

HERON TREE

FIVE : 2017-2018

angels bells breath coins
crowds curve decade direction
dunes eddies frames garden gates
habit hands hooks instant keepsake
keys line loops marble moss mouse
nestlings owl place pollen pond
radius redbuds rubble skin
snap thaw touch
voice way



HERON TREE : FIVE

EDITED BY

Carol Berg

Matthew Burns

Chris Campolo

Rebecca Resinski

This volume collects poems
published on the HERON TREE website
between February 2017 and February 2018.
herontree.com / info.herontree@gmail.com

© 2018 by Heron Tree Press

All rights revert to individual authors upon publication.

HERON TREE

FIVE : 2017-2018

HERON TREE PRESS
CONWAY, ARKANSAS

HERON TREE : FIVE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Each author name is linked to the contributor information, and each title is linked to the poem.

- 1 JAMES OWENS | A Prayer for Unison
- 2 MARTY WILLIAMS | The Clearing (For My Father)
- 3 LOIS MARIE HARROD | Love Poem Stuttering towards a Metaphor
- 4 KYCE BELLO | Equinox
- 5 MICHELE LEAVITT | First and Last
- 6 M. S. ROONEY | Touching
- 7 SANDRA K. BARNIDGE | Orbit
- 8 ALICIA ELKORT | After the death of both parents
- 9 DAMIEN URIAH | What She Said When I First Came to the Community
- 10 RONNIE HESS | Middleton Owl
- 11 ANDREA POTOS | My Grandfather's Home
- 12 GILLIAN NEVERS | Letter to Dan from Rome
- 13 RYAN CLARK | Prairie
- 14 BURGI ZENHAEUSERN | Rubber Glove
- 15 STEVE KLEPETAR | In the Bushes
- 16 KARA DORRIS | Say you say
- 17 ANN E. MICHAEL | At a Girl Scout Lodge
- 18 JAN LEPERLE | After Running to My Daughter Late in the Night, She Tells Me Her Nightmare is
About Snakes, Not Poisonous, and a Little Bit of Bears
- 20 BRANDON KRIEG | Temple Builders' Lament
- 21 DAVID ANTHONY SAM | Unforgetting
- 22 PAT ANTHONY | Coots at Cedar Lake
- 23 STEPHANIE MCCARLEY DUGGER | First Syrup, On Making Molasses
- 24 E. H. THATCHER | Still Life
- 25 SHARON OLSON | In the Bowery
- 26 STEPHANIE MCCARLEY DUGGER | Lessons
- 28 ANGIE MACRI | They are not there:

29	DEBORAH BACHARACH Lot's Wife Addresses Her Audience
30	PAUL WIEGEL Uncoupling
31	PATRICIA J. MIRANDA Plotting
32	PHILLIP STERLING Fog
33	JENNIFER HAMBRICK Matryoshka
35	JEANNE WAGNER Gabriel and the Virgin: Fra Angelico's Annunciation
36	CAMERON SCHNEBERGER 8 Maxims for the Hickory Road Ghost
38	ALEC SOLOMITA My Love's in a Snowdrift
39	ALAN PERRY Exoplanet
40	KATIE MANNING The Book of Ice
42	CHRISTINE SWINT Letter to My Father at the Winter Solstice
43	BRADLEY SAMORE Winter Offering
44	NOTES
45	CONTRIBUTORS

JAMES OWENS

A Prayer for Unison

When my scattered longings rise to go, let it be
as if at dawn one of these vast autumn flocks

of blackbirds has paused to liven our maples
with lilt and chatter, and to stand under the trees

is to coalesce at the stem of an intricate,
now waking, dark brain as it thinks

of itself. The birds shift with never a rest
from branch to branch, tree to tree,

taking off and darting an arc out over
the road and homing back, sometimes

a dozen or so patrolling in formation
above the dim yard, the whirr of their wings

in tune as they pass—and each is separate,
a nerve firing into motion that seems random,

while the flock is still a unified being,
a mind aware within its subtle radius,

so that when it is time, all silence their chattering
to rise in a whispery rush and leave as one

into the brightening, airy spaces over the earth.

MARTY WILLIAMS

The Clearing (for My Father)

That year, well before thaw, he cleared
a path through scrub alder and spruce,
halted where the slope flattened out,
drove a stake into the hard ground.

He sunk pilings for a foundation and returned
to build a cabin on the bog. Alone, foot stopped
on the shovel, he heard a loon. Knew the raunch
of bear nearby, outside the circle of light.

Season after season, he left his work in town,
went there to that clearing. Peeled back the trees
with his axe, salted the bog with gravel
from the lakebed. There were summers
full of sawdust and hammers,
wheelbarrow handles cleaved to his palm.

Warm in the snug, square cabin he dreamed a garden
full of flowers and daisies gleamed
bold and white in the evening. Made a home
for themselves there. In the face of the mountain,
on the shore of the lake.

In the afternoon, all wood smoke and gin, he watches
the young birches grow, block the lake from
his view. He sits there, still, into evening,
waiting for the loon or the bear to return.
Gravel sinks, the woodpile falls out of its rows.
Trees creep back into the clearing.

LOIS MARIE HARROD

Love Poem Stuttering towards a Metaphor

As a river remains
faithful, finding
its way down
down the mountain, switching
this way and that
round block and boulder,
sometimes held up
by beavers
with their own ideas
of rest and refrain,
pushed aside
by mudslides
and snow,
ditched and ditching,
a new channel
and then the rush
the awkward rush
and rain, more rain—

let me falter
towards the sea.

