedom the city afforded. Hours went in and out of focus. Beautiful people slipped from storefronts, engagements, lives. It was still summer this far south, and it seemed like the sort of day when one could fall in love but wouldn't. I was hungry to feel that. Possibility, openness, driving forward alone. I wanted to ride that hungry edge, shaky with its humanity, brilliant in all its fractured possibility.

The building's bricks flake like scaled fish, sticky with that old August sun. You smile. We wait for the light to change. And cross the street.

We walk through the park. The quiet hums like a lullaby. You speed past dog walkers, impatient. You envy a sleek woman's tailed raincoat and watch the men sail a soccer ball in the brightly lit square. The cancer takes a pause. We are on a weird vacation now, recounting past vacations. A weekend on the North Side of Chicago several years ago, sleeping in an attic apartment. We invented stories about the people living in lit windows around us. We did yoga surrounded by butterflies in an arboretum, navigated neighborhoods before iPhones, and found a Peruvian restaurant that served raw heart. We remember Mexico City, walking sixteen miles through its turbulent streets with an empire beneath us. In Seattle, we eat dinner and go to sleep, the cancer knocking in the middle of night, wanting back in. It is there in the morning, almost kind, sitting with us as we sip too-hot coffee.

We meet with your oncologist and, against her advice, push to arrange a consult with a team of surgeons. Your appointment is scheduled for a Tuesday. When we check in at 6:45a.m. we learn this is a good thing. They always schedule the inoperable consultations on Wednesdays. The receptionist likes Zumba just like you do. In the waiting room, there is a tank full of fish and a woman sitting next to it with oxygen tubes in her nose. In the still-dark window, our faces stare back at us, waiting. We are your entourage: Dad, myself, my new husband, sometimes Dad's eighty-seven-year-old mother, sometimes one of your sisters, sometimes your son. The med tech looks at us and sighs, searching for folding chairs. I usually have to sit on the exam table because what has to be examined in you is so large we have to talk our way around it. Most visits the doctor lifts the hem of your straight-legged jeans, cuffing his fingers around your fine ankles to check for swelling. Always the doctors check to see if your ankles are swelling and always your ankles are slight and strong, stemming lean shins and calves. You like dancing. And running stairs. You like exercise pants that stop just above the ankle. Your surgeon walks into the small room and says, "Cancer is intrinsically unstable in the genome. It is susceptible to change."

I am reading Karen Babine's memoir *All the Wild Hungers: A Season of Cooking and Cancer*. Karen is reading Susan Sontag's *Illness as Metaphor*. I am crying my way through Karen's metaphors for cancer. We are all looking for metaphor here, where the shape of your ankle is medically significant. We learn your mother's ankles are swelling. She was diagnosed with stage III pancreatic cancer the day before my wedding.



Most times I try not to really look at you. Say if we are in a Kohl's dressing room or trying on clothes in your closet. Because if I do, I can't stop taking in all the small ways your body is changing. How unmetaphorical that is. Your small wrists don't stand for anything I want to say. Your mottled skin. How faint the scar above your port has become.

A genome is a haploid set of chromosomes in a cell. It is the genetic matter of a cell. Cancer is unstable in its own genetic matter. That means it shifts in ways we cannot explain. You have tested negative for every genetic mutation known to cause colon cancer. But your father had polyps at every colonoscopy. He died of pancreatic cancer at age seventy-six. Your mother is eighty-two with inoperable stage III pancreatic cancer. Her father died of pancreatic cancer at age seventy. Your sisters both neglected their colonoscopies until your diagnosis and at your urging finally sought them. Both had precancerous polyps.

If we can believe it wasn't something in the actual gene, what common experience did you all share? You all drank and cooked and bathed with the water from the Missouri River, the Platte River, and the Dakota Sandstone Aquifer. But so did all of your neighbors and classmates. You all drank the water at the table in a house on Ontario Street where your father smoked two packs, sometimes three, of Camel longs every day for the first twenty-one years of your life. Was it in the paperwork he brought home from the service station, stained in engine oil that your mother shuffled through every morning, keeping the books? You were born a month premature with your twin. Was it there? When your body wasn't given enough time to be ready for the world? Your father, at eighteen, covered his head with his hands as instructed on the boat deck in Bikini Atoll while the United States Navy tested atomic bombs above. After he died, your mother received \$75,000 from the government, an apology, but what about her own body, lying next to his every night for fifty-seven years? Did the radiation spread to you, rhizomatous in its roots?

