

WONDROUS LEAFLETS

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Wondrous Leaflets

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Irene Toh, Editor



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The poems appear in the sequence of the leaflets released at Red Wolf Editions' site in April 2024.
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Debi Swim, Tiny Victories, Leaflet no. 29

Mark Danowsky, Freelance, Leaflet no. 30

Mark Danowsky, Holding Up, Leaflet no. 31

Martin Willitts Jr, Sign Language with the Watery Movement of Hands, Leaflet no. 32

Martin Willitts Jr, Finding A Cairn, Leaflet no. 33

Karla Linn, Salvific, Leaflet no. 34

Karla Linn, Animal Truth, Leaflet no. 35

Emil Sinclair, Like Onion Skin, Leaflet no. 36

Emil Sinclair, Retrograde, Leaflet no. 37

Heather Sager, Why Blue, Leaflet no. 38

Erin Jamieson, For A Moment, Leaflet no. 39

Erin Jamieson, Low Tide, Leaflet no. 40

Jeff Burt, Boxing, Leaflet no. 41

Jeff Burt, Extended Haiku, Leaflet no. 42

M F Drummy, Dulce De Ego, Leaflet no. 43

Kenneth Pobo, Bobolinko in Villa Park, Illinois, Leaflet no. 44

Kenneth Pobo, Referee in Spangles, Leaflet no. 45

Thomas Molitor, The Last Wasp, Leaflet no. 46

Diana Raab, Hummingbird Flutters, Leaflet no. 47

Josh Medsker, Park I., Leaflet no. 48

Josh Medsker, Park II., Leaflet no. 49

Michael Minassian, Waking, Leaflet no. 50

Michael Minassian, Hudson Trail, Leaflet no. 51

Mark Heathcote, Bedrock, Leaflet no. 52

Mark Heathcote, Colossal Choices, Leaflet no. 53

Mary Janicke, Ephemeral, Leaflet no. 54

Thomas Zimmerman, My Night to Cook, Leaflet no. 55

Thomas Zimmerman, Monstrosity, Leaflet no. 56

Emil Sinclair, The Light Fantastic, Leaflet no. 57

Debi Swim, Oh, World, Leaflet no. 58

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

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

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 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⁺ 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)

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?

