

An impressionist landscape painting by J.M.W. Turner, showing a field of red flowers in the foreground, green trees in the middle ground, and a blue sky with soft, hazy clouds. The style is characterized by visible brushstrokes and a vibrant, somewhat muted color palette.

POETIC

SUM

#ISSUE5

**EDITORS: SHIYANG SU
JIANING RAN**

A painting of a pond with lily pads and flowers. The water is a mix of blue and green, with visible brushstrokes. In the foreground, there are several lily pads and a few pink and red flowers. The background shows more lily pads and flowers, with a soft, hazy atmosphere.

We write for this world.

我们总还在为这个世界挣扎/写诗/歌唱/流泪/为不曾降临的明日/熠熠生辉的今昔

An impressionistic painting of a pond. The water is a mix of blue, green, and purple tones, with visible brushstrokes. In the foreground, there are several lily pads of various shades of green, some with small pink and red flowers. The background shows more lily pads and flowers, creating a sense of depth and light. The overall style is soft and painterly.

Contributors

Ajanta Paul

Angelica Whitehorne

Arthur Lamar Mitchell

Daniel Brown

Douglas Cole

Jianing Ran

Joan McNerney

Joseph Hart

Karen Carter

Kate Weaver

Natalie Lester

Nolo Segundo

Norma Felsenthal Gerber

Phil Flott

Shiyang Su

Stephen Granzky

Stephen Mead

Tony Brewer

Potion

Footsteps dying
On the cobbled flagstones
Of medieval history...

The flag of serendipity
Flies at half-mast,
Mourning which tragedy?

Sobbing strains
In sorrow's solstice
Mark the long night.

The apothecary chooses
Powdered roots of past emotion
For his mysterious potion.

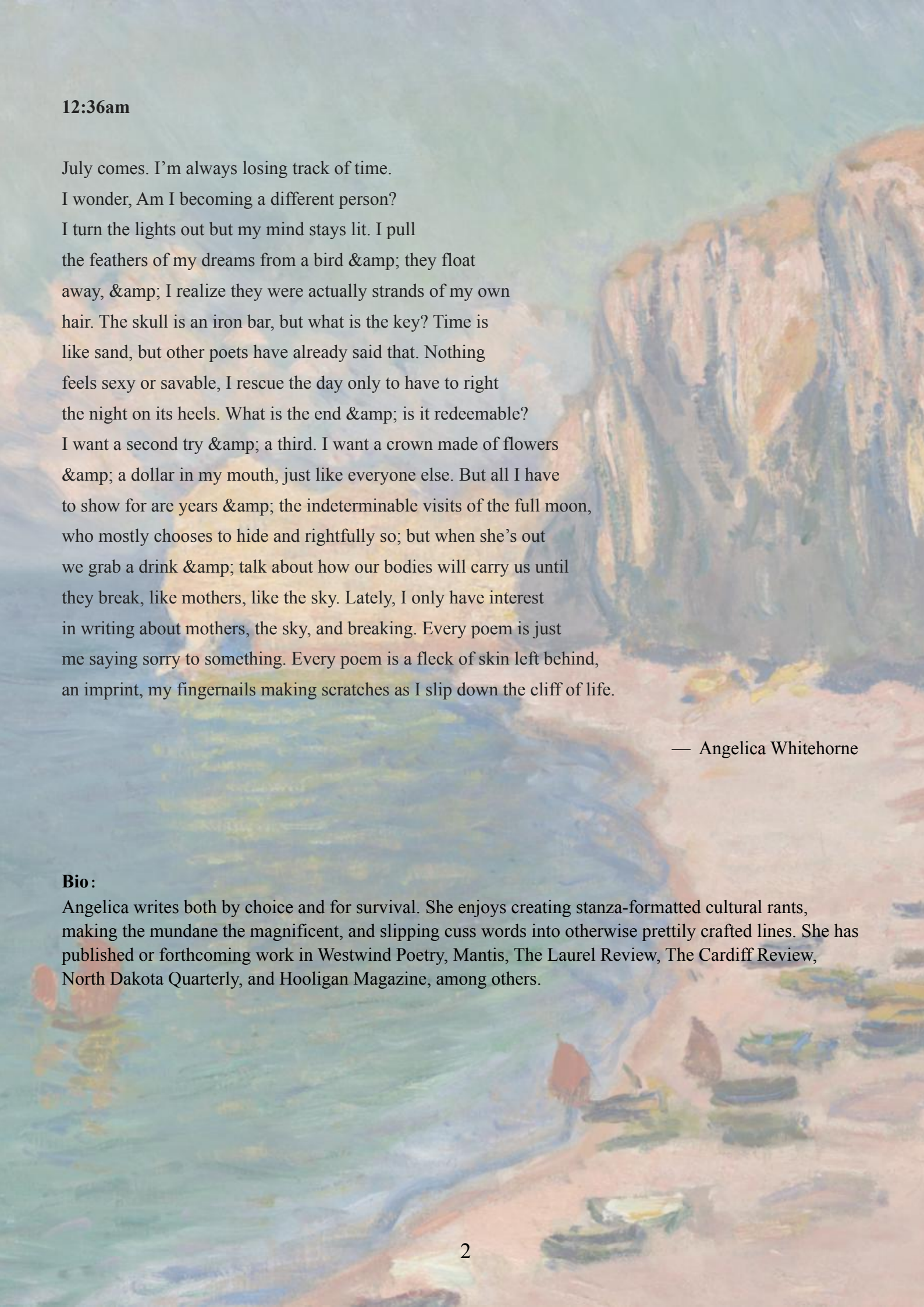
Peace hides in clusters
In cloistered soliloquies
Of the shadowy soul.

As passion philanders with purity
In the brief interlude
Of the morality play.

— Ajanta Paul

Bio :

Dr. Ajanta Paul is a poet, short story writer and literary critic from Kolkata, India who has been in academia for the past 30 years. She has published internationally in such literary journals as *Spadina Literary Review*, *The Pangolin Review*, *Poetic Sun*, *The Piker Press*, *The Punch Magazine*, *Harbinger Asylum*, *Innerchild Press International*, *The Bombay Review* and *The Statesman*. She was nominated for the Pushcart Prize in 2020. Ajanta has published a collection of short stories - *The Elixir Maker and Other Stories* in 2019 (Authorspress, New Delhi) and a book of poetic plays *The Journey Eternal* (Salesian College Publication, Siliguri, 2013) and has contributed poems to several seminal anthologies of poetry.

