



River City Poetry
Volume 9
Fall 2020

Edited by April Pameticky
River City Poetry
Rivercitypoetry.org
Wichita, Kansas

Wichita, Kansas
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RCP Fall 2020

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Introduction Fall 2020

Rarely has a year felt so upended. *River City Poetry* offered a special edition this June, an effort to honor the strange confluence of events that has marked 2020.

The poetry of this issue continues to mark that sentiment as poets respond to the times, the headlines, the issues that surround us.

The online journal has only ever been one aspect of what *River City Poetry* hopes to accomplish. But this year, the events that we would typically host, the collaborations we would sponsor--those radically changed [or in many cases, disappeared altogether]. Like many artists and those self-employed, reconfiguring what it means to create and communicate in a completely online format shaped the poems that are part of this issue.

We've also chosen to include broadsides from the Wichita Broadside Project 2020, which ran from February through October. These were originally designed to be posters placed in high-foot traffic areas in our Wichita community. But of course, shelter-in-place orders, and the need to reduce our activities meant that poets and 2D artists had to reconsider how their designs would be received. I think the results are fantastic.

Christine Swanberg writes in her opening poem for this issue that “**poetry is the mouth beneath the mask,**” and I hold that line closely to my own heart as I remember, that despite the challenges this year has brought, despite my own need to do more to fight systemic injustice and racism, despite my own helplessness in the face of watching loved ones get sick, while other loved one argue over whether COVID19 even exists, that hidden shadow is where poetry is so utterly necessary.

Changes are coming to *River City Poetry* in the spring. We are excited, that despite so many challenges, we are growing in new directions and remain committed to sharing poetry and providing unique opportunities for poets to collaborate and create new work. Look for those changes later in the year.

And as always, we are grateful to our dedicated readers. We are small but mighty in our support of writers and creatives.

As former Kansas Poet Laureate Kevin Rabas, is fond of saying—Write On, my friends. Write On.

April Pameticky



Wichita Broadsides Project 2020
River City Poetry



Artist: Leslie A. Williams
Artwork: "Pastel No. Five"
Author: Julie Ann Baker Brin

"Cloud Comingling"
Artist Leslie A. Williams
Poet Julie Ann Baker Brin

Julie Ann Baker Brin
4 Poems

Alien Landing Pad

Twelve tall they stand, round and
robust, in the big river's curve, just
West of the Keeper. Supercharged

light poles landmark the central
vortex, a power place of many names,
glowing amethyst tonight—all but one.

He has a ruby blush, standing out
within the circle, though set apart.
He is you, so obvious, different,

an outlier unlike the others only
because of a burned out bulb, yet
in some ways a much brighter star.

Dallas to Wichita in the Passenger Seat

I am a wiggly worm, a kid again.
Squirm. Cannot sit still in my bucket,
shake and rattle, turn and twist.
Jumpiness. Enthusiasm blends with
impatience. Feet full of nerves, pressing

imaginary controls. Energy expending,
spent. Budget the backbone;
six hours may be too expensive.
Pet the mind. Soothe, smooth, stroke,
before my inside lining shakes

loose, before the ligaments tense
and tear. Alternately bone lazy
and rakish angle crazy. Deliberately
breathe; abundantly conserve.
Point, pout, roll, swerve, stop.

I, CACTUS

Sand under my stems, prickly
spikes sticking out, poking in.
Dry spines conserve water, wait
for electrical storms. I could
bloom so wild given the right

moment, the welcome clime.
Then someone would want
to connect; bees and butterflies
would hover for my gold. I,
the bristling stoic to the outside

world, an inside sweet and longing.
Patient, succulent, communing
with whomever happens along,
at the mercy of the ground
beneath and the heavens above.

Outside at Mort's

Martini bar: jazz - joy - vibe - smiles,
little bird sounds and animal horns,
sweet night. If only to be in this cadence

forever: breeze - perfume - smoke - ether
moves my heart, my limbs. This is what I get
dressed up for. Feeling intense, feeling warm. Break

time: animation - conversation - vibration - libation,
how I long for a dizzy night out on the town.
Get around, get down, let my straps fall, twist

my bracelet - rings - earrings - earlobes.
Fidgeting, flirting, listening and pretending to,
feeling important, feeling alive.

