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first light—
the sonogram worm
squirms
I’m speeding, praying
I’ll arrive just in time
to tell her I’ve never believed
in the bitter end
Abyssinian cities of the dead,  
I can sense you at night,  
the moon tilting just slightly,  
a round prison hat.
One soft touch

lift the veil gently
ripe azaleas pink
petals’ infinite edges,
shorelines on death’s brink
The beech trees toss in waves
Of wind like a belief in God
Like drunken refusals of fear

POEM

ERIC RAWSON
She takes tiny bites like a bird picking seeds from a feeder; her heavy winter coat is filled with feathers.
Where’s he been, that bird?
Over what miles of ocean
has he flown on intuition
every spring landing right here?
She’d accept the odd lie or two
if he’d only cease saying
‘to be perfectly honest’
I’m sick.
The kind in which death is inevitable,
and all I want
is beer, to say I tried it.
I could weep at the sound you make
humming in the kitchen as
you slice the onions
Rapids pulsating roar, collision of eddies ~ empty blue canoe.
My torch burns black and blue
providing artificial heat.
Torn paper edges float to the ground.
If I had ever wanted honesty
I would have measured the
distance between our thumbs
and asked for it.
Folded like a stalk of bamboo yielding to the wind, you gather my chin in the chalice of your hands.
He peered—
wobbled—
shrieked.

Bingo!
traffic lite changes
slowly yellow to red
without any cars
a mer o kin
a mor o can
a mor o cuz
a mor o coin
Great-Granny rocks
with her snuff at sundown.

Beside her Great-Granddaddy
with his chew, perfectly still.
If it were simple
I could say it,
not attempt to crack the code
with words upon a page.
Overgrown locks, striped ivy drops.
Mom works on dirt hills
says like a preacher—
“Writers write to forget.”

NICOLE TAYLOR
Her neat narrow footsteps
turn a clown’s handiwork
The daffodil turns
Its trumpeted face, sunward
Herald of the spring
The skyscape that begot it is quibblingly a sunflower ending up in my eyes, dazzling.
Fall in Costa Rica…
Hundreds of raptors soar overhead.
Like soot, they drift across the slate gray sky.
Welcome home!
rising above Detroit in a snowstorm
de-iced plane thunders into clouds
indistinguishable white sea
flying toward the mystery
A YouTube video on how to hull seeds
the police disguised

as children and watching
from behind the trees
Digital zero
polygon chairs mirroring
arms that never touch
Celestial Duo

Pearlescent crescent embraces diamantine planet in wake of sunset: growth, paired with inspiration.

Lark Beltran
At night, the highway exhales invisible toxins. Wheels, headlights gun for some distant turf. We stand disembodied in the crossfire.
FUNERAL TRAIN

Racing through walls of rock
Cruelly cut passages
Souls trapped between two places
Their faces pressed against the glass.
fantasia
conducting the orchestra
in the elevator
Old antiques on dusty shelves;
Beautiful furniture hidden away in a corner;
The smell of must.
Memories tucked away forever.
i can feel
the thousand roads
that i will walk down
already beneath my feet
Lady’s Slippers

The smell of her feet
Slipping out of her shoes;
Naked steps across the forest floor:
Pause, inhale deeply.
The Aspen march down the hill
A platoon of skeletal soldiers
From a long forgotten war
The battle is met.
I open up the eyes of the fading past
trapped between the four walls of my rented room
Invisible embellishments hiding on a masterpiece. Monet’s fingerprints embedded in hundred year-old oils.
Craving laughter I
climb high and swing over
falling into bliss
When the sax floats out into the hot city nights, the girls in gold taffeta come down the stairs.
A syzygy. A union
set against the Applegate River.
I shouted on my arms in the humid night.
A peephole, a fish-eyes view
A distortion of perception
Curved at the rims.
pink slip—
his plaid robe
worn in the seat
Cheery-eyed with blossom lips,
Full of life and innocence,
Smiles and laughs one more time,
In unequivocal and utter bliss.
Years of green beards
Branches with a lawn
The Great Pine rises
Gives a mossy yawn
Here is the punched-in face of the foreclosed home:

One black shutter askew marks her upstairs bedroom window
The moon is virtuously fettered,
With the veil of the sun’s luminosity,
Shadows of hope glitteringly litter,
Sunlit darkness sways.
There’s a new morning star outside my window, or maybe an obscure planet with a dream. Both evoke some faith.
BIOS

This month’s cover art is by Stephanie Del Paggio. Stephanie is a junior at Klein High School who writes for Sweet Designs Magazine and is a High School Journalism Ambassador for HerCampus.com. She doesn’t write to live; she lives to write. In addition to her artwork, Stephanie’s poem, “Ms. Doolittle,” is featured on page 44.


   Carolyn’s website: facebook.com/CarolynAgee

Vishwas Anand of Bangalore is a poet and a writer. His poems have featured in online websites like One Shot Poetry and Jingle Poetry. He is also an Ezine Articles expert author.

   Vishwas’ website: vishwasanand28.wordpress.com

David Ash, publisher of Basho Press (www.BashoPress.com), produces humorous 5-7-5 gift books such as Haiku for Coffee Lovers and Haiku for Cat Lovers. Ash’s frog sometimes hops from Mukilteo, Washington, into the literary pond.
Mindy Ator of Hillsboro, Oregon, writes poetry, builds clay sculptures, and works in mixed media collage. She has been published in Writers Journal.

Mindy’s website: butterfly2b.wordpress.com

Christopher Barnes’ first collection *LOVEBITES* is available from Chanticleer, 6/1 Jamaica Mews, Edinburgh.

Greg Bateman was born in Stratford, New Jersey, in 1975. He studied at The Pennsylvania State University where he earned a BA in English in 2009. He currently lives in San Antonio, Texas.

Lark Beltran, originally from California, has lived in Peru for many years as an ESL teacher. Her work has appeared in *Sage of Consciousness, Concise Delight, Able Muse, Strange Horizons, Penwood Review*, and other places.

Melissa Cauchi is an artist, poet, writer, and high school student who derives her inspiration from dreaming, animals, and all things nature. She loves indie music and adventuring with her cat.

Thomas Cochran was raised in Haynesville, Louisiana. A schoolteacher by trade, he currently lives in rural northwest Arkansas. Non-fiction and poetry have appeared under his name in *Oxford American* and *Rattle*, among other publications.

Ivo Drury workshops words in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Andy Durrenberger resides in Hillsboro, Oregon. A 2007 graduate of Portland State University, he is a member of the Oregon State Poetry Association and joins Parallel Play Writer’s Group meetings whenever possible.

Andy’s website: adpoetrycollections.com
Lee Evans lives in Bath, Maine, and works for the YMCA. His poems have appeared in such journals as *Contemporary Rhyme*, *The Deronda Review*, and *The Golden Lantern*. His poetry collections are available on Lulu.com.

Michelle Frost lives in Portland, Oregon, where she writes about anything except rain. Her writing has appeared in *Yoga Journal*, *Portland Parent Magazine*, and *Arizona Woman Today*. Currently, she is editing a poetry collection to be published by Minor Characters Press.

Alice Folkart writes poetry and short fiction on the island of Oahu. She has published in many online literary journals, and is active on the Internet Writing Workshop and Perfect Day 4 Poetry.

Howie Good, a journalism professor at SUNY New Paltz, is the author of three full-length poetry collections, including *Everything Reminds Me of Me* (Desperanto, 2011).

Siham Karami is a married mother of five and owns a technology company. "Nerd by day, Bard by night." Her poems have been or will be published in *14by14*, *Sonnetto Poesia*, and *The Whirlwind Review*.

Rebekah Kimble attends Schenectady Christian School and is in tenth grade. She has enjoyed writing for many years and has had several articles published in the student edition of *The Daily Gazette*.

Maureen Kingston lives and works in eastern Nebraska. Her poems are forthcoming in *the Hobo Camp Review*, *Pirene’s Fountain*, and *Red River Review*.

