

BVAA

2018

Art-Poetry

Proofing Sheet

Version 4

## **Dying Birds**

By Evan Plante

2007 Nov 10

(Contemplating Merrick Jarmulowicz's death, a dream and a pile of feathers.)

They're falling from the trees,  
those dying birds.  
Wings to the body.  
Frozen.  
Falling off the power lines  
and bouncing along the pavement  
like bowling pins.

They stare back at me,  
though not blankly,  
though not facing.  
Lightly accusing soldiers  
dead in the road.

Years ago I shot at birds.  
Now I don't.

We found a feathered feast  
in the woods near some  
scat-on-a-rock.

Did the scatter eat the bird?  
Why are they frozen  
cold in rigor?

Yet they feel warm to the touch,  
my body heat bouncing off  
their shiny feathers?  
Those dead birds  
lying on the pavement.

Like pins... with no alleys.  
No rules.  
No overtaking of decay.

If I kick one to the ditch  
they seem no less in number.  
As I watch, the bird-pile grows,  
their blackness covering the gray tar  
as new pavement.

Dead birds, not pointy,  
First alone.  
Now locked together in a  
Great mat of death.

*Source poem for Liz Decasse*

## **Blink Back**

By Evan Plante, December 2017

The focal plane rain told the truth  
That we are be-lighted, delighted  
Privileged to see all  
To be at all  
To cruise  
And to feel all.

The six fingered spline shows the world  
As I blink back, shrink back  
Soaked by tears  
Drowned by tomorrow  
And walk  
Like parallel drips.

The missing wind blows nether streets  
Yet we hold back, fold back  
Upon ourselves  
Forced to sit  
Compact  
With voices unheard.

The mind spends its time in the rain  
Made to taste dark, face dark  
The cityscape  
Edges are soft  
And sweet  
With shadowless forms.

(End)

*Response poem to Liz Decasse*

Poem by Jane Nozzolillo

Time

Have you ever thought, as I have, in my  
golden years, that time is just flying  
by

The years, the months, even the days  
are taken from us with barely a blink of an  
eye

It seems like yesterday, or at least last year,  
that I turned forty-five

And now if it wasn't for a wonderful doctor,  
I might not even be alive

But I am alive, exploring and enjoying  
every wonderful day

And I'm not letting that racing thing called time  
get in the way

*Source poem for Linda DeFeudis*

Poem by Jane Nozzolillo

The pink bike leaned against the barn  
wall waiting for my daughter to be  
returning  
I whispered to the little bike that today  
its wheels would not be  
turning  
In my heart I will always see her flying  
down the neighboring  
streets  
Her little bike basket which she loved so  
much filled with her favorite  
treats  
My husband came and stood next to me  
looking at my eyes so red and  
damp  
My dear, he said, she will be back in two  
weeks it's only summer  
camp

*Response poem to Linda DeFeudis*

## **Wisteria Ignored**

By Jody Zolli

Sometimes beauty thrives on fumes  
Delicately scenting traffic  
Draping languidly over guardrails  
Like gossamer groups of grapes.

I've seen your cousins cozened  
Cultivated and espaliered  
Preened, prepared, presented  
To the pampered and refined.

But here, some accident of nature  
Or, perhaps, some strange intent  
To bless the autos hurtling by  
With your phantom fragrance.

By now you must be unsurprised  
By the momentary wonder  
Delivered by distracted stares  
From gridlock-stilled wide eyes.

Atop the derelict filth and rust  
Bestrewn with wind-thrown cast-off trash  
Blossoms rustle in spring breezes  
Beckoning toward summer.

*Source for Sue Dion*

## **Still of the Night**

By Jody Zolli

We wake in the early bright  
Rouse to sip the sun  
Sap rising we bestir our boughs.

Children's cries echo  
Below outstretched limbs  
First a flurried stop and go  
Then lying soft and lazy.

Trickling laughter  
Through swaying shadows  
Their tiny fingers tracing  
The ancient braille of our bark.

Scattering homewards late  
Sun sinks bittersweet  
Shades the sky to apricot and carmine  
All sounds ebb to silence.

