



Volume six

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THE CENTER FOR POETRY AT CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

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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 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.

KRISTIN BERKEY-ABBOTT

Kristin Berkey-Abbott earned a PhD in English from the University of South Carolina. She has taught at many colleges and is the Director of Education at the Hollywood (Florida) campus of City College. She has published 3 chapbooks: *Whistling Past the Graveyard* from Pudding House Publications), *I Stand Here Shredding Documents*, and *Life in the Holocene Extinction*, both published by Finishing Line Press.

Card.



TOM JONES

S.A.

Texas

GRATITUDE JOURNAL

She has released the obsessive
record-keeping of her youth:
the journals, the exercise logs,
every grade she ever earned,
a neat catalogue of a life, papers filed
in folders across multiple cabinets.

In the morning, she no longer chronicles
her dreams. Instead, she fills
the feeders and listens to each chirp.
She measures the mornings in metaphor,
but she writes nothing down.
Instead of identifying every feeling,
she notes the new arrivals to the yard,
each creature and every preference.

In the afternoon, she pots the plants
that will attract the birds and the butterflies.
Once she would have recorded
every step of the process, every choice
linked with its outcomes. Now she delights
in blooms and blossoms, knowing that the next
year can take care of itself.

As the light drains from the day,
she listens to the sound
of rain on the roof. She notes
the different tonal qualities as rain runs
through the gutters and drips
into the parched earth.
She lets the rain soothe
her into sleep, no need to write
down her various gratitudes.

WHEN I RUN AWAY TO THEOLOGY SCHOOL

When I run away to theology school,
I shall think no more of mortgages and insurance rates.
Sea level rise will recede to the backwaters
of my consciousness. I will eat
whatever is served to me, and I will fall
asleep at a regular hour.

When I run away to theology school,
I will turn off the news. I will submerge
myself in books from an earlier age.
I will abandon the controversies
of our current time to lose myself
in arcane arguments of past heresies.

When I run away to theology school,
I will pray more regularly. I will spend
more time in the chapel. I will write liturgies
and construct worship spaces to match.

When I run away to theology school,
I will finally structure my life in a way
that makes sense. I will strip
my life to its barest essentials.
All will be revealed
when I run away to theology school.

N° 1488

WILLIAM BONFIGLIO

William Bonfiglio is a PhD candidate studying creative writing at the University of New Brunswick–Fredericton. His poetry has been awarded a Pearl Hogrefe Grant in Creative Writing Recognition Award and the Julia Fonville Smithson Memorial Prize and has appeared in *Sugar House Review*, *Briar Cliff Re-view*, *American Journal of Poetry*, and elsewhere.

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE.

CREDIT DEL'OU
ANGERS

RECOURRER.

Mary
Gilliland
e. Marson
Ch. Luperme



(1) Indications à biffer d'un trait de plume, s'il s'agit de valeurs réexpédiées.

dans la circonscription postale
destinataire.

NOTE IMPORTANTE.

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

Il est permis d'insérer dar
n° 1488 que des vau
dans la circonscription postale
destinataire.

NOTE IMPORTANTE.

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

R

ANGERS U.P.
323

PANTANAL

The orchard is underwater.
The coffee trees have drowned.

Weeds crowd thickly
beneath a surface
clogged with wads
of *kariba* and hyacinth.
The floating blooms
are deeply violet
in the shadow
of the griseous sky.

A stalk,
a raised neck,
arrows through the sheen of water,
drawing its body forward
with lubricious allure.
It angles toward a thicket,
where strangler figs have encroached
on a stunted grove
of cashew trees.

The seasonal rains carved this plot,
and made a mere
of the clearing.
It rings with a throaty chirping
that rises anonymously
from the fallow.

Something shrieks.
It is not the child
we found fishing off the boardwalk
who continued to scream
Mamões! Mamões aqui!
even after we had shaken our heads
and smiled.

We had thought
the *mamões* would be plentiful,

that we would be able to reach
and yank them from weighted branches.

The *mamões* are underwater,
the child no longer there.

ING MESSAGES

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PM
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BAP

te me
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if any -
right

10.