KYCE BELLO

Equinox

Plum buds fatten under a gray sky
that takes the day and breaks into rainfall.

Yes, that is spring hatching
between my hands.

Every planting season
worries of drought or calamity

fall silent as I begin to work.
Warm soil, bees in the early

blooming apricots.
Cisterns brimming at last

with the late snows of winter.
What isn't a garden, or a seed

slipping into ground?
Inside the open door, a basket

of unfolded cloth, unswept floors.
When snow comes in April,

it flutters over plum blossoms.
Light pierces heavy skies.

Gentleness, open me.
The seeds are just beginning to rise.

MICHELE LEAVITT

First and Last

If pleasure is the absence of pain,
then pain comes first.

In the planter outside my front door,
a wren's nest whorls down

to darkness. The nestlings chirr when I pass by,
or when the wind's fingers brush too close,

as if the wind and I are mothers,
returning with meat, as if refreshed

sensation means relief from pain,
meaning pain comes last—

like a shadow, sleek and well-fed,
or a body's imprint in the bed.
I grow to love you, dear familiar.

M.S. ROONEY

Touching

Take the bouquet you were given,
yes, now, in your hands,
right here, with neither water
nor sunlight where you stand
to signal hope for staying.

All this has
no other place
to be.

Let the silken pollen fall,
soothe and stain
your fingers.

SANDRA K. BARNIDGE

Orbit

We walk our bicycles off the sidewalk and approach the Sun. It is on the ground, a 24-foot ring of mulch and dandelions in the center of the city. We look directly at it and take three flowers from the outermost edge.

We ride on to Mercury, .9 miles away and hidden from view until a docent pulls a walnut from her pocket. She smiles at you, as they always do. You give her a dandelion, and you wave as we leave her in the rippling heat.

Venus a peach, the Earth an apple. A painted golf ball for Mars, a beach ball our Jupiter.

A Saturn hula-hoop and two basketballs later, I can't go on. You race ahead laughing as you pump your legs up the countryside inclines and down again. I fall back into your trail of gravel and sweat. The Sun rises up, and it follows me now.

You are going for the Pluto marble in a farm town 23 miles from the city center. I want to fly with you past Neptune, but I won't make it.

I give one last push on the pedals and let myself float. I will coast until I stop, and then I will watch as the space between us grows. With distance, the pale cylinder of your back will soften to an orb.

You will be radiant.

ALICIA ELKORT

After the death of both parents

Coyote finds me by the lupine
where I've paused beside a creek

drawn to the gurgle & swirl of eddies,
the lift of dragonfly. There are no borders

between us, I undone a marvelous breath
of blue thrush across sky & space to grieve

how moss fastens skull, how we return.
Coyote stares from behind scrub & boulder,

bows her head. I want to touch her.
I want to know when I will feel gratitude

for having loved so well.
Coyote trots away & I watch her go.

DAMIEN URIAH

What She Said When I First Came to the Community

In this place the bare trees of winter learn to sing.
In this place is the psalm of God.

I was born in the light of spring,
in the rain, and from that moment on
I have been evaporating.

In this place are warring tongues
and men with guns, our people
who lost themselves to belief,

but the fields continue to give grass
and the goats still jump the fence
and we learn our bodies in the old bus by the gully,

dust from the chicken coop in our lungs.
Don't choke on chicken shit.
Cover your mouth or lose something.

Remember to go every once in a while
a little further down the gully where
the water escapes and never stops running
deeper and deeper into the valley of God.

And what if we were naked,
two children alone in a creek-bed,
and we were far from this place
so I asked what it was you thought you were
and I kept asking until you had no answer

and we kept praying, kept slipping away
like a stream over red clay and sandstone
deeper and deeper into the Ozarks
where the water changes direction.

RONNIE HESS

Middleton Owl

Most remarkable is not the bird,
a juvenile great grey owl, out of its usual,
northern habitat this winter, come south
so goes the theory, because of the competition,
the hunger for disappearing little voles.
No, it's the crowds, dozens of sight seekers,
straddling the train tracks, gathered around
the post office parking lot, stopping traffic,
settled in folding chairs, or perched
behind tripods and high-resolution cameras
taking him in, face to face, eye to eye.
He has made the papers, front page. You think,
such an unassuming fellow for a raptor,
scarcely moving, letting the wind ruffle
his feathers, unaware of any danger, inexperienced,
posing for the photographers without care
this Good Friday, while the flock wishes it could
touch him, wipe the blood from his beak.

ANDREA POTOS

My Grandfather's Home

Pendagiou, Greece

Tin, corrugated and rusted, now covers
what was once the roof, a few lichen-
stained tiles lie scattered.
Three walls remain; in places, vines
sprout across the uneven grey stone.
My daughter and I bend;
we peer under
a muddy tarp that cloaks
a rubble of fallen stones
as if saved for the day the granddaughter,
and the great-granddaughter could cross
the Atlantic, drive the dizzying
mountain roads to kneel
on the April grass
and reach their arms inside, pick one stone
to carry home.

GILLIAN NEVERS

Letter to Dan from Rome

When I have fears that I may cease to be...

- John Keats

I'm sitting in a sprinkle of violets in this cemetery
the other side of the mountain from the trattoria
where we sat last May in soft rain. I'm reading Keats
on Keats' grave in the cemetery the other side of a mountain
that isn't a mountain, but a hill built on amphora.
A landfill of shards, fragments of olive oil vessels slowly
working their ragged way up through centuries.
There is a park on top, but the path is chained off.
There is no way in. No way for me to find as you found,
forty years ago, a pot handle. It's on a shelf in the living room
between the ivory angel and the origami match box.
I like to hold it, trace its rough surface, follow its curve.
My father said it was fake. If dropped in water,
it would crumble. Disappear.

