

A photograph of a rocky streambed. The water flows from a small waterfall on the right side into a pool of water at the bottom. The rocks are light-colored and have a textured, layered appearance. The water is clear and reflects the surrounding rocks.

# The Road Not Taken

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***The Road Not Taken***  
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## Janice D. Soderling

Janice D. Soderling has recent and forthcoming work at *Hobart*, *Per Contra*, *Wasafiri*, *Alabama Literary Review*, *Measure*, *Evansville Review*, *Light*, *B O D Y*, *Synthesia*, *One Sentence Poems*, *The Rotary Dial*, *Raintown Review*, *Poetry Storehouse*, *Mezzo Cammin*, *Blink Ink*. She was guest associate editor for the *Able Muse* translation issue, serves as poetry editor at *Frostwriting* and has been a featured co-reader at TransatlanticPoetry on Air [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5t\\_zd7yfx88](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5t_zd7yfx88).

### Ditty

Will my lover come at dawn  
before the roosters crow and call?  
*Your lover, lass, has sailed and gone.*

Will my lover come at noon  
before the wild wheat stretches tall?  
*Your lover, lass, will not come soon.*

Will my lover come at night  
before the green leaves fail and fall?  
*Your lover, lass, lies deathly white.*

Will my lover comfort me,  
before my bonny baby crawls?  
*Your lover, lass, is drowned at sea  
and feeds the fishes faithfully.*

## Old Lesbia Reminisces Over Jealous Lovers

(*Quis nunc te adibit? cui videberis bella?*- Catullus 8).

She wonders where they've gone to  
those lovers full of blame,  
who well knew what they wanted,  
though they fumbled for her name;

who stared up at her window,  
who sang outside her door,  
who came late nights, half-drunken,  
where they had come before;

who cursed and raged, unwilling  
that she should pick and choose  
some other, hotter lover;  
that they were last night's news;

whose verse declared time's tailwind  
would dry her flowing charms,  
while they renewed their pleasure in  
some younger beauty's arms;

that she would fade and wither,  
a husk, an empty shell.  
It's true time passed for her, but time  
whizzed by for them as well,

who bounced their small round pebbles  
like moonlight off her wall.  
Indeed, their loss exceeds her loss.  
They cannot come at all.

## **Unnamed**

That sound you hear at midnight,  
like the clatter of old bones,  
is the skeleton in your closet  
that brings you sighs and groans.

It sleeps all day so comfy  
on a trundle bed of stone,  
but dances on your nightstand  
to make your mind its own.

Its rattle is a promise.  
It refuses to be gone.  
It moved in and it came to stay.  
You will not die alone.

## Michael Fraley

Michael Fraley has been a recent contributor to *Plainsongs* and *Blue Unicorn*, among other poetry magazines. M.A.F. Press published his chapbook *First-Born*. Tamafyhr Mountain Press published his e-chapbook *Howler Monkey Serenade*. Michael's poems have appeared in five countries. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography from the San Francisco Art Institute, and a Master of Arts in Writing from the University of San Francisco. Michael lives with his wife and daughter, and three cats, within walking distance of the San Francisco Zoo. Besides reading, he also enjoys hiking, photography, and vintage cameras.

### Daughters of the Waterfall

Though some are short and some are tall  
And some of middle size,  
The daughters of the waterfall  
Are giants in my eyes.

I love the freedom of their souls  
As, gathered in their glory,  
They carry water in clear bowls  
And weave their changing story.

The animals both large and small  
Who congregate near by  
Are not afraid to heed their call  
To share a midnight sky.

The daughters are a moving sight  
Composed of liquid lines,  
Accentuated by the light  
That filters through the pines.

Their memories are long and old,  
Encompassing the past  
When all the land was frozen cold,  
When seas were deep and vast.

The daughters of the waterfall  
Will come for me, I pray,  
When I'm no longer in the thrall  
Of mortal work and play.

## **The Zebra**

With Mohawk mane and lashes long,  
The zebra is a fashion plate  
Who easily can find a mate.

The zebra has done nothing wrong---  
Do not mistake his stylish stripes  
For prison garb of tougher types.

The zebras are not all the same;  
Each one is marked distinctively  
To match his personality.

