

COLLEGE *of* SOUTHERN MARYLAND
Fall 2015 Literary Magazine



Connections

Featuring new work by poets W.D. Ehrhart and Philip Metres
Special contribution by former Maryland Poet Laureate, Michael S. Glaser

In Memoriam



**English Professor
JOHN LAMIMAN
1953 - 2015**

**we worked with him, enjoyed his company,
his soft-spoken kindness,
felt his passion for literature and learning,
for his students—
we lost a warm heart that gave us hope and love
rest-in-peace, dear friend and colleague**

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Rope Bridge at Alwick by Heather Madden

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The Prospect

Jeanette Warren

I peer through Narrow Blinds
of my psychiatric hospital
at the World beyond these White Walls.

Hallucinations of snow-freckled Tree Tops
dance in my September.

Mother Earth hoards
Keepsakes of Autumn.

Leaves descend
clothed in Vibrancy.

Kamikaze Acorns assault
unsuspecting patrons below.

Leaves cluster
in Disorderly Collections.

Chill embraces
Summer Breeze.
Temperature makes accommodations.
Season proceeds along
Ordained Directions.

As for me?
I am propelled forward on Courses
pre-charted—
I see Snow before she falls,
all from within
White Walls.

Parable of the Blind Men

Patrick Allen

Let us not agree
to disagree. Together
we know elephants.

From New York to 35

Sean Rada

I just can't shake this feeling that
If we go to New York as friends
Like we've been planning for weeks
We'll share the most romantic moment
As you make me fall on Rockefeller
And you stand above me laughing
We'd lock eyes and become overwhelmed
With all the passion in the Milky Way

We'd kiss our way back to the hotel room
And we'd share our life stories with each other
Over the bottle of whiskey that we brought
Because we are way too damn young to drink
And we'd spend the night under one blanket

Then you'd wake up before me and
Take a shower to wash away the memories
Then we would drive home like nothing happened
And we'd go back to friends for awhile
Then we would go our separate ways
And live separate lives, until eventually
We'd both be pulled back into the town
In which we grew up, like moths to a flame

And we'd see each other at the Safeway
When we're 35, we'd smile and wave
Like we didn't pour our hearts out
Over that ten dollar bottle of whiskey
In the smallest hotel room in the world
And you would tell your kids to hurry along

In the waiting.

Sherbie Carson

So little of our time is spent arriving.

And in that moment when we do finally reach the point of anticipated arrival, planned so long ago in the distant past, we cannot escape the vague sense of discontentment. Prodded along by the promises of “if only”, we forsake the sunsets and travelers along the way. No time to rest. No time to evaluate. No time to probe the depths of a heart. We eat fast food in fast cars. Business suits and brown-bagged liquor handed to us from drive-thru windows. Bedtime faces illuminated by the incandescent glow of digital mistresses that woo lonely hearts into alternate realities. The world where he is able to find the approval he longs for. Boom! Pow! You saved the galaxy again! What a hero! “How strong and brave, you are”, she whispers. While sons and daughters call out from the next room, needing a hero that can hear their cries.

Insatiable, until the far-off day deemed “Enough”. Where the salary, degree, and possessions quotas have all been met. When the house remains eternally clean, the laundry pile has ceased to climb out of the hamper, and the socks all find their matches. Then, on that day, we shall rest and acknowledge all of the accumulated possessions and good fortunes that our labor has provided. As though we were the masters of our own destiny. Forgers of fate.

The highlight reel, and Facebook feed will stroke the ego; while family portraits that line the hallways boast of mutual affection. In memory, the sacrifice of Peace will have been, for “them”. The constant connection to digital realities will have been for “their” convenience. In case of emergency, we say. How rude it would be to deprive the world of our immediate attention. Dinners can wait, conversations put on hold, the bedtime story postponed.

Schedules fill, restless hearts empty. In a world of instant connection to distant lands, we find ourselves strangers—
 In our own homes.
 In our own hearts.
 In our own minds.

Unable to share a silence. Anxious to fill the empty spaces with noise, to drown out the sounds of hearts that ache.

Streetlights change. We stop. We go.

One day, we finally sacrifice the last piece of ourselves for the mirage.

Only to find, Life was in the waiting.

Love is where we engage our heart while we wait.

Undone.

Sherbie Carson

His words pierced through the night sky and my heart as a sword.
But tonight there was no war.

no trigger-ready warriors, poised and ready for combat.
no battle of will—no struggle for power and control
no weapons—no armor.

Just two lost lovers—each alone—both having forsaken the
desire to fight.

