

# OccuPoetry

Issue 5

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## ORIGIN OF THE SPECIOUS

Don't give me those woolly excuses,  
that Dark & Stormy look at KGB  
where sharks offer swimming lessons.  
Don't hurt yourself trying to be  
like me (although it couldn't hurt).  
Don't put lipstick on a ghost.  
Never collide with a kaleidoscope.



ERIGYA  
YOU  
CURATED  
THE  
PIPE  
FOR  
25  
15



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**Paco Marquez**  
Guest Editor's  
Introduction

At the beginning of the Cold War in 1953, Nobel Prize winner Czeslaw Miloz noted that, “fear is well-known as a cement of societies. In a liberal-capitalist economy fear of lack of money, fear of losing one’s job, fear of slipping down one rung on the social ladder all spurred the individual to greater effort.” Now that capitalism won, what is to keep it in check? More than condemning corporate greed, the idea behind the Occupy movement has been foremost about finding new ways of learning to live together. While I was a student at UC Berkeley, professor John Searle would take his wallet out of his back pocket, wave a \$20 bill at us, and note how it was a mere piece of paper with “semantic content.” Money, I came to understand, is about relationships (very much a social construction); the market is prone to fads and buddy-buddy power lies. How we interact, relate, and create the rules by which we exchange goods and services sets an economy. We cannot give in to the capitalist notion that having health services, education, shelter, and life is a privilege only for those who work hard and are fortunate. The market can and will be swept from under the feet of the powerful and transformed, if we but alter the way we interrelate. The greedy people I know do not see that their need to accumulate things stems from their values, fears, and loneliness more than from their physical needs. With a

different perspective and thoughtful use of new technologies, we can continue to change the economic systems that now seem to enslave us.

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The most far-reaching artistic movement since the romanticism of the 18th century has been the surrealism of the first half of the 20th. It sprung in part as a revolt against the fascist atrocities then taking place in Europe. Through the dream, the illogical, the disjunctive surrealists sought to undermine the simplistic art, grand statements, and easy answers of the Nazis. Just as it is easy and weak to simplify, showing ethical and aesthetic complexities displays dexterity and strength, which, in turn, opens the space for local/individual empowerment. There are no easy answers in this collection – we have some chants, some clearer poems, some denser, the slow work of reflection, details, perspectives...

In the face of today's resurgent fascist trends, thinking, reverie, quiet discussion can be subversive acts. Let's be bold about this.

Paco Marquez  
New York, NY

## Phillip Barron

### Editor's Comments

My favorite scenes in Teju Cole's debut novel *Open City* are the conversations between Julius and Farouq. They meet as strangers. Farouq, Moroccan by birth, works as a clerk staffing an Internet cafe in Brussels, Belgium. Julius, Nigerian by birth, lives in New York City and visits Brussels to search for his grandmother. In a European city with three official languages (Dutch, French, and German), these two African immigrants converse (in English) about Walter Benjamin, Edward Said, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Tahar Ben Jelloun, and other Moroccan novelists. They talk. They disagree. They continue to talk. They talk about the value of difference.

"This is why Said means so much to me," Farouq says.

You see, Said was young when he heard that statement made by Golda Meir, that there are no Palestinian people, and when he heard this, he became involved in the Palestinian question. He knew then that difference is never accepted. You are different, okay, but that difference is never seen as containing its own value. Difference as orientalist entertainment is allowed, but difference with its own intrinsic value, no. You can wait forever, and no one will give you that value.

Farouq explains why, as a student, he defended Malcolm X on the principle that "difference contains its own value, and that the struggle must be to advance that value."

Writing in the shadow of the terrorist bombings in Brussels, I hear Farouq advancing the simple yet radical idea that true freedom is not homogeneity. It is not the melting together of all cultures, just as it is not the domination of one over the other. True freedom comes when we learn to appreciate cultural difference, to value it intrinsically.

Much has happened since our last issue of *OccuPoetry*. Too much to recount here. But it suffices to say that for every new political movement that asserts human dignity and demands that we strengthen our cultural pluralism, I feel a bit more hopeful.

Issue 5 brings us the shortest poem *OccuPoetry* has published (Rose Knapp's three-line distillation, "CEO Foursquare") and also the longest (Linda Norton's found language poem of Yelp reviews of California prisons, "One Star"). As always, there are many styles, many voices to be heard. There is difference here. The present is a very politically aware time, from the Black Lives Matter movement to the US presidential election. Props to Paco Marquez for taking the lead to distill its politics in this latest issue. I hope you will find in these pages some value in the difference they contain.

Phillip Barron  
Davis, CA

**Abigail Carl-Klassen**  
**And the Universe Bends**

Hunger is no excuse for a man to steal,  
but the arc of the universe bends toward justice.  
Take a hollowed outcast from the inside

and the palm of her hand bends toward justice.  
Surrender, the weight of the man and his boxes  
because the wheel of his bicycle bends toward justice.

Every thread in every stitch of her machine bends  
toward justice  
and the sweep in the tip of his broom bends  
toward justice  
and the ding of the paleta man's bell bends  
toward justice.

The scales are stacked in favor of the rich man  
but the sharpness of the sickle bends toward justice.

## Lauro Vazquez

### Origins of Migration

They reach the California coast from as far as the Aleutian Islands. Near the edge of the Bering Sea, this archipelago of volcanoes, this streak of magma and ice, is strung together to form the northern most reaches of the Pacific Ring of Fire. And neither this wall of fire and seaquakes nor the frozen abyss can halt their three thousand mile migration.