Like Libras well-behaved and tame,  
They seem deceptively at ease,  
But soon kick up their heels when pleased.

The zebra is a gentle horse  
Who seldom will resort to force.  
The herd protects him; you will find  
He's never far from his own kind.



## **The Ostrich**

The ostrich is a gorgeous girl  
Who knows she is, and likes a fuss  
About her legs so glamorous.

Her flirting lashes keep their curl;  
Her beak is round and speaks of bliss,  
As if she's waiting for a kiss.

Her feathers are a light soufflé,  
A froth above her legs so strong  
And underneath her neck so long.

Contrary to the tired cliché,  
She doesn't hide her head in sand;  
Her speed is her defence on land.

She shares a common nest--each hen  
Deposits eggs, from five to ten.  
In one month's time, the young can run  
As fast as any full-grown one.

## Donald Mace Williams

Donald Mace Williams's poems have run in *Measure*, *The Raintown Review*, *The Anglican Theological Review*, *American Arts Quarterly* online, *The Texas Observer*, *Barrow Street*, and a good many other magazines. His narrative poem "Wolfe," a ranchland retelling of the *Beowulf* story, ran in *Rattle* in the winter of 2008, and the magazine published it a few months later as a chapbook. (His Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Texas was on the structure of the long line in *Beowulf*.) He does not yet have a full-length book of poems, partly because I've written nearly all my poetry since retiring from a career as a journalist and professor.

### Clearing the Sight

Not long into my walk, where a vacant lot  
slips under a barbed wire fence and becomes the plains,  
(sometimes becomes a poem, aha), I watched  
a roadrunner cross the street, stop, kooky brained,  
and run on, in – plainly – a grounded takeoff on me.  
Then, wow, a gull whisked by, sky shears in white,  
and later a jackrabbit sprang up, instantly  
sprinting and bounding, soon vanishing, tall ears last.  
Great, I thought, me in three aspects, muddled  
and earthbound, ethereal, fleetingly, skimmin'ly mixed.  
But then: hey, you're eighty-four. Why do you keep on muzzing  
the air like twenty? Grow up and think what you think.  
OK. Scratch all that. I'll try, this once, to tell  
just what I saw, let what befalls befall.  
Ready? I'm not sure this starkness works at all.  
A jackrabbit. A roadrunner. A gull.

## Wordlessness

When I'm outside and a cool breeze springs up,  
I think *oh great, delightful*. Then I wonder  
How robins, say, or jackrabbits enjoy it  
Without the words to tell their senses so.  
My pleasure, like my pain, has to pass through  
The filter of the alphabet, not like,  
Say, horses, which express their joy by running,  
Or mockingbirds, which seem to sing more brightly.  
But I, spreading my arms to the cool air,  
Think words for what I feel, so it's removed  
One step from real. For real, I need to lose  
Word power and, that done, avoid thinking,  
*Good, it's gone now. No words at all. Aphasia.*

## Robert Holden

Brad Holden is a doctoral candidate in English literature at Yale University. He has studied one year in Germany and translate poetry from German and Greek. He has also published two poems in *The Lyric*.

### Milton's Wife

I then was beautiful when he beheld  
My maiden form, and womanhood's first flush  
Adorned my cheek. A child almost. And so  
Me seems it now, whene'er a maiden of  
Uncertain age I see—just seventeen  
And innocent of all the ways of men.  
Conjugal bliss he wanted, bliss desired,  
And gladly would I then, his chosen bride,  
Have pleased, if pleased I could, his great demands.  
But awkwardness made clumsy both our hands.  
And when I tried to speak, his study door  
Was closed, yea, closed to me. So how to please  
I knew not aught to do. My mother warned  
Me only of the pain, and he, in spite  
Of lucubrations long, no romance knew,  
Nor gave—no word to please a woman's heart.  
He sang for years and yet for me no song,  
No verse, no sonnet sweet or sign of love.  
To Latin meter were my eyes as blind  
As those of my two daughters fair—unloved,  
Untaught by him and his ambition great.  
Shut from the door as I, and made to be  
As quiet in the home as in a church.  
He saw them not when he had eyes to see.  
Their maturation was unmarked, unknown.  
And the delightful things they lisped, a child's  
First halting words, were soon resented as  
Another interruption from his work,  
The chosen work in which he'd live, not them.  
His studies were his life, unliving books,  
But studies how to live were all unknown,  
To love unread. He concourse claimed with all  
The mighty dead, but me no gentle word  
Could spare. If conversation was his wish,  
As he professed in print, to my great shame,  
Why did he marry me?—a child? A girl  
Whose swelling breasts, like to forbidden fruit,  
Were riper than her mind? Whose body showed  
A fitness that no mind unschooled could reach?  
I knew I disappointed though I knew

