

ISSUE
Two

Volume six

T A B

THE JOURNAL OF
POETRY & POETICS

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THE CENTER FOR POETRY AT CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

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

 CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY | WILKINSON COLLEGE
of Humanities and Social Sciences | Department of ENGLISH

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The internal Advisory Board represents a variety of disciplines and perspectives; is consulted individually and/or as a group for advice and ideas; meets once each semester for reports, updates, and needs of the journal; and is invited to assist in other ways as needed. The Chair of the Department of English and Wilkinson College's Publicity Coordinator hold standing positions on the Advisory Board. Each additional board member serves a three-year, renewable term.

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 2018 print issue amplifies the qualities in aesthetics and materials of ephemera as the main framework to poetry. Damien Gautier contributes his photography of urban typography showcasing various words, letters, and signs which have been rearranged and layered calling attention to the arbitrary size and two dimensions of both the physical photograph and the postcard. In today's world of excessive materials in a disposable culture, we revisit the function and permanence in a collection of postcards. We examine the origin and value of a postcard as a record of personal travel, propaganda, and advertisement and how some collections end up being documents of preservation.

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.

JESSICA BERG

Jessica Berg is from the south suburbs of Chicago and received her BA in English from Governors State University. Berg writes anything from poetry to memoir pieces to book reviews and is currently working on her first novel.



Card.



Handwritten text on a blue background, including "Hawthorne", "Texas", and "U.S.A.", along with a circular postmark reading "ALLIPAS" and a date stamp "JUN 15 1914".

TOM JONES

WIVES

Raven-haired and cautiously conservative,
you approach me in a Friday night fever dream.
This is a test, and I'm
dressed to impress
in pressed linen and gothic red.

I prepare you a meal as your wife waits above us,
dining in solitary
on pretty
pink raw knuckles.

You hold me close.
You whisper.

"Remember? We used to fly together. We were flying."

I remember
we flopped
face first
straight into
the bottom of the rock.

and now?

I'm crying into the crock pot—
your arms
hold on tighter than life with the purpose of letting go.

At the end of the day,
I make a mean enchilada
and the worst housewife
in equal measure—
Bad press for your ilk
no matter
how you slice it.

Go to the attic and retrieve your trophy,
dust her off.
Keep her lips sealed
and hands tied.

She'll never fly, but
never fly away.

N° 1488.

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RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE.

CREDIT DEL'OU
ANGERS



MARY GILLILAND

Mary Gilliland hails from the northeast United States. Her poetry has also appeared in such publications as AGNI, Hotel Amerika, Notre Dame Review, Poetry, Poetry Ireland Review, Tampa Review, Nuclear Impact: Broken Atoms In Our Hands, and The &NOW Awards: The Best Innovative Writing. She has taught at Cornell University and at Namgyal Monastery of Buddhist Studies.

Mary

Gilliland

RECOURVRER.

Marras
Cher Inferieur

à biffer d'un trait de plume, s'il s'agit de valeurs réexpédiées.

NOTE IMPORTANTE.
valeurs recouvrables à PARIS, se co
aux indications figurant au verso du
dureau n° 1485.

NOTE IMPORTANTE.
valeurs recouvrables à PARIS, se co
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ANGERS U.P.
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EARTHLY MISHAPS

Faint, humming, inexorable in the damp
below the ruined walled castle garden
Mare's Tail tunnels an eight-foot root.

Sly-boots, I've spaded the circle, reached to my elbow.
Still the plant breaks. As Eve brought a man
his labor, it will multiply tenfold.

I shop for survival: a sprayer to level pride, melancholy
and unwanted shoots. The canister is lowered from
its shelf, bagged in plastic. The till rings.

Keys in hand, I see the carpark as a horsetracked swale
where Cadfael leads his roan, saddlebagged
with an apothecary box. Medieval herbicide?

As he stumps through mud, the monk's brass scale tips:
one pan sways with the bitterness of interrupted life,
the other, Eve's radical helplessness.

GUEST IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

I was on chicken surveillance that night:
fowl to be roasted whole or split and fried,
delivered to the busy suburb.
My mind ran to last week's manifest destiny
wanting to return to the meadow
thrust into the newly green, sun humming
off the pond. Working the line—a private
lake—would have to fill in that longing.
Then the night shift rooted its wishbone in my chest.

I passed the guard, crawled the sidewalk. But
a frenzy of messy barks—the beagle next door—
had me turn. Each tray of hens was carried from
the walk-in cooler, each carcass bathed,
patted dry, set on the appropriate counter
with a little clearing around it.
That odd feeling of walking in place
closed my throat, the inexorable remains
of feeding on wages, hungry for wings.