At twilight we turn inwards  
Sap retires to august roots  
Breezes sigh at water's edge  
Draw brisk familiar fingers  
Between fleeting needles.

Moon wanders wayward overhead  
Mirrored in our placid pond  
Lapping at fixed feet  
Day now done, we drink deep.

We do our best growing in the dark.

*Response to Sue Dion*

Poem by Kara Krantz

fingers press against wet soil,  
compacting my heart deeper against  
the concave pressure of the earth.

can I begin again? Is there a point where loss  
becomes gain, and can you show me that place  
so I can press my cheek against the ground  
and feel its heart beat?

my cheeks are smudged with ashes  
- you smile and call it smoky eyes -  
and I have to admit  
it's a good  
look.

it's warm here, where the fire fans my freedom  
and I'm grasping for your hand, so I can press it  
against my chest  
and beat again.

*Source for Bob Evans*



Poem by Kara Krantz

I'm grasping onto a memory.

Relying on this banged-up,  
unreliable narrator of a mind  
that won't let  
you go.

I'm sifting through dirt, searching for vestiges -  
calling it archeology so the truth  
won't symbolically slay me.

My darling, lay me down to sleep  
beside you.

I'm grasping onto my sanity.

Relying on my faith to uphold me  
and the memory of our love to mold me  
to this place.

I can still taste your lemon meringue kisses  
and the bitterness left behind  
from our goodbyes.

I'm grasping without thinking,  
without a concept of what else  
to do.

I'm grasping, I'm gasping.

I'm holding on to you.

*Response to Bob Evans*

## **A MOTHER'S INSTINCT**

By Patty Cahill

Putting on my coat  
Leashing my dog  
This crisp Autumn morning

Walking along early  
The cool air, refreshing

Crunch, crunch crunch,  
The fallen leaves  
Beneath my feet

Unexpectedly spotting  
A bird's nest  
A nearby bush  
I gently lift it

Perfectly and carefully built  
The nest a symbol of Love:  
Paper, tape and twigs entwined

A mother's instinct:  
To shelter her babies

*Source poem for Carol Frieswick*

**DELIGHTFUL**

by Patty Cahill

Waking up before dawn,  
The Beach,  
An early morning walk

A beautiful Sunrise  
Before my eyes

A sign another delightful beach day

The Ocean calm,  
inviting

Rejuvenating,  
Refreshing,  
Relaxing,  
Its nature

*Response to Carol Frieswick*

## **Late Afternoon**

By Mary McDonald

When day has wrung the last bits of brilliance out of the sun  
Softened its edges till the light is like cool drops of water  
Towering beech and oak and maple inviting this gentle light in  
When shadows grow long and deep  
Offering secret places  
Come to me.  
Wrap your arms about me  
Feel my breath upon you  
Let the shadows wrap us tight  
The smell of cool earth intoxicate  
The grass beneath whisper softly  
Open your arms for me  
Open your heart for me.  
I would climb inside

*Source for Sarah Beth Guimond*

## **Veils**

by Mary McDonald

every moment of every day

we decide.

circle towards one another

reach for each other

or

turn aside

*response to Sarah Beth Guimond*

## **Letter of Gratitude**

By Elizabeth Decasse

*a letter of gratitude-*

to you who bares your soul,  
    revealing more to me – some stranger,  
    some fellow traveler through life -

you have shown me / that which you cannot yourself see,  
and for that, / i am blessed. and i am grateful. and i am in awe.

you have shown me / that which is within all of us  
suffering / strength, hope / among that which feels hopeless.

you have shown me / that which others cannot have  
an inherent trust / which i shall keep sacred.

i am blessed / to have known you,  
witnessed your struggles / and basked in your light

i am grateful / to have been receiver  
of that which makes you / you, and

i am in awe / of that beauty within you,  
of your courage to open yourself

you have shown me / that which you begin to see,  
a soul on the path of healing.

and i thank you -  
    from the bottom of my heart,  
    i thank you, i thank you / for that which  
    you have shown me / that which i shall always see

remember your light  
and i shall continue to stoke that fire.

