

# T A B

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## THE JOURNAL OF POETRY & POETICS

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*p o e t i c a*

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The print issues of *TAB: The Journal of Poetry & Poetics* are special editions, each published at the beginning of the calendar year. These issues reflect *TAB*'s mission to create an environment that celebrates poetry in various forms and venues. The annual print issue engages the reader with poetry as a material object and asks that the reader negotiate between image and text. The design of the first issue does not assume a traditional role of quietly framing content; instead, design actively shapes the reading of the entire page. The special print editions of *TAB* will continue to experiment and explore the intersections between form and content, object and space, and reader and reading.

Monthly electronic issues follow each annual printed issue. Using these differing formats—print and digital—allows experimentation with design and materiality in a time when print and electronic dissemination coexist. *TAB* will not force either format to adapt to the other. The reading experience in virtual spaces is different than that of a printed journal. The electronic issues are shaped by Open Journal Systems, a federally funded, open-access system from the Public Knowledge Project designed to serve the public good globally. While the electronic files can be printed, each electronic issue will be formatted for ease of reading on the screen. Decisions about page size, typography, and composition are driven by the online reading experience, rather than to merely mimic a print version. *TAB* also makes use of the audio/video possibilities of digital dissemination.

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PATTIE FLINT



## IOWA

I kissed a boy from Iowa at three in the morning  
but we turned back the clocks that day; so did I  
kiss him at two or did we kiss for an hour longer  
than I thought we did? I miss him and sometimes  
I think that I will drive two thousand miles to him  
to say hello and kiss him again.

When I met him it was late; already too late so he  
sat me down and bluntly told me how lonely he  
was and that he wanted to fall in love but he didn't  
have the time. It was the saddest thing I ever heard,  
next to a woman who was signing a receipt in  
New York City; buying a script for her next play and  
somberly saying, "this is the only part of my career  
in which anyone wants my autograph."

I should've looked at the name of the script in her  
hand, so I could give her a standing ovation and ask  
for her John Hancock and make her day—her life.  
But I didn't; and so I looked at Mr. Iowa and his  
furrowed brows and tired eyes and I kissed him in  
the snow right when the clocks turned, and I wish  
we could've saved the time.

KATHLEEN GUNTON



**THE LIGHT IN MURIEL RUKEYSER: CENTO**

Late in the twentieth century  
I can see past the church, the words of an ending line  
And death holding my lifetime between great hands.  
We all knew we had all crossed over when we heard the song  
*You will love everyone.*  
When we saw the water mystery of the lake  
Road of the sun and the moon to  
The stars your ancestors,  
Fear, and form, and storm turned into light.  
A moment of light achieved deep in the air of roses.  
And finally  
Obsessed by a single thing  
It is true  
This is the word:  
Love.  
My life is closing, my life is opening.  
Make my poems for others unseen and unborn.

LINE 1 ~ "DELTA POEMS"  
LINE 2 ~ "THE BACKSIDE OF THE ACADEMY"  
LINE 3 ~ "KÄTHE KOLLWITZ"  
LINE 4 ~ "AKBIA"  
LINE 5 ~ "WHAT THEY SAID"  
LINE 6 ~ "CLUES"  
LINE 7 ~ "THE OUTER BANKS"  
LINE 8 ~ "FOR MY SON"  
LINE 9 ~ "THE SEEMING"  
LINE 10 ~ "FIGHTING FOR ROSES"  
LINE 11 ~ "NOT YET"  
LINE 12 ~ "SILENCE OF VOLCANOES"  
LINE 13 ~ "ONE MONTH"  
LINE 14 ~ "WHAT HAVE YOU BROUGHT HOME FROM THE WARS?"  
LINE 15 ~ "SONG: LOVE IN WHOSE RICH HONOR"  
LINE 16 ~ "ANEMONE"  
LINE 17 ~ "POEM"

COLLECTION: *THE SPEED OF DARKNESS*

**A ROSE FROM DENISE LEVERTOV: CENTO**

What we desire travels with us,  
The pebbles of past wishes peacefully under-water. Old desires  
Still visible but  
Abandoned.

Bells in her spirit  
Filled with some other power  
Singing its colors  
Pausing only as if to meditate.

Our unused wings  
Floating like bright snow  
Into the ring of the dance  
Up to remotest stars.

