

# WONDROUS LEAFLETS

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# Wondrous Leaflets

Issue number 1

Irene Toh, Editor



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<https://redwolfeditions.wordpress.com/blog/>

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Tiny Victories  
by Debi Swim

The bees,  
you, me,  
we  
see the power  
in the flower  
as it cowers  
under the great  
weight of rain  
till it abates  
then flower  
rises, realizes  
its power  
towers against  
the odds.

“Where flowers bloom so does hope.” – Lady Bird Johnson



Debi Swim has had poems published in two anthologies and in the *Bluestone Journal* for Bluefield College, as well as various online publications. She is a persistent WV poet who loves to write to prompts.

Freelance  
by Mark Danowsky

I push the rock  
up the hill  
each day  
regardless of pay  
because learning  
is its own reward  
(corny tho it sounds)  
& so too research  
satisfies unwritten  
but a good list  
is bliss  
if fleeting & so days tumble  
the rock resets  
without rolling back  
a small leap  
as nights turn  
in a bright flash  
orange over ocean  
I'm already hillside  
mind gearing up  
for the day's lessons

Holding Up  
by Mark Danowsky

I'm supposed to be  
able to be mad now  
after this distance  
this *duration*

I feel empty  
in the usual way  
you'd remember  
us knowing all too well

You missed out  
on a mess you wanted  
to see play out  
which I feel for

It's anti-social  
and that's the dynamic  
we were best known for  
outside looking in

It's hard to listen  
to any of the old tunes  
or watch the flicks  
tied close to you

I separate myself now  
not by playing off of  
but instead by stimuli + zeitgeist  
+ my vision of best practices  
- your narrow allowances

I come up short  
with every order  
I ask of myself

Mark Danowsky is Editor-in-Chief of ONE ART: a journal of poetry. His poetry collections include *Meatless* (Plan B Press), *Violet Flame* (tiny wren lit), *JAWN* (Moonstone Press), and *As Falls Trees* (NightBallet Press). *Take Care* is forthcoming from Moon Tide Press in 2025.



Sign Language with the Watery Movement of Hands  
by Martin Willitts Jr

I bring a bouquet of spring water in my hands  
to my mouth — a brass band celebrates gratitude  
in my heart. The sign for *love* is universal.

This sign for “*water*” is to flow a hand across your body.  
To say “*Memory*,” touch your head with an index finger.  
There’s no sign for “*drinking well*.” I must finger-spell

these words. I taste deepness of earth’s secrets, its music,  
my thirst for answers, its torrents forming stories  
about water in our bodies, our birth womb-water.

When I spend all day by an ocean,  
splash-whoosh of waves sings me back to creation.  
The sign for “*whoosh*” is clapping two hands.

I can reach into sea grass at ocean’s edge,  
feel small fish in their nurseries.  
Wiggle a hand across your body to sign “*fish*.”

Springs I know and rivers I see,  
merge into the energy of oceans.  
The sign for this churning makes an explosion.

My memory suddenly shifts to places long gone:  
human places wrecked over time and carelessness.  
I don’t like to sign “*drought*” or “*disaster*.”

I know without water, we will die.  
Right now, someone drinks contaminated water.  
Everywhere ponds, lakes, rivers are drying up.

What signs can I give this world  
to change future’s course  
so that water is drinkable and safe again?

My hands can only form limited words.  
How can my words flow  
into that delta of your ears?

Note: I grew up with a near-deaf father. I saw the black and white movie about Helen Keller, The Miracle Worker, and I taught myself sign language. Unfortunately, my father refused to learn it. I have been a sign language interpreter for a long time.

Finding a Cairn  
by Martin Willitts Jr

I find a cairn of rocks,  
stacked with memories of someone's death.

A lake's placid surface,  
stretches out echoes, a floating image  
of wren's shadow, rippling leaves  
dreaming their last colors.

A loon spreads their message from shore to shore,  
calling out its forlorn, love-sick,  
heartbroken urgency.