Unable to continue the daily struggle—grasping for the single
affirmation that would make the casualty of war worth the cost

The one resolution that would reclaim
all of the broken dishes,
the biting words full of venom,
the tears shed behind the bathroom door.

The heartfelt answer to his piercing question—**Is Love Enough ?**

And the right-brained poet inside of me—leapt forward
In defense of the sacred belief that binds the heart within the
chest like gravity.

Of course it is. It has to be.
It is the cornerstone. The foundation of all created things.

And as I watched the Poet fight, in defense of the sanctity of Love,
the broken-winged bird inside of me withdrew to the deeper
recesses of memory to wrestle with his words in silence.

She is the one who remembers
all of the nights spent alone
the military that possessed the authority
to divide the innocence of young love.

She was the one who blindly followed Love's poetry to streets
and towns far away from all that she knew of Home—to raise
his children—while still a child herself.

She was the one who remembered.

As the words and ideology spun around us like stars—
The Heavens parted for just a moment—and I saw him.
Truly saw him—for the first time—in a long time.

Not the 6'4", 220 pound embodiment of masculinity whose
anger I had learned not to provoke—
Not the virile man whose facial hair regenerated within hours
of being shaved—

But the little boy, behind the glass veil, that used this mighty
giant as his avatar.

The boy who desperately needed to know—

That the unconditional Love of his mother
truly existed in the world outside of his
childhood home.

That failure was an option.

That mistakes were redeemable.

That all of the effort and energy meant something.

That he was seen. And known. And irrevocably connected.

To something deep inside of me.

For all of the nights that he gently rubbed shampoo through
the hair of his sons
And looked to see the bubbles trickle down their chest
and pool inside of their little belly buttons—

Remembering the life-sustaining connection that once existed
there

—The umbilical cord that he, himself, had severed.

The visible badge of remembrance, claiming their palpable union
with me—

As he pondered the depth of his own connection—

Wondering if he had ever been more than seven inches inside
of me.

And the gentle boy spoke the first words that I've heard in a
long time—

“When I question the possibility that maybe Love
isn't enough,

—It unmakes me—

All that I know. All that I work for. All that I am
invested in.

—Undone—”

Knowing the power to make or break a man is not a responsibility
that I have the strength or capacity to bear—

I sit, contemplating all of the times that Love has unmade me—

That I have been left alone—to crave connection—

Just like this little boy—Undone.



Pier by Mary Prather

To all the reluctant sharers of words this one is for you.

I am Poetic, Not a Poet

Patricia Bankins

In the puzzle of my words
I reveal my soft underbelly, my unprotected side
I am afraid and alone
And have only my words to protect me
My thoughts may betray me
In my words I hope for clarity
Try for excellence
Dare to inspire
And glibly seek fame
My words are my truth
They expose me
They comfort me
My own home-grown remedy for what ails me
My words are pieces of my heart that escape me
Like children
They long to run-away from me
But I hold tight to them
Not too tight
Let them go
The little children
Trust that I your mother
Have done my job well
The world will not eat you up
Will not harm you in anyway
But will watch in awe
At your brilliant demonstration of living
My Words
I love you

Music for Instruments

G. H. Mosson

Cars purr past me, like heirloom quilts
sooth teething babies. Runners criss-cross the city,
inchworms of leaves.

Cloud-drifts bespeckle dawn-splashed, stone-faced
buildings. Breakfasts spill across so many Saturdays,
which mature
into a sprinkle-down of May Day relief.

Over unfingered newspapers, new flowers flutter
among dog-nuzzled shadows. A gang on a porch
shares a mother's after-supper iced tea.

Four grasshoppers approach the pinnacle
of four grassheads. Lovers garland porches
in the abuzz dusk and coax a language from biology.

Woman in My Purse (Varied Studies in Haiku)

Mitzi S. Phalen

1. Golden Age Passport
Sixty-two years or older
Lifetime Admission

For National Parks
Mountains, forest or sea shore
What did Mabel see?

Hike, bike, camp or swim
Or, see the park from the car
Sea to Shining Sea

2. Colonial Beach
Voter Registration Card
Westmoreland County

Precinct four dash one
Oak Grove Fire Station Site
Mabel went to vote

Issued in O-Two
Polls open at six a.m.
You must show this card

-
3. Type-O Positive
Fairfax Association
Blood Donor Program

A card full of hope
Donate again and again
Seven blanks to fill

One donation made
Next date to donate, March fourth
Where was Mabel then?