On land the elephant seal is sluggish. But underwater this hairy slug is a bullet that swims, a missile fired across the great blue cosmos. Slowly, implacably, the males ascend first from the unfathomable darkness. Fueled by its precious blubber the seal is a well-oiled torpedo, undaunted cosmonaut penetrating now the unknown waters of this unexplored universe.

The journey to their coastal breeding grounds is long but the seal which millennia ago abandoned land to plunge headfirst into the great mystery of the sea remembers that it rose from sand and so returns to sand.

The males no sooner reach the beach that they blow their huge trunks, rear up and slash open their chests with their powerful canines. After weeks of fighting, the females

washed red by the foamy waves finally emerge  
from the ocean. On the shore the males await  
them, huge gashes like jagged pieces of coral  
bloom from their necks.

## *1791: San Pedro*

### Charquin

Charquin, leader of the Quiroste tribe, has already spent a lifetime roaming the coastal coves and mountains of Año Nuevo. Every year thousands of elephant seals return here in order to breed and molt their old skins. On the beach with their snouts thrust to the air, the elephant seals shimmer like spears nailed in the sand.

And the seals are not the only ones seeking refuge along the coves and canyons of Año Nuevo; surrounded by earthquake faults and by fog and impenetrable redwoods Año Nuevo is a formidable palisade for the hundreds of runaway Indians seeking safety from the yoke and lash that binds them to the newly-established missions along the California coast.

At age sixty, Charquin abandons the safety of this natural fortress and he also abandons his name. He walks into the San Pedro outstation of the Mission San Francisco and is baptized with the name Mateo. Charquin abandons one pagan nether world for the fire and brimstone of another. This lunacy born of faith or curiosity lasts him but a few days.

A week later Charquin — brief slave,  
perpetual runaway — is naked and lit with  
sweat, he is back dancing in Año Nuevo. From  
the coast blows a breeze like a wet blanket over  
his back.

**Conor O'Brien**

**The Poet & The Poem**

I heard a poem once  
It was being recited on the top of a building  
It was so powerful and significant and true  
That people filled up the inorganic mess between  
The parking meters and advertisements

The poem went on for several hours  
It could never have been published  
It should have at least been printed  
And given to every hand carrying a pair of eyes  
To every youth with the future in mind  
Every criminal whose motives won't subside  
And the 99%ers who need to hold those signs

The poem went on for two more days  
The ghost of Abbot Hoffman came  
Humming *Amazing Grace*  
It was a novel piece of humanity  
A poem not a petition  
If there's a difference

We surrounded the building now  
Couldn't see the poet there were only the crowds  
We camped out with many reasons  
But it was the poem mobilizing us  
It might as well been televised  
But oh you know what they say about that

The city is full of us now  
Local supporters, YouTube reporters,  
Rebels, youth spirits, rock minstrels, bomb  
    throwers,  
Bank robbers, peacock freaks, sun worshippers,  
Dead poets, Haight Street folk, liberated women,  
Teachers, and body snatchers

There was no poem anymore  
And I think there may have never even been a poet  
Maybe Anonymous, but certainly not an individual  
We are here now and we are the poem  
We are the weird adjectives and marching verbs  
We're not Fawkes or Guevara or Jefferson  
It's not a revolution  
It's a poem  
And it will not be televised

# Jeffrey Cyphers Wright

## Wall Street

I stand with those who march.  
I walk with those who run.  
I run with the ones what fly  
and fly with them who dream.

I walk behind the leaders.  
I lead the ones behind.  
I dream a long truce, white  
Banners bearing a green X.

My country, I sing of thee.  
Unwind your wounds. Be free.  
Fight for justice and peace.  
My country, for thee, I sting.

## Wounded Star

You're always going on  
About how unfair things are,  
How the deck is stacked for some.  
Damn the dealer.  
Every whine is one less win.  
Let's hear it for the kiss of hell.

Here's to the drowning rat.  
Here's to the patrol that's cut off.  
Here's to the crippled acrobat.  
We're all acting our parts,  
I'm wind in a tumbler.  
You're a little off-key.

What could ever take your place?  
A grain of salt? A wounded star?

## Parting Shots

“Just smile all the time.” - Wilco

Be good to your inner boo,  
windmill tail. Get in touch  
with the dark, chewy center.  
Dreaming my mom in whiteface.  
Laugh track in outer space.  
Checking for updates.  
Daria's lipstick on dawn's roach.  
We need a maximum wage.  
We need zero population growth.  
It's always been about you  
harbinger of the coming calamity.  
Proceed at your own risk.  
Whispers from the future perfect  
going south along the ink floes.

## Whippersnapper Express

“I know Zadie Smith  
Her husband’s an Irish wolfhound  
You have no idea  
Where my labia and libido meet  
Night unfolds its tent  
I think about fate and deep shit  
Rolling around in Bushwick

To die for love and the resistance  
Eros erasing us with arrows  
Red stuck in gold’s keyhole  
Pinned to a flame  
Bells licking the sky  
So, the thing is, we have a tie  
It’s always like that sometimes”

## Jane Hirshfield

### Tree

It is foolish  
to let a young redwood  
grow next to a house.

Even in this  
one lifetime,  
you will have to choose.

That great calm being,  
this clutter of soup pots and books

Already the first branch-tips brush at the window.  
Softly, calmly, immensity taps at your life.

“Tree” previously appeared in *Given Sugar, Given Salt* (HarperCollins, 2001). Used by permission of the author.