How long has the cancer been growing inside your body? Was it there five winters ago when we went skiing but you got the flu and spent the day on the couch instead, sleeping so deeply I felt a catch in my throat like a mother watching her children when they are still young enough to nap? Was it there the next winter when I told you about my abortion while we snowshoed in the Selkirk Mountains and you cried and couldn't stop crying? Not because you didn't support my decision but because you wanted to meet whatever person would have come, wanted to know her. Was it there when we jumped from the Third Avenue Pier into Lake Pend Oreille the next summer holding hands, giddy with afternoon light?

It was there when we jumped from a skiff into the Bay of Banderas one year ago. We swam against the current to a hidden moon of a beach to watch the frigate birds nest. You couldn't keep up with Dad and me. We kept looking back and you were smaller and then smaller still. You said you just couldn't make yourself



Looking for Metaphor, Here

move, but we thought that was ridiculous. You were in phenomenal physical shape, much healthier than either of us.

It was there when we talked on the phone one late February night over a year ago. I lived three hundred miles away from you in Montana where the snow was so cold it blew away in the wind. We couldn't work our way around what we were talking about. It was as if there was a dark mass between our meanings, something we couldn't penetrate. It was different from the bright avoidance typical of our conversations, when we sort of hum around ideas as the Midwest cheers your gregarious nature on. You were too tired to hold the phone up to your ear. I don't remember anything we said, but I remember hanging up and knowing something was wrong. That morning I had spoken on the phone to an artist in our community, trying to order a print for my wedding, but her pet crow kept barking in the background, making it hard to hear her. Even hours later all I could hear in my right ear was that crow barking in the cold living room. In May, Dad will be driving through the desert, and he'll pass one hundred crows congregated on the highway's bank, rollicking skyward. That afternoon you will call him to tell him they've found metastasized colon cancer in your body. I will be at the beach with my cousins, and all day two crows will follow us up and down the Oregon coastline, back and forth as we run in the wind.

Were you alone when that single cell mistook itself and split? Were you lacing your tennis shoes? Maybe it felt like sadness when it happened. Maybe it felt like weight.

There are a thousand things I want to write to you. I am reading Ocean Vuong's novel *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*. He is reading Roland Barthes's *Mourning Diary*, and like his character I am setting Barthes's diary down. You are here, mother. There are a thousand things I want to say to you, a thousand things I want to hear from you.

Last night you called me on the telephone, softly because your phone's speakers were fizzling because you had dropped it in the toilet. You echoed that maybe it would be easier to collapse this time, maybe it would be kinder to us if you took away these years, this unending ending time. In the morning, in my yard, in your fluorescent salmon activewear you tell me that, with the light filling up the road as you bicycled to my house, you apologized to God. Of course, I want to be alive, you said. Of course, I want to be here. Of course.

We are one year, one and a half months into your diagnosis. The surgeon who is a pianist used his hands to remove sixty-five percent of your liver. I wonder what he played on the piano before he operated. I wonder what he played that night when he went home, when you were sleeping under the drugs that filled your hospital room with hallucinated pillows. In twenty-three days we will return to the hospital. The surgeon—a different surgeon—will remove the original tumor in your colon. I know how I will feel in the waiting room. I will feel as if it is the sort of day when I could fall in love and will. I will feel as if I am waiting for you to be born.





Kurt Olson

The Radio Is About to Turn the Dial Itself
for (and after) Z.G.

There runs a surplus of soul in you that cracks when you smile
like a stiff neck with big plans: entropy contraband.

Oh, the tapestries you'd weave with those bouldered joints if we could find
thread wound wide enough.

Maybe you could share your eyes with us? A view of the harbor where you
moor your yesterdays, sails sat flat against the rug along the wall.

I hear you sigh big from clear across town when the outside goes quiet.

A warm creek moves below the ice to thaw in private.

I can't imagine how many miles you need just to breathe.



CONTRIBUTORS

Claire Åkebrand (cover artist) is a Swedish-American painter, musician, and writer. She is represented by the Art Spirit Gallery and Woodwalk Gallery in Wisconsin. Her art has appeared in *Atomic Ranch Magazine*, Karen Nepacena's book *Midcentury Modern Style*, and other places. Her main inspirations include Paul Klee, Arshile Gorky, Lucienne Day, graffiti, and mother nature. She lives in Provo, Utah, with her husband the poet Michael Lavers and their two children.

Allegra Armstrong lives with six cats in Spokane. She is a poetry and fiction writer whose work has appeared in *Fleas on the Dog*, *Cleaver*, and elsewhere. She likes riding her bike and swimming in the river.

