

T A B

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THE CENTER FOR POETRY AT CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

T A B U L A
p o e t i c a

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DESIGN STATEMENT

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 the mission of Tabula Poetica: The Center for Poetry at Chapman University 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 print issues does not assume a traditional role of quietly framing content; instead, design actively shapes the reading experience. The special print editions of *TAB* continue to experiment and explore the intersections between form and content, object and space, and reader and reading.

The 2017 print issue examines the effects of noise and text delivered to the reader as visual volumes on multifaceted layers. Textures and patterns act as a sounding board, adding a variety of tones intended to create an atmospheric pairing with the poems themselves.

Electronic issues, on the second Wednesday of every other month, follow this 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 are formatted for reading on the screen. Decisions about page size, typography, and composition are driven by the online reading experience, rather than to mimic a print version. *TAB* also makes use of the audio possibilities of digital dissemination.

To order a copy of the print issue from 2016, 2015, 2014, or 2013, please send a check for \$10 made out to Chapman University to *TAB: The Journal of Poetry & Poetics*, Department of English, Chapman University, One University Drive, Orange, CA 92866. *TAB* is available at the AWP Bookfair.

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Contributors receive complementary copies and can request additional copies. *TAB* is distributed at the AWP Conference each year.

Special Feature: Knox College

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Creative Writing program at Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois. The program proclaims, “We treat writing as an exercise in living.” The faculty include Robin Metz, the program’s long-time director; Monica Berlin, whose poetry book is forthcoming as the 2017 Crab Orchard Poetry Open winner; Nicholas Regiacorte, who’s won the college’s teaching award; Cyn Fitch, whose Knox career began as a non-traditional student transferring from a community college; Gina Franco, author of *The Keepsake Storm*; and Natania Rosenfeld, a literature scholar whose poetry collection is reviewed in this issue of *TAB*.

This year, *TAB* Editor Anna Leahy was asked to judge the A. Eugene and Ella Stewart Davenport Award in poetry and Audrey Collet-Conard Poetry Prize at Knox College, where she earned her bachelor’s degree. The Davenports have been awarded to undergraduate creative writers there since 1960, and the Collet-Conard award was established in 2016 to honor poetry “reflecting both aesthetic excellence and spiritual resonance (broadly speaking).” The packets of poems submitted to the competition—and the conversations that Leahy had with these writers—showcase the best of emerging poets and demonstrate the attention to craft and thoughtfulness in language of students working across academic disciplines.

TAB is thrilled to share the work of the following young poets:

“Look” by Diandra Soemardi, Collet-Conard Poetry Prize

“Wait, Wait” by Erika Riley, 1st Place Davenport Award in Poetry

“414-415” by Stephan Torralba, 2nd Place Davenport Award

“Moon Poem” by Sam Geiger, 3rd Place Davenport Award

“dearest” by Bridget McCarthy, Honorable Mention

“Hiking Tumamoc Hill at Night” by Joshua Tvrdy, Honorable Mention

LOOK

Whether or not you'll grow up to be a scientist, a microscope is a always toy. A microscope is a window :it lets you peek into a world you wouldn't have known. But don't you touch it for your fingers would blunder. As a child, I analyzed my finger under lenses. As a child Meshach captured bees and saw hair over their eyes. In biology class, I saw spears spiking from the legs of an ant. We're supposed to be looking at arteries of a rhubarb, but instead I thanked God for He didn't make ants any bigger, but God didn't make xylems any bigger either. If He did, then I'd slide down the slippery web of evolution, and maybe end up alongside dinosaurs. I heard dinosaurs were killed by shooting stars. There is something imperceptible about tales and theories, how they sound a lot like windows too.

DIANDRA SOEMARDI holds her BA from Knox College and is the recipient of the school's Audrey Collet-Conard Prize in poetry. She is a first-year graduate student in Chemistry at University of Maryland and is originally from Jakarta, Indonesia.

WAIT, WAIT

In retrospect, every night of August hurt,
starting somewhere in my quicksand
stomach, *oh, dearie, stop struggling,*
it's the only way out, stop struggling, stop
telling yourself you're not worth every
piece of china on his wall.

