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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](http://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.
In 2013, New York-based artist Nina Kathchadourian published a collection of photographs of book spines called *Sorted Books*. In the book’s introduction, Brian Dillon writes, “it is as though the books have convened of their own accord like plants or insects—following secret or, in the case of more explicitly comic or narrative groupings, not-so-secret attractions.” That project rested on the idea, in Dillon’s words, “that books are objects designed to be handled.”

We’ve been thinking about this project for a long time and wondering how *Tab Journal* might encourage this sort of found-and-constructed literary and visual art. From its inception, our literary journal has set out to explore relationships between print and digital forms, between text and image, between writer and reader. In book-spine poems, the reader of books becomes the writer of the poem. The lines are the books’ titles, so is the poem written or curated? Does the poem say as much, or perhaps more, about the writer-curator’s reading habits as it does about the subject of the poem that’s been constructed?

After the pandemic changed the ways we access libraries and physical bookstores, *Tab Journal* sought out poems composed and formed by stacking physical books as objects designed to be handled. This issue of Book-Spine Poems for Pandemic Times is a selection of both individuals’ bookshelves and what’s on people’s minds during this historical moment of the Covid-19 pandemic. It’s also a collection of remarkable, intriguing poems using shared constraints.

In reading this issue, it’s important also to consider who has a bookshelf at home.
and what that means. One recent global study indicated that kids who grow up with books in the home tend to perform better academically. A home library is likely a side effect of the sort of wealth and education that open doors as much as it is part of a learning environment that builds skills and empathy that foster achievement. When Tab Journal posted an open call for book-spine poems, we were aware that submissions would likely suggest how class, gender, race and ethnicity, disability, and education correlate with book buying and with having space to keep physical books. The many photos of stacks of books we received might also suggest what kinds authors and stories are published and promoted—and who’s missing.

Having physical books is such a charged topic that when Marie Kondo suggested purging one’s shelves, the backlash was swift. She then clarified, “So it’s not so much what I personally think about books. The question you should be asking is what do you think about books.” While we hope that this issue of Book-Spine Poems for Pandemic Times challenges you to think about what a poem is and means, we also hope you will ask yourself what you think about books—the books in this issue, your own books, the library, bookshops, and book publishers?
Lisa Alvarez

Lisa Alvarez’s poetry has appeared in Borderlands: Texas Poetry Review, Huizache, and Zócalo Public Square and is forthcoming in So It Goes, the literary journal of the Kurt Vonnegut Museum and Library. She grew up in and around Los Angeles but has spent the last 30 years in Orange County, where she earned an MFA in fiction from UC Irvine, became a professor at the local community college, and co-edited Orange County: A Literary Field Guide. During the summers, she co-directs the Writers Workshops at the Community of Writers in the California’s Sierra Nevada.
It Could: One End

a time of gifts
first course in turbulence
an experiment in misery

breath, eyes, memory
the world doesn’t work that way
but it could

beyond your doors
where the sidewalk ends
the secret garden
the last flower
world’s end
Mary Camarillo

Mary Camarillo lives in Huntington Beach, California. She is working on a novel and a collection of linked stories. Her short fiction and poems have appeared in journals such as Sonora Review, The Bookends Review, Lunch Ticket, and The Ear.
Bedside Book Spines in the time of COVID19

How to write an autobiographical novel:
First, catch
the mirror and the light,
night blooming jasmin(n)e,
lost in the city.
The nickel boys—
children of the land—
gone so long.
Verge
from our land to our land.
Emily Capers

Emily Capers lives in Chicago where she recently earned in her MFA in Fiction. In her writing, she likes to explore identity while experimenting with form. Her work has appeared in Allegory Ridge, High Shelf Press, and The Mill.
Beloved

Beloved
citizen,
the power of our words
short talks
wild beauty,
here there was once a country.
Jim Garber

Jim Garber was runner-up in the 2017 Elizabeth R. Curry Poetry Contest. Two of his poems are included in *Visions: An Anthology of Ekphrastic Poetry*. He is co-president of the Katonah Poetry Series and serves on the organizing committee for Poets Corner at Tompkins Corner Cultural Center. He reads regularly at poetry events in and around the greater New York City area.
MAKING YOUR OWN DAYS

You’ve just been told
the world doesn’t end—
nothing to be frightened of.

Let the great world spin
in the heart of the sea
to bedlam and part way back.

The country between us
pretending to be asleep,
diving into the wreck.

The sense of an ending:
dancing after hours,
extremely loud and incredibly close,
into the dangerous world
12 floors above the Earth.