4. Perhaps Mabel died
Her things boxed up for Good Will
Was that Mabel's end?

Who packed up her things?
Daughter, grandchild, care giver?
Did they treasure her?

Shopping at Good Will
Purses are two-fifty each
Plus Mabel, no charge

Gooseberries

E. Laura Goldberg

Endless rain on the garden.
Heavy with hard fruit nagging
to be plucked, the bushes flourish.
I pull at handfuls of little balls
till their obstinate stems yield
to the tension and snap. Long thorns
scratch my skin like claws of an angry
cat, leaving red welts, then tracks
of scabs down my arms. The damn
things clang into the metal bowls.
Fifteen pounds of gooseberries
each with its dried tuft of flower
I must remove between thumb
and rapidly callusing forefinger.
Where's the time for this?
When I open the fridge, it's packed
with bowls, each with an accusing
chorus clamorously calling,
"Make us jam or pie."



Harborside - Honfleur - France by *William "Ed" Moroney*

Remembering Bulimia

Jeanette Warren

I remember now: in the crayon box. Slyly hiding between the crest of the Crayola cardboard box and the waxy Bubblegum Pink crayon was my desperate attempt at control. Thankfully, the psychiatric tech searching my suitcase for eating disorder “paraphernalia” didn’t think anyone to be crazy enough as to hide their laxatives in a crayon box. Think again, lady!

The kind and gentle woman who performed this invasive search of my underwear grew to be a dear confidant, encourager, and dare I say, friend, during my three month stay at Pacific Shores Hospital; but on that day, I hated her. I loathed her. In fact, I hated everyone. The kind, compassionate counselor—pssh, what does she know! The inviting intake advisor—a man?! I hate men, with their fondling touches and insatiable standards. The worrisome, loving aunt—maybe I can convince her to bail me out of this! The daunting, firm nurse—does she actually think she can make me drink that supplement? Hah! But most of all, I hated myself.

When I arrived to my “room,” I quickly took inventory of the important stuff:

- laxatives—check (crayon box, genius!)
- diet pills—all clear, still wrapped in the socks
- razors—confiscated (oh well, I can always kill myself when I get outta here)
- magic toothbrush—ten four (it only looks like a normal toothbrush)

I sighed heavily in relief—all my essentials made it through customs. There was no Bulimia Drugstore in this place... Either my necessities made it, or they didn’t. I had counted all the pills several times before I came, ensuring that I had

enough to make it by without having so many as to be easily noticed. Granted, I surely didn't plan on staying long. Just long enough to please my parents, convince everyone I'm "healed," and get back on with my bulimic business!

Come to find out, I was a tad sicker than my distorted body image permitted me to perceive. For the entirety of my three month stay, I remained on orthostatic vital signs (for those of you that are treatment-illiterate, orthostatics are when nurses take your blood pressure and pulse first lying down, then sitting, and finally, standing up. The purpose is to monitor drastic changes in your vital signs between positions. Now imagine the agony: twice a day, every day, for three months. Stupid.) I must admit, some deluded part of me was quite pleased with my orthostatic record: only the thinnest of the thin were given this kind of special attention! All the normal people had their blood pressure and pulse taken like human beings, just how you get at your yearly check-up. But not the anorexics: they had to be closely monitored. You see, for those that are severely underweight, the heart rate can drop to fatal lows when lying down. Nurses had to monitor vital signs closely to ensure no one died in their sleep. If orthostatic vital signs were critically dangerous, patients were sent to the hospital where they could be monitored 24/7. Now I never got that bad, but the fact that I was thin enough to earn orthostatic vital treatment boosted my bulimic ego. Skinny points!

To top that, the nurses pricked my finger throughout the day to monitor my blood sugars: 30 minutes after waking up, before breakfast, after breakfast, before lunch, after lunch, before dinner, after dinner, and 30 minutes before bed (again, sympathize with my agony: 8 times a day, every day, three months. My fingers became pin cushions.) Why all the fuss about some blood sugar? I didn't even know what blood sugars were, much less why they needed to watch them

so closely. All I knew is I had better be above that special number; get below that special number and they make you—dunh, dunh, dunh—EAT AN UNNECESSARY SNACK! Lions and tigers and crackers, OH NO! Like many of my roommates, I did not appreciate unscheduled snacks. It was enough to ask of me to comply with the ridiculously over-proportioned meal plan, much less to surprise me with crackers and peanut butter at the nurses' twisted whim! So when I went to have my fingers pricked, all I cared about was being above that number. God help me if I got too low. It didn't so much matter that I could die; just don't make me eat that awful snack.

