

Scribbler

JULY 2016

ISSUE 88

Editor's Note

As writing about sex becomes more common, has love become a taboo subject? I ask because love seemed to be a less inspiring prompt than sex was. I'm basing my query on how few writers sent work for this Love issue compared to how many sent work for the Sex issue. That said, some fine poems were sent. Take a look.

The theme for the fall issue is Contemporary Life, that is, Modernity, from smart phones to the Zika virus to 3D printers capable of printing functional guns. Please send poems (60 lines or fewer) or prose (950 words max.) to Karnit@LMI.net or to Kayla Sussell, 420 45th Street, Oakland, CA 94609. **The deadline is September 15, 2016.**

— Kayla Sussell

Braiding

My grandmother's face was all wrinkles,
her hair blue black,
its resistant waves pulled tight,
then fallen in a widening cascade
behind the wicker chair she seemed a part of,
would rise from only as a white-winged moth, a soul.

Standing behind, no higher than the chair,
I'd braid it for her.
Loved dividing this black sea
once more than Moses into three burnished
satin sheaths of hair I loved the feel of,
stroked more often than I had to
to get the portions right, and she,
who always knew, held still.

Still more the forgiving challenge of the work.
Left over center, right across the left, now middle.
changing hands, then tugging just tight enough to hold.
Eleven, twelve, one more, it seemed each year,
till it swung like a sable steeple bell
or curtain cord I'd guard so they couldn't pull.

My grandmother died at her sister's grave when I was four.
Too young to have braided hair, I know.
But I remember every strand and turn,
what gentle hands she said I had,
and could show you now,
though I never braided hair again,
just how it's done.

— Bill Freedman

My Cells with Giddy Recall Reel and Spin

My cells with giddy recall reel and spin
Ancestral trick of photosynthesis
Dendrites have turned to fuzzy buds within
My interstitial spaces sing of this
What is not green of shoots is blue of sky
The scent of bee seduction fills the air
There is no where, no what, no who, no why
There is no past, and certainly no care
This drunken blossoming expands and grows
This blooming fills up all possible space
Here there is only yes, no room for noes
Intoxicating sweetness, hazy grace
Expanding yes, as birdsong from above
Love, then, is yes, and yes, oh yes, is love.

— Jo Podvin

Casual Conversation

"after
you
left
he cried
he said
he loves you
he doesn't know how
to tell
you"

— Denise Keil

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Adele Mendelson Richard Loranger

Richard Michael Levine Harold Norse

Lucille Lang Day A. M. Stanley Sara Bruckmeier

Dan Gellepes Cynthia Lukas Mary Oliver

PREVIOUS-ISSUE FINANCIAL REPORT

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Lynn Sugayan.



Subscriptions:

Participants in Clive Matson's creative writing workshops receive copies of the Scribbler for two years, and for as long thereafter as the recipient shows interest. If you are interested in receiving copies of the Scribbler, send an email with your name and mailing address to: clive@matsonpoet.com

Submissions and Editorial Policies:

Basic Acceptance Policy: If the current editor likes a piece, it gets published; if not, it is passed on to the next editor who will either use it, or return it to the author. All rights are reserved. Send submissions to: scribbler@matsonpoet.com (BUT any emailing instructions at top of page 1 rule!)

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SCHEDULE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

POETRY SALOON (drunk on poetry!)

Meets at 472 44th Street, Oakland, the second Friday of the month. Potluck at 6pm, reading at 7:30pm. Bring poems or prose by you and others to share, or come just to enjoy. Hosted by Kayla Sussell.

July 8, August 12, September 9, October 14

CRAZY CHILD WRITING WORKSHOPS (fee: \$80)

Saturdays, 10am - 5pm, once a month.

July 23 in San Anselmo

August 20 in Oakland

September 10, place tba

October 15, place tba

10-WEEK WORKSHOP poetry, prose, plays, nonfiction (fee: \$400), Wednesdays, 7pm - 10pm, Temescal District, Oakland. Current sessions end September 14; next sessions start September 21.

NOVEL AND CREATIVE NONFICTION WORKSHOPS (fee: \$400 for ten sessions)

One ongoing, intensive workshop meets for three hours every other Monday in Marin. Writers bring ten pages to each session. Limited to five writers.

STRUCTURE OF LARGE WORK

(fee: \$400 for ten sessions)

For writers with a draft of a full-length play, script, or novel, or who want to start a large work. Our topics are standard repertory, starting with "Whose story is it?" Current sessions end September 23; next sessions start September 30.

THE NOVEL'S ARC (fee: \$500 for five sessions)

In this workshop four novelists commit to reading each other's novels and examining how each works as a whole. We'll devote a two-hour session to each novel. Next sessions will be arranged as soon as four authors declare their readiness!

WRITING EXCURSIONS: SEE PAGE 8

For more information about any workshop, visit matsonpoet.com or phone 510-654-6495. To register, phone 510-654-6495 or email clive@matsonpoet.com (unless otherwise noted).



**Stepmothers, Boyfriends and Hemlines:
A Gender Epiphany**

If you wear that dress,
I will not love you.
If you do *not* wear that dress,
I will not love you.