Seeing things:
ever-ending birds,
the evolution of useful things,
an arrow in the wall,
the things we carried,
the winged energy of delight,
the movie at the end of the world.

Keep this forever.
This isn’t the sort of thing that
happens to someone like you.
No one belongs here more than you.

I am no one you know
as I lay dying
in the time of butterflies—
break, blow, burn.
Jodi Hottel

Jodi Hottel’s most recent chapbook is *Out of the Ashes* from Pandemonium Press. Her previous chapbooks are *Voyeur* from WordTech Press and *Heart Mountain*, winner of the 2012 Blue Light Press Poetry Prize. Hottel’s work has been published in *Nimrod International*, *Spillway*, *Ekphrasis*, and anthologies from the University of Iowa Press, Tebot Bach, and the Marin Poetry Center. She is currently sheltering in place in Sonoma County, CA.
Guidebook to Relative Strangers

Wherever you go, there you are—
   Off the clock
      In praise of slowness.
      
The shelter of each other.

Contact
   [Terrible blooms]
   [Bright stains]

In the body of our lives—
   Comfortable with uncertainty.
Saira Khan lives and writes in the suburbs of Seattle and can be followed @sairakhans.
TEFFI  SUBTLY WORDED

INITIATION  ELISABETH HAICH

HERE IS WHERE WE MEET  JOHN BERGER

THE WAY OF IGNORANCE  WENDELL BERRY

300 ARGUMENTS  SARAH MANGUSO

Eckhart Tolle ~ THE POWER OF NOW

HOWL  Allen Ginsberg

How Should a Person Be?  SHEILA HETI

MACHADO IN THE DREAM HOUSE
[Untitled]

Subtly Worded
  Initiation
Here Is Where We Meet
The Way of Ignorance
300 Arguments
The Power of Now
  Howl
How Should a Person Be?
  In the Dream House
Jenna Le

The Disordered Faces in the Water Praise The Best We Could Do

The disordered
faces in the water
Praise
The best we could do;

Springing
Whales
Digest
The sorrow of war
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victoria Livingstone</th>
<th>Bryan Betancur</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Livingstone’s poetry, translations (from Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese), academic essays, and journalistic pieces have appeared in <em>The Café Review</em>, <em>Metamorphoses</em>, <em>Hispanófila</em>, <em>Truthdig</em>, and elsewhere. She teaches at New Jersey Institute of Technology.</td>
<td>Bryan Betancur is an assistant professor of Spanish at Bronx Community College. His academic and journalistic essays have appeared in <em>Bulletin of the Comediantes</em>, <em>Inside Higher Ed</em>, and other publications. He is working on a book of short stories.</td>
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Exhalation

What is health insurance (good) for?
The fall
of no country I know,
the mismeasure of man.

Searching for recognition
near to the wild heart,
the things we cannot say:
meditations.
Leslie Pietrzyk

Leslie Pietrzyk is the author of three novels, including *Silver Girl*. Her collection of short fiction, *This Angel On My Chest*, won the Drue Heinz Literature Prize and was published by University of Pittsburgh Press. Her work was awarded a Pushcart Prize in 2020.
Who do you think you are?

Rats!
Partisans!
Lowlife!

Just as I thought...

Dare Me
Shopping for a better country.
Molly Bess Rector

Molly Bess Rector earned an MFA in poetry at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, where she directs the Open Mouth Reading Series. She is the recipient of residencies and fellowships from the Edward F. Albee Foundation, the Vermont Studio Center, the New York State Summer Writers Institute, and the Artists 360 program in Northwest Arkansas. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in Ninth Letter, The Orison Anthology, Best New Poets 2019, and others. Her work can be found online at www.mollybessrector.com.
The Cure

It is Daylight
Trembling Air

From the Inside Quietly
Everything in the Universe

Whispers Secrets & Promises
The Cure

Long Life
All Its Charms
Laura Stanfill

Laura Stanfill is the neurodivergent publisher of Forest Avenue Press. She wishes on indie bookstores like stars.
There there
There there
Bright
Odd girl out.
Look me in the eye.
People like you
Carry the sky.
The land of forgotten girls,
Invisible girls:
This is the story of you,
What I carry
To the bright edge of the world.
I am, I am, I am
Saying your name three times underwater.
Claire Yspol

Claire Yspol is a Dutch artist based in Dundee, UK. She works across writing, moving image, artist publishing and more, to playfully interrogate the complexities of living amongst objects and other systems. Her works pay homage to the everyday, but also to art itself; the experience of which is a specific way of being-here.
null
Futures

O positive
conditions of love
create dangerously
all possible futures.