Rufous City Review

Masthead

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Introduction

Welcome to the eighth issue of RCR which owes its girth to the Submission Bombers, a group of writers saturated with encouragement and support for their fellows. In parts inspiring and overwhelming, the Submission Bombers were gathered together via Laura E. Davis, the editor of Weave, with the intention of “taking large scale action” by submitting en masse to publications in want of diverse voices.

Thus, dear reader, you will find in these pages the marginalized, the sick and scared, the small-voiced and the slightly deranged. Yet, make no mistake; the poems aren’t solely afflicted with loneliness and despair. There is hope here too, however quiet, however hidden, and it is worth the search. Enjoy your stay.
Jill Khoury

Brain on TV

Today will be the second MRI
to illuminate my brain and the space
behind my eye sockets,
called orbits.
I ask, can we have an anniversary party?
The tech says there will be no sedation.
*Lie very still. Try not to move your eyes.*

My head is strapped.
  *Already nerves in my neck
fire electric, *pop* pop* pop*.*

The light knocking begins and soon
that other noise:
  *the one like a saw,
a mill, a drill, boring through the skull’s
center to take a sample.*
  *My eyeballs convulse
beneath their lids. They conduct their own
private rave
  *while ghost hunters
with night vision cameras
try to catch it on video.*

*Nystagmus, involuntary quiver
that happens only from hard drugs
or damage to the cerebro-vestibular
lathe
  that turns
your body in space*

No one told me this. I had to look it up
myself. As a child I was exhorted to
  *quit flicking your eyes
(slapped)*

I took all these facts and dreamt on them.
Tiny planets. Ungentle orbits.
The most recent doctor said

We have new technologies.
surgery

I backed farther into the chair.
The room went dim.

I said

It’s too late
to look like the other kids.

Later in the car, I text Katherine.
This time
I have my brain
on DVD.

She writes back.
Maybe we can
watch your brain
on the projector,
throw popcorn.
Exit Interview

When I first heard *terminal*, I could only think of airports, of how journeys begin, of crowds who rush forward with their baggage, eager to reach final destinations.

How to describe the transition – a flow, no, more like a faucet’s slow drip needing the grip of a wrench to stem its little losses. I forget my body more each day.

I tell you, it is not things that I miss. When I see something blue in the far corner of my vision – a bird, a vagabond piece of sky - I think it is his eyes. It never is.
Joy Ladin

Evening
Sunset flashes through tobacco barn slats,
fireflies through unmown grass.

Bowed black mass, a horse's neck.
In a pool of incandescence, a woman with shock-white hair

bends to a task on patio flags.
Dim stars thicken above her head.
Kristin LaTour

This Long Winter

what she meant when she said *hurt*
was the wind was screaming through her branches

and when he said *quiet*
he meant the silence that lives between lathe and plaster

the snow falling on the pines
and the nest left bare and dangling

her lips stained with wine
his hand clenching the fork

what she meant by *feed*
what he meant by *full*

the darkness sliding over the table
candles not lit and the light burned out

her muffled breath
his pursed lips
To Love the Lion Tamer

is so easy, you’d recoil
from chair legs, balance feet
and palms raw atop a scaffold
pyramid just so his eyes
could command your cells
to be still; so you could numb
your limbs and lips dreaming
the scar dripping down
his ribs is the Huallaga River
in Peru.

Unfortunately for you
such a man requires
the acrobat, with her chalked
starfish hands,
her corseted body
that can hold a man’s weight
mid-air.

Do not tell him you were traded
for four good horses. That your arms
tanned faster in the fields
than the men’s did.
The first time you shaved
the flesh peeled right off your jaw

as if your face were
an over-ripe plum.
And still, it grew back.
One of these is permanent
as a slap
best left to grow wild.
Christianne Balk and I Discuss Snipe Hunting while Reading Her Book *Bindweed*

It's one of those talks that go nowhere,
a goose chase of a talk
so late at night the stars have drifted
beyond the light of their lanterns.