Not how. But even in the pain I tried  
To make myself more meet, or worthy of  
His love, his thoughts, his pen. The books that lined  
His shelves were not by me untouched, but read—  
Though none was there to teach—and wisdom that  
I found was not ignored. If every book  
Was not to me alike an aid, or food  
For palate unrefined, I found what was,  
And what I learned filled me with pride. My name  
Was Mary and I taught myself to read.



## **The Coming Cold**

The drowsy spider creeps beneath the door  
To flee the coming cold. She'll dream away  
The winter in some corner overhead,  
Unseen by any human eye, though near  
Enough to feel the fire's heat, its glow  
To see—whene'er she wakes from summer dreams  
Of buzzing flies. Her silken tapestries,  
Abandoned to the cold, shall be the prey  
Of autumn winds that tear the gossamer  
To dancing ribbons in the breeze, and soon  
The dew that pearled each thread shall ice become,  
Until the frost upon the window pane  
Weaves webs as fine as those the summer saw.

## **Susan McLean**

Susan McLean is a professor of English at Southwest Minnesota State University. Her first poetry book, *The Best Disguise*, won the 2009 Richard Wilbur Award, and her second book, *The Whetstone Misses the Knife*, won the 2014 Donald Justice Poetry Prize. Her poems have appeared in *Mezzo Cammin*, *Measure*, *Light*, *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, and elsewhere. Susan also translates poetry, and a book of her translations of over five hundred of Martial's Latin epigrams will be published by the University of Wisconsin Press in December 2014.

### **Petrarch's About-Face**

I'm not the first whose vows of chastity  
succumbed to glimpses of a stunning blonde.  
Who, though, has sinned so ineffectually,  
courting in vain for decades and beyond?

I thought my verse might soften her resistance  
or pique her vanity. Instead, it filled her  
with irritation at my rude persistence.  
She shunned my pleas, and now the plague has killed her.

I kiss your rod, Lord. Thank you for these hurts  
that turn my pen to good, my thoughts to God.  
Whip harder, Lord! Give me my just deserts  
for trying to seduce Madame de Sade.

## Mary O'Donnell

Mary O'Donnell's poetry has been published in a number of places, including *The Greensboro Review*, *Coraddi*, *The Lyricist*, and an anthology of Maryland poets, *Montpelier Plus Four*. She has an MFA in creative writing and a PhD in literature from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

### Death From the East

*(Genoa, 1346)*

Ten ships were they, to Genoa come in,  
The sail-men sick and dying at the oars.  
The Lord has sent his judgment on our sin.

From Persia, and from Cathay, and the Indies,  
They should have brought us silks, and gold, and more—  
Ten ships were they, to Genoa come in.

The sail-men stumbled up the plank, their skin  
All blackened with the strange and putrid sores.  
The Lord has sent his judgment on our sin.

The lords, the princes bold, and all their kin  
Did leave the city, fleeing by the scores;  
Ten ships were they, to Genoa come in.

So too the priests, though they should stay within  
the city gates, comfort the dying poor:  
The Lord has sent his judgment on our sin.

And now 'tis come for me; my head does spin.  
*Unto thy hands I give my spirit, Lord—*  
Ten ships were they, to Genoa come in:  
The Lord has sent his judgment on my sin.

## **In the Far Corner of the Photo, Here**

In the far corner of the photo, here,  
is the stone footbridge that we used to take  
down to the drugstore. Underneath, the creek  
is low this year, but I remember years  
we scaled the banks, watching the waters rise  
far above flood level. And nearby, see  
the windows we called home. Behind the trees  
the old girls' school remains. We change the size  
of things, remembering, and that, I know,  
is why that hill was steeper when I climbed  
it every day, and not because this photo  
is an aerial view. The passing time  
should also change my memory of you;  
yet you remain the Judas that I knew.

