



# Lamp Lit

spring 2026 1.4



# LampLit

## Spring 2026, Issue 1.4

© 2026, Lamp Lit

All rights reserved.

Ownership of all work is retained by the original creators.

[www.lamplit.net](http://www.lamplit.net)

Editors: Jaime Lilley & Michael C.

Cover Image: Alexis Tinker-Tsavalas

*Close up textures of the freshly hatched eggs of an Orchard Ermine  
Moth (Yponomeuta padella)*

# Table of Contents

## A letter from the editors

6

## Poetry & Art

Poetica, <i>Lisa Delan</i>	8
Old World Swallowtails, <i>Alexis Tinker-Tsavalas</i>	9
The Meristem, <i>Katie Larson</i>	10
Ashfield Night, <i>Jennifer Badot</i>	11
The Needles, <i>E.K. Ottenritter</i>	12
Decaying leaf, <i>Alexis Tinker-Tsavalas</i>	13
I'm So Sorry, It's Just that a Mother Rarely Feels Untethered, <i>Kiana McCrackin</i>	14
Perfect Time, <i>Zoë Davis</i>	15
Downy Emerald Dragonfly, <i>Alexis Tinker-Tsavalas</i>	16
The Change, <i>Kathleen Palmer</i>	17
Easy Street, <i>Polly Conway</i>	19
Amateur Scientist Reads the News, <i>Rachael Bull</i>	20
That's not my department says Wernher von Braun, <i>Zoë Davis</i>	21
Fallin' Blackbird Festival, <i>Rachael Bull</i>	22
Small Emperor Moth, <i>Alexis Tinker-Tsavalas</i>	23
The rain is too heavy for cats, <i>D.S. Maolalai</i>	24
Dormant, <i>Polly Conway</i>	25
Clouded Yellow Butterfly, <i>Alexis Tinker-Tsavalas</i>	26
Warm Inside the Shell, <i>E.K. Ottenritter</i>	27
Through the Gate, <i>Nina Prater</i>	28
Mirage, <i>Kiana McCrackin</i>	29
Banded Demoiselle Damselfly, <i>Alexis Tinker-Tsavalas</i>	30
Farm Smart, <i>Nina Prater</i>	31
Lopez Island, <i>Jennifer Badot</i>	32
With the children we make deer ears, <i>Esther Sadoff</i>	33

## **Fiction & Art**

Honeysuckle, <i>Mindy Kober</i>	34
The Feather Artist, <i>Joe Ducato</i>	35
Onions, <i>Yoonji Huh.</i>	40

## **About our contributors 41**

## **A Letter from the editors**

Dear contributors and readers,

Don't you love the way, in spring, one day the waking trees are stretching their naked limbs skyward, and the next they are dressed and shivering in sun-shot leaves of the brightest green—a colour only seen when leaves and sun are new? This time of year I always walk around hearing that E.E. Cummings's poem about how the earth answers all our violations, year after year, forever, only with spring.

We say it every time, and can only say it again: it is humbling and wonderful to know, season after season, that you all are out there, answering these deeply troubling times with poems, stories and art—with your particular ways of seeing and being in the world. Every reading period we learn so much, and feel so deeply honored to be able to share this work we loved.

Thank you, as ever, to everyone who contributed, and a special thanks to naturalist and photographer Alexis Tinker-Tsavalas, whose images of the tiny world never fail to amaze us with the truth that we share the world with so much more fierce and delicate beauty that we don't even know is there until we look for it.

This is us. Looking.

Thank you, again and again, for choosing us!