I hated the way his kitchen smelled,
because it smelled exactly like him, I forgot
how to say, "Stop," when he leaned over
the table, told me all about *pretty eyes, bad*
timing, I waited for him to sink into the linoleum.

I tried to tell him that he was celestial,
but all he did was squeeze me until I became dust.
I clamped my own hands over my mouth, said
This is what you're supposed to want, a hand
moving up and down your arm in a way
that feels anything but natural, and
that goddamn beach was too secluded.
I placed my hands over my stomach, pressed
down hard, waited for words, waited for
a *where are you* from my mother, waited
for him to sink into the sand (*sink, please*).

With his permission, I scattered his belongings,
his study guides, his precious words, words
became blurs, syllables became spills:
If he was a summer storm, then I was a car crash,
destroying myself for all to see.

If it were now, I'd take every piece
of china and smash it on the ground,
letting the scent of *could have, would have*
replace the scent of his skin, his hair, his dryer sheets.

I could watch him sink into his own
mistakes, into his vomit, his vodka,
his misspelled words, his judgments and lies
and *it was a jokes*. (very, very funny)

That August I wore my vulnerability like morning dew.

This August I will work at the Italian ice shop down
the road. My eight dollars and seventy-five cents
an hour will feel better than his hands,
up and down my arms. My mouth will swell
with sweetness, and my teeth will rot.
I will give the customers a smile that is both
unsettling and intimidating (to match my disposition)
and when he shows up at that window
with a five dollar bill and a smile too rotten to return,
I will ask, "Do I know you?"
and pop open the register.

ERIKA RILEY is a junior at Knox College from Stony Brook, New York, majoring in creative writing and minoring in journalism. She works as the editor-in-chief of the campus paper, The Knox Student, and plans to work in either journalism, new media, or publishing.

414–415

at last, from the cave mouth: a boy! feel his pale skin absorb the air 'round
him—creature of fog. step
beyond the mouth, boy, into sunrays
that adumbrate your

figure. ask me about warmth. feel yourself as a series of
curved lines. i will take you home and cradle you in morning, make you breakfast, write you
lullabies that you, for now, will not understand, but whose sounds you will intuit.

in turn, you will find home in coffee, your skin will adjust
to fabric, and you will learn to read
your face as a map, and the cave wall will become
a memory no longer yours, replaced by

what is real.
and as the sun descends and the earth, again, comforts you in native darkness,
i will teach you the word night,
so when you sleep, blanketed in what is now named, your wakeful mind will cling
to night to maintain this illusion.

This poem is from a larger series entitled “Songs to Stieglitz” based on the photography of Alfred Stieglitz. See: Stieglitz, Alfred. *Camera Work: the Complete Photographs 1903-1917*. Koiln, Taschen, 2008. The title refers to page numbers.

STEFAN TORRALBA is a recent graduate of Knox College, where he earned a BA in English and where his work placed second in the school's Davenport Poetry Contest. He is now pursuing a PhD in English at University of California, Riverside.

MOON POEM

with nancy eimers

now it's a way of remembering, dark by dark, letting go.
to find myself again on the lakeshore in the shower of the eclipsing moon

is to mistake a close friend's pale cheeks for my god

there's been a lot of that. watching the moon
to call it a mayfly is to identify something

small & familiar in the tactile world,

is to gather thousands of mayflies in a metal bucket
& then pour them into the wind.

to watch that moon is to dissolve mortar,

housecat, daydreams, part-time job, is to stream live
a series of birds sitting absolutely still on a telephone wire,

until it quiets, blushes, or gives up hoping

for anything more.
in early evening, the moon is what's made of it,

painting red the night

as we separately send our prayers away.
each minute, we post thirty six thousand photos to our feed.

a moth drying on a windowsill

has the volume of memory, or is it the windowsill
moving like memory in the fading day

that holds our ugly words inside?

in a failed city i found a surveillance camera
and the surveyors all long gone.

what more could vanish but the moon

as we pass slowly through the light's wake?
the hours--implying that yes, it would be something like this:

no moon, no moon, no moon.

SAM GEIGER is a graduate of Knox College and currently lives in the Oregon woods.

