

failed ~~haiku~~

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Photo by Maxianne Berger

Cast List

In order of appearance
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Valentina Ranaldi-Adams

Wilda Morris

Diana Webb

Neena Singh

Jennifer Gurney

Deborah Karl-Brandt

John Hawkhead

Randy Brooks

Patricia Hawkhead

Andrew Markowski

Susan Burch

Tuyet Van Do

Kristen Lindquist

Pris Campbell

Tomislav Maretić

Shawn Blair

Genevieve S. Aguinaldo

Debarati Sen

Tim Cremin

Oscar Luparia

Petra Schmidt

Joseph P. Wechselberger

Timothy Daly

Maxianne Berger
Ravi Kiran
Kathleen Trocmet
Debbie Strange
Marsh Muirhead
Bryan Rickert/*John Pappas*
John Pappas
Roberta Beach Jacobson
Jerome Berglund
Anthony Lusardi
Ingrid Baluchi
Reid Hepworth
Christa Pandey
Gil Jackofsky
Rick Jackofsky
Teiichi Suzuki
Linda Papanicolaou
Mary Arnold
Mary McCormack
Barrie Levine
Lavana Kray
Ram Chandran
Daipayan Nair
Gavin Austin
Mona Bedi
Tracy Davidson
Chen-ou Liu
petro c. k.

Dipankar Dasgupta
Audrey Quinn
Tony Williams
Gayle Worthy
Cynthia Anderson
John Budan
Bakhtiyar Amini
Jo McInerney
Thomas A. Nouvel
Colleen M. Farrelly
Matt Snyder
Arvinder Kaur
Joanna Ashwell
Caroline Giles Banks
Ruth Holzer
C.X. Turner
Mike Gallagher
Ann Sullivan
Françoise Maurice
Barbara Sabol
Joshua St. Claire
Jenn Ryan-Jauregui
Chen Xiaou
Michael Henry Lee
Lori Becherer
Susan Yavaniski
Lakshmi Iyer
Mark Gilbert

Richard L. Matta
Laurie Greer
Gerry Mc Donnell
Sarah Paris
Ram Krishna Singh
Vijay Prasad
Pitt Buerken
Maya Daneva
Nick T
John J. Dunphy
Michael J. Galko
Erica Ison
Shasta Hatter
Jamie Wimberly
Lori Kiefe
Mike Montreuil
Natalia Kuznetsova
Gillena Cox
Marilyn Ashbaugh
Eavonka Ettinger
Maeve O'Sullivan
Susan Farner
Sondra J. Byrnes
Robert Witmer
M. R. Defibaugh
Mark Forrester
Cynthia Rowe
Lorin Ford

Shloka Shankar
Kathabela Wilson
Ana Drobot
William Scott Galasso
Vicki Ann Galasso
Surashree Joshi
Ron Scully
Christine Wenk-Harrison
Richa Sharma
Louise Hopewell
Jenny Fraser
Jon Hare
Terrie Jacks
John J. Han
Kati Mohr
Srinivasa Rao Sambangi
David Cox
John Zheng
Allyson Whipple
Claire Vogel Camargo
Nina Kovačić
Bryan D. Cook
Jeffrey Walthall
Mike Cullinane
Frank Dietrich
Kimberly Kuchar
Charles Harmon
Nancy Brady

dan smith
Adrian Bouter
Keith Evetts
Lee Strong
Jack Galmitz
Susan Bonk Plumridge
Herb Tate
Clodagh O Connor
Debbie Olson
Lorelyn De la Cruz Arevalo
Mona Iordan
Tim Roberts
Wilbert Salgado
Stephenie Story
Tazeen Fatma
Jay Friedenber
Devoshruti Mandal
LeRoy Gorman
Ruchita Madhok
Kelly Sargent
Priti Khullar
Bonnie J Scherer
Mircea Moldovan
Kevin Valentine
David Oates
Tohm Bakelas
Bryan Rickert

church spire
contrails add
the cross

optical illusion
the love
in your eyes

nuclear winter
the death
of a soulmate

Valentina Ranaldi-Adams

in the kitchen together
mincing
no words

before cutting the cake
wrapping up
an argument

Wilda Morris

How our Beauties Sleep

As the orchestra tunes up before the performance, she recalls her own sixteenth birthday party. The one preceded by her mother's confession..