RYAN CLARK

Prairie

Here are pasture gates and telephone poles, brush trees mesquite
clawing at clouds but so short they can only ever grab at the tops

of prairie grasses, and if they are green they are lucky, though the green
of the highway sign shouting East Highway 62 will always be brighter.

And abandoned houses fall with cratered roofs like words fallen dead
just finger bones praying outward through the walls and into the clay

just north of the Salt Fork of Red River, soon to crumble down the bank
as if grown suddenly tired in bending down to drink.

Past the gypsum hills the red dirt goes hiding beneath the dead crunch grasses
and the wheat that struggles up to the gates begging toward the road.

The world always returns to flat, as if nothing is beyond this flatness,
only cut and protrusion, a few streams crawling through on hands and knees.

My home is prairie hills is creek bed is bales of hay rolled higher
than any tree can grow here with this Elm Fork, this sandy braided stream,

this cycling of dead things and minerals and myself, all of us
here cradled in the crook of the North Fork's bend.

The prairie is a mouth that is opened by force and gradually closes in
on what it has lost, lips squeezing tight over rock, sod tongue pulling.

BURGI ZENHAEUSERN

Rubber Glove

Soft armor, slough of
the firm touch. I've shed
mine, pink, medium size. Limp

shell of a grip out there.

Translucent skin instead, still
moist and shivering
in the alien sun. I pray.

*a response to "Pink Glove on Sidewalk,"
a photograph by Alan Sirulnikoff*

STEVE KLEPETAR

In the Bushes

The angels were once as plentiful

As species of flies.

The sky at dusk

Used to be thick with them.

- Charles Simic

In the bushes, in the trees a thousand angels
sparkling like glow worms or Christmas lights—
strong squadrons riding out on the smoky
breath of clouds. One summer a pair
nested in the light outside our door.
My father shook his head, my mother
worried about the dust shining around bits
of string they dragged from everywhere.
But for all the dirt, they blessed us
with their wings and red heads, their trailing
wisps of light congealed into webs of silk.
As sun burned on the river, I left secret offerings—
half eaten cupcakes, Lifesavers
broken into hooks, wedges of halvah.
From my window, I watched, their wings
just silver blurs as they sucked sweet marrow
from detritus and crumbs.
On the water their song rose, audible
light glowing downstream toward the rising moon.

KARA DORRIS

Say you say

Say you stare at the highway
as if it were the way to keep your madness
at bay. A way to know there is always a *to*
& *from*, a *here & there* like a letter
or keepsake always finding new ways
of interpretation. Say you say the highway
is really a river, & the cars are as rudderless
as leaves. Say you say the early morning
light you drive into is not the same
evening light you drive out of, that the yellow
median lines blur like memory. Say you say
each song the radio offers up the wind
was you, once upon a time &, somehow,
still is.

ANN E. MICHAEL

At a Girl Scout Lodge

I flung my spidery body into New Jersey's
scrub pine forests, acre on acre of trees no taller
than myself, stretching toward sea over

the hidden aquifer whose water I'd
mixed with flavored sugar powder in the lodge kitchen,
the orange beverage a kind of crime against nature.

During the hike I'd struggled to keep up—
lured into lingering by Indian pipe, British soldier moss,
salamander nooks in rotting bark, cedar pools

and after lights-out stared through thin darkness
at the beamed lodge ceiling. I could not sleep,
not because I chattered with the plush row of girls

but because I was wandering past the blazed trails
into that great crowd of trees, my bare feet
sticky with pine tar, gritty in sand, no voices around

save those of little dun-colored birds, wind in needles,
soft, aqueous vibrato in the porous rock layers
above which I floated, ever seaward.

JAN LAPERLE

After Running to My Daughter Late in the Night,
She Tells Me Her Nightmare is About Snakes,
Not Poisonous, and a Little Bit of Bears

I do not know if people like
to give statistics about
Deaths in America or if it's
a habit or if it makes them feel
certain about something or other,
but I do not like it. Especially
when my daughter in the next room
is meowing or when an airplane
is flying over our house and I think
of my brother, a new pilot.
He gave me a ride in his plane
once, told me to hold the yoke.
My hands turned to water.
Here, right down here, in the yard
next to the bird bath, with a
handsaw, under the cherry blossoms,
I'm sawing and I'm strong.
But the winter, and the things
people say. But the garden
and the scattered seeds.
My hunger and my husband
at the grill. My daughter's
nightmares are still cute.
The birds do not believe her
meows or in an air of grilling
chicken, they do not believe
they are next. If I were always
thinking about distances instead
of fear, I'd say the plane from
the ground looks like a toy or how
when I was flying with my brother

the whole world seemed tender,
and I was just floating along,
simple as a cloud, my only job
for the day to fill the birdbath,
and watch the birds go wild.

BRANDON KRIEG

Temple Builders' Lament

Swallows string cats' cradles
above the roofs.
A robed young woman
locked out into the morning
smiles, as if tricked,
at the sky. Later her face
appears in every window
of a passing train, like a CD skipping.
After-dinner rain
empties the hot streets, a fly
draws a rectangle endlessly
in the center of the room.
In that frame: the sculptor's
journal-notes for the lost
lecture: "Building the Temple
of the Future Within Us."
He guessed we'd find ourselves
in frames within frames, but
couldn't have imagined these same
acts of resistance the only left us:
watching bats and butterflies flicker
over the canal; picking apricots
on a slope nearly too steep
to stand on; opening an old book,
again and again.