**Tim Kahl**

## The Parable of Capital

It's not only light that covers the earth.  
It's not only an infant sound that interferes  
with the layers of the known episodes  
exploding south of the border, unfolding  
where the sangria is made according to legend.  
As the story goes, it was placed in a wide mouth jar  
during a ritual to protect the home after  
the fruit had been purchased from a street vendor.  
The bananas were separated from each other,  
the campfires set to signal the brighter suns  
waiting for impact with clumps of dust.  
It's not only the light from screens that settles  
on the breath of this dumb crust, but the blue  
wavelengths washing past their curfew  
into the open casket of the night erupting ions.  
We all suspect the constellations are  
getting dumber, but we can't really tell.  
It's not really a medical condition  
but rather a sad fact of existence  
which is a central tenet of the property dispute.  
It is not that the light belongs to anyone  
as much as it is taken over by dinnertime,  
the authorities explaining their chivalric meaning.  
Then a whole generation of metal traders

and psychoanalysts on the cusp of  
the megalopolis in the monsoon rains, the whole  
place under water. They have all misunderstood  
the parable of capital. Mosquitoes have  
reproduced. The campaigns have all lost  
their balance. The families with the names  
built for marriages and shady dealings  
believe the clouds are their enemies  
because the light cannot penetrate them.  
White hot stars remain unseen in the distance,  
and they do not work for anybody.

# Margery Parsons

## No Time to Be Burnt Out

I once heard a poet say  
"This is no time to be burnt out"  
because crime upon crime  
after crime upon crime  
tears bodies and minds  
of those on the bottom  
of this empire  
and its bottomless horrors.

This is no time to be burnt out,  
no conventional wisdom,  
doubt, prevarication,  
no relativism  
on what this is all about  
when the evidence cries out  
of inhuman dehumanization  
to anyone with ears not shut.

This is no time to be burnt out,  
but to scream, rage, roar  
to shout,  
to march, to rage, to rise,  
all those who have been cast out  
and those with hearts and eyes  
to say "No!  
No more stolen lives!"

This is no time to be burnt out,  
to forget dreams  
of a world fit for human beings.  
We must vault  
our aspirations, our vision  
beyond this prison-house of a system  
as we fight  
to end this endless night.  
Yes, revolution.

This is no time to be burnt out.  
Imagine children everywhere  
growing up without fear,  
humanity breathing clean air  
on a thriving planet,  
no one a target  
for their sex or ethnicity  
and war  
only in museums, in history.

What wouldn't you give for this?  
What should your life be about?  
This is no time to be burnt out.

# Ryan Nash

## Vestiges of us

Vestiges of us

living at the intersection

these two victories

~~at~~ the landmark made us

third-person ~~about~~

empty the clothing

~~empty~~ armed

& dreamy

shadows on the ceiling

~~about~~ & whatnot

knowhow, history, nature

allows us transformation

allows us to keep promising

## **Annelies Kamran**

### **J'y suis, j'y reste**

Forty percent of the village is owned by non residents.  
They come out for the weekend;  
    buy beautifully useless tchotchkes from the  
    overabundance of antiqueries as hostess gifts.  
They are incredulous when the farmstand doesn't have  
    local corn out of season and coo over goat cheese as if  
    they had milked the goats themselves.  
They can't parallel park their unnecessary Range Rovers,  
    pristine vehicles that will never see anything but  
    macadam and cement.

I'll be at the beach:  
    Weighing the different colors of sand,  
    Wading through tidal ponds,  
    Washing off beach glass in the surf,  
    The lift and drop of a wave cradling me.

The house on the corner has been razed, including its  
    century-old rhododendrons.  
In its place is a summer house (mansion) with cedar shake  
    siding.  
    Probably has a media room; I'll never know.  
The people who stay there occasionally will flit in from  
    Singapore or Dubai,

knowing the milk they ordered over the internet is in  
the SubZero.

When they shop in the local grocery, it will be as alien as  
Mars and  
their uncontrolled spawn will be in everyone's way.

I'll be on the river:

Watching the swan watch me,  
Drifting toward its nest on the current,  
Dodging dragonflies,  
Droplets from my paddle fooling the fish.

The hedgies' helicopters buzz overhead more often than  
they used to.

Infrastructure and development doesn't matter when you  
can fly;  
being trapped in traffic won't give them a heart attack.  
I am inconveniently in the way to their perfectly realized  
life:

equal parts stimulation and adventure and serenity.  
Security can be whipped up like an artisanal cocktail,  
available in bulk to the pretentious who mistake birth  
for merit.

I'll be in the woods:

Smelling sunlight on white and pitch pines,  
Slapping at flies that get too close,  
Looking for the marks of the woodpeckers,  
They leave individual patterns like signatures of  
species.

The job has thirty or three hundred applicants in hot

pursuit.

Everyone knows it will go to the offspring of someone's  
friend,  
but we must go through the motions neo-medievalism  
demands.  
My resume gets longer, with more education and action  
verbs;  
even if I get the job, I will be training my algorithmic  
replacement.  
The opportunities and people are wasted,  
but they aren't being wasted by me.

I'll be in my backyard:

The cardinal knows to cheep on the back door step  
when the bird feeder is out of food,  
The deer will eat the shoots off saplings in late winter,  
The rabbits sometimes sit on the patio with me,  
Knowing I will protect them from the neighbor's cat.

