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THE CENTER FOR POETRY AT CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

T A B U L A
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Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences**

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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 Journal* continue to experiment and explore the intersections between form and content, object and space, and reader and reading.

This year's print issue is driven by inclusive design and low-vision principles. We aim to produce an equitable and engaging experience with diverse sight abilities. In 1840, William Moon developed an embossed reading system for the blind that was less complex than learning Braille. It was centered in Britain and later shared by missionaries in India, China, Egypt, Australia, and West Africa. The Moon system was particularly useful for people who had lost their sight later in life because the Roman alphabet had already been deeply rooted in their cognitive recognition and recall and, therefore, proved easier to learn than the abstract system of Braille. Moon's system could be taught and learned in only a few days. It now appears in *Tab Journal's* 2020 print issue.

Both the color blocking of the print issue and of the the title pages of the online issues echo the approach that Oliver Byrne applied to *The Elements of Euclid* in

1847. Byrne translated all seven books of the *Elements* into a visually dominating presentation of diagrams and color to help categorize and highlight information. Byrne published mathematical and engineering works in the more text-based tradition, but with *The Elements of Euclid*, he made it clear by his subtitle, "...in which coloured diagrams and symbols are used instead of letters for the greater ease of learners," that he intended the publication to be more accessible.

Electronic issues are published on www.tabjournal.org and follow the theme of the annual print issue. Using these differing formats—print and online—allows experimentation with design and materiality in a time when print and electronic dissemination coexist. *Tab Journal* does not force either format to adapt to the other. The reading experience in virtual spaces is different than that of a printed journal. While the electronic files can be printed, electronic issues are formatted for reading on the screen and for assistive technology. Decisions about page size, typography, and composition are driven by the online reading experience, accessibility, and low-vision standards. *Tab Journal* also makes use of the audio possibilities of digital distribution.

To order copies of the current or previous print issues, 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, California 92866. *Tab Journal* is available at the AWP Conference and Bookfair each year.

Sarah Boyle

Sarah Boyle is a poet, mother, and teacher. Her chapbook *What's pink & shiny/what's dark & hard* was published by Porkbelly Press, and she is the

founding editor of the Pittsburgh Poetry Houses, a public art project. Find her online at www.impolitelines.com.

Dispatch

for: Colin Kaepernick

In thirty minutes of / enrichment / today I learned my colleague has successfully
indoctrinated the students with propaganda I am aware I am / not unbiased My
students are /most / definitely aware / are my students aware / But I had / no
idea how quickly an honors student with a facility for language / could take a
dumbass thing said to her hours / a day before integrate it and state it with
the calm / certainty of fact So / do / my students know to disagree with my
points of view Have they ever been taught / to disagree to marshal facts / logic
More horrifying / or less / that the teacher taught her students that the American
flag and the Star Spangled Banner stand for the military and nothing / else How
could / that ever be true / Where is the line between deprogramming and
demanding allegiance / My patriotism is / true and would happily / kneel before
the flag / My patriotism is / shameful and how can / you be shocked / anymore
that this country isn't / what it says it is I do / know how easily students will
believe they can / pull themselves up by their own bootstraps / that the path
to riches is open / to all / that America is the beautiful the land of the free /
and they believe these things innocently / while they casually mention their / first
/ friend who / got killed While they call / out offensive peers joking about
getting shot / Because that isn't funny when you had to leave school for over
a year / because you / were / shot While / they sit in classrooms / built by a
system / designed on purpose / to keep them / in their place / where they can
kneel / forever / for all this country cares

Shevaun Brannigan

Shevaun Brannigan's work has appeared in such journals as *Best New Poets*, *AGNI*, and *Slice*. She is a recipient of a Barbara J. Deming Fund grant and holds an MFA from Bennington College.

Frank Learns the Harmonica

It's January 1, 2020, we've been to the parade.
Night's around us now like barricades.
We can't get through the day without changing something
in ourselves. Frank inhales,
the metal to his mouth, tentative scales,
his hand cups the harmonica, his fingers shake the note.
The house fills with the sound of his resolution.
In 2019 I would have compared us,
my tremored hands, my years of smoking,
but for the past hour now, I've listened
to Frank's lungs expand and contract,
and just been so glad at his body.
It's true, each year I've wanted to quit something,
never thought to add. But I can't exhale
without taking in. It's not so much resolve,
but a request: play two notes
so they sound like one.
We have practiced, we've sought instruction,
steadied our hands. Though 2019 was sour
we spent its last night telling stories to friends
and staring at each other.

The air around us a mix of exhales and inhales
as people counted down, we kissed our way out,
your face what I said goodbye to, opened my eyes
and said hello.