Very sincerely yours,  
Jaime & Michael



## **Poetica**

*- after Eduardo C. Corral (after Franca Mancinelli)*

Poetry sets the mise en scène then refuses to collaborate.  
If poetry smoked a cigar it would keep the band and hide it in a shoebox.  
I saw poetry at Archimedes Banya butt naked in the cold plunge.  
Last week I caught it side-eying me from my favorite song.  
Everything your mind can't digest is eliminated as poetry.  
Poetry sneaks out at night and never tells you where it's been.  
The alphabet bends over backwards for poetry.  
The dog ate my poetry.  
The president banned it for being a lifestyle choice.  
If you can't find poetry in the library check detention.  
Last time I saw poetry it had lipstick on its collar.  
Taking poetry to a strip club is redundant.  
Poetry bit my ear and now I need a tetanus shot.  
If you meet it on the road, don't read it.



A mating pair of Old World Swallowtails (*Papilio machaon*)

## **The Meristem**

Do you make the rooster's dawning crow?  
Or draw back the coyote's bloody-soaked snarl?  
And what of the barn owl's silent, starry flight? Or the cat's clawing instinct,  
intrepid in her pounce? Do you call these things yours as much as  
flute or drum? As much yours as there have been things in you  
pick-pocketed and pandered to; wretched and unwanted?

And so what if you are tired, tart and tangy as a mustard seed sprout?  
The land knows this.  
The land does not care.  
Longer than fear, longer than hate, there have been these trees, these flowers,  
these herbs.  
And see here? Here is the harvest. Here is the good work of patient and  
heedful hands.  
Out here, in the garden, things are as simple as they are tricky; fresh and  
enchanting  
as much as they are ancient and  
unforgiving.

And yet this fenced in wild is no lackluster gemini, no overlooked daughter  
archetype.  
Every move just another countermove to the previous. Every root a finely spun  
kaleidoscope of slow but ever imminent choice.  
There is no nullifying this soil.  
There nothing to nullify.  
Be made, be done, become.  
What growth is there  
is already there.

## **Ashfield Night**

Beyond the orchard low  
hills relate to sky  
as I do to people

I love. I stay loam  
and rock underneath  
yet green on top

reaching. The people  
I love are clouds,  
and the sky is pale

at this hour. It holds  
everything, even  
my serrated self. My body

unclenches here. My ears  
spill machine sounds, greed  
sounds, the harrowing-hours-

of-progress sounds. Here: bird-talk,  
bee-blood, thunder.  
I need this: to be

with creatures a creature.  
To be a cloud  
with clouds, and the night

all stitched and battened,  
an ink-filled  
in-dwelled hill.

## **The Needles**

I am so quiet for the purpose of hearing my internal radio.  
In this open and (sometimes) loving Utah the gray of a rare cold front.  
Rocks blush hard against salted fingers. I make pillars of them arguments  
and all else stop at what used to be a scenic waterfall. Now very dead  
and still the brush can offer some green. Oh well I  
should fly home to the joint trails I planned for. I gave legs to them  
and you got very little from me. A slot canyon thins  
into an image for later. You'll let me out won't you?  
If you were here you'd make a shape with your mouth.  
The whistle bouncing off of nothing.



The textures of a decomposing leaf

## **I'm So Sorry, It's Just that a Mother Rarely Feels Untethered**

*Lyrics from Girls in The Hood by Megan Thee Stallion*

A cloud is building, just East of The Badlands. 90 on I-90. Younger, I drove a little 2-seater Mazda Miata. I used to joke that I wanted to put 20 of those stick figure family stickers on it, now I drive a Suburban, 4 car seats in the back. *Fuck bein' good! I'm a bad bitch* rattling me from the speakers. Phone lit with the burgeoning bloom of the weather radar app. Notify me when electricity reaches from the Earth to space. A near constant vibration, lightning app wilding. Blue sky mask. Prairie calm. *Severe Weather Warning!! Counties: Pennington, Jackson, Oglala-Lakota. Hazards: Tornadoes, 4.5 inch hail, 100+ MPH straight line winds. Take cover, stay away from windows, find an interior room on the first floor.* 100 on I-90. Roll those windows down. *I'm sick of Motherfuckers tryna tell me how to live!* A great darkening. The first crack erupts on the windshield, a spiraling tendril of a thing. The steering wheel is becoming harder to tame. Vroom Vroom, baby.