DAVID ANTHONY SAM

Unforgetting

One decade buried to memory,
a single cicada rises from earth
to sing his lasting hunger.

PAT ANTHONY

Coots at Cedar Lake

More chicken than duck—
I learned to identify coots by
sitting quietly with my father
until they'd come dabbling
and shouldering each other
in the lake water where the
cattails seemed to shoot to
the sky from the sky itself,
breaking white clouds into bits
and pieces, leaving fluff to float
around those dull black bodies.

He told me they ate hellgrammites
and I loved such forbidden knowledge,
that word lurking on my lips and slipping
right into feathered bellies. The coots
I imagined to be some kind of bad
angels with their one splash of white bill
and blaze a stark reminder of what
they used to be before turning to
the dark side, condemned to eat the
horrid larvae of dobsonflies that
flittered all around us, those horned
and hooved monsters squirming
now in the bottom of a Folger's can
like the very devil.

STEPHANIE MCCARLEY DUGGER

First Syrup, On Making Molasses

It happens at the moment
of breaking— the sun pulling
the sugarcane seed-heads high,
twirling them through layer
after layer of atmosphere
until you see them blaze
from ripeness or ecstasy.

Then the stark
grind of the stalks,
boil, skim,
and the dark, sweet syrup dripping
through cheesecloth into the bottles
whose labels stick
because of the sap collecting
in the green steam air.

All of this happens in an instant
after waiting and waiting
for the season's raze.

E. H. THATCHER

Still Life

Two red anjou pears
cannot possibly seek to fill
this clay bowl my mother
gave me.

I have let them sit
for so long, only today
I wanted one for breakfast.

My fingers outstretched, they
pushed through weak skin
and I felt the viscid pulp
inside.

The sweet
rotted flesh.

SHARON OLSON

In the Bowery

Mixmasters sprawled onto the sidewalk
in front of the restaurant supply store,
metal beater blades turned upward

like supplicants, banded ropes of electrical
wire, La Signora stovetop espresso pots,
one could be in Italy—Prato—down the street

from the Madonna of the Sacred Girdle,
but we pushed on to the Photography Center
where video artists had left us endless loops,

washing machines caught in the crazed frenzy
of unbridled spin, their belts whipping, a dance
my brother couldn't have known

but invented just the same, at age seven,
with four glass milk bottles placed reverently
in our washer, not even bothering to select a cycle,

producing a racket so pervasive the neighbors
heard it two blocks away, and my mother had to pay
Henry Hata, the only one brave enough to pull the plug.

As children strange visions came to us, like those
of the holy relics, our mother seen once
struggling to throw her girdle to the floor.

STEPHANIE MCCARLEY DUGGER

Lessons

I rest my hand on your ribcage,
feel the fist-size tumor. I should

have loved you better. To shift
a moment here or there

would recreate us, change
perhaps even this. But I can't

rip out the mass or let the warmth
of my hands dissolve it. The knot

of cells reminds me of failure, reminds
me of the piano lessons I took

twice: the first when I was six
and a woman offered classes

at church. I quit after a few months;
we didn't have a piano at home,

and I never got any better.
The second in my thirties. I bought

one then, an old dark upright
that wouldn't stay tuned. It was the same

year you came along. Three times
we moved with that piano, until I knew

I'd never really learn. I always wanted
my fingers to glide over the keys,

coaxing mercy and quiver. If I had gone
down the road to the church

when I was young, practiced every
day, it would now be effortless,

muscle memory, the sound surfacing
with the slightest touch. Here, your chest

rising and falling with what I know
to be the end, I imagine your ribs

as keys, and my hands swift enough
to change everything.

ANGIE MACRI

They are not there:

the deer at the end of the gravel road
where it splits to go down to the Sylamore

at the cherry tree, at the fire pink. Dawn,
he sees them while he walks the dogs,

far past the redbuds, and the dogs
do not see, don't run to chase. Only

he sees them: young trees come
alive, mixed with shades of stone,

playing, he says, not a care in the world.
I find their trail worn in the forest floor.

DEBORAH BACHARACH

Lot's Wife Addresses Her Audience

The woman in the third row on the left,
the one who wishes she had
a white parasol or lived in a world
where parasols were not out of place,

you are actually paying attention.
You want to know why
I looked back. I tripped.
I caught a flash and thought

my wedding ring. I could picture
my knitting,
my frail peonies.

I had two daughters in front
and two behind.
That was my body
hanging from the city wall.

PAUL WIEGEL

Uncoupling

Anyone can turn their back and create
a thin crooked curve of separation that
looks like a failed straightening of the
crescent moon. That still-bent space, like
that which fills with ring after
the metal clapper recoils from
a bell's curved side. You can crack
that hanging moon like bone
the same way you hear an
empty snap of air before that ringing bell.
It only takes once to accept the pull of
the rope and what it can do, and what it tips,
which is the bell itself:
that's what the tugged rope moves,
and then the space closes.
Anyone can look up in a bell
tower and guess at what it
will take to close that thin space
that lies between bell and toll,
but until you stand there and
trace the curve of his back or her arm
or the moon pulled straight, you will
never know of that quiet grey
space that lies between.
It's the bone crack and empty snap
of the filling universe, the thin
grey arc that separates us.

PATRICIA J. MIRANDA

Plotting

Follow these steps to a happy ending.