I'll be in the house:

Wearing my mother's sweater,  
Sitting in my father's recliner,  
Polishing my grandmother's dining set,  
Enjoying the view as framed by every window.

I'll be home.

## Linda Norton

### One Star

Not exactly sure how to rate a prison. I am not an inmate.

I was visiting a long-time friend who is serving a life sentence.

Dress code: no yoga pants, underwire bras, no sleeveless shirts or cleavage, no open-toe shoes. Do not wear orange, green, colors of inmates' and guards' uniforms.

There are vending machines. You can even take a picture with inmate. The inmate cannot touch money so please be advised.

We had a great visit. I'll definitely go back.

\*

I have an auntie that has spent almost 16 years in this place to date LOL Have been writing her and she calls me from time to time thru out her time There is always a lock down in there for the smallest thing

We have been cut off of some phone calls bc of whatever going on

From what I know about the place, it's just a big joke!

There are more addicts in there then on the streets bc drugs are constantly brought in by guards

A lot of them are jeopardizing their job constantly bc they get romantically involved with inmates

The place is a big cess pool of constant drama!

The place needs a revamp

\*

In the cell there was myself, three Mexican girls who got lost leaving Modesto (???), a couple of black girls, and a couple of white girls.

A white girl asked to get switched to another cell because of the "shenanigans" "I'm with all these shenanigans! Can you put me with only White people?"

LOL!!!!

She then took all of the toilet paper to make a blanket for herself. What fun, peeling layers from her every time I needed to pee . . . \*

Can't EVEN believe there ARE jail Yelp reviews!!!!

Even a moron can predict what people are gonna say!!!!

Are there any 5 stars jails in existence????

LMFAO!!!!

\*

Awful.

Added one star for the arts and crafts program. I like macaroni pictures.

What of it?

\*

Protective custody inmates are mainly gang drop outs, chomos (child molesters/sex crimes), celebrities, people with high profile cases and LGBT status

These inmates wear red jail clothing

LGBT and sex crimes are housed with each other.

People with mental disabilities and disorders unfortunately end up here too.

These people get the shit end of the stick I'd say.

I have been to Santa Rita more than three times and I have always witnessed deputies mocking and disrespecting mental individuals on several occasions.

Mental inmates that are violent wear a distinctive jail suit consisting of green and white stripes and are always shackled with handcuffs and waist restraints.

Whether your stay is overnight or extended, this place is for no person in their right mind.

Leaving can be bittersweet because you will find yourself making at least an acquaintance or two just by having them teach you the ropes

ENJOY :)

Author's note: All lines are excerpted from Yelp reviews of California's prisons and jails.

**Alexandra Appel**  
Something About Icarus or  
the Oracle at Delphi and  
Sons of Anarchy: A Retelling

a mighty series of circumstances must reclaim from death

our bees. Honey not being the only issue  
although, at that, reason good enough

arising from a rotting carcass tied to a tree (was the  
tree an oak?)

You see, because Orpheus and Eurydice are below a  
story is told:

Through a rend in the fabric of light and water  
a swarm of bees.

First, pass a multitude of tests, there being more than  
a single god assigned  
due to the death of Icarus and something else taking  
place a very long time ago

after all Aristaeus navigates much in the way of heroic  
exploits

It's all in the water now, use your imagination.  
There is much to uncover. Naiads for instance.

**Bill Kahn**

The Burden of Final  
Expenses

The odd man out sits idle  
unable to measure-up any longer  
to the social order pushing him for extended action  
He doesn't possess the inner strength needed  
to ease the burden of final expenses

He has stepped away from pleasure  
erecting a defensive stance for someone  
and concealing costly shameful affairs with others  
leaving behind nothing more important  
than his privately invested equity

He works on being responsive  
but labor with old friends is not an option  
His debt to society rests with balancing a family  
and being aware that resolutions alone  
will never fully pay it forward

His obligations were rescinded  
when the terminal loans were spent quickly  
after coming dangerously close to going-at-it alone  
only to limp back from promising projects  
left deficient and too distant

His cool ain't so hot no more  
Winking keeps those cunning eyes wide-open  
with piercing sarcasm used as a shinning indicator  
of how life is measured by the dread of aging  
and the price paid to join a dying sun

## Charles A. Perrone

### Year-End Review

(ditty and duty)

of losses, of damage, you ought to have shame  
collapses disasters you merit clear blame  
of so much chicanery, you had no idea?  
for penitence now you should free a  
person who is bound  
someone who's detained  
victim who's been framed  
countenance that's maimed  
wild beast that's been tamed  
poor citizen who's been told  
that this is all natural  
or even God's will  
this total lack of thrill  
in one's life and the  
endless chain that still  
generates lucrative words  
for the prophets of profit  
the yay-sayers of layers  
of gold, silver, icing  
on cakes eaten too.

## Ricardo Tavaréz

### Journey

liquor store glows  
nocturnal dandelion rays  
reveal rosy eyes'  
distant gaze

pocket bottle counterweight  
stabilizes legs  
East African saudade  
pierces memory's dam

lost classmates sport  
dull torn fatigues  
bare feet trudge  
along baking clay

hungry heat simmers  
boys sprout steel  
refugee limbo Mogadishu  
London New York Oakland

cyclist cranks gears  
coupes roll by

childhood faded by  
twenty solar circuits

liquor store sign's  
dandelion rays soothe

## Bob Schildgen

### My Television Lies Face Down

My television lies face down in the weeds, quietly sobbing.  
His power cord loses its way in the tangled grass,  
looking in vain for an outlet in the ground.  
He can no longer bear the memories  
of monks on fire in protest  
of thatched roofs exploding in flame  
of bomb craters exhaling dust,  
and on his own screen, a screen inside a command center  
displaying a dirty-rainbow corona of detonation  
and then the generals explaining it all,  
supplementing discussions with visual aids,  
pointers and maps, computer-generated diagrams,  
and potent power point presentation of power  
making the case for subsequent periods of incineration,  
prolonged perhaps, or brief, depending on unreliable  
reports  
from impeccable sources of counter-intelligent  
investigation,  
making the case for another foray into blasted landscapes  
and locations he'd never known or shown before.