I never knew a snipe existed, though you swear
your poem is proof --

> snipe-punctured mud shoals . . .

you wrote.

“I’ve seen them,”
you insist.

That’s not proof.

You draw me a bird on a napkin,
a fat sandpiper
or maybe a hunchbacked crow.

I snuck new kids at night
to hunt snipe in the woods
deeper than the center of a tootsie pop.

*Back in ten minutes,* I promised,
snickered, disappeared.

They returned next morning
scratched as cat-raked pigeons,
swearing.

They had to break through
the black brush like bulls.
They had to listen for cars.

We don’t even talk about loss tonight,
though that’s what your book is about.

We don’t want to touch
on your dead husband,
my sick wife lying
two oceans away
on a hospital gurney.

What can we say?
There’s enough grief on any night
to lose ourselves in,

enough nights to wander
through bindweed and chiggers,

snipes above us on the dark branches
cucking like hens in their sleep.
Chauna Craig

Open Range

Under this sky, faded and frayed, bleached by a long, rainless stretch, my seams unravel. The meadowlark’s trill is distant, mere hum. This sky is no blanket, and it cannot smother the persistent wind that starts somewhere before horizon and ends nowhere I can see.

Atoms from space move through us, carve us from us.

Can you rip a hole in a hole? How else is anti-matter born? I name this empty. And without.

Wind-rubbed grasses battle. Hawks loop aloft, their hollow feathers rising. Flimsy and unanchored, nothing stakes a claim here.

You are gone and I want—now—only this: a scouring wind and the fringe of seeding grass teasing my fingers, like the ends of your hair I once squeezed in my palm. Softly splitting.
wait,

burn

masks,
Each Additional Word at 15¢ Each Beyond This Point
Leah Sewell

**Fast Turn**

At fifteen
with no warning
still dressed
in my school uniform
I turned

drank on Water Street

It was right there
It was the drugs

I dry-wopt into the cracked
mirror in an empty warehouse
on South Main
cheeks like my mother’s
and father’s stern brow

Swam in the filthy
river during the festival

fireworks
domineered
bled and furrowed
from my extremities

Boys roared
and whistled
from cars

Under the inside-out
flag tented over
his bed, the soldier
held my thighs

Smoke treaded August air

I fell and bit
ballast in a train yard

tried to ride blind
hoped for El Paso

I pivoted all too
suddenly
I fell
into the campfire
laughing

like a tree
I cracked
sideways and fell
in the woods and rolled

and I flew over the edge
into a dry crick

Breathless
I looked up

The stars steadied
a meadowlark trilled

I was ready
and covered in silt
Alexandra Smyth

Splash Time

The whistle blows at fifteen past the hour signaling fifteen minutes of paradise.

Six Adonises in red standard-issue swimming trunks line up, young bucks offering sacrifice to the god of Safety.

They breathe in chlorine and h2h, exhale SPF 15. One by one sunbaked bodies ascend the ladder

the blessings of youth on display: all angle and plane. I like the one with the chipped front tooth best.

Knobby knees take their turn swaggering down the plank, board buckling slightly under their weight.

They bounce once, twice, then slice the air, the body tucks itself into a fist.

The descent is silence.

The fist punches the water. The deep end atomizes. He emerges, shaking droplets from invisible antlers.
Caterpillar Love

Life has handed her an ass-pocket full of ugly, and she’s ready for change, so she pours next month’s water bill into the small of her back in the shape of an insect. She smiles as psychedelic wings peek out of her denim waistband, and flutter beautiful, beautiful, beautiful in tattooed ink while she walks. She’s tired of crawling, and hopes to float pretty for a while—It’s easy to love pretty, she thinks, but Easy and Love are strangers chasing different dreams, and who she is holds her heels like a shadow.