Needless to say, none of this was clicking for me. Everything seemed overblown. Ridiculous. Foolish. Pointless. Stupid. Blown out of proportion. The meal plan was too much. The nurses were too concerned. The medicines were too precautions. The therapy was too long. The medical treatment was too serious. I mean, come on people! What's the big deal anyway? It's not like I'm dying!

Now I see: I was dying. And maybe, subconsciously, every bit of me, wanted to...

Rings

Jennifer Polhemus

Fifteen years later
I dropped my wedding band
down the heat vent in the
bathroom floor. It slipped
like a coiled snake
from my still shrinking finger.
I was not sad or desperate,
only afraid of your screams
and fists, the sparse blades
of my hair tugging back
against the cage of your fingers.
You said you could retrieve it.
You have said many things
succulent and sharp.
Brought many gifts,
a bouquet of terror
and the razor's edge of roses.
The promise of a super nova
reined in by a circle of metal.
Not a big loss, just brass
blessed in holy rosemary water
ten days after they were shipped
from Fingerhut to our apartment
before our house in the 'Hood.



St. Mary's River Easy Climb by Jill Spencer

Connections Feature

Poet W. D. Ehrhart read at CSM as part of the Spring Connections Literary Series in April 2015.



Long Time Gone

W. D. Ehrhart

The boy on the bench on the boardwalk
just got back from the war. He watches
the waves washing the shore, the shore birds
pecking at tiny crabs in the sand
or diving for fish in the shallow surf.

There was sand where he was, but a long
walk to the beach, and the pecking birds
were snipers, the diving birds IEDs.

Now that he's home, and home isn't home,
what will he do with himself?

Maybe he'll go to college. Or trade school.

Maybe he'll re-enlist. He lifts

his gaze to the distant horizon

where sea meets sky at the edge of the world.

He wonders how far he could swim.

Connections Feature

Former Maryland Poet Laureate, Michael Glaser, co-leads an annual retreat called Bread for the Journey which embraces the reading and writing of poetry as a means of self-reflection and personal growth.



The following contribution is from the fall 2015 program. Michael Glaser also read at CSM as part of the Fall Connections Literary Series in November 2015 with poets Rachel Heinhorst and Neal Dwyer.



Q: WHAT IS A POEM?

Answer: Merriam-Webster Dictionary:

A poem is a piece of writing that usually has figurative language and that is written in separate lines that often have a repeated rhythm and sometimes rhyme.

Answer: Poetry.org

Poetry (*ancient Greek: ποιέω (poieo) = I create*) is an art form in which human language is used for its aesthetic qualities in addition to, or instead of, its notional and semantic content. It consists largely of oral or literary works in which language is used in a manner that is felt by its user and audience to differ from ordinary prose.

Answer: Wikipedia:

Poetry is a form of literature that uses aesthetic and rhythmic qualities of language—such as phonaesthetics, sound symbolism, and metre—to evoke meanings in addition to, or in place of, the prosaic ostensible meaning.

(continued)



Answer: Bread for the Journey, 2015

a collaborative poem by the participants of Bread for the Journey, 2015


—*collated and edited by Michael S. Glaser*

A poem is an offering a gift, a garden of words.
It is a sacrament traveling through the mind and heart
into the world

A poem is a map for exploration and discovery.
It lightens the way by lifting the veil
and answering questions we hadn't known how to ask.

A poem breaks the spell of the evening news.
It is an invitation to pause, a song in the midst of soundbites,
a stop sign to make us pay attention and remember who we
are.

A poem is the very breath of words.
It cracks open the shell of wonder
to become a bearer of hope and light.



A poem is a call. It knocks at the door. It prods and points,
praises and provokes. It urges us to wake up
and dance with it on the edge of the mountain.

A poem is a vessel that astounds.
It delights and confounds.
It blesses and sustains.

A poem is a way we give birth to ourselves—
it is a journey, a revelation, a lament,
a question, a quest, a celebration.

A poem is a bridge, transforming what is barely discernable
into a pathway that opens the heart to the deep structures
of this sacred world.

A poem is a practice of grace and gratitude.
It is a living voice, yearning to be heard,
a stepping stone on the way to communal tears and laughter.

A poem is a meditation on the complexity of life.
It reminds us of things we knew but didn't know how to say.
It invites our whole being to show up and stay awake.

Connections Feature


Poet Philip Metres read at CSM as part of the
Fall Connections Literary Series, October 2015.