True, there was a respite.  
His poetic side delighted in the sound of names:  
Baghdad Kabul Kandahar Islamabad Uzbekistan  
and evoked some lamp-lit dreams  
of sheer silk veils across the breasts of the dancers,

and the sound of an oud, and a slow pull on a hookah.  
But then more vaporizing cars and crumbling walls  
and a blazing avalanche on a nameless mountain.

Ironically, he snapped during a commercial  
for medication to relieve anxiety.

There was a flash, a pulse of smoke,  
a gray-blue blur then total silence.

There is little I can do to help him now.

Already a spider is running a difficult web  
from his cable port to a manzanita branch,  
while ants pause on the tuning panel on his side  
listening for some faint signal from within.

## Richard King Perkins II

### Prophetic Absolutism

I have witnessed rebels wrapped in the glow  
of a greater justification, daggers and bolos  
sighing like inspiration in moribund folds  
of red air turned against the aura of a silver spoon.

Yet there are those political appointments  
which can be delayed but never broken  
like the nine disenchanting industrialists  
swaying in the grasp of accomplished nooses  
until the ravens have had their say as well.

**Rose Knapp**  
CEO Foursquare

Dis Stilled H<sub>2</sub>O  
Ponds petrolfied  
Black oil, nil suits

**Shawn Avenigo**  
**Behind Bars**  
(Debtors Prison, Mississippi)

Like Rilke's Parisian panther,  
he paces in his cage, feels  
the space close-in around him,  
can't see anything beyond his Hell.

He sleeps behind a blur of bars, dreams  
in black & white    night terrors  
wakes up in a sweat, clothes drenched  
and stained the color of ripe tangerines.

Orange is not the new black; it's old  
school here in Mississippi, where the shade  
of a man's skin corresponds directly  
to the level of forgiveness bestowed.

And bail? Too many zeroes to comprehend  
as this man awaits trial    fair or otherwise.  
His eyes weary, hope depleted, wallet  
empty, he's paralyzed. Trapped. All for

a stolen loaf of bread, bologna & cheese  
the simplest of fare to fill the four empty bellies  
waiting for him to return to a cold, dark home  
and an eighty-six dollar electric bill past due.



*I thought I heard a possum shit.  
I mean,  
I think I heard a pistol  
shot.*

## Barbara March

### Self Translation

What does it mean to live a cryptic life  
I could tell you

but it wouldn't be  
enough non-docile dialogue

*orare* to speak sweet gibberish

like seven infant bluebirds the snake  
wrapped itself around

my mouthpiece is suffocated by priests,  
did Agamemnon ask the oracle to 'splain the  
flash mob?

running to the  
rain garden  
I lay cardboard over earth's fumes

doves like me love the mystery boom boom

Brenda says I've mutated to <>link myself to alias

I imagine a Swiss bank account of words  
highly sought after, never doubted

I know they're safe in Switzerland  
rain spews off the roof > crashes onto flat rock yawn  
ends in a kiss

those are pretty verbs,

like John's lily fruit blooming in the wilderness

& do they mean  
my left is right-ish dominant?

I guesstimate by the frenzied eye of the moon  
that: clarity comes when a raging woman

oracles

Jeffrey Cyphers Wright  
Bull's Eye



*"Bull's Eye" mixed media, 8 x 8" 2011*

## Dawn McGuire

### Under

Jung and my girlfriend say every dream-protagonist is you. I mean me. In this one there's a secret cell of insurgents

under the manholes knee-deep  
in drain water. It gushes through  
the pipes after last night's rain.

It's a sound so new to my drought-  
raised pup that he jumps on my chest  
to protect me. Back to sleep

the dream reopens as slowly  
as a rusty clasp-knife, as my dad's hand around  
mine when we'd cross the street.

At five in the Broadway crosswalk  
I was fearless. I knew everything  
about love: how, on the other side

he'd take forever to let go. He's here  
somewhere. I can feel his grizzly grip  
heating up my hand as my wet feet

freeze in the flux. I recheck the plans  
switch my phone to battery-save mode.  
My comrades fill the underground.

We will act. We will pay. No one is free.  
In the steady dim light I can see that  
every one is me.

## Paige Webb

### Instant on a pendulum

Then we gave our son away  
on a Wednesday  
(driving we / were all inside  
tight looping the park  
when a sweep of bullets in cracks / a cry  
a sudden blur  
of a fly through my window  
resounding / a second split  
and opened)  
earlier that day we  
piled on so many plans  
now  
I guess I didn't know  
how the man could have been  
(sleeping boy's / head over  
a blue shirt carrying as if  
into his own comfortable  
sheets / he shifted in)  
please go / figure out how  
a blue shirt mouths crimson  
on a Wednesday  
we gave our son a name  
to lift up to / fit into  
(signed pages turned / turning  
inside a room  
we waited / and hurried and





## **Tehmina Khan**

### **At Wool Street**

The name of this place lies buried  
below the concrete foundation of my house.