"I've invited those four nice boys from your class. Michael and James and the good looking twins "

'What on earth did you do that for. ? Oh Mother you're so embarrassing!'

It was ages before she met the man of her dreams who loved her too.

'I chose you but not my parents.'

'It's very kind of you to invite your poor old mother-in law.'

The woman beside her rustles her sweets, interrupting her reverie.

' Never been a huge fan of ballet. 'Who wrote the music?'

'Tchaikovsky.'

'Ah yes. Tchaikovsky. I suppose you think I'm a Philistine. Of Course if you know your Bible you'll be aware that Goliath was a Philistine. The giant who was killed by David.'

' Yes I did know that. And ofcourse, if you know the real fairy tale behind this version, you'll be aware a quartet of rose bearing suitors doesn't appear . And the prince's mother was also a giant, who planned to eat her son's new bride, but got boiled to death when she fell in the cooking vessel as the feast was prepared.'

stirred pot pourri

from dried up petals

bitter aromas

Diana Webb

the longest day
away from home
after the fight
I keep checking the phone
for his text message

another rejection...
the goose plucks
at its plumage

Neena Singh

an open window
my neighbor's dinner inspires
my own

I would love for you
to see yourself through my
rose-colored glasses

Jennifer Gurney

starry night
the way we lose
our innocence

slippery ground
the last time
we danced

Deborah Karl-Brandt

anniversary
digging out the old vinyl
underwear

snowdrop bells
pushing through the chill
of a stillborn child

John Hawkhead



roadside memorial
the chicory
blessing

Randy Brooks

cracking up
after all these years
her photo in my billfold

diaper check
cleared for take-off
on Daddy's shoulders

Randy Brooks

old stone wall
granddad's cement runs
through the mourners

moon shadows
creeping through the bedroom
a caught breath

Patricia Hawkhead

corn maze
from ear to ear
her smile

dark of the moon
the empty space
in a beggar's cup

fishing date
she reels me in
for a kiss

Andrew Markowski

universal donors

I still can't find
someone
to love

—

sinking into
my couch...
is the spot
worn out
or am I

dating the dumb jock the princess & the pea brain

necrofeelmeup

Susan Burch

family gathering --
on the entrance table
mobile phones

Tuyet Van Do

shoulder massage . . .
the ease of the wild duck
flying past

we each die alone a typo on the grave marker

late night argument
we blame
the bedroom feng shui

Kristen Lindquist

yard to yard our cat knows the neighbors' secrets

old hippie
my birkenstocks have brought me
this far

time after time the earworm sings me back to you

Pris Campbell

all that remains
after the divorce—
photographs

Tomislav Maretić

dead squirrel
I choose to be
ceremonious

slightly edited
my vow to live
authentically

Shawn Blair

Grandma's wallet-
album of children
who rarely come home

Genevieve S. Aguinaldo

Dal lake
a shikara drowns
in the mist

Debarati Sen

mornings with Dad
thank God for the Red Sox
or we'd never talk

week five
of a two-week project
port-a-potty

Tim Cremin

*green economy
even Aladdin conforms
low-energy lamp*



poem and photo: Oscar Luparia

Oscar Luparia

summer's end
a biplane pulls
the torn banner

spawning in the tap water forever chemicals

Petra Schmidt

memories
from another time ...
the old ViewMaster

Joseph P. Wechselberger

morning coffee
dark and bitter
thoughts

Timothy Daly



Maxianne Berger

fading daylight
a street singer lost
in her song

social stigma
she gets married
to her rapist

Ravi Kiran

Guinness on the house . . .
the songs go on
late into the night

Kathleen Trocmet



absent-mindedness i get better at forgetting

words/image(C)DStrange

Debbie Strange

baggage claim
overdressed
for her luggage

Marsh Muirhead

Living Will

morning mass
the rattle of pills
in grandma's purse

*a yellowed newspaper
from the day he was born*

knitting
another baby blanket
goes unused

*family photo
the tender touch
of the dust cloth*

a curio cabinet
full of memories

*autumn mist
sinking into the sill
satin moth*

Bryan Rickert/John Pappas

july fifth
beer bottles
wet with rain

summer crush
the creamsicles sweeter
at his neighbor's house

John Pappas

gallery scroll
revisiting my past
meals

a generation too late for me period panties

AI . . .
may not outwrite you
but will outlive you

Roberta Beach Jacobson

pez dispenser
the odd candid response
to how are you

Jerome Berglund

memorial day
following the parade
heavy rainfall

Anthony Lusardi

On Being Someone Other

He looks from my passport to me, then back again.