The background is a textured, impressionistic painting of a coastal scene. On the right, a tall, craggy cliff face rises, rendered in warm tones of ochre, terracotta, and muted reds, with vertical brushstrokes suggesting its rugged texture. Below the cliff, a sandy beach is depicted with soft, blended colors of pink, peach, and light brown. In the foreground, several dark, rounded shapes, possibly rocks or pieces of driftwood, are scattered across the sand. To the left, the sea is visible, with a mix of cool blues, greens, and greys, suggesting a calm but slightly overcast day. The overall style is painterly and evocative, with a focus on light and color over sharp detail.

12:36am

July comes. I'm always losing track of time.
I wonder, Am I becoming a different person?
I turn the lights out but my mind stays lit. I pull
the feathers of my dreams from a bird & they float
away, & I realize they were actually strands of my own
hair. The skull is an iron bar, but what is the key? Time is
like sand, but other poets have already said that. Nothing
feels sexy or savable, I rescue the day only to have to right
the night on its heels. What is the end & is it redeemable?
I want a second try & a third. I want a crown made of flowers
& a dollar in my mouth, just like everyone else. But all I have
to show for are years & the indeterminable visits of the full moon,
who mostly chooses to hide and rightfully so; but when she's out
we grab a drink & talk about how our bodies will carry us until
they break, like mothers, like the sky. Lately, I only have interest
in writing about mothers, the sky, and breaking. Every poem is just
me saying sorry to something. Every poem is a fleck of skin left behind,
an imprint, my fingernails making scratches as I slip down the cliff of life.

— Angelica Whitehorne

Bio :

Angelica writes both by choice and for survival. She enjoys creating stanza-formatted cultural rants, making the mundane the magnificent, and slipping cuss words into otherwise prettily crafted lines. She has published or forthcoming work in Westwind Poetry, Mantis, The Laurel Review, The Cardiff Review, North Dakota Quarterly, and Hooligan Magazine, among others.

The background is a soft, impressionistic painting of a desert landscape. On the right, there are tall, layered rock formations in shades of brown, tan, and blue. A river or stream flows from the top left towards the bottom center, its surface rendered in cool blues and greens. In the lower right, a sandy bank is dotted with small, colorful objects that look like rocks or perhaps a boat's gear. The overall atmosphere is hazy and nostalgic, with a palette of muted earth tones and soft blues.

In Fading Light

From a weathered porch, a man aged, but not done
Loving a high-desert place, succulents, spice and thyme
and low western hills basked in warm Spring sun
sends a tongue of fire on her spine.

Until Helios cools, and Gaia's breeze commence,
turning in the air, mesquite and sage
a wild call,

The anamnesis of his long-ago child's sense,
Each place, figures moved on a wider stage
Carry the memories great and small
Of nights and jasmine's scent
Read the book of life page by page.

Awakened by endless nature's kiss
Touched by loving lips, and a song,
some of sorrow, some of bliss.
Peace above all, away the throng.

One soul-mate missed, the undying friend
To have and hold in glory to the end.
So many great friends gone
Lost dreams behind the bend.

A song-bird calls a mate home across the miles.
Beneath the wide, painted sky's fading light,
His faithful dog looks up to him and smiles,
Venus appears. A king's crown for this sight.

— Arthur Lamar Mitchell



PARADISE

Alone on Russian Hill, hunkered down, a
Sphinx in a garden, and shadowed stand of bamboo
thicket of fern, moss, waters trickling songs
to a *dyad*, and pair of *nymphs* crying on winds,
unrequited love, and desire tear the breast,
and tender rose, its thorn, the scent of blood
driving the world, a singular passion transfigured
poised, like a *praying mantis* gazing toward the great
Pacific dream, gathering late day rays of Autumnal sun
drifting among the homeless and holy demons alike,
ravaged & scorned, in our loveless *Babylon* of proud
working poor and poets battle-scarred, unwell
in ranks of tourists walking five abreast as in Kansas
not native style as we who exist here walk the hills and,
shifting streets, lined with gold, buried under its weight
flowing around the unadorned coffins of the fallen.

— Arthur Lamar Mitchell

Bio:

Arthur has a recently completed novel – ‘A Grotto in the Sea.’ Poetry set to music by five different composers- ‘Under the Winter Sky’ set to voice and chamber orchestra- music by Michael Moore. Eight poems set to music for voice and instruments; Ten songs, Natural World, concept album, ‘Garden of Eden,’ techno-ambient music by Martin Batista. The poem ‘The Book of Life,’ written for song ‘Rain-forest’ album – ‘Sax by the Bay’ -Music by Yil Oz, and other performers. Recently published poetry: Remembered Arts Journal; Nature Writing; Winterwolf Press. Lagan Online. Society of Classical Poets, Corvus Review, Ephemeral Elegies. Pushcart nomination.



The Catalpa Tree

Right now the subject is
the branch of the old catalpa tree,
curved like the crest of a wave
in a Japanese print;
outside my window each morning
mounted against different colored skies;
distinct from the previous day;
today a most beautiful blue
holding a wave
in the current of time
before it mingles with surf.

— Daniel Brown

Bio :

Daniel Brown is a retired Special Education teacher. His poems cover a variety of styles and subjects from Haiku to poems about music and social issues. Daniel's work has been published in Chronogram, The New Verse News Mightier:Poets For Social Justice and Haiku Society of America publications among others. He reads his poetry regularly on his You Tube channel "Poetry From Shooks Pond" and is working on his first collection Family Portraits in Verse. He lives in Red Hook, New York.

Woman Swimming in January

You're young, and you spend your time
in two worlds: this bewildering old house
once farmhouse on hilltop over apple orchards,
woods of wild out the back door, trapper shack
with iron pressure traps, chains,
mysterious bottles of unlabeled poison and wolfbane

and a mist beyond that, a toule fog we used to call it,
thin veil with occasional crossovers wandering out
like that all black leather motorcycle rider
crawling up to the porch from a wreck in the street,
looking for a phone...movie and TV astronauts,
undercover detectives, cowboys, gamblers, spies,
secret agent time-traveling mystic warrior semigods...

before this body, this name you live your life in,
now dead of winter sunlight slanting down the beach
with long shadows stretching out like visions of eternity,
and a woman with heat rising from her body
slowly entering the sea and swimming out...

— Douglas Cole

Bio:

Douglas Cole has published six collections of poetry, a novella called *Ghost*, and the highly praised, well-reviewed novel *The White Field*. His work has appeared in several anthologies as well as journals such as *The Chicago Quarterly Review*, *Poetry International*, *The Galway Review*, *Bitter Oleander*, *Chiron*, *Louisiana Literature*, *Slipstream*, as well Spanish translations of work (translated by Maria Del Castillo Sucerquia) in *La Cabra Montes*. He is a regular contributor to *Mythaxis*, an online journal, where in addition to his fiction and essays, his interviews with notable writers, artists and musicians such as Daniel Wallace (*Big Fish*), Darcy Steinke (*Suicide Blond*, *Flash Count Diary*) and Tim Reynolds (*T3* and *The Dave Matthews Band*) have been popular contributions <https://mythaxis.com/?s=douglas+Cole>. He has been nominated twice for a Pushcart and Best of the Net and received the Leslie Hunt Memorial Prize in Poetry. He lives and teaches in Seattle, Washington. His website is <https://douglastcole.com/>.