Alan Cohen
3 Poems

Living with the Bomb

We thought it lovely in the garden
Every flower fierce with color
Challenged the fury of the shifting wind
And grass, new coalescent green
That, a firm reassurance, quiets the heart
Flaunted its cell walls before battlements of trees
Three butterflies caught by eye in a cube of space
Were the dance, the spatial coordinates, the randomness

But the bomb was falling
And we had to gather everything, rapidly
In our blanket
Losing branches, rootlets, the entire sense of symmetry
Trundling off into the shelter to refashion, reconceive

Next visit the garden was not so brilliant
The green was more suited to middle age
And again the bomb was falling
And we gathered what we could

Now we rarely sit in the garden
Spend more time in the rocking sofa
On the back porch
Daring the sky to unburden itself

We will be leaving very soon for another county
With the blanket on the back seat
Hoping to find new soil

Something Clean

All day we stared at the stones in the asphalt
Stones like nuts in a gingerbread
The oils of our faces, distracting
Despite nights deep in sleep
Nights like gardens: leaf, blossom, waterlight
Distracting
Also the mosquitoes
And it was not until sundown
That we noticed the uniformed plane trees
Even the few early fallen leaves
Dry and brown
And were pulled into schemes, devices
That sent us purposeful
Hesitant
Down the sidewalks
Into the cafes
Only imagining that revolution
Shouting ourselves hoarse in Teheran
The hands, the voices of our brothers
So close we could hold them
Inscribe them on breast, heart, marrow
Wear them in secret in the green places
In the evening cafes, gardens
Why does it all end in blood

We are dreaming another war
While we miss this one in Afghanistan
In Ethiopia
A big war
With similar consequence
Entering cities
Looting, massacre
The underground gathering
In a warehouse with only four chairs
And sirens and searchlights
At our windows, needing cleansing
Brick buildings crumbling
Palms growing in the sidewalks
And a large cart full of plums at a second story window
War and we will bring it to Sao Paulo
Phoenix, Vladivostock, Lome, Lyons
Beginning in those green twilights
In cafes, in gardens
In innocent heart, marrow, spleen
There is nothing hollow

No sawdust, sound lumber
And it rings under the axe with joy

Idea

Today the world is gregarious
The stones make a poetry on the beach
The waves on the ocean
The seagulls in the air
The seals on the rocks
The flowers on the hillside
Torrents of decodable speech all around us
Stanzas, song, clamor
Sun and shadow
Wind in the grasses, in our shelly ears
And we understand it all
Read so many languages
Grow wise just watching and walking
Have no idea what it is all about

Jen Currin
3 Poems

Night Train

To drink more coffee, snort
more gingko, to be able
to think
a hard-won thought,
humorless as this
diminishing blue hour,
lustrous as the gold drill
affixed to the giant machine
boring deep into the gravel
across the street
to plant pilings in the marshy soil.

Overhead a solid steel bank
of cloud, monolithic
as an alien mothership
parked over the river
sending down or blocking
beams of--
Light? Energy? Feeling?

I do not want to look at your face,
dust on the back of a book jacket,
author to fix or finish.
Everything has a language,
she said. If only you'd stop
talking long enough to listen.

Blue--poets like the word
& the color
even a shell to hold
in front of the eyes
like a magnifying glass.
But to intentionally misunderstand
a prayer--yet who could ever
understand a prayer?

Vestibule--we're waiting
& the night train hurries
us toward our destination.
Steep mountains & a cold
cup of red tea.
Down the corridor

someone has already set our places
at the small round table.
I take up my book,
the lamps flicker on.
With a little brilliance--or you might call it patience--
these maps might be readjusted.
You smile at me sleepily.
We're just about to arrive.