Maple leaves become red eyes from crying too long.  
They undulate, dream-like, in cold chill.

This cairn does not mention any name of a dead person.  
Someone placed these rocks in a tower,  
a finger pointing towards the sky, echoing loss.

I never see that loon, hidden in scarlet tree leaves  
but his moaning cries color broken silence of death.

Martin Willitts Jr is an editor of *Comstock Review*. He won *2014 Dylan Thomas International Poetry Contest*, *Stephen A. DiBiase Poetry Prize, 2018*, *Editor's Choice, Rattle Ekphrastic Challenge, December 2020*; *17th Annual Sejong Writing Competition, 2022*. His 21 full-length collections include the *Blue Light Award 2019*, "The Temporary World". His recent books are "Harvest Time" (Deerbrook Editions, 2021); "All Wars Are the Same War" (FutureCycle Press, 2022); "Not Only the Extraordinary are Exiting the Dream World" (Flowstone Press, 2022); "Ethereal Flowers" (Shanti Arts Press, 2023); "Rain Followed Me Home" (Glass Lyre Press, 2023); "Leaving Nothing Behind" (Fernwood Press, 2023); "The Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji" including all 36 color pictures (Shanti Arts Press, 2024); and "All Beautiful Things Need Not Fly" (Silver Bowl Press, 2024).

Salvific

By Karla Linn Merrifield

Night's parliament  
of owls—barred, barn, great horned, screech,  
and snowy—saves me,  
for owls know and tell who, who  
dreams to bring a feather's kiss.

Animal Truth

by Karla Linn Merrifield

Beaver dams. Beavers build them.

One stick at a time.

Mars' moons, Cassiopeia's dreams  
of Orion take form.

The Universe built its galaxies  
one star at a time.

H-bombs. Hominid animals  
build them. All natural, just  
the milky evolutionary way  
of life on Planet Earth,  
our solar system, our green  
lodgings in the cosmos.

We breathe oxygen.

We continue to build.

When darkness falls,

we go to work:

another dam,

another galaxy,

another H-bomb,

another poem

one line at a time.

Karla Linn Merrifield has 16 books to her credit. Her newest poetry collection, *My Body the Guitar*, was nominated for the 2022 National Book Award. She is a frequent contributor to *The Songs of Eretz Poetry Review*. Web site: <https://www.karlalinnmerrifield.org/>; blog at <https://karlalinnmerrifield.wordpress.com/>; Tweet @LinnMerrifield; <https://www.facebook.com/karlalinn.merrifield>.

Like Onion Skin  
By Emil Sinclair

The world is paper thin  
she said,  
like onion skin.  
Light shines through  
from the other side,  
casting shadows  
on the screens  
of my eyelids.  
I can almost  
make out shapes  
if I squint  
in just the right way;  
shadows moving  
like the wings  
of crows.  
One cold night  
they pulled me  
clear through  
the membrane,  
into a dark room.  
She sat there  
on a wooden bench,  
absolutely still  
and unmoving;  
her eyes staring off  
into the distance,  
fixed and unfocused—  
otherworldly.  
My dead Aunt Ruth,  
her skin as white as  
baking flour;  
almost translucent.  
And her grey-black hair,  
braided and slicked back  
like a helmet,  
in the way of a goddess  
from ancient Egypt.  
She looked right through  
me,  
as if I wasn't there,  
but said this out loud:  
“What happened  
to our dreams?”  
she cried  
in a plaintive tone.  
When I awoke,  
I couldn't even cry.

Retrograde  
by Emil Sinclair

I thought I was  
far away  
from the past,  
flying over  
green lands  
across blue seas—  
far away  
from you.  
But there  
you were, still  
standing  
by the sea wall,  
wearing the black dress  
and holding a single  
yellow rose;  
calling me back  
to you,  
as the gulls screamed  
bloody murder  
overhead.

Emil Sinclair is the pseudonym of a sometime poet and long-time philosophy professor in New York City.