Please write me
what you think
about it &

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KRISTEN BRIDA

Kristen Brida's poetry has appeared in *Fairy Tale Review*, *The Journal*, *Barrelhouse*, *New Delta Review*, *Bone Bouquet*, *Tinderbox Poetry Journal*, *Hobart*, and elsewhere. She earned her MFA in Poetry at George Mason University, where she was the Editor in Chief of *So to Speak Journal*. She currently lives just outside of Philadelphia, where she works in publishing. Follow her on Twitter @kristenbrida.

Post CARD

on Windham



THE IMAGINED CITY OF ALUCIO

I.

Within this glow of a city, everything unfolds in a manner

:: a reflection, except in this endless redoubling, the bend
of light blushes

bubblegum on the cobblestone, the wading pools on the outskirts, the < >.
except the cherry blossoms, they blush bone china

II.

If you stand at the road between the row of boathouses and the river, you will almost feel

you are an entry point where the light is a wanted hand
on your thigh.

I often walk through this city eat macarons find someone's lover look
at the skyline like a reflecting pool.

III.

It has been said that each cloud is a mirror here, and when you look up, you see your face with
the blue that scrapes the sun, and you become your own saint with the sky as your stained glass
window. When travelers arrive they expect this to be the case, and when they discover otherwise,
their hands glow with cavities.

IV.

Travelers call this city second city of lights,

but dwellers call it city of prisms

From

KELLY R. SAMUELS

Kelly R. Samuels lives in the upper Midwest. Her poetry has been nominated for Best of the Net and has appeared or is forthcoming in *The Carolina Quarterly*, *Rappahannock Review*, *Sweet Tree Review*, *Salt Hill*, *RHINO*, and others. She has two chapbooks forthcoming in early 2019, one from Unsolicited Press and one from Finishing Line Press.

PLACE
ONE CENT
STAMP



FOR JERRY HALL, STARTLED, IN THE CAR

Looks like rain on the glass, remnants
of autumn, season of the fur, the long sleeve, tall
boot. Reaching for something, incredulous, stunned
by.

What is this divided by that, carried? Or later: conjugation
of this verb in French, in Italian, in all those Romance
languages. No?

Your eyes must be the color of the stone
on that finger, or seem so. Shading all
that aids us in imagination, filling in: you.

You asking for the question
to be repeated, tucking your hair behind
your ear, praying for the bell
to ring, that clamor.

Your knee
bent – that settling in
for the long drive – just this quick interruption
before.

FOR KATE MOSS IN THE CAR WITH JOHNNY

White glare—you looking as if
just woken, shaken in the middle of the night, someone
saying, *Quickly, now. We must go. Take only what you need.*
And so your clutch held to your chest and so the fur
to keep you warm. And then: interminable waiting,
the floor rising, coming up to meet you.

Sometimes we had to crawl to get to where we were
going, and then lie down and try and recall what came between
that hour and this one. Blasted.

Shattered. Something
like fragments. There was the one who begged me never to leave
her, never. Her hair the same color as yours in this, bangs flung
to the side. The other
outside the bar, crouching
to pee, and all the boys gathering as if
side show.

You. Your thumb lies
folded, curled in your palm.

EMILY SHEARER

Emily Shearer's poems have appeared in *West Texas Literary Review*, *SWWIM*, *Clockhouse*, *Ruminate*, the *bookends* review, *Crow Hollow Books*, *The Tishman Review*, *All We Can Hold*, and others. She was featured in the inaugural issue of *Minerva Rising*, where she now serves as the Poetry Editor and Associate Book Developer. See more at <https://www.bohemilywrites.net>.



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PACT - PUB

MANNA

Before we met, the earth was bare. We didn't know
how not to starve. We didn't have an atlas to our names,

a country to call home. Your body learned my language,
and my body began to mend its cracks.

I wanted to hear you come to my voice,
I gasped and my words flew out like birdsong.

As the cockatiels flew away, I reached for you;
I wanted to breathe the air of your speech,

but it was your lungs heaving,
your diaphragm pulling manna down from heaven.