First, have something in your pocket.

Stones and crumbs are standard,
but to guarantee a sequel,

fill your pockets with loss.
Audiences will pay handsomely,

in a coin with no exchange rate.
Next, lie as well as they do.

When they say they'll come back,
claim you were just waving

to your cat on the roof, where she goes
when she's caught a mouse and just wants

to eat in peace. Then stoke the oven.
180° is remarkably effective,

though you've been raging hot
and think others should, too.

What I'm saying is look the other way
to achieve the best char. Last, skip

the homecoming. These woods are too dense,
too wild, to forsake your only chance

at a happiness that's clean
right down to the bone.

PHILLIP STERLING

Fog

—Leelanau County, Michigan

When the wind does not arrive
as expected

the rain will change into
her beloved white nightgown

and stretch out
upon the soft, abandoned fields

between the dunes
where the coyotes bed in silence

so as not to disturb

JENNIFER HAMBRICK

Matryoshka

In Sunday school they told us
we'd get prizes for memorizing it

Our Father

so in the kitchen I spin in circles
babbling verses by rote
while a Bundt cake bakes
and at the kitchen table
my mother's trying to read

who art in heaven

and Joan of Arc's more interesting
than me or Bundt cake which
she never wanted in the first place

hollow be thy name

and she tells me it's *hallowed*, not *hollow*
and I keep spinning in circles not knowing
what that means but somehow wondering if
maybe Joan of Arc is hallowed and maybe
also the nesting dolls my older sister brought
back from Russia and gave to me—

matryoshka, mother

matryoshka, woman of distinction.

Woman begets woman begets woman
down to the smallest doll locked solid
in her wooden form, all painted in the same
matronly apron and babushka, smiling
the same thin black line, cheeks rouged
with the same pink paint circles.

My favorite is the tiny one in the middle

and forgive us our trespasses

and with young, spindly fingers I remove her
from the epicenter of her mothers

as we forgive those

who trespass against us

and put her on the shelf with my herd of wild
glass horses, fitting mother, grandmother,
great-grandmother back together
distinction echoing for generations
in their hollow core

on earth as in heaven

JEANNE WAGNER

Gabriel and the Virgin: Fra Angelico's Annunciation

I see they're made for each other—
though he's only a stand-in for God—
a Captain Smith, or a Cyrano.
They could be sister and brother,
the way their arms fold over their
breasts in secret semaphore;
their slippered feet peeking out
from under their robes; twin
coils of hair framing their faces.
The only difference is that feathered
artifice between his shoulder blades,
stylish and smooth as sateen.
I want to stroke it, like the soft wings
of the hens that follow me in the yard
at home, pecking the dirt, clucking
and boasting egg every noon.
I knew I'd never be as pure as these two,
angel and virgin, because once I heard
the shuddering of an owl's wings
as it landed nearby, concussing the air,
the cry of fear as the hawk swooped
down, and, with two sharp talons,
embraced the vole.

CAMERON SCHNEBERGER

8 Maxims for the Hickory Road Ghost

1.

He appears on an old dirt road. How and when no one in town is certain. Some say the moon when it's splinter thick has something to do with it.

2.

He appears on an old dirt road. No need to feel fear, but there is fear. What kind of face can be seen by many, but described by none?

3.

He appears on an old dirt road in the middle of August, on Christmas Eve, on the day the geese leave, on nights the flowers choose to stay open.

4.

He appears on an old dirt road. Not just to anyone, he's a choosy ghost. Only appearing to those slightly lost, or those with a slight ache in the back.

5.

He appears on an old dirt road. To follow him off the trail. Clothes tossed aside by the pond. He wades through the water looking for something.

6.

He appears on an old dirt road. One popular theory: A ring of keys was found in the pond. He's a janitor or a grounds keeper who can't pass on with empty pockets.

7.

He appears on an old dirt road. Another popular theory: He drowned himself in that pond and sometimes the night remembers and reenacts the story for an audience of one.

8.

He appears on the old dirt road. The air turns cold
and the crickets shut up. He'll follow you down
that old dirt road. You'll be scared and he'll be nothing.

ALEC SOLOMITA

My Love's in a Snowdrift

My love's in a snowdrift
I search for her with numb,
gloveless hands, scooping
showers of glitter
into the setting sun.
The sky falls fast
and the wind picks up
until I stagger to my feet,
whiteout blind.

ALAN PERRY

Exoplanet

Astronomers discover a new star: Trappist-1 and its seven planets, b through h

I'm relieved to know there's hope for me
that a Goldilocks character might adorn
another world. Some water is likely there
not frozen but free to slide down mountains
and glimmer off the starset, life as we
would want it—warm enough to be nurtured
strong enough to survive meteor rain and
asteroids, waiting for the right eon
to invite me in to live there and love
a body called d, e, or f—it's hard to tell here
40 light years away from Aquarius.
But I'm patient.
I'll flip through the planets
focus the telescope and hold my breath
for the fly-by of your light
to reach me.

KATIE MANNING

The Book of Ice

all that remains of Zechariah

a day
is coming
when you
will
fight against
the LORD
fight against
his feet
and
flee
flee as you fled from
the holy
sunlight
in frosty darkness

living
winter
will become
the plague

flesh will rot
on their feet
eyes will rot
in their mouths

no rain
no rain

do not
celebrate
the punishment

do not

celebrate

will be inscribed on the bells of the horses

CHRISTINE SWINT

Letter to My Father at the Winter Solstice

My scroll of grief spits and crackles
in the sun's bonfire—

Do you hear it? That girl,
her voice in me?