-a witness.

*Source for Kara Emily Krantz*

**Resilience**  
by Elizabeth Decasse

<p><b>prologue:</b> and so He put ink to paper and her story began.</p> <p><b>the beginning:</b> crying hungry crying dirty crying hungry crying crying crying crying</p> <p>she learns to depend on no one but herself</p> <p><b>the middle:</b> she becomes an expert at dodgeball, objects constantly flying at home</p> <p>she becomes a master chef at age ten, feeding the littles while mama sleeps</p> <p>she becomes a live-in maid, leaving no stain behind</p> <p>out of fear of punishment of shame of inadequacy of retribution</p> <p>she becomes a little adult as the adults who care for her couldn't care less</p> <p>she tells Him each night, begs him for help because he's the only one she can safely tell</p> <p>she asks Him why why this life why her</p>	<p>why anyone she thinks He's come through when they finally move on when the adults "save" them</p> <p>but that story's just beginning</p> <p>He places her in a whirlwind, in the hands of countless others- those who are worse even than her own those who are in it for the money those who mean well but just don't know how</p> <p>until finally He shows her one that listens that doesn't hurt that doesn't yell that takes control but gives freedom</p> <p>one that loves</p> <p><b>the end:</b> she isn't happy, or not the way you might expect</p> <p>but she has grown she has overcome she has forgiven</p> <p>her stories scatter across the state, pages torn and ashen in her wake cast to the dirt, and set ablaze</p> <p>and she is reborn as she was always meant to be.</p> <p><b>prologue ii:</b> and so she opens to a blank page, and so she lays ink to paper and so her story begins anew.</p>
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*Response to Kara Emily Krantz*

## **I Do**

by Andrea Lettic

For better or worse...  
but this is the worst.  
Still much alive  
but stuck in this hearse.  
Debt and buried alive  
I suffocate from this Earth.  
The weight from this ground -  
your silence a deafening sound.  
How many rock bottoms  
can one tavern hold?  
"Going in for just one."  
Or so that's what I am told.  
Will it get better,  
our now and forever?  
Because like I said first,  
this is the worst.

*Source for Donna Manley*



Poem by Andrea Lettic

Slow down.  
But time is running out  
In this out-west town.

Father time imprints history -  
Faded denim.  
Worn boots.  
Deep lines like cattles' brands.

As waves of technological advancement  
grow stronger they stir up the Monsanto's dust,  
choking out those who want to live on the land.  
Stealing every cent.

There is strength in nature.  
Preserve.  
Conserve.  
Together we'll carry these traditions on.

*Response to Donna Manley*

## **When Spirits Cross the Street**

by S. M. Nevermore

I'll bet you've never seen,  
When spirits cross the street.

A sudden scattering of leaves,  
A trail of snow hissing across the road.  
Why, you'd never guess what's within the bluster.

The smallest of these gales are children,  
Still frolicking in their play.  
The larger are adults and elders,  
Watching the young create their games.

Life goes on, so to speak.  
Woods that are long gone,  
Homes that have long been torn,  
Still exist for these happy spirits.

They greet each other with cheer,  
They shop, they lounge,  
They'll even cook a meal.  
For family and friends are all that matter here.

Families reunite and friends come together.  
'Tis not a sad endeavor.  
For even though some may wait what seems like ages,  
All families find each other in stages.

So when you see a flurry of leaves,  
Or a dusting of snow as you drive,  
Think of which spirits you might find.  
As you drive on by.

Oh, please don't fret about harm.  
For they hardly notice as you drive on through.  
They'll continue on as normal just as you or I.  
If you did see them it would surely be a sight.

Oh the wonders you see when times collide.  
Horses, buggies, motorcycles.  
Hoop stick, game boys, and hopscotch.  
Empire gowns, flappers, short shorts and leather jackets.

Now, you may think me strange or false,  
You may cry folly and faint.  
I assure you that I jest you not.

I can see what few others can't see,  
When spirits cross the street.