"You're Iranian?" he asks, scowling.

"No, I was born in Iran."

"Parents' nationality?"

"Father a Scot, mother, Assyrian."

"A Syrian?" His eyes widen.

"No, an Assyrian . . . you know, 'The Assyrian came down like a wolf in the fold . . .'" I trail off lamely. He gives me a funny look.

"And your husband?" pointing beside me.

"Originally from Baluchistan," I smile.

"Baluchistan? Where's that?"

"It's a province straddling Pakistan and Iran."

"Iran!" he barks. "So what would you say is your nationality?"

"I'm British," I retort, "as you can see from my passport."

"Hmm . . ." Unconvinced, he rifles through my suitcase. "Any contraband?"

safe landing—

a refugee child

clings to his father's neck

Ingrid Baluchi

Hindsight

The trick is knowing how to gauge a smile. My first mistake was not noticing that hers didn't make it up to her eyes. It was more like Mona Lisa's, barely a crack. My second was not knowing when to leave.

pointillism...
sometimes it's hard
to connect the dots

Reid Hepworth

long hot summer
not even doctors' visits
break the malaise

Christa Pandey

a plan
for the day
putting on my socks

now, old and fat
a waist is a terrible thing
to mind

Gil Jackofsky

neon lights
sizzling from dusk 'til dawn
buzz words

maternity dress
paternity suit
it's complicated

Rick Jackofsky

at dawn
the first subway starts
with vacant seats
and things of last night
left over

Teiichi Suzuki

Keepers

*visitors coming—
the museum guard
squares his shoulders*



Disability makes Richie suitable for few jobs other than standing in a gallery to dissuade people from touching the art, which he does diligently. He's a gentle soul who likes to stop by my little basement office to check that I'm okay.

Today he's telling me about the man he lives with, who sounds like a piece of work—abusive, even. Still, it's more than I want to know about his personal life and I working against a deadline so I'm only half-listening.

“ . . . he says he'll push me out the window if I don't do what he says.”

My fingers freeze on the keyboard. I glance up and down the hall. No one else is around—I'm on my own. Should I urge him to file a report, or will that put him in more danger? I respond with the only thing I can think of.

“How does this make you feel?”

He slowly processes the question and in a soft voice replies

“It scares me.”



*Am I
my brother's keeper—
at closing time
in a darkened gallery
the shadow of a sphinx*

Lmp

Linda Papanicolaou

2023

"Black Lives Matter"
deep in the weeds

Mary Arnold

bleached tampons
as if our insides
need whitening

white towels in the bathroom period blood drips
down my leg

heart on my sleeve
everyone
stares

Mary McCormack

linoleum squares
my careful steps
around him

Barrie Levine



pre-wedding jitters -
to take or not to take
his last name

Lavana Kray

Lavana Kray

The Journey

day after funeral
her pet parrot
fell silent

the smell of hospital
even after her funeral.

immersing ash...
the lightness
of letting go

outside the window
a butterfly flies away...
her thoughts fill my mind

half moon-
half of me left with her

daymoon-
whatever
remains of me

Ram Chandran

winning argument
grandma throws up
her devil horns

morning window
the bed
in her mirror

Daipayan Nair

turning the key
so much remains
unlocked

early snow . . .
etching his name
in copperplate

melting
in a whisky glass
my resolve

Gavin Austin

rudderless
I put my faith
in a garden rock

ouija board —
the sudden whiff
of mom's perfume

Mona Bedi

lacking (green)fingers
my neighbour's
lawn mower accident

Tracy Davidson

traffic jam
the hearse's driver
stares at me

soup kitchen
a gray-haired man scratching
his lottery ticket

unexpected pregnancy
I can't recall the first time
we made love

Chen-ou Liu

fading nimbus
memories of gods
clouded over

petro c. k.