DEAREST,

i'm back to climbing stairs again
reaching the lonely rests, but not

my legs have burned the last three
floors, i think they know i

haven't been reminded in a while
that i'm scared of heights

come home soon, these stairs—
i need to sleep

Note: In the past of the English language, “rest” has been used to mean “the landing between flights of stairs” as well as “freedom from anxieties or pressure.”

BRIDGET MCCARTHY resides in Galesburg, Illinois, where she is pursuing a Creative Writing major and Business & Management minor at Knox College. Her poems and fiction have appeared in several issues of Knox's Cellar Door.

HIKING TUMAMOC HILL AT NIGHT

For Sandy

We do this for danger—a diamondback
coiled on the path, jumping

cholla underfoot, a copper wasp
stuttering through the air, sting

so bad it feels like giving birth—
the kind of pain that draws a crowd, blood,

blinds us to the quiet ways
your body is dying. We do this

to see our homes grow smaller
as we travel higher, lights splayed

below, glittering, like a clumsy cloud
stumbled and spilled its collection

of beach glass—golds, blues, silvers—
all over the desert. Our words, inside

this thinning air, nearly touch
what they try to touch—you

tell me about prayer, how a dying
honeybee sprays the air

with its name, calling for the hive
to carry it home. You tell me

the legend: a man runs down
this hill, late at night, completely

backwards. Reckless or brave, he
doesn't look where he's going, he doesn't

even glance, and somehow, despite
the turns and stones, he never stumbles.

If I peel the skin of his hand, I'll see
this wilderness, won't I, alongside

the usual bones? His body keeps
all of it—the switchbacks and snake-holes,

the drooping ocotillo, the red
fruit of a prickly pear, the intimate

rises and swellings of this place, our
place, and look, there we are, scaling the slope

of his knuckle. You can barely move
forward now, the steepest part, your body

surrounded by saguaros, an audience
of shadows. Maybe tonight we'll finally

see him, the backwards man, descending
above us like a god, turned away

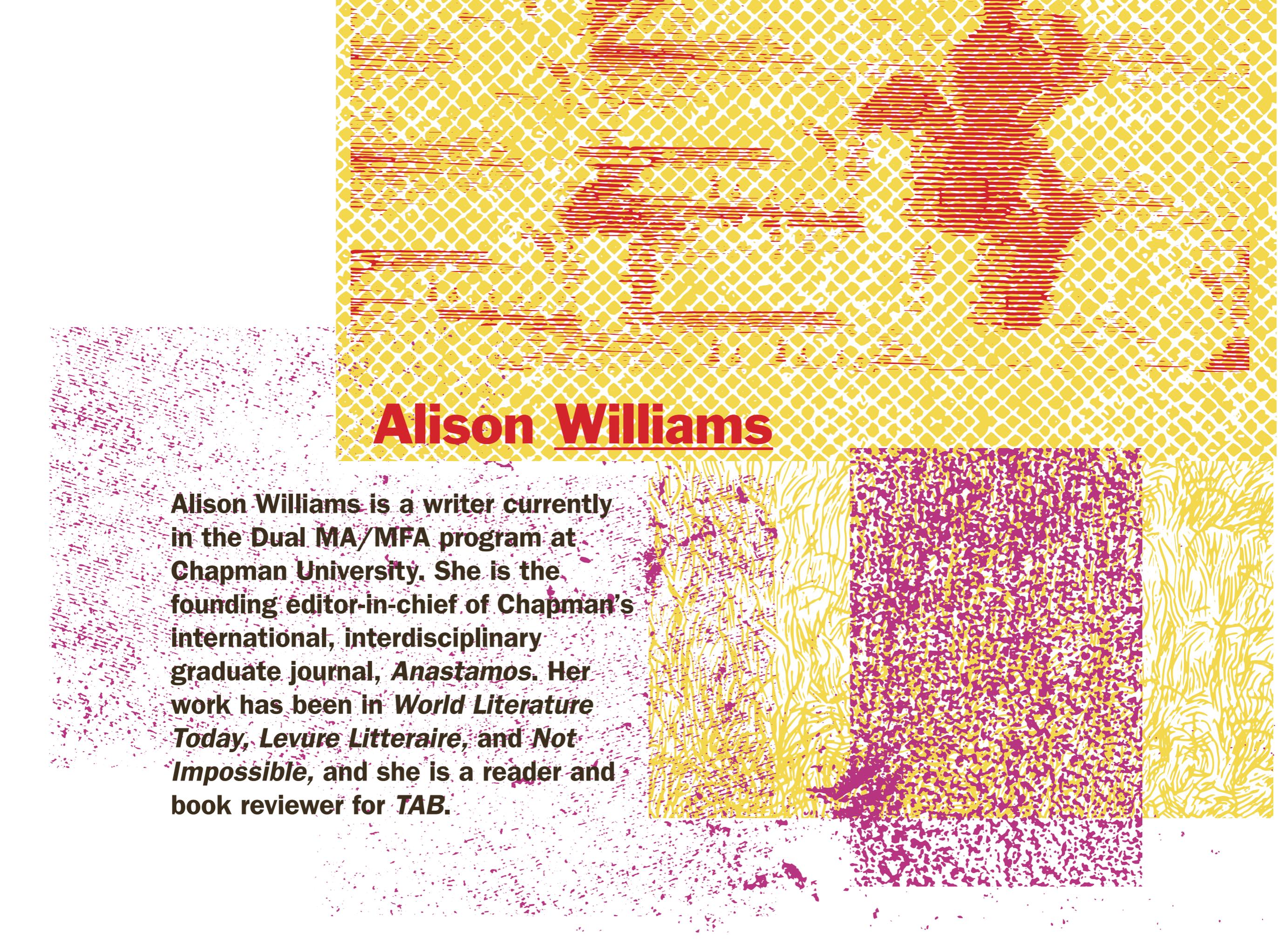
from our progress. He'll move
to the edge of the trail just in time,