## Perfect Time

*After Edward Hopper's Eleven A.M. (1926)*

I am told by the guide '11:00 am is a peculiar time for a woman to be sat naked in a chair'.  
I beg to differ.

It is the perfect time for a lady to be sat staring out a window in the buff, judging an indifferent city. Lonely?  
No. She is peaceful. She has found time to stop. To stare. To exist. She is the hour hand and we are the minutes. We are voyeurs of her private world; she does not tick back. She shuns the validation of a critic with their pixelated eye. She is wild, untethered. She could jump and she would fly.

The window frame becomes a guillotine of light, keeping the street's noise from bruising her skin, already mottled from pale strokes. Cabbage greens, plum through the ribs, white thumb of her knees. Detachment?  
No. I witness sunlight as a grandmother pinching flesh. Soft and solid, newborn in a velvet chair. She is dreaming of her own equations. DaVinci in a tenement block.

Instead of lounging in cluttered living-room, she slinks her curves into deeper springs.  
A minimalism of craving. Lamp unplugged, letters untouched. Clothes are folded in those drawers.

I know her face is a study in serenity. I know she is about to kick off her shoes.



A series of images 30-45 minutes apart of the wing of a Downy Emerald Dragonfly (*Cordulia aenea*) as it slowly expands after shedding its larval skin

## **The Change**

For years she is ocean  
circles and currents  
rising up with Springs  
and down into Neaps.

She ebbs and flows  
pushed and pulled  
up and down  
by the moon's magnetic force.

Creeping, the certain rhythm  
dissipates  
her timing is off  
her waters unnavigable.  
All that was known  
is unknown.

Her steady rise and fall  
the regular round  
is newly fickle  
early, or late, or missing.

She can no longer chart  
her own blue depths.  
Her universe unravels  
in lawlessness.  
Nothing is as it was.  
All is chaos.

*There will be  
a new heaven  
and a new earth  
the old things  
shall pass away  
and the sea will be no more.*

She stands firm  
leans into the new  
slower, longer, deeper  
cycle of seasons.

She breathes  
in and out steadily  
laughs at her strange solidity.  
She is earth, no longer ocean.

(Scripture quotation taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used with permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide.)

## **Easy Street**

On Reddit, a juvenile jack fish wears a jellyfish as a hat. Immune to any sting, its body fits perfectly under the bell. The jelly gets nothing from this deal but friendship. Go to Crown Beach for a real-life fish fix and see a million black mudsnails clustering in the muck, shells still slick with the last wave's water. One rides on another's back, teetering but ultimately steady. Yeehaw, I say, bless the mundane. Bless the grains of sand that are secretly shells, absolutely whole. Bless my simple heart, blown away by microwaved kettle corn. When I lie my elbows twinge. I don't make the rules, except for the few I follow: stop holding a cat when they start meowing. Taco Bell is once fortnightly. Never say "circle back." Stop trying to recapture old magic. Let yourself be lightly moved when waiters sing Happy Birthday at a restaurant. Clap politely afterwards. No one wants this but it's a step in a direction. Life warrants a celebration. Eat the free cake.

## **Amateur Scientist Reads the News**

I, Unlearn'd Astronomer, spotted last night  
through my backyard telescope, a potential  
interstellar visitor, a mysterious object  
racing towards earth.

I am dizzy with discovery,  
baffled as my interstellar object produces  
its own light. Shooting through the solar system,  
I know it. Something is hurtling towards us, while earth  
is moving toward something.

A cosmic cannonball  
hurtling through space, we caught on camera—how fast  
are we spinning around the sun? By my best calculations  
Earth is screaming through space at one point three  
million miles per hour. I planted my bare feet in the grass,  
looked up.

We are pieces of a failed star on course  
to escape the Milky Way altogether and blast off  
into intergalactic nothing followed by  
a runaway supermassive black hole  
racing through space with a tail of infant  
stars two hundred thousand light years long.

