





**MOCK  
TURTLE  
ZINE**  
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## About

Mock Turtle Zine is a local, independent literary and arts publication supporting Miami Valley creatives. This zine is a collective effort that relies not only on contributors for content but also on a talented group of volunteers that review, edit, format, print, and distribute the zine.

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The Love We Bore Him, Elegy to  
Conrad Balliet  
Stella Ling

September, 2018

I had received an email detailing Conrad's accident, his paralysis and subsequent inability to swallow, his refusal to have a feeding tube.

That night he appeared to me in a dream. He was a young boy.

We were in a room in an unknown school, the room was suffused with light.

He was so young, his schoolboy shirt unlined

I spoke to him but

he did not answer me

He had a pencil in his hand and his fist was clenched around it, like a pencil sharpener

He was busy, absorbed in something I could not see, I tried to catch a glance

he did not answer me

We were silent together, two children, and my eyes were awestruck by our quiet dance, solemn and alone

As we sat there, the bones of his face changed and he became the Conrad that I knew

The old Conrad, with the profile of his Adam's apple pronounced and clear,

searching through his mounds of books,

turning his head so he could better hear,  
I saw his lips move, the words washing in and out  
garbled, without meaning-  
a shout, but of despair

As I looked again, a halo richly woven,  
wavered above the space where his face had been  
And an unseen mouth spoke with fairy lightness,  
a Gaelic lilt  
reading to a higher meaning,  
resonant beyond my hearing

His whole body was drifting,  
away toward the school room window, truly  
breath became a hum, a drone, a buzz  
and in his fist, my heart clenched,  
resigned  
to the clouds of death seeping in  
as time crept out the crevices

All his ages mashed at once together,  
the separate lumps fighting destiny  
schoolboy  
school master  
naughty imp  
scalawag even  
wit, and poet

The lover  
Ever the lover

I called, I spoke,  
he could not answer



There was only a white glaze  
and a smile  
floating in the room, uncatchable

for the robin who flew in front of my car  
Ron Rollins

rushing panicking  
swooping in to help its mate,  
roadway victim of the car before me  
  
in a flash i watch,  
see the first bird struck  
    feather flutter, broken stricken  
asphalt flopping  
  
and then horrified, headlong, its companion  
    flying down to its aid  
trying to help its mate  
only to put itself, lethally,  
  
in my path  
  
no time to brake, i can't but see  
beak agape, bird mouth a silent scream  
black and glassy eye, wide with --  
  
with what?  
is it too much to think  
    that it was not  
    just a bird  
but a knowing creature all too aware  
  
of its immediate fate  
understanding that its bond to its spouse  
had turned suddenly deadly, realizing its  
lifelong commitment  
  
meant its early end  
the impulse to rescue gone

terribly, fatally wrong

is it too much think  
that there was  
love?

robins mate for life

and as anyone knows who makes that choice,  
it can cost you.

i killed the bird,  
the helpful bird

and it really, truly shook me.  
all day long, i told myself: silly. not a big a deal.  
just a goddamn bird.

but that evening i had to tell the whole thing,  
the whole sad thing, to  
my wife  
and waited, waited

for her  
to tell me  
that it was OK. that i couldn't have helped it.  
that it was all right.

# On the Bluebird House

Janet Irvin

Through the rain-dimpled glass  
the unexpected vacancy  
of the bluebird house  
invites speculation. Where  
are the wrens, those upstart  
invaders who moved into place  
without invitation?

Empty of last spring's nest,  
the house broods, content,  
while greater things take wing.

A red-tailed hawk  
swoops past the maple,  
alighting with feral grace  
on the cedar post.

Wings flared, eyes steady,  
bristling with purpose,  
it surveys the weedy plot,  
intent on delivering  
taloned death to the lesser  
rungs of nature's ladder.

