

# Red Wolf Journal

Fall 2014 Issue 3

## *Celebration and Ritual*



Peter Roundy and Grace Harriman, editors

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## CELEBRATION AND RITUAL

Welcome to the *Red Wolf Journal* Fall 2014 Issue 3.

Celebration and ritual: the two words are a call for a gathering of poems to be included in this issue. The two words are an intention for reflection, nothing more.

Ceremonies and rituals have always been the milestones of human experience. Baptisms, weddings, funerals, anniversaries, the changing of the seasons have long mapped the course of our collective experience.

The universe of nature provides the setting for mankind's need for ceremony and ritual. The order of solstices, the oceans, the sun, moon and stars are the altar of the marriage between man and nature.

And there are the more intimate personal rituals and ceremonies—the dining table, Sunday mornings, ways of greeting, a cup of tea—the signs and symbols that are the measure of one's daily life.

And then there is the universe of human consciousness—the life of the mind—where exist the most subtle forms of order and design. Language, and in particular the language of poetry, is in some way a celebration and a ritual.

The poet carefully selects words and constructs a poem as a message of meaning, emerging from the images in a moment, a scene, a lifetime. The very act of turning language into a poem is a ceremony of the poet's vision, a ritual as it transfers meaning in the vessel of its imagery.

Any poem, modern or ancient, rhythmic or free form, celebrates or mourns the minute and the limitless: a table set with a small meal, a night sky mapped by stars.

Each time a writer engages with language it is a ritual: using words to describe in a unique voice an aspect of our shared humanity. Poetry can express our deep need for words to express emotions, ideas, a sense of place, a belief or fear.

Poems can capture the celebrations/rituals that are flamboyant, colorful: the rhythm of dance and music in a wild street parade; or they can convey the sense of solitude in an individual ritual—an unexpected moment of reflection, thanks, sorrow in the way a tree is framed in a familiar field.

Poetry is generous with its meanings, and our hope is that many poems submitted to *Red Wolf Journal* will reflect upon and speak of these major themes.

Sincerely,

Peter Roundy & Grace Harriman, editors

Red Wolf Journal Fall 2014 Issue 3

<http://redwolfjournal.wordpress.com/>

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modeh ani  
by Wayne-Daniel Berard

g\*d is reborn  
in me each morning  
I gasp a little  
for the breath  
h\* tosses to me  
I catch the  
tidal wave of  
the day looms  
breaks over me  
and g\*d sputters  
splashes and says  
“\*’m back! \*’m here!  
it wasn’t a dream!  
oh thank you thank  
you whoever you are!”  
“let’s talk abo\*t th\*t”  
I whisper

Note: “modeh ani” is titled for the Jewish prayer upon awakening, in which G\*d is thanked for returning one’s soul to one’s body that morning.

**Wayne-Daniel Berard** teaches English and Humanities at Nichols College in Dudley, MA. He is co-founder and co-editor of *Soul-Lit*, an on-line journal of spiritual poetry. He lives in Mansfield, MA with his wife, The Lovely Christine.

Rite Of Passage –  
To the accompaniment of Saint-Saëns' Organ Symphony  
by Vivienne Blake

Grandeur  
splendour  
cold day  
hot tears  
seething crowds  
what to say?  
how encapsulate a life  
that ends in the squalor of disease?  
dependency  
helplessness  
mind gone,  
thank God.

Insistent rhythm overlays  
the shuffling feet  
creeping out of the stark chapel,  
so much black cloth  
conforming to conformity

A surge of sound  
of trite remarks  
of tearful hugs.  
Music says more  
of our cherished friend  
than any words could do.

Vivienne's process notes: This poem was written at the very start of my poeming, about the funeral of a very dear friend. The rhythm of the first stanza follows the rhythm of the opening of the Symphony.

**Vivienne Blake**, who is elderly and decrepit, living in rural Normandy. Her life has been a busy one, so the tranquillity of retirement suits the habits of a poet.