Why Blue?  
By Heather Sager

I was trapped in a house in the country  
with three other people.  
I worked most days,  
many nights.  
My only escape  
was a walk into a field,  
where I could gaze up  
into blue sky. The blue was like  
a clear blanket made of space  
that I imagined I could  
ride to the stars.  
I would never make it  
to those stars,  
but I liked walking alone  
to the field and gazing at blue.  
The blue, radiant and expansive,  
lifted my exhaustion. It helped the earth  
stay on my shoulders  
just a little while longer.

Heather Sager lives in Illinois where she writes poetry and fiction. Her most recent poetry appears in *Bending Genres*, *Does It Have Pockets?*, *New Feathers Anthology*, *The Basilisk Tree*, *The Nature of Things* (*Lone Mountain Literary Society*), and more journals.



For A Moment  
by Erin Jamieson

algae tangles around my legs &  
for a moment I'm drawn into  
a world where the people above  
are just murmurings against  
the powerful force of waves  
beating onward under misty light

Low Tide  
by Erin Jamieson

at low tide  
misty gray  
waves become  
my soundtrack  
in step with every  
tower I erect  
away from  
striped canopies  
where families  
eat pb & j  
away from  
eager gulls

just a few  
glorious  
hours

before it  
is erased

Erin Jamieson (she/her)'s writing has been published in over 100 literary magazines, including two Pushcart Prize nominations. Her poetry chapbook, *Fairytales*, was published by Bottlecap Press and her most recent chapbook, *Remnants*, came out in 2024. Her debut novel (*Sky of Ashes, Land of Dreams*) came out November 2023.

Boxing  
by Jeff Burt

Apple-picker, gourd-packer,  
bog-raker, pumpkin-winch,  
irrigation feeder, flooder  
of furrows, pail-shuffler,  
bucket-boss, crate-boxer,  
pummeled by auburn light,

I was the temporary harvest king  
paid per piece, cash and quarters  
counted toward dusk among orchards  
and frost-starred barbed wire.

Early ice on stagnant pools,  
I staggered and swam in the dark fields  
to moonlight, a drunken brawler  
searching the soil to find his feet.

Extended Haiku  
by Jeff Burt

A dog sniffs  
and can tell a warm change  
is coming to the weather.

A neighbor says his knees ache,  
a woman that the scarves she hung out  
overnight didn't dry.

The mystery writer down the block  
who compulsively writes two thousand words a day  
complains her wrists work, that she could use some carpal tunnel.

Down the street a boy stops making secret graffiti,  
dateless, prepares for prom,  
from his father takes a large rifle to school.

Jeff Burt grew up in rural and small-town Wisconsin, with a boyhood dominated by fields and water, Lake Superior, Lake Mason, the Fox River and its tributaries, Long Lake, and the Mississippi. The variety and plenitude of botanical and biological forms tintured his life. After stints in Texas and Nebraska, he has lived in Northern California for most of his adult life, sculpted by redwood and hardwood forests, droughts, floods, fires, and the Monterey Bay. He and his wife live in Santa Cruz County, California, where his three children grew and were released into the wilds of other places.

*Dulce de Ego*

By M V Drummy

I am the blackened,  
happy fig, swimming  
in a pool of dark  
sweetness with my  
fellow figs, waiting  
for the moment after  
you spoon me into  
one of those upmarket  
cut glass bowls of  
yours reserved for  
special occasions like  
*carnaval*, umbrellaed  
by a few pieces of  
common queso, when  
you slice me open,  
my tiny seeds exposed,  
& place me, ever  
so gently, onto your  
anticipating tongue.