LUBNA SAFI

Lubna Safi is a Syrian-American writer completing her doctorate in Arabic Poetry and Poetics at the University of California, Berkeley. Both her academic and creative work emerge from the deep-seated intersections of her bilingual upbringing. Her work has appeared in the *Avalon Literary Review*, *Gravel Literary Journal*, *Exchanges Literary Journal*, and *Jaffat El-aqlam*.

ATLAL

Ancient Arabian poets deciphered their traces
in the *atlal*, campsite ruins, the aftermath of an intimate detonation.
This way they ignited odes.
Shadow of the beloved, crushed between the beams
of the past and a fallen wall.
From the ashes of a just put-out fire
they guess the time passed between drop of sand
and tears.
Masters of organizing disappointment,
they continue to weep, or they do not.
they set out for the beloved, or they do not.

Her fingers laced with white sheets,
she stands now before time's usual carnage,
this city, whose history
trails a thousand elegies,
hoping to replace the violence of the abstract
with the intimacy of detail, always on the verge of being read.

She kisses the pale-faces of old acquaintances
not even the filtered moonlight can get this close.

The old poets only eulogized places
empty of people they were full of ghosts.

MATTHEW WHEATLEY

Matthew Wheatley lives in Southern California and is a graduate of the MFA program in Creative Writing at Chapman University. He has previously been published, under his pen name Matthew Fairchild, in *Cardinal Sins*, *Rivet*, *Halfway down the Stairs*, and *Split Rock Review*. He is also one of the Founding Editors of *Anastamos* interdisciplinary journal.

PLACE
ONE CENT
STAMP

Positioning



THE RED HIJAB BY BONNIE BOLLING
PUBLISHED BY BKMK PRESS, 2016

In today's polarized culture, people tend to view the world in dichotomies. You are either a native or a foreigner, good or evil, safe or unsafe. In *The Red Hijab*, Bonnie Bolling elevates the spaces in between, showing the humanity that lies in the places that are not quite one world or another.

The two most prominent spaces that Bolling inhabits in the collection are those between native and foreigner and safe and unsafe. As an American living in Diraz, Bahrain, the poems' speaker spends much of the first part feeling at home neither in Bahrain nor America. In the second poem, "In Diraz," the speaker goes out to the market wearing a hijab, but "even the woman, oh—there is no fooling her." Despite the fact that no one can see who she is, she appears to the locals to be a foreigner. The speaker then goes on, "My home is not here / but I don't think it is there ei-ther." The speaker inhabits a space between two homes and two worlds, belonging fully in neither.

In most of this collection's poems, Bolling also situates the speaker in a place that is neither safe nor unsafe. Violence is frequently shown around her, but never directly affects her. It is always a few blocks away or down the street. In her home, she is safe, even though her friends from America would certainly declare that she lives somewhere that is not safe. In "On a Balcony with the Lunch Poems," she writes:

They say someone's dying—
right now and brutally,
deep in the village.
They carry up more wine.

There are violent acts being committed nearby, but the casual nature of the final line indicates that neither the narrator nor the people around her feel threatened by it. The violence is there, but not immediately threatening, far enough away to continue on with their lives. This does not ensure that it will always stay that far away, but, for now, it does and will.

In "Noon (Al Dhuhr)," readers move closer to the violence, as the poem moves into the mind of a terrorist about to blow himself up with a suicide vest. As he walks over to his target, he sees a one-armed man get on his bike and ride away. Instead of cursing the fact that a potential victim gets away, as we might expect from someone about to wreak havoc, he thinks, "Good for him." Then, in the moment before he detonates himself, he thinks, "A pity that bus pulls over, stopping at the curb, / letting those people get off—." This man does not have the heartless rage of someone about to murder swaths of people, but he commits the violent act nonetheless. Again, the reader experiences a person situated between two worlds, in this case those of empathy and evil.

The call to prayer, or *azan*, resonates throughout many of the poems. Much like the call to prayer can be, every so often the *azan* punctuates the life of the speaker, reminding her that she is not like the people around her. In "Grace, a Moment of," she attempts to pray, but instead begins to think, "Poor American. / How guilty you are. / How the world despises you." In spite of her mind wandering, she is able to say a small prayer at the end: "*Save them, I say from the floor, save them all.*"

Again, the speaker is in a place in between, within her prayer but not fully there, yet there enough to pray a bit. The *azan* adds a musicality to the collection, too, acting as a chorus to the verses of her poems. Every little while the same refrain returns.

Bonnie Bolling's *The Red Hijab* is a wonderful collection that refuses to put people into neat boxes. It embraces the multiple lives and perspectives that exist for each of us, from mothers to terrorists. By embracing widely, Bolling creates a collection that hums with the tension of people pulled in different directions.