## In the Garden

Sandra Rivers-Gill

From the road, at the edge of the driveway  
She sees impatiens posed above the ground

Blooming like spring again in mid-July,  
The mauve petals whirl into mulch like a plan

She sees him kneeling in the resilient earth  
The dwarf roses pout their peachy lipstick

They dally and desire to be plucked;  
Wine-hued Lilies, sinewy and blushing

Their velvety nectar appeal to confident bees  
She enjoys the botanicals he has planted there

The way he quenches their thirst every evening,  
He controls wildflowers in his farmer-tanned hands

He loves the way they blossom inside his light;  
he takes pride pruning their silhouettes

He will feed the seed of a tomato as it takes root  
He knows it will ripen in the Summer's splendor

# The End of the Drought

Judy Johnson

So long word-parched,  
tongue thick and heavy in my mouth  
restricting vocabulary for the sake of students  
too young to decode or appreciate Latinate style  
and—warned about those people  
“educated beyond their intelligence”

(whatever that meant)

I carefully culled my words even among peers.

Then one summer I heard a speaker say, “These things

(what things I do not recall)

are inextricably interrelated,”

and saw clouds mass on the horizon

packed with all the lush, moist, life-giving language

I’d perforce left behind.

For days I repeated his words like a mantra:

macaroni and cheese were inextricably interrelated,

as were ocean and shore or rose and thorns.

Remembering words I’d stored away

(autonomous, ubiquitous, reprehensible)

delighting in polysyllabic utterance for its own sake,

my dessicated brain awakened, words like snowdrops

pushing up from winter ground soaking up the suddenly

lucent landscape.

Dayton Metro Library Poetry Contest  
3rd Place Teen

Where I'm From  
Jackson Hunter

I am from aluminum siding and brick,  
An empty chair beneath the silver maple,  
Pine trees and freshly mown grass.  
Peanuts put out for the squirrels and bird feeders filled  
to the brim,  
A flag of red, white, and blue flies above a porch that  
says "Welcome",  
A charcoal gray door that says "come in".  
I am from framed memories hanging on the walls,  
Grandparents urns watch over all from the mantle.  
The clock on the wall chimes on the hour,  
Quilts stitched with love to keep me warm.  
I am from two large dogs running and playing,  
Sticks being fetched and balls being squeaked.  
Three cats prowling and pouncing about always ready  
for a treat.  
I am from hot, homemade meals served with love and  
laughter,  
Clinking and clanking of pots and dishes,  
Sunlight shines bright where we share our food and our  
day,  
Here we laugh, we love, and we pray together.  
I am from backyard gardens and blackberry bushes,  
Swimming pool for the dogs,

Honeysuckles sweeten the air, maple leaves sway in the  
wind,  
Rocking chair rocks with the wind.  
A house in which my grandparents lived out their lives,  
Raised the woman that I come from,  
Memories in every floorboard, every nook and cranny...  
Where I am raised with joy, rules, and love,  
That is where I come from.



Dayton Metro Library Poetry Contest  
2nd Place Teen

How am I to admit—  
Kayleigh DeLaet

How am I to admit--  
That while you worked extra shifts,  
To keep a roof above our heads,  
I was praying to god,  
You wouldn't come home at night.

How am I to confess--  
That while we made love,  
And you moaned my name,  
Another man's pleasure,  
Was always on my mind.

How am I to tell you--  
That I was unfaithful,  
All this this time,  
When that is the very thing,  
He was to me.

How am I to accept--  
That the girl in the mirror,  
Is a fraud of the one,  
I've always known--  
Content with deceit.

Tell me, how do I live with the fact--  
That while you loved me,

With all your heart,  
I couldn't bear to love you,  
With any of mine.

Dayton Metro Library Poetry Contest  
1st Place Teen

Remade

Gabriella Clingman

I loved myself  
but that didn't matter because  
I wanted you  
you told me we should be together forever  
and eventually I believed that, even when  
I thought I could be happier without you  
I had to reach a standard to receive your love  
I no longer thought  
I was perfect without alteration

so I remade myself

you were my identity  
I stopped believing that  
I could say no  
I lost myself for your approval  
shutting my mouth so you were always right  
reducing my body to aesthetic value  
I hated who I'd become  
but that didn't matter because  
you liked me

(read it backwards)

Dayton Metro Library Poetry Contest  
3rd Place Adult

## Street Symphony

Brendan Epps

Woodwinds represented by the hood wind passing  
across the lips of green and brown bottled domestic  
beers with European names which days earlier were  
goggles.

The tink-tink of vials, xylophones in sharp keys  
resounding for miles.

Trunks only provide part of the percussion,  
Black snare drummers flam sixteenth notes and  
drum rolls

Twenty-two high-hat hits in succession.