SeaScape

Hearing waves from a distance and
feeling sea breezes brush our faces,
it seemed a century before we
came to the ocean.

So blue and bright to our eyes
its rhythm broke chains of
unremarkable days.

Over cool sand we ran and you picked
three perfect shells which fit
inside each other. Swimming away in
that moving expanse below kiss
of fine spray and splashes.

With clouds cumulus we drifted while
gulls circled the island. Together we
discovered beds of morning glories
climbing soft dunes.

— Joan McNerney



Night

Fog horns sound though
air soaked in blackness.
All evening long listening
to hiss of trucks, cars.

Shadows brush across walls
as trees trace their branches.
Gathering and waving
together then swaying apart.

While I sleep, stars glide
through heaven making
their appointed rounds in
ancient sacred procession.

Dreams as smooth as rose
petals spill into my mind
growing wild patches in
this dark garden of night.

— Joan McNerney



Skyward

Another hot day at
the playground filled
with shrieks from kids
tumbling down slides.

Shouting boys hop on and
off the whirling carousel
as girls sing songs to
double dutch jump rope.

Waiting for my chance
on the swing. Finally
one is free as I clutch
the metallic link chains.

I pump myself up
pushing pass trees,
feeling cool breezes
brush over me.

All the noise is far below
as I rush towards
blue skies. My feet are
walking on clouds now.

— Joan McNerney

Bio :

Joan McNerney's poetry is found in many literary magazines such as Seven Circle Press, Dinner with the Muse, Poet Warriors, Blueline, and Halcyon Days. Four Bright Hills Press Anthologies, several Poppy Road Journals, and numerous Poets' Espresso Reviews have accepted her work. She has four Best of the Net nominations. Her latest titles are *The Muse in Miniature* and *Love Poems for Michael* both available on Amazon.com and cyberwit.net

The background of the page is a painting of a coastal scene. It features a rugged, rocky cliff face on the right side, rendered in shades of brown, tan, and blue. Below the cliff is a sandy beach with several small, colorful boats or structures. The water in the foreground is a mix of blue and green, with visible brushstrokes. The overall style is impressionistic and textured.

The Sea

The ocean is an ugly thing.
You drown in its embrace.
From its depth you don't escape
In animal disgrace.

You like a sunken galleon sink
And settle in the silt,
Investigated by the fish,
Eyes closed. Do what thou wilt.

And as the currents carry you
Beneath the sea and far,
You are extinguished like a lamp,
And buried, like a star.

— Joseph Hart

Bio:

Joseph Hart has a BA. He had poems published in small magazines, and was twice nominated for a Pushcart. He had two collections of poems accepted, one by Kelsay Books and the other by Cyberwit.



Page Torn from Tea Leaves

I am from the diary,
refusing to open
private crevices,
my smudged-over lies.

I am from the green tea,
preserving life, exposing truth,
the kiwi pear and pineapple
ginger of gardened pleasures.

I am the writer, homeless
child, the longing of a constant
tree pruned from brittle branches,
no longer distanced from the wind
breathing mass into the rib.

— Karen Carter

“Page Torn from Tea Leaves,” was previously published in Miller’s Pond, Fall 2020 and originally in ByLine Magazine, 2003.

Bio:

Karen Carter teaches high school English in Tyrrell County, a place of rural-remote beauty near the Outer Banks, North Carolina. She was the first female to earn a PhD in religion at Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia and is a seasoned teacher in post-secondary and secondary education. In the past year, her poems have appeared in *The MacGuffin*, *Eclectica*, *The Broadkill Review*, *Miller’s Pond*, *Wild Roof Journal*, *The Write Launch*, *Tiny Seed Literary Journal*, and *The Avalon Literary Review*.

Perfume Bottle Cotton

I stole your sweatshirt by mistake.
But you didn't stop me.
Did you want me to take it home
and soak it in my skin, press it
between the leaves of trees patterned
on my bed sheets?

This is what we will have to settle with;
 exchanging natural scents—
 giving ourselves reason to meet
 and breathe together again?
 breathe you in
 breathing in

Old cabin walls with outdated furniture—
Freshly-showered flesh hugged by that subtle, clean scent—
Towels still crunching from the bitter salt of the sea—

Everything here consumed through
 two small passageways that stimulate

the buzz of wild strawberries and blazing skies
all hidden in the pilled fabric of that gray sweatshirt.

I pull the neckline over my nose
 breathe.

— Kate Weaver

I'll have to find a time to give it back to you,
 but what if you stopped me?

Bio:

Kate Weaver is an English graduate student at John Carroll University. She's been writing poetry for six years. Published work includes: "Clear Skies" by Z Publishing House, Emerging Writers Series (2018); "Dauphin Island" by Z Publishing House, Emerging Writers Series (2019); a variety of poetry and short stories published by *Agora*. Awards: Jean S. Moore Award for Fiction (2018) and North Carolina College Media Association, Honorable Mention for "The Aftermath" (2017).