keeping company
with the Himalayas
morning flight

Dipankar Dasgupta

airport bound
last glimpse of Dad
in the rearview

Audrey Quinn

pelting rain—
the nature
of a nature walk

tanning...
I prefer the shade
of mock orange

Tony Williams

Summer Clowns

On our next to last day at Wesley Pines, she talks me into performing in the talent show with her. We walk to the raised area at the front of the outdoor pavilion and sit down. She opens her mouth just so and knocks on her head. A song sails improbably out into space. I prop one leg on top of the other and flex my large calf muscle, assuming even the people in the back row can see it keeping time with her tune. Her face is still. It has to be. Mine breaks into a grin. I giggle, nervous that the other campers may think we're too silly, even for them. I tell myself, "Never mind! They're not going home with us. We can risk it all!"

abandoned church camp
dust devils take the stage

Gayle Worthy

rite of spring the cacophony of Coachella

following in her footsteps falling flat on my face

artificial plant a left-handed compliment

Cynthia Anderson

Rabbit Hole

The stuff we cram into our lifetimes found at garage sales. The detritus and accumulations of nearly a century of a woman's life, all on display for the world to see. I feel compelled to buy a curious small wooden handle, shaped by a lathe with a wheel attached to one end, donating ten dollars for the useless item. Online, I discover it is an antique pie crimper, something I never heard of. Hours and many sites later, I learn about the history of pie making which leads me to information on the merits and diseases of various apples. Late night, I find a photograph of the item on an auction site. " Made by Shakers at Canterbury, New Hampshire. Estimated value, between \$200 to \$300."

grandma's estate
her deep stained
grungy teapot
ideal for brewing
a perfect cuppa

John Budan

Berlin Wall
between me and
my old self

stap by step
Grandpa measuring
Grandma's absence

Bakhtiyar Amini

mothwing dust...
among her things
plans for renovations

Jo McInerney

Waiting to Begin

“You were a passenger princess, too, huh?” assesses the concertgoer beside us as they barrel on past misgendering me. I look at my clothes, male from head to toe, and still... not good enough.

binder imprints
on my chest
a lifetime
of wrong
impressions

Thomas A. Nouvel

even when
they are with him . . .
mommy

uncoupled
no longer
playing Eve

still
in the wrong body
morning hangover

Thomas A. Nouvel

Sail Away

I linger a bit longer, gazing at the ships moored in the harbor. A Lightning dinghy slips through the sultry evening into the docks.

When we were young, he and I would race the sunset on a Lightning like this one—past the sandbar where we'd skinny dip, past the school where he taught me how to coax a black racer out of the crawl space, past the bar that never checked our IDs...

The memories linger a bit longer as I say goodbye to the sunshine catching his smile and the adventures that we shared in our sailing days.