## **J.W. Mark**

JW Mark is a poet living in Stow, Ohio. Publications to include his work include *The Ampersand Review*, *Eunoia Review*, *The Midwest Literary Magazine*, *flashquake*, and *The North Chicago Review*.

He is the author of a novel, entitled *Artifice*, as well as a book of poems entitled *Patched Collective*. He can be contacted at [jwmarkmail@gmail.com](mailto:jwmarkmail@gmail.com) or through his website [jwmark.wordpress.com](http://jwmark.wordpress.com).

## **Candy Maker**

compose divine creations, cast  
your sugared spoons to bowls  
your swivels swift curate the bits  
of candied canes and sticks

which blended brew a treasured bliss  
by sweetened dreams arrive  
the bastioned fat from which we'll sleep  
regretful thick and soft.



## Jean L. Kreiling

Jean L. Kreiling is a past winner of the *String Poet* Prize, the *Able Muse* Write Prize, and *The Lyric Quarterly* Prize; she has been a finalist for the Frost Farm Prize, the Howard Nemerov Sonnet Award, and the Richard Wilbur Poetry Award. Her poetry has appeared widely in print and online journals, including *American Arts Quarterly*, *Angle*, *The Evansville Review*, *Measure*, and *Mezzo Cammin*, and in several anthologies.

### The Sale

So much hangs on those words: "For Sale."  
The sign stands by Aunt Martha's fence,  
each rotting fifty-year-old rail

gray ballast for the innocence  
of large white lettering on red  
and commerce plied with confidence.

A house, an acre, and a shed  
make up the modest property;  
its patchwork past spins out one thread

that weaves three futures randomly:  
Aunt Martha's chance for peace of mind,  
a buyer's hopes, a realtor's fee

all hinge on papers not yet signed.  
The house needs paint, its roof is old,  
the plumbing older—but behind

the worn façade, the buyer's told,  
the house has good bones. Priced to sell,  
it's clean and quaint. Okay, then. Sold.

Aunt Martha sighs and weeps a spell,  
but with her own bones quick to break,  
"assisted" life might suit her well.

Relieved, the realtor comes to take  
the sign down; she's already spent  
the slim commission that she'll make.

The buyer, too, counts every cent;  
she's just divorced, and still upset  
by her own breakage. She'll invent

a new life, bear new ballast, set  
old griefs aside. She'll start by facing  
aging roof tiles, mortgage debt,

and rotting things that need replacing.

## **A Poet's Pantoum to Herself**

Revise, recast, redraw. Begin again,  
and make it new. Be brave: erase a lot,  
and make yourself invisible, for then  
you may be read more clearly. Maybe not.

To make it new, be brave. Erase a lot,  
add color, find a fresher simile.  
You may be read more clearly (maybe not)  
if you make tried-and-true your enemy.

Add color, find a fresher simile,  
observe as spiders weave and truckers drive.  
If you make tried-and-true your enemy,  
then even asphalt roads can come alive.

Observe. As spiders weave and truckers drive,  
see flecks and dents and grubby undersides;  
when even asphalt roads can come alive,  
then you'll discover where the next word hides.

From flecks and dents and grubby undersides,  
you'll build a brightly lit room of your own  
and then discover where the next word hides—  
you'll learn the lesson that you've always known.

You build a brightly lit room of your own,  
and make yourself invisible, and then  
you learn the lesson that you've always known:  
revise, recast, redraw, begin again.

## **Martin Elster**

Martin Elster, author of *There's a Dog in the Heavens!*, serves as percussionist for the Hartford Symphony Orchestra and is a composer. His poetry has appeared in journals and anthologies, including *The Society of Classical Poets*, *The Chimaera*, *The Rotary Dial*, *Lucid Rhythms*, and *New Sun Rising: Stories for Japan*.