Dear Father

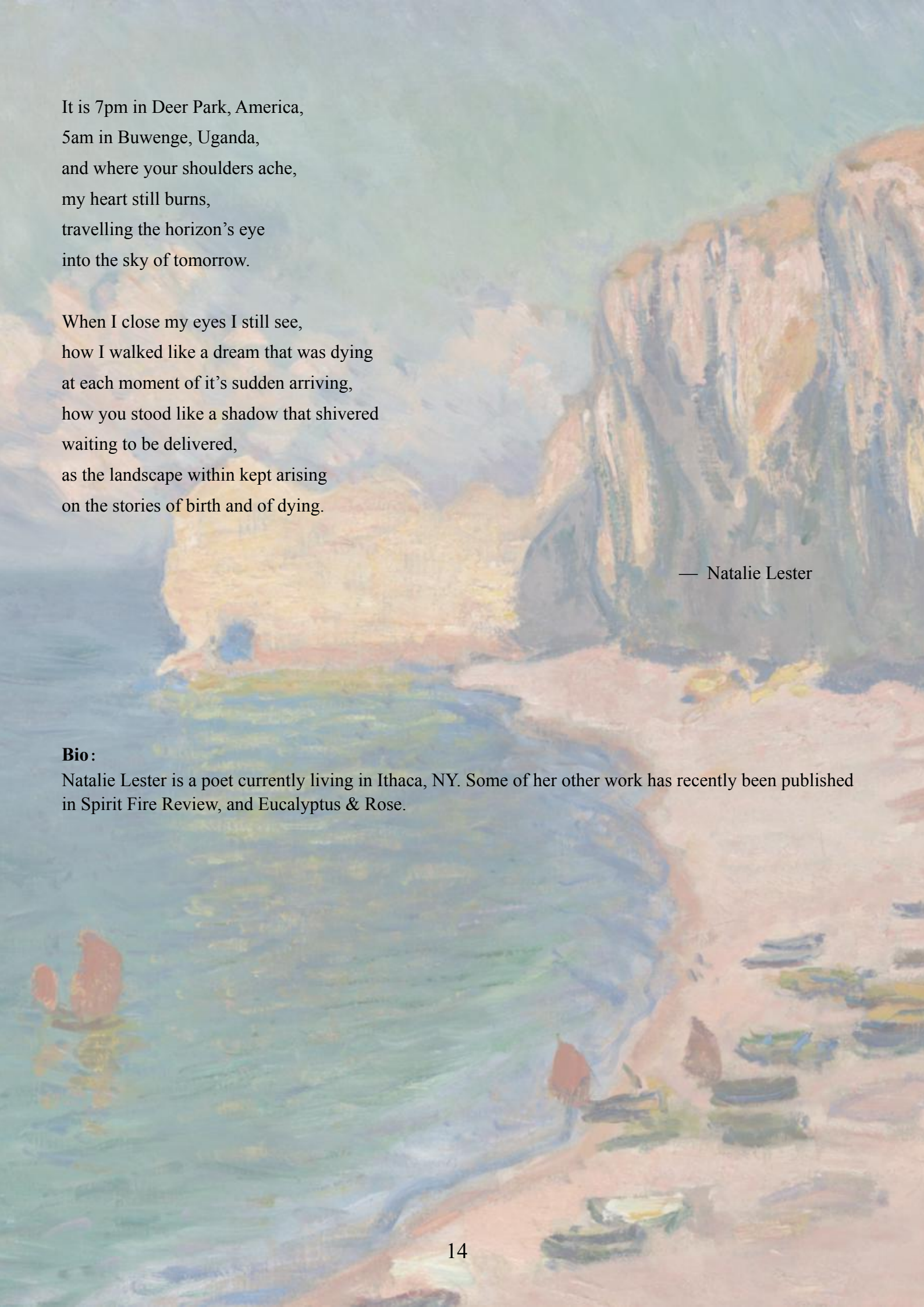
I am writing this poem for you.
It is 3am in the town of Buwenge, Uganda,
where I lie under a mosquito net,
weaving past and future into the web
of what is now becoming.

I am writing this poem because I want you
to hear how I love you.
Because a childhood of disappointment
and a woman living in silence,
cannot make something that is whole.

It is 5pm in the town of Deer Park, America.
You are leaving the office and driving home,
too tired to know what you feel anymore,
too tired to know whose voice belongs to whom.
And when you enter the house again,
another multitude of voices awaits you.

I have not forgotten the laughter of joy
that sprang from your hands
that first moved us,
or the heavy grip of your anger
that stunned and consumed us.

Beneath my net I listen to the low hum
of night turning towards morning.
I have not forgotten the cry
that opened between birth and first knowing,
the grief that would shape my heart's going,
or the space between your heart and mine,
stretched out like a gulf far and wide.

The background is a painterly illustration of a coastal scene. On the right, there are tall, rugged cliffs with vertical textures, rendered in shades of brown, tan, and blue. The sky above is a mix of light blue and greenish-blue. In the foreground, a sandy beach curves along the bottom right, with several small, colorful objects scattered on it. To the left, the ocean is depicted with textured brushstrokes in various shades of blue, green, and brown, suggesting waves and reflections. The overall style is impressionistic and textured.

It is 7pm in Deer Park, America,
5am in Buwenge, Uganda,
and where your shoulders ache,
my heart still burns,
travelling the horizon's eye
into the sky of tomorrow.

When I close my eyes I still see,
how I walked like a dream that was dying
at each moment of it's sudden arriving,
how you stood like a shadow that shivered
waiting to be delivered,
as the landscape within kept arising
on the stories of birth and of dying.

— Natalie Lester

Bio:

Natalie Lester is a poet currently living in Ithaca, NY. Some of her other work has recently been published in Spirit Fire Review, and Eucalyptus & Rose.



A Morning's Walk

My wife and I walk every morning,
a mile or so--
it's good for us old to walk in the cold,
or in the misty rain, it makes less the pain
that old age is wont to bring to bodies
which once burned bright with youth,
though now I wear braces on ankles,
braces on knees, and I walk slowly
with 2 canes, like an old skier,
sans snow, sans mountain.

We passed a tree whose leaves had
left behind summer's green and now
fall slowly, carefully one by one
in their autumnal splendor.

My wife stopped me--
listen she said-- but
I heard nothing—hush,
stand still she said,
and I tried hard to
hear the mystery....

Finally I asked her, knowing my hearing
less than hers (too many rock concerts
in my heedless youth), what we listen for?

She looked up at my old head, and smiled--
only she could hear the sound each leaf made
as it rippled the air in falling to the ground.

— Nolo Segundo

Bio :

Nolo Segundo is the pen name of L.J. Carber, 74, a retired teacher who in his 8th decade has been published in 41 literary journals in the US, UK, Canada, Romania, and India; in 2020 a trade publisher released a book length collection, *The Enormity Of Existence*, and in 2021 a second book, *Of Ether And Earth*--with all royalties going to Doctors Without Borders.

The background is a painting of a hazy, mountainous landscape. The scene is dominated by a winding road that curves through a valley. To the right, a large, craggy mountain rises, its surface rendered in warm, earthy tones of ochre, sienna, and terracotta, with some darker, shadowed areas. In the foreground, a river or stream flows through the valley, its surface depicted with cool, blue and green brushstrokes. The overall atmosphere is one of a thick, atmospheric haze or fog, which softens the details and creates a sense of depth and mystery. The brushwork is visible throughout, giving the painting a textured, expressive quality.

DELHI HAZE (On the road to Agra)

Speeding along a roadway
Through the Delhi haze
Trying to make up time lost:
Flight canceled due to fog

Vacationers out to see the Taj
Van's horn set to blaring
Hurling to our pleasure
We can't see ahead.