Dear Anne, Did I tell
you that Luciani is
swimming to the

l'ending me 2 W in the Valeurs A Recouvrer.
 Summer 1891
 T Carnegie
 Sept 1891
 Owen

permis d'insérer dans
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Book review

LETTERS TO THE FUTURE: BLACK WOMEN/RADICAL WRITING EDITED BY ERICA HUNT AND DAWN LUNDY MARTIN
KORE PRESS, 2018

What is tomorrow? What does it mean? What does it hold? Or look like? In *Letters to the Future: Black Women/Radical Writing*, that is the question the artists in this collection are asking and answering. This anthology challenges readers with this question to truly immerse us into the boundless possibilities in an effort to form answers. *Letters to the Future* is a collection edited by Erica Hunt and Dawn Lundy Martin in which women poets and artists explore gender, race, sexuality, political ideologies, and what it means to be a Black woman in our current world. While reflecting back on the past, the writers of this collection examine the reality of what the present holds and demand a better future. The editors bring together a collection of strong, Black, imaginative, and boundary-breaking women from the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, and the United Kingdom to discuss essential and problematic issues.

Hunt, a poet, essayist, and author has appeared in *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Poetics Journal*, among others and has received awards from the Foundation for Contemporary Art, the Fund for Poetry, and the Djerassi Foundation. Dawn Lundy Martin is a poet, an essayist, and conceptual video artist whose most recent poetry publications include *Life in a Box is a Pretty Life* and *Good Stock Strange Blood*. Together, these two women artists provide a place where others can come together in an immersive and innovative collection well worth the attention of a broad swathe of readers.

This collection offers a variety of poems in all shapes and sizes, but the underlying conversation, as Hunt references, is that of the “questions of tomorrow.” It is the question of identity, sexuality, of language and community, political ideologies, and everything in-between. Martin describes this work as an “anti-doctrine, as future imaginings, as languages with their own rules, as new makings, undisciplined and rebellious.” This collection is the future.

In this anti-doctrine, poems range from prose to free verse to micro-essays, from conceptualized images to deconstructed ideologies of what society may think of as poetry, or art. *Letters to the Future* provides a space where art and poetry are mixed and reformed. With this collection, the contributors span a wide range of age and backgrounds, and the stylistic approaches to poetry and art give us something we haven’t seen already because it re-writes what we think we know about poetry as well as re-writing the world.

Poems by Robin Coste Lewis use titles or descriptions from art in which a Black female figure is present or featured. Lewis uses these descriptions and titles to bring the history and the past into the present to re-see the objectified reality of Black women. In her poem “Catalog 1: Ancient Greece & Ancient Rome,” she writes:

Statuette of a Woman Reduced
to the Shape of a Flat Paddle

Statuette of a Black Girl
Right Half of Body and Head Missing

Head of a Young Black Women Fragment
from Statuette of a Black Dancing Girl

By taking the words from a description of statues, Lewis is able to provide a specific picture of how Black women were and still are perceived: as bodies, as fragments, as reduced to shapes. These descriptions are from Western art objects that objectified the black female body, but they remain, viewed not only in the past but also now.

In this collection, artists incorporate language, blank space, structure and form, and visual designs and images to provide an original and unique collection. Hunt and Martin do an especially good job putting together a collection that celebrates the artist and artist statements. Adrian Piper takes an experimental, powerful stance in “Imagine: (Trayvon Martin).” Piper’s art here is simple, with three words “See color insert.” The insert is a post card with a picture of Martin’s faded face and a bright red bullseye overlay and the words “Imagine what it was like to be me.” This image and these few words give the reader all the questions and answers at once. Being able to detach this postcard from the book gives the reader a new, hands-on experience, with the book, and the ability to detach becomes a comment on the reader as much as inherent in the artwork in the reader’s hand.

Kara Walker’s piece, “Search for Ideas Supporting the Black Man as a Work of Modern Art,” uses a handwritten painting on postcards to discuss the female Black body and the West’s way of looking at and disregarding the female body and, with it, humanity. In Yona Harvey’s “The Subject of Surrender,” blank spaces encourage the reader to fill in the blanks throughout the poem. Each reader renders the poem differently.