M F Drummy holds a PhD in historical theology from Fordham University. He is the author of numerous articles, essays, poems, reviews, and a monograph on religion and ecology. His work has appeared, or will appear, in *Allium*, *[Alternate Route]*, *Anti-Heroic Chic*, *Ars Sententia*, *Emerge*, *the engine(idling)*, *FERAL*, *Main Street Rag*, *Marbled Sigh*, *Poemeleon*, *The Rumen*, *Scarlet Dragonfly*, *Viridian Door*, *Winged Penny Review*, and many others. He and his way cool life partner of over 20 years enjoy splitting their time between the Colorado Rockies and the rest of the planet. He can be found at: Instagram @miguelito.drummy Website <https://bespoke-poet.com>

Bobolinko in Villa Park, Illinois  
by Kenneth Pobo

I accept that  $2 + 2$  only equals 4  
on Tuesdays. Mom says to live  
in the present, the past

is a closed radio station. I shut out  
all news—except a robin  
hopping beside the Ovaltine factory,  
now a condo. Chicago,

ten miles away, a broken  
bicycle with a gold-plated basket.  
I enroll in The Canella School  
of Hair Design, spy on ducks  
who live behind a tall evergreen.

My old church swapped philosophies.  
From Jesus to Fitness. A barbell  
forgives me of sins I would  
gladly commit if they would  
befriend me.

Referee in Spangles  
by Kenneth Pobo

As we enter the Spotlight food store, a red-faced woman clings to the door, breathing heavily. A man with a loaded cart divebombs past her. “Can we help you?” Lenny asks. I dash inside to get a store manager who says he knows her—she’s had spells before and will be alright. “If you could bring me some Hawaiian Punch,” she says to the manager. He sits her down on a bench and gets it for her.

When we drive home Lenny says “Boy, you handled that all wrong.”  
“Handled what?”  
“The woman with the spell.”  
“Why?”

“If you hadn’t run for the manager, we both could have put her on the bench, but there you were, arms akimbo, running off.”

Lenny and I probably won’t make it to our fifth anniversary. A silence overtakes the drive. I slam the car door at home. Lenny turns on a Gilligan’s Island rerun and kisses me playfully. “You’re nice,” he says.

“Is that an argument?”  
“It could be.”

Such a starry night—  
the front window crackles with light.  
Like a referee in spangles.

Kenneth Pobo (he/him) is the author of twenty-one chapbooks and nine full-length collections. Recent books include *Bend of Quiet* (Blue Light Press), *Loplop in a Red City* (Circling Rivers), *Lilac And Sawdust* (Meadowlark Press) and *Gold Bracelet in a Cave: Aunt Stokesia* (Ethel Press). His work has appeared in North Dakota Quarterly, Asheville Literary Review, Nimrod, Mudfish, Hawaii Review, and elsewhere.

The Last Wasp  
by Thomas Molitor

You crawl across the unsealed cells of a hexagonal hive that's mounted in the corner beneath the roof like an outdoor speaker. You move your smooth, sleek, shiny tripartite body from chamber to chamber conducting a final crib check in a collapsing colony. This is your last crawl. Do you know that? Early spring I watched your mated queen put up her pendant throne as she awaited the birth of her winged workers. In late summer her majesty wielded absolute vespide power over an ever expanding catacomb queendom. But now it is winter. The queen is gone. You are the lone drone, the noble one, the one that didn't fly away and leave the queen regnant behind - smoky black wings and multiple stings - the last courtier crawling over a masticated monarchy. This is your last crawl. Do you know that? The winter is your guillotine. I am here to catch your loyal head.

Thomas Molitor is a graduate of UC Berkeley and lives in the high desert of New Mexico.



Hummingbird Flutters  
by Diana Raab

Hummingbird flutters  
Will he visit with answers  
I will sit and wait.

Diana Raab, MFA, PhD, is a memoirist, poet, workshop leader, thought-leader and award-winning author of fourteen books. Her work has been widely published and anthologized. She frequently speaks and writes on writing for healing and transformation. Her latest memoir is *Hummingbird: Messages from My Ancestors, A memoir with reflection and writing prompts* (Modern History Press, 2024). Raab blogs for *Psychology Today*, *The Wisdom Daily*, *The Good Men Project*, *Thrive Global*, and is a guest blogger for many others. Visit her at: <https://www.dianaraab.com>.