Walking Down the Night  
by James Brush

Savage calculations based on the positions of a thousand stars determined the shape of his prayers. Warped triangles, sometimes square-bottomed pyramids with eighteen sides. Once a dodecahedron, but that was when he was drunk and homesick and working through some things. On a roadside one night, he stopped where a vulture's dark remains were pressed into those of a squirrel killed a few hours earlier. The edges of feathers that escaped wheels fluttered in the small hurricanes of passing trucks. This squirrel-vulture creature, its greasy form pressed into an asphalt shadow and branded by the ridges of a dozen tires, was something new. There was no shape for this awful smash-boned prayer he knew he must say. Dazed and lost, he placed his hands on the cooling pavement. He released all his body's weight. He said his mass and counted it down to zero. He followed the escaping heat out of the atmosphere, rode the highway's shimmering prayer and carried them home.

**James Brush** lives in Austin, TX where he teaches high school English. He is the author of *Birds Nobody Loves*, and *A Place Without a Postcard*. You can find him online at [Coyote Mercury](#) where he keeps a full list of publications.

Have A Knife Day!  
by Ryan Buynak

Limb to limb  
and mouth to mouth,  
I awake Monday.

This knife is made out of an old  
railroad spike.  
And this knife is made of an old  
horseshoe.

My knees are made of bone, and sinew.

Today's sharp,  
and you are like a candle  
underwater.

Got a local haircut,  
went to drown in Midtown;  
ate lunch in the middle  
of a thousand sad sandwiches.

Hustle here and swamp there,  
while the epidermis whiles away.  
I sweat at the temple,  
cutting twice as nice.

Collar bones be pretty  
and equal headaches,  
cut my boredom with loud life.  
He's thirty plus one:  
They say  
about me.

A girl sits in the sun,  
her body seems to melt  
onto the ledge like a Hershey's kiss.

I watch this.

Another gal had the bottom half of her  
jet-black hair dipped in hot pink.

Another had a thick layer of makeup  
covering her beautiful ugly face.

The myriad microscopic day  
runs away with my muse minutes.

Cut me ten by thee.

**Ryan Buynak** is a terrible person who happens to be the future of American  
poetics. He lives and leaks in New York City.

Garden Ode  
by Mary Carroll-Hackett

Every garden, it seems, leads again  
to Eden, to the first tugged root, first seed,  
first greening reach. Not toward that sin  
that men invented, but instead toward need  
for sustenance, protection, and comfort—  
for that which feeds us all, even now  
in the sweet snap of the pea, the laced  
cool season of greens, the sun-warm dirt,  
curled embrace of bean vines, the slow  
drift of rain, as subtle and certain as grace.

**Mary Carroll-Hackett** earned an MFA from Bennington College and is the author of *The Real Politics of Lipstick*, *Animal Soul*, and *If We Could Know Our Bones*, from A-Minor Press. She teaches at Longwood University in Farmville, Virginia. Mary is currently at work on a memoir.

In Praise of Sins of the Tongue  
by Liz Dolan

Because St. Blaise talked a wolf  
into releasing a pig gripped in his teeth,  
on his feast day, throats are blessed  
with two crossed candles to dislodge  
stuck fish-bones, to stave off flu.  
And to eschew the sins of calumny,  
backbiting, boasting and rash judgment.

Oh the burden of the blessing from that  
roasted martyr! How can we stop  
our willful tongues from weaving stories  
that keep us quick in this blighted bog.

‘Tis manna in the desert.

What harm if it’s at a blackguard’s expense?  
Sure no man upright believes half our palaver;  
we merely strive to trump the other  
with the most fantastical tale we can conjure  
like the grand one I fabricated yester-week  
about your shrew of a wife sobbing  
before the aurora borealis thinking it was a vision  
of the Virgin Mary herself on a Whit-sun’s eve.