This collection takes on many different forms, but the commonality among the artists is that they are Black women writing for a difference, for a future. Hunt and Martin have put together a groundbreaking collection that stresses the importance of tomorrow and what it means for today. This collection pushes in all of the directions we need to go.

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SAINTES

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Book review

***DIRT, ROOT, SILK* BY SUSAN AZAR PORTERFIELD
CIDER PRESS REVIEW, 2016**

Susan Azar Porterfield opens her third book of poetry, *Dirt, Root, Silk*, with the declaration, “If I call the tree, tree, then you / are there in the spaces, same as naming.” This first poem is titled “Elegy/Aubade,” which demonstrates how, even through her shortest titles, Porterfield invokes both the dead and new beginnings before addressing a loved one after their hypothetical demise. In this book, Porterfield’s talent for making the sad and mundane beautiful shines. It is no wonder that this collection won the 2015 Cider Press Review Editors’ Prize.

The book’s title poem is a reminder of how profound the slightest objects can be. This poem ends with the suggestion that we “[e]xamine the layer by layer the fibrous leaf / for the core. Tumble in.” An almost-metaphor for her writing style, Porterfield begins “Dirt, Root, Silk” with a grand view at the “brink of a cornfield.” With a jump, she then focuses in with the precision of a microscope to listen to the rows of grain: “intimate, / how slight the real, dirt, root, silk.” She eventually focuses even further on the fibrous leaf. Each poem in *Dirt, Root, Silk* is an invitation to the reader to “tumble in” to the smallest, significant moments in life.

One example of such a moment takes place during the speaker’s usual morning routine in “In Which You and I Witness.” In this poem, the speaker is going about the usual morning activities when the speaker notices a bird outside of the window. Though the speaker admits, “I could have gone all my life, of course, / with this secret death” because “[...] I just saw him casually,” that moment of the bird—“odd, alone” struggling to fly then burrowing its head before death—is disruptive. The morning routine is briefly interrupted to witness an end just as the day begins. Porterfield dabbles in the ordinary, and the speaker must get on with the day because “It was a Monday, / and it’s always, always the same.” We recall “Elegy/Aubade” as we push forth to the next poem with the new beginning the poem grants the reader.

Throughout the collection, the poems consistently call forth the duality of life and death, the oxymoronic tendencies for the good to exist with the bad. “April 7, 2:46 P.M.” is a good example for this duality the poems toe. This poem is a still from a moment in time, a quaint portrait of a house surrounded by nature. There is rain pouring down outside, the speaker’s legs are kicked up, and the speaker is in love. However, the poem turns on its head with the final two lines: “I’m not unaware that there’s sorrow and searing pain / most everywhere in the world today.” Porterfield proves masterful at these turns through several poems in her collection.

“Small Living Things,” the poem after which the second section of the book is named, is another piece in which Porterfield exhibits her tight control over turns. She tells the story of a woman who:

[...] whenever she
tried to speak
bugs or slight birds flew into her mouth.

 This made her wary.
She stayed home
a lot or when forced
to leave, covered
her mouth with a cloth
or hand.

The poem goes on to reveal that eventually the woman stays silent for so long that she forgets the sound of her voice. Here, in the final stanza, Porterfield turns the story around. The woman who feared the small living things flying out of her mouth eventually learned to “gestur[e] and stumble[e]” around until one morning when she startled awake with an “Oh!” She learned that “small living things / weren’t flying into her mouth / but out of it.” Here is the forgiving kindness that permeates Porterfield’s poetry. She writes with a wisdom that nods to everyday insecurities and struggles while at the same time gently encouraging a certain joy in life.

This collection of poetry is a journey through the good, bad, and beautiful aspects of daily life, with small twists that often accompany and break the mundane. It is pastoral while acknowledging the pain that comes with living. It is a series of snapshots into the speaker’s personal life and thoughts while maintaining its universal, emotional appeal. Finally, it is a collection that defies those who find boredom in their everyday by sharing the charming, rough, and tragic wonder of the ordinary.

DANIEL STRASBERGER

Daniel Strasberger is a graduate student at Chapman University working toward an MFA in Creative Writing. He has been published multiple times by the Hi-Desert Publishing Company.