Cymbals crash together, sounding like broken glass  
everywhere,

the shards seeking refuge from the mayhem they've  
witnessed.

After trying their best not to reflect outward the  
crime scenes inside the beams of the window pane from  
which they've fallen.

No longer cuddling the cow-belled outcries of  
ouches and the sighs of desensitization

Treble-influenced hunger pangs drown out Keys in  
Stevie's songs of life.

No superwomen or men.

Not even living just enough for the city, nor enough  
love even for money.

Residents wishing time was 30 years earlier when they were still just close to the edge avoiding being pushed,  
then, we were concerned with losing face by getting smushed,  
not literally losing face, though.

The sax man is playing the blues that everybody's feeling—emotionally cyanotic—he's right there, middle of 5th Avenue, but there're rucksacks outside of Sack's man

Wrapping up, or maybe uncovering the lack of man contrasted against the blackground of Cashland sites, quick-debt services.

Funny, but it seems as if I've heard of this in Dante's work.

So if purgatory's the bottom level, we must be experiencing hell here on earth.

Guess that's what they mean by ground zero, ground level, so we're thankful in hindsight of our 25th floor apartment, even when the elevator's out.

The composers of this symphony better be careful though. There've been sheets rewritten with unexpected crescendos in his and her stories.

Leading to catch-22s where those who participated were sorry and those who remained tone deaf, were worried.

Crazy, the tambourine shakes from the beatings of oppression, mysogeny, and sorrily mislabeled persons.

I mean, how do we get blue-collared people who can only afford t-shirts,

unable to wipe their winter-dripping noses because  
they've only got short-sleeved shirts.

And I don't mean polos.

White t's and wife-beaters, as a matter of cost-  
benefit analysis versus the analysis of fashion trends.

When will this drawn out tune end?

Are we too far gone to remember that it doesn't  
have to bleed to hurt?

Dayton Metro Library Poetry Contest  
2nd Place Adult

Snow Moon in Virgo after Divorce  
Whitney Bell

Whatever you do  
you must not worry  
about the future.

Think about the thick, divine  
quiet of your sunny treehouse  
apartment, and the owl  
who you have heard calling  
but have not yet seen.

Think about the sycamores:  
about how grateful you are  
that you did not, in fact,  
become an actress, or a singer,  
or famous.

(Okay, you still might want to  
become a singer, but back-up singers  
can walk to the grocery store  
and buy blueberries  
without having to sign autographs.)

Think about the birch tree  
dark and light-skinned, how she waves  
March in, between this Southern wind  
and the Polar Vortex; as they clash

through the Midwest,  
she remains grounded.

An American flag flops above a rooftop.

Hire a cleaning lady to dust or don't.

Make a pot of soup or don't.

Order Chinese delivery.

(Are you really overdrawn again?)

Think about these things.

But whatever you do  
you must not worry  
about the future.



# Battleships

Grace Curtis

We traced the comet  
that you swore

reminded you of dahlias  
streaking through

the vase of night,  
the river-like time

procession calling  
for battle: a continuum

so wide, it sleeps  
on one end

and wakes at the sea.  
This was the bonus—

tone-deafness  
as a blessing,

a giving up  
of command. Eventually,

we demanded  
that time hold its place

and sail away from us  
in battleships

named for the only places  
we had never visited.

Thresholds  
Kathy B. Austin





**FENCES**  
Paper spread out before me  
like a polite gesture I began  
applying color, wanting it  
to own itself, not be  
territorial, like the  
Indians who never used fences  
spreading out to the  
horizon like grass.

Dayton Metro Library Poetry Contest  
1st Place Adult

I came to the party with my lampshade  
on  
Isaac Knapp

I came to the party with my lampshade on  
A veil of absinthe on a face frozen with  
sleep and the flash of a camera. At night  
I drag synthesizers into the highway  
tunnels, trying to replicate whale songs.  
No whales arrive--a consequence  
of landlocked states. Endless  
reorganization is the fate of people  
who care about order. I don't care.  
Disintegration is my sentence. The knife  
Gradually accepted by the ribs.  
Learning the language of cage and fracture  
of punctured lung and breathless.  
Speak to the knife and it will answer  
asking you to leave this party  
as my eyes' bright filaments  
snap and set my shade aflame.