**Liz Dolan’s** poetry manuscript, *A Secret of Long Life*, nominated for the Robert McGovern Prize, will soon be published by Cave Moon Press. Her first poetry collection, *They Abide*, was published by March Street. A six-time Pushcart nominee and winner of Best of the Web, she was a finalist for Best of the Net 2014. She has received fellowships from the Delaware Division of the Arts, The Atlantic Center for the Arts and Martha’s Vineyard. Liz serves on the poetry board of Philadelphia Stories. She is most grateful for her ten grandchildren who pepper her life.

The Elephant Fort  
by Fabiyas M V

Black beauties in chains—  
Before the ticket counters,  
A long queue does creep  
To scatter near the black wonders.

Ears and tails always move,  
Ruminating the rhythms of forest.  
Elephants are inside the fort,  
Exposed to the sky barest.

I hear the hushed emotions  
In the clinking of chains.  
Hearts smoulder in;  
Eyes emit lava of pains.

Burning red wild flowers  
And tickling streams,  
Each elephant longs I know:  
But dreams die in chains.

Note: Anakotta (a fort for the elephants) at Punathur, near Guruvayur in Kerala, India, is a tourist place, where you see a large number of elephants together. All are chained.

**Fabiyas M V** is a writer from Orumanayur village in Kerala, India. He is the author of *Moonlight and Solitude*. His fiction and poems have appeared in *Literary The Hatchet*, *E Fiction*, *Selected Poems 2012 and 2013* by Pendle War Poetry, *Inspired By Tagore Anthology*, *ACWC Anthology*, *Indian Ink*, *Animal Antics 2012*, *Romance Magazine*, *Structo Magazine* and in several anthologies by Forward Poetry and other publishers in India and abroad. He won the Poetry Soup International Award, USA, in 2011 and 2012, a prize by the British Council in

2011, the RSPCA Pet Poetry Contest, UK in 2012, India, a sponsor's prize in Eriata Oribhaba Poetry Competition, Nigeria in 2013, and The Most Loved Poet For March 2014 Award by E Fiction, India . He took honorable mention in Political Poet Poetry Competition, USA in 2013. He was the finalist for Mattia International Poetry Contest , Canada in 2011 and 2012. He is the quarter finalist for Mary Ballard Poetry Chapbook Prize 2014. All India Radio had broadcast his poems.

Mouths

by Grace Carley Harriman

1.

Cambridge, MA, 1975

My young son  
Steers the pulpy letters  
From alphabet soup  
Until his tomato red finger  
Spells out in the bowl:  
YES, BIRD, NO.  
He raises the bowl  
And drinks his words.

2.

Bath, Maine 2013

On Winter Sundays  
I drive to Hill House and Winship Hall  
To deliver the sacrament  
To the very elderly.  
I carry a linen cloth,  
The gold chip,  
The correct number of wafers.  
  
I know the eleven recipients well,  
Not through conversation,  
But through the details:  
The reader of mystery novels,  
The laughing lady  
With coloring books and crayons,  
The dignity in the posture of the veteran.  
The twin sisters with rouge spots,  
The beautiful woman with coiled hair,  
Crocheting an afghan.

They know me most Sundays,  
Except Elizabeth, on the Alzheimer ward.  
She scoots her wheelchair  
Her slippered feet move fast,  
a scuttling crab.  
When I touch her shoulder  
She will look into my eyes.

I would not attempt  
To guess at the words  
They would choose  
To steer in empty soup bowls,  
Every open mouth is familiar  
To me as their faces.  
I place the wafer on each tongue,  
Between glossy gums.

The wafer disintegrates.  
“This is the bread of life.  
Taste and See that the Lord is good.”

Do not diminish or demean.  
The rooms fill and empty.  
Do not recoil from decay.  
Do not diminish or demean.