Letter to Petersburg

Philip Metres

window to the wistful you kept me
up at nights your light tethered
me to beds unmateable untranslateable
your schoolchildren threw snowballs
over the mass grave at Pokrovsky
apparition of Gandlevsky shaking
shaking Gogol & Dostoyevsky
daymares the neural galleries & sculleries
I lose & lore you unowned & owed
your cold mouth your winter eyes I wanted
to erase my face in your face ascending as I



descended the escalator sans guile & lyre
turning so I could see what I would
lose forever saffron insides of apartments
you bled your gold & gilded the gray outside
where my words herd not the you of you
an old song harped on a strand of sand
where torn plastic tarps like sails
ghost ship of a building skeleton
flagellate the stone, shred themselves a history
of inward windows O windward gate
locked & jawed I've gotten no closer to you
than to my death! here, at the river of never
I want to burn posthumously like a word
to say farewell & beg forgiveness
in one breath & cede you to you
return whatever I've taken
this sudden blood on my tongue
if only to lift the holy psalter of you
& kneel before the soiled altar of you
& open my broken throat

Obligated

Rachel Heinhorst

My boots, of all things
asked for this, all day,
buckles clinking,
worn leather,
the first time this season,
confidently beginning.

They even announced this
after I took them off,
at the top of the stairs.

I sat with them there,
held one by its sole,
decided, yes,
they have it in them,
to kick into leaf piles,
hang out with bonfires and mud,
and when winter comes,
leave their tracks in the snow.

Doing Something

Kate Lassman

I don't like to read the news anymore.
A cloud of cruelty and greed,
indifference and fear
seems to settle ever more darkly
over the world.
The chasm of needs of every kind
is beyond ever being filled.

But to ignore the darkness
is to condone the darkness
and to despair at the darkness
is to contribute to the darkness.

I cannot end world hunger or war.
I cannot prevent school massacres.
I cannot cleanse the poisons from the wild.
But I can donate that extra can of hominy;
I can recycle my coffee cup lids;
I can feed the homeless cats
who come to the back door.



Snow Heron by Robin Karis

Summer

Mallory Haselberger

It had been a long winter. I was pretending to find the light in something that I knew in my heart I didn't want anymore, or ever again. A frosty summer had been spent halfheartedly, wasted away with the promises of something that could never be delivered—happiness, exuberance, and exhilaration. Year after year, I waited for that feeling of light to appear through the body in front of me, expecting it to come straight from a heart that couldn't manage even a tiny beam. The days grew shorter, the darkness loomed stronger, and I was impatient for a change. I cringed with every frigid touch of a hand, jerked my body away from the harsh latch of an arm. It wasn't what I had envisioned for myself when I was young and innocent. From the time I began school, I remember sitting in a classroom with light flooding through the windows, constantly watching, wishing to get outside and inhale the fresh air. Everything was simpler and nothing was forced, but with time, my heart had been taken with a cold front, leaving behind something that I didn't recognize. I didn't want to admit when everything turned frigid.

Everything that I did felt forced. A forced smile, a forced lie about how happy I was, a forced laugh when I said that everything was fine. Always fine, no matter the listener. As the winter came to me, my skin grew colder, my face grew lifeless, and my heart felt numb. I made it through countless winters that seemed to never end, continuing in a cycle that only left me colder each year. I craved the darkness that came with the cold air, hoping that if it were dark enough, I might be able to hide myself further away from the tiring tasks that had been somehow piled onto me. I tried to face that emptiness I couldn't fill with light, failing and leaving myself only weaker with each attempt. I smiled less. The spring passed by without a second thought with the arm of winter still tightened harshly around my waist.

I laughed far less. The flowers bloomed, the grass turned green, and the days grew longer, but it didn't matter. Every day felt too fast, moving by in a flash, while still staying emptily the same with each blink of an eye. I was dizzily unaware of what to do with myself. Everything was contradiction—every day of warmth left me colder than the last. Each day the sun rose left me darker and more drained. Light was unattainable. I didn't know how to step out of the darkness and into the light without making everything else tumble down around me.

I was never one of those people who waited for summer and willed it to come after a long school year. I liked the solitude of winter, the crispness of the fall leaves under a heavy pair of boots, breathing in icy air through my nose. It was everything I had grown accustomed to, and everything that had become as comfortable as frost against skin during the morning. The summer never felt like it was mine to enjoy. It was always too fleeting, not enough air coming through the trees during the day, bright enough to blind you if you stared at anything for too long. And then, suddenly, I found myself wishing and hoping for summer to start, go on forever, and never end, all at once. Just a few golden rays of sunlight, dry heat, and the dusk against the sky was enough to change the way things appeared to me. I had stepped forward from the darkness, but I was still unsure of how to proceed without the latch that had been clamped over my heart.