like he's able to see with more
than his eyes, passing like breath,

a rewound memory, so close
he'll brush your cotton shirt sleeve

with his elbow, pressing sweat
into the fabric like rain.

JOSHUA TVRDY hails from Tucson, Arizona, and is a recent graduate from Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois. He is now working with the Religious Studies department there to resurrect Fusion, an online journal that features theological and spiritual writings. He plans to pursue an MFA.



Alison Williams

Alison Williams is a writer currently in the Dual MA/MFA program at Chapman University. She is the founding editor-in-chief of Chapman's international, interdisciplinary graduate journal, *Anastamos*. Her work has been in *World Literature Today*, *Levure Litteraire*, and *Not Impossible*, and she is a reader and book reviewer for *TAB*.

Book review

**WILD DOMESTIC BY NATANIA ROSENFELD
PUBLISHED BY THE SHEEP MEADOW PRESS, 2015**

A pervasive sense of privation and loss, but also the richness of memory and nature, inhabits *Wild Domestic*, the debut collection by poet Natania Rosenfeld filled with reflections on art, nature, and story. Dropping in here and there with observations, connections, adaptations, Rosenfeld circles around her life, the life of her family history, and the life of social history, like the birds she references throughout the book. A querying scrutiny underlines the poems, an investigation into the self and into nature, but with a cultivated articulation that delicately holds the contradictions of the title in balance. For all the esoteric potential and execution in the poems, there is a prevalent violence, an underlying threat, that is inescapable.

The book is composed of three sections: Mother Hunger, Prey, and Wild Domestic. The poems in the first section are the most evidently autobiographical and are steeped in Rosenfeld's Jewish heritage, with a family that fled from war-torn Europe. There is a longing present, for food but also for home and place. These poems, although imbued with tenderness and familial memory, set the stage for the following two sections, in which violence, oppression, and the threat of fleeing and pursuit throb.

In this first section, a child seeks to interpret and make sense of the world through the adults around her, but they, too, are lost and attempting to find place. There are beautiful and personal contradictions, as in the namesake poem of the chapter, "Mother Hunger." A moment of possible intimacy and connection begins the poem, with "When you came down, summer / afternoons, from the attic, / with baskets for the two of us[.]" But the poem closes with the solitude of the speaker revealed, as "Next day, / when you gorged on fruit, / I lost you again." In "Levelings," the push-and-pull continues with

Oh aunt, I thought,
female of angles
and flutey forbiddings.
Go away.
Be my friend.