The Woods

She told me she was going
into the woods
to find the divine feminine.
"I will be holding onto her skirts
even if I'm dragged
through the mud," she wrote
on a postcard bearing a picture
of a Northern Flicker.

She instructed young people
on how to be self-sufficient.
"That's a black bear. Back away."
"That cave of throbbing
light is what we came for--
but don't go inside
just yet."

The coral lipstick she wore
on our second date
stained my white shirt.
We met--like so many--
online. I was surprised
by her agile fingers. After awhile
we lost touch: I stewed
in loneliness, she fell in love
with her straight roommate,
writing her voluminous love notes
swaddled in pink envelopes
which she slid under her door.
That was the year I finished college
just as the great experimental composer
died, and although I wasn't invited
I wondered what cake, what prayer
at their wedding.

Haiku To the End of Capitalism

promissory note--

red bird on many-leaved branch

couldn't give a shit

is utopian

information--this cold stone

held in my pocket

little as we are

willing to give--rain falls hard

summer's death; dry ground

see all as product

or relationship--grasses

bend, share a secret

marriage--that contract--

expired--out of use--but

a friendship lives on

beyond money--park

free for now--crow croaks--ego

rips like dollar bill

John Dorsey
3 Poems

Jason Ryberg Sings a Homage to Bon Jovi

like a glass of water
you are the child of a river

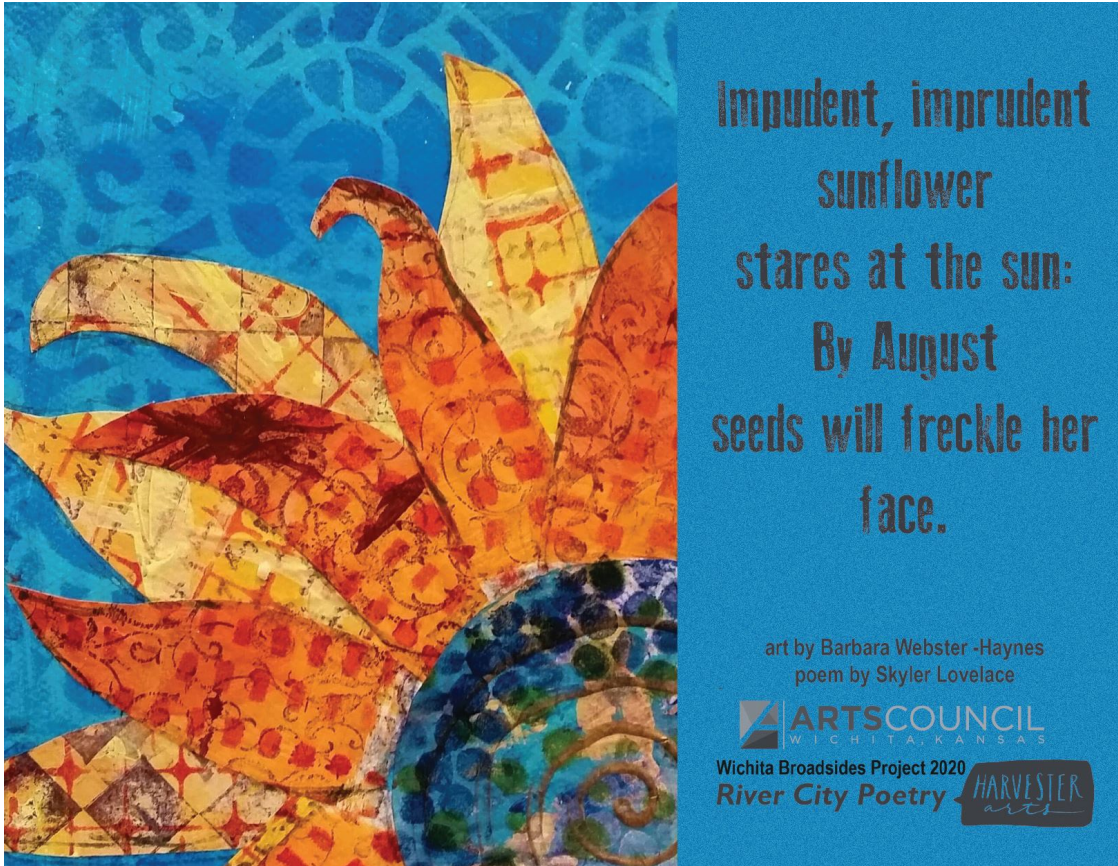
just remember the words
that brought you here
& move on.