Karen George

Karen George is author of five chapbooks and two collections from Dos Madres Press: *Swim Your Way Back* and *A Map and One Year*. Her work has appeared in *South Dakota*

Review, Valparaiso Poetry Review, Adirondack Review, Louisville Review, and Naugatuck River Review.

Visit her website at www.karenlgeorge.blogspot.com.

Frida Kahlo, *Henry Ford Hospital (The Flying Bed)*, 1932

Frida, not everyone wants to see you unclothed on a hospital bed in the open air, industrial Detroit on the horizon, blood puddling beneath you. Clutched in your hand, long umbilical cords attached to floating objects: model of the female reproductive system, a snail, an orchid, your pelvis fractured in a bus accident when you were eighteen, and the male fetus you miscarried.

Miscarried, an odd word, *-mis* (wrongly)—to carry wrongly, as if you chose an incorrect way to carry your unborn son.

When shown in a New York exhibit six years later, your painting was titled “The Lost Desire.” I never desired to have children. People don’t want to believe that. I’ve been told a marriage isn’t valid, unless it results in children. Schooled, as a preteen, by the faith I was raised in— procreation the only purpose for sex. Even then, I knew bullshit when I heard it.

This is a hard poem to write.
I wish your son had lived.

Frida, thirty years after your death, ecstatic to buy my first book of your art, a male clerk slid repulsed eyes over its cover, mouth squinched up like he’d bit into an extra sour lemon wedge. “I never cared for her,” he stated, eyes lowered. I pretended not

to hear his unwanted opinion. What I wanted was to slap his face, utter a few choice curses.

Georgia O'Keeffe's *Two Jimson Weeds*, 1938

Nightshade. Blossoms highly magnified,
inches from your face, disorient.

Curvy leaves stink. White, pleated petals unspiral,
scent mesmerizing. Sometimes toxic if ingested.

Multiply-named *angel trumpet, moonflower,*
thornapple, devil's cucumber.

Blooms at night, sipped by moths, vital
in witches' brews. An aphrodisiac in India.

Ancient tribes used for epilepsy, asthma,
to induce visions, lessen pain when setting bones.

Spiny four-chambered capsules packed with seeds
lie dormant for years, sprout when disturbed.

The summer before we moved,
two years before my husband died,

we grew the rampant vine in a square
hemmed by house and driveway.

He cut a ten-inch tubular bud, floated it
in cool water, to unfurl inside at dusk.

If only I'd saved some seeds.

Jen Karetnick

Jen Karetnick is the author of ten poetry collections, two of them forthcoming. Her work appears widely in journals including *Barrow Street*, *december*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *Terrain*,

Under a Warm Green Linden, and elsewhere. For more info, follow on Twitter @Kavetchnik or Instagram @JenKaretnick.

Unfriending the Dead

I don't take the peacock, a weather vane
on the roof, one tail feather longer than

the other like a finger, as a sign,
or the vultures circling over and

over the backyard, helicopters in
search of a culprit, the mercaptans

whetting their appetites. It's only when
the third dead friend's name butterflies by on

Instagram that I think to take a stand,
stop allowing these accounts like air plants

to survive on the mist they wring from senses,
bury them in memory's shifting sand.

Let this machine eat those already gone.
Everyone lives until I unfollow them.

Lydia Weinberger

Lydia Weinberger is a third-year student at UNC Chapel Hill. She is passionate about color theory.

Erasure #2 from pages 93-95 of *Smart Chefs Stay Slim*

Beneath the coffee, inside the cookbooks,
Too many twenty-nine year olds
Are thrown a check
Then a way to escape:
Browse the photos
Come
Down
I do not like to eat—
Food helps keep my mind open like a lemon
The juice is very sour, very acidic;
New things
Laughing—
I don't love myself:
It's a passion.

Katherine E. Young

Katherine E. Young is the author of *Day of the Border Guards*, a finalist for the 2014 Miller Williams Arkansas Poetry Prize. Her translations of Russian-language poetry and prose have won

international recognition; she was named a 2017 NEA translation fellow. She served as the inaugural poet laureate for Arlington, VA. For more info, see www.katherine-young-poet.com.

Plane Angle

after Euclid

We have the angle: you, me. We can't yet
determine its inclination: acute? Obtuse?

There are other angles—husbands, wives,
the woman up in Boston you see twice

a year on business—our configuration's
multidimensional. From our single

point of intersection, lines radiate
out: children, parents, neighbors, friends.

In bookstores, bars, restaurants and malls,
we masquerade as ordinary folk

whose shoes need polishing. We know no one's
ever embodied divinity the way

we do, initiates stealing to darkened
parking lots as if to the bridal bed.