the sun slips
behind the horizon—
overdose

Colleen M. Farrelly

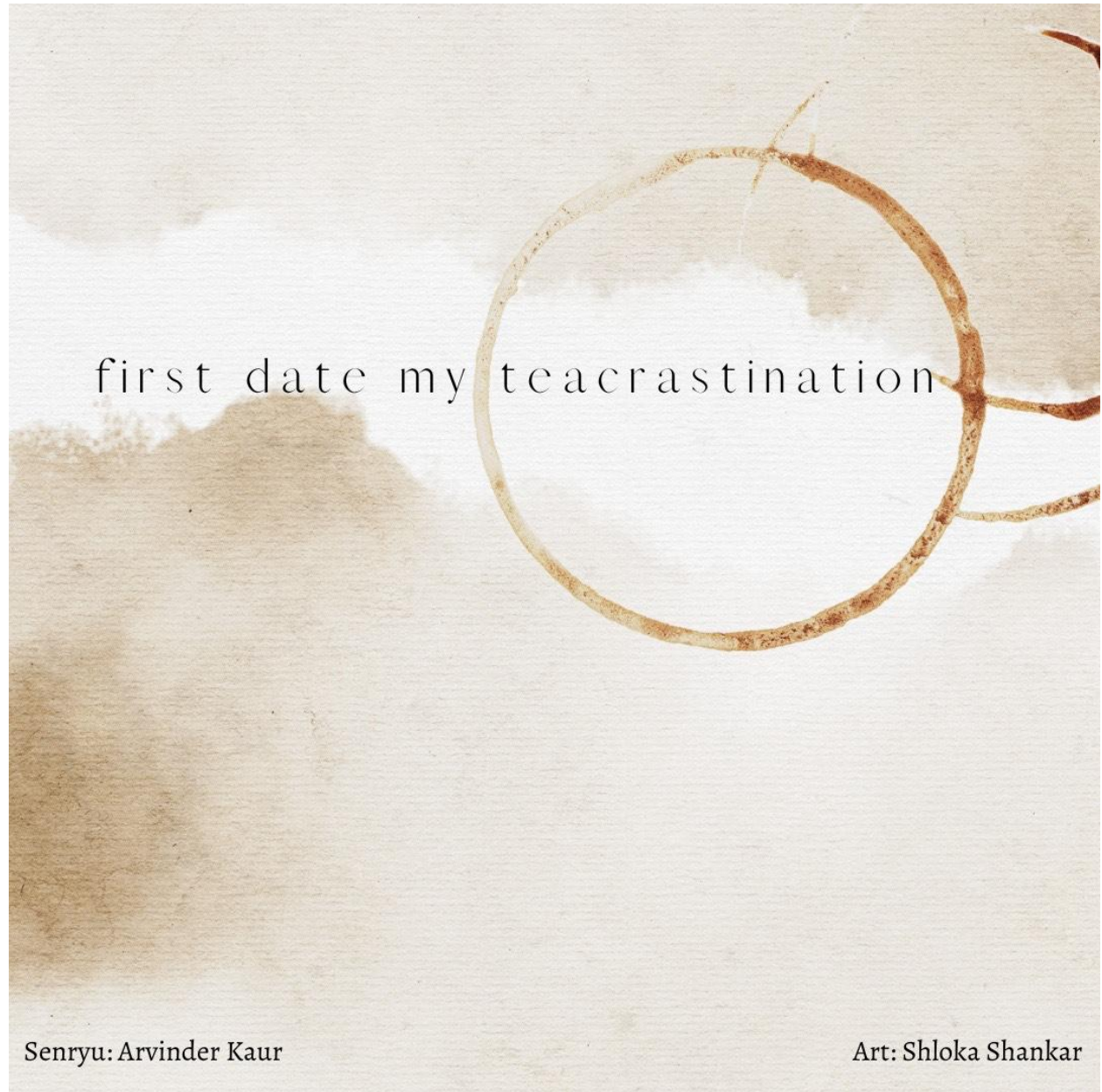
party day rushing the mower over dewy grass

between appointments

the grace

of nothing

Matt Snyder



throwaway food
the haunting eyes
of a jhuggi girl

Arvinder Kaur

minecraft
picking a way through
the in-laws

Joanna Ashwell

nurses burnout
triage and treatment
on the picket line

Caroline Giles Banks

hospital window
facing
the incinerator

forest walk a hundred grackles rise and spatter us

Ruth Holzer

the pause
between each mouthful
hospice care

wavering~
the light between
funeral songs

overthinking my way home

C.X. Turner

hidden
in raindrops
her tears

Mike Gallagher

beginning to journal
at seventy-five
a short story

Ann Sullivan

artist's studio
at the end of his brush
the song of the sea

Françoise Maurice

whale jawbone tracing my ancestry

In Wait

As a child, I perfected the leap from threshold to bed, clearing
the space where the dreaded monkey hands might reach up,
grab an ankle, drag me to a place darker than night. Even now,
I make a small hop into bed. Quick to slide my feet
beneath the covers.

swimming
 in the shallows
 a curved dorsal fin

Barbara Sabol

still unemployed
his face tattoo says
"cursed"

Joshua St. Claire

instant coffee grounds for divorce

hipster baker
her brownies all have
edgy pieces

space tourism
they orbit around the next
billionaire

Jenn Ryan-Jauregui

childhood
running as fast as
dad's legs can carry us

car racing
invisible cheering crowds
along the country road

Chen Xiaou

a cold day in...

The Good Humor Man, pied piper of the '50s and '60s, operated in nearly every American suburb, utilizing converted USPS Cushman scooters and Jeeps plastered with Barnham Baileyesque posters, placards and stickers each depicting an array of frozen treats and novelties: Creamsicles, Bomb Pops, King Cones, Drum Sticks and Snow Cones to name but a few.