Park I.  
by Josh Medsker

Brap app app app  
playing cards in a **BMX** wheel

Reeds scale the sky, *hichiriki*  
for the most hearty yet delicate wind reeds

Climbing with the weeping willow,  
in the Japanese garden corner,  
warm pink light sifting down  
through gently hanging branches,  
kept fresh by the brackish lagoon

Tiny peninsulas of marsh, reeds capturing seeds  
for shore birds

Thick mud flat smell  
bound to blackish seaweeds  
by rusted industrial washed up scrap,  
oxidizing rock, both crusted  
orange with plankton

Shades rippling  
Kaleidoscoping under a low sun  
as the wind rolls in.

Park II.  
by Josh Medsker

No breakdown yet of molecular structure.

Windblown rocks downpour  
sea waves  
gradual fragmentation  
rock particles  
sediments  
soil

H<sup>+</sup> ion in water reacts  
metallic ions  
rock minerals dissolve  
as the rock's rained through

Carbon dioxide in air,  
living organisms, dissolving in water  
carbonic acid acidified rocks  
water reacts with internal minerals  
as the rock's breathed through

Air reacts with rocks  
iron rust orange  
iron oxide coloration  
As the rock's burned through

Tree roots and mosses grow  
penetrating through rock  
creating pore spaces  
as the rock's broken through  
pulled apart.

Lichen symbiotic fungi and algae  
chemical release, breaking down  
  
as the rock is eaten through.

Josh Medsker is a New Jersey poet, originally from Alaska. His debut collection, *Cacophony*, was published in 2019 by Alien Buddha Press. His writing has appeared in many publications, including: *Contemporary American Voices*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Haiku Journal*, and *Red Wolf Journal*. For a complete list of Mr. Medsker's publications, please visit his website. ([www.joshmedsker.com](http://www.joshmedsker.com))

Waking  
by Michael Minassian

Even in the city  
I hear roosters crow.

From silence  
their urgent voices

bring dawn nearer—  
still the moon

refuses to remove  
its white mask.

Hudson Trail  
by Michael Minassian

I went for a walk this morning  
along the Hudson River  
in the shadow of the Palisades.

The water choppy at high tide,  
an angry arm of the sea  
pushed by winter and north wind.

Some believe spirits haunt  
this stretch of woods and road,  
others swear doors open to empty air.

Birds twitter, call out,  
fall silent at my approach—  
the woods press in, I pick up the pace.

Trees whisper to each other,  
leaves rustle on the ground,  
life stirs in the underbrush.

Across the river, a whistle blows,  
a silver vein flows along the tracks,  
windows reflect back dull sunlight.

The train passes as if time blinked.  
Clouds change shape and color—  
the morning folds into itself

like the wings of a gull  
expanding and gliding  
on drafts, currents of air.

Michael Minassian is a Contributing Editor for Verse-Virtual, an online poetry journal. His poetry collections *Time is Not a River*, *Morning Calm*, and *A Matter of Timing* as well as a new chapbook, *Jack Pays a Visit*, are all available on Amazon. For more information: <https://michaelminassian.com>

Bedrock  
by Mark Heathcote

Sheep sit grazing amongst mountain boulders  
they are like well-worn sarsen stones  
bent against the wind; leaning to crop, inward.  
Watching for a shepherd who never cobbles  
a path on either side of going forward or back  
he is just the mountain, the sky all around.

Like a pasture, He's the bedrock all have lay on  
which is why they are somewhat content-to-sit-like  
steppingstones and marvel—baa - baa baaing.  
counting all those distant stars  
till all but one has vanished under a blanket of snow,  
that melts before finally letting go.

Colossal Choices  
by Mark Heathcote

Open my heart, open my eyes  
prise-me-open like a mussel  
I have grit, I've got, fire, passion  
little else belies inside my shell  
but my heart and soul they're colossal.

