

# HERON TREE

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NINE : 2022

bridge    center    crow    current  
curve    direction    field  
filament    fortune    ground    hand  
home    instant    laughter  
lights    lines    listener    magnet  
markings    mica    mischief  
movement    outbursts    place    sight  
snow    specks    spider  
stream    surface    taps    tremor  
veil    veins    wisp



# HERON TREE

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NINE : 2022

EDITED BY

Chris Campolo

Rebecca Resinski

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[herontree.com](http://herontree.com) / [info.herontree@gmail.com](mailto:info.herontree@gmail.com)

## HERON TREE : NINE

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LESLEY FINN

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## Mother in New-Fallen Snow

Amid dusty realities  
The good lady bundled up, sallied into the drift.  
Look at her. Graceful agile  
Bright soul in the business of making a parlor  
Where other people can hear nothing, a part of the garden,  
The very far corner, pure sweet half-trodden. The mother,  
She listened to the bright-cheeked hum happy consent  
Light wreaths of snow shining bits of ice.

You must understand  
Never before would she catch a word.  
All winter long warm milk, grave wholesome silence.  
But this snow-kissed garden, the parlor, was about to summon  
One voice that of a girl the runaway this lady  
Once could have been.

That flimsy gown those thin slippers  
Beau-ti-ful bleak her.  
There is something in faith in what we call miracle  
Clear as crystal wonderstruck an icicle in the moonlight  
She was gazing at it shaking  
Triumphing in the mischief.

The snow parlor was flesh blood  
Nothing anything everything.  
Oh possibility: come.

## ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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“Mother in New-Fallen Snow” was created from “The Snow-Image: A Childish Miracle” in *The Snow-Image, and Other Twice-Told Tales* by Nathaniel Hawthorne (1852). About the poem and the process of composing it, Lesley Finn writes:

My poem arose from a sequential erasure of the full text of “The Snow-Image: A Childish Miracle.” The composition process was intuitive and willfully subversive: I read the piece, in which all characters except the mother leave the house and go into the snow; she seemed unnecessarily trapped to me. I read through again, choosing words that had a gravitational pull, and after a few passes a story of motherhood quite different from that of Hawthorne’s narrative took shape. From the start of the title through the last line I kept the words in the order they appear in the original text, only altering the punctuation and capitalization.

Lesley Finn’s work has appeared in *Atticus Review*, *Glint Literary Journal*, *CALYX*, *Jellyfish Review*, *phoebe*, and elsewhere. She lives in Connecticut and can be found online at [lesleyfinn.com](http://lesleyfinn.com).



JOAN LEOTTA

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## Birds

Crows, (those) sable harbingers  
(give way to)  
gulls who float  
and rest upon the air.  
Songbirds of the woods  
(build) nests among  
orchard trees, their  
outbursts of melody  
like a brook let  
loose from wintry chains.  
(I stand with) swallows  
(who) address the heart.

## ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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“Birds” was created from “Buds and Bird Voices” in *Mosses from an Old Manse* by Nathaniel Hawthorne (1846). About the poem and the process of composing it, Joan Leotta writes:

This was my first attempt at found poetry, and I worked to enhance the original meaning of the work with my own perspective on the topic of the passage I chose—birds. Words not from the base work are in parentheses, and I hope that my selected words add a new beauty to the topic.

Joan Leotta is the author of *Dancing Under the Moon* and *Morning by Morning* (Origami Poems Project 2016 and 2020), *Languid Lusciousness with Lemon* (Finishing Line Press 2017), and *Feathers on Stone* (Main Street Rag 2022). Her work has also appeared in *Stanzaic Stylings*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *The Wild Word*, *Visual Verse*, *Writing in a Woman’s Voice*, and elsewhere. She lives in Calabash, North Carolina, and can be found online at [facebook.com/joanleotta](https://facebook.com/joanleotta).

KAREN GEORGE

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## Ars Poetica

A fountain, part riddle,  
language sacred ever since  
a child. To find meadow, palace, sea,  
give the world voice.  
When words whisper meaning,  
question, sigh, wither, dream,  
what might happen?

The path offers foolish,  
beautiful half-uttered words  
mumbled in confusion. Imagine  
how far you fancy  
quiet as a wisp of green.  
Milk want,  
examine peculiarities,  
fill the well,  
graze, quicken.

KAREN GEORGE

---

Become Like the Sea, A Vessel

Lace the years back  
to a time of voyage.  
Arrive green,  
flee into curiosity,  
untie order, reach  
a place sunk  
in wonder,  
a quiet cove.

KAREN GEORGE

---

Dear Mother, last night I dreamt

of silken ears and curly hair—a great, broad field  
of waving grain that talked to the wind.  
We came to a stream which glowed

with a hundredfold radiance,  
on the bank, violets so large and fragrant,  
their petals a deep, glossy luster.

You tapped your finger against rocks  
veined with gold, and I caught a glimpse  
of what seemed to be the mouth of a cavern.

At the threshold, in a voice like the stream's murmur,  
you say *Wait for me here*, and enter the portal.  
While you are gone, I lay along the sandy bed,

the sky so blue against the knotted trunk  
of a majestic oak—a woman with dripping hair.  
A thread of music runs in and out of the cave

like a blaze flickering. I hear you  
singing an exquisite song, imagine  
your shadow dancing an ecstasy of joy.

## ABOUT THE POEMS & AUTHOR

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“Ars Poetica,” “Become Like the Sea, A Vessel,” and “Dear Mother, last night I dreamt” were created from different stories in *Tanglewood Tales* by Nathaniel Hawthorne (1853): “Ars Poetica” from “The Dragon’s Teeth,” “Become Like the Sea, A Vessel” from “Circe’s Palace,” and “Dear Mother, last night I dreamt” from “The Pomegranate Seeds.” About the poems and the process of composing them, Karen George writes:

I selected “The Dragon’s Teeth” because I liked the title, and I quickly browsed the words and found that pages 61 and 62 contained the most words that interested me either by sound, image, or idea. I made a list of words I liked on each page in the order they appeared on the page, and began to see what words resonated with other words further down the page, until they began linking up into what I saw as an *ars poetica* poem.

I selected Nathaniel Hawthorne’s story “Circe’s Palace” because I liked the title, and after browsing the words on its pages, decided on page 73 because several words pulled me in: *sea, vessel, lace, green, wonder*, and *cove*. I began working forward and backward to see what words went with them to form some kind of scene, image, or idea.

I selected Nathaniel Hawthorne’s story “The Pomegranate Seeds” because I liked the title, and I simply ran my eyes over the pages, pulling out phrases I liked the sound of, or the imagery they suggested—making a list of them. When I had a 6-page list of phrases, I browsed them and circled ones that I liked best, again by sound and the imagery/idea they conjured. Then I began piecing them together to make some kind of sense. A dreamlike poem emerged that reminded me of dreams I’ve been having about my deceased mother since she died in March 2020.

Karen George is the author of *Swim Your Way Back* (Dos Madres Press 2014), *A Map and One Year* (Dos Madres Press 2018), and *Where Wind Tastes Like Pears* (Dos Madres Press 2021). Her work has appeared in *Sheila-Na-Gig Online*, *I-70 Review*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Writing in a Woman’s Voice*, *Poet Lore*, and elsewhere. She lives in Florence, Kentucky, and can be found online at [karenlgeorge.blogspot.com](http://karenlgeorge.blogspot.com).

JAMI MACARTY

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## Snow-Image

1.

new-fallen whom

a strain delicate

2.

downward aspect

shining on bushes

trees and shrubs

windows now leafless

3.

snow-birds tempest

a Violet warmth

gravity without thought

4.

resumed darning

5.

coming frock

part sister

6.

half-trodden listening

7.

ice finish

8.

sculptor discerned

cunning haste

9.

beau-ti-ful syllables

from the frozen mouth

kiss sounded

10.

the sky leaving

inheritance dazzle

11.

kind invite for fluttering

feet to a cold

print surface

12.

merrily immediately

threshold flock

13.

Welcome

dear playmate visitants

14.

honest toward the world

15.

a sensible little stranger

16.

undertaking a miracle laugh

in a shrill wind

17.

sparkled positively of moonlight



18.

snow-image of a snow-child

a star of good hospitable snow

19.

little white damsel anthracite

bright gleam causing betwixt

twilight doors from Nova to the North

20.

amiss thick

finding shawl ways

21.

earth-rug

now-sister

22.

short of annihilation

everything future possibility

of snow

and stove

## ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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“Snow-Image” was created from “The Snow-Image: A Childish Miracle” in *The Snow-Image, and Other Twice-Told Tales* by Nathaniel Hawthorne (1852). About the poem and the process of composing it, Jami Macarty writes:

“Snow-Image” was made by highlighting two to fifteen words on each page of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s short story. Though I started the highlighting process from the story’s last page and moved backward to the story’s first page, I maintained the story’s given order of words as they appear on each page from start to finish within the poem. I left capitalizations and spellings of words as is. I removed two plurals and one *-ed*; I added an *-ing* and made a preposition from the letters of other words, one time each. When adding to or making words, I gave myself a constraint of order and placement. So, when I was looking to add an *-ing*, the three letters of the suffix had to occur in the order following the word to which the suffix was being added. If they did not, I had to come up with a different way or word. Finally, I let the story’s twenty-two pages dictate a formal element of the poem: the number of pages corresponds to the number of sections. The results: “Snow-Image!”