Buckle up.  
This is what the headlines say,  
we are learning to look to the stars again.  
Whitman would be proud.

## **That's not my department says Wernher von Braun**

I didn't realise you wanted me to write  
about what was really happening in the world  
I thought metaphor a safer choice for love  
and all that sits between it and war  
and all the beautiful ways we starve ourselves  
of bite-sized truths over breakfast news  
when the world has gone to hell as we slept  
a rocket goes up  
a rocket comes down  
history just another poem  
you will have forgotten by noon.

## **Fallin' Blackbird Festival**

It is good to be bird-hearted,  
delicate, burdened by sympathy.  
Good, to turn doe-eyed  
with rage at the broken windows,  
the way we ruin things.

In Arkansas the red-winged blackbirds fell,  
plummeted like shrapnel  
from bursting rockets. They were overcome  
by the blinding, the bursting, the booming  
of a dying year's victory celebration,  
the way we welcome a new year with bombs.

The delicate bird-hearts beat too fast,  
too hard. With each rocket, burst of color,  
a hundred tiny heart attacks.



The wing of a Small Emperor moth (*Saturnia pavonia*)

## **The rain is too heavy for cats**

and for street sweepers  
work. there has been a dead pigeon  
outside of our house for two  
days. it is a rag thing.  
a lump in the throat  
of the world on the concrete-

slab pavement. they don't generally last.  
someone gets them - someone puts them  
somewhere else. or else they are eaten  
by cats or at night by the vermin.

but this weekend - no:  
red weather and warnings of trees  
coming down in predicted  
high winds. tiles rising like a brush  
through the grain of an animal's fur,  
and directives  
to stay in and shelter.

look: the neck has been broken.  
it perhaps hit a window at speed.  
it must have been our bedroom.  
we must have been downstairs.  
imagine - the impact. movement, clear skies  
and clean glass. I've seen it before

and they fall much more slowly  
when they fall than they are  
flying. they fall soft, impact eating  
velocity. someone throwing torn bread  
off a balcony or off a bridge.

## **Dormant**

Have you ever seen  
a ladybug washup?  
Thousands dot  
the ocean's surface  
with red and just ride  
the waves for a little while.  
Congregating on kelp  
or floating alone.  
They can live for more  
than a hundred hours  
on the water; seemingly  
dead but simply waiting  
to be returned to shore.  
To restart their lives,  
leave the past behind.  
I swam in one once.  
My round, buoyant body  
surrounded by luck.



The wing of a Clouded Yellow Butterfly (*Colias crocea*)

## **Warm Inside the Shell**

A little pink thing is my ghost puncture, only found when the permanent conversation happens with those I am just meeting, will never meet again.

Say I'm a bright little star, only after the Bay Bridge. Say nothing about my potential. I am not your height enough for that.

Horseshoes upturn. Working hands get scarred by rope and I let a plastic mood ring go. Used to play this game in the sand where I buried a gift and tried to relive the acceptance before high tide sucked back in.

Where was the nail on the dock that brought me down? The gray cow you saw floating when you were a boy? These are just stories between us, smiles of ease.

The blank is showing the soul. Is making a show of the soul. Call me in a harbor waiting to dry.

## **Through the Gate**

You half-joked about me  
leaving you  
for someone else  
and I rolled my eyes

and said as I kept washing  
the dishes, I don't want  
to have sex with someone  
who believes in God,

and the laugh  
that burst from your chest  
was like the cows busting  
through the gate

hooves thudding  
on the packed dirt  
relieved to be out  
of the old paddock  
and into a new one.

