

Scribbler

JANUARY PUSHING JUNE 2019

ISSUE 98

The Scribbler has reorganized as a Poets House West journal. We are committed to printing a wide variety of energetic writing coming from our youth and from others all the way up to our elders, in all their various styles.

Editor's Note

This edition of the Scribbler is dedicated to the traveler, the nomad, the relentless adventure seeker. It seeks to capture the words of those who are uncapturable!. The theme was inspired by my own many years of perusing the world from one gig or hunch or nameless reason to the next, and the many inspiring folks I met along the way. They may be physically impossible to pinpoint on a map, but in these pages lie small snapshots into their rambling lives.

When I was a solo traveler, I'd often find myself stumbling over words when trying to explain my life, to defend a purpose behind my traveling madness. The truth was, I wasn't really sure why I was doing what I was doing. Something just kept propelling me onward; things just kept lining up synchronistically; and the idea of having a home somewhere stagnant seemed like some kind of unattainable reality that frankly made me nauseous and bored.

Looking back out of the eye of the storm, I am beginning to realize that my purpose all those years, my frantic running towards everything, was a sort of youthful lust for life that I don't know if I will ever feel again. I wanted to drink up the entire world, see it all, experience everything until I burnt out and collapsed.

This is probably the driving force behind many like myself who keep trucking onwards into the unknown despite the chaos. It is our innate desire to understand ourselves more, to trudge through the complicated inner terrain, to feel some sort of familiarity with other human beings, to understand our shared experience on this planet more clearly, to grasp for that feeling that we are connected. Traveling is just the fast track to accomplishing that. These personal moments of clarity are a direct result of leaving everyday life behind to see what the world will offer you up kindly and also throw in your fucking face.

What I enjoy most about these poems is their emphasis on-the rawness; the fleeting, inner states of mind that both taint and enhance our outward journey. They showcase the collection of dust and grime and boredom and euphoria and holy, profane epiphany that you simply can't hide from on the open road. I have chosen to barely edit them, preferring the realness, the bluntness of a nomadic life unpolished and to be celebrated, not manipulated, for the beautiful questions they leave unanswered; for the disgusting knot in your stomach that won't unfurl; for the authenticity behind each of these pieces of art.

An enormous hug, via printed words, to these humans and their stories, all of whom I have crossed paths with one way or another all over the world during some of the most vibrant years of my life.

— kaira loving

Rooted

Megan Rae Mastel is a folk herbalist, prayer poet, earth caretaker, connection facilitator, edge dancer and soul activist. She centers plants as teachers in her ever evolving creative practices with regenerative livelihood, education, storytelling, art, community gatherings and earth connection rituals through the Living Hearth Farm & School (thelivinghearth.com). She currently resides in Minnesota and dreams of all the wanderings to come.

What I've learned from life on the road
Is that I have to grow roots
to find what keeps me "rooted"
To this most expansive life.
Without these roots
I bloom too fast

I spread too far
And I lack the nourishment
to hold me through the rough times:
The soil to hold my tears
and the mycelium to weave my thoughts.

With my strong roots I can stretch boundaries
Advancing into new territories
Entwining with experiences
That carve rings of growth into my body
and lead to creaks of wisdom in my bones.
Carrying my stories to the next generations
Connected to something deeper
Through falling in love with the Earth
and becoming the land.

— megan rae

Workshop Schedule

CRAZY CHILD WRITING WORKSHOPS

Let your creative self write with abandon.

Based on the tutorial *Let the Crazy child Write!* (New World Library, 1998).
(fee: \$80 or any donation; included in 10-week workshops)

10 am to 5pm □ Sunday, June 9, Oakland
Sunday, July 14, Point Richmond

THE BEAT AESTHETIC and Why We Need It Today

"To be a Beat is to be at the bottom of your personality looking up."
— John Clellon Holmes in "Existentialism and Life"
(\$5 or any donation)

Omni Commons, 4799 Shattuck Avenue
(at 48th Street) in Temescal District, Oakland
1 to 4pm, **second Saturdays**: June 8, July 13 (none in August)

10-WEEK WORKSHOPS

(fee: \$400 per session)

poetry □ *prose* □ *plays* □ *nonfiction*

Wednesdays 6:30 to 9:30pm Temescal District, Oakland
Current sessions end July 3 — New sessions start July 10