Dayton Metro Library Poetry Contest  
3rd Place Senior

## The Unearthing

Anne Randolph

I pick up a pink granite rock, one side flat,  
slip my fingers into faint fingerholds.  
A Woodland Indian village once  
stretched across my subdivision.  
Each time a new home site is excavated, bulldozers  
heap hills of soil and rock, like burial mounds.  
I scour turned soil for relics, spot speckled  
green and pink granite stones, wash them off,  
try to figure out their function – grinding,  
polishing, pecking or hammering.

Lining my collection across the kitchen counter,  
I grasp a smooth long hammerstone,  
imagine it smashing nuts, grains or roots.  
I wonder what scents arose from  
grains like goosefoot ground for porridge or bread.  
Although ancient Indian recipes are lost,  
these stone survivors of disease and war keep  
a link to tribal women, the work around fires,  
as if my hand touches theirs when I cradle them.

Dayton Metro Library Poetry Contest  
2nd Place Senior

Fervor

Barbara Astor

On weekday mornings when you  
leave for work, I part a metal slat at  
eye level upon hearing the sound of your  
waking truck, its bright eyes leading you  
down the driveway onto our slumbering  
street as it rounds a bend and  
I spot you in the open spaces  
between black trees before  
you disappear.

In minutes, you'll be on the highway,  
your hour's journey that leaves me  
with a charged imagination where  
in the pitch before daybreak, cars  
travel incognito with no headlights,  
their errant drivers darting from  
one lane to another like jack rabbits,  
and bowed heads at the wheel,  
the self-absorbed whose every  
communication is urgent. For two weeks  
on the way home, you watched him  
tailgate as he texted until he hit you.  
Flashing lights. April ice on a bridge.  
Beneath a sheet on the ground,  
a stilled body. And even then, the steady  
sight of you backing into the driveway

each night when you arrive home.  
The gift of having you one more day.

- *For Warren*

Dayton Metro Library Poetry Contest  
1st Place Senior

Ode to a Supernumerary Rainbow

Kathleen Glover

*Chicago, May 2011*

You emerged from the uteri of raindrops,  
as clouds crumpled and scattered like used Kleenex.  
You plaited lightning's last few strands,  
placed a final peal of thunder on the end  
of that bright braid, and tucked the storm  
into the nape of the sky,  
then you flipped onto your back and arched  
into the grandest skip of color  
I'd ever seen, ROY G BIV (X2)—  
except for your big sister  
Aurora Borealis.

Everything colorful hid that day—  
outclassed.  
Crayola crayons refused to come out  
of kid's backpacks and flowers talked  
among themselves,  
decided to take a sick day  
and just stayed folded up.

Your outer skins and bellies  
faded into ultraviolets  
and infrared fathomed  
by butterflies, pit vipers



and aliens.  
Then holding  
sun's rays, you sauntered  
westward to wow them in L.A.

# Dream Weaver

Heidi Arnold

I'm awakened from a dream of being tangled up with Grandma, pulling her from an overflowing cast iron tub of water. I rise from my bed younger than I was when I pulled the covers to my chin—and more fiery than I was when I turned out the light. Dreams make sense when you're in them and you follow along the script like you wrote it yourself. You step into *The Wizard of Oz*, watch the scene, and realize it's only a movie. But you return to the reality of fear when the monkeys fly and that green-faced witch is close. And all the while knowing, it's just a dream and Dorothy will be back in Kansas by the end of the night.

Just like that, I see my 98-year-old Grandpa dreaming and hear his words, but the characters are invisible to me. His fingers are feeling sensations of more than the wind and are holding more than a cloud as his arm reaches up to the sky and his eyelids flutter like butterflies.

"That guy has his car in the ditch over there," Grandpa says.

He is pointing to the side of a building. So I ask about the car and he says with his eyes closed, "We had lettuce last night, didn't we?"

I just say yes and he's quiet. His spirit is nourished in these exchanges, agreeing on the shape of a tree or the truck in need of a tune-up as I wait in silence for his wit to bubble up like apples baking in a pie. His almost-century-old eyes spy a robin on the back of the park bench, yet he cannot easily locate the chugging train on the other side of the road.