## **Mirage**

I held wind in my hand until it bit at my fingers and I let her loose  
in the grassland where she devoured and was devoured.  
Once, herds of Buffalo roamed here. I lie  
my ear to the ground, I hear them? Or is that my blood beat  
betraying my skin again? My husband licks knives,  
sharp like me. Don't worry for him. The knife and I  
are as soft as the pussywillow. In lost springs, I sliced branches  
away, while their arbor-mater watched through eye-scarred bark  
the shift from feather to green on my mother's kitchen table.  
Now, another year's air nips at my toes and my cheekbones  
heat. This is not the first seedtime I've idolized  
but this sky seems an achingly lustrous blade-mirror;  
the lightening of surface above the drowning man's head.  
Worry for him. The softness of water is quite a heavy thing.



The wing of a Banded Demoiselle Damselfly (*Calopteryx splendens*)

## **Farm Smart**

He says he's not very smart  
but he can tell what brand of chainsaw  
the neighbor is using  
by the sound

and can tell what caliber of gun  
the other neighbor is shooting  
by the sound

and he can tell what kind of truck  
is driving past  
by the sound

and he doesn't understand: to me  
that is like being able to see UV light.

## **Lopez Island**

Where there was fog  
there's now a hill  
wearing a green cloak  
not of woe  
but of wow  
and there's my mother  
who is not my human mother  
but a bird  
and a disappearance  
and she is herself  
a clear fine morning

**With the children we make deer ears,**

hands cupped to our cheeks and pressed backwards.  
We step backwards into the dark,  
calling out to them until they can't hear us.

We take mints, then crush them against the ground  
to watch them spark. It's called triboluminescence.  
I want to hang onto the words (tribein: to rub and lumin: light).

I want to believe in the power of knowledge,  
that knowledge grows. When we walk out of the woods,  
our eyes adjust back to the darkness,  
deer ears velvety soft as the path ahead.

I want to remember the softness of a sweater tied around my waist,  
sitting in the veranda, the shape of my legs, my knees,  
sitting on the ground, scraping mints across asphalt,

the impossible feat of remembering  
anything at all, or knowing anything fully,  
each being enclosed in the dim prism of its own senses.

Darkness never stops adjusting itself, the way  
I collect knowledge, each fact like a specimen,  
like the grooves of the mint where I press my fingers and rub.

We watch the distant deer step into the shadows,  
snapping branches, the near silence,  
soft swish of their tails before they disappear.



*Honeysuckle, gouache on paper*

## **The Feather Artist**

Gracie hadn't been to Still Pond in 2 years, not since she saw the coyote there - which was all it took for the fire-eating dragon, Fear, to declare the place off-limits. But Still Pond was where Gracie really wanted to watch it from. She thought about watching it from the park but then remembered some kids there once called her "stork woman" which caused the dragon to put his big foot down there as well.

When the day came around, Gracie made a decision. She decided she wasn't going to let any fire-eating dragon tell her where she could and couldn't go, so she left her home and headed for Still Pond Trail.

She found that the trail had changed. The ground was damp and spongy - difficult for anyone to walk on but especially hard for an old, stork-legged woman. The trees had filled in and their thick canopy no longer let the light in. Gracie courageously put one foot in front of the other and ignored the sulking dragon at her heels.

"Damn the coyotes," she whispered, praying that she wouldn't see one.

When she reached the clearing and the pond, she found a stump, sat on it and patiently waited for it. It wouldn't be long. Suddenly there was a harsh rustling in the brush behind her. She swung around to see a boy - a skinny boy wearing rag-like clothes that hung off him like wet sheets off a clothes line. His thick, wavy hair resembled a sea storm. A small cloth bag was draped over his shoulder.

Gracie couldn't remember ever seeing another soul at Still Pond except for the coyote. Of course, there were the insects - always the insects. God had big love for the exoskeleton.

She couldn't get over the boy's eyes. They were the bluest eyes she had ever seen - bluer than robins' eggs. Ordinarily she would have been frightened, but she wasn't - not even a little.

"I didn't think anyone would be here," the boy said, then looked at his watch.

"Is it time?" Gracie asked.

"I think so," the boy replied, "I brought something to see it with."