Or the river, mourning
over the shoals? A blue heron,

head and throat a question, unfolds
its wings, screeches across twilight

eddies, another shade
in darkened woods. Where has it gone

now that I can't see it?
I want to believe you live

not in my cells or in my thoughts
but in *this*, now—

where cormorants preen their blackness.

BRADLEY SAMORE

Winter Offering

The trees
like many-fingered hands
are held open
as white coins fall
through their greenless reach
gathering at their elbows

NOTES

The epigraph of “Letter to Dan from Rome” by Gillian Nevers comes from “When I Have Fears that I May Cease to Be” by John Keats (written 1818; published 1848).

The epigraph of “In the Bushes” by Steve Klepetar comes from “In the Library” by Charles Simic, *The Book of Gods and Devils* (Harcourt 1990).

CONTRIBUTORS

PAT ANTHONY is a recently retired educator, and her poems have appeared in *Cholla Needles*, *San Pedro River Review*, *Snakeskin*, *Open Minds Quarterly*, and *Nature Writing*. She lives in Fontana, Kansas. Online at middlecreekcurrents.com.

DEBORAH BACHARACH is the author of *After I Stop Lying* (Cherry Grove Collections 2015), and her work has appeared in *The Texas Review*, *The Antigone Review*, *CALYX*, *New Letters*, and *The Southampton Review*. She works as a writing tutor, serves as a reader for *The American Journal of Nursing*, and teaches poetry workshops for children. She lives in Seattle, Washington. Online at deborahbacharach.com.

SANDRA K. BARNIDGE is a freelance writer, and her work has appeared in *Atlas Obscura*, *On Wisconsin*, and *Psychopomp Magazine*. She lives in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Online at sandrabarnidge.com.

KYCE BELLO is the author of the artist chapbooks *Primagravida* and *Gentle Ground* and the editor of *The Return of the River: Writers, Scholars, and Citizens Speak on Behalf of the Santa Fe River* (Sunstone Press 2011). Her work has appeared in *Sonora Review*, *The Wayfarer*, *Taproot*, *San Pedro River Review*, and *Written River*. She lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and works in early childhood education. Online at oldrecipe.wordpress.com.

RYAN CLARK is the author of *And Bring My Developing Hands* (Con/Crescent Press 2008) and *How I Pitched the First Curve* (forthcoming from Lit Fest Press 2018). His work has appeared in *Otoliths*, *Panoply*, *Aufgabe*, *Split Lip Magazine*, and the *Found Poetry Review*; he also contributes to the *Spoon River Poetry Review* blog. He teaches English and creative writing at Waldorf University and leads writing workshops at Forest City High School. He lives in Forest City, Iowa.

KARA DORRIS is the author of *Elective Affinities* (dancing girl press 2011) and *Night Ride Home* (Finishing Line Press 2012). Her poems have appeared in *Crazyhorse*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *The Rising Phoenix Review* as well as the anthologies *Beauty is a Verb: The New Poetry of Disability* and *The Right Way to be Crippled and Naked*. She teaches writing at the University of North Texas and is the founding editor of *Lingerpost*. She lives in Denton, Texas.

STEPHANIE MCCARLEY DUGGER is the author of *Sterling* (Pauper Nautilus 2014) and *Either Way You're Done* (Sundress Publications 2017). Her poems have appeared in *Arts & Letters*, *Meridian*, *The Southeast Review*, *Spoon River Poetry Review*, and *Taos Journal of International Poetry and Art*. She is an

assistant professor at Austin Peay State University and assistant poetry editor at Zone 3 Press. She lives in Tennessee.

ALICIA ELKORT is a film production controller, and her work has appeared in *Stirring*, *Rogue Agent*, *Tinderbox Poetry Journal*, *Menacing Hedge*, and (with Jennifer Givhan) *AGNI*. She lives in Santa Monica, California.

JENNIFER HAMBRICK is the author of *Unscathed* (NightBallet Press 2013) and two forthcoming poetry collections. Her poems have appeared in *Santa Clara Review*, *The American Journal of Poetry*, *Main Street Rag*, and *Third Wednesday*. In April 2018 she will be the guest poet for The Poet's Song project of the McConnell Arts Center Chamber Orchestra. She has also received poetry commissions from the VIVO Music Festival and the Johnstone Fund for New Music. A classical singer, broadcaster, and web producer, she lives in Columbus, Ohio. Online at jenniferhambrick.com.

LOIS MARIE HARROD is the author of *Nightmares of the Minor Poet* (Five Oaks Press 2016), *And She Took the Heart* (Casa de Cinco Hermanas 2016), and *Fragments from the Biography of Nemesis* (Cherry Grove Press 2013). Her work has been published by *Postcard Poems & Prose*, *The Ibis Head Review*, *Sequestrum*, *Suprimal Poetry Art*, and *Sliver of Stone*. She has edited six volumes of *Cool Women* and is the layout editor for *U.S.1 Worksheets*. A creative writing professor, she also offers creative writing workshops for high school students and homeless women. Online at loismarieharrod.org.

RONNIE HESS is the author of *Whole Cloth* (Little Eagle Press 2009), *Ribbon of Sand* (Willet Press 2014), *A Woman in Vegetable* (Kattywompus Press 2015), *O is for Owl* (forthcoming from Borderland Books), and *Canoeing a River with no Name* (forthcoming from Bent Paddle Press). Her work has appeared in *Echolocations: Poets Map Madison*, *Mizmor L'David Anthology: The Shoah*, *Poetry Speaks*, and *Bramble*. She sits on the boards of the Wisconsin Poet Laureate Commission, the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets, and the Friends of Lorine Niedecker. She lives in Madison, Wisconsin. Online at ronniehess.com.