The second section, Prey, is wrapped in myth, art, and story. Birds circumnavigate the chapter, sometimes stationary and trapped, sometimes gliding out of reach. This is another antipodal balancing reflecting prey, as a bird can escape, soaring above ground, but must return within reach to survive. The human body also transforms, morphs, becomes animal-like. Humans in particular conjoin with birds. In "Stranger," the poet inhabits a caught hawk, trapped in the violence of human indifference. "*Just a bird, they said, / a hawk from/somewhere else. / We didn't put her there.*" The poem "Earthward" continues the theme with subtle references to bird-like movements of the parent:

Hair white, indigo-eyed,
Mother calls me to the last
flaring of her summer garden.

On our evening walk, Father's
head turns slowly when I point
to the still egret by the pond.

As much as these poems soar through the natural world, they are grounded in the viscera of the human experience. There is a violence, in nature and to the body—particularly to the body. Like the painter Chaim Soutine, whose work she references in two poems, Rosenfeld investigates the fleshy layers that make up the world and finds in them both terror and beauty. “Four Rabbits by Soutine” ruminates on the painting by the same name, and, with war as the shadowy framework underpinning the book, one can't help but draw a comparison between the action on the animal and the potential action on a human in the poem's final section:

Flayed Rabbit: anatomized,
used up, on the stained
sheet. The torso stretched
like pulled meat,
a skull, vacant bloody
mouth at the point
of the genitals.
Thrown down, or laid
gently, the thin arms
still rise in a screech
beside the head.

Look for truth:
you'll find gristle.

In conjunction with the more somber pieces, there are also strong moments of resistance, as in the paragraph poem “Admonitions”:

They say the god entered her in the form of a bird. I say change the old stories to new ones. Say that he was the sky and she was the bird and he cradled and carried her...Only don't say that he entered her in the form of a bird. If I could dictate the laws, I would make it against the law to say that.

Even when engaging with the potentially supernatural, Rosenfeld locates within the physical. In “For Omm Sety,” which is based on a British woman named Dorothy Eady who believed she had been reincarnated as an Egyptian priestess and who in fact became a renowned Egyptologist, Rosenfeld inhabits the body of Eady in her modern incarnation and Eady as the pharaoh's mistress. The separation of time slips and is sustained in the body of the lover.

The final section, which shares the book's title, *Wild Domestic*, finds the human and the animal inhabiting the space on the pages in a capacious menagerie. Language that ascends towards the untamed and fierce is conquered and restrained, making the poems themselves the creatural amalgamations of the title.

In “Fish Songs,” fish embody familiar characteristics, as “The old ones tell stories / of the great carp in the family tub,” and

“observe the pensive trout / gazing at a pine above the dark / stream. [...]” “My Abductor” merges woman and horse into a centaurian form on a glorious ride into the sky, above the soft beasts below.

Moon-faced heifers, hay snufflers,
look up, gape! We’re on fire,

woman and horse [...]
[...]

[...]
we tattoo our blood song
on the currents that bear us
far, so far from here.

Rosenfeld completes the book on a note of resistance, of escape, and of connection, with the final poem “Family Weather,” which sits in acceptance of the unsteady but constant passage of time, which begins:

Sometimes father approves.
Sometimes mother cries.

Either way, the clouds
float toward the horizon.

The poem and the book end as follows:

[...] you hear
singing and see snowbanks
and are never alone.

Andrea L. Hackbarth

Andrea L. Hackbarth currently lives in Palmer, Alaska, where she works as a college writing tutor and piano teacher. She holds degrees from Lawrence University, Prescott College, and University of Alaska, Anchorage. Some of her recent work can be found in *Mezzo Cammin*, *Gravel*, *Measure*, and other print and online journals. She blogs about poetry and other poetic things at www.thelostintent.com and is the poetry editor at www.wordsworthing.com.