### **Walking With the Birds and the Bones Through Fairview Cemetery**

The cardinals calling from the oaks and maples  
scattered across this boneyard are my pals;  
they're never flustered by the festering dead  
scattered beneath the lawn. A katydid  
hidden in the leaves of a sycamore  
cheers me with its chirrs. The stiff's can't mar  
my breezy mood provided that my ears  
are titillated by these songsters' airs;  
nor can the mourning dove, whose voice is sadder  
than sad, coo-ooo-ing beyond a brake of cedar.  
But as a scimitar moon and Venus gleam  
and glimmer on the stones through thickening gloom,  
some bird of prey unnerves the night with cries  
that likely freak the phoebes, jolt the crows,  
and even shock the shrikes. Above the town,  
alone and hearing such an eerie tune,  
I pause and think how every day I borrow  
my atoms from a cosmos that will bury  
my hundred trillion cells in a cemetery  
whose birds insist there's nothing here that's scary  
while, eyeballing me, half a dozen deer  
proclaim one's thoughts should never be so dour.  
From fawn to doe to buck, each barely stirs  
as, one by one, the night unveils its stars.

## **Laurie Kolp**

Laurie Kolp is a graduate of Texas A & M University, Laurie Kolp now lives in Southeast Texas with her husband, three kids and two dogs. Some of her publications include *Poets & Artists* (GOSS183 Publishing Group), *Writer's Digest*, Diane Lockward's *The Crafty Poet*, *cho*, *Miller's Pond*, *The Fib Review*. Laurie's first full-length poetry collection, *Upon the Blue Couch*, was published by Winter Goose Publishing in April 2014. Learn more at <http://lauriekolp.com>.

### **A Blackbird**

Written on the blackbird's wings,  
etched within its eyes: life  
that in a broken moment rings  
darkness, veil of night.

Arise, thy soul, fly free,  
arise among the dead.  
Fear not the light you see,  
embrace the warmth instead.

## **John MacLean**

John MacLean is a retired English teacher who has also been a merchant seaman, mill hand, janitor and assistant district attorney. His poetry has appeared in *The Road Not Taken*, *The Lyric*, *Avocet*, *Spitball*, *14 x 14*, and *Kota Press*. His book, *If You Teach It, They Will Read*, is published by Rowman and Littlefield.

### **The Loving Sands of Gobero, Niger**

The naked bones can't tell us how they died,  
Perhaps drowned in the ancient inland sea  
Now buried by waves of Sahara sand  
That fill these gaping mouths once more set free.

The scientists come seeking other bones  
Of prehistoric hippos, crocodiles,  
That raised their young along the leafy banks  
Long gone to dessert for two thousand miles.

They find bones of a mother and two boys,  
And carbon proves them strewn with flowers extinct,  
The mother's crossed hands cradle one son's head,  
The older boy's arms round his brother linked.

Millennia are measured in dry bones,  
A father's life in one such tragic day,  
His loves left buried on that ancient shore,  
Till dessert winds scour sand and bones away.



## **A Visit**

I'm leaving Santiago, and the time  
That's left for travels, will not bring me back.  
I sip my coffee, hear a distant chime,  
My rented courtyard sweet with palm and quince.

There was a time my life was full of years,  
The world so full of places that sped by  
In floods of half-regarded imagery.  
No reason then to think I'd not return.

Done with Neruda's house and market tours,  
I watch the Andes - once must be enough –  
Their melting peaks strong in the morning sun,  
Stark testament to all things only lent.

We leave few scratches on the stones we've tread,  
But couples pass me on the cobbled street,  
Graffiti sings from an abandoned store:  
"El amor es mas fuerte," the walls cry.

## **Allen Ireland**

Allen Ireland's work has appeared in *Candelabrum*, *Blue Unicorn*, and *The Lyric*.

### **Private Meeting**

Five deer were gathered for a private meeting  
This evening at the bottom of the lawn.  
I opened the back door and yelled a greeting:  
The buck let out a snort, and all were gone.

A hunter, then, for trophy or for table,  
Might have unleashed his rifle's dormant power.  
A nodding grandmother, if she were able,  
Might have stayed up to watch them for an hour.

An artist might have taken brush or pencil  
And drawn them in the beauty of the season.  
But I'm the fiend, the aberrant, the rebel.  
I violated nature for no reason.