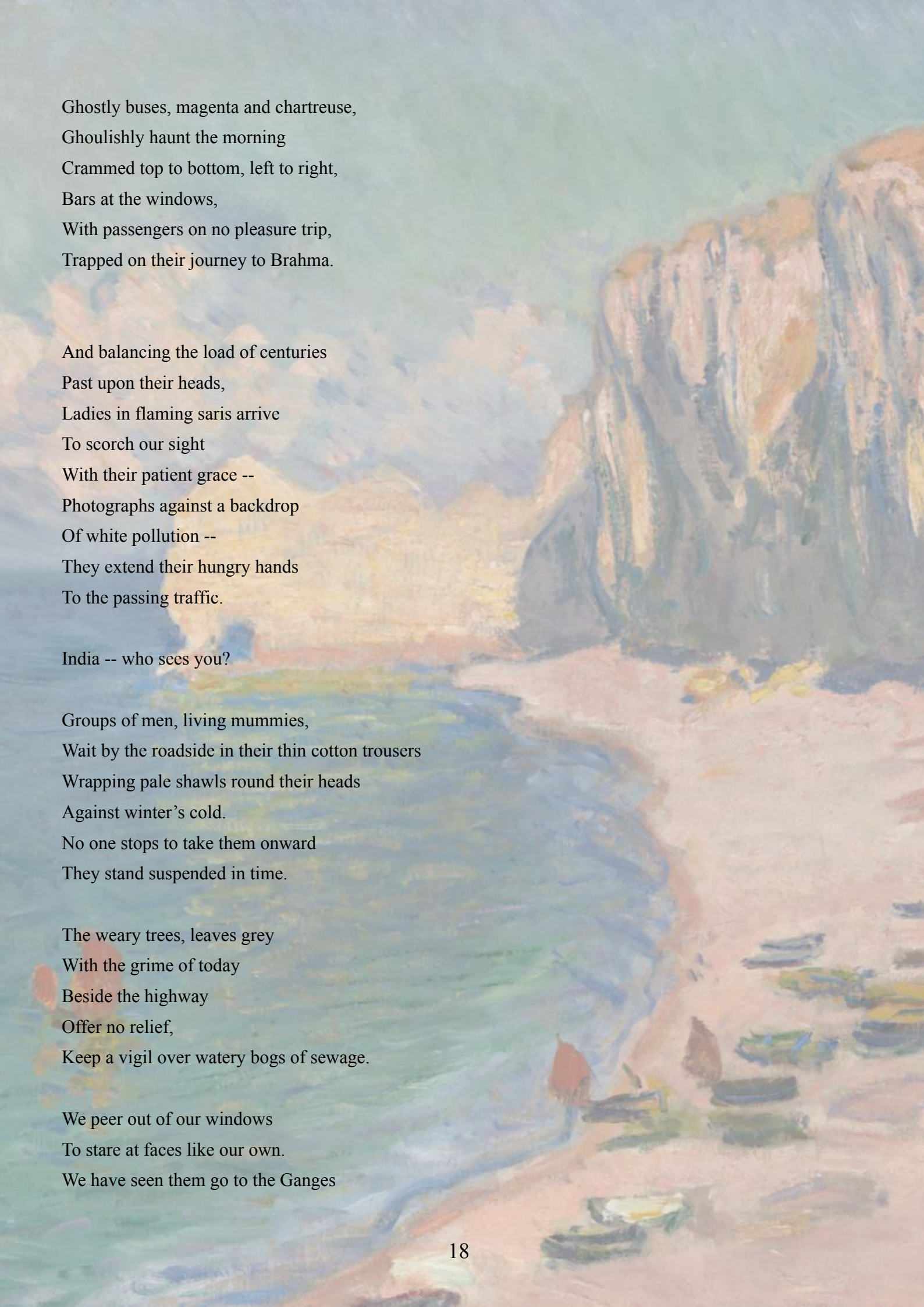
Out of the smoke deep as a dream
Visions appear and disappear
As from the clouds of a crystal ball:

Lofty camels emerge pulling
Splintered wooden carts --
In what century are we traveling?

Yaks gleaming mahogany
Arise from the dust
And cross our path.

Beside countless straw shacks
Men warm their sooty rags
Over open fires that spark scarlet
As blood in the dawning.

One after another, bicyclists
Pedal out of the mist
And as quickly fall back
Swallowed up in Kali's belly
Unable to ascend the crest of the hill
To touch the future.

The background is a textured, impressionistic painting. It depicts a landscape with a river or stream in the lower left, a road or path leading towards the right, and a large, craggy rock formation or cliff face on the right side. The colors are muted and earthy, with shades of blue, green, brown, and pinkish tones. The brushstrokes are visible, giving it a sense of movement and depth.

Ghostly buses, magenta and chartreuse,
Ghoulishly haunt the morning
Crammed top to bottom, left to right,
Bars at the windows,
With passengers on no pleasure trip,
Trapped on their journey to Brahma.


And balancing the load of centuries
Past upon their heads,
Ladies in flaming saris arrive
To scorch our sight
With their patient grace --
Photographs against a backdrop
Of white pollution --
They extend their hungry hands
To the passing traffic.

India -- who sees you?

Groups of men, living mummies,
Wait by the roadside in their thin cotton trousers
Wrapping pale shawls round their heads
Against winter's cold.
No one stops to take them onward
They stand suspended in time.

The weary trees, leaves grey
With the grime of today
Beside the highway
Offer no relief,
Keep a vigil over watery bogs of sewage.

We peer out of our windows
To stare at faces like our own.
We have seen them go to the Ganges

The background is a textured, impressionistic painting of a coastal scene. It features a sandy beach in the foreground with several small, colorful boats or objects scattered along the water's edge. The water is rendered in shades of blue and green, with visible brushstrokes. In the background, there are rugged, reddish-brown cliffs or mountains under a pale, hazy sky. The overall style is reminiscent of Impressionist or Post-Impressionist art.

To be washed clean.
But what are their sins
That they must be reborn --
Endless generations of the poor?

The glass pane is between us--
Eyes averted. Who are the sinners?

— Norma Felsenthal Gerber

Bio :

English Teacher and former Executive Editor Product Management/ Photographer with 9 books on Amazon. Published poetry / fiction and nonfiction in numerous journals. Journals , including Ariel Chart/ Eastern Iowa Review/ Quaranzine

The background is a textured, impressionistic painting of a coastal scene. It features a river or inlet flowing from the top center towards the bottom right. The water is rendered in shades of blue, green, and white, with visible brushstrokes. On the right side, there are tall, rugged cliffs in warm tones of orange, red, and brown. In the foreground, a sandy or rocky shore is depicted with soft, blended colors. A small boat is visible in the lower right, near the shore. The overall style is painterly and atmospheric.