Emily Dickinson Died for This

the sound of rain
in the missouri sky
social distancing
from hummingbirds.

Pandemic River Poem

here even the babies are ugly
when you look at their reflection
in the water.



**Impudent, imprudent
sunflower
stares at the sun:
By August
seeds will freckle her
face.**

art by Barbara Webster -Haynes
poem by Skyler Lovelace

ARTSCOUNCIL
WICHITA, KANSAS

Wichita BroadSides Project 2020

River City Poetry

HARVESTER
arts

“Sunflower”
Artist Barbara Webster-Haynes
Poet Skyler Lovelace

Victoria Garton
3 Poems

Fluoroscope Memory

At seven I sat low in the 54 Chevy sedan,
but got to stand to see the mighty Mississippi.
No seatbelt to hold me down, just the expectation
that a young lady would mind her p's and q's
even if that river sometimes didn't mind its banks.

Mom adjusted the AM dial to bring in Quincy,
big town on the river, a long hour from home.
Getting there was worse than waiting for the
sparrow reading group to finally end.
We bluebirds read last and fast.

Mother entertained with stories of my birth.
Dr. Harlan holding me high and after a swat
to make me wail, a part of the story appealing
as canned lima beans, she mimicked his voice.
"Narrow heels, high arches," man's gruff chuckle.

"Her shoes will cost you a fortune."
At this point, mom always laughed though
there was a creaky hinge in her throat, like opening
the little box that held her carefully gathered
egg money. At seven I knew we had no fortune.

The best part of the shoe store was the fluoroscope,
a boxy machine at the back where I slipped the
the new oxfords—brown or black and white—
my only choices. I got to peek through the scope
while the salesman, not yet glowing green, also looked.

Mother had her view and made deep-throated
hums as the salesman described the fit. Sometimes
in a bigger pair I'd look again into subterranean depths
and wiggle my ghoulish bony toes and dream
of wearing them exposed for Halloween.

I had to get away from home for cheap sandals
and frivolous flats on August dog-day sales.
The shoes were cheap, the foot surgery was not.
My mother, eighteen years dead,
still shops with me for shoes.

When planter fasciitis hit I walked on squishy pad,
saw footprints flash red, longed for fluoroscope view.
Orthopedic ugly shoes at designer price.
I heard the hinge creak in her throat, in resigned
voice mother said, "Yes, we'll take them."

What We Can Create

Tea candles on lily pads float the pool.
All are lit and an exact one foot apart
so the flames are level and hovering
above the water like fireflies, like tiny tulips
of fire. A blanket of light levitates over water,
heat waves teasing macadam in hot August.

Precise, perfect, momentary, staged,
in art we have collective-caught breath,
human-created awe, epic epiphany.
And also chaos under water as ripples
move this one left, that one right.
On deck we gently nudge with long poles

Which grow heavy and nip the water
creating tiny moments of turbulence.
Wax grows thin in small metal cups.
Wicks consume themselves, flicker out.
Out of the dream state comes dissent.
“What’s the point of an indoor pool?”

A mighty chorus arrives from Ancient Greece.
“Yeah, we need the night sky, stars reflecting
back our constellation.” “A windless night
so the candles stay lit.” “No mere pond,
we need a lake, spectacular Crater Lake
to elevate and seduce the soul.”

And all who glimpsed above the flames
a flicker of wings and life as fleeting and
knew that beauty was always enough,
these few are drowned-out. The circus
offers sabers of light from Roman Candles,
a man and a woman of the cloth to pray

or tie a knot when lovers are overcome,
hawkers to sell ear plugs against the roar
of “ahhs” and “ooooohs,” politicians
to divide the waters and supply the wind.
“But we agreed on a windless night,”
says a small voice beside the porta-pots.