**Grace Carley Harriman** spent her life in Cambridge, Mass., teaching English and Chinese History to Middle Schoolers. She self published two anthologies of a wide variety of poems with creative writing assignments for each entry. She has traveled to China 14 times, to tour and volunteer teach in the Pangliu Village School and the Dandelion School outside Beijing. She retired to Bath, Maine where she writes poetry, gardens and walks her dogs.

Bringing In The Corn  
by Barbara Harroun

Almost Thanksgiving and the farmers  
are in the field, bringing in the corn.

The half shorn fields, and the thin  
silver sunlight beckons winter—  
the naked branches crooked like fingers—  
come, come.

On arrival, my daughter, nearly 5  
spots the last apples in the tree  
the ones the deer eat, standing  
on their hind legs. The tall prairie  
grass is matted in places much  
like my daughter's unruly hair  
upon waking. She cradles  
the apple my father shook  
from the tree. My son on my hip,  
my fruit, my abundant harvest.

Behind the tool shed, my father's second deer  
of the season, upside down and field dressed.  
My daughter wants to see and I don't  
stop her. She only goes so far, apple in  
hand. Why, she asks. To feed us, I say,  
to nourish us in winter. She is learning  
a version of the first Thanksgiving that my  
husband detonates over dinner. Venison,  
I say. All our food comes from somewhere real,  
I say, wishing I was closer, my face pressed up  
to the death of what feeds me.

Returning home, we pass cemeteries  
on both sides, but I am seeing  
the bottom field, once the corn

is brought in. The deer, easing out  
of the timber, exquisitely alive, clearly visible  
and set to feast.

**Barbara Harroun** is an Assistant Professor of English at Western Illinois University where she teaches creative writing and composition. Her work has previously appeared in the *Sycamore Review*, issues of *Another Chicago Magazine*, *Buffalo Carp*, *Friends Journal*, *Inquire*, and *Bird's Thumb*. It is forthcoming in *i70 Review*, *Sugared Water*, *Requited Journal*, *Per Contra*, and *Prairie Gold: An Anthology of the American Heartland*. She lives in Macomb, IL with her favorite creative endeavors, Annaleigh and Jack, and her awesome husband, Bill.

Obon Odori  
by Jodi Hottel

Sandals dart from beneath  
the pink kimono in front of me,  
as I follow the line of dancers circling  
the parking lot lined with SUVs.

Tiny girls robed in flowered silk,  
young man in a hook-nosed mask,  
sensei with her old-world smile,  
we all step, turn, clap, dip,  
to the familiar, high-pitched songs  
crackling from the loudspeaker.

As the night fog covers us,  
hanging lanterns light orange  
and red, plastic cups of sake  
warm us, fiber optic fans  
pulse purple and electric blue,  
waving in the dancers' hands.

Like a child, I am embraced  
by our community, linked  
by step, forward, back, turn,  
the flutter of fans,  
ancestors blessing  
our adaptation of tradition.

**Jodi Hottel's** work has been published in *Nimrod International*, *Spillway*, *Ekphrasis*, *Naugatuck Review*, *Touch*, and anthologies from the University of Iowa Press, Tebot Bach, and the Marin Poetry Center. *Heart Mountain*, her chapbook of poems about the Japanese American internment, was winner of the 2012 Blue Light Press Poetry Prize.

In the Church of the Cactus Forest  
by Richard Kempa

I too raise my hands above my head outspread  
in the morning. Only I do not congregate,  
vocalize a faith, resolve to carry the grim word  
of salvation denied to the bleary-eyed.

Their sleep is beautiful. Arising at first light,  
I tuck their blankets, touch their skin,  
and go to the church of the cactus forest  
for a communion best kept alone.

Maybe, later, I will relate something exotic:  
how the boulders in a dark hollow  
shifted at my approach, raised their snouts,  
became the pungent javelina,

or how, when I entered an arroyo, the odors  
of the dew-drenched desert conjured  
that morning ten years ago of the great storm  
and who I was that day.