## **Sherman Poultney**

Sherman K. Poultney is a native New Englander who now resides in North Carolina. He has published his poems, short stories, songs, plays, and photos in various media over the last 49 years and held public readings of his plays with the Fairchester Playwrights. He has a PhD degree in physics from Princeton University. He teaches a structured poetry workshop using the technique taught by LaureAnne Bosselaar, then of Sarah Lawrence.

### **Call Back the Morning**

Try as she might to remember at evening,  
she can't hear again when her newborn first cried.  
If only one could call back the morning.

The photo in her hand doesn't stop her failing  
to feel again how her infant first suckled.  
Try as she might to remember at evening.

A snapshot shows her baby crawling,  
but she has no mental image of when her baby first walked.  
If only one could call back the morning.

Another photo has her wishing  
to hear again when her toddler first talked.  
Try as she might to remember at evening.

She often thinks back to her handling  
of when her child first balked.  
If only one could call back the morning.

The boy ran out one day despite her warning  
into the path of an oncoming truck.  
Try as she might to forget at evening,  
if only one could call back the morning.

## **Robert Boucheron**

Robert Boucheron is an architect in Charlottesville, Virginia, website [boucheronarch.com](http://boucheronarch.com). His stories, essays and poems appear in 2014 in *Bangalore Review*, *Belle Rêve*, *Bloodstone Review*, *Commonline Journal*, *Conclave*, *Coup d'État*, *Digital Americana*, *Grey Sparrow*, *Lowestoft Chronicle*, *Milo Review*, *Origami Journal*, *Outside In Literary & Travel*, *Poydras Review*, *Ray's Road Review*, *Rotary Dial*, *Short Fiction (UK)*, *Slippage*, *Work Literary Magazine*.

### **The Wanderer**

As one who has no road to find,  
I wander long and late,  
And dare not pause to look behind,  
Because I would not wait.

The first to leave and last to know,  
I wander late and long,  
Which way the fickle gust may blow  
The burden of my song.

Without provision, pack, or guide,  
I wander long and late,  
Yet some day I will surely stride  
Through that cloud-castle gate.

## **The Baker**

I bought a sack of wheat flour  
As white as virgin snow.  
I lit the oven before the hour  
The sun begins to show.

I mixed fresh milk with barley malt,  
Bright honey from the hive,  
A brown egg, a pinch of salt,  
And yeast that foamed alive.

Allowed to rest, the mass grew big.  
I kneaded hard by hand,  
Added sweet raisins, bits of fig,  
And shaped the dough to stand.

I baked the loaf until it turned  
Golden from the heat.  
This bread my morning's labor earned  
I give you now to eat.

## **Katia Raina**

Katia came to this country from Russia in 1993 at the age of 15, and fell in love with her new home, and with the English language. An intern for a literary agency, Katia is in her final semester for the MFA Writing for Children and Young Adults program at the Vermont College of Fine Arts. She has stories and non-fiction for young readers published in *Faces*, *Calliope*, *Skipping Stones* and other magazines.

### **For My Grandmother: A Sestina**

Once I wrote a poem  
About a grandmother  
Who was sitting by the window  
Sitting there and knitting  
A woolen skirt for her granddaughter  
I made the poem rhyme all pretty

Too bad it was a lie, a pretty  
Glaring one too; did I hope the poem's  
Shape would make it true? A dutiful granddaughter,  
I only wanted to craft a perfect present for grandma  
Did I forget you weren't much of a knitting  
Type, or that you didn't have much time for windows?

I'm guessing now what I wrote was a window  
Into what could have been; a greeting card, a pretty  
Picture, an idea; dreams knitted  
With a thread of how it really was, into a poem  
Neatly fitted into a moment between a grandma  
And a granddaughter.

In truth it was the granddaughter  
who liked wasting her childhood hours by the window  
while her grandmother  
now gutted squirming fish by the kitchen sink, now shuffled the washrag back and forth  
across the floor of their two rooms, now shopped for prettiest  
things she could find in Soviet shops to dress her lazy budding poet,  
Skirts, hats, boots, scarves, imported, warm, nicely knitted.