Trailing behind, our individual lines
contort, constructing triangles, cones, circles,

starbursts that strike sparks from concrete berms,
tiled walks in raucous shivaree—as if

tomorrow at dawn our loved ones will break down
the door, parade the bloodstained sheets through town.

John Zedolik

John Zedolik an adjunct English instructor in Pittsburgh and has published poems in *Commonweal*, *Poem*, *Poetry Salzburg Review (AUT)*,

Transom, and the *Post-Gazette* in Pittsburgh. His first full-length collection, *Salient Points and Sharp Angles*, was published by CW Books last year.

Ran Out

Pork and sauerkraut feeds us
for days of dinner as no one

desires to cook upon return
from the ICU, as mother

has been crushed and lies
dying amid the tubes and machines—

so good luck to us as the tradition
insists, but I do not feel its force

as we finish the final leftovers
from the maker whose fortune

ended before I knew it, in this
new year auguring now hunger

for those of late so emptied.

Daniel Miess

Daniel Miess is a student in Chapman University's Dual MA/MFA program. His work has been published in *Mud Chronicles: A New England*

Anthology, Anastamos: Library Edition, and Adelaide Independent Literary Magazine.

Book review

Postcolonial Love Poem by Natalie Diaz
Graywolf, 2020

In her new collection of poems, *Postcolonial Love Poem*, Natalie Diaz brings the reader into an imaginative world where themes such as violence, the erotic, the effects of colonialism, and indigenous water rights exist. Often these aspects of the world are embedded within natural imagery and both religious and mythological language.

The end of the title poem says:

The rain will eventually come, or not,
Until then, we touch our bodies like wounds—
this war never ended and somehow begins again. (2)

Rain becomes a metaphor for change that may or may not come. While the speaker is cautiously optimistic on one side, the poem is realistic that things may not change at all. When Diaz writes “touching our bodies like wounds,” she evokes a tender moment of vulnerability to contrast with a world at war.

While Diaz still writes about the figure of the troubled brother in *When My Brother Was An Aztec*, in this new collection, she gives the figure of the beloved a prominent role. Whether she describes erotic desire for her beloved as “a jaguar moves” in

"Skin-Light," as the Minotaur in "Asterion's Lament" and "I, Minotaur," or as a being like the Eucharist in "Like Church" and "Ode to the Beloved's Hips," she explores the desire and gives it sacred value.

In recent years, the broader American public became more aware of Indigenous water rights because of the visibility of the Standing Rock protests. The space given to this issue in *Postcolonial Love Poem* emphasizes the real impact on Mohave people. In what I find the most lyrical and moving work, Diaz writes the following in the "First Water is the Body:"

If I was created to hold the Colorado River, to carry its rushing inside me, if the very shape of my throat, of my thighs is for wetness, how can I say who I am if the river is gone?

What does 'Aha Makav mean if the river is emptied to the skeleton of its fish and the miniature sand dunes of its dry silten beds?

If the river is a ghost, am I?

Unsoothable thirst is one type of haunting.

Through three questions and a single answer, poem asks the reader to reflect and open oneself to greater complexity. When the river dies, the identity of people dies too, and when identity dies, then the Mohave could become like ghosts, thirsting for

a river that exists in memory.

Within “*exhibits from The American Water Museum*” are smaller sections or images that remind me of the exhibits in a museum. The description of the water contamination crisis in Flint, Michigan, is particularly haunting:

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A dilapidated diorama of the mythical city of Flint, Michigan:

The glue that once held the small-scale balsa wood children to their places—along the streets, waiting in line at the bus stop, on top of the slide in a playground, or on the basketball court—has desiccated and snapped away. Now the children lie flat on the floor of the diorama, like they are sleeping, open-eyed *to the sight, to what they have seen* through their mouths—hundreds of miniature empty clay cups roll back and forth out of reach of their hands, some have ground down to tinier piles of dust and sand at their unmoving fingertips.

The diorama becomes a metaphor for how Flint, Michigan, is seen in the public imagination. Just as the water crisis faded from media interest, so the diorama is in a state of disrepair. The people in Flint are contained within a box, much like the box of a television. “The hundreds of miniature empty clay cups” continues to echo the lack of access to clean drinking water.

Postcolonial Love Poem is an excellent follow-up to *When My Brother Was an Aztec*. It builds upon elements Diaz has addressed previously, such as the erotic, but also addresses new topics such as the Flint water crisis and the Standing Rock protests. By bringing the reader into a world shaped by pain and pleasure, Diaz brings us into an eloquent, complex world of feeling.