Fridays 10am to 1pm Lafayette
Current sessions end July 19 — New sessions start July 26

MARIN WRITERS GROUP

(fee: \$25 or any donation)

7 to 9pm, **third Thursdays** in San Rafael

ALAMEDA ISLAND POETS WORKSHOP

(fee: \$25 or any donation)

7 to 9pm, **second Thursdays**: June 13, July 11, August 8
Frank Bette Center, 1601 Paru Street, Alameda

2-BUSY 2-WRITE

(drop-in writing time)

(fee: \$10 or any donation, like healthy cookies)
Tuesdays, 7 to 9pm □ Temescal District, Oakland

THE NOVEL'S ARC

(fee: \$500 for five sessions)

Current sessions 7 to 9pm Thursdays: June 6, July 11, Aug. 1.
Four novelists read each other's novels and examine how each works as a whole. Two-hour sessions, once a month, devoted to each novel. New sessions will be arranged when four authors declare their readiness.

POETRY SALOON

(drunk on poetry!)

Second Fridays at 472 44th Street, Oakland
Potluck at 6pm, readings start at 7:30pm

*Bring poems or prose by you or others
to share, or come just to enjoy.*

June 14, July 12

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:
matsonpoet.com or phone (510) 508-5149

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Luis de la Garza, Ellaraine Lockie, Pete Najarian

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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THE SCRIBBLER may also be found online at matsonpoet.com. If you wish to stop receiving the print version, please notify us at clive@matsonpoet.com.



PLEASE DONATE TO KEEP THE PUBLICATION GOING

You can write a check to Clive Matson and mail it to:
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A Colombia, Con Amor

I remember your waves
sweet, soft sea foam
licked my toes

warm, rolling breath
hugged our ankles

On the shoulders of your shoreline
infinity rose inside of me,
worry danced off into the distance
toppled over the horizon.

When your sun rose,
I swore it was a miracle
When your sun set,
I swore you were a miracle.

I met God in your jungles
shook hands with spiders,
dreamt on broken clouds.

18 months separate us,
and still:

Your mountains peak behind my eyes
hills roll underneath my tongue
rains drip from my fingers.

Can I drown in you?
Linger on your limbs?

I'm yours, if you'll have me,
siempre.

— Caitlin Stull

Depleted

Some people aspire for riches, others for status or power (and I suppose like most of us I've desired those things as well) but more than anything I've always wanted to feel free. To express myself wider, to expand in size and to feel even more connected with all that is out there in the mysterious multiverse. Like our bodies know to drink water when we are thirsty, our soul knows when to fly. Fate has allowed me the opportunity to indulge this instinct and I cherish all that I have been able to do. I hope to never stop expanding.

I met Kaira at the base of a waterfall in Israel with a giant grin on her face and a magical sparkle in her eye. Shortly thereafter we hitch-hitched together (for my first time). It is friends like Kaira who I have met while throwing myself to the wind on an adventure that makes traveling life so meaningful to me.

There is a crack in my bucket
and water is spilling all over the floor.
My pack has torn and I
have lost what was once important to me.
I have a long journey to drive
but have been leaking fluids in my path.
I am running low on energy and
desperately need to find more.
Am I slowing down or spiraling out?
Dizziness makes me unsure.
But I am gasping for air now
with lungs that refuse to work,
they have decided I deserve to suffocate,
undeserving to exist anymore
on this open road.

— Dane Schelberg

Drink

Emily Hart is a London soul mostly found wandering Latin America; she collided with Kaira at a surf spot on her way up the Baja California peninsula last year. Currently based in Medellín, Colombia, she's soaking up city chaos, buying too many notebooks, and drinking more coffee than is medically advisable.

I stare over the valley.

I dilate my pupils so wide
I can shove straws in them,
And drink in what I see until my skull overflows with it.

I pull the straws out, dripping with beauty,
And close my eyes tightly,
keeping the nectar of this landscape safely stored.

Months later,
I gaze blankly up from my computer,
Through a smudged window in a peeling white frame.
An anaemic grey sky which threatens nothing and promises less.

I shake my head.