*Source for Carol Plante*

## **The Only Question**

by S. M. Nevermore

I am the pilot who steers the plane.  
I am the one who makes the flowers grow.  
I am the one who decides where to go.

But where exactly do I go?

The choices are endless.  
The places are boundless.

It doesn't have to exist.  
I can visit lands of make believe and fable.  
I can traverse alternate worlds.  
There are no barriers for me.

I can see things no other can see.  
I can do things no other can do.  
I can go where no other can go.

Who says ants can't ride a turtle's back?  
Who says I can't have cake in the garden?  
Who says I can't find a slipper that belongs to a giantess?

No one but I.  
The book is there.  
The pages are blank.  
The door is open.

The only question is where do I begin?

*Response to Carol Plante*

## **Serenity**

by Lisa Shea

Easing into downward dog,  
my spine crunch-crackles. I unclog  
and breathe away the stress and must.  
News: Nine million killed by smog.

Starving kids hoard day-old crust,  
hole-laced roofing wormed with rust.  
I'm pondering my full-fridge state.  
World's roulette is fixed; unjust.

Outside, leafless trees gyrate;  
Wintry winds and rain debate.  
Here, within, the kittens purr  
while seniors ponder empty plate.

Our entry to our world is pure.  
Chaos twists as we mature.  
Every day we can abjure  
and draw each breath to seek a cure.

*Source for John Randell*

## **Freedom**

by Lisa Shea

The world is an interlaced thicket.  
A dense, disorienting place of twisting branches and  
spiraling moss  
all seeking to entwine us.  
Ensnare us.  
Distract us from our dreams.

But there is always a path through.  
A way to zig rather than zag,  
to find that clear space,  
to stretch our wings,  
and fly, fly, fly toward  
what will make us whole.

Not the shiny, glittery,  
ephemeral trinkets craved  
by the magpie.

Not the fluffs of blue string  
and brightly colored shells  
of the bowerbird.

But the things which bring us true  
contentment.  
Someone to love. Someone to love us.  
A place to call home.  
Ample nutritious food.

And the ability to soar.

*Response to John Randell*

Poem by Christine Wheeler Beauchaine

In the early morning darkness  
Alone with my thoughts  
And the dog  
The train rumbles past  
Like the end of the world  
Or the beginning  
We used to chase them  
You and I  
For you loved them  
And I love you  
And I could not have imagined  
Someday I would miss that

*Source for Frank Robertson*

Poem by Christine Wheeler Beauchaine

Sitting in the late summer sunshine  
Writing and writing in my journal  
Jumbled chaotic thoughts  
And melodramatic poetry  
I might never let anyone read  
Trying to sort out everything  
All of my life really  
But mostly love  
When over my shoulder  
A buzzing so loud  
I wonder  
How large and angry is this insect  
Yet is no unhappy bug  
But a hummingbird  
Green and gold  
Wings beating frantically  
And my heart too  
For I have never seen one up close before  
It is miraculous to me  
I decide to take it as a portent  
Of good things to come  
And a reassurance  
That all will be well

*Response to Frank Robertson*

Poem by Sarah Beth Guimond

“You Devil  
I never imagined hell,  
I had no need to.

Told my mother the earth  
I didn’t believe in that;

And she threatened to take  
Heaven from me,  
But I never believed I belonged there anyway.

It seemed too far away.  
Too clean, too pristine  
For the likes of me.

I think when  
There is a frost I could  
read all the names of the angels  
In the language of nature.

There are thousands more than I know I’m sure, my heretic skin,  
My heathen heart.  
And there are two.

Two like the two shades of blue that your eyes are darker than most.

Two angels,  
Like the children you have named,  
Whose names I don’t know  
Even though we say we are friends.

I almost named my child Gabriel you know, but then I didn’t.

I stayed up all night staring at a crack in the wall, a nameless child  
resting in my womb, he was not worried that I had no name for him.  
He was not in a hurry to leave and be born into the world like I was.

You Devil,  
I imagine you know exactly what this Illusive heaven is like,  
you were there once, and when I learned your name, my blood echoed through the corridors  
of my heart like a church bell.