Children anywhere within earshot of the incessant loudspeakers blasting such annoying children's classics as: *Three Blind Mice*, *Pop Goes The Weasel* or *This Old Man* over and over and over again, would be immediately reduced to Pavlovian-like creatures, begging their parents for spare change in order to satisfy a daily fix.

It's unfortunate that any home-bound, only child would be denied these simple pleasures. But, given one mother's xeno-germa-phobic fear of a "commie-financed gypsy conspiracy" to steal and or infect children under the guise of peddling ice cream, it was all but assured that neither would enjoy anything remotely akin to good humor.

Dante's Inferno
a gold star in the after-school
reading program

Michael Henry Lee

plein air painting
the cat's tail adjusts
the composition

Lori Becherer

half dressed
at the window
city night

reassuring me
about the needle
a tattooed nurse

heat warning
a butterfly lingers
in our manmade breeze

Susan Yavaniski



Lakshmi Iyer

he reads each word
until there are no more
and then we applaud
and make for the sparkling wine
and savory nibbles

Mark Gilbert

day after day
beneath the chapel's stained glass
a growing stain

breathing easier
the beetle completes
a bike path crossing

Richard L. Matta

tadpoles...
the first leg
of our journey

Laurie Greer

Touch

It was an old seminary. Framed photographs of thirty or forty priests in the year of their ordinations, hung along the corridor walls. Over the years the numbers had fallen away and when I was there for the exam board meeting, there was a mere handful of seminarians awaiting their results. After the meeting we had lunch consisting of plain fare followed by tinned pears and ice cream. As we mingled I felt deft fingers delicately tingle down the length of my spine. I was alarmed. It was the principal getting my attention. I made my excuses and walked quickly away from the seminary, down the tree-lined avenue.

faintly dappled -
everywhere
was losing light

Gerry Mc Donnell

golden hour
in-between maybe
and never mind

last light
at the hummingbird feeder
a temporary truce

Sarah Paris

she wrings her hair
rising from the lake:
rural Venus

Ram Krishna Singh



winter fog time to time i am

Vijay Prasad

Ascension Day
the grandparents order
a stair lift

dredge hole
the sun and half the town
on site

Pitt Buerken

open grave
not knowing why
I stop for a moment

salted caramel
how sticky
grief is

Maya Daneva



Nick T

*yesterday slipping
just out of reach
dementia*

Nick T

climate protest
a drum beats
out of time

Nick T

their tongues getting numb --
lovers lick
a shared snow cone

'don't make me tell you again'
woman tells her child
for the fifth time

John J. Dunphy

dressing screen–
the pleasure
of mystery

Michael J. Gallo

among her tattoos
the small scars
of self-harm

change of editor
a different me
is published

Erica Ison

Getting Things Done

My dad tells me he needs thirty-three tickets for my college graduation. I am the first one on both sides of my extended family to graduate from college. Neither one of my parents graduated from high school, my dad never even attended high school. The University of Oregon gives only six tickets to each undergraduate. My dad, a retired Chief Petty Officer, tells me to put out that I will pay \$15 for a ticket. I am shocked, and tell him he can't afford that. He says the tickets won't cost him a dime. He instructs me when someone approaches me with tickets, tell them my story about being first generation college. He predicts they will just hand me the tickets. I do what he says and over and over they hand me the tickets. During the second week of this activity I am called to the Provost office. I am a high profile anti-war activist so go in ready to defend myself. I say I earned my degree, that one of my papers on PTSD was added to the resource files at the school crisis center. The Provost interrupts me to say he knows I earned my degree that is not why he called me in. He asks if it's true I am going around offering money for graduation tickets. I ask if there is a rule against that, and he says no; he is just wondering why I'm doing that. I tell him my story. He asks if four tickets will help. The Provost asks me to wait a moment and goes into his office to make a phone call. A few minutes later he comes out and hands me four more tickets. I am speechless.

cake and champagne
and potluck dishes
a new recipe

Shasta Hatter

tongues
spoken in the meadow
red poppies

Jamie Wimberly

open window...
the oohs and aahs
of the tennis final

alpine hut...
stirring the clouds
in our tea

Lori Kiefe

In the Back Forty

The trick, they say, is to not reveal too much of yourself, but just enough to get a nibble. Then... Wham!
You got him hook, line, and sinker, the biggest catch of the year. The largest prize fish of your ordinary life.