No pyramid here, no stone pillar,  
no tablet engraved in forgotten pictographs.

Over shellmounds of memory, a conquest  
written by conquerors in Spanish and English,  
invasive languages choking the roots of native  
words.

What voices whisper in the earth beneath my  
feet?

Whose home do I occupy?

I, whose name has travelled from a spice  
continent  
on the far side of the Pacific.

**David Moscovich**

**Speed Up Your Metabolism VS**

**The NSA**

No AM appetite? 1, 446, 000      electronic  
mails      reconsider hitting snooze

naturally calorie-free faceted lingerie enjoy  
a mug of these non-federal enforcers  
made 11 000 requests to variousundry  
forced dump all mobile phone call data rico  
cheating

TastyTasty!more than 5 million missed-call  
alerts

for use in contact-chaining analysis

details of 2.668 million text crossings each  
day Newark's

concurrent ultrametadatasites would  
enhance vitamin-C vitamin-B  
complex/con airport-bound analytics.

**Iris Lee**  
**A Survey**

Do  
you own  
your own home

or  
are you  
just a renter

or  
do you  
have a roommate

or  
do you  
live with family

even  
though you're  
old for this

way  
of living  
but oh! finances

preclude  
having your  
own living space

one  
more question  
are you homeless

as  
in having  
less home than

every  
human being  
ought to have

perhaps  
you sleep  
in your car

but  
if you  
have no car

you  
must sleep  
in the subway

and  
eat wherever  
and shit wherever

thanks  
for responding  
to this questionnaire.

**Poet's note:** this form is a Hay(na)ku, created by  
the poet Eileen Tabios

## Dress Code

He  
once said  
don't wear jeans

before  
he picked  
me up and

took  
me to  
meet his cousins

for  
the first  
time and I

was  
so insulted  
and angry that

he  
could think  
I didn't know

what  
was proper  
to wear that

I  
sulkily muttered  
of course I

wasn't  
planning to  
wear jeans. I

now  
realize he  
didn't want them

to  
think because  
I was white

I  
would be  
disrespecting his family.

Never  
occurred to  
me then but

that's  
because I'm  
white, still am.

## Oh Say

O, SAY

I can see  
seven American flags  
from my living room window.

Plus one  
flag of the City  
of New York, orange and blue.

Sometimes  
they tell me which way  
the wind is blowing.

Sometimes  
they become invisible  
in fog or snow.

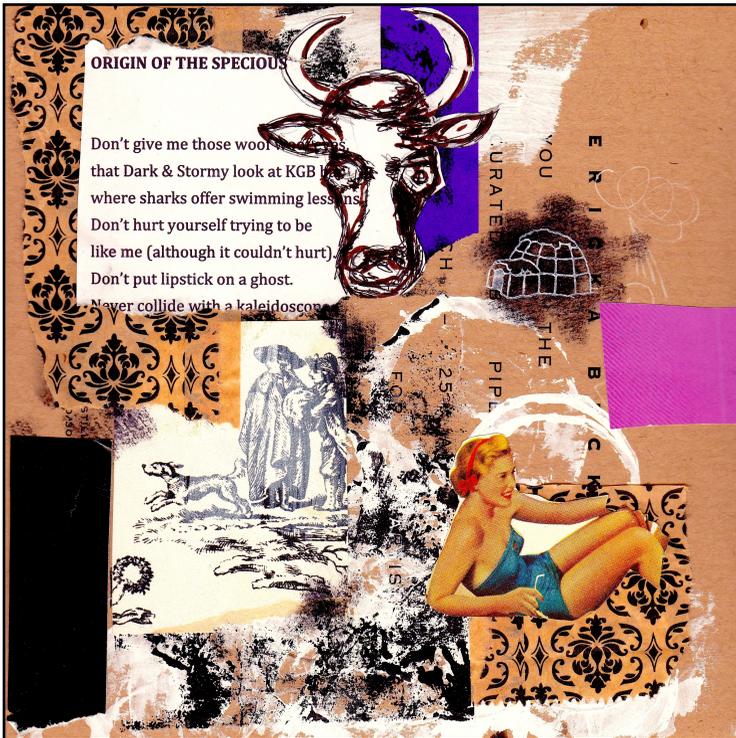
They furl,  
sometimes they unfurl;  
depends on which way

the wind  
is blowing.  
Sometimes the wind

isn't blowing  
at all, and then  
the seven plus one

drape themselves  
passively around their poles  
and wait for the wind to rise again.

Jeffrey Cyphers Wright  
Bull, Dog



*"Bull, Dog" collage, mixed media, 8 x 8" 2016*

## Contributors

**Alexandra Ellen Appel**, The Reluctant Poet, describes her work as a paradox of faith in opposition and confrontation. To Appel a poem is soothsaying, at the very least indicates an aspect of truth. Her recent publications appear in *Animal: Writers in the Attic*, *A Log Cabin Book*; *Cirque*, *A Journal of the North Pacific Rim*; and *CrossCurrents North: Alaskans on The Environment*. Appel has attended the Aspen Writers Workshop, Bread Loaf Writer's Conference, and the Squaw Valley Writer's Workshop and received support from the California Arts Council. For a Degree of Doctor of Education, Appel authored *Toward A Philosophy of Education based on Eco-psychological Principles*, University of Vermont, 2000