I want to cradle a caterpillar in my palm and let it inch its way up my wrist; I want to feel the cool tickle of its fuzz in the crook of my elbow. I want to crawl inside its chrysalis and whisper in its ear, I love your cocoon.
Gemma Cooper-Novack

**Anaconda Sunrise**

Hours of driftwood lattice the beach where rocks once trembled and waves hissed at our thighs, diamonds on their backs flickering in the moonlight. Lowhanging mist burns off the sand, crackles in midair. Our muscles snapped, exposed throats pulsing ready to swallow, whimpers glistening in the buoy-light a few sharkspans away. My bare feet brand the coastline, scraps of china and cutlery bulge dormant in the sand. The whitecaps flicked their tongues and you were coiled up against me, and I could scale the years between in a single bound.
Ellen McGrath Smith

The Lotus as Absinthe

“Yes,” said the girl. “Everything tastes of licorice. Especially all the things you’ve waited so long for, like absinthe.” – Ernest Hemingway, “Hills Like White Elephants”

To have waited so long for an Afternoon Death

* To have never ingested true wormwood

* To have sat at the edge of a precipice watching the sun slide down all the while holding on to your very own crumbling horizon

* To have swallowed your tongue ‘til tomorrow

* To have longed for a so-long to macerate into hello-I-have-missed-you-more-than-I-can-say

* To have stayed in one place inside bliss-bower-green inside clouds that were portents of nothing

* To eat symbolist flowers plucked from their evil surroundings

* To see stars fill the sky like the bowl of a spoon full of holes from your breathing to heaven from earth

* To give birth to the breath of the moment each moment while tasting what only the lonely who love their aloneness can taste.
Alexandra Quintanilla

**Crisis**

Pour me a cup
of your happiness—
the one from the other
day that steamed and smelled
of cinnamon and laughter.

I feel as if I’m falling
through a Viking’s beard.
That is to say I’m having
a hard time. I keep
getting stuck. I go
nowhere and it is dark.

I long for what I can’t have,
for the person I will never
be like the red carnation
dying in a wine bottle
striving to be a meaningful rose.

Remember that kaleidoscope
I won at the fair?
The shards of glass danced
together and away and revealed
these dark fragments of myself.
The ones you always knew were there.
Karen Locascio

Our Lady of Implosion

I’m gravity
universe my uterus
eggs of stars

I’m the wingless sky
barren as a house

I’m a river of poison
falling clear
from your cloud-beard

I’m alchemy
lungs drowning in a jar

I’m a meat scrap
uneaten
Kathleen Kirk

**Glimpse of Red**

If I fell down and the pony stepped on my chest—
breaking me open—what would fly out?

I’d call it a bird—this release of my best
self, rubied & winged, unpinioned by doubt

or the rude cage of bone, tent of flesh.
Let it be glimpsed & counted in the birder’s

book, as cardinal or tanager, or one humming…
& let those who thought they saw think they heard.

That’s how I’d hide in the world
this next red incarnation—as a familiar

animal, of intricate nest. Still
who would hear the lyrical call—

water or laughter? And who’d see the helix
twisting, rusted, Audenesque.
Letters to My Mother

1.
Today I want to say to the world:
I write to my mother, but she is dead.
I carry the secret like a pregnancy.
I walk through the city, the evidence
hidden in a handbag.
But I am not in the city today. And in
the empty forests, I can say the inadmissible.
While the scent rises from the evergreens
in the sun, as it would
from a woman’s body, I tell the passing branches:
my mother is not dead to me.

And this, so close
to what was our Montana house;
the neighboring asphalt plant
is now a houseless subdivision, smoothly paved,
but empty. Where the entrance was
there is a Baptist church. Smoothly paved.

Looking out over the ridge, soil rich
and rocky, sandblasted grass grey from dust,
velvet mullein and St. John’s wort a yellow smear
one pause by one, I think of other summers.
I was just as hungry, but it was a different hunger.
When you are young and do not know the answers
for the questions you are asking, why–
you are hungry for the answers. But when the time
has come when you have learned the all, why–
you are hungry for the ignorance. I, today, am hungry
for the child who prowled these same woods
cold in the dark,
listening for her mother
calling her home.