With the dance of my despair,
The marbled blue of the liquid awakens,
Rolling and sloshing against my temples,
Frothing and splashing the darkened dome of my skull
With flecks of sunlight and streaks of breeze.

Its cool roar will jolt me awake.
Its waves will throw me overboard.
Its tide will wash me back here.

Back here where I hang over the landscape like a mist,
Touching every leaf, blade, and feather.
Tasting the inky contentment of blue and green,
Smelling red brushstrokes of clay.

— Emily Hart

Untitled

I met Kaira on the bus. I hope we all have the chance to be on such an adventure at least one time in our lives. The type where the meaning overwhelms the circumstance and you're filled with a fervor of youthful energy to make an impact in the world. Our meaning was fruit trees, and Common Vision was our non profit that provided the platform. For six weeks we traveled across California in a veggie oil powered bus, installing orchards at low income schools and inspiring students towards ecological thinking. Kaira is a sister to me in a way that is beyond explanation. We are both witches of words and dancers on the skin of reason. It gives me joy to know that our hen scratches of pondering may exist on the same page.

Decisions, paths and forks in the road
Treadmill of linear continuity
Onwards and backwards, inevitably evolving
in slow sudden increments
barely noticed because of their omnipresence

I but a speck of dirt on the insole of time
Repeatedly ground in the harsh bosom of challenge
then lifted with joyous high step over fields of possibility
undulating like prairie grass in the wind

Or a school of fish
An organism made of multiple beings
swimming together
separately

Do I have a school I'm unaware of?
What currents bring me here?
What role is this little I in the great world ocean?

Peel your eyeballs wide child
and open your ears like a dry desert canyon
ready to receive rain

The journey is the gift
If the process is the reward
Everything is happening at the right time
or some other such platitude

Fuck off eh?
New age positive bullshit
Burning incense instead of cleaning
the corpse that rots in the cabinets

I wear cynicism as armor
humorous spikes
defend my last precious shards
of irrational optimism

I shan't spread these precious seeds
on infertile soil

— Jessica Meisman

Night Voyage

Living in Chile I found Neruda and Dylan Thomas, and finally met words that seemed as full as the waves or as dirt as the landscape. Returning, I hitched into Burning Man, which blew my stifled unconscious — seeing a landscape of what felt like unbridled creative manifestation and direct expression of raw symbology, architected by renegades, rebels, and maniacs from around the planet. Poems are a vehicle for encountering the sublime, the unmanifest, the unworkable. The raw. The tiger in our soul. The wounds and the weapons. Poems reveal us to life. I met Kaira in 2016 in a rainstorm, traveling across a floor of winding light.

Go!

Leave the laptop.

Forget what you thought
you were going to do
when you got there—

Let this be a death.

Don't take thought to returning.

The world is dangerous — anything could happen.

Why not walk boldly into the unknown
and laugh with the laughing souls
you find there?

Some voyages are visions of horror
poverty, war, malnutrition
the need for humility.

Others are opportunities
to master desire in a banana grove
share friendship with spirits of youth
as they appear one by one
like drops in your newly-still
glass
of ocean

When the waters in our hearts
finally settle
sometimes we can see truth
crashing at the bottom

And turning
returning
as we must re-turn
we dis-cover that which was hidden
when we first left home
so long ago.

— August West

Untitled

Chandler Rae Fitchett is a twenty-three-year-old poet, editor, and graduate student at San Francisco State University. She is currently working on her first chapbook. When she's not tinkering with the crafting of experimental poetry, she enjoys creating collages, sipping piña coladas, getting caught in the rain, and resisting the patriarchy. To read some of her work, check out @smallmuseums on Instagram.

i want to rub sunscreen on your back
near
a record shop
or
a furniture store
or a place
that sells
chocolate custard
in Chattanooga.
i've never been there
that city just came to mind
I like the way that word leaves my tongue
chat
ta
noo
ga.

reminds me of a child's first words.
chat
and
renew
the
lonely sap
that
drips down
your trunk

what you
thought
was
your
nature.

you forgot that you are not natural.
you
forgot
you put your shirt on backwards
there is
lint on your black denim
hasn't been washed
in 2 weeks.

we stare at each other's
veiny hands
at a Waffle House.

we wait for coffee.