A voice from the dark called out  
This is the way.  
The poet waving farewell  
Through death's gated tunnel. A rose.

LINE 1 ~ "VARIATION AND REFLECTIONS ON A THEME BY RILKE"

LINE 2 ~ "THE STRICKEN CHILDREN"

LINE 3 ~ "TO OLGA"

LINE 4 ~ "ZEROING IN"

LINE 5 ~ "THE SHOWINGS:LADY JULIAN OF NORWICH, 1342-1416"

LINE 6 ~ "THE WELL"

LINE 7 ~ "LA CORDELLE"

LINE 8 ~ "FROM THE IMAGE-FOW—SUMMER OF 1986"

LINE 9 ~ "STANDOFF"

LINE 10 ~ "WAVERING"

LINE 11 ~ "CAEDMON"

LINE 12 ~ "EMBRASURE"

LINE 13 ~ "I LEARNED THAT HER NAME WAS A PROVERB"

LINE 14 ~ "MAKING PEACE"

LINE 15 ~ "THE SPIRITS APPEASED"

LINE 16 ~ "AUGUST DAYBREAK"

COLLECTION: *BREATHING THE WATER*



**ANNE SEXTON'S TUNNEL: CENTO**

I sit at my desk.  
Leaving the page of the book carelessly open.  
Why?  
Well, death's been here.  
The door opens.  
Oh my God, help me.  
How strange that you're so tender!

It is early afternoon  
And before it was time.  
Many have come to such a small crossroad  
To catch the star off each ship.  
My hunger was for Jesus—  
My love.  
Maybe Jesus knew my tunnel.

*All that is new is telling the truth,*  
I said, and entered  
Wrapped in robes  
So that I might hear.  
The music takes place in a grotto.  
Oh! There is no translating.  
O my hunger! My hunger.

I will go farther  
And death, that old butcher, will bother me no more

LINE 1 ~ "AND ONE FOR MY DAME"  
LINE 2 ~ "WANTING TO DIE"  
LINE 3 ~ "THE ADDICT"  
LINE 4 ~ "LIVE"  
LINE 5 ~ "IN THE BEACH HOUSE"  
LINE 6 ~ "PAIN FOR A DAUGHTER"  
LINE 7 ~ "CRIPPLES AND OTHER STORIES"

LINE 8 ~ "YOUR FACE ON THE DOG'S NECK"  
LINE 9 ~ "THE WEDDING NIGHT"  
LINE 10 ~ "SELF IN 1958"  
LINE 11 ~ "A LITTLE UNCOMPLICATED HYMN"  
LINE 12 ~ "SUICIDE NOTE"  
LINE 13 ~ "KE 6-8018"  
LINE 14 ~ "PROTESTANT EASTER"

LINE 15 ~ "LITTLE GIRL, MY STRING BEAN, MY LOVELY WOMAN"  
LINE 16 ~ "CONSORTING WITH ANGELS"  
LINE 17 ~ "CROSSING THE ATLANTIC"  
LINE 18 ~ "THOSE TIMES..."  
LINE 19 ~ "TO LOSE THE EARTH"  
LINE 20 ~ "LOVE SONG"  
LINE 21 ~ "FLEE ON YOUR DONKEY"

LINE 22 ~ "WALKING IN PARIS"  
LINE 23 ~ "IMITATIONS OF DROWNING"

COLLECTION: *LIVE OR DIE*

J O S E P H   M U R P H Y



## ILLUSIONS

Something has grasped your shadow.

You can't budge; no plan. Something toys  
With your adored reflection.  
You'll have to give it up; set aside  
What you don't need.

Let go: Your mirror  
No longer fits its frame: twist its rim;  
Lean further out.

So much swirls below. You want to exit; forget.

But something has begun to surge  
From the dust, the flux.

It's your image! It ripples, spins.

Then, an awakening: It's no likeness. It's you  
Soaring above the brine.

You'd leaned out further than expected; but rose  
Instead of fell.

You dart and toss in the shape of your choice!

Just beyond, a breath away, a larger shape stirs.  
You're puzzled. What now?

*It's you, but isn't; it's there, but can't be;  
But is.*

It's a more perfect illusion;  
Beyond it,  
More.

A N D R E W R U Z K O W S K I



IF FROM GREAT NATURE, OUR OWN ABYSS

The branches thinning.  
Think Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*.  
Her tongue shucked from palate.