2.
I like to think of you as a young girl
because the fact remains, you were a very good girl.
In photos, your ribbons and cat's-eye glasses
do not match the woman who has raised me.
I suppose it was this girl you drank to get away from because when you sobered up, she was no longer there.

I used to look at my grandmother, look at you look at her, and think how it must feel to see your mother old, muted, underneath a starched white bib.

3.
MOTHER--
It is my father's side of the family what had the longevity, Auntie Bea only gave her mind up at 90, and lived a good five years after that. You did not outlive your mother.

On the roof of your house, which was your mother's house, I walked up and looked at the tiles. It was a moment of a sun between rains, and on the tiles, the moss was clinging-lime and saffron, fur upon the red sandpaper.

No law counsel for your house. I am squatting in it, really. I have closed your door.

Before I did I took the vodka that you thought you were hiding from behind the armchair and I dumped it, with the mixers, in the drain, and the smell was of laboratories and dissection, cheap perfume and cutting words.

4.
Dear mother,
I met a boy yesterday who had never been photographed in the face. I did. He has an Irish smile, Irish laugh lines, and I captured them, and gave them to him.

He has told me he misses my eyes, (which were closed, most of the time). I do not show him my poems. He is too kind; he saw my scarred arms and could not guess what happened.

What a brazen loneliness you left me here to kill. I sought to fill it with his kisses and succeeded, for a while.
5.
Mother,
Today, while on my bicycle,
I saw an old man
pruning roses.
Castoff petals made a pink skirt
at his feet.
His shirt was untucked
and the tails hugged the strap
of his suspenders.
I saw these things because they were new.
I had never seen an old man
pruning roses.
At your house, the transplants
from your cousins in Alberta
bloom and bloom, but the blossoms
never last.
When it storms, the rain tears at them,
mercilessly.
Angele Ellis

Tristes Tropiques

While I complain of being able to glimpse no more than the shadow of the past, I may be insensitive to reality as it is taking shape at this very moment…

Claude Levi-Strauss, Tristes Tropiques

1.

At my doorstep, an insect impersonates a brown leaf. One feeler, like a comb’s lost tooth, gives him away. I look again. Glossed folded wings ringed like bark, or a striated shell from the darkening beach. Hiding in plain sight on the concrete, he’s out of time. He can teach me patience in these tristes tropiques.

On the veranda, poles of polished banana wood shoulder thatched roof like bronzed caryatids. A ceremonial mask crowned with parrots scowls in profile. Its beaked disdain reminds me of my father in a mood. When les Arabes were clever, they traveled everywhere. I need an astrolabe—my flashlight can’t navigate these smeared southern stars.

2.

Porto de Cortez is lost, landlocked in poverty. The highway that took seventeen years to unwind left Cortez behind—treeless square languid with dust, yellowed frame hotel ringed by pre-Aztec spheres too heavy with heat and history to steal again. In situ, they aligned with stars in the changeless sky.

Utter flatness of storefronts, half-boarded like an Old West town, rode hard and hung up wet. Fifty-pound sacks of rice wheeled to the mercado, brushing like bloated bugs past a beggar, babbling and high. A cashier, white belt slung low on her jeans, confers with a security guard, holster at his side.

Only at the seviche stand do I feel at home, back to roadside stands of childhood (FRESH TOMATOES,
CORN, GOAT MILK FUDGE. The bored pretty teenager serving in tank top and cutoffs, wishing for someone cute to come along. I say *por favor, gracias*, clutch two cups of lime-cured fish, swimming in Styrofoam as if alive.

3.

In Sunday’s paper, the before and after of earthquake: scenic and forensic shots spread side by side. A road through forest vanished, a hotel collapsed, a hill divided into canyon. A school reborn as morgue, carefully matched shoes of the dead cobbled together. *Los zapatos de los muertes*, mute as a monument in bronze.