There hadn't been anyone that I had met that I could relate to light, or could relate to a brightness that could make the darkest storm seem like a walk in the park. I spent years trying to find it and create it in something that would never be. Then there was you. All I had to do was turn my head slightly to the right, lean forward in my seat, and there you were. Already looking, not willing to look away, sunlight directly behind your head and keeping you slightly from view as we watched each other. I can still feel the warmth of late July sun against my skin, the same lack of breath I've always felt from the still air, but something

wasn't the same. Not necessarily a spark, but everything took on a new look; a new feeling. Everything was slower, but in a defining way that opened my eyes—more sensory and clear. All at once, everything that had once been impossible for me to notice flooded my senses: the pale, old pavement with faded lines that was crumbling and felt like sand at the edges; the heady green smell of the freshly mowed grass and contrast to the smell of sweat and honeysuckle wrapped endlessly around the broken wire fence; a blue sky turning to pink, weightless enough to make you feel like you could reach up and pull down a cloud. I couldn't turn away. There you were.

I hated looking into the light, but I still couldn't help myself as I watched you. For the first time, I could understand the appeal of the hottest time of the year. It made my heart beat that little bit harder, breaths deeper. It was never something I had experienced with such long winters. Even when I tried to ignore the feeling and look away, I'd look back up, and you'd be right back in my line of sight. You didn't disappear like anyone else. Taller than you looked, teeth even whiter than possible, a sheen on your skin as you moved by me. Firm footsteps and a solid cadence that exemplified strength and security. You were blinding. I couldn't help myself but stare, lean forward a little more, ignore the sounds of the world around me. I was enthralled, not only by the vision of you, but by how I felt at the sight of a brightness and radiance I hadn't seen before. There weren't words to describe it accurately, not at the time. But I look at it now and I see the golden, fleeting rays of sunshine as summer turns to autumn, and I think you. I think light, I think bright, and I think illumination. I think you. Everywhere I turned that summer, I thoughtlessly turned to see you, hoping for one more fleeting glance of sunlight. Blonde hair turns to golden locks dyed by the sun, tanned skin turns to thoughts of summer, being outside turns my mind back to July dusk.

Summer turned from little more than a season that meant nothing, to everything. I look at the calendar and hope for May,

June, and July's warmth to come that much faster to bring me back to the light I know is coming. Even in the winter, it's never too far behind for me to be able to just lean forward to meet you, breathe in the heavy air, and wait. You always reappear, big eyes meeting mine, a smirk and a smile that claims arrogance but exemplifies sweetness, and always, no matter what, a brightness that I can't deny that feels like all the light, heat, and balminess of the summer wrapped up in one package and dropped right into the pit of my stomach. It doesn't have the bite of Jack Frost, the crisp air of fall, or the blossoming flower of spring. It has the refreshing feeling of a sweating glass of lemonade on a porch rocker, the dreamy thoughtlessness lying in a pool full of cold water, and the sticky, sizzling feel of the heat as it infiltrates through your clothes and onto your skin. It's summer; it's you.

That day, it was too hot for a car engine to take the slow drive around the high school. That day, it was too hot to keep the windows down without feeling too uncomfortable without the comfort of air conditioning. That day, I learned the captivating, all-encompassing power that summer and light can bring if you let it look you straight in the face and let out a nervous, heartfelt, apprehensive smile. I had always thought that four months of heat that felt hotter than hell itself was a waste of time to laze around and let envelop your thoughts until you couldn't think. Then I realized that the light was a source of new beginnings and new hope for what I had always hoped and prayed to have... and then I realized that the light wasn't just an illusion of the summer sun and the feeling of the changing seasons bringing new beginnings in the fall. The light that I had never found in anyone else and had never felt the true effects of in the heat was you. I just had to wait for the summer sun to begin to set and bathe the world in golden brightness and see you there. It was you. Always you.

The Cycle

Andrea Mang

Raindrops touch my windowpane
Creating a rhythmic pattern of soothing splendor;
An intersection of clouds and sun.
Three loud sounds from above, mark the moment
It's Monday, Laundry Day
I climb the stairs of domestic fortitude;
The proverbial duties of a housewife

To my darkened room
Of womanly tradition
Perceived by my mother,
A Christian housewife
Her long dresses, I remember
The word feminine, she gave me

In my room, a segregated color scheme
Of black and white is on full display
As I remove a girl's gray dress
From my washing machine—
My daughter's Gray dress
I touch my stomach;
I feel the roots of my motherhood
On my skin like a dicot plant.
Is this Her future?
Rays of the sun surround the windowpane
Abruptly, I open the blinds—
I look out



Crashing of the Waves by Anna Readen

Explains

Eileene Zimmer

My sons say it explains a lot
of what they consider
my strange behavior
when they hear of the accident
I suffered as a five year old child
when I was hit by a flat-bed truck
after getting off of a school bus
and was flung to the side
of the road as if a rag doll
landing on my head in the gravel
and knocked unconscious.
They could be right,
I suppose,
as I dance wildly to music,
both real and imagined.