Like a cup over filled,  
spilling out like a smile, and laughter, oh, my heart—  
You Devil  
I ask not for it back.

Long ago eaten by wolves, not  
The ones in my childhood that  
Devoured innocence,  
I would not give it to them.

I am red cloak. I am red cape. I am red dagger.  
I am a vanishing act, but I always come back— or do I?”

*Source for Lisa Shea*



## **Indigo Escape**

By Sarah Beth Guimond

From the blurry depths of  
dreamlike fog, beneath the water's surface,  
I can just make out the shape—  
Like reading tea leaves in a cup,  
Like twilight slowly enveloping the Earth.  
I want nothing more than to be wrong about what I see.  
Is this a chain to hold me?  
Perhaps an anchor,  
perhaps a snare?— or I pray, perhaps it is a buoy line that holds a boat nearby? That holds our  
escape  
from our fears?  
I want nothing more than your peace.

*Response to Lisa Shea*

## **The Old Dog Speaks**

By Karen Elizabeth Sharpe

Each day you leave me. I have come  
To expect it and do not suffer. By now  
We wear each other like an old pair of slippers  
And besides, I am tired. For 11 years  
I have held my tongue, except when  
The crows get raucous in the field out back  
Yet now, I must tell you: There is nothing  
To be afraid of. When I close my eyes  
After you are gone, when my bones click  
Into place, the field is all around me  
Alight with daisies and purple clover  
Full of bees. Each day you leave me  
I see it more clearly, the jays and sparrows  
In the brush, the gold of the sunlight  
Going on forever. Listen, I have been  
The bowl you empty your sorrows in  
The warm fire of forgiveness to your rage  
I have seen your shadows and your stars  
And I am still here. At the moment  
When you pass from that life to this  
When the key turns in the door  
When your heart leaps to life  
Or forgets to even care  
I have already given you mine.

*Source poem for Pamela Siderewicz*

## **Chosen**

By Karen Elizabeth Sharpe

A half moon last night, rising  
over an ice-skimmed Quinsigamond  
and the slow earth turning away another day,  
as we rolled to a stop, caught,  
watching, the moon a sleepy eye winking  
at the chain of lights on the highway below  
and us in the car, a moon so like an upturned palm,  
like a chalice, so like an offering  
spilling the night out on the streets,  
that as the engine stilled and the car cooled  
we said nothing, but leaned our heads close  
in the starlessness, in the black moon-poured sky.  
Maybe it was the chill December air,  
maybe the solstice coming on,

but no moon-pulled tides have ever been guided like this,  
to the side of the road on a frigid night,  
when best would be to head home, get on with things,  
but this is what it means to be chosen to love,  
to step out of the blind flow of traffic together,  
to strip naked the ghosts of purpose we call self,  
to lose our names, our reason in the process,  
to ride the brim of a half moon rising,  
to know there is not the right word for anything.

*Response poem for Pamela Siderewicz*

Poem by Bob Marrone

The doors are closed, the locks show rust  
No entry through the backward room  
Facing forward as I must  
Looking at a fateful gloom

Onward onto unknown ground  
No road to show the way or pace  
Seeking answers never found  
Slowing in the endless race

Ever forward no time to tarry  
Lasting efforts holding sway  
Seeing life now, not so scary  
Opening doors to show the way

*Source poem for Dennis Smith*

**New England Scene with Barn**

By Bob Marrone

At crack of dawn; at edge of night  
When darkness falls; in brightest light  
In Misty morning; in summer storm  
In snow so thick it hides its form

It stands the test of weathered time  
Clapboards bare and showing grime  
Majestic purple could steal the scene  
But has a rival in nature's green

Adorned with splendor by Old Glory  
Adding substance to the story  
Soul of nation, heart of man  
Making peace with nature's plan

*Response to Dennis Smith*

## **Tomato**

By Trisha J. Wooldridge

Taken from my native home,  
I was dragged to cold, dark, stony lands  
where nights were far too long.