Sky Flight

A thin, red haze held the moon
on a swing of clouds.

I dreamed of talking in tongues,
making millions,
my stream at last clear.

I spruced up porches
to give cool in the heat,
love in flower boxes.

Hell hollering a momentary lapse
from blue skies.

The rest of my life had been wrong.
I woke

speaking English
with my tears,
a symphony I understood.

I begged a blessing,
bestowal of blue.

— Phil Flott

Bio :

Phil Flott, a retired Catholic priest, recently published in Passager, Pensive Journal, Vita Poetica, Sangam Magazine.

The background of the page is a soft, impressionistic painting of a coastal scene. It features a river or inlet winding through a landscape with warm, earthy tones of orange, yellow, and brown. In the foreground, there are several small boats or structures on the water, rendered with visible brushstrokes. The overall style is painterly and evocative, with a focus on light and color rather than sharp detail.

Rose Sannasardo

(1915—1989)

My daughter sees my mother
looking out at her from my
four-year-old granddaughter's eyes.
She told Payton, "I see
my grandma in your eyes."
then realized this must have
puzzled a child so young. I
understand my daughter's searching
for my mother, gone so many years.

We hold on to our dead finding them
in another's slender fingers or laughter,
in shrug or gait or tilted head. We
resurrect their recipes, lavish praise
on a sauce or dessert as if they
can still hear. We use their words,
defying death and fashion, to advise children
of the worth of *a bird in the hand*,
remind them *blood is thicker than water*
or say we are *on pins and needles* as we
wait for a first grandchild to be born,
at times surprised when their words
slip unbidden from our mouths,
as if they have conspired to be present
in this absence we feel, this union
of fell necessity and devoted choice.

If my mother were still alive,
I would tell her the day
her granddaughter found her
in the eyes of her great-granddaughter,
at dinner that night Payton asked,
"What was her name?"

— Stephen Granzyk

Rosemary

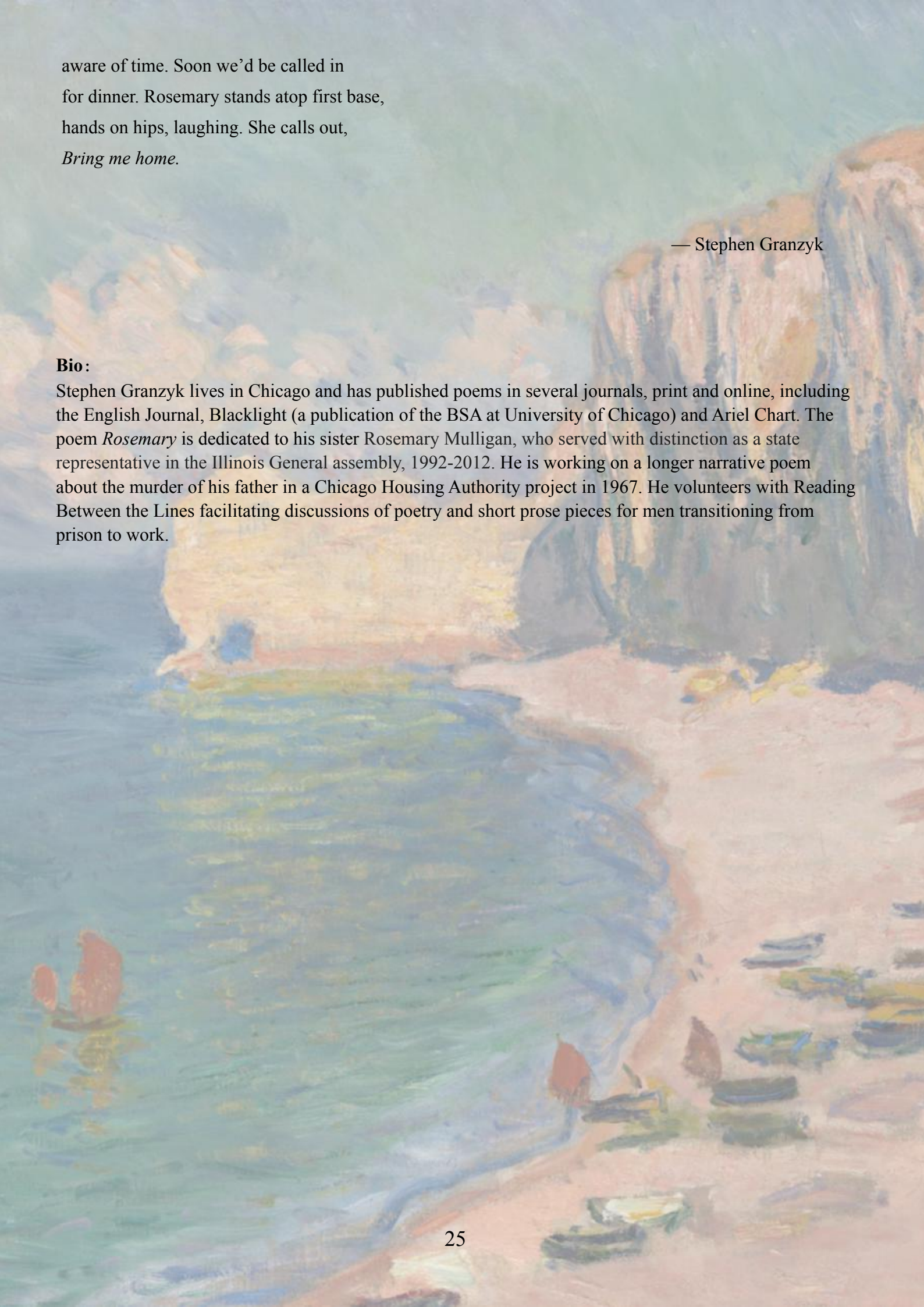
(1941-2014)

The poem *Rosemary* is dedicated to Granzyk's sister Rosemary Mulligan, who served with distinction as a state representative in the Illinois General assembly, 1992-2012. Her legislative work focused in particular on her commitment to addressing the needs of women and children.

I worried where she was as I waited
for my sister in the vestibule of Mary,
Seat of Wisdom, after Sunday Mass.
She'd gone to get the car in a summer
downpour so I wouldn't get drenched.
I was 12, she 16, with her first license.
Driving around the block to pick me up,
she had reached for an umbrella sliding off
the seat, veered into a parked car. A disruption
of small consequence in two lives navigating
the storms in our home. Both of us lifelong
on alert, forever scanning the horizon.