Roger Dunsmore taught Humanities, Wilderness Studies, and American Indian Literature at the University of Montana (Missoula & Dillon) from 1963-2013. He is the author of numerous books, including *You're Just Dirt* (2010, FootHills Publishing) and *Earth's Mind: Essays in Native Literature* (1997, University of New Mexico Press). His fifth volume of poetry, *On the Chinese Wall: New & Selected Poems, 1966-2018* was published by Drumlummon Institute of Helena, Montana, in September 2019. He was a founding member and mentor of the Bent Grass Poetry Troupe, 2005-2013. Humanities Montana selected him as one of their Humanities Heroes in 2012. Dunsmore has been short-listed to the Governor for the position of Montana Poet Laureate three times. Currently, he is beginning his tenth year of staple-gunning the work of other poets monthly to utility poles and in small businesses in his Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, neighborhood.

Jenni Fallein is a meditation teacher, painter, and poet living in Coeur d'Alene with her husband, Roger Dunsmore. She has one volume of poems entitled *If Beauty Were a Spy* (2012, Foothills Publishing). She also has work in several anthologies including *Poems Across the Big Sky* (Many Voices Press) and *Civilization in Crisis* (Foothills Publishing). She and her husband Roger Dunsmore have hosted poetry circles for many years beginning in China in 1999. They also taught poetry and yoga at Elkhorn Women's Prison in Montana for five years before moving to Idaho. She has had the honor to have had poems published in *Trestle Creek Review* in past years.





CONTRIBUTORS

Lucia Gregory is based in Spokane. She approaches photography intuitively and works to discover uncommon beauty in everyday life. She shares images on Instagram (@looshagee).

Elizabeth Mathes has lived most of her sixty-three-year life in North Idaho. She has published poetry in small literary presses across the United States. Professionally, she is a counselor headed full steam towards retirement. The natural world and the conundrum of being female often inspires her writing.

Kurt Olson is a poet and bookseller from Spokane, Washington. He's published poems in several places (but does it really matter?). He lives with his genius wife, Aleah, and their many terrible, terrible cats.

Jennifer Passaro has lived and worked in what the writer Mary Clearman Blew coined the "rough-hewn circle" for the majority of her life. A centering that holds from Missoula, Montana to Boise, Idaho and north again to the Palouse of Eastern Washington, this circle cups a wild and ever-changing portion of the Rocky Mountain West. She studied creative writing at the University of Montana and has worked as a bookseller, fish buyer, newspaper reporter, and wilderness ranger, among other occupations. She currently lives in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, with her husband, their son, and their two old pups. She is a stay-at-home mom.

Jessica Raetzke is an artist and educator, working in Alabama. Her artistic practice primarily focuses on the use of photography and lens-based media, examining how bodies occupy and navigate shared spaces. Her website is jbraetzke.com.

Danielle Estelle Ramsay is a queer and neurodivergent poet and writer based in the Pacific Northwest. She has been writing for as long as she can remember. She writes at intersections: grief with faith, queerness with religion, and so on. She is a United Methodist pastor, a parent, an anime fan, and she loves you very much.





CONTRIBUTORS

Mery Smith is Spokane's 5th Poet Laureate. She is a story teller and story holder who's working to bring poetry into spaces we wouldn't otherwise consider poetic. Mery's work has been featured in publications around the Inland Northwest as well as online at PicturesofPoets.com and the published anthologies: *Listen to Your Mother: What She Said Then and What We're Saying Now* and *Pivot and Pause: A Poetry Anthology of Resilience, Remembrance, and Compassion*. She has one chapbook, *Crumbs*. Find her on socials like Facebook and Instagram, at @merynoelsmith, for news on local workshops and ways to get involved.

Lori Wallin lives in a creaky old house full of books and yarns and dishes, but sadly lacking in cat. She shares the space with her two favorite humans.







Trestle | CREEK | Review

welcomes submissions of any genre of literary or creative work for its 2025 issue. Submissions of poetry (3–5 poems per submission), prose (5,000 words maximum), or black-and-white artwork (any style or medium) may be sent via email. We consider work by any member of the North Idaho College community—including students, faculty, staff, and alumni—and by residents of the Pacific Northwest.

No previously published work can be considered, but simultaneous submissions are welcome. Please include a brief bio with your submission. More information and complete submission guidelines are available at our website, www.nic.edu/tcr. Submission deadline is **January 31, 2025**, for May publication.

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