I was writing the word *earthquake* at my pasteboard desk when shockwaves rattled my chair. One-twenty, CST. The ninth day of January. Recalling how my Nonna on an ordinary morning watched a terracotta field split open like the lip of a rubber change purse, then snap shut, burying the hapless moans of a spotted Italian cow.

Danny, reading English at the bar — serving break — looked up to decipher the weirdly vibrating palms. His bones remembered. Limon, Costa Rica, 1991: as a boy of three, he saw his familiar street heave like a sea serpent, stone crabs scuttle inside cracked houses. Animal panic seizing everything, even the rock-solid adults.
Cedar Water

I pulled an ancient tombstone out of a lake.
It was a double stone but only his name
was carved in.

Did she find someone else she’d rather be buried with?
I set it on the ground and lay down like it was mine. It loomed
above my head like an idea.

I’d been warned against touching water,
but now it coated both arms,
the side of my cheek, my neck near the jugular.
Someone once asked me what tannin means. I told them
it means, “ruined."
I looked like something enormous licked me
with its tobacco-stained tongue.

Brown water warps eyesight. I only see the edges
of objects underneath. I could build a complete gruesome town
with its contents, a cursed purchase.
A pillow embroidered with a stillborn baby’s name.
A yearbook whose owner marked the date
that each classmate died.

The local museum dredges the lake to stock its exhibits.
They forged records, so people won’t think it is unlucky
to visit. The name plates lie.

The lake bed pebbles mixed with pennies. Coins for travelers’ eyes, stones
for their boots, pockets, mouths.

Years later, the museum director saw the tombstone photos
on my camera, scolded me
for stealing. I betrayed myself
when I reached in. Am I the saddest artifact? That water
painted the rest of my life.
Silent Movie Dating Tips For Ladies

Accept only wilted or rumpled flowers. Pies and banana peels are aphrodisiacs.

No matter what you actually answer, the intertitles will read “No” the first time he proposes, and then “Yes” at the end of the movie.

When he gets arrested to get your attention, admire his name in large print in the newspaper.

Anarchists assume the role of Cupid: tossing bombs instead of arrows.

Check fence knotholes for love notes.

Wear bobbed hair under your ample ringleted wig. Beneath your flounces and petticoats wear a straight dress that flattens you out.

It doesn’t matter what shade of lipstick you both wear, it all looks black on the movie screen.

When you both put on sailor suits, pick the more feminine white one with the traditional hat. Let him have the navy suit with the collar that can flip onto his head when he pratfalls.

Forgive him if he falls for an evil sexy robot disguised as you.

Keep a house that is a car that is a boat, but beware: each will crumble in a dramatic fashion.

During a dangerous rescue attempt, suggest he save a dummy dressed just like you.

Don’t bother learning to untie ropes. That’s his responsibility.
He will save you. He will save you. He will save you.
How to Erase the Dead

Grab the cracked whiskey bottle, let its contents leak, sweet, into your palm. Lick the drops, warm on your tongue. Use this same tongue to describe the roads back home as gravel-spun, as rising, as flesh-like whispers, dust. Palms and broken glass, windshields shattered before dawn. The roads are the same color as your tongue – pomegranate and honey, a swirl of fog and mirage, dewy with the breath of maps. Trace the squiggly lines, the cut-off borders with your tongue, bleed purple-red stain into corners of wrinkled and aging paper your smooth palm skin. Hold the whole place inside your mouth, shift it around, wetting it like a small stone. Here is the gloss: the smear of your mother’s shoulder lost in folds of paper, silhouette of a small child vinegar soaked, fading colors. Taste the rust and tarnish. Your tongue numbs itself beneath the whiskey, scratches against edge of glass in hurried cuts, a dried leaf tongue, just to cut, to empty, dehydrate. Reach for the map key and its symbols, for north or south, looking for faces whiskey-spun and splotched far beyond the center. You will find it, somehow after erasing it, sealing in a scent of violets, tombstone, and ash.
It’s not that his lips crave the earthy texture of Grecian wood, the scent of pigment or broad expanses of crinkled gold leaf. It’s more that he’s forgotten how to touch his wife. She lies in bed, stripped of her paint and gilt, holds her breath while he performs his daily devotions: each morning and before retiring he finds it simpler to kiss the image of his patron saint—those fearsome wings, the severed head in crook of arm. She knows he’ll never sprout a radiant halo despite his faithful reverence of icons written by holy men clustered on Mt. Athos as she awaits the miracle of his kiss, the nights, the years, growing like splinters beneath her nails.
COLUMBUS DAY, 2009