I had fun making this poem and am gratified by the process and the product. I have wanted to participate in a *Heron Tree* call for a while and hurrah I did it!

Jami Macarty is the author of *Landscape of The Wait* (Finishing Line Press 2017), *Mind of Spring* (Vallum Chapbook Series 2017), and *The Minuses* (Center for Literary Publishing, Colorado State University 2020). Jami’s work has appeared in *BlazeVOX*, *Interim*, *Tinfish*, *Vallum*, *VOLT*, and elsewhere. Jami is also the co-founder and editor of *The Maynard*, an online literary magazine. Jami lives in Tucson, Arizona, and Vancouver, British Columbia, and can be found online at [jamimacarty.com](http://jamimacarty.com).

KATE FALVEY

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## The Three Visionary Girls

With their reddened leaves  
and glossy seed-berries,  
a tuft of samphire  
gathered from the beach,

they toss up the water  
with their stifled laughter, faces  
peeping from the summit of the cliff  
like secrets.

Trailing wreaths of scarlet  
and skeletons of seamen,  
they took wing over the ocean  
and were gone

but they drew closer together  
with a fond and melancholy gaze,  
salt breath polishing pebbles and pearly  
shells of the undiscovered past.

What, then?  
There is a magic in this spot.  
Dreams haunt and flit.  
One rushes straight through,

and all three  
thunder  
as if with rage  
and triumph.

KATE FALVEY

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## Dorothy Almost Imagined

Dorothy, whose mind  
was differently circumstanced,  
was rude, emaciated with want  
and strange sorrows,  
wild with enthusiasm.

Dorothy was gifted  
with eyes that seemed  
to mingle with the moonlight,  
her voice, like sunshine become audible,  
like sunshine that grows melancholy  
in some desolate spot.

Dorothy's acuteness taught her  
the dance of sunshine  
reflected from moving water,  
how the lingering twilight  
was made brighter by  
the rays of a young moon.

Dorothy almost imagined  
that she could discern,  
before the winter snows were melted,  
a ruddy light, the witch-hazel  
which points to hidden gold  
where all is barren to the eye.

Dorothy set forth,  
airy gaiety extinguished  
on such a bitter night, desolate  
with many losses. A blight fell upon  
the land, cold and wintry—the cold earth  
of the grave, the cold heart beneath.

Dorothy listened  
and there was no sound, nor  
any movement, except a faint shuddering.  
Then she noted a sound  
more mournful than even that of the wind,  
a sound afar off and indistinct as if a snow-drift  
swept by with a sound like the trailing of a garment.

Dorothy at length understood  
that beautiful but shadowy images  
would sometimes be seen,  
like bright things moving in a turbid river.  
Perceiving that the apparition was life-like,  
she shook prayers dripping with half-melted snow  
from beneath a tall and lonely fir-tree.

Dorothy's entreaties echoed  
through the leafless woods.  
She was scarcely conscious  
that all except the pine-trees retained  
no trace of earlier beauty as she  
proceeded to voice her heart's anguish.

Dorothy willingly received  
the unearthly eloquence  
of light and airy voices,  
witness the spectacle of that day,  
felt surely that faith was a plant that  
would twine beautifully round  
something stronger than itself.

## ABOUT THE POEMS & AUTHOR

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“The Three Visionary Girls” and “Dorothy Almost Imagined” were created from different stories in *Twice-Told Tales* by Nathaniel Hawthorne (1837): “The Three Visionary Girls” from “Footprints on the Seashore,” and “Dorothy Almost Imagined” from “The Gentle Boy.” About the poems and the process of composing them, Kate Falvey writes:

Finding and crafting these poems from the gorgeous wordscape of my early love, Hawthorne, was a strangely fulfilling experience. I’ve never attempted the “found” form before and it’s been too many years since I’ve immersed myself in Hawthorne’s world. This was, truly, an immersive experience—and more clever minds than mine might create an interactive installation of some kind from this process.

At first, I had strict enough rules: use phrases in chronological order as I moved through the story. (And choosing a story was nostalgically engrossing.) I quickly dispensed with even this simple dictate when the poem required conjunctions, specific verb forms, pronouns, or punctuation to make even impressionistic sense.

No matter how they are strung together, the charms of Hawthorne’s words—his unmistakable voice and vision—gleam through my stanzas. Working with his words this way felt like painting with his light. It’s now hard to repress the romantic 19th century diction—which, truth to tell, I’ve always listed towards.

I’ll try “finding poems” again as a kind of meditative practice, spending quality time with beloved writers.... Maybe a Bronte mash-up next?

Kate Falvey is the author of *Morning Constitutional in Sunhat and Bolero* (Green Fuse Poetic Arts 2013), *What the Sea Washes Up* (dancing girl press 2013), and *The Language of Little Girls* (David Robert Books 2016). Her work has also appeared in *Plume*, *NonBinary Review*, *Mom Egg Review*, *Mud Season Review*, *Little Patuxent Review*, and elsewhere. She serves as an associate editor for the *Bellevue Literary Review* and lives in Long Beach, New York.

KELLY R. SAMUELS

---

Riding Several Horses

No looms here.

Only a bladder for dried peas

to rattle in.

Lost among small closets and winding stairs.

The absence of windows—

like being blind, while people talk  
of the sky.

To be.

To be a little moon.

A calculable perturbation. Hearing  
the grass grow, the squirrel's heart beat:

Chapter and verse.

Chapter and verse.

Stable earth and the changing day—

gleams on the wet grass.

Bright August lights.

Shadows

with the tufted grass, the apple-tree boughs.

I don't own you any more  
than if I saw a crow.

How inadequate the words are.

The bitter incessant murmur.

The medium in which ardent deeds took shape.

## ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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“Riding Several Horses” was created from George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* (1871-1872). About the poem and the process of composing it, Kelly R. Samuels writes:

I have never loved Eliot’s *Middlemarch*. Upon recently rereading it, I marked parts and phrases I liked. The second were what I took to generate this piece, shuffling them about to make something new—an exercise I have since done with other classic novels I respect but do not necessarily hold a great fondness for. Doing so was immensely pleasurable and offered me a way to creatively engage with novels that haven’t been favorites of mine; it was a form of playing, and, in the end, I came to appreciate the language, if not the narrative.

Kelly R. Samuels is the author of *Zeena/Zenobia Speaks* (Finishing Line Press 2019), *Words Some of Us Rarely Use* (Unsolicited Press 2019), and *All the Time in the World* (Kelsay Books 2021). Her work has appeared in *The Massachusetts Review*, *The Pinch*, *The Carolina Quarterly*, *The Shore*, *Bear Review*, and elsewhere. Kelly lives in the Upper Midwest and can be found online at [krsamuels.com](http://krsamuels.com).



MARIA L. BERG

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## Repent

Did I not tell you you would repent it?  
But you must know  
If fate has willed it  
What shall we do?

But it is you  
Did I not tell you you would repent it?  
But still, that was not of the slightest use  
If you do not help me

If you will swear to me  
Why dost thou hesitate?  
Did I not tell you you would repent it?  
But it is now time to return

What will become of me  
If I only stood at home, I'd be glad  
But what did you say to the church steps as we passed?  
Did I not tell you you would repent it?

## ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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“Repent” was created from *More Fairy Stories Every Child Should Know*, edited by Kate Douglas Wiggin and Nora Archibald Smith (1907). About the poem and the process of composing it, Maria L. Berg writes:

To create “Repent,” I collected questions, the beginnings of phrases that began with “if,” and phrases that began with “but” from the entire text of *More Fairy Stories Every Child Should Know*. I have been studying the volta and different types of poetic turns, which informed my interest in these kinds of phrases. From reading previous collections of *Heron Tree*, I became interested in putting my found poetry into poetic form and found the quatern worked well with my ideas.

Maria L. Berg’s work has appeared in *Washington’s Best Emerging Poets 2019*, *The Auroras & Blossoms NaPoWriMo Anthology: 2020*, *Five on the Fifth*, *The Evening Theatre*, *Sick Lit Magazine*, and elsewhere. She can be found online at [experiencewriting.com](http://experiencewriting.com).

DEBORAH-ZENHA ADAMS

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hold the world

*derived from* The House of the Vampire *by* George Sylvester Viereck

The cause of the rupture between them was a matter only of surmise; but the effect it had on the woman testified clearly to the remarkable power of Reginald Clarke. He had entered her life and, behold! the world was transfixed on her canvases in myriad hues of transcending radiance; he had passed from it, and with him vanished the brilliancy of her colouring, as at sunset the borrowed amber and gold fade from the face of the clouds.