I was bred,  
spliced,  
Frankensteined  
to be “hearty”  
to last longer than my normally brief life,  
to be fatter, beefier,  
more succulent,  
and bear more children than nature intended.

Hundreds of years,  
of science,  
of slavery,  
of commodification,  
of being pulled, too soon, from the vine  
and transported miles in darkness,  
so you  
might eat my tender fruit.

It is no comfort  
to know  
you  
commit  
those same sins  
upon your own children.

*Response to Al Weems*

## **War Paint**

By Trisha Wooldridge

This is for me,  
not you.

I was up late,  
with heartache  
with insomnia  
with brain weasels  
with comics  
or cute cat videos  
with nothing at all.

And I hadn't time to shower.  
And I'm already running late.

But the glossy, flimsy, shimmering  
barely there  
armor  
of eye-shadow, liner, mascara  
maybe even lip gloss...

That's for me.

*Response to Al Weems*

## Daughter

By Linda DeFeudis

*A deceased mother, Barbara, to her daughter*

Daughter, a part  
Within you, I am

My spirit,  
Your spirit,  
Your arms,  
My arms,  
A warm embrace

A vision,  
I see you,  
Feel, touch you,  
Your face

My being,  
Your being,  
Within you,  
I walk

Walk softly,  
Walk softly,  
Listen, quiet,  
A whisper,  
My talk

You now the leader,  
Your footsteps,  
Now my footsteps

I follow  
In closeness,  
In unison,  
We, together

My being, your being  
Now oneness  
In time / space

Your walk,  
My walk,  
Your steps,  
My steps

Alone you are not  
I follow in heart

Try not to ponder  
Or ask questions why

Feel me,  
Our closeness,  
Our oneness,  
Please try

*Source for Christine Wheeler Beauchaine*



## **The Typewriter**

By Linda DeFeudis

Black and majestic  
I sit,  
stoic and proud,  
My frequent use awaited

Skillful Hands  
Searching,  
My letters,  
Their touch,  
My keys of communication

What will I write today?  
A letter,  
An essay,  
A love story?

Infinite possibilities  
Now cut short,  
Obsolete

I often sit alone,  
Untouched,  
Ignored

Lonely,  
My black,  
Once shining  
Attire  
Now dismal

My "Royal" throne  
Vanquished

Technology,  
The new King,  
Communication

*Response to Christine Wheeler Beauchaine*

## **A Life Concluded**

By Kevin Saleeba

(Note that even though this is the source poem, Kevin had seen the source piano photo before writing this, and used it as part of his inspiration)

The room is quiet,  
Like with a soft kiss,  
While outside's chaos  
Falls into a dark abyss

Storm clouds surround my ominous thoughts  
Hypnotized by the sway of nearby trees,  
I watch drops drip down the window pane  
The rain persists and builds; Paralyzed by the beating beads

The random rhythm of these drams  
Causes me to raise my fist  
With cheeks stained with tears  
I punch the glass, cutting my wrist

Flood water rushes through the broken glass  
Refreshing my face  
To thoughts and feeling ultimately brooded  
All means nothing to a life now concluded

*Source for Mike Zeis*

## **The Upright Mahogany**

By Kevin Saleeba

Forced to play the Upright Mahogany  
As early as age four  
Awkward fingers bumbled and stumbled  
A terrible dance, this menacing song

Tripped by black and white keys of spruce  
Hammers miss-struck bass and treble notes  
The sound board soured with the vibration  
No music was made, no inspiration

Bitter false notes ended as puberty enraptured  
Not interested in Mozart, not attracted to Bach;  
Not caring about Beethoven, Wagner, or Brahms

Ignored and not played, the Upright Mahogany  
Moved to the dark and wet cellar  
Temperature dropped  
Varnished wood, the dust collected

Morphed and contracted, stretched and deformed  
The pedal rod, the bridge, the pin block, the strings;  
The nails, the screws, the glue, and the keys  
Shape permanently changed  
Pulled and stretched in all ways

The Upright Mahogany, now lying on its back  
Tossed out with an old chair, a dresser, and trash

*Response to Mike Zeis*