He pulled a cardboard tube from his bag. The tube had been doctored at one end.

"We can share," he offered.

"I'm fine," Gracie declined.

"Ok, but you can't look right at it."

Gracie scrutinized the boy.

"You're not from here."

The boy nodded.

"No, I'm with the traveling show. We got in about a week ago."

"But you're so young. Are you a run-a-way? Why would a young boy take up with a traveling show? Where is home?"

"Home?" the boy asked.

"Yes home - the place where you eat, play, go to school. The place where people love you and keep you safe."

"Oh home. I guess that would be upper Michigan."

"Off the lake?"

The boy laughed, "Everything's off the lake."

"You seem like a nice boy," Gracie said, "The world is a dangerous place for a boy to be out here alone. Hasn't anyone ever told you that?"

The boy looked up.

"I don't know if I can stay for the whole thing. The bosses don't like it if we're gone too long."

"What is it you do for these people?"

The boy brushed the sea storm away from his eyes.

"Pick up, feed the animals, put things together if someone feels like teaching me."

"Do your parents know where you are? Why don't you go back and just be a boy - do boy things?"

"Like what? Climb a tree?"

"Yes, or throw a ball. I don't know."

The boy put the tube up to his eye and looked towards the sun.

"It's starting. I'm sure of it now."

"How did you get here all the way from Michigan?" Gracie asked.

"Hitch-hiked," the boy replied, "Got lucky and hooked up with a long-hauler. Bronx Trucking it said on the rig. That driver could make a clutch sing God Bless America. I never felt so safe. Diamond Willy he called himself."

"Aren't your parents worried about you?"

"I call them."

"Good."

He lowered the tube and held it out to Gracie.

"The fortune telling lady made this for me. She tells fortunes in her sleep. Sometimes we stand outside her window and listen."

Gracie leaned back.

"Did your father beat you? Is that what happened? The truth, and maybe I'll tell you mine."

The boy spread dirt with his feet.

"The truth?"

"Yes."

"My father's a good guy. I'll tell you the truth if you promise not to laugh."

"Promise."

The boy stared hard at Gracie.

"I know it sounds silly, but it started after I found this old book in a house my father and uncle were cleaning out. That's what they do. They clean out houses."

"After people die?"

"God, I hope so."

He put the tube back up to his eye and looked skyward again.

"The shadow has covered part of it already. The book turned out to be a book of paintings by this artist, Edwin Case. Ever hear of him?"

Gracie looked around.

"No."

It was slowly becoming darker and the air, cooler. Still Pond could barely be seen.

"Night inside day," Gracie whispered, "Hear the quiet? What about this book?"

The boy half-smiled.

"Edwin Case is a feather artist."

Gracie put her hands between her knees to keep them warm.

The boy lowered the tube.

"That's all he paints, feathers. Any kind of feather you can think of. Sometimes he paints feathers that only he can see. Sometimes he leaves the feather without color so someone can put in their own colors."

"How interesting."

Gracie looked around.

"The world wears a veil."

They sat in silence as the light slowly dissolved. The boy reached into his pocket, took out a neatly folded piece of paper then carefully unfolded it and handed it to Gracie.

"This is my favorite," he said, "It's from a rainbow lorikeet. See the detail?"

Gracie smiled.

"I do. Stunning."

"I know it sounds funny," the boy said, "But when I opened that book, all the clouds in me disappeared and I felt like...I can't explain it. I felt freer than I ever thought I could. I never told anyone this part."

Gracie straightened her sundress. The boy spoke slowly and softly.

"I knew right then and there what I was going to do and where I was going."

"Away from home."

"Yes. I knew I could see all the colors the feather artist saw and more. I read somewhere that every feather is different, that they all have a distinct smell that tells you where they're from."

"Fascinating."

"I also found out that Mr. Case is in Stoney Brook Hospital. He has a disease that's taken his voice and eyes."