The glamour of Clarke's name may have partly explained the secret of his charm, but, even in circles where literary fame is no passport, he could, if he chose, exercise an almost terrible fascination. Subtle and profound, he had ransacked the coffers of mediæval dialecticians and plundered the arsenals of the Sophists. Many years later, when the vultures of misfortune had swooped down upon him, and his name was no longer mentioned without a sneer, he was still remembered in New York drawing-rooms as the man who had brought to perfection the art of talking. Even to dine with him was a liberal education.

Clarke's marvellous conversational power was equalled only by his marvellous style. Ernest Fielding's heart leaped in him at the thought that henceforth he would be privileged to live under one roof with the only writer of his generation who could lend to the English language the rich strength and rugged music of the Elizabethans.

hold the world

in amber

a secret charm

is no offer of fortune

no perfect art

only a thought

of music

## DEBORAH-ZENHA ADAMS

the naked eye may send

*derived from The Mushroom, Edible and Otherwise by M. E. Hard*

The spores are the seeds of the mushroom. They are of various sizes and shapes, with a variety of surface markings. They are very small, as fine as dust, and invisible to the naked eye, except as they are seen in masses on the grass, on the ground, or on logs, or in a spore print. It is the object of every fungus to produce spores. Some fall on the parent host or upon the ground. Others are wafted away by every rise of the wind and carried for days and finally settle down, it may be, in other states and continents from those in which they started. Millions perish because of not finding a suitable resting place. Those spores that do find a favorable resting-place, under right conditions, will begin to germinate by sending out a slender thread-like filament or hyphæ, which at once branches out in search of food material, and which always forms a more or less felted mass, called mycelium. When first formed the hyphæ are continuous and ramify through the nourishing substratum from which there arises afterward a spore-bearing growth known as the sporocarp or young mushroom. This vegetative part of the fungus is usually hidden in the soil, or in decayed wood, or vegetable matter. In Figure 3 is a representation of the mycelium of the small pear-shaped puff-ball with a number of small white knobs marking the beginning of the puff-ball. The mycelium exposed here is very similar to the mycelium of all mushrooms. In the pore-bearing genera the hymenium lines the vertical pores; in teeth-bearing fungi it lines the surface of each tooth, or is spread out over the smooth surface of the Stereum.

The development of the spores is quite interesting. The young basidia as seen in Figure 2 are filled with a granular protoplasm. Soon small projections, called sterigma (plural, sterigmata), make their appearance on the ends of the basidia and the protoplasm passes into them. Each projection or sterigma soon swells at its extremity into a bladder-like body, the young spore, and, as they enlarge, the protoplasm of the basidium is passed into them. When the four spores are full grown they have consumed all the protoplasm in the basidium. The spores soon separate by a transverse partition and fall off. All spores of the Hymenomycetous fungi are arranged and produced in a similar manner, with their spore-bearing surface exposed early in life by the rupture of the universal veil.

the naked eye may send

a lament bearing teeth

to consume the verse

and rupture the veil

## ABOUT THE POEMS & AUTHOR

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The poem “hold the world” was created from *The House of the Vampire* by George Sylvester Viereck (1907), and “the naked eye may send” was created from *The Mushroom, Edible and Otherwise* by M. E. Hard (1908). About the poems and the process of composing them, Deborah-Zenha Adams writes:

My process for erasure poems is not particularly interesting, and probably not particularly original. I begin by selecting a few pages from any piece of text. I scan them for strong nouns and verbs, and I also look for compound words or words-within-words that might yield an unexpected turn to the poem. There is usually one word or phrase that becomes the core of the work; once I find that, the poem reveals itself. Texts from the 19th and early 20th centuries often contain a wide selection of both hard and flowery words, and these can be combined to make a high-tension poem. In the passage from *The House of the Vampire*, the words “secret,” “charm,” and “music” almost begged to be combined with the word “world.” *The Mushroom, Edible and Otherwise* seemed like the sort of text that would veer off in a direction different from fiction works. Sure enough, “naked eye” jumped out immediately.

Deborah-Zenha Adams is the author of *All the Blood Relations* (Ballantine Books 1996), *All the Dirty Cowards* (Silver Dagger Mysteries 2001), and {This Tale is True} (Oconee Spirit Press 2018). Her work has appeared in *Adelaide Literary Magazine*, *Dead Mule School of Southern Literature*, *Orion*, *Sheila-Na-Gig*, *Scapegoat Review*, and elsewhere. She lives in Tennessee and can be found online at [deborah-adams.com](http://deborah-adams.com).

IRIS JAMAHL DUNKLE

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## Earthquake

*an erasure of Jack London's The Valley of the Moon (1913), Book 1, Chapter 1*

What if the girls and women caused a tremor  
—a long shriek—enough to kill. For a time, work  
went on and on in the home. Another  
week gone fierce up. She walked on through weathered  
wood, dust of years, ridged, wide-cracked, uneven.  
Until she attempted to tread a day  
recklessly; took a mouthful of control  
without waiting for the earthquake. She had  
crossed the plains in a prairie schooner, in  
a bullet-hole, in a small looking-glass.  
She had been thrust under young men. She had  
sobbed repression, swung noiselessly open,  
was startled by her own voice: No, no.  
Think of your own precious self—everything  
in the world is wrong now. Shut the door.

## ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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“Earthquake” was created from *The Valley of the Moon* by Jack London (1913). About the poem and the process of composing it, Iris Jamahl Dunkle writes:

This erasure based on the first chapter of Jack London’s novel *The Valley of the Moon* is an act of recovery and resistance. I’d always admired how Jack London had written such a strong and realistic female character in the early 1900s; the novel has a strong female protagonist who leads her husband on a quest to find a home. However, during my research for writing a biography about Jack London’s wife, Charmian Kittredge London, I found out why the novel depicted women more realistically—quite simply, parts of the novel were written by Charmian. My erasure attempts to write the agency and voice of women back into this text.

Iris Jamahl Dunkle is the author of *Charmian Kittredge London: Trailblazer, Author, Adventurer* (University of Oklahoma Press 2020) and *West : Fire : Archive* (Center for Literary Publishing, Colorado State University 2021). Her work has appeared in *Tin House*, *Pleiades*, *The Los Angeles Review*, *Poem-a-Day*, *Green Mountain Review*, and elsewhere. She is the poetry and translation director at the Napa Valley Writers Conference. She lives in northern California and can be found online at [irisjamahldunkle.com](http://irisjamahldunkle.com).

MELISSA FREDERICK

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The Moon, This Unending Night

1.

I watch the world  
through a mountain—

no prying eyes  
no seemingness

my griefs moon-thick and close

2.

Mother Moon      seems here  
but with her rudder lost

she is deep in creeping quiet  
thinking      nothing  
that was not dear (to me)

3.

my little temple  
may endure  
advanced age (puzzled by frost)

& recall night by burning  
bitter stories in snow

4.

all is confusion, Mother:  
waves scatter and  
                         hurricanewhirls  
lay waste to a downward  
                         -curving life



you begin to drift; I cannot  
see the name I bear on my sleeves

5.

sleep I indeed alone?  
silk-white robes seek fields in spring

as I brandish my sorrow  
    break the bridge  
    paint the river dragon red

6.

new moon  
smile and say—

the human mind cannot be known  
the waves shall not cross over lonely barriers  
the feeling of time does not flow away

## ABOUT THE POEMS & AUTHOR

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The poems in “The Moon, This Unending Night” were created from two English translations of the Japanese *Hyakunin Isshu: Hyakunin-Isshu (Single Songs of a Hundred Poets)* by Clay MacCauley (1899) and *A Hundred Verses from Old Japan* by William N. Porter (1909). About these poems and the process of composing them, Melissa Frederick writes:

This is another group of poems that I’ve based on old translations of *Hyakunin Isshu*, an anthology of tanka (one hundred poets, one poem each) published in the 13th century and including some work written centuries before that. The two translations I’ve been drawing on were published around the turn of the 20th century, when Japanese society had already become more westernized and open to westerners living in Japan. (One of the translators, Clay MacCauley, even spent 25 years there as a Unitarian missionary.)

It gets difficult describing all the layers of words—poems, translations, translations of translations (as in MacCauley’s work, which includes direct translations of the original Japanese). The process of crafting my own poems from this material was relatively simple. I banked words and phrases from the two translations and created my own tanka from those banks. While I stuck with the five-line structure of the traditional tanka, I did not follow the 5-7-5-7-7 syllabic convention. I wanted to give myself room to play with form, to tease meaning out of unusual word combinations.