But when the sun sheers the cloud bank  
and bejewels each spindle, thorn, blade,  
and the liturgy of the birds crescendos  
and wings shimmer and the air thrills,

I stop, unlayer myself, take  
the sacrament of the pen in hand, become  
a vehicle, an organ of the near and far,  
until I raise my arms and the pen falls...

**Richard Kempa** lives in Rock Springs, Wyoming, where he teaches writing and philosophy at Western Wyoming College. He has authored two books of poems, *Ten Thousand Voices*, which was published by Littoral Press in Oakland in 2013, and *Keeping the Quiet*, published in 2008 by Bellowing Ark Press in Seattle.

Vows: Two Becoming One  
by John C. Mannone

Hers

The tympani inside your heart  
echoes in your clear-as-a-bell blue eyes

that vow to hear

every touch, every sign

I leave for you

and a promise to let you keep all the stars

even the ones sifted from my hair

that are wishes; and prayers

His

I feel, just as the stardust in my eyes  
whenever I cradle your smiles in my  
heart,

a lullaby, hazel as sunlight shining  
through morning mist—

a promise to cherish

your soul poured out

into my hands: my heart for you

will overflow always

Theirs

**John C. Mannone** has work in *Split Rock Review*, *Agave*, *BlazeVOX*, Tupelo Press, *Raven Chronicles*, *Poetica Magazine*, *Synaesthesia*, *3Elements Review*, *The Baltimore Review*, *Rose Red Review*, *Pirene's Fountain*, *Tipton Poetry Journal*, *Prairie Wolf Press Review*, *The Pedestal* and others. He's the poetry editor for *Silver Blade* and *Abyss & Apex*, and an adjunct professor of physics in east TN. His work has been nominated three times for the Pushcart. Visit John's blog, *The Art of Poetry* [here](#).

## Baptisms

by Jean Voneman Mikhail

We tried to touch quicksilver,  
poured from a little jar  
that dad had brought home  
from somewhere. But each time  
the drop moved away  
from our fingers.

These were your tears, little brother,  
untouched by our ideas of you.

That time we threw you  
in a pond, we three girls laughed  
as we held you by your pants,  
always stained with earth's marrow.

Your locks underwater moved  
with all the astronauts in space.

You never cried  
so we slapped you on the back,  
comforting you.

Saying *good boy, good boy.*

*Hush, now, don't tell.*

A drawer in the hallway,  
her baptismal gown waits.  
She is so small, a curler  
rolls from her hair, lopsided.

Her head drops, a word  
on her tongue repeated.

She climbs in the drawer  
so we close her in easily.

A baking heat in the house.  
Dovetails swell, the notched wood  
knocked in by the mallet  
of a mighty hand.

The pajamas she wears  
have a flowerscape, silky  
from so many washes, soft  
as the word "Fla." on the back  
of the box of orange blossom  
perfume in her room.  
She touches her wrists,  
her pulse. Her mother  
has shown her how to  
sleep at the sound  
of a closed door, meaning  
darkness rolls in on roller skates  
over slate, meaning sleep  
over the open road of the car.  
Her father's foot on the brake  
can't keep her from flying.

**Jean Voneman Mikhail** attained a Masters Degree in Creative Writing from Ohio University. She lives in Athens, Ohio with her husband and three children. She has published in *Riverwind*, *The Westminster Review*, *Maybesopoetry*, *Between the Lines reading*, and recently was selected to participate in a poetry reading/art show.