"I'm sorry to hear that."

The boy's eyes seemed bluer though Gracie wasn't sure if it had anything to do with the disappearing light. The world was engulfed in shadows. The boy held up the cloth bag.

"So far I've collected 56 feathers. I'm taking them to Stoney Brook. I hope another trucker as nice as Diamond Willy picks me up. Maybe smelling the feathers will brighten Mr. Casey's day."

"I'm sure they will. You're quite a boy. Then what will you do?"

"I'm already doing it."

"Really?"

He pulled out another folded piece of paper, unfolded it and handed it to Gracie who held it to her eyes.

"That's beautiful. You did that?."

"Yes."

"And all this because you found a book. Amazing."

The boy lowered his head in embarrassment and nodded.

Gracie said, "Down there in the meadow. Do you see them? Do you see the wild horses? They can't move. They don't know what to make of it. Do you want to hear my truth?"

The boy nodded. Gracie looked into his blue eyes.

"I've never been past my fences. I have a husband in Heaven and kids in Australia and Germany. I have fenced myself in but seeing you has made my world a little bigger. You're a feather artist and a bit of a dragon slayer."

"Dragon slayer?"

"There's my house down there. Can you make it out?"

"Yes, I see it."

"The light's returning."

The boy nodded.

As the sun slowly lifted its veil, the boy stood close to Gracie. They quietly watched color and light come back into the world.

The horses in the meadow twitched. They longed for the sun. They longed to run free again.



Onions, colored pencils on paper

## About our Contributors:

**Jennifer Badot** (she/her) is the author of *A Violet, A Jennifer* (Lily Poetry Review Books, 2022). A Pushcart Prize nominee, Badot's poems and reviews have appeared in the *Boston Globe*, *Studia Mystica*, *Lily Poetry Review*, *Nixes Mate*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Anti-Heroine Chic*, the *Poetry is Bread Anthology*, *The Big Brutal Act Anthology* (forthcoming), and elsewhere in the glorious vastness.

**Rachael Bull** (she/her) is a writer, mother, and graduate student. While she currently lives in central Indiana, her work is rooted in her home in the hills and hollers of Southern Appalachia. When she isn't writing, she can be found serving coffee and seeking out the beauty in the midwestern mundane.

**Polly Conway** is a writer and editor based in Alameda, CA. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *One Art*, *Wildscape Literary Journal*, *Pictura*, *Ellie*, *Nulla*, *Jelly Squid*, *Monday Night*, and others. She is the Poetry Editor at *Nulla*, a multimedia journal based in San Francisco, and runs an ocean dipping club. She holds an MFA in Poetry from California College of the Arts. You can find her on Instagram at @pollyannacowgirl.

**Zoë Davis** is a writer from Sheffield, England. Forward Prize and Best of the Net nominee, her work can be found in publications such as *Frazzled Lit*, *Roi Fainéant*, and *Citywide Lunch*. Zoë balances her creative life with playing wheelchair rugby league. Follow her on X @MeanerHarker, where she's always happy to have a virtual coffee and a chat.

**Lisa Delan's** poetry has received a Best of the Net and three Pushcart Prize nominations. Her work has been featured in *Burningword Literary Journal*, *3rd Wednesday Magazine*, *Milk Press*, *The Wild Umbrella*, *American Writers Review*, *Anthropocene Poetry Journal*, and *Passengers Journal*, among other publications, and she recently penned the libretto for a multi-media choral work which premiered in her adopted hometown of San Francisco, CA. When she is not writing you can find the soprano, an international performer who records for the Pentatone label, singing songs on texts by some of her favorite poets, and at lisadelan.com.

**Joe Ducato** lives in Utica, NY. Previous publishing credits include; *Lit-Ezine*, *Adelaide Literary Magazine*, *Santa Barbara Literary Journal*, *Modern Literature*, *Written Tales* and *Bangalore Review* and among others.