I also decided early on to center the imagery of my pieces around the moon. (The moon! I write a lot about the moon.) In my first bundle of poems (see *Heron Tree* volume 8), I included a mention of the moon in every tanka. Recently, I’ve expanded the symbolic presence of the moon to include terms connected with it in the translations: snow, frost, white, cold, mother.

Melissa Frederick is the author of *She* (Finishing Line Press 2008). Her work has also appeared in the *LA Times*, *Oxford Poetry*, *Mid-American Review*, *Matchbook*, *Blanket Sea*, and elsewhere.

JONATHAN YUNGKANS

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## Forslin's Jig

*a cento after Conrad Aiken's The Jig of Forslin (1916)*

Through dream, immortal into another dream, we hold them and so  
nothing perishes. Things mused upon are, in the mind, like music—

who laughs, who kills, who cries? The music chatters, the music sighs,  
the music sinks and dies. Into the smoldering west the fatigued mind

wanders and forgets. The corners of the ceiling are blown like mist  
and through the immortal silence. We may hear the hurrying days

go to join the years. Choral stars, like great clocks, tick and chime—  
the jeweled movement of the sky—cold and green and white, poured

in silver. The real world dwindles and grows dim, and under watchful  
stars, at last, is gone. The dark world slowly comes to rest. The walls

of the city are rolled away. My veins are streets. Millions of men rush  
through them. Wind whistles. We are falling. The night is deep.

JONATHAN YUNGKANS

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## Our Shadows Descend

*a duplex after Conrad Aiken's "Senlin: A Biography" (1925)*

Our shadows descend before us, long and blue.  
Ghost-like, a cloud descends from twinkling ledges.

A cloud of ghosts descends, twinkling down ledges,  
The rocks aflame with ice, the rose-blue sky

is ice, the rose-blue sky setting the rocks aflame  
where the blue stream flows coldly among the meadows.

The meadows are cold. As a blue stream flows  
in long straight lines, the star drops fall, one by one—

the long straight drops of ghosts like stars plummeting.  
The clouds flow downward, slowly as grey glaciers—

the inexorable mass of grey glaciers. Large as clouds  
through slanting mist, black rocks appear and glow.

Mist grows. Black rocks appear, slanting, and glow.  
Our shadows descend before us, long and blue.

JONATHAN YUNGKANS

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## Our Hands Are Light

*a duplex after Conrad Aiken's The House of Dust (1920)*

Our hands are light, singing with emptiness.  
We built a tower of stone into the sky.

We have launched ourselves high, building a tower.  
What did we built it for? Was it all a dream—

the dream for which we were building,  
like the ghost of a music we have heard?

We hear ghosts, a dazzle of pallid lamplight,  
a wind blown over a myriad forest.

Wind blows. The forest sings as it passes through,  
eternal asker of answers in the street.

The eternal asker of answers stands  
and lifts his palms for the first cold ghost of rain.

Cold rain ghosts his lifted palms, not answering.  
Our hands are light, singing with emptiness.

## ABOUT THE POEMS & AUTHOR

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“Forslin’s Jig,” “Our Shadows Descend,” and “Our Hands Are Light” draw on poems by Conrad Aiken. “Forslin’s Jig” was created from *The Jig of Forslin* (1916). “Our Shadows Descend” and “Our Hands Are Light” incorporate words, phrases, and lines from “Senlin: A Biography” (1925) and *The House of Dust* (1920), respectively. About these poems and the process of composing them, Jonathan Yungkans writes:

Writing “Forslin’s Jig” followed a reasonably simple process. Begin at the final line of Conrad Aiken’s poem. Read line by line in reverse order. Let intuition do much of the rest for overall logic and flow. I had written another version of “Jig” several years ago, following the same method. This was purely out of love for Aiken’s music and imagery, without my remembering there was such a thing as a cento or “found” poetry. That version has been lost. This one feels more compact, but the narrative curve remains the same overall.

In “Our Shadows Descend” and “Our Hands Are Light,” I followed a similar process as in “Forslin’s Jig,” reading Conrad Aiken’s poem line by line in reverse order and letting intuition have its way with overall logic and flow. This time, I also fell back on the poetic form of the duplex, which was created by Jericho Brown in 2018. In it, Brown combines aspects of the sonnet, ghazal, and blues poem: 14 lines of between 9 and 11 syllables each, arranged as couplets and with the second line of one couplet echoed in the opening line of the next. The first line of the poem is repeated at the close to bring the piece full-circle.

Jonathan Yungkans is the author of *Colors the Thorns Draw* (Desert Willow Press 2018) and *Beneath a Glazed Shimmer* (Tebot Bach 2021). His work has appeared in *Gleam*, *Synkroniciti*, *Panoply*, *High Shelf*, *MacQueen’s Quinterly*, and elsewhere. He lives in Whittier, California.

K ROBERTS

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•  
 see; that last  
     lovely tree  
             as a poem  
         summersweet  
             •  
         gather the green snow  
 wear flags for her  
     that made  
         a leafy with  
     •  
 among fools  
     who only  
         nest in i  
         •  
             she has  
                 lain  
             upon  
                 never  
             •  
         she lives  
     by flowing her  
         hungry  
         hair  
             lifts her mouth  
         to the pressured rain  
     •  
 can a day  
     clasped within  
 arms of earth  
     think? intimately  
         as that  
 shall  
     robins  
 pray

## ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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[see; that last lovely tree] incorporates words from “Trees” by Joyce Kilmer (1913). About the poem and the process of composing it, K Roberts writes:

Kilmer speaks about his appreciation of nature’s beauty. In my response to Kilmer’s poem, I wanted to acknowledge the problems of environmental damage and our loss of connection to nature. The concept I began with was to create a shape poem, a visual presentation that would support the theme. Word-cloud mapping software was useful during the early drafts. The software poured a copy of Kilmer’s text into a design outline, filling the tree shape with letters the way water fills a vase. Program settings made it possible to weight the priority of words and change font sizes. These choices caused groupings to shift, as the words swirled inside the outline. When meaningful fragments emerged, these were typed into MS Word and edited into stanzas. The final version is a wire frame; the vase has been emptied of its water, and the poem is a silhouette of an absent tree. Adding dots as stanza spacers was the finishing step. The dots imply the dying tree’s falling leaves, its last season of bearing fruit.

K Roberts’ work has appeared in *Decolonial Passage*, the anthologies *Disasters of War* and *Brought to Sight & Swept Away*, and elsewhere. They also serve as a first reader for *NUNUM*.



## JAMES BENTON

Address Alternate Gettysburg Lincoln's of Reading<sup>1</sup>*Full text re-conceived**(a a a a a a)*

above add advanced. ago all

altogether and

*(and and and and)*

any are are

are as battlefield be be before birth

brave brought but But, by can

*(can can can can)*

cause civil come conceived

conceived consecrate, consecrated continent

created dead dead

dead, dedicate

dedicate,

dedicated

dedicated

dedicated

dedicated,

detract. devotion

devotion—did

died do earth.

endure. engaged equal. far

far fathers field, final

fitting for

*(for for for for)*

forget forth fought

Four freedom—and from

from full gave

gave God, government great great

great ground. hallow have

*(have have have have)*

here here

*(here here here here, here, here).*


---

<sup>1</sup> If reading this aloud, do not articulate the words in parentheses. If reading silently, do not think them.

highly honored in increased is

*(in in in)*

*(is is It it It It)*

it, larger last liberty, little live.

lives living living, long

long measure men,

men met might nation

*(nation nation, nation),*

nation, never new      new nobly

nor not

*(not not not not)*

note, Now      *(of of of of of)* on

*(on or or our)*

our people, people

people, perish place poor

portion power      proper proposition rather

rather, remaining      remember resolve resting

say score sense, seven shall

*(shall shall)*

should so so

so struggled take task

testing that

*(that that that that that that that that that the The The the  
the the the the the the the their these these they they they  
this this this this).*

those thus      *(to to to to to to to to)*

under unfinished us    us

us—that vain—that war,

war.    we    We

*(We we we we we we we we)*      what

what whether which    which who      who

who will work

world

years

## ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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“Address Alternate Gettysburg Lincoln’s of Reading” was created from Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address (1863). About the poem and the process of composing it, James Benton writes:

To create this poem, I alphabetized Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, then arranged the results in rough lines, looking to tease out alternative readings based on the aleatory associations of words thus rearranged. Some words, such as articles and other small words, tended to repeat without adding much substance, so without removing them altogether, I set them aside as supernumerary. I wanted to preserve the integrity of the text and its internal potential by not adding text of my own, which would tend to direct the reader to my own reading rather than allowing the resulting text to speak for itself.

James Benton is the author of *Sailor* (Winter Goose Publishing 2017) and *The Book of Sympathetic Magic* (Winter Goose Publishing 2021). His work has appeared in *Rattle*, *Tahoma Literary Review*, *Clade Song*, *San Pedro River Review*, *Poetry Now*, and elsewhere. James lives in La Grande, Oregon, and is a member of the Blue Mountain Writers group.