Moon Lit

Have you noticed the moon is not photogenic?
Take a picture and a hole will appear on a black page.
That little circle, that disk falling from the hole punch
is the moon's full face. Photograph the moon
from space capsule and grey nubs will fill your dreams.
You will never catch the soul of the moon
no matter how smart your phone, your camera.

Better to look at the moon with bare eye,
even when the moon is an empty eye socket
where a black vulture pecked.
Alone on a cloudless night you will know in your bones
how the naked moon fills naked eye.
No photograph, romantic song, drooling lovers,
or howling dog can leave you so moon lit.

D.R. James
3 Poems

Petoskey Stones

Petrified shells slowly emerge, moisture
the magic potion exposing six sides—
cloned *hexagonaria*, extinct
in clear shallows of the Big Lake, ice-plucked
cement, ground-off and rounded, deposit
of glaciers erasing an age, pockets
of planet anatomies, those throw-backs
to the sibilant sigh of a sea—as if
in finite gazillionitude docile
fossils mass as Devonian witness.

Unremitting Epiphany:

Shoulders and knees unyieldingly mature!
Mine slide bone over offending bone and
puff like tough balloons, fueling refusal
to move. Once, my shoulders were boulders. Once,
my knees weren't tricky. I'd sic 'em on lifts
that deep-sixed me, rips willed invisible.
I saw them scoring jealous stares, mistook
injury for max-burn musculature.
They saw the future, the facts that would soon
ooze, their doomed hinges undone with stickum.

**My Wife Practices a Psychotherapy on Me
Using the “Dissociative Experiences Scale”**

—after Ali Rashid’s *Somebody Looking at Us*, 2020

“What percent of the time, by intervals
of ten, do you feel you’re standing next to
yourself, seeing yourself as another
person?” asks the seventh of twenty-eight
hypothetical manifestations.

*As in that masked head of the alien
conjured by galactic metaphysics
like an optical reincarnation
emerging from a thinly white-washed wall
of haphazard placards? “Eighty? Ninety?”*

Josie Rozell
3 Poems

Wishing Well

Life in scents of mustard moments
tales of clamor close my eyes &
I squint to wish
for one eternal resounding hello—

I don't know if the water
has heard my golden dollar.

Oh well.

Sometimes
the sun shines &
sometimes
I don't have to water the garden.

Summertime Afternoon in the Midwest

The sky is thick and dreamlike with clouds,
great battleships of cotton and luster
sailing to an endless azure tune—
on my back beneath the poplar tree
I listen to the steady whine of the horse fly.

Rain has come over the central plains in torrents,
heavy running along the window panes
heavy with oblong droplets pelting skin,
duck from backdoor to garage, to house again.
Three days of the stuff, and now—

A tiny buzz alerts me to a visitor.
Wind sore and curious, a yellow hover fly
lands on my forearm and chutes his long nose
to sniff at my skin. I raise my hand to usher him off,
with time enough his curiosity has earned him his place.

I watch as a blister beetle makes an attempt
up the poplar tree base; only to be thwarted
by gravity, swatted to the dirt floor.
Black carpenter ants weave loop-de-loops around her,
and I scoot my legs to the other side so as to avoid her toxin.

On my walk back along the brick sidewalk,
I see for rent, for sale, many houses—
most with yard signs hammered deep into the front lawn,
“We’re Glad You’re Our Neighbor” and “Love is Love”
and “Elect Marty Pile for Mayor”.

Cotton-tailed bunny rabbits dance the jig
and bounce their lives away from my stroll.
I even see a deer, tawny with white speckles
leap over a row of chain link backyard fences
with a twang! The sun stays high

until 9:30 p.m. these days; nights
so short and static,
I take two naps a day and still
I sleep like a child.

Parenting

At heart my father
was a naturalist.