So, what shall I wear?

I shall wear
daggers for my eyes
and train my gaze
upon the hideous creature
you refer to as
love.

I will not love you
if you wear that dress.
I will not love you
if you do *not* wear that dress.

So, who shall love me?

I shall be loved
by a film
and by a building.
Thousands will embrace
my daggery gaze.

And when the entire world has seen
that your love
is not love,
but dust
and more dust,
covered in dust,
I shall wear anything,
and I *shall* wear everything.

I
might even
wear
that dress.

— Susan Pedrick



Love Nonet

I'm thinking about being in love

Don't think about being in love

But I want to be in love

Don't need to be in love

I need to be loved

I've enough love

Not in Love

In Love

Love

— Lisbit Bailey

Billy the Dog

Cotton ball, dandelion, cloud of fluff—
with a stick up your bottom
you'd make an affectionate toilet brush.
Lie against my hip, right where it hurts,
better than a hot water bottle.
Your tail's vibration we measure in hertz:
cycles per second, dog-hours of love.
When Dad drives, sit on the armrest
to see what he sees. Walk where he walks.
When he swims, bark "Man overboard!"
do an aerial 360 and cannonball
like a furry dumpling into the soup-warm pool.

— Jan Steckel



Old Chestnuts

Well, what is it really about? This morning you kissed the nipples on my old dugs
and told me I was still a beauty.

Sixty years ago, even with the sun shining, I was quite an ordinary girl though
being used to love did give me a patina.

I held your hand in the park today: the dog did its best to come between us.

We rise and fall in each other's rhythms, but the rise gets steeper
and the fall, Aah the fall does beckon.

Maybe, like the chestnut conkers

We kept in our pockets as children, we'll

Find our final hiding place in the same scuffed hole,

Falling together.

— Tama Zorn

Pomegranate

Love is a stab of ruby rain
love is a fragrant peel
and the firm red seeds
hidden within
Love is the flesh
Love is the stem

A bride kidnapped
from her family house
finds that the best part
is in the mouth
the tender wanton bite,
the juicy little kiss

— Adele Mendelson



Laundry

I had forgotten the pleasures of laundry and now I am
refinding them. Such a sensuous stretch of the day,
hour-long breath – thirty minutes inhaling,
thirty leisurely out – luxurious veldt of time
teasing an open line of potencies,
but even more, even more essential lime
eye seraph canticle, I watch the tumble,
hear the daring spin, watch the ardent tumble,
the methodical, the caption, the result,
the blur, the intermingling of all my lives,
hear the universal whir, the whir, sphere-whir,
Dante be damned, permeate please with me,
parse the private day, leave caterwaul behind and
seethe, please, ride the whir, tumble into nautical
and sigh eyes to method, to ardent, to canticle,
to permeate, to ware. I had forgotten the sheer
pleasures of laundry and now I am resheening them.
The cycle releases, the cycle begins, how man is that,
how human, how mammal, how animal, how is. Breathe
the furtive turn, breathe and spin into a newborn
whim sanction child tumbling time into
the perfect play, the possible, ratcheting
the undine box of mind and fray,
opening the cloth of all our lives to the
soft seams of reeve, and catenating day to day
a ring of woven dreams that bear us bright
and shaking to the damp heart of clean.

— Richard Loranger



A Blessing in Beige

The universe is really beige. Get used to it.
John Noble Wilford
The New York Times

For Lucy

Some stars burn brighter as they age
Like maple leaves and apple trees flaming up from green.
Alas, the color of the universe is beige,

Not peach or pearl or the palest shade of sage,
Not turquoise, as they once thought – so serene.
Some stars burn brighter as they age.

The love that we have is harder to gauge
But it, too, burns brighter the later it seems.
Does it matter so much if the universe is beige?

As a poet breathes sound onto a silent page
Your love bathes my days in aquamarine.
Some stars burn brighter as they age.

Let them light up our lives as we leave this stage
And fill our hearts with their triumphant sheen.
Who cares if the color of the universe is beige?

A bird in flight outshines its silver cage.
If the sky's too bright the stars shine unseen.
May our stars burn brighter as we age.
Hurray, the color of the universe is beige!

— Richard Michael Levine

First published in *Blue Unicorn*. Reprinted in *Catch and Other Poems* (2015), by Richard Michael Levine.

The Business of Poetry

the business of poetry
is the image of a young man
making music and love
to a young girl whose interest
in love and music coincides
with an enormous despair in both
their inner selves like a plucked
guitar in the dry hot sun of
hope where savage and brutal men
are tearing life like a page
from a very ancient
and yellow
book

— Harold Norse

Let Me Count the Ways

I love you the way raindrops love the earth,
chlorophyll loves to capture light,

a heart loves to beat
and great horned owls love the night;

the way oxygen loves a red blood cell,
nitrogen loves to fill a room,

DNA loves to replicate
and pink camellias love to bloom;

the way fire loves to leap and weave,
the future loves to become the present,

a frog loves to croak at dusk
and iron loves a magnet;

the way poppies love to face the sun,
thunder loves to follow lightning,

a starfish loves a tide pool
and a geyser loves erupting;

the way an enzyme loves its substrate,
stars love to burn and glow,

the earth loves to split along a fault line
and the limbs of a child love to grow;

the way ferns love a forest floor
and mosses and lichens love stones.