RICHARD L. MATTA

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Embracing the Unknown Cento

How far the unknown transcends what we know;  
to guess it, puzzles scholars,  
assured of certain certainties.

If you can wait and not be tired by waiting—  
a noiseless patient spider—  
the woods are lovely, dark and deep.

## ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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“Embracing the Unknown Cento” was created with lines from:

“Nature,” Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1878)

[This World is not Conclusion], Emily Dickinson (1896)

“Preludes,” T. S. Eliot (1917)

“If,” Rudyard Kipling (1910)

“A Noiseless Patient Spider,” Walt Whitman (1868)

“Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,” Robert Frost (1923).

About the poem and the process of composing it, Richard L. Matta writes:

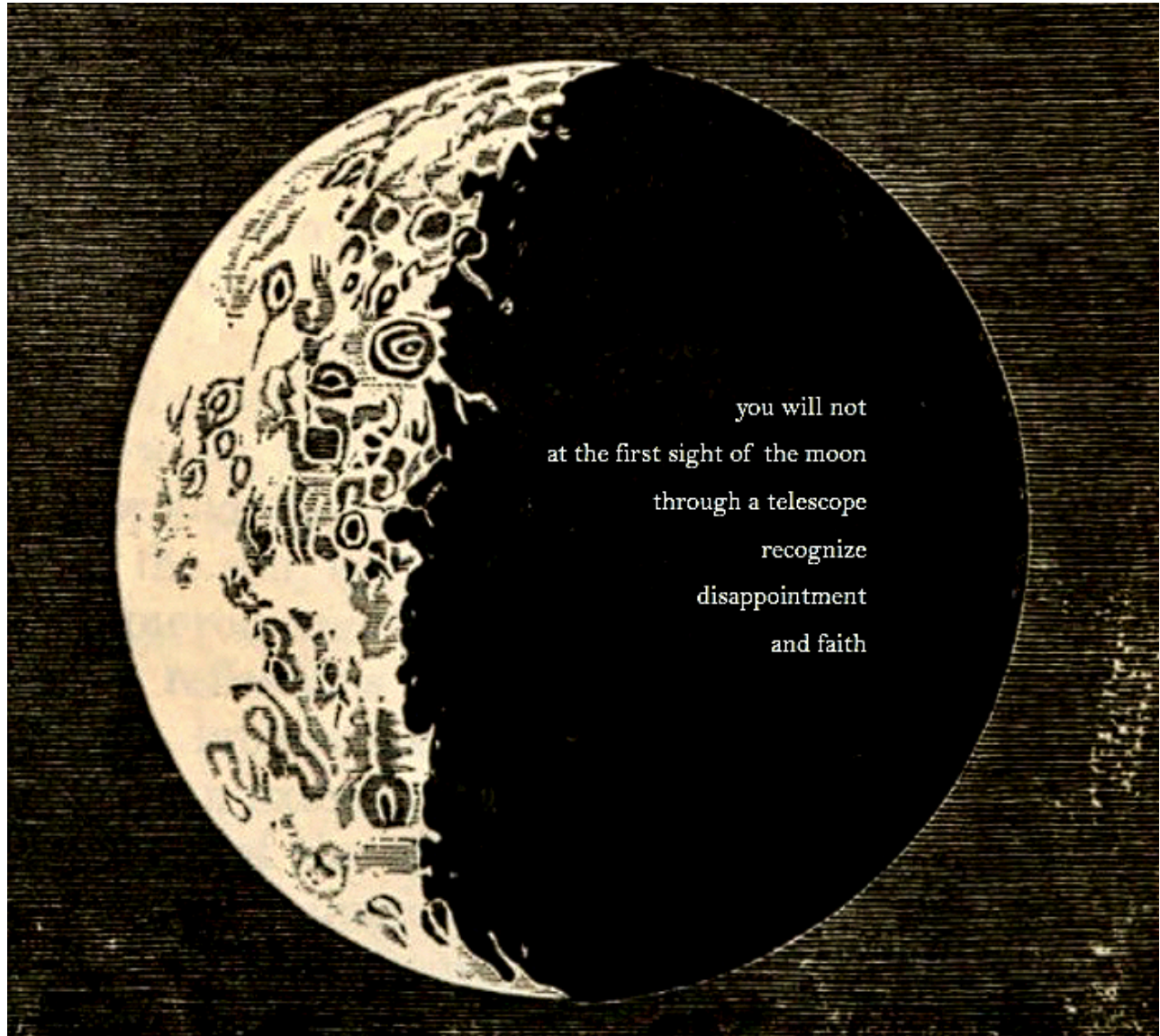
I began the cento writing process by listing favorite poets, reading their work, and finding lines which resonated. I began sensing an approach and sequence of lines coming together toward my theme and worked the line order.

Richard L. Matta’s work has appeared in *The Healing Muse*, *The Dewdrop*, *Ancient Paths*, *\*82 Review*, *California Quarterly*, and elsewhere. He lives in San Diego, California.

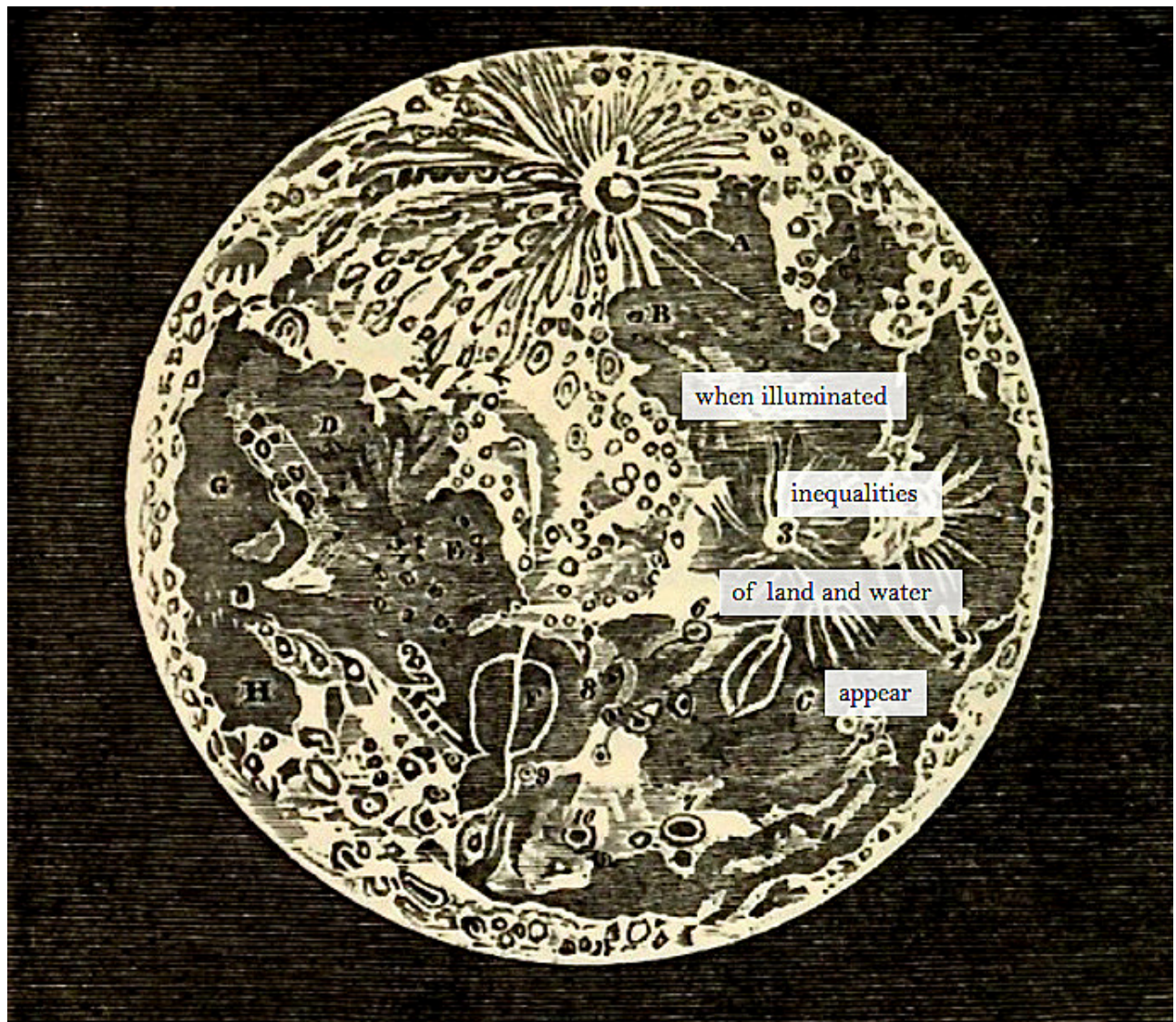
DIANE LEBLANC

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Two Telescopic Views of the Moon







## ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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“Two Telescopic Views of the Moon” includes images and text from Letter XV, “The Moon,” in *Letters on Astronomy, Addressed to a Lady: In Which the Elements of the Science Are Familiarly Explained in Connexion With Its Literary History* by Denison Olmsted (1840). About the process of creation and composition, Diane LeBlanc writes:

I’m attracted to old astronomy books that situate science within history, literature, religion, and other ways of knowing. I was particularly drawn to images and text in Letter XV, “The Moon,” in *Letters on Astronomy, Addressed to a Lady*. Olmsted describes mid-19th century telescopic views of the moon’s surface while asking questions about water and the viability of life forms on the moon that scientists with more sophisticated tools are still working to answer.