Keep Dealing

Eileene Zimmer

They suggested that I should wear
one of those green visors often seen
on card dealers at gambling establishments and
lower the light over the table since
as soon as they came in the door, returning
from college, I would say
“what do you want to play”
and “deal.”

It was a way to spend time together,
four sons and mom, dealing
and playing cards. My favorite
was Hand and Foot, a slow game allowing
conversations and connecting.

We could easily find the needed
six decks, shuffled thoroughly, decks
divided among the players, shuffled,
divided, sections traded, shuffled,
divided, shuffled, cards dealt.

My sons were often reluctant to spend the 2 hours as only home for a few days, but I bribed them by agreeing to wash all of the dinner dishes during the lengthy shuffling, easily finishing before the end of the game.

They each left home, in his own time, to college, mission, military. I knew that they needed to go, but have mourned that loss. Fewer at home than none. Three are now married with children. The five of us are rarely together and never with 2 hours of uninterrupted time. We no longer play Hand and Foot.

I only have my memories of the shuffling
and the dealing
and the dish washing.

Contributors

PATRICK ALLEN is the division chair of the Social Sciences and Public Services Division at the College of Southern Maryland.

“I write poetry that seeks to understand how we are driven by the force of our belief into action,” says Patrick.

PATRICIA L. BANKINS wrote two poems in an attempt to inspire her students to share their work. *I am Poetic, Not a Poet* was inspired by the students. At the time, she was an instructional assistant in the literacy program and got rare opportunities to work with students who were not linguistically challenged. It was a treat. Then the poetry students inspired the literacy students to try poetry. The literacy students were inspired by their multifaceted friends, who were poets. Patricia was inspired to see students inspire students. Yet, the poetry students were still afraid to share. “I am Poetic, Not a Poet” is for those talented poetry students and their teacher, who did so much for the literacy program.

SHERBIE CARSON says that the greatest goal that she hopes to accomplish during this lifetime is to bring Joy to the heart of her Creator, and to become a worthy steward of the beautiful children, devoted husband, loyal family members, and faithful friends that He has entrusted to her care.

W. D. EHRHART is a Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War. He teaches at the Haverford School in Pennsylvania and was the CSM Connections Literary Series speaker in April 2015.

MICHAEL S. GLASER served as Poet Laureate of Maryland from 2004 – 2009. He is a professor emeritus at St. Mary’s College of Maryland, serves on the Board of the Maryland Humanities Council, and co-leads retreats which embrace the reading and writing of poetry as a means of self-reflection and personal growth. He has published seven collections of his own poetry, edited three anthologies, and co-edited *The Collected Poems of Lucille Clifton* (BOA 2012).

E. LAURA GOLDBERG has poetry that has appeared in the *Birmingham Poetry Review*, *RHINO* and *Pebble Lake Review*, among other places, and is awaiting publication in *Gargoyle*, and the *Journal of Humanistic Mathematics*. She won first place in the DC Commission on the Arts’ Larry Neal Poetry Competition.

MALLORY HASELBERGER is a sophomore at CSM studying English. She can usually be found with her fingers attached securely to a keyboard, singing along obnoxiously with the radio, or arguing about incorrect grammar usage with someone who doesn't know what they're getting themselves into.

RACHEL HEINHORST received her MFA from Goddard College in Vermont and currently teaches in the Languages and Literature Division at CSM. Her work has been published in *Calico Tiger*, *Ascent Aspirations*, *Connections* and the *Pitkin Review*, among others. In 2014, Seasonings Press published her broadside, "The Space between Us." She takes great pleasure in writing about her family and believes poetry offers the purest examples of the human experience.

ROBIN KARIS lives in Maryland and enjoys writing, reading and photography. She has been published in CSM's *Connections* Literary Magazine for many years.

KATE LASSMAN is currently a new adjunct instructor teaching English composition at CSM at the Waldorf and La Plata campuses. She holds an MFA in poetry from George Mason University.