—Chandler Fitchett

Untitled

For my 18th birthday, I didn't get an apartment or college acceptance letters. My family gifted me a backpack and good wishes. With the road in front of me, I went as far as India, as close as my own heart, and many places in between... I left for the adventures, but stayed for the Love. It was on these journeys where I first met the magical Kaira, in a garden on Orcas Island, WA! This has been the true gift: not just a backpack, but the gift of befriending others and myself.

Don't lie,
because your eyes hide
nothing.

I see the light that is waiting,
waiting to get out.
It seeps from the corners of your smile,
from the wrinkle of your eye,
when you think that
no one
is looking.

I can trace the maps
you dream of.
I can follow them on the backs
of your ancestors' hands.

I can feel the love that stirs
like a great eagle, poised to take flight
on intrepid wings.

Why tarry
when God is waiting!
The wine has already been poured;
the glass hungers for your lips to meet
and taste the sweetness of lands
far and splendidous.

Why keep your Host waiting
any longer!
You are a guest here,
welcome to make merry!
And He has already offered you
the sweetest fruits
from His larder.

Don't wait,
for every step you make
is love.

And don't lie,
for every word you utter
is God.

—Jasmine Stuverud

Untitled

Travel is the snake which can't find its tail, sometimes you're the mouth sometimes you're the hind.

Imagine the odor of luck this potent
on the air of ceaseless development
& unresolved struggle.

A praise
to the undulating senselessness of the ethers path.
Past the point of discontent,
out here amongst the priestly pepitos,
spicy and solemn,
gentle strangers with too many pockets &
octopi which wrangle a quick lunch,
holding it savory slow.
Navigating the studious ones,
with malice for the timeless, all soaring spicy high
and digging for the bottom of unknown delights.
Lucky to be alive to decide.

Cast Luck as the lead in a fantasy
but luck is plagiarism, it already bored you.
What if luck is the quantifiable amount of sand
in the vanquished remains
of a once stoic bottle of tequila?
Sexless discomfort.
Can luck be the amount of hugs you receive as a child?
Luck is definitely a sunburn,
luck is sight over sound.
Luck is length and girth,
luck is a lunar period &
a question mark.
Luck is the most profane term we know!
Lucky, luck is holy proud.
Luck is all the times a bird has not shit on your beak.

Decide to be of luck's bountiful stock.
Meditate on just how few instances
a predatory cat has mangled your intestines.
Fancy the great many occasions

in which a coconut has not taken the life of your first love,
or the love of your life,
(they kill more people than sharks annually,
falling coconuts & great loves).

Reflect on all the paper cuts never received.
Ponder the certainty of vainglorious days
and how many may yet still be looming.
Consider, just how few asteroids
have destroyed your species.
Now, having taken those tablets,
give equal effort to calculating all of the
pennies, pesos, yin, quetzals and baht
found along the slippery slope.

We can wait.
Luck is impulsive and patient.
May those shiny gifts from the ground unseen
always outweigh the moments
of trauma, loss and degradation.
When given that lucky private time
to luckily do those private things.
Take a moment
to consolidate the number of sunsets witnessed.
Were any on passport provided beaches?
This wanton critter, luck and I,
hope that those living testaments to a day bested,
that the movies of a green flash never seen
exceed the number of organs lost in a lifetime
by irrevocable margins.
May daiquiris always outnumber deaths,
when billed against the house.

Sing loud in the language of ceaselessly profane luck!
As you traverse your enigmatic delights,
live lucky, dumb-proud and gracious,
in vagrant awe of most things.
Namely that nonsense luck.

—Joel Parker

Untitled

Devon comes from central Pennsylvania. She was a member of Camp Hill High School's cheerleading squad with Kaira ten years ago, but their passions for writing and travel as adults led to their reconnection. Devon spent a year living in Sydney, Australia, which gave her a lot of material to draw from. She also grew up taking cross country road trips to visit family which has had a significant impact on her style and subject matter. Travel has shaped a lot of her identity and she derives a lot of inspiration from these experiences.