STEVE KLEPETAR is the author of *The Li Bo Poems* (Flutter Press 2016), *A Landscape in Hell* (Flutter Press 2017), *Family Reunion* (Big Table Publishing 2017), *How Fascism Comes to America* (Lofoco Chaps 2017), and *Why Glass Matters* (One Sentence Poems 2017). His work has appeared in *Verse-Virtual*, *Boston Literary Magazine*, *Red River Review*, *Illya's Honey*, and *Snakeskin*. He lives in Massachusetts.

BRANDON KRIEG is the author of *Source to Mouth* (DIAGRAM/New Michigan Press 2012) and *Invasives* (New Rivers Press 2014), and *In the Gorge* (Codhill Press 2017). His work has appeared in *FIELD*, *The Iowa Review*, *North American Review*, *Antioch Review*, and *The Cincinnati Review*. He is an assistant professor at Westminster College and the faculty adviser for the college's literary magazine, *Janus*. He is

also one of the founding editors of *The Winter Anthology*. He lives in Columbia, Missouri. Online at brandonkrieg.com.

JAN LAPERLE is the author of *Hush* (Sundress Publications 2012), *It Would Be Quiet* (Prime Mincer Press 2013), and *A Pretty Place to Mourn* (BlazeVOX [books] 2014). Her work has appeared in *Gargoyle Magazine*, *Subtropics*, *Rattle*, *Shadowbox*, and *42opus*. She has served as a guest editor for Sundress Publications and a coordinator for Young Writers' Workshops at Tusculum College. A completion coach at Walters State Community College and an Army Reserve career counselor, she lives in Greeneville, Tennessee.

MICHELE LEAVITT is the author of *Back East* (Moon Pie Press 2010) and *Walk Away: a memoir* (Kindle Singles 2016). Her work has appeared in *North American Review*, *Baltimore Review*, *Sycamore Review*, *Guernica*, and *Hermeneutic Chaos*. A freelance writer, she lives in Gainesville, Florida. Online at michelejleavitt.com.

ANGIE MACRI is the author of *Fear Nothing of the Future or the Past* (Finishing Line Press 2014) and *Underwater Panther* (Southeast Missouri State University Press 2015). Her work has appeared in *Bluestem*, *New Madrid*, *Sugar House Review*, *Crab Orchard Review*, and *Glass*. She lives in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Online at angiemacri.wordpress.com.

KATIE MANNING is the author of *The Gospel of the Bleeding Woman* (Wipf and Stock 2013), *Tasty Other* (Main Street Rag 2016), and *A Door with a Voice* (Agape Editions 2016). Her work has appeared in *Poet Lore*, *New Letters*, *Verse Daily*, *Stirring*, and *Fairy Tale Review*. She is an associate professor of writing at Point Loma Nazarene University, the founding editor-in-chief of *Whale Road Review*, and the area chair of poetry studies and creative poetry for the Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association (PCA/ACA) national conference. She lives in San Diego, California. Online at katiemanningpoet.com.

ANN E. MICHAEL is the author of *Small Things Rise & Go* (FootHills Publishing 2006), *The Capable Heart* (FootHills Publishing 2011), and *Water-Rites* (Brick Road Poetry Press 2012). Her poems have recently appeared in *Mom Egg Review*, *Painted Bride Quarterly*, *Peacock Journal*, *Antiphon*, and *Prairie Schooner*. She works as a writing coordinator at DeSales University and lives in Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley. Online at annemichael.wordpress.com.

PATRICIA J. MIRANDA is a high school English teacher. Her work has appeared in *Bop Dead City*, *DASH Literary Journal*, *Into the Void*, *The Literary Nest*, and *Shot Glass Journal*. She lives in Columbus, Ohio.

GILLIAN NEVERS works with the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets, the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, the Greater Madison Writing Project, and the Road Scholar program on a variety of poetry outreach initiatives. Her poems have appeared in *Verse Wisconsin*, *the Aureorean*, *Pirene's Fountain*, *Architrave Press*, and *Wisconsin People & Ideas*. She lives in Madison, Wisconsin.

SHARON OLSON is the author of *The Long Night of Flying* (Sixteen Rivers Press 2006), and her work has appeared in *Off the Coast*, *String Poet*, *The Curator*, *Arroyo Literary Review*, and *Cider Press Review*. She is a member of the Cool Women Poets critique and performance group and the U.S.1 Poets' Cooperative. A genealogist and retired librarian, she lives in Lawrenceville, New Jersey. Online at slopoet.blogspot.com.

JAMES OWENS is the author of *Frost Lights a Thin Flame* (Mayapple Press 2007), *An Hour is the Doorway* (Black Lawrence Press 2007), and *Mortalia* (FutureCycle Press 2015). His poems have appeared in *The Cortland Review*, *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, *The Fourth River*, and *Blue Fifth Review*. He lives in Indiana and northern Ontario. Online at circumstanceandmagic.blogspot.com.

ALAN PERRY is a retired human resources executive who divides his time between Tucson, Arizona, and a suburb of Minneapolis, Minnesota. His poems have appeared in *Riddled with Arrows*, *Sleet Magazine*, *Gyroscope Review*, *Muddy River Poetry Review*, and *Gnarled Oak*.