Sitting outside with Grandpa in the summer that God provided just for us, I logged hours and hours of observation. Grandpa was gone and he was living a life he never dreamed, one that spun in endless circles like Dorothy and the Scarecrow's yellow brick road—seeming to go nowhere good. Perched in his wheelchair under the shady sunshine of a tall tree, his eyes closed and lips moved as his strong hand reached out to pick up an unseen item from the ground. Sitting with him pressured me to remember the form his mouth had taken for all the years I could remember: lips lightly pursed holding tobacco spit, as if this liquid gold needed shelter. Deep ditches in his cheeks formed the structure for the pool of prized saliva. His bottom lip, like a window sill, caught any drips. His last day of chewing and spitting came the day I moved them out of their home two years ago—a moment that haunts me. He always held that spit in the recesses of his mouth and still replied to Grandma: "I'll be right there!" Unbeknownst to me, I had memorized the intricacies of how he moved to poise for spitting tobacco juices into a bush or from the driver's seat of the car, different than releasing them into his homemade spittoon. I've clocked countless shifts of re-living his thick fingers pinching the rim of the tin spit can, followed by wiping the corners of his mouth with the back of his hand. And now, it makes me giggle as I watch him like a teenager watching her favorite movie over and over: in his dreaming, he spits. He puts his lips together like a master sculptor maneuvering clay, and spit comes out just like he had a wad full of leaves stuffed inside one cheek. The irregular sound of vehicles streaming home after work on a nearby road lulls him into a dreamy

stage. I study his face, the shape of his head, the sag of his skin; all this pushes me into the corner of remembering how he sat side-by-side with his brother, each in a recliner facing west and not looking at the other. Talking mostly of old days, one of them would spit into the can, and like a contagious sneeze, the other would reach out for the can to be passed. The can connected them in ways not speakable, like two men who shared a vital organ. His last dreaming months were woven under the cover of a perfect blue sky with strong green-leaved trees in sight, enough of his favorite nature to keep his heart beating and his mind active. I watch him half sleep, as memory seeps out like the liquid of a fruit that's spent too much time in the refrigerator drawer. I try to catch those sluffing memories as they fall down his pant leg before they gently blow into the wind, never to be seen or heard again.

At night when I tuck the covers around his now-boney shoulders and tuck the end of the comforter under his heels as he requests, he whimpers like an old dog snuggled next to a fire on a cold night. My eye lashes are close to his and our noses almost Eskimo kiss as I speak clearly to him about what day tomorrow will be. I kiss his lips, thin lines sunken beneath the ocean's horizon, and say, "I'll see you tomorrow, Grandpa...after lunch."

His unwavering reply peers over the edge of the unknown, "I hope so."

I turn out the lights in his room, leaving the door cracked so an aide might hear him shift out of bed.

Carrying my day's work and a bag of his laundry, I push the security code to the exit door as I wrestle the urge to sit all night in the chair in the corner of his room in

case he might need me. I often tip-toe back in and his eyes are already closed, maybe viewing the first dream of the night. Outside, the sky is black and the temperature is drastic. His room is Guam, adjusted for his thin skin and inactive muscles. I drive past his dark window and recall another dark window more than 40 years before.

The summer after I learned about The Letter People and jumped successfully on both my left and right foot, I learned my colors and spent many summer days with Grandma and Grandpa. Besides hearing Grandma read Little PeeWee and The Little Engine That Could, my nighttime ritual was standing atop a dining room chair at the bedroom window looking out into the darkness. I focused my attention on the state route beyond the edge of the yard. As Grandma kept a close eye on her watch, I anticipated seeing Grandpa drive past the window in his semi heading to pick up a load to deliver across several states. And then quickly—as quickly as I drove past his dark, nursing home window—Grandpa’s truck flashed in front of my eyes. My heart knew what was coming—the air horn, signaling that he could see me and would be back soon.

“I’ll see you tomorrow, Grandpa...after lunch.”

When he dreams, I suspect he is tangled up with Grandma, calling to her with his mouth full of tobacco. The reality of living without her is purely a nightmare, and sometimes he wakes not remembering she is gone. His foot is pressing the accelerator of this life, but he notices the car rolling backward like that weird sensation of sitting still in a carwash but having the feeling that you’re moving. But he doesn’t panic; his words tell me the dream.

“You use much livestock?”