I used images and text from Letter XV to create my own interpretation of literal and cultural telescopic views of the moon. To create the first view, I started with an image of the moon, half-lit by the sun’s reflection, that offered a dark field on which to impose an erasure of Olmsted’s letter. The second view features an image of the full moon mapped with craters and seas. I envisioned a more complex geography mapped with ideas about land and water. Although I redacted Olmsted’s language, the words are unaltered and taken in chronological order from Letter XV.

Diane LeBlanc is the author of *Sudden Geography* (Finishing Line Press 2014), *This Space for Message* (Seven Kitchens Press 2017), and *The Feast Delayed* (Terrapin Books 2021). Her work has appeared in *Sweet Lit*, *The Journal of Compressed Creative Arts*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, *Mid-American Review*, *Cimarron Review*, and elsewhere. She lives in Northfield, Minnesota, and regularly leads writing workshops at the Northfield Arts Guild. She can be found online at [dianeblancwriter.com](http://dianeblancwriter.com).



BASILIKÉ PAPPÁ

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PORTUGUESE WIRES

FIRST LETTER

Do but think, my love, two atoms that are free to turn, but not to move far from each other; for love, more powerful than any piece of iron, has united them forever. So there they are, like fish in the lake, enchanted with it all, trapped.

All these violent emotions I try so hard to shut up in a little box chase each other around in cycles. Suppose I could travel far to perhaps find more beauty elsewhere. Alas! You would make finer adjustments in your loops, and spark-set me still more. Good-bye. Love me always to a deep red, heating the wire as you go.

SECOND LETTER

Why did you let me fall into the sorrows of which you are the nucleus? Such a void can make the magnet stronger. Why are you not willing to pass your whole life at my side? An electron always likes to be close to a proton.

You write me letters cold; the current becomes gradually less.

I well know that I love you so fast and so carelessly that I start, rush ahead, stop, rush back, stop, and do it all over again and again. I know not what I am, or what I do, or what I wish for. How dear you are to me, and yet how cruel! Good-bye!

THIRD LETTER

What will become of me, my dear receiver, and what would you have me do? Say this again in different words, with a greater strength of signal?

Did you ever howl down into a long pipe or hallway and hear the sound? If you make it louder and louder, a condition will be reached where it won't do any good to call any louder. Repeating your name a thousand times each day gradually gets an extra coating of tinfoil.

Why must it be that I shall possibly never see you again? Do as you please; even in cooking you put covers over the vessels to make a mystery of it.

## FOURTH LETTER

Methinks I do a wrong as large as the moon and the earth to the streams of my heart in trying to make them known to you in writing. Whatever this transmitter sends out goes along the wires to the distant receiver but doesn't affect the receiver.

Sometimes we speak of the vacuum in the same words we would use in describing evaporation of a supreme delight. It means more than that. So many wakeful nights, the improbability of your return represented by an arrow head; the coldness of your love, and your last good-byes, the characteristic curve of your departure. Yet you told me once that I was very beautiful. I dare not now pray you to love me. I only wish that you do not box my letters up in a cabinet in cold blood. Good-bye.

## FIFTH LETTER

I am writing to you for the last time, so we can move back to some point where the pulls are equal.

You betrayed me every time you told me the names of the tiny planets sand is made up of; every time you gave me your tears on a silver plate; every time you said long waves needn't be lonely any more. Yes, I understand now that I allowed myself to be enchanted by very mediocre transports and just water.

The most desired game is that played by a single proton and a single electron. But the more it is played the smaller it becomes until finally it is reduced to a dot. I have at last touched the end of the wire. I have freed my heart from this circuit. I might as well go back to a city where all the streets are at right angles.

I care not to know the result of this letter.

## ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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“PORTUGUESE WIRES” was created from *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son* by John Mills (1922) and *The Letters of a Portuguese Nun* by Marianna Alcoforado (1669), translated by Edgar Prestage (1893). About the poem and the process of composing it, Basiliké Pappa writes:

I have never before written a found poem with a certain theme in mind. But the moment I saw that John Mills’ *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son* was a suggested source, I knew exactly what I wanted to do: mix them up with *Letters of a Portuguese Nun* and speak of love in terms of electricity.

Defining the structure of my prose poem was easy: there would be five parts, as many as Marianna Alcoforado’s letters to Chevalier de Chamilly, each ideally starting with her opening lines—remixed, of course, with lines by Mills—and each reflecting the emotional state expressed in her original letters.

I moved into my usual procedure of dividing a sheet of paper into two columns and writing down lines from both sources. After combining my first choices, I started reading through the books for phrases to add and words to replace. I also kept some of the original lines from both books intact—they were perfect as they were.

In the introduction to Marianna’s letters, it is mentioned that “the title of ‘Portuguese Letters’ became a generic name applying [...] to every kind of correspondence where passion was shown *toute nue*.” With that in mind, I kept “Portuguese” in the title, substituting the word “Letters” with the “Wires” that so often appear in the letters of John Mills.

My aim was to add a surreal touch to the intensity of love and heartbreak, playing a great game as I go.

Basiliké Pappa’s work has appeared in *Punk Noir Magazine*, *Glitchwords*, *Sledgehammer Lit*, *11 Mag Berlin*, *Bones*, and elsewhere. She lives in Greece.

CAROL H. JEWELL

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Letter 19

The Audion Amplifier and Its Connections

—from John Mills' *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son* (1922)

In our use of the audion we form three circuits.

The first or A-circuit includes the filament.

The B-circuit includes the part of the tube between filament and plate.

The C-circuit includes the part between filament and grid.

The first or A-circuit includes the filament.

We sometimes speak of the C-circuit as the “input” circuit and the B-circuit as the “output” circuit of the tube.

But, normally, the C-circuit includes the part between filament and grid.

Now listen carefully because I am only going to explain this *once*.

We sometimes speak of the C-circuit as the “input” circuit and the B-circuit as the “output” circuit of the tube.

What are you looking at? This is very important.

I told you to listen carefully because I am only going to explain this once.

I wish I had daughters instead of sons.

What are you looking at? This is very important.

Daughters would pay attention, to show me later.

I wish I had daughters instead of sons.

Daughters to bring me grandchildren and other rewards.

Daughters would pay attention, to show me later.

The B-circuit includes the part of the tube between filament and plate.

Daughters to bring me grandchildren and other rewards.

In our use of the audion we form three circuits.

## ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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“Letter 19: The Audion Amplifier and Its Connections” incorporates sentences from John Mills’ *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son* (1922). About the poem and the process of composing it, Carol H. Jewell writes:

I chose to write a pantoum, my favorite form, but right off the bat I had trouble, because the first four lines were not originally mine. I had to take those lines from a letter, and somehow make them relevant for me. The poem purports to be about the audion amplifier, but the repetitive lines slowly modify to become about the narrator’s wish that they had had daughters, and not sons. I especially like poems that don’t end up where they began. I love it when a pantoum has a mind of its own and I just follow along, sometimes adapting the rules.

Carol H. Jewell is the author of *Hits and Missives* (Clare Songbirds Publishing House 2017). Her work has appeared in *The Ekphrastic Review*, the anthologies *But You Don’t LOOK Sick* and *SMITTEN*, and elsewhere. She lives in Albany, New York.

M. E. SILVERMAN

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John Mills' Letter of a Radio Engineer to his Son on Electricity and Matter  
*a found poem*

My Dear Son,

I hope you will one day be interested in radio-telephony  
and will want me to explain it to you. Here  
is the simplest explanation I can give  
and still make it possible  
for you to listen.

First, plenty of books tell you how and what to do,  
but very few waste time. Experiment  
for yourself. Be quite familiar with ideas,  
with a radio set, copper wires, tinfoil, glass plates,  
sheets of mica, metal, wood,  
and all kinds of love,  
the ability to work, the energy  
that runs our batteries,  
but what is the real reason  
we can use wires, metals, audions, and crystals  
in order to send and receive messages?

Simply put: all these things are made of little specks,  
too tiny to see called electrons and protons.  
How do they differ?  
Like us, in size and in laziness,  
and this inertia that, as you know,  
is the resistance of a body  
to changes in momentum,  
how it is harder to start, harder to stop  
or to change its direction and go  
a different direction. Give it a name:  
this is the positive-charged proton,  
the basic component of all, even you and I,

where an electron always likes to be close to a proton.