ANDREA POTOS is the author of *An Ink Like Early Twilight* (Salmon Poetry 2015), *Arrows of Light* (Iris Press 2017), and *A Stone to Carry Home* (forthcoming in March 2018 from Salmon Poetry). Her work has appeared in *Poetry East*, *Potomac Review*, *The Sunlight Press*, *Peacock Journal*, and the Syracuse Cultural Workers' *Women Artists Datebook 2018*. A longtime bookseller at independent bookstores, she lives in Madison, Wisconsin. Online at facebook.com/AndreaPotosPoet/.

M.S. ROONEY lives in Sonoma, California. Her work has appeared in *Illuminations*, *Bluestem*, *The Cortland Review*, *3:AM Magazine*, and *Theodate*, as well as in the anthologies *Voices from the Porch* and *American Society: What Poets See*.

DAVID ANTHONY SAM is the author of *Dark Land*, *White Light* (Dark Land Publishing 1974, 2014), *Memories in Clay*, *Dreams of Wolves* (Dark Land Publishing 2014), and *Finite to Fail: Poems after Dickinson* (GFT Press 2017). His poetry has appeared in *december magazine*, *Red Earth Review*, *The Summerset Review*, *Aji Magazine*, and *The Wayfarer*. He currently serves as the poetry editor for GFT Press. A retired college president, he lives in Virginia. Online at davidanthony.sam.com.

BRADLEY SAMORE is a high school English teacher, and his poems have appeared in *Wild Plum*, *West Texas Literary Review*, *Fourth & Sycamore*, *The Literary Nest*, and *Words Apart*. He lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

CAMERON SCHNEBERGER lives in Chicago, Illinois. His work has appeared in the *Minetta Review*, *Yellow Chair Review*, and *NonBinary Review*.

ALEC SOLOMITA is the author of *Do Not Forsake Me* (Finishing Line Press 2017), and his poems have appeared in *Algebra of Owls*, *Literary Orphans*, *Eclectica Magazine*, *3Elements Review*, and *MockingHeart Review*. An editor and critic, he lives in Somerville, Massachusetts.

PHILLIP STERLING is the author of *And Then Snow* (Main Street Rag 2017) and editor of *Isle Royale from the AIR: Poems, Stories, and Songs from 25 Years of Artists-in-Residence* (Caffeinated Press 2017). An associate editor at *Third Wednesday* magazine and the newsletter editor for the Poetry Society of Michigan, he has been an artist-in-residence for both Isle Royale National Park and Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. A professor emeritus at Ferris State University, he lives in Lowell, Michigan.

CHRISTINE SWINT is the author of *Swimming This* (FutureCycle Press 2015), and her work has appeared in *Ekphrasis*, *CALYX*, *Birmingham Poetry Review*, *Tampa Review*, and *SLANT*. She is an adjunct professor of English and writing circle leader, and was one of the founding co-editors of *Ouroboros Review*. She lives in the metro area of Atlanta, Georgia. Online at christineswint.com.

E. H. THATCHER is pursuing an MFA in creative writing at Chatham University. His work has appeared in *Around Poetry*, and he has also served as a guest editor for the journal. He teaches creative writing at the Allegheny County Jail through Chatham's Words Without Walls program and organizes Word Circus, Chatham's monthly MFA reading series. He lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

DAMIEN URIAH is a stone mason, tutor, and library reference assistant. His work has appeared in *Indiana Voice Journal* and *Three Line Poetry*.

JEANNE WAGNER is the author of *The Zen Piano Mover* (NFSPS Press 2004), *In the Body of Our Lives* (Sixteen Rivers Press 2011), and *The Genesis Machine* (Sow's Ear Press 2017). Her poetry has appeared in *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *The Cincinnati Review*, *Shenandoah*, and *The Southern Review*. She serves on the board of Sixteen Rivers Press and is a former editor of *California Quarterly*. A retired accountant, she lives in Kensington, California. Online at sixteenrivers.org/authors/jeanne-wagner.

PAUL WIEGEL lives in Berlin, Wisconsin, and has been a high school teacher for 21 years. His work has appeared in *riverbabble*, *Whale Road Review*, *Hummingbird*, and *English Journal*. An occasional street poet, he sometimes writes poems for passersby at art shows, farmers' markets, and street corners. Online at www.foxriverpoetry.com.

MARTY WILLIAMS is the author of *What to Make of This Bounty* (Thousand Words Press 2012), and her work has appeared in *Poetry East*, *Digital Paper*, *dcomP magazinE*, *Inquiring Mind*, and the anthology *Winged: New Writing on Bees*. She is a teacher consultant with the Bay Area Writing Project at UC Berkeley and a writing workshop leader for Amherst Writers & Artists. Active with a variety of writing initiatives—including Teachers as Writers, Room to Write, Words for the Good, and WriteEasy—, Marty runs workshops for writers of all ages and coordinates community literary readings. She lives in Oakland, California, and on Kenai Lake in Alaska.

BURGI ZENHAEUSERN served as a translation editor for *Knocking on the Door of the White House* (Zozobra Publishing 2017), and her work has appeared in *Antiphon*, *Gargoyle Magazine*, *Forage Poetry*, and *Beltway Poetry Quarterly*'s translation issue. She lives in Chevy Chase, Maryland.

HERON TREE

FIVE : 2017-2018

angels bells breath coins
crowds curve decade direction
dunes eddies frames garden gates
habit hands hooks instant keepsake
keys line loops marble moss mouse
nestings owl place pollen pond
radius rebuds rubble skin
snap thaw touch
voice way