By middle age, tardiness had become a symptom.
Those insidious siblings--depression and anxiety--
had ginned up an obsession with the rush of
untethered thoughts cycloning through her mind,
crowding out the space for family—at first
bewildered by her failure to manage time,
near the end, barely able to watch her sinking
in a hoarder's sea of debris, saving everything
while she herself was beyond rescue,
overcome by dangers she couldn't see
because of the ones she imagined. Until neglect
stopped her heart.

As children, we played baseball in a vacant lot,
uneven terrain that tilted up east to west.
I see her running uphill toward first.
I'm downhill, headed up to bat, squinting
into the glare of a setting sun. Neither of us

An impressionistic painting of a coastal scene. The foreground shows a sandy beach with several small, colorful objects, possibly shells or pieces of driftwood, scattered across it. The water is rendered with soft, blended colors of blue, green, and yellow, suggesting a calm sea. In the background, there are large, craggy rock formations in shades of brown, tan, and blue, with a small blue opening or cave visible in one of the rocks. The overall style is soft and painterly, with visible brushstrokes and a focus on light and color rather than sharp detail.

aware of time. Soon we'd be called in
for dinner. Rosemary stands atop first base,
hands on hips, laughing. She calls out,
Bring me home.

— Stephen Granzyk

Bio:

Stephen Granzyk lives in Chicago and has published poems in several journals, print and online, including the English Journal, Blacklight (a publication of the BSA at University of Chicago) and Ariel Chart. The poem *Rosemary* is dedicated to his sister Rosemary Mulligan, who served with distinction as a state representative in the Illinois General assembly, 1992-2012. He is working on a longer narrative poem about the murder of his father in a Chicago Housing Authority project in 1967. He volunteers with Reading Between the Lines facilitating discussions of poetry and short prose pieces for men transitioning from prison to work.

The background is a textured, painterly image of a landscape. It features a river or stream in the foreground, with a sandy or rocky bank on the right. In the background, there are tall, craggy cliffs or mountains. The colors are muted and earthy, with a lot of texture and brushstrokes visible, giving it a sense of depth and atmosphere. The overall tone is somewhat somber and contemplative.

Felt

Dust covets surfaces
of sun faded satin. This is the
texture touch is left with: felt.
It's suede-plush as some doe
just brushing one's fingers before disappearing,
becoming a glade.

Here intricacy flourishes
like shavings of thin metal.
Ages smooth them. Light sifts.
Through the very air stagnancy is ignited,
revealing details, depths, the gleaming myriad layers...

Dawn comes to such facets, a room sheeted, its
furniture, its paintings boxed
under wraps. This is a sigh
settled setting and it waits
either for the day when some move
shall take place or for those
who have gone to come suddenly back.

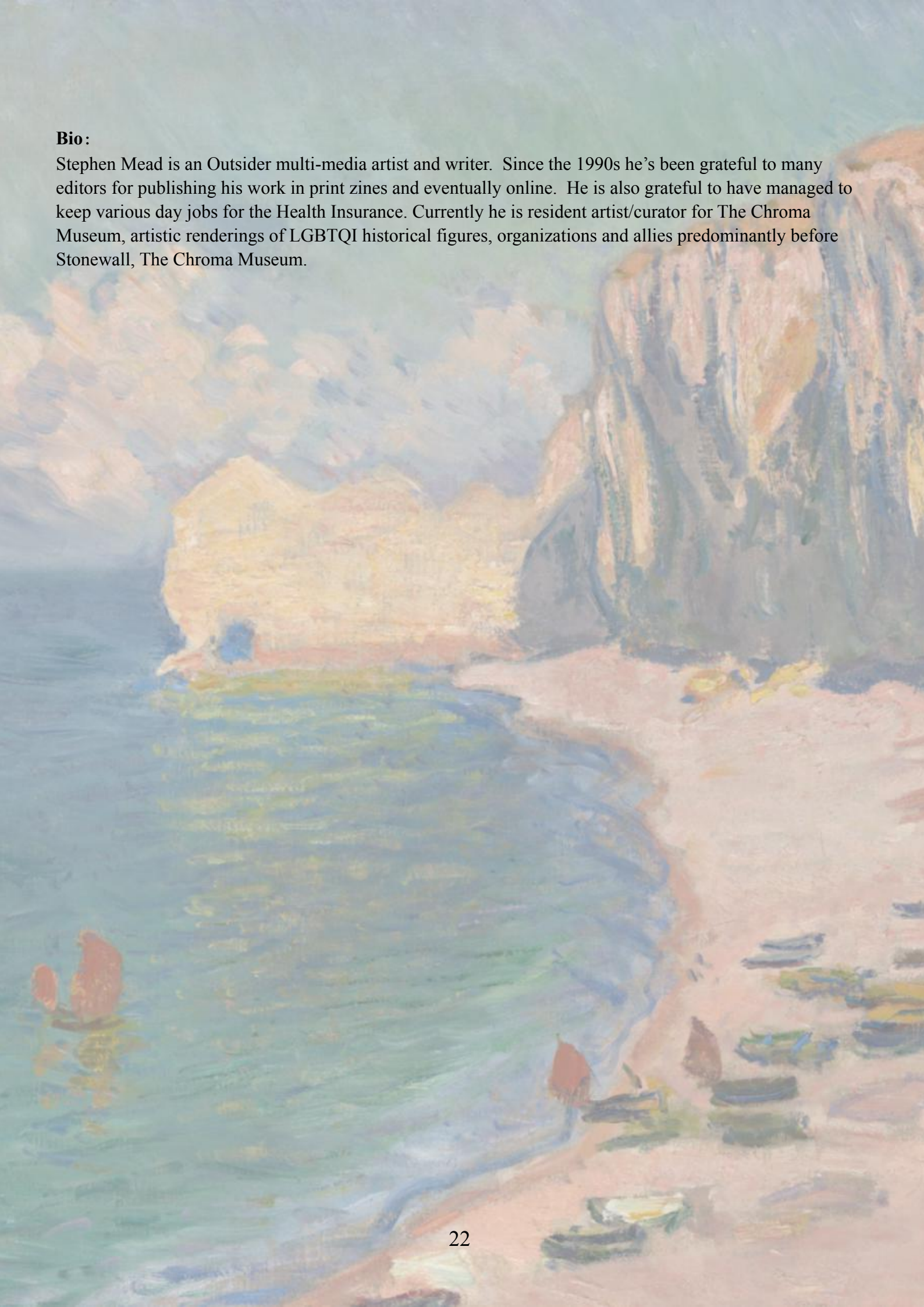
The impression is classic Goth,
steeped in the intrigue
of any closed off residence.