ANDREA MANG is a student, wife, mother, and a U.S. Army veteran who also enjoys writing poems. She states that when she write poems, she becomes more alive. She loves capturing moments in time by expressing these moments through poetry.

WILLIAM "ED" MORONEY is an assistant professor at the College of Southern Maryland and coordinator for the Criminal Justice and Homeland Security curriculums.

JENNIFER POLHEMUS graduated with highest honors from CSM in 1999. She was first published in the *Connections* Literary Magazine in 1991, and her work has appeared there many times over the last two decades. She currently lives in Pennsylvania and has worked in the mental health field since 1998. Jennifer is excited, and exhausted, because she is only a handful of credits away from finally earning her BS degree in psychology. Her most recent work includes five poems in *Awakenings Review*, 2015, a literary magazine with the mission of advocating for those with and educating all regarding living a life

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touched by mental illness. “Residue of Dreams,” a poem from her third chapbook, *Women Dancing* (published by Poet’s Haven, Ohio in 2014), and previously published in *Connections* Literary Magazine, was nominated for the Pushcart Prize in 2014.

HEATHER MADDEN is a student and artist in the Southern Maryland area. She has a beautiful son and fiancé which bring a deeper, yet slightly comedic meaning to her everyday life. She is in her second year of college, attending the lifetime learner route, which she hopes won’t end anytime soon.

PHILIP METRES is the author and translator of a number of books, including *Sand Opera* (Alice James 2015), *To See the Earth* (2008), and *Behind the Lines: War Resistance Poetry on the American Homefront* (University of Iowa 2007). His work has appeared in *Best American Poetry* and, among other awards, has garnered two NEA fellowships, the Thomas J. Watson Fellowship, the Beatrice Hawley Award, two Arab American Book Awards, and the Cleveland Arts Prize. He is a professor of English at John Carroll University in Cleveland. For more information on Philip Metres, visit www.philipmetres.com or behindthelinespoetry.blogspot.com.

G.H. MOSSON is the author of two books of poetry, *Questions of Fire* (Plain View, 2009) and *Season of Flowers and Dust* (Goose River, 2007). Mosson’s poetry and literary commentary have appeared in *The Tampa Review*, *The Potomac Review*, *Measure*, *The Lyric*, and *The Cincinnati Review*. His poetry has been thrice-nominated for the Pushcart Prize. Currently, he is a regular poetry reviewer for *The Broadkill Review* (Delaware). Mosson lives in Maryland with his family and practices law.

MITZI S. PHALEN says that the inspiration for her poems in this issue of *Connections* came from some cards that she found inside a used purse that she purchased from a Good Will store.

MARY PRATHER is a college student who enjoys using photography to capture simple images in a vast world.

SEAN RADA is a student in his first semester at CSM. He read “Acquainted with the Night” by Robert Frost in the seventh grade, and knew, the second that he finished the last line, that poetry would play a huge part in his life. He states that he can’t imagine what a notebook looks like with more notes than unfinished poems. It’s helped him through rough times and has made good times even better. He plans on becoming an English teacher so that he can try and instill this same love for poetry in students in high schools across America.

ANNA READEN is an alumna of CSM. Currently, she is completing her bachelor’s at Flagler College in St. Augustine, Florida. This new city has provided her with many opportunities for her favorite artistic medium, black-and-white photography.

JILL SPENCER lives in St. Mary’s County and teaches part-time at the CSM Leonardtown Campus. A few years ago, she took up photography and enjoys taking nature shots, usually of nearby places, usually on the water.

JEANETTE WARREN says of herself, “I am an alcoholic/drug addict/bulimic/anorexic/manic-depressant/poet. My writings come to you from the interior of a psychiatric unit, where I am currently residing for the purpose of rehabilitating my life from a recent relapse into self-destructive behaviors. . . . I hope that as the audience explores the mind of a mental patient, they will, at best, find a bit of themselves in the madness, or at least undergo a rude awakening from the blinders of everyday life. . . . My work strives to utilize the greatest gift of creative expression: the power of the written word to pierce the hearts of the judgmental and ignorant.”

EILEENE ZIMMER grew up in Northern California and recalls first creating poems as she roller-skated along the rough sidewalk of her neighborhood. She maintained a book of poems throughout her childhood. One of the first books that she received as a child was a collection of poems. At work, she frequently created verse to sing at staff trainings, once providing a whole training in song. She was excited to be able to take a poetry class from Rachel Heinhorst this past summer. It was the first time that her poetry had been critically reviewed and has much improved. She is a recent graduate of CSM and is currently an adjunct professor of mathematics.



Connections

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