foggy morning
only the call
of a loon

Reality eventually sinks in. The truth exposes itself, unintentionally, driven by the wrong word put on paper, for someone to read, whose sole comment will be, “what a miserable son of a bitch.”

minutes
before darkness
the one that got away

Mike Montreuil

bad luck again -
my short-sighted Cupid
hits the wrong mark

Natalia Kuznetsova

deepening lethargy -
more and more
Netflix episodes

Gillena Cox

stilettos
I slip
on his sarcasm

Marilyn Ashbaugh

cucumbers for
homemade dill pickles
jar size matters

lost desire marriage bed spreads

Eavonka Ettinger

large rosary beads
on the taxi's rear view mirror
a miniature bra

Maeve O'Sullivan

drought garden
silk flowers
fill the voids

she cries out
in the night
political nightmare

Susan Farner

stacked stones–
all the letters
she saved

his corduroy pants–
following the ridge
home

enso, why don't you call?

Sondra J. Byrnes

eschatology
the last round
of the spelling bee

designer gloves
I ask the pretty clerk
to give me a hand

Robert Witmer

first road trip
I'll go anywhere
she takes me

summer hike
twisting the stream
out of her shirt

M. R. Defibaugh

rubbernecking
along the river walk
a snowy egret

ballet recital—
an errant swan
toddles offstage

Mark Forrester

new relationship
a cat picks its way
along the fence-line

Cynthia Rowe

twittering sparrows –
my thoughts drift back to
the Mah Jong club

Year of the Rabbit—
whenever it's mentioned
the hounds prick up their ears

Lorin Ford

typesetting my subconscious to a fault

Shloka Shankar

family picnic
the summer I learned
my dad could cook

Kathabela Wilson

my new tattoo -
so one-dimensional
when you touch me

Ana Drobot

strawberries
their sweetness paid
in sweet

William Scott Galasso

senior village
the drugs arrive
at dusk

Vicki Ann Galasso

surashree

sins we pass around sleepless nights

Surashree Joshi



lovemaking candle
on the bottom shelf
besides Applied Calculus

Ron Scully

wanderlust
the RV test run
in the driveway

Christine Wenk-Harrison

stirring a Kafkaesque sorrow evening wind

autumn mirrors my futile makeup

Richa Sharma

butterfly house
an electric blue Ulysses
mates with my nose

Louise Hopewell

increasing
the volume of his snore
the dawn chorus

Jenny Fraser

neatly stacking
chocks at heathrow
the small things

violin variations—
walking past your house
on a misty morning

Jon Hare

broken promises
the misery
learned
in the words
trust me

permeating
the exercise class
the morning toot

Terrie Jacks

public library
a librarian's voice
the loudest

flying for 12 hours
weary faces avoiding
each other

trying to refinance
my home
the huge pile of
papers with
puzzling numbers

John J. Han

Eclipsed

the sticky road
under my shoes
stardust
from dusk till dawn
locusts on the windscreen

we all
are the sum of our parts
sometimes
a crackle of wipers
dearly wanting to move

this
is the solution
drink
as if the Red Sea
will be zipped

Kati Mohr

the flaw
has a beautiful curve
bathroom mirror

traffic jam
my grandchild asks
how long

Srinivasa Rao Sambangi

Botero museum-
even the pears are
rubenesque

David Cox

in the arms
of kudzu vines
an abandoned shack

windless day
touching bamboo chimes
for a clank

John Zheng

midwestern punk bar
the way nobody
looks at me

a thousand miles . . .
all the things
I wish you'd said

half of downtown shuttered
the site of my worst date
still in business

Allyson Whipple

how age finds us
the unplanned letting go
of work he loves

Claire Vogel Camargo

after midnight
the cost free rock concert
from the next door

Nina Kovačić

A Daddy's Dilemma

In the driveway, a 122 S Volvo, second-hand but in pristine condition. I'm washing and waxing it with my preschooler son when a loud pop and tinkle of glass shatter the peacefulness of a Sunday morning. Rushing to the front of the car, just too late.

"Look Daddy, I'm fixing the car!"

Another swing of the hammer takes out the second headlight.