I reply just in case his dreaming is a silent film, straddling both worlds—Oz and Kansas. He knows a tornado has spun his bed, and his recliner, and his reality. Dairy cows from the old homeplace fly in his view and his son’s bicycle passes the corner of his consciousness. His brothers walk the road while his wife and mother make pie—concrete figures in his Oz. I’m there too—a little girl watching.

# The Journey

Anna Cates

the path winds on  
where the river runs

geese flee for winter  
imagine aching wings

blind pathways to the moon  
the earth moving below

the corpus yielding  
to sensations of sky

silent noegenesis  
bridging chasms of sea

in acts of xenization  
all of us pilgrims

# On What We Keep

Grace Curtis

A man said the average  
home contains 300,000

items. A list  
of all we've forgotten or will.

For instance, a ribboned  
stack of my mother's

old letters. Every last one said put  
your trust in God. The sun

in California is as close  
to God as I ever got. Still,

her picture-perfect scrawl,  
her up-right verbs, the way

my hungry hands reached  
into the box

for those mission missives  
that then got added

to the things I hoard. Years later  
she told me she guessed I hated

getting those letters. When  
I was little I asked

if a calf remembers her mom. Not once  
it's weaned, she said.

That was another thing  
she got wrong.



# Weeding

Sandra Riley

i.

In lime Sharpie Rae wrote on a paper towel—  
Dear Sandra,  
Always remember to weed your garden  
and stuck it on the fridge already crowded  
with postcards under an apple magnet.  
I had told her my rose bush needed trimmed,  
yet I had no shears to penetrate the branches.  
She kneeled on her haunches and showed me  
the weeds I mistook for wild violets,  
pretty poison sumac that needed uprooted.

ii.

I wrote to David about trees, about wanting  
to find a hollowed sycamore to nestle myself  
inside, my spine aligned against the trunk,  
about my garden with healthy Hostas,  
the rebellious rose bush I couldn't cut back.  
I told him too about my Wandering Jew  
that beat death this winter and is thriving  
again finally in its wood pot, about the eager  
Spider plant that is flowering, how I like  
to care for something more fragile than I am.  
He said to remember Voltaire's Candide—  
we must remember to cultivate our garden.

iii.

Grandma Rita pruned her roses on the side  
of the blood-red house on Choctaw Lake.  
Her white permed hair like cotton, in yellow  
gloves with shears in hand, the bushes yielding

yellow, red, pink, and white blooms.  
The geese would walk up from the lake  
to beg for bread and while Grandma tended  
her roses I would feed them old buns.  
I remember her when I look at my rose bush  
that will not yield under my care,  
pull the poison sumac with bare hands.

# The Cheeseburger

Robert Flavin

Early Friday evening

I sit in a downtown fast-food eatery

munching on whatever big meal

I have chosen to consume.

Work was hard today,

and I am tired of moving and thinking.

Several active adolescent boys

prepare to leave the restaurant.

They have eaten voraciously

and are now hurrying wherever.

They do stop to clean their common table,

most of them anyway.

One of the group gleans from the clutter

an uneaten cheeseburger

still enclosed within its dull yellow wrapper.

Passing a homeless man,

seated at a table near the exit,

the adolescent places the treasure

near the man's arm.

No eye contact is made.

Neither says a word.

No one in the group notices.

Forty years later

I still remember.

# Sadness of the Hypersensitive Agency Detection Device

Steve Broidy

We are the children of the paranoid.

Those who heard a predator  
in the sougning of the breeze through grass  
begot us--they who sensed that silent  
watering holes were traps.

We are their heirs who can never relax;  
who fear intruders in the coughing  
of freezers late at night; and foes  
at work when we slip on ice.

We are those who survived the ages  
alive to what moves and to what moves us.  
Our children learn their rag dolls do watch them,  
and things that are restless live under their beds.

We see omens in splatters of crow-drop on sidewalks,  
plots in the movements of ships at sea;  
no comfort but to spit three times,  
say our prayers; close our doors.

We know the noose of events draws tighter,  
scuttle to seek a shelter that's safe; and  
fear that a patient God looks upon us,  
filling the Void with a knowing smile.

# Give Me More

Andrew H. Justice

Each year it comes later and later—  
    the snow.  
I know eventually it won't come at all,  
    replaced by longing as  
        the heat steams my blood  
to vapor ghosts—  
    screeching over the loss  
    of silence,  
        the true silence of  
when the air grows heavy and  
the clouds sprawling grey  
quiet sifts down on a busy  
world robbing it of sound  
    flake  
        by absorbing  
            flake.