**Shawn Aveningo** is an award-winning, globally published poet whose work has appeared in over 80 literary journals and anthologies, including LA's

*poeticdiversity* who recently nominated her poetry for a Pushcart Prize. She is co-founder of *The Poetry Box*®, managing editor of *The Poeming Pigeon*, and journal designer for *VoiceCatcher*. Shawn is a proud mother of three who shares in the creative life with her husband in Beaverton, Oregon. <http://www.thepoetrybox.com>

**Abigail Carl-Klassen's** work has appeared in *Cimarron Review*, *Guernica: A Magazine of Art and Politics*, *Post Road* and *Huizache*, among others and is anthologized in *New Border Voices* (Texas A&M University Press), *Goodbye Mexico: Poems of Remembrance* (Texas Review Press) and *Outrage: A Protest Anthology for Injustice in a 9/11 World* (Slough Press). Carl-Klassen won the Manitoba Magazine Publishers Association Award for Best Suite of Poems and was nominated for a Pushcart Prize and Best New Poets 2015. She earned an MFA from the University of Texas El Paso's Bilingual Creative Writing Program and taught at El Paso Community College and the University of Texas at El Paso.

**Jane Hirshfield's** eighth book of poems, *The Beauty*, and her second collection of essays, *Ten Windows*, both appeared from Knopf in March 2015. She is a current chancellor of the Academy of American Poets, and the 2016 Mohr Visiting Poet at Stanford University.

**Tim Kahl** is the author of *Possessing Yourself* (CW Books, 2009), *The Century of Travel* (CW Books, 2012) and *The String of Islands* (Dink, 2015). His work has been published in *Prairie Schooner*, *Drunken Boat*, *Mad Hatters' Review*, *Indiana Review*, *Metazen*, *Ninth Letter*, *Sein und Werden*, *Notre Dame Review*, *The Really System*, *Konundrum Engine Literary Magazine*, *The Journal*, *The Volta*, *Parthenon West Review*, *Caliban* and many other journals in the U.S. He appears as Victor Schnickelfritz at the poetry and poetics blog The Great American Pinup and the poetry video blog Linebreak Studios. He is also an editor of Clade Song. He is the vice president and events coordinator of The Sacramento Poetry Center. He currently teaches at California State University, Sacramento and

houses his father's literary estate – one volume:  
Robert Gerstmann's book of photos of Chile, 1932.

**Bill Kahn** comes from a family of writers and activists. He wrote and performed as a teenager and young adult. In 2014, he was published in *The Greenwich Village Literary Review* and *OccuPoetry*. For several days in April, 2015 he participated in an on-site visit to the greater St. Louis and western farmland areas of Missouri with The Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock (Manhasset, New York), a social justice philanthropic organization.

**Annelies Kamran** is an author, researcher, analyst, teacher, political scientist, and naturalist. She holds degrees from Boston University, Dowling College, and the City University of New York, including a Ph.D. in political science. The author of two award-winning digital textbooks on American government and politics, her work for general audiences has appeared in *Newsday*, *Vision*,

and *Suffolk Life*. Currently working at WorldView Software, Inc. creating educational social studies software, she is a lifelong member of the community depicted in “J’y suis, j’y reste” and has turned to poetry in an attempt to articulate the frustration and resentment caused by inequality. Find out more about her at [annelieskamran.com](http://annelieskamran.com)

**Tehmina Khan** has a lifelong passion for learning new words in multiple languages. She has taught science to preschoolers and citizenship to octogenarians. At present, she works as a writing tutor at City College of San Francisco and also teaches poetry and literary translation to kids. She loves to travel, cook, bicycle, and get outdoors. Her work has been published in *PoetsEleven* and *Squaw Valley Review* 2012 and 2015. Tehmina makes her home in San Francisco with her husband and son and exists within a web of extended family.

**Rose Knapp** is a poet, novelist, short story writer, multimedia artist, and music producer. She has an

experimental novel forthcoming and various poetry publications in *Commonline Journal*, *Blue Lake Review*, *Poetry Pacific Magazine*, *Indiana Voice Journal*, *Shot Glass Journal*, *Chicago Literati*, and many others. She currently divides her time between Brooklyn and Minneapolis.

**Iris Lee** has had a career in public service and now devotes herself to poetry and editing. Her poetry collection, *Urban Bird Life*, was published in 2010 by New York Quarterly Books. She studies at the Writers Studio, and she leads a writing workshop for theater professionals at the Actors Fund in New York City.

**Barbara March's** poetry has appeared in *Yemassee*, *Mudlark*, *Berkeley Poetry Review*, *Orion*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Caesura*, *Cascadia*, *The Transnational*, *Agave Journal*, *Tupelo Press 30/30 Project*, *Words Fly Away: Poems for Fukushima Anthology* and other journals and publications. She is a member of the Northern California Book Reviewers and serves on

the poetry judging committee for the Northern California Book Awards. She is co-founder of the Surprise Valley Writers' Conference, and advocates for student poetry in remote communities. She lives in Cedarville, California.

**Dawn McGuire** has four poetry collections, the last of which, *The Aphasia Cafe*, won the 2013 Indie Book Award in Poetry. Her new manuscript, "American Dream with Exit Wound," has been accepted for publication in 2016. Her work has appeared, online or in print, in *ZYZZYVA*, *The New Yorker*, *Nimrod International*, and other journals. Dawn is a neurologist and lives in San Francisco.