NON-CUSTODIAL

At the nadir of the year
August five months past,
until their June return.
like migratory birds
their second home
by the boyish detritus

we wait, their father and I.
we count the weeks
We trust that
they will recognize
if not by scent or instinct, then
they've left behind:

a pair of small black socks, folded
and forgotten in the corner,
growing dull and grey with dust;

the river bank quartz collection
lined up on the windowsill
to catch the meager January light;

two stray Legos, a lone K'nex wheel
and a rainbow-striped bouncy ball
settled in book shelf corners.

These are rare artifacts
(drawings tacked to the walls are cryptic interpretive panels)

in the museum of last summer.

These we do not disturb:
These do not count
clutter
to be cleared away.
they've just gone out
to a friend's house, to soccer practice—

this our silent agreement.
in the tally of household

These let us convince ourselves
for a short while
they'll be back before dark.

Our curation lets us believe

that one will remember the reason
for his hand-made envelope on the wall

and the other will still be entranced
by the clouded translucence of quartz.

THE WOMEN LIE ALWAYS IN REPOSE

in and out of the Ortiz Gurdián Museum, Leon, Nicaragua

1. *La Magdalena Penitente*—studio of Guido Reni

A seventeenth-century Mary reclines upon
the shadow of foreground stone. Banished far
from her village (quaint in the sun-showered distance)
this Mary had the audacity to choose
not to bear the appellation *la Virgen*

but Magdalene. *Unclean!* cry the terrified priests.
Our Mary clutches death and offers forth
her thighs, soft muslin draped between their cleft,
while locks of unrestrained improper red
caress and frame her curiously spherical breasts.

Her face, though, she refuses to give. Her eyes
she keeps well hid, upturned to gaze at two
putrid cherubs. Her painter can preserve
his faith, call her penitent, keep ignorant
of her lasting pride, her un-regretful scorn.

2. *Sin Título*—Ramiro Lacayo Deshón

Around the corner
and past four centuries
an anonymous model
lies back into undefined space
and lets herself fade behind

the abstraction of
turbulent brush strokes. She
is not made flesh but of lines
too thin to hold a woman's weight,
too bright—violet, crimson, green—

to cast a woman's
 soft shadows, too profuse
 for clarity. Through the thorn-
field of this harsh geometry
 the anonymous woman

juts her musky curves
 forward, thwarting painter's
 camouflage. But herself she
keeps. Her expression she conceals.
 Head thrown back she allows her
thoughts to be obscured.

3. Parque Central

In the high midday swelter women sit
upon broken and peeling park benches,

their toes, ankles, calves, even their knees
and plump brown thighs allowed to glisten,

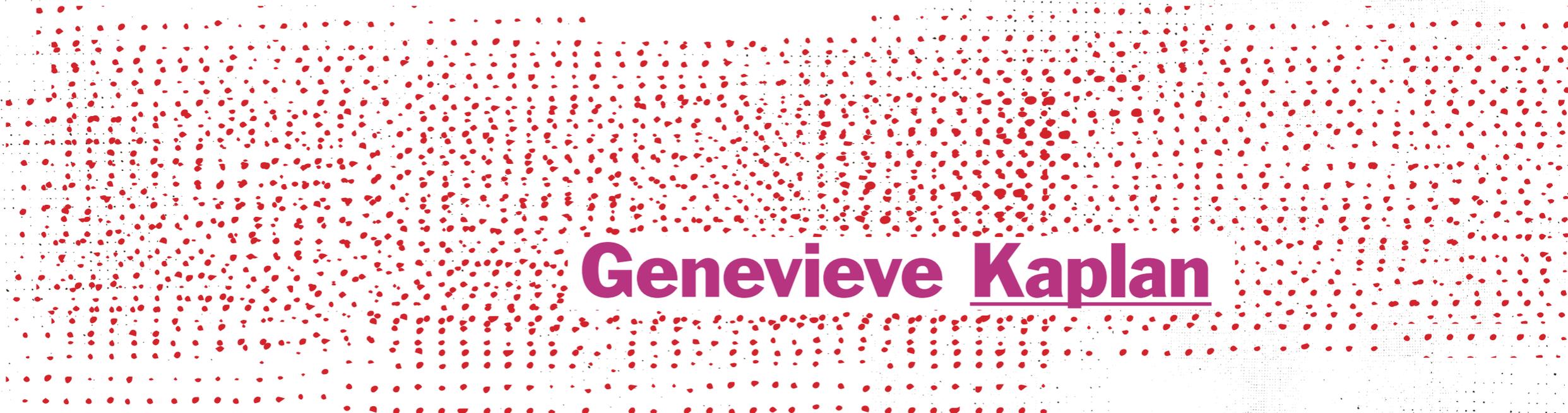
to be caressed by sunrays and passing gazes.
Above this, only shade can touch

their skin, to keep beads of sweat from forming
on manicured brows, and slowly running

down to reveal the raw canvas beneath
the scene they've painted on themselves.