Cameron Lange is a previously unpublished poet from Los Angeles currently studying English Literature at the University of Sydney. After graduating, he hopes to return to L. A. to write about his chaotic hometown.
Paula Lietz of Manitoba, Canada, has various styles of poetry, art, and photography in print and features in many online sites (as listed on her blog). Each site allows her to unfold as an artist.

Paula’s website: themoonatthewindow.blogspot.com

Chen-ou Liu is a freelance writer. His poems have appeared in Four and Twenty, Ribbons, Modern English Tanka, Gusts, Magnapoets, Simply Haiku, and Concise Delight.

J. D. Mackenzie is a 2011 Pushcart nominee for poetry whose recent work has appeared in The New Verse News, The Ekphrasis Project, Four and Twenty, and Poets for Living Waters. He lives with his family in the foothills of Oregon’s Coast Range.

M. Elaine Moore is a fiction writer and poet. She has written one novel and is at work on another. She is published in The Island Breeze, Foliate Oak, The Camel Saloon, and 50-Word Stories.


S.C.’s website: www.scmorgan.com

Kimberly Poitevin teaches humanities at Salem State University in Massachusetts. “Onions” is her second poem to appear in Four and Twenty. Other poems have recently appeared or are forthcoming in elimae and 14 by 14.

Pedro Poitevin teaches mathematics at Salem State University in Massachusetts. His book of Spanish palindromes Eco Da Eco de Doce a Doce was published earlier this year by Ediciones La Galera, in México City.
Geoff M. Pope teaches English and communication courses for City University of Seattle. In the January 2011 issue of *Quill and Parchment*, he was the featured poet.

Geoff’s website: www.geoffpope.com

Eric Rawson is the author of *The Hummingbird Hour*. His work has appeared in a number of periodicals, including *Agni, Ploughshares, American Poetry Review, Commonweal*, and *Denver Quarterly*.

Kristin Roedell is a Northwest poet and retired attorney. Her work has appeared widely in print and online. She was nominated for Best of the Web, 2010, and the Pushcart Prize, 2010, and serves on the *VoiceCatcher* editorial board.

Scot Siegel has authored three books of poems, most recently *Skeleton Says*, Finishing Line Press, 2010. His second full-length collection is due out from Salmon Poetry in early 2012. Siegel is a Red Room author.

Sally D. Simpson of Roberts Creek, British Columbia, draws on the beauty of her surroundings to create poetry described as having “Psychic Weight.” Her work is published in anthologies, newsletters, and online journals.

Sally’s website: coastalnotes.ca

Nicole Taylor has been accepted at many print and online publications. She has been publishing and winning locally, Oregon. She is a dancer, an artist and a volunteer.

Nicole’s website: apotessanthology.blogspot.com

Celeste Thompson’s poems have appeared in the *Oregonian* and *Portland Review*. Her chapbook *Rabbit Fur Purse* was published in 2006.
Tom Thumb currently works on a farm in Northern California. More of his poetry can be found on website.

Tom’s website: tomthumbsruse.blogspot.com

Nicole Vacherot, of Vermont, is currently in the process of self-publishing her first book of poetry, *Grace in Stillness*, which will available through Amazon in late April. This haiku is her first published work.

Daniel James Vives of New York, New York, is a young aspiring writer with dreams of obtaining success in the world of literature and music. This is his first accomplishment as a writer.

Brian Warfield has published three short stories. This is his poetic debut. He lives in Philadelphia.

Kenton K. Yee writes from California. His recent or forthcoming poems and flash fiction are appearing in *Bartleby Snopes, Word Riot, Apollo’s Lyre, and Short, Fast, and Deadly*.

Kenton’s Website: facebook.com/scrambled.k.eggs

Larry Ziman lives in West Hollywood, California, and publishes and co-edits *The Great American Poetry Show* (www.tgaps.net), a serial poetry anthology open year-round to submissions of poems in English on any subject and in any style, length, and number.