'I cannot undersell such a pearl? '

Not when countless others are misshapen  
so give me all you've got, prince or frog.  
Or else the deal is off null and void  
and I'll head back to my grotto-gutted  
miserably empty and totally, annoyed.

Mark Andrew Heathcote is an adult learning difficulties support worker. He has poems published in journals, magazines, and anthologies online and in print. He resides in the UK and is from Manchester. Mark is the author of *In Perpetuity* and *Back on Earth*, two books of poems published by Creative Talents Unleashed.

Ephemeral  
By Mary Janicke

The cardinal returns.  
No mate in sight.  
Has he lost her?

He seems contented.  
He sips, he bathes, he sings.

Maybe he found  
Being alone is not so bad.  
He lives for the day.  
Solitude seems to suit him.

She's the one who misses him  
Being part of a couple.  
Having someone to care for.

And yet she too  
greet each day with hopefulness.

Much like the cardinal,  
She is adept at making the best of things.

Mary Janicke is a gardener and writer living in Texas.



My Night to Cook  
by Thomas Zimmerman

The bubbling meatball sauce, the sweating bitter  
ale, the thumping pasta pot's Medusa  
hair: my night to cook. It's deja vu  
ten thousand times, the wheel of fate: it matters  
little if I'm coming up or going  
down. The morning's blue sky paled to white,  
and now it's night. I read Li Po all day:  
the mountain blossoms, mirror rivers, measured  
sorrow, ladled wine suffused with beauty  
and its mother, death. For now, though, cooking  
is catharsis. I can stir and drink  
and play loud music if you're gone. You're gone.  
The string quartet's called *Intimate Letters*.  
And this is one to me. Or maybe you.

Monstrosity  
by Thomas Zimmerman

This morning's dogwalk's done, the coffee's gone,  
your wife is up and down the basement stairs:  
just what's she making? Dog is zonked, of course.  
Beethoven's in your earphones: overture  
starts dissonant, gets staid. A Saturday  
that's misty, gray: a bit like you. How will  
you waste it? Dozing with an obtuse book?  
A twitchy horror film? Or will you make  
your own monstrosity? You think you've learned  
to earn your ironies as well as your  
abstractions. Lamp reveals more age spots on  
your hands. The sun could fry you like a Hammer  
vampire. Gangrene, evergreen. You still  
believe you're real, the person writing this?

Thomas Zimmerman (he/him) teaches English, directs the Writing Center, and edits *The Big Windows Review* <https://thebigwindowsreview.com/> at Washtenaw Community College, in Ann Arbor, Michigan. His poems have appeared recently in *Disturb the Universe*, *Pulsebeat Poetry Journal*, and *Urtica*. His latest book is *Dead Man's Quintet* (Cyberwit, 2023). Website: <https://thomaszimmerman.wordpress.com>  
Twitter (X): @bwr\_tom Instagram: tzman2012 Facebook: Tom.Zimmerman.315

The Light Fantastic  
by Emil Sinclair

Let us trip the light  
fantastic  
together  
one last time  
dance with me  
goddess mirth  
in three quarter time  
again my love  
for no one else  
but you  
and I  
can hear the  
music  
we made  
together  
in secret rooms  
of light  
and words  
you said  
to me  
amen.

Oh, World  
by Debi Swim

Time with you is brief.

Have I seen enough sunsets,  
enough pale dawns, ample  
waves rushing to shore?

Have I listened to sufficient  
hoots, trills, sweet melodies  
and followed the flight of

hawks and geese and stars?

Have I tasted my fill?  
Swilled river water,  
snow on tongue tip,  
savored teaberry and leaves  
of nature's wintergreen?

Oh, world, tell me true,  
will I rue these days with you  
or more regret those times  
I bent dutifully to tasks, unaware  
of honeysuckled summer breezes,  
the way it teases butterflies and bees.

Then, at the day of reckoning  
will I, sated, sigh that I  
have lived to full balance  
of work and rest, blessed  
with memories for eternity  
of all creation's glories?  
Will I, world? Will I?