**David Moscovich's** collection of one-page fictions, *You Are Make Very Important Bathtime*, was nominated for a Pushcart and &Now prize and is available from *Journal of Experimental Fiction* (Geneva, IL). He is the recipient of a fellowship from New York University and sponsorship from the New York Foundation for the

Arts (NYFA). He is also a founder of Louffa Press, a micro-press dedicated to printing innovative fiction in collectible, handprinted and numbered chapbooks.

**Ryan Nash** has a MFA in Creative Writing from San Francisco State University. He is the winner of the 2015 Harold Taylor prize for poetry and a former Editor-in-Chief of the literary journal *Fourteen Hills*. His work can be found at [poets.org](http://poets.org) and in various small zines and journals. For more info contact [nash.ryannash@gmail.com](mailto:nash.ryannash@gmail.com)

**Linda Norton** is the author of *The Public Gardens: Poems and History* (Pressed Wafer, 2011; with an introduction by Fanny Howe), a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize. "One Star" comprises lines from Yelp reviews of California prisons and jails. It is part of a new manuscript of poetry and prose called *Wite-Out*. Linda is also working on a memoir called *Dark White*. She received a Creative Work Fund grant in 2014.

**Conor O'Brien**, originally from Warren, Ohio, now lives in Cleveland. He is a graduate of Cleveland State University with a B.A. in English Writing. O'Brien enjoys writing poetry, creative non-fiction, fiction, independent journalism, subversive literature, and musical manifestos.

**Margery Parsons** is a poet and revolutionary activist who sees a crucial role for art in resistance and revolution. She lives in Chicago, works in the arts, and loves music and film along with poetry. She has most recently had poems published in *Rag Blog*, *Poetry Pacific*, *Calliope*, *New Verse News*, and *OccuPoetry*.

**Richard King Perkins II** is a state-sponsored advocate for residents in long-term care facilities. He lives in Crystal Lake, IL, USA with his wife, Vickie and daughter, Sage. He is a three-time Pushcart nominee and a Best of the Net nominee

whose work has appeared in more than a thousand publications.

**Charles A. Perrone** was born in the Empire State of New York but raised in the Golden State of California; he last studied in the Lone Star State of Texas and still works in the Sunshine State of Florida. Different forms of his verse and related creative work (visual, musical) have appeared in each of those states, as well as in Scotland, Canada, Mexico, and Brazil. His two print chapbooks were published by moriapoeetry (Chicago, 2008, 2015).

**Bob Schildgen** was born and raised on the west coast of Wisconsin, on the Mississippi River just north of Lock and Dam No. 10, and about 20 miles downriver of the original Pike's Peak. He now resides in Berkeley, California. His most recent book is *Hey Mr. Green*, a collection of columns written over the past 10 years for *Sierra*, the national magazine of the Sierra Club. Schildgen was managing editor of *Sierra* from 1997 to 2005.

His poetry appears in *OccuPoetry* ("Can't Get the Oil Out of My Wings") and *Atlanta Review*.

<http://sierraclub.org/mrgreen>

**Ricardo Tavaréz** is a Bay Area educator who teaches composition at Contra Costa College. He cofounded and directs the Pan Dulce Poets reading series in San Francisco's Mission District. Ricardo's writing is a reflection on cultural dynamics, music, and memory. You can find him jogging along Lake Merritt, racing valets and paleteros. For more on Ricardo's writing, visit <http://manzanazul.wordpress.com>

**Clement Tsang** was born and raised at the foot of the San Gabriel Mountains. He writes about our ecology for hope, despite our current era of the Anthropocene. While observing how the natural world interacts with our (in)human one, he looks for victories but will also capture defeats and failures. If native plants had a voice, he'd want to listen to them and is inspired by doing the good

work of conservation and advocacy. His work touches on the intersections of social and environmental justice, food, labor, land, and shared natural resources, including wealth. He is currently pursuing a BA in Creative Writing at San Francisco State University where he is a member of the Real Food Challenge.

**Lauro Vazquez** is a CantoMundo fellow and a graduate of the University of Notre Dame's Creative Writing program, where he was co-editor and contributor at *Letras Latinas*, the literary program at Notre Dame's Institute for Latino Studies. His poems have appeared in *Mandorla*, *Café Review*, *The McNeese Review*, *Ostrich* and elsewhere.

**Paige Webb** is an MFA candidate at Washington University in St. Louis. She serves as an instructor for the Kenyon Review Young Writers Workshop and as an editor for February Press. Her work has appeared in *The Portland Review*, *Toe Good Poetry*,

and *Behind the Lines: Poetry, War, and Peacemaking*. “Instant on a pendulum” is dedicated to Marcus Johnson, a six-year-old killed in Ferguson, Missouri. The poem appropriates some language from a news article and a police officer’s account of his death.

**Jeffrey Cyphers Wright** is an artist, critic, eco-activist, impresario, and publisher. He is best known as a poet. He received his MFA in poetry after studying with Allen Ginsberg. From 1987 to 2000 he ran *Cover Magazine, the Underground National*. He is art editor of *Boog City* and for many years was poetry reviewer for *The Brooklyn Rail*. In 2014 he won Theater for the New City’s poetry contest. Recent books include *Triple Crown, Sonnets from Spuyten Duyvil* and *Party Everywhere*, written during a residency with EMediaLoft. He also produces events at KGB and La Mama ETC with Live Mag! His artwork has appeared in several shows as well as being reproduced in *Empty Mirror, Urban Graffiti*, and *Local Knowledge*.  
<http://www.livemag.org>