He took my trembling hand
and told it to catch garter snakes

to slither as I slept
from the bedside table

to drink as I clutched
my chest from thumping out

to eat as I gagged
hands empty of crickets

to doze as I coughed
I was too sick to live

to laugh as I shrieked
when I caught sight at night

to bathe as I spied
the scales ruffle in sunlight

to drink as I stared
while the great forked tongue twirled

to eat as I watched
frozen mice salsa dance

to sleep as I sketched
the suave pretzel folds

to slither away
as I waved goodbye

being no longer afraid
because I loved them enough.

Christine Swanberg
4 Poems

**Confessions During the Age of Corona
and National Poetry Month**

Poetry is the mouth beneath the mask
but poetry pales.
No metaphor compares to the courage
of those
without the luxury of observation.
No simile
matches the sheer guts of brave souls
who get up
who knows what hours of the night or day?
get up
go because they choose to sacrifice, serve,
to risk, to heal.
Poetry is a balm but not a cure,
palliative,
like a psalm or prayer,
a lamentation,
the collective cry we do not allow
others to see.
Poetry is the voice beneath the mask,
behind the glass,
perhaps darkly as the scripture says,
the voice
of elders for whom sacrifices are made.
I confess
I don't want anyone to die
on my behalf.
I have lived the life I chose,
solitary contrarian,
full of the adventures I dreamed of.
I confess,
I live them over and over,
sheltering in place,
overprotecting those I love,
sending donations,
calling a few friends and family,
preparing the garden,
buying hummingbird food curbside
as if no one
was risking a life on my behalf.
For my penance
I will take a walk in today's sunshine,

recall
beautiful places I have already been.

Once a Catholic

I still love the dark mystic beauty
of old Catholic churches,
the lingering smoke of incense,
harbor little ill will toward the faith
of my youth,
do not cotton to the phrase:
Recovering Catholic.
I am not Catholic
but one of the wayward faithful
who has chosen a sect with more music,
joy, and women pastors.
I remember the beginning of my seeking
that dark late autumn in the Heartland,
low hanging clouds like baskets
beginning to swell with hail,
that day at age thirteen
when a clear voice spoke to me in a dingy hall:
“God does not want you to follow blindly,”
extinguishing all I had learned in Catechism.
From that rubble,
I am grateful for all the seeking
and finding since then on a winding faith walk,
grateful for Catholic beginnings
that led me elsewhere.