All the stuff, or matter, this matter

of our world is made up of two

kinds of building blocks,

and all the blocks are like bricks

because when one builds a house

each must rest on another.

Further, between an electron

and any other electron or between

two protons or between an electron and a proton

there is distance,

enough space

so that lots of others could fit

if only they were willing

to get that close.

Sometimes they do get very close together.

I can tell you how if you will imagine

a group of protons and electrons playing together,

that there are ninety different games they can play

and if a number of atoms join,

form molecules and become a substance,

something big enough to see,

it could be the best possible little atomic group,

a grand picnic in which all are present,

grouped together, behaving,

a sort of game with other groups

playing as large as the moon and the earth,

and many of these actions which we call chemistry

are the result of change,

one molecule to another,

toward a radio you can see

filled with complicated atoms

and little wires carrying currents,

conducting electricity, broadcasting

a sound I hope we might build together.

## ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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“John Mills’ Letter of a Radio Engineer to his Son on Electricity and Matter” was created from *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son* by John Mills (1922). About the poem and the process of composing it, M. E. Silverman writes:

I am naturally drawn to words—all words. Sometimes a review or a letter or an old book will catch my eye and ear. It lingers the way the ocean does after you leave. It is then that I know I have to create something to keep it with me. When I came across *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son* by John Mills, I was immediately struck by the poetic language, the imagery, the science, and mostly importantly the affection that pours through for his son.

M. E. Silverman is the author of *The Floating Door* (Glass Lyre 2018). He co-edited *101 Jewish Poems for the Third Millennium* with Nancy Naomi Carlson (Ashland Poetry Press 2021) and *New Voices: Contemporary Writers Confronting the Holocaust* with Howard Debs (forthcoming from Vallentine Mitchell). His work has appeared in *Tampa Review*, *Tulane Review*, *I-70 Review*, *december*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, and elsewhere. He serves on the board of *32 Poems* and is the senior competitions editor for *Harbor Review*. He lives in Forsyth, Georgia.



DEBORAH PURDY

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## Away from Home

I used to make  
markings on the curves—

a series of letters,  
the same words

like tiny planets,  
their own circles

enough to give you the idea  
of our world.

DEBORAH PURDY

---

The Right Words

Instead of names  
there were just enough

questions  
far away from each other

already in the  
swift-moving stream of

a series of letters  
on a sheet of paper.

## ABOUT THE POEMS & AUTHOR

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“Away from Home” and “The Right Words” were created from *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son* by John Mills (1922). About the process of composition for each, Deborah Purdy writes:

I skimmed through the text and compiled a selection of words and phrases to create a word/phrase bank of potential lines for the poem. After making selections for lines that fit the theme of the poem, I combined them to create stanzas with meaningful context. I then rearranged the stanzas into the form of the poem.

Deborah Purdy is the author of *Two Moons* (rinky dink press 2020), *Mermaids in the Basement* (dancing girl press 2021), and *Conjuring an Epiphany* (Finishing Line Press 2022). Her work has also appeared in *Black Bough Poetry*, *The Wild Word*, *Gingerbread House*, *Mom Egg Review*, *Moving Images: Poetry Inspired by Film*, and elsewhere. She lives in the Philadelphia area of Pennsylvania.

B. J. BUCKLEY

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Imagine a Grand Picnic

Four small boys playing tag  
chase each other around in circles,  
run away from each other if they can.  
Sometimes one goes wandering off,  
farther away, single, lonely,  
out of sight.

Tinfoil, metals, audions, and crystals  
go a different direction.  
In a minute wood follows them.

Sheets of mica  
differ in laziness a great deal,  
come to a stop.  
Do they ever begin again?

Copper wires would talk to you,  
draw little sketches  
between the water molecules:  
pocket flash lights,  
star shaped balloons.

Glass plates are magnified  
until they're planetary,  
as large as the moon  
and the earth.

## ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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“Imagine a Grand Picnic” was created from John Mills’ *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son* (1922). About the poem and the process of composing it, B. J. Buckley writes:

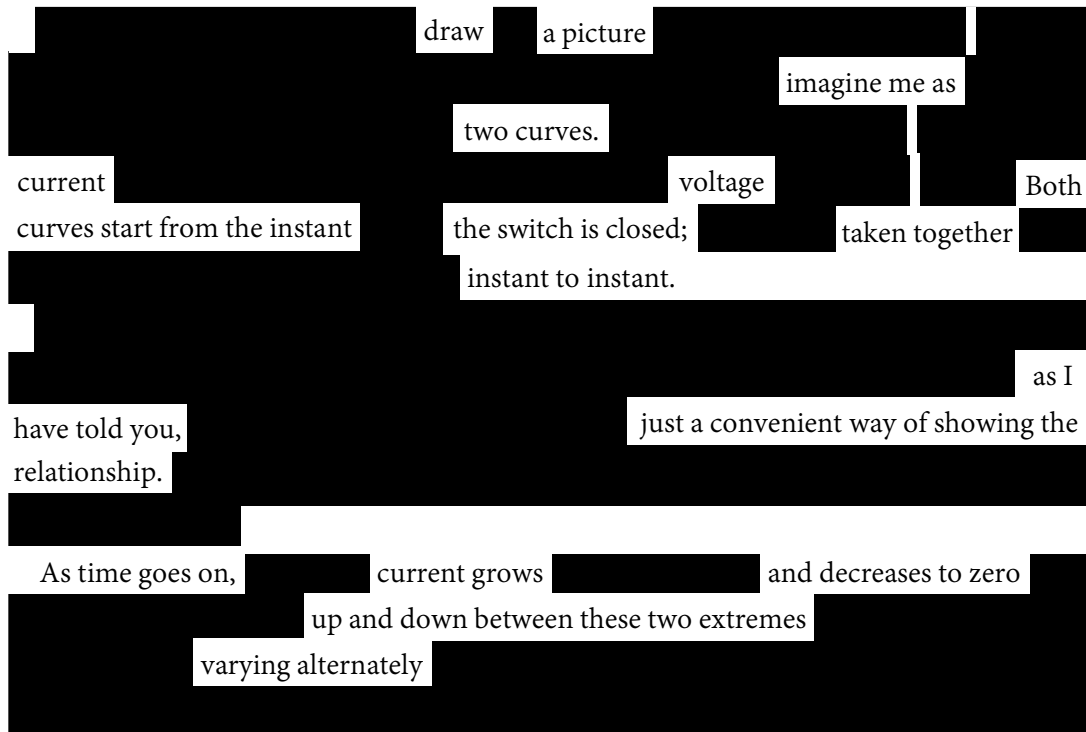
I wanted this poem, from this surprisingly playful technical text written to a young boy, to have play and young boys in it. I began by making lists of radio parts and of the ways the movements described in the text could also be the movements of children. I also thought of the ways in which children personify the technologies they use. I then imagined a group of boys—and personified radio components—playing outside with each other after a picnic, and let the narrative unfold.

B. J. Buckley is the author of *In January, the Geese* (Comstock Review, Inc. 2022), *Corvidae* (Lummox Press 2014), and *Moonhorses & the Red Bull*, co-authored with Dawn Senior-Trask (Pronghorn Press 2005). Her work has also appeared in *Sugar House Review*, *CALYX*, *Whitefish Review*, *Southern Humanities Review*, *december*, and elsewhere. She lives in Power, Montana.

## JENNIFER HERNANDEZ

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### Inductance



Look at the two curves and see this for yourself.

ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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“Inductance” was created from *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son* by John Mills (1922). About the poem and the process of composing it, Jennifer Hernandez writes:

For me, blackout poetry is a form of liberation. Instead of starting with a blank slate and feeling the pressure to fill it with words, I start with a slate of words and excavate those that resonate, discovering the poem as I chisel away at the text. My experience has been that the most utilitarian source texts—manuals, guides, encyclopedia entries—often yield the most interesting poems. I have an intuitive approach. In this case, I scanned the table of contents of John Mills’ *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son* and chose the chapter with the title that most pleased my palate upon speaking it aloud—“Inductance and Capacity.” Next, I copy-and-pasted the first page of the text into Microsoft Word and printed it out. I prefer the feel of paper and pen for first drafts of all kinds. At this point, I skimmed through the text, forcing myself to read not for comprehension, but only to circle the most interesting words and phrases that emerged from the text. Quickly, it became apparent that this text painted a picture that operates on multiple levels. What fun to discover! Finally, I returned to the Microsoft Word document and blacked out the remainder of the text, making small revisions of my original word choices and watching the poem take shape on the page. The art of blackout poetry adds another dimension, almost a sculptural quality.

Jennifer Hernandez’s work has appeared in *Red Weather*, *The Talking Stick*, *Visual Verse*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *This Was 2020: Minnesotans Write About Pandemics and Social Justice in a Historic Year*, and elsewhere. She lives in Minnesota.