church ritual  
by Carl Palmer

warm unmoving august air  
miserable mid-morning mass  
penalty penance punishment  
for drinking sneaked rectory wine  
entire summer every Saturday  
every Sunday sitting kneeling  
same front left pew hands folded  
holding plastic rosary pocket bible  
wearing only owned suit blue wool  
white cotton shirt starched scratchy  
itchy sweaty too tight too hot  
topped with one of dad's clip-on ties  
perpetual smell of faded dying flowers  
overly perfumed blue haired women  
acid smoky yellow odorous incense  
unfocused eyes daydreaming downward  
alerted as I feel mother's close inspection  
hear her familiar forced tsk tsking sigh  
unsnapping the red leatherette handbag  
releasing familiar aroma mix cloves  
menthol cigarettes smelling salts  
Black Jack caffeine chewing gum  
pink dust of cracked compact powder  
rattle of keys coins cellophane  
as she locates the least wadded tissue  
wets a clean corner with nicotine spit  
tries to wipe that newest brown freckle  
from my blushing sunburned cheek

**Carl "Papa" Palmer**, retired Army, retired FAA, now just plain retired, lives in University Place, WA. He has seven chapbooks and a contest winning poem riding

buses somewhere in Seattle. Carl has been nominated for the Micro Award and Pushcart Prize. MOTTO: Long Weekends Forever

Jackie's Poem  
by David Plumb

I was going to stop by the porch  
To see if you are still around  
But they tell me you are not  
No one even knows who  
You are, though the family name  
Is faded paint at the Rug and Cider Mill  
I still feel your thin neck  
I see your long legs in jeans  
But I'm sure the pony tail is gone  
We stood in shadows and I'm not clear  
What we were doing then  
It was more heat and wish  
The next day I got the flu  
And never saw you again

Fall arrives breast up red and yellow  
And I'm not looking for what wasn't  
Might have been in the orchard  
Or the porch, or whose dream is who's  
You are gone, the house is gone  
The moon, oh I see it  
Your blue eyes, your small face  
Your chin close to mine  
Somewhere in the mix of things I see  
A silence of sorts, a wish  
Running off toward spring  
Where the boys and girls are new  
See how they dance oh  
See them leap and sing

**David Plumb's** writing has appeared in *The Washington Post*, *Sport Literate*, *The Miami Herald*, *New College Review*, *Santa Barbara Review*, *Homeless Not Helpless Anthology*, and *The Healing Muse*. Will Rogers said, "Live in such a way that you would not be ashamed to sell your parrot to the town gossip." David Plumb says, "It depends upon the parrot."

At The Bar Mitzvah  
for Helen, who gifted her son with her dance  
by Ysabel de la Rosa

Your arms seed the space,  
make the air grow. Feel the molecules  
divide as your skirt swirls with you,  
spiral of color.

Dance for the son who  
watches the one  
who gave him life,  
granted him passage.

Your arms cradle the space,  
carve the air as you sail through  
starting steps and then spinning turn.

Your hands free the space  
once cradled and contained,  
opening outward with grace.

You bring new angles to manhood's first  
day—knee touches elbow—and then  
bring new curves—a sweeping thigh draws  
circles in the air.

Dance for the son, the one  
whose presence brings you  
light, life, love.

Celebrate the bond that needs no tie  
as you reveal this gift of many blessings:  
space, meaning, self, art.

May your son accept these blessings.  
May he carry his mother dancing  
forever in his heart.

**Ysabel de la Rosa's** poetry has appeared in numerous literary journals. Her feature writing has been published in 45+ publications in the U.S. and abroad. In 2014, her poem, "Palo Duro Palette," was awarded first place for creative verse by Press Women of Texas.

To A Persian New Year  
by Carol Sadtler

Twelve days after the equinox, Sara  
puts a match to the sacred rue, sets out  
sprouting seeds for new life, apples  
for beauty and health, olives  
for love, an egg, coins, sumac, vinegar:  
seven small bowls to bless the guests.

There are no deficits here, 27 stories  
above Manhattan as the windowed walls  
diffuse a gray day into light that softens  
our faces.

The tea comes in tall glasses, curved to fit  
our empty hands;  
Persian script curls gracefully across the spines  
of leather-bound poems on the shelves;  
We sink into plump cushions, soothed  
by rosewater and hyacinth—three thousand years  
of gracious ritual.