[velum]

A sense organ, a sensory nerve ending, an object.  
My lines, her hands  
shrink back to snow.

[a birch tree]

Becoming silence, the word becomes apparition

felt.

A voice hushed.  
A word becomes  
cocoon in the throat.

[verbs]

The line asks:

Are you hungry?  
Are you clinging  
to my neck?

My life writ in skin.

Cut off.

Not the shape but the water.

[container]

An eye unending.  
The shape of a line, the surface area of it all.

Ecotone.

Logical.

Air-like.

The cold dark and fluid.

[a breath]  
[a being]

Somehow containing the feeling of a feeling.  
Something not death.

A thing:

Sub-dermal.

Sub-stratum.

Liquid.

Bone.

Some sort of love circuitry.

The line is the shore.  
The line is a black-eyed mannequin,  
a larger strangeness.

The break is night and I can taste it cooling,  
breath on cheek and it is my blood,  
tongue and voice becoming material.

My line is a set of gills in caesura.  
A set of gills in air.  
The moment between.

I want geography.  
I want to know it in cycles.

I want to be Orpheus singing for a transvestite character.

Perhaps,

Eurydice.

Perhaps,

buckshot.

The line is a sound hole.

The line is.

The line is a rooster's call waving in light.  
My anguish, not his.  
The line is a transformer sitting in a field somewhere:

An interval of relief.

The act or process of writing.

Successive values of speech becoming.

The innermost essential part,

the pith of a dead body.

The apparent boundary between earth.

The flesh of any animal that conveys fluid as blood  
A small natural watercourse.

[a conduit]

A fissure in midwinter resembling  
The line is a thing surfacing.  
The line is not a continuum

but it is.

Think about an utterance,  
the pause between breaths.

Think of it, a field turning memory.

A line swelling.

[negative]

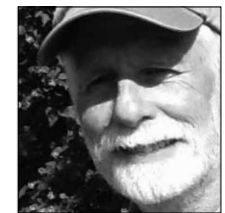
The line is ballooning back to wholeness.  
The line is in ruins:

*a friend's death*  
*fathomless miles*  
*a dream*  
*a wanderer*

The reader takes the white as silence.



RONALD WALLACE



**ACT I, SCENE V**

*after Buson*

He loves her best when he's not with her. He's happiest, he thinks, when he's alone. On those occasions, yes, he loves her dearly. But the thought of pouring poison in the porch of her ear haunts him. Unlike Claudius, not to saddle himself with someone else, but to escape the little day to day annoying conversation, the endless one-way talk. Does everyone's wife, he wonders, so go on and on? Gossiping and nattering about who knows what?: The neighbor kids; their friends' successes; some stranger's house; how everyone is somehow better than they, is such hot shit! Oh horrible! most horrible! Or could it be, he wonders, lonely now, that that's what love is?

## CONTRIBUTORS

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Pattie Flint is an uprooted Seattle native toughing it out in New England and spends her days as an editor at Medusa's Laugh Press specializing in hand-bound books. She has been published in *InkSpeak*, *HESA Inprint*, and *Borders*, among others. She is currently working on her second young adult novel.

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Kathleen Gunton is a writer/photographer. She believes one art feeds another. Her work appears in publications as diverse as *America*, *Arts & Letters*, *Inkwell*, *Lalitamba*, *Shenandoah*, and *Thema*. Her poetry has been nominated for the Pushcart and been included in anthologies, most recently *Monkscript Two: Surprising Saints*.

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Joseph Murphy has had his poetry published in a number of journals, including *The Gray Sparrow*, *Third Wednesday*, and *The Sugar House Review*. He is also a poetry editor for an online publication, *Halfway Down the Stairs*.

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Andrew Ruzkowski lives and writes in Chicago. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Columbia Poetry Review*, *Black Tongue Review*, *The Camel Saloon*, *Emerge Literary Journal*, *Parable Press*, *The Bakery*, [PANK], and *Midwestern Gothic*, among others. His chapbook, *A Shape & Sound*, is available from ELJ Publications.

### RONALD WALLACE

Ronald Wallace has published twelve books of poetry, fiction, and criticism, including *Long for This World: New and Selected Poems* and *For a Limited Time Only*, both from the University of Pittsburgh Press. He divides his time between Madison and a forty-acre farm in Bear Valley, Wisconsin.