J. A. LAGANA

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receiving

start simple

you are

experimenting

you are

a blue curve

different in range

careful

current

distant and

intermittent

musical and

desired



J. A. LAGANA

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How the wind will

bend

loop

pull

through

twist

switch turns

complete rotary taps

bring small or larger parts

above

around

## ABOUT THE POEMS & AUTHOR

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Both “receiving” and “How the wind will” were created from *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son* by John Mills (1922). About the poems and the process of composing them, J. A. Lagana writes:

The poem “receiving” was created from “Letter 21: Your Receiving Set and How to Experiment.” A bank was created by selecting words and phrases from the entirety of “Letter 21.” Words were filtered and erased; words in the poem appear in the order in which they appear in the source document.

“How the wind will” was also created from “Letter 21.” A word bank was created from a randomly chosen, yet consecutive, section of paragraphs. This poem began with a consideration of the word “winding,” which I internalized as “wind-ing”—as in the wind doing its thing. I could not help but think of recent tornados that have caused such destruction.

J. A. Lagana is a founding co-editor of *River Heron Review*. Her work has appeared in *Paterson Literary Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *Amethyst Review*, *POETiCA Review*, and elsewhere. She lives in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and can be found online at [jlagana.com](http://jlagana.com).

CHRISTINE VEASEY

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## Dear Youth

Dear Youth:

experiment for yourself  
to send messages and to receive them

our world is made up of two kinds of building blocks  
you mustn't think of these blocks as like bricks  
we don't yet know so very much

protons and electrons playing together  
atoms group together to play the larger game  
like a troop of boy scouts in a grand picnic  
I shall write of more complicated games

balloons buoyant in air  
revolve about the sun as a center  
the atmosphere in which we live  
unimportant in amounts

funny thing about it all

to run away and play in some other group  
molecules of the blue vitriol go wandering  
needn't be lonely any more  
everything will be satisfactory  
despite the fact that these ions broke away from each other  
they don't stay together long before they split apart and start wandering again

over and over again  
dissolve  
wander into the moist paste  
connected  
nothing in possibility

we use years as the units in which to count up time  
 but how would you know those scales gave correct weight?  
 I trust you have a fairly good idea

the pull of the positive terminal and the shove of the negative  
 has a high resistance

separate  
 we'll find  
 the grid  
 deep red

easy ways of finding out for one's self but we shall not stop to describe them  
 I want to show you how to make a picture  
 you are to imagine me as using two pencils  
 would he do it?

after one learns how  
 quite ingenious  
 the electronic games  
 this whole business of variable capacities

this extra trouble would be because of the relations between gangs  
 at right angles to each other  
 they have no effect on each other  
 if they are parallel and wound the same way  
 they will act like a single coil of greater inductance  
 parallel but wound in opposite directions  
 they will have less inductance because of their mutual inductance

like learning to dance  
 in conformity with the human voice

## ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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“Dear Youth” was created from *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son* by John Mills (1922). About the poem and the process of composing it, Christine Veasey writes:

In my process for found poems, I grab words and phrases that fit the theme I begin with in mind. As this specific poem was evolving, I was thinking of the uptick in shootings in my area related to gang violence and how difficult it is for youth to separate from that in real life even with simulations like Grand Theft Auto of which I heard talk of an immersive VR headset version being released. I feel that this sort of time-travel is possible when reading through any book, but that it was specifically intended in *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son*. We are all the children of the authors we read, and John Mills was brilliant in knowing that someone from the future would read through his work some day and apply it to their own space and time. I was just lucky enough to have caught a glimpse of that intention.

Christine Veasey is the author of *Walking Into Spiderwebs* (2021). Her work has also appeared in *The Prompt Magazine*, *Disasters of War: An Anthology for Veterans Day*, and elsewhere. She lives in Philadelphia, PA, and can be found online at [twitter.com/honeylovepoems](https://twitter.com/honeylovepoems).

SUSAN KAY ANDERSON

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At Radio Central

I can devise  
little sketches

of copper wires, tinfoil, glass plates, sheets of mica,  
metal, and wood.

*(one is about 1845 times as lazy as the other)*

Many of the actions  
in a larger game  
are complicated games.

*(such as are played in the atoms of copper)*

A fast game  
just as the earth and Mars  
and the other planets play  
right at the center.

*(most of sea water, therefore, is just water, that is, pure water)*

SUSAN KAY ANDERSON

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Every Singer

changes completely  
so that the listener  
cannot understand  
what is being said—

which is necessary  
to give the sound  
naturalness.

Unfortunately, however,  
they require  
the use of amplifiers.

SUSAN KAY ANDERSON

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## When I Was a Boy

*Glassy blue crystals formed    dissolved    in water.*

But that isn't all—

single, lonely

seventeen

I lay on a sheet of paper

a ball its outside circle

long out of sight.

Because you remember

I was responsible for eleven.

*I needn't be lonely any more*

*if I persuade the other atoms*

*to stay together*

*not satisfy a guilty conscience*

*by giving up*

*at least by giving away*

(they split apart

go away

by itself)

You can see            that each—

some even more lonely

had a great deal

left behind.

At the other end

this stream is a current.



## ABOUT THE POEMS & AUTHOR

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“At Radio Central,” “Every Singer,” and “When I Was a Boy” were created from *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son* by John Mills (1922).

About “At Radio Central” and the process of composing it, Susan Kay Anderson writes:

This poem is created from John Mills’ *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son*. The first letters are very emotional sounding (to me) and hint at an inner disturbance or trauma from war times (WWI) that John Mills would probably want to tell his son about but can’t. Instead, he writes down all he knows about radio technology. As I read these letters, I felt attracted to the dramatic conflict that seemed to be happening with what was being shared and what was being held back. It felt like a code I could break, but ultimately couldn’t. I couldn’t understand radio technology and couldn’t understand the trauma of war and separation. Yet, I felt close to the war while reading these and intensely concerned with “winning” or being able to succeed in understanding the science presented until my brain was being its own receiver/transmitter of waves and electrons. I selected words which spoke to me in a sort of coded language that sounded scientific but was very emotional.

About “Every Singer” she writes:

There are so many jewels in John Mills’ *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son*. I read the text with an eye for details I could grasp onto and wrote down words and phrases that were full of personality and humor. What I discovered was a philosophical treatise. I felt that it was painful for Mills to see his son grow up but couldn’t tell him this. He had to accept this fact, and his writing shows a kind of sad resignation with a mix of practicality.

About “When I Was a Boy” she writes:

I looked at John Mills’ letters and chose interesting words and phrases. It seems like he wanted to disclose more than radio information to his son. As I read, I picked out words and phrases which spoke to me and wrote those down in an attempt to understand just what John Mills wanted to say. I’m not sure it is in this, but I could feel an explanation about war that has no explanation. As I read *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son*, I

could see how Mills leaves his project of wanting to speak to his son and just focuses on the science of radio technology. It was interesting to me how Mills seems to be entertaining himself, too, in these letters, and I looked for those words and phrases that illustrate this.

Susan Kay Anderson is the author of *Mezzanine* (Finishing Line Press 2019) and *Please Plant This Book Coast to Coast* (Finishing Line Press 2021). Her work has also appeared in the anthology *Insurrection* (Gnashing Teeth Publishing 2021), *The Ocean State Review*, *Barrow Street*, *Interim*, and elsewhere. She is a poetry submissions reader for *Quarterly West* and *Lily Poetry Review*. She lives in Sutherlin, Oregon, and can be found online at [www.pw.org/directory/writers/susan\\_kay\\_anderson](http://www.pw.org/directory/writers/susan_kay_anderson).

JACKSON OSCAR

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## A Dear Telephone

My dear boy:

A construction of copper wires,  
streaming tinfoil, and glass plates;  
a duplicate from worked sheets  
of mica, metal, and wood.

My dear son:

A series of muscular puffs  
stored away in winding threads;  
specks of electricity  
too tiny ever to see.

Dear young man:

A speaker's tuned voice singing  
and tiny windpipe cycling,  
transmitting sound waves to me  
to listen to loud and clear.

My dear man:

A design I can no longer  
feel nor touch, fix or adjust;  
dearest boy, son, young man, man,  
don't you ever leave from me.

My dear boy,

are you there? Can you hear my voice—?

## ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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“A Dear Telephone” was created from *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son* by John Mills (1922). About the poem and the process of composing it, Jackson Oscar writes:

When I first skimmed *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son*, the slightly varying, almost incongruously personal salutations struck me, eventually leading me to create a poem featuring them and expanding upon the feelings I found expressed in them. To construct the poem, I read through the book, scribbling words and phrases that I found either linguistically unique or generally useful. I then culled and scrambled them, marrying sterile and passionate words until I had a poem that contrasts the dramatic, unexpected changes of our current lives and communication situation with the inevitable, gradual changes in life that every person goes through.

Jackson Oscar lives in suburban Virginia.