My back arches as it sinks  
into the loose white sheets  
    down, down onto  
hard, black asphalt; it wretches.  
This bike path winds its way  
by my woods,  
by my creek—  
lush and delicate  
in its baptismal gown,  
teasing the contradictions  
from my stale flesh.

Kissed by a crystalline individuality,  
tears swell in their wells only  
to freeze before falling.  
My eyes are now locked to a squint,  
my self drifts into each moment.  
when snow touched my skin,  
only to melt from my demon heat.

I stole its form, the essence of  
atomic structure that draws  
me to this spectacle.  
There are only so many left  
and here, now, I  
                  killed one.  
Why does death spring  
from me.  
Is this why all leave?  
Is this why fall leaves?  
My future—this is it.

Silence.

I covet and dread it.  
Alone with ones thoughts,  
the source of all unhappiness.  
Please snow, in your  
                                  benevolence,  
bury me. Storm into my skull,  
fill it white, turn me to a gift-shop  
globe. Absorb all my sound so  
I cannot think again.  
Freeze my blood so I stay like this.

## Artists & Authors

**Kathy B. Austin** creates collage, mixed media paintings, and mini-books using her photography and poetry, as well as acrylics, collected images, quotes, and ephemera. Her art has been displayed most recently at Harmony Creek Church and Sinclair Community College in Dayton. She was a Yellow Springs Village Artisans group member for several years and attends art fairs.

**Heidi Arnold** is, most recently, the author of *Walking in our Schoenen*—a biography about a Dutch couple who made their home in Dayton, Ohio. She has published a few poems and non-fiction pieces. Her passion is helping people understand that incarcerated women are real humans! Her other creative endeavors include travel, photography, and friendship.

**Steve Broidy** is an emeritus professor at both Wittenberg University and Missouri State University. He is the author of *Earth Inside Them* and Editor of *From the Tower: Poetry in Honor of Conrad Ballet* (both Main Street Rag Publishing). He is a two-time award winner from the Dayton Metro Poetry Contest.

**Anna Cates** is a graduate of Indiana State University (M.A. English and Ph.D. Curriculum & Instruction/English) and National University (M.F.A. Creative Writing). Her first collections of poetry and fiction, *The Meaning of Life* and *The Frog King*, were published by Cyberwit Press, and her second poetry collection, *The Darkroom*, by Prolific Press.

## Artists & Authors

**Grace Curtis'** book, *The Shape of a Box*, was published in 2014 by Dos Madres Press. Her second Dos Madres Press collection, *Everything Gets Old* will be available in 2019. Her writing can be found in numerous journals.

**Robert Flavin** graduated from Chicago Loyola in 1968 and then served for four years in the military. He taught high school mathematics full-time for thirty-two years and then taught darkroom photography part-time for several years as an Adjunct Instructor of Art at Sinclair Community College in Dayton, Ohio. He is currently a part-time Adjunct Instructor of Mathematics at the University of Dayton. Robert and his wife, Lynn, reside in Washington Township near Dayton.

**Janet E. Irvin** is the author of two novels -- *The Dark End of the Rainbow* and *The Rules of the Game*. Her work has appeared in a variety of print and online publications, her book reviews in the *Ohioana Quarterly*. Irvin and her husband live in Springboro, Ohio, on the edge of a nature park.

**Judy A. Johnson** freelances for educational publishing and works at Clark State Community College to pay the bills and feed two cats. A member of a small writing group since the 1990s, she has written poems that have been heard on Conrad's Corner and at Art and Poetry events at the Dayton Art Institute. Her book, *A Week to Pray About It*, a collection of meditations, was published by Cowley Publications in 2006.



## Artists & Authors

**Andrew H. Justice** is a poet from Dayton Ohio, currently residing in the Belmont Area. He is a recent graduate from Wright State University with a Bachelor's degree in English. Andrew writes to find what has always been there, but he was unconditioned to see.

**Sandra Riley** is a teacher of writing at a community college. A native of Columbus, she resides in Yellow Springs with her sons.

**Ron Rollins** is a writer, editor, artist and community volunteer who lives in Kettering. He and his wife, Amy, have two grown children and three grandchildren.

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