Slough off past adversities and laugh;  
Meats and vegetables simmer and  
Mosen is pouring wine;  
Let us toast Hafez, and ourselves.

**Carol Sadtler** is a writer and editor living in Bucks County, PA. After earning degrees in English and comparative literature, she created and directed marketing communications for nationally known organizations and higher education institutions. Her poetry will appear in *Rhino* in the coming year.

We Sat In Grandma's Kitchen  
by Irene Toh

When body was presence, mind  
distilled whispers out of sight.  
On weekdays, we ran up the steps  
gathering leaflets, first  
treasure hunters—and on Sundays,  
grandmother bowed mauve  
in a kind of halo.  
We sat in the kitchen—  
grandma's chicken cooked in wine,  
fried meatballs a slow feast—  
made a psalm of a bowl.  
Only the end shall quiet  
brief tirade riffling grass  
in enigma of faded sun.

**Irene Toh** is co-author of an online collaborative poetry collection, [Duet \(Red Wolf, 2014\)](#). She is co-administrator of [Red Wolf Poems](#), a poetry prompt site, and co-editor of the inaugural [Red Wolf Journal's Spring 2014 issue](#). She really likes soulfulness and surreality in poems. Mostly she's inspired by the moon and the stars. She blogs at [Orange Is A Fruit](#).

Cartography  
by Jonathan Travelstead

Weeks in the Chattahoochee and Nantahala Forest,  
all you have is this shadowbox of mountains,  
balds, and gaps:

Hawk, and Springer. Blood Mountain—  
where you watched from the shelter as a black bear  
solved your trucker's hitch, snuffled your food,  
taking nothing. Gooch, Tray,  
Cowrock, and Blue.

Coming up for air, you summit  
the few bare places, then survey the panorama  
of nameless places lost in the sea of green.

Siler, Wayah, and Wesser Balds. Swim, and Cheoh.

Flat points where the base of mountains meet,  
pauses between notes.

Hightower, Horsebone, and Flatrock Gap.  
Hogspen. Unicoi, Mooney, Glassmine, and Tesnatee.  
Winding Stair, and Swinging Lick.  
Panther. Licklog, Burningtown, and Tellico.  
Simp, Stecoah, and Sweetwater.  
Cable, and Black Gum.

Their naming is its own sweet music—  
the scribbled crossings, summits, and roundabouts  
of a wannabe musician who doesn't know his instrument,  
but hopes one day he will be lost in it,  
able to take a bearing by the spoken sound  
of landmark alone.

**Jonathan Travelstead** served in the Air Force National Guard for six years as a firefighter and currently works as a full-time firefighter for the city of

Murphysboro. Having finished his MFA at Southern Illinois University of Carbondale, he now works on an old dirt-bike he hopes will one day get him to the salt flats of Bolivia.

Often She Arrived To Find Her Mother At The Door  
by Barbara Young

Absence began with a stutter-step,  
became a rift, a cliff, a flight from  
which Mom would return, baffled,  
and sad for the bones of her arms.  
When the weather let her she would  
walk her mother to the lake beyond  
the parking lot. She pushed the chair  
like a shopping cart, said Look, Mom,  
a goldfinch. Said mallard. Cattails.  
Said I was rereading the Mahfouz  
you gave me and thought. Said  
clouds, cumulous. Shopping words  
to sustain a dying language. Once  
they found her, resting, on a green  
rickety park bench. I was going to  
the store for bread and that soda  
that my daughter likes. Thank you.  
I have been longing for a cup of tea.

Barbara's process notes: My husband, my cousins, my friends. I see strangers—  
“friends of friends” on Facebook—repeating the forms. We're on both sides of the  
cart, slipping from one to the other overnight. This began with a word list prompt.

**Barbara Young** is aging without grace in Nashville, Tennessee. She likes puns,  
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