"All done, Daddy!"

As a young parent, I don't know what to do. Would scolding scar him for life, make him insecure and lacking in self-confidence? Without scolding would he learn right from wrong?

I take the easy path, hold my tongue, smile, take his hand gently and lead him away.

"Daddy has to sweep up this glass because it will hurt you if you step in it".

Fifty years later and Daddy's still sweeping.

*his appointments
driven by
Daddy Uber*

Bryan D. Cook

on his deathbed
my friend wonders aloud
do you think there's still
time for me to
drink myself to death?

Jeffrey Walthall

cotton candy swirls
at the end of the boardwalk
flip flops stick behind

Mike Cullinane

among the rubble
a woman is carrying
her face in her hands

shooting stars
I rescind
my death wish

Frank Dietrich

salt in the bath
waiting on
my fish tail

Kimberly Kuchar

Harry Potter tour
London bus of kids
disappears through a tunnel

Charles Harmon

gathering
some eggs
--IVF

Nancy Brady

finding the word for angel in the puzzle isn't you

polymath my cyborg parrot

dan smith

slow kids at play

nervous behaviour
my cat opens
one eye

Adrian Bouter

joining the chorus
this Monday dawn
j-j-j-jackhammers

last hometown visit
a mistake in every way
but one

last thing I hear —
my anesthetist's complaint
about his pay

Keith Evetts

the first performer
sang so well the song I'd prepped -
amateur night

nursing home -
weekly euchre game down
another player

Lee Strong

an actor
in a minor role
my neighbor

Jack Galmitz

harbour dredging
how deep do i go
to find me

Susan Bonk Plumridge

night journey
my torch breaks
the silence

Herb Tate

the bedroom beckons--
I long for your warm embrace
electric blanket

Clodagh O Connor

scrabble night
the conversation turns

o
u
t
h

Debbie Olson

early morning
the baker kneads
his stiff shoulder

Lorelyn De la Cruz Arevalo

new neighbors
a different style of
breaking dishes

Mona Jordan

cabin fever banjos in the tree line

bullet holes in the moon waving daddy goodbye

Tim Roberts

coffin at the bottom
daughter throws in a rock
instead of soil

Wilbert Salgado

first love
the implacable necessity
of a phone

Stephenie Story

Years later...

I tucked your cologne between several layers of neatly ironed clothes after you left. But as it happens, you yourself couldn't leave with all of you. You still reside in different pages of my diary as in the recordings of the songs that you would very nonchalantly sing for me. There are also pictures that talk in their stillness, broken pieces of your carefully articulated gifts and obviously your letters. But it's your T-shirt (now mine) holding your essence that is the dearest of all. I take a long breath into your blue shirt whenever a long day's fight with this very odd world drains me out. Years roll in and out with you in the air to hold me tight, until today.

I comb through the clothes to reach out for your aura, giving you an anxious hug before I realize that you have left. Again.

holding me together lilac flame

Tazeen Fatma

group photo
the uncomfortable wait
before the flash

horror movie
tree shadows
reach for the bed

evening news
we share a drink
in the hemlock grove

Jay Friedenber

after months
only his letter returns
war

Devoshruti Mandal

colonoscopy
who knows where
the soul goes

prison tour
so much is free
advice

LeRoy Gorman

he said she said the pelting rain

Ruchita Madhok

jogging in the rain ...

the tears

I held back

typos

in my profile —

starting over

Kelly Sargent

edit
re-edit
and then delete
the message for him

Priti Khullar

my fingers
through your golden strands-
shucking corn

groundhog day -
six more weeks
of knitting weather

Bonnie J Scherer

*the red cheeks
of an old smuggler
summer babblings*



Haiku: Mircea Moldovan, Photo: Lăcrămioara Conea

Mircea Moldovan



Father's Day
thinking of the child
that almost was

Kevin Valentine

bushwhacked!
her father answers my tap
at her window

Kevin Valentine

she waits until after
he picks up the check to say
“we’re through”

Southern heirloom
so many hands have polished
this silver knife

David Oates

doesn't he know I'm hungover?

red-bellied woodpecker
jackhammers the gutter
above my window

Tohm Bakelas

Friday night
she's strung out again
on catnip

spicing up
the holiday meal
grandpa's use
of outdated
racial terms

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