Crouching at water’s edge
to drag in the garbage bag
cast off by fishermen, my mother
makes out a belt, some sort of vest --
and legs.

_Walter, it’s a body,_
she calls to my father,
waiting at the tide line.

Once a cool-headed ER nurse,
my mother doesn’t cry
until later that night
when she tells me how
he’d been missing for three days,
was believed to be in his late seventies.
She doesn’t say
_the same age as your father._

Weeks later,
she tells us about
a dark island discovered
on the shores of my father’s left lung.

She doesn’t cry
even as the tide rises,
rocks us all toward
the lip of some terrible
new world.
Contributors

Leonard Kogan was born in former Soviet bloc from where he moved to Israel and then to the United States. Currently, he lives and works in New York. The hybrid, the incomplete and the fragmentary are conceived as underlying principles of Leonard’s visual representations. These ideas are conceptualized via portrayal of sequence-images, imperfectly clonal repetitions, rebus and moments of exuberant melancholy. Jill Khoury earned her Masters of Fine Arts from The Ohio State University. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in numerous journals, including Sentence, Prick of the Spindle, Menacing Hedge, and Harpur Palate. She has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize twice by Breath and Shadow: A Journal of Disability Culture and Literature, and has a chapbook, Borrowed Bodies (Pudding House Press). Donna Vorreyer’s work has appeared most recently in Sweet, Linebreak, Rhino, THIS, and Caesura. Her chapbooks include Womb/Seed/Fruit (Finishing Line Press), Come Out, Virginia (Naked Mannekin Press), and Ordering the Hours (Maverick Duck Press). Joy Ladin, Gottesman Professor of English at Yeshiva University, is the author six books of poetry, including just-published The Definition of Joy, Forward Fives award winner Coming to Life, and Lambda Literary Award finalist Transmigration, and a memoir, Through the Door of Life: A Jewish Journey Between Genders. Kristin LaTour’s poems have appeared or are forthcoming in Fifth Wednesday, Cider Press Review, The Adroit Journal, dirtcakes, and qarrtsiluni, among others. She has two chapbooks available through her website, www.kristinlatour.com. Meg Cowen’s chapbook, "When Surrounded By Fire," is forthcoming from Dancing Girl Press. She has been awarded the Elizabeth Curry Poetry Prize and has recent work in The Pinch, Barely South, A Cappella Zoo and Weave. She received a teaching fellowship from Southern Connecticut State University, where she edits Noctua Review. Paul David Adkins grew up in South Florida and lives in New York. Chauna Craig’s stories and essays have appeared in Prairie Schooner, Fourth Genre, and CALYX and the anthologies Sudden Stories (Mammoth Press) and You Have Time for This (Ooligan Press). Her work has been recognized by Best American Essays and the Pushcart Prize anthology, and she’s won fellowships to Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and Vermont Studio Center. Richard Leach is a poet and self-taught collage artist from northeastern Pennsylvania. After making art for himself for many years, he began in 2009 to share his work online. Since then he has had pieces in group shows in Stockholm, Tehran, Cannon Beach, and Portland, Oregon. Find him online at richardleach.deviantART.com. Leah Sewell is a Chicago native living in Topeka, Kansas. She's an MFA candidate at the University of Nebraska and an editor, book designer and poet with two small kids. Her work has appeared or is expected in Weave Magazine, Midwestern Gothic and PANK. Alexandra Smyth lives in Brooklyn, NY where she is a receptionist by day and a MFA in Creative Writing candidate at the City College of New York by night. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in The Alarmist, Eclectica Magazine, Neon Literary Journal, The Smoking Poet, and Specter Magazine. Aaron Counts is the co-author of the non-fiction text Reclaiming Black