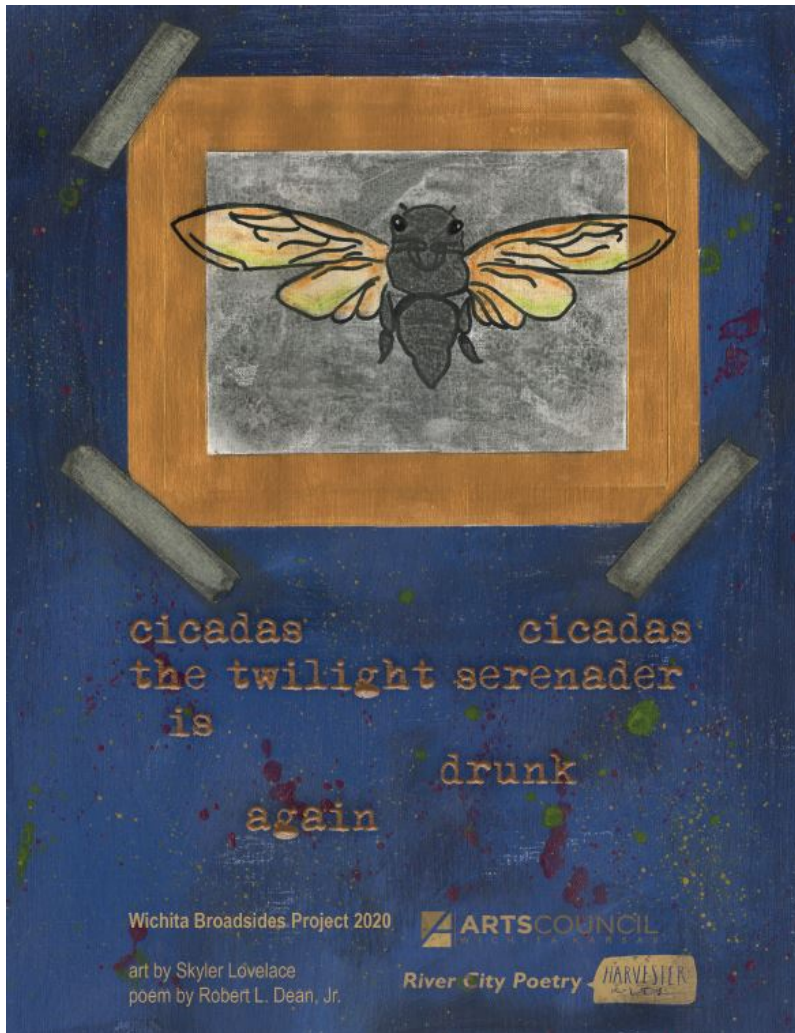
Whirlwind

When a whirlwind of endings threatens to uproot you,
and the windows rattle and hiss,
when doors are closing with a bang or a whisper,
and even appliances and utilities whimper or die,
you wonder whether your resilience
will see you through this miasma
which you hope and pray is temporary
and you search for the light
though the tunnel seems longer than usual,
and answers do not present themselves.
What can you do but try to calm
the dancing gods of anxiety
with their golden spears and torches?

You call upon the antidotes that saved you
in the past: prayers, affirmation, exercise,
the garden with its treasures, one true friend,
the trees with leaves riding the wind.
Perhaps it doesn't help that fall
with its smoky winds like incense
is just around the corner, and soon
the bitter winds of winter will come biting.
What can you do but prepare the hearth,
a stack of books to veer the mind's
compulsive need to probe and plan?
Does it help to know that this poet
understands exactly how you feel?

Dismantling the Garden

The crows are complaining.
Smoky October winds hint of winter
coming early this year. I
am a summer girl and loath
the end of the garden season
though I could find hope
in every perennial cut back, each
window box annual pulled out,
the burning of prairie grass
and the end of milkweed grown yellow
and mottled, the phlox brown and tinged.
It would be wrong to say
I doubt that the garden will bloom
next year. My seventy first
birthday lurks around the bend.
I am weary of loss.
Who will be around next year?
Today's dying back of the garden,
though temporary, makes me wistful.
A solitary dove breaks my heart.
I am taking down the bird houses again,
remembering the fledglings
the frantic parents coaxing them
into this world, young and full of fervor.
The sheer guts of flying!
I am taking down the hummingbird feeders,
wishing the tiny travelers a safe journey.
I will myself out of melancholy
this cold October morning of first frost.
I am not ready to dismantle my life.



“Cicadas”
Artist Skyler Lovelace
Poet Robert L. Dean, Jr

The Extraordinary X

Melany Pearce is a friend and a fellow compatriot of a community poetry group sponsored by the Wichita Public Library.

I was delighted when she sent me a copy of her chapbook *The Extraordinary X*, and I thought I would share some of the best lines here—in part, to celebrate the creative spirit which is glowing so brightly for some, despite the current circumstances.

This compilation is an homage to the alphabet, each poem carefully crafted around the versatility of each letter. While certainly full of sounds and alliteration, there are also hidden and unexpected gems:

From “The Letter J:”

... for many years totally
interchangeable with ‘i’
/ ... /
to learn the Romans used you as a stop sign

From “Rolling, Raucous R:”

Referred to by Shakespeare
As the ‘canine letter’ for
the trilled ‘rrr’ sound
of a dog’s growled warning

And finally, from “Dearest D:”

You adorn delightful, descriptive words,
such as resplendent, redolent, dowdy,
duplicitous, indecorous, indelible.

There is both joy and delight, simplicity and fun in each poem.

If interested in reading your own copy, please contact April Pameticky at [aspameticky\[@\]gmail.com](mailto:aspameticky@gmail.com) to put you in touch with the poet.