**Yoonji Huh** is a dedicated student enrolled at a school in Seoul, South Korea. With a strong passion for the arts, Yoonji is diligently curating her art portfolio in preparation for university.

**Mindy Kober** is a contemporary pop artist living in Los Angeles, and her preferred medium is gouache on paper. Her work explores the themes of reconstructed memories, societal codes, and the natural world, and evokes an illustrative charm typically found in storybooks. She uses the idea of storytelling in her work to piece together forgotten traditions and half learned folklore, reassembled and retold by the universe itself. You can find her on IG at @kobermindy and on her artist website at mindykober.com.

**Katie Larson** is a 25-year-old native Californian woman. She is an aspiring writer, poet, and mixed media artist. Katie has been previously published for photography and poetry in FLARE Magazine. Other poetry publications include HNDL Magazine, Wishbone Words Magazine, The Orange Rose Magazine, Prosetrics Magazine, Ave Astra Magazine, California Bards Norcal Poetry Anthology 2025, Knee Brace Press, and Full Mood Magazine. You can find her on Instagram and on X: @iamktb14!

**D.S. Maolalai** has been described by one editor as "a cosmopolitan poet" and another as "prolific, bordering on incontinent". His work has been nominated fourteen times for BOTN, eleven for the Pushcart and once for the Forward Prize, and released in three collections; "Love is Breaking Plates in the Garden" (Encircle Press, 2016), "Sad Havoc Among the Birds" (Turas Press, 2019) and "Noble Rot" (Turas Press, 2022)

**Kiana McCrackin** is a writer, a photographer, a cloud gazer, and a mother. She currently resides in South Dakota where she is learning what the wind has to say and translating what the trees tell her. Kiana has work published and forthcoming in various literary magazines, is a reader at MEMEZINE and can be found on Instagram @she\_arranges\_words.

**EK Ottenritter** is a Maryland poet, now based in Northern Virginia, in the MFA program at George Mason University. She loves Eastern Shore things and lines that give everything away. She is a reader for Poetry Daily and phoebe journal.

**Kathleen Palmer** is a freelance art curator and poet in progress, based in Surrey. She has long seen exhibitions as story-telling in three dimensions. Partly inspired by working with poets in museums, she returned to an early love of writing. Her work has appeared in The Alchemy Spoon and Lamp Lit. She can be found on Instagram and Threads as @kathleenpalmer\_101.

**Nina Prater** is the author of *Under the Canopy of Unpruned Leaves*, a poetry chapbook published by Belle Point Press. Her poems have also been published by *Painted Pebble Lit Mag*, *One Sentence Poems*, *Buddhist Poetry Review*, *Literary Mama*, and *A Revolutionary Press*. Nina and her family live on a small farm in the Arkansas Ozarks.

**Esther Sadoff** is a teacher and writer from Columbus, Ohio. She is the author of four chapbooks: *Some Wild Woman* (Finishing Line Press), *Serendipity in France* (Finishing Line Press), *Dear Silence* (Kelsay Books), and *If I Hold my Breath* (Bottlecap Press). She was nominated for a Pushcart Prize by *Hole in the Head Review*, and she is the winner of the *Women of Ohio 2025 Poetry Award*.

**Alexis Tinker-Tsavalas** is a naturalist and nature photographer based in Berlin Germany. He has been fascinated by all kinds of wildlife for as long as he can remember, with his particular focus in the last years being on the tiny details - insects, spiders, and other tiny organisms. He loves macro photography as a way to show this often overlooked part of the natural world that is all around us. See his work on instagram @naturefold or on his YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/@naturefold>.



## Contributors:

Jennifer Badot

Rachael Bull

Polly Conway

Zoë Davis

Lisa Delan

Joe Ducato

Yoonji Huh

Mindy Kober

Katie Larson

DS Maolalai

Kiana McCrackin

EK Ottenritter

Kathleen Palmer

Nina Prater

Esther Sadoff

Alexis Tinker-Tsavalas