I love you with all my cells and proteins,
nucleic acids, muscles, nerves and bones.

— Lucille Lang Day

First Prize in Love Category, Poets' Dinner 2009.
Published in *Levure Litteraire*.



In the White Room

In the white room, in his wide bed, in his house
in the clean, crisp white sheets that smell of spring in
early winter morning warm white light
I lie with him for the first time and his body atop
of mine warms me. I, like the white spider I saw
the first day I first saw him, sense so well with the tips
of my appendages and I am small and nonlethal.

In the white room as he lies atop me his freckled skin
slightly reddens and warms more – something I like about him
like the blond hairs upon his arms and legs, the way his Adam's apple
protrudes, the way the red in his skin blushes from neck to face
in slow degrees. In the white room, in the white sheets, we whisper
to each other at times, at other times we make each other laugh.
The light that fills the room fills us.

When I wake up to early, warm, white, winter sunlight shining
through my bedroom window I am only slightly surprised
I have dreamt of him again.

– A. M. Stanley

Recycling

i have a picture a friend gave me on my mantelpiece
he left it behind him one time, after a date.
it's a photo of him
and there's a rip down the center – slightly off center
presumably another chick's face was on the other half
and he ripped it in two, before leaving it on my table.
I never asked why this photo...
my guess is, he wanted to give me a picture of his face
because that's what he did.
but why did he choose to give me THIS photo, frayed
edge and all?
I know he doesn't have many material things –
did he find the photo, maybe stumbled across it by
accident,
and think, "hey, this will do
I like this picture of me, I'll re-use it
can't have Her in it though, that would be weird."
rrrrrrrip!!
not romantic? one might think?
too practical, Maybe?
I dunno
maybe I'm too old to be that kind of romantic anymore
there are people in my past too

I have loved, and been loved.
actually i think the photo IS romantic.. the essence
of romance
once there was someone beside me, and now there
is space
for someone new...
maybe you?

– Sara Bruckmeier

Seven Tankas Addressed to Vanessa Bell

131
The few words I've read about you
my beautiful Vanessa,
suggest
you suffered greater evil
than we know

144
Every time I read your letters,
Vanessa,
I first look at your eyes.
They frighten me.
You frighten me.

145
By instinct and learning,
I'd have avoided you,
Vanessa.
Too free, too avant-garde.
Even now, I seek out convention.

146
All who know me would claim
I've made a mistake,
Vanessa,
being attracted to you.
They'd be right.

147
The wisest course
other than saying goodbye –
keep you at arm's length.
and observe you as a foreign
and dangerous creature.

148
Hubris, thinking
I could stay safe
against the poster girl
for all I'm taught to fear.
I'm old only once

149
Every chance I get,
Vanessa,
I'll say your name over and over
and so bring you before me
and vanquish time.

– Dan Gellepes

There is a Fullness

There is a Fullness to this amassing dusk
That passes by and in and through us
There is a cedar with a heart-shaped trunk
Its bark unraveling in strips, undone
A red velvet ant – I thought – now with wings, lifts up
A white wildflower is revealed in thickened brush
A scent of moisture, hanging sweetly, lingering
The repertory of birds sings, singing fervently
All of these – and me – seem filled with a recognition
Filled with great purpose and filled with great trust
There is never too much or not enough here within
There is all that is meant to be, heaven-bent
There is a Fullness to this dusk as it must be, flush
That passes by and in and through us...to Loving

– Cynthia Lukas



Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.
You only have to let the small animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting –
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

– Mary Oliver

From *New and Selected Poems: Mary Oliver* (1992).
Boston: Beacon Press.

WRITING EXCURSIONS

LAKE COUNTY WORKSHOP

"LET THE CRAZY CHILD WRITE!"

Saturday, October 22, 4 to 6 pm, and

Sunday, October 23, 10 am to 5 pm

Lake County Arts Council Gallery

235 Main Street, Lakeport, CA 95453

Fee \$55. Phone 707-263-6658 to register,

510-654-6495 for details on the workshop.

HIGHWAY 395

August 7-14 at Pine Cliff Resort

June Lake, Lee Vining, California

Fee \$700

(\$50 discount to the first three people who register)

For information **and to register**, check out Clive's "Excursions" webpage under the Instruction tab at: <http://matsonpoet.com>.

CRAZY CHILD WORKSHOP

Introduction to 10-month series
devoted to survivors of the fire

Sunday, August 21, 10 am to 5 pm

Middletown Art Center * Any donation

For information, Lisa Kaplan 707-295-6663
or Clive 510-654-6495

SCRIBBLER FINANCIAL REPORT

Total expenses: \$418.52

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If you love poetry, if you know that the poets among us take time to grow and flower, please donate for the sake of this publication. Your generosity helps to keep *The Crazy Child Scribbler* (and Clive) going.

THE SCRIBBLER

Clive Matson

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Oakland, CA 94609