I have no proper landscape on my cheeks.
My white, unshaven thighs don't glisten.

Still, I scan the park for an empty bench,
and assume my place with the women in repose.



Genevieve Kaplan

Genevieve Kaplan is the author of *in the ice house*, winner of the A Room of Her Own Foundation's poetry publication prize, and three chapbooks. Her poems have recently appeared in or are forthcoming from *New American Writing*, *BOAAT*, *Copper Nickel*, and *Denver Quarterly*. She lives in southern California, where she edits the Toad Press International chapbook series, publishing contemporary translations of poetry and prose.

A LIGHT AS FORGOTTEN (TO US)

as gnats flitting in the tall grasses, bolster of the shallow ponds, low breezes
among the reeds in the forgotten land. starred aspen, starry, the opening
of the meadow: green with wisps looking upwards, reaching
for their place (*when I'm gone, you'll need a place to be*, who comes
too close, who doesn't know better), the flowers haven't forced
their way up. to touch them, unkind torsos themselves upon the opened wood
white trunks, bare—as forgotten as the dried, curled leaf, folded into
a shell, curled in the middle, along the ends, folded over. it throws
into relief, it does: dark hummingbird among the small yellows, black-winged
butterfly in the light garden, helicopter churning above the (leaf meal) (bird
step) (grasses) blue-eyed grasses

Laila Shikaki

Laila Shikaki poet from Palestine. At the age of six, she decided that she would grow up to be a teacher. At twenty-six, she realized that poetry was her calling. After earning her MFA from Chapman University, Shikaki taught at Birzeit University. She is now pursuing a PhD in Literature at St. John's University in New York City.

I'VE DECIDED NOT TO DATE
A MUSLIM

*I've decided not to
date a Muslim
again*

you said
4 months 26 days
after you broke up with me
on a what's app call
no video
6 a.m.
my time

yes, that will do us a service
I said out loud
in my head
inside
I didn't want to compete
with another Muslim
inside I felt I could blame
Religion

when people ask
I could say
Religion was not
in our favor
love does not conquer all
Religion does

and one day I'll say it
with more conviction
and a smile

for tonight
an hour after seeing you
Religion won
we
lost

Joshua Jennings Wood is Director of the Creative Writing Conservatory at the Orange County School of the Arts, which serves artistically gifted 7th–12th graders. He has been a finalist for *Glimmer Train's* Short Story Award for New Writers, *The North American Review's* James Hurst Poetry Prize, and the Pablo Neruda Prize. His writing appears in *Volt*, *DIAGRAM*, *The Berkeley Poetry Review*, *SpiralOrb*, *OccuPoetry*, and elsewhere.

Joshua Jennings Wood

OASIS

do not know
see what
This is no ordinary
don't be fooled. This
something, something
are more ready than
you watching this? You
a spectator at a mystery show in which you
puzzle, skilled participant in
scene
seems so obvious now
you
are ready when
don't quite know, like this
oasis
is the mind's way of telling
you
don't want to admit to
anyone
especially yourself
you
think. Why else
are
also performing, imperfect witness of
the
action, and
players assemble, maybe a landscape
oasis

BETTER LIVING THROUGH CIVILIZATION

“I always had a mania for symmetry.”

Molloy, Samuel Becket

I believed for awhile I invented
misremembered my imagination

things go missing here things get obscured, god
what understatement, what do you do you

try to build an offering some semblance
complete with boundaries routines and

consequences: This is perfect nonsense
areas of the maze get washed

away—all things drift

To entropy

unpiecing to the sea, the idea
though of buried mirrors porous enough

To present

To one