I'm beginning to fray at the fingertips...
What do you deem important?
The ripple of satin robes? —

Gas station erotica? —
A penchant for theatrics? —
Bob drives a Chevrolet S-10.
Says he'll drop me at the state line.
I ask to stop at a Sinclair.
Fluorescent beams cascade
from the metal canopy.
A million miles from nowhere
the sky catches up with me,
pavement and dirt in tow.
I again am obsolete.
Without neon stages
and eyes boring holes
into my backside,
What do I amount to?
Skittles and a pack of menthols.

Earlier on public radio
they talked of outlawing
menthols,
so soon it may be just Skittles.
The clerk's name tag reads
"Kevin,"
His name rhymes with my
own.
I will never stand in this place
again.
I wonder if it will miss me.

—Devon Powers

Untitled

My dad always told me to ask myself whether or not I'm running towards something or away from something. Now I live across the country and my van is broken down. But I think I know what he must have known back then; that the answer doesn't matter. The journey is in the asking. Kaira and I met a few years ago in Portland at a tea house. We shared a pot of chai.

These hands seem only slightly familiar,
with a new coating of grease and road grime,
shiny almost.

They appear longer,
more slender than the hands I've grown accustomed to.
Could it be this different lighting?
Perhaps the air of this unfamiliar place is getting to my head.

I'm liable to perceive things in a peculiar way at 4am
in a service station parking lot
30 miles south of Cleveland.

This fever is still on me.
It's hard to shake
without my trusted and comfortable sleep routine.
I want to miss my bed,
but truth be told
I've never been happier to lose a good night's sleep.

I'm finally on the road.
Outdoors; with the Beetles and the stars.
With the night people and the wild things.
For better and for worse.
Participating in commonly unheard music.

— Perry Martin

Reykjavik, Iceland

Although my motivations are sometimes a direct effect of discontentment, I have an honest curiosity about new places and experiences that keeps me moving. Mobility is a part of my essence, it always has been. I've traveled internationally on multiple occasions, road tripped the US and lived out of cars with this here gal, Kaira. I have dreams to keep pursuing this lifestyle I lead (with much needed breaks in between). Poetry has allowed me to speak in ways that I otherwise could not. It is one of the ultimate releases of my brain splatter that aids me in the diverse transitions through the layers of life.

I am far from who I want to be.
I am a grain of sand encapsulated in an hourglass,
counting time while I await the day
holes should be punctured in my lid.
Salt from a shaker,
released onto the plate of existence
to be digested.

I have tasted the sweetness of life,
the bitterness of licking my wounds.
I have danced on floating docks & boats
& trains that glide on rails,
cried on planes & in vans on land
& in hands other than my own

(we are) Rain drops carried on wind
frequently lost in the occasional puddle
alongside cigarette butts soaking
awaiting the day to yet again
hitch a ride on a heat wave back
taking in the views
of the bottoms
of the city slicker passerby's shoes.

— Amber Stocklingsky

Untitled

A born traveller, I consider myself somewhat of a nomad, a global citizen who has called 10 countries home thus far on my journey as I live into the legacy of the custom name given by the midwives who delivered me on a small Pacific Ocean island: Leisale (translated loosely: sway/ocean swell/grass skirts dancing/ driftwood on the tide). Kaira's path and my own crossed when she and others welcomed me wholeheartedly into their home in Asheville, NC as we all sought to learn practical ways to tread more softly on this earth. Our paths have woven multiple times since; I love to hear tales of her adventures and look forward to meeting again her kindred restless soul somewhere down life's trail, wherever that may be on this big, wise, beautiful planet.

I.
we break our own hearts
on
each other

as waves do

on soft sandy beaches
on ragged rocks
on cliffs
over and over

for as long as we live this magnificent life.

II.
today i journey inwards
it is a soft and jagged place,
full of shadow and beauty and awe
like a phosphorescent ocean cave
on a moonlit night

i breathe like the ocean swell.

— Hannah Stewart

"Hello, Paradise.
Paradise, Goodbye."

reading by Clive Matson

First Saturdays of the month at 7 pm
June 1, July 6, September 7

Frank Bette Center for the Arts
1601 Paru Street, Alameda, CA 94501
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**Excerpt performed in Paris,
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ALERT

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If you haven't submitted or done a workshop or sent money in the last two years, this is your last Scribbler.

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