POST CARD

M. Widdham



For writing messages
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Book review

**ST. FRANCIS AND THE FLIES BY BRIAN SWANN
AUTUMN HOUSE, 2016**

St. Francis and the Flies, the 2015 Autumn House Poetry Prize winner and Brian Swann's eleventh book of poetry, meditates on experience, spirituality, and nature. This book of free verse poems, varying in length from sparse to bursting at the seams, explores nature and Swann's personal anecdotes with musicality embedded in each line, taking pause to experience the senses and understand the present moment.

From the very first poem, "Images," Swann creates a natural flow, using repetition, like sounds, and line enjambment to lead the reader through the book. The first few lines "Thrush music drifts in so rich I can't quite follow / its bent and fractured notes, the bent fractured, the fractured / bent, quick liquid rills, trills unpredictable, impeccably phrased" creates a certain movement for the reader, even in the absence of rhyme and meter.

This musicality is evident throughout the collection, often using a variety of line breaks and prose to shift the length of a poem. The poems tend to be shorter in the beginning of the book, the imagery tighter and more succinct. The poem "Hrafn," for instance, keeps to shorter lines and stanzas:

Before day breaks
he's already a shadow

on the snow, clipping
the porch, breaking

This particular eighteen-line poem is kept tight, but structure and line breaks vary across poems in the collection. As the book delves deeper and examines each moment more thoroughly, the poems lengthen. "De Volpini," a 115-line poem, leads the reader across the page:

We're worming our way into the fifteenth century
grotto-cavern under
the house where St. Ignatius Loyola lived.

This poem stretches back and forth on the page, the structure and the sound in the words leading the reader seamlessly line by line. Even within the longer-lined poems, Swann succeeds at keeping the reader interested in each word. "Off the Pan-American Highway" begins with the following:

I can still see myself looking up at Shirley Jackson's widow's walk
in Bennington and thinking how thin the modern veneer
even though it was only a story and though it takes more [...]

The forty-one lines of this poem cover the page in text and with imagery that creates meditative wonder. You don't truly know what Swann experiences.

Nonetheless, Swann delves deeply using imagery, spirituality, and meditation to examine each moment. The title poem, "St. Francis and the Flies," starts:

It is good to be seated in front of the flaming logs
and watch the mountains rise under the sun as flies
buzz in the corners of high panes, die and fall on me [...]

Here, the speaker takes a moment in time, sitting in front of a fire, and experiences that moment, the flames, and the flies. He then veers into the realm of spirituality with the next stanza:

and my book open at Bellini's *St. Francis*, his state
amicable with donkey and crane and all God's creation
where everything's in place while he stands in front [...]

From here, the poem takes another step back, this time from the spirituality of what the speaker has read and into his own personal meditation on the subject. In the fifth stanza, he states:

I've trained myself to like flies. If you can like flies
you can like anything, for flies are unavoidable
as death, and as they die are replaced as if there were [...]

This statement is in response to his reflection of St. Bernard who killed a swarm of "demon flies." In acceptance of flies, which are portrayed in death and darkness, the poem takes a step away from these specific religious references and meditates more on a particular spiritual understanding of the world around him.

This collection of poems itself is divided into two parts, each with its own part one and part two. The first part of the book has a focus in a moment of time. "Images" and "Hrafn," both in on the first half of part one, zero in on a specific moment in time and how the images in that moment affect the speaker. "St. Francis and the Flies" starts the second half of part one and focuses on a specific scene of flies around the speaker as he reads. Part two of the book looks at experiences and small anecdotes, taking a step away to understand where each experience or anecdote resides in time. Both "Off the Pan-American Highway" and "De Volpini" look at the speaker, presumably Swann himself, during his travels with people and examine how those experiences affected him at that time of the experience.

When reading this book of poetry, the reader mentally and emotionally follows along on a personal journey. Through the

imagery and words, through the structure and language, the reader understands each moment in time and reflects on our own understandings of ourselves and the world around us. *St. Francis and the Flies* is a book of poetry meant to be read and meditated upon long after reading the final words. I'm still pondering.