We don’t normally do reviews as part of RCP issues. We tend to feature our reviews directly on the website, publish year-round, and provide direct contact to the poet. But we knew this would be an extremely limited edition of work, and so thought to share it with this fall’s readers.

By day, **Julie Ann Baker Brin** works for public broadcasting... not behind a microphone, but red tape. So, by night, she prefers to use the other side of her brain for creative endeavors. Julie is a new member of the Kansas Authros Club and her portfolio is at juliebrin.org.

Alan Cohen was a poet before beginning his career as a Primary Care MD, teacher, and manager, and has been living a full and varied life. He has been writing poems for 60 years and is beginning now to share some of his discoveries. He's been married to Anita for 40 years, and they've been in Eugene, OR these past 10.

Jen Currin has published four collections of poetry, most recently *The Inquisition Yours* (Coach House, 2010), which won the 2011 Audre Lorde Award for Lesbian Poetry and was a finalist for three awards, and *School* (Coach House, 2014), which was also a finalist for three awards. *Hider/ Seeker*, her first collection of stories, was published by Anvil Press in 2018 and named a *Globe and Mail* Best Book. Her poems and stories have been published in many magazines, anthologies, and journals, including *VERSE*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *The Cream City Review*, *The Massachusetts Review*, *The Mississippi Review*, *PRISM International*, and *Washington Square*.

John Dorsey lived for several years in Toledo, Ohio. He is the author of several collections of poetry, including *Teaching the Dead to Sing: The Outlaw's Prayer* (Rose of Sharon Press, 2006), *Sodomy is a City in New Jersey* (American Mettle Books, 2010), *Tombstone Factory*, (Epic Rites Press, 2013), *Appalachian Frankenstein* (GTK Press, 2015) *Being the Fire* (Tangerine Press, 2016) and *Shoot the Messenger* (Red Flag Press, 2017) and *Your Daughter's Country* (Blue Horse Press, 2019). His work has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize, Best of the Net, and the Stanley Hanks Memorial Poetry Prize. He was the winner of the 2019 Terri Award given out at the Poetry Rendezvous. He may be reached at archerevans@yahoo.com.

Victoria Garton writes poetry as well as non-fiction features for the cattle industry. She lives on a ranch at Nevada, MO, and has taught English and Literature classes for Crowder College for the past 15 years. A recent Zoom Riverfront Poetry Series reader, her poetry has been in *Thorny Locust*, *The Same*, *Quarterly West*, and *Poem. Non-Fiction* has appeared in *Working Ranch* and *Missouri Angus Trails*. Her book *Kisses in the Raw Night* was published by BkMk Press, UMKC.

D.R. James's most recent of nine collections are *Flip Requiem* (Dos Madres Press, 2020), *Surreal Expulsion* (The Poetry Box, 2019) and *If god were gentle* (Dos Madres Press, 2017), and his micro-chapbook *All Her Jaẓz* is free, fun and printable-for folding at the Origami Poems Project. James lives in the woods near Saugatuck, Michigan.
<https://www.amazon.com/author/drjamesauthorpage>.

Josie Rozell is a writer and a mixed-bag adventurer based in Hawai'i, who focuses on poetry broadcasting the human soul. She runs for days on end and hikes over mountains for weeks in order to meet people and tell their stories. Her next adventure is to cycle from Scotland to Singapore with a mandolin, asking for stories along the way. She is currently at work on her first collection of poetry, *Articulated Soul*, coming December 2020.

Christine Swanberg is the first official Poet Laureate of Rockford, IL. She has published many collections with various national presses, most recently *WILD FRUITION: SONNETS, SPELLS, and OTHER INCANTATIONS* from Puddin'head Press. About 600 of her poems appear in about

80 national journals, often as a regular. Her major awards include City of Rockford Community Impact Award (for teaching, writing, and mentoring), YWCA Leader Luncheon Award for the Arts, and many poetry awards. Now retired from teaching, she has created a sanctuary in her yard.