How neatly our lives were knitted  
One into another, the matching granddaughter-  
Grandmother threads; lyrical and mundane, like a poem  
Your busy patterns and my idle ones, were just two sides of the same window,  
My idleness kept me busy and your busyness kept you pretty  
young in your cool blue turtleneck each morning, an accomplished grandmother;

with cool arms and smooth knees, an engineer grandmother, a teacher grandmother,  
a belt in hand to threaten my shaky inky letters into more recognizable shapes, your brows  
knitted

Together into a single line, as you whipped the chair (never me!) and still you were so pretty,  
Your eyes blazing worried love scorn tenderness upon your granddaughter,  
As she practiced her letters, so that one day beyond your emerald-tinted eye windows,  
I could find a way into your soul, then map the route into a silly poem.



## **Tovah Yavin**

Tovah Yavin's poetry has appeared in magazines such as *The Formalist*, *Blue Unicorn*, *Piedmont Literary Review*, *The Lyric*, *Jewish Affairs*, and *Horizons*. Her middle-grade novel, *All-Star Season*, received both the Sydney Taylor Manuscript Award and a 2008 Notable Book Award from the Association of Jewish Libraries. She has published short fiction for children in a variety of trade and educational magazines and in anthologies. Her work can be further explored at [www.TovahSYavin.com](http://www.TovahSYavin.com). She lives in Maryland with her husband, 2 dogs and 3 cats and frequently visits her children and grandchildren.

## **HIS PARENTS**

It rained the day our son died  
No one had predicted rain  
No one said the wind would sigh  
That way or spring would freeze. So, who's to blame

When tornadoes strike,  
Roaring through the sky,  
Reducing homes to splintered spikes,  
Choosing whose sweet grandma dies,

Whose lives will blow away?  
So, we stand, backs straight, shoulders squared.  
To see him through this passageway,  
To say goodbye with dust and prayers.

Then take away his memory,  
His sun-shined, gilded memory.

## **Ted Charnley**

Ted Charnley holds a BA from Quinnipiac University, a JD from the University of Maryland and has studied poetry at Johns Hopkins University. He lives with his wife in a 200-year old farmhouse they restored in western Maryland. There, he herds woodchucks, practices chainsaw topiary and makes offerings to the nymphs of the springs.

### **Orrery**

I was the Earl of Orrery and thus  
the lord of my estates, ascended from  
a shipwreck found off Antikythera.

And you, my moon, were lured and overcome  
by slow and grave attractions, tighter orbits.  
Lording my estates, ascending from

my place, I whirled in geocentric order.  
Quietly, some clockwork gears would turn  
to other grave attractions, wider orbits

go eccentric. Arms of bronze and iron  
no longer hold the space between us true.  
And you escape, as clockwork gears still turn

till I (around whom all revolve but you)  
am not your earth, but just a distant sun.  
So nothing holds the space between us true

when ancient models rust and come undone.  
I was the Earl of Orrery and thus  
your earth, I thought, not just a distant sun  
or relic found off Antikythera.

## **Brittany Smith**

Brittany is an old soul, born in Charleston, SC. She's been writing poems since about age 10, starting with birthday poems and progressing to small school competitions and established literary journals. Brittany has written a variety of other poems including "Losing You's Worth Loving You," which was published in the fall of 2010. She currently resides in Austin, TX working as a bilingual educational assistant and pursues her love of writing every chance she gets.

### **Nothing's Changed**

It kills me to be apart  
But I haven't the slightest, mildest, faintest way in which to start  
A meaningful face to face conversation  
How to build on the relation  
We share

But it rips me apart  
It pulls painfully like a sore tear  
Along a tightly woven seam  
For I mean  
To hold you tight  
To let you know you are so perfectly, unconditionally right  
For me

But be  
It as it might  
My words fumble  
Only sounds, syllables, & sentences full of unimportance  
And lack of substance  
Spill forward

And each moment lost  
Is a tug on the cord  
Of my heart

For I've come to find  
You're essential for my mind  
To pass the time  
To lay bad thoughts to rest  
My will power, at its greatest test

As I resist the urge to stare endlessly into your eyes  
As my voice tries  
To stomach up what needs to be said  
When my eyes are lowered just to try to form the words that your lips just read  
For my hearing has seemed to have wavered  
And while I averted my eyes from yours  
They're now just fixated on the contours

Of the subtly sweet, potentially sensation-filled, lips that fall into my scope of range  
But when all isn't said....  
Nothing's changed