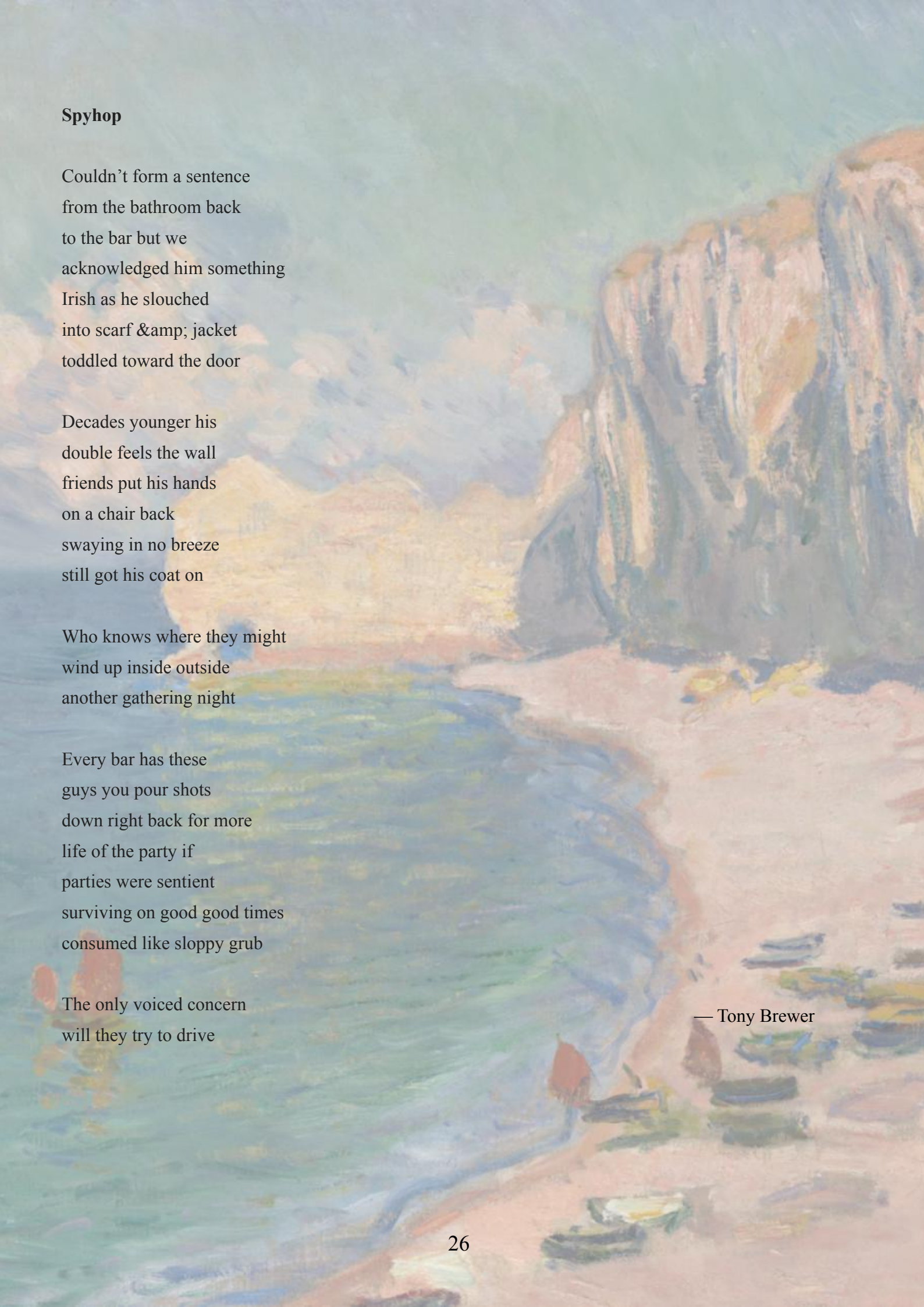
Listen. Look.
Feel breath stirring images?
They are invisible but shocking
with sensuality's understated spark charge,
that static current, and the stories it is full of.

— Stephen Mead

Bio:

Stephen Mead is an Outsider multi-media artist and writer. Since the 1990s he's been grateful to many editors for publishing his work in print zines and eventually online. He is also grateful to have managed to keep various day jobs for the Health Insurance. Currently he is resident artist/curator for The Chroma Museum, artistic renderings of LGBTQI historical figures, organizations and allies predominantly before Stonewall, The Chroma Museum.





Spyhop

Couldn't form a sentence
from the bathroom back
to the bar but we
acknowledged him something
Irish as he slouched
into scarf & jacket
toddled toward the door

Decades younger his
double feels the wall
friends put his hands
on a chair back
swaying in no breeze
still got his coat on

Who knows where they might
wind up inside outside
another gathering night

Every bar has these
guys you pour shots
down right back for more
life of the party if
parties were sentient
surviving on good good times
consumed like sloppy grub

The only voiced concern
will they try to drive

— Tony Brewer

Rust Can't Sleep

And aren't we breathing
red air when we take
years into our lungs
oxidized to blood
behind lidded eyes
dreaming at the sun?

For many a dream
is merely the start
the pile of dust
empires feed on vampires
hidden in dusk

Others snail away
forbidden to respond
capturing the light
& holding breath
easy as a pen

The iron works
the industry fades
we – all black
in the night

— Tony Brewer

Bio:

TONY BREWER is a poet, live sound effects artist, and event producer. He is executive director of the Spoken Word Stage at the 4th Street Arts Festival, co-producer of the Writers Guild Spoken Word Series, and president of the National Audio Theatre Festivals. His writing has appeared in *Ryder Magazine*, *Laureate*, *Seppuku Quarterly*, *Voices from the Fire*, *Rye Whiskey Review*, *Fevers of the Mind*, *Northwest Indiana Literary Journal*, *Pulp Poets Press*, *The Beatnik Cowboy*, *Punk Noir Magazine*, and elsewhere and he has been nominated twice for a Pushcart Prize. He frequently collaborates with experimental audio collective *Urban Deer Recording Cvlt* and he has produced and recorded for *KKFI*, *KOPN*, and *WFHB* community radio and *WFIU* public radio as well as *NPR Playhouse* and the *HEAR Now Audio Fiction & Arts Festival*. His books include: *The Great American Scapegoat*, *Little Glove in a Big Hand*, *Hot Type Cold Read*, *Homunculus*, and *The History of Projectiles*. He also appears in the anthologies *A Linen Weave of Bloomington Poets*, *And Know This Place: Poetry of Indiana*, *Writers Resist: Hoosier Writers Unite*, *Death by Punk*, and on the *Urban Deer* album *Paris Suite*. Tony has been offering Poetry On Demand at coffeehouses, museums, cemeteries, churches, bars, and art and music festivals for over a decade and he is a founding member of the poetry performance group *Reservoir Dogwoods*.



The End.