Manhood, and his poetry and prose have appeared in *ego trip’s Big Book of Racism*, *ColorsNW*, *The Seattle Times*, *Specter*, *In the Distance* Podcast and *Bestiary Magazine*. He is the winner of the 2011 Nazim Hikmet Poetry Competition and holds an MFA from the University of British Columbia. **Gemma Cooper-Novack** is a writer, playwright, theater teacher, and writing coach living in Boston. Her work has appeared in *Hanging Loose*, *The Saint Ann’s Review*, *Aubade*, and *Euphony*, as well as on the Chicago podcast *The Callback*. Her play *Blindside* was produced in Chicago in 2008, as was *Chicago Chronicle No. 1*, a piece she wrote collaboratively with six other playwrights. **Ellen McGrath Smith** teaches at the University of Pittsburgh and in the Carlow University Madwomen in the Attic program. Poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Now Culture*, *Sententia*, *The American Poetry Review*, *Cerise*, *The Same*, *Kestrel*, *Oranges & Sardines*, *Diner*, *5 a.m.*, *Oxford Magazine*, *The Prose Poem*, *Southern Poetry Review*, *Descant* (Canada), and others. She has been the recipient of a Pennsylvania Council on the Arts fellowship for poetry and a Rainmaker Award from Zone 3 magazine. **Alexandra Quintanilla** has a B.A. in English from Rice University. She has just returned from teaching English in western Spain and starts medical school in fall 2012. **Karen Locascio** is an MFA candidate in poetry at UMass Boston. Her first published poems appeared in *Amethyst Arsenic*. She always thought writing these little bios would be a lot more fun than it actually is. **Kathleen Kirk** is the author of four poetry chapbooks, most recently *Nocturnes* (Hyacinth Girl Press, 2012), and the poetry editor for *Escape Into Life*. Her work appears in a variety of print and online journals, including *Blood Lotus*, *Lake Effect*, *Menacing Hedge*, *Poetry East*, and *Umbrella*. **Oshinn Reid** is 28-year-old folk musician who lives in Montana and wishes people still wrote letters. She has work in *Four and Twenty* and *Breadcrumb Scabs*. **Angele Ellis**’s poetry has appeared on a theater marquee (after winning Pittsburgh Filmmakers’ 2009 G-20 Haiku Contest). The author of *Spared* (Main Street Rag), a 2011 Editors’ Choice Chapbook Selection, and *Arab on Radar* (Six Gallery), Angele was a 2008 recipient of a poetry fellowship from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. **Valerie Loveland** is the author of *Reanimated*, *Somehow* (Scrambler Books, 2009). Her poems have been featured in *Dzanc Book’s anthology Best of the Web* 2008 and the Massachusetts Poetry Festival. She works as an optician in Action, Massachusetts. **Mary Stone Dockery**’s first collection of poetry, *Mythology of Touch*, was released by Woodley Press in 2012. She has two chapbooks forthcoming from Dancing Girl Press and Kattywompus Press. Her poetry and prose has appeared or is forthcoming in *Gargoyle*, *South Dakota Review*, *Arts & Letters* and other fine journals. **Claire Zoghb**’s first collection, *Small House Breathing*, won the 2008 Quercus Review Poetry Series Annual Book Award. Her chapbook, *Dispatches from Everest*, is forthcoming. Her work has appeared in, among others, *Connecticut Review*, *CALYX*, *Crab Creek Review*, *Mizna: Prose, Poetry and Art Exploring Arab America*, and *Natural Bridge*, and online at *Assisi Online Journal* and *Mezzo Cammin*. 