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Pretty Owl Poetry is a quarterly online journal with big print dreams and its head in the sky. We publish poetry, flash fiction, and art.



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She calls me a tumbleweed

by Teresa Petro

some rare like flower clusters, but I got all this shit stuck in me—

how to ramble past cowboys' feet with hang-ups and sticks ugly dirt like divorce/debt/a/bad/haircut

and conversations that sound like a Bob Dylan song

my body = once disengaged from the root

Now I look for the wet place on the map in the wine circle stains

to spread seeds, to open mechanically and absorb.

Having No Father

by Steve Klepetar

Having no father, he sat in the dust and disobeyed. Even rain

couldn't move his blood. His mouth hung open and he drank the wind.

Without a father to remind him of sanity and doves, he could tease

aspen leaves, polish a stone until it mirrored his ragged face. Having

no father, it mattered little if clocks ran out or bells chimed in the village square.

All night he entered the curtain of moon, spoke in whispers to ghosts of trees.

He gathered rings of glass, found opals and rubies nesting on frozen ground.

Without a father to show him the way, he enjoyed these things like the texture

of cake, or ocean on his bare skin. Fatherless, he was prone to dreams, where

brown fawns gathered by pools, lapping water that tasted of cold flint on rough and silent tongues.

The Truth

by Robert Walicki

We pulled the wings off flies and bugs just to watch them struggle. We didn't

look at ourselves as cruel, our hands full. Call it the curiosity of the meek.

We couldn't hurt anything unless we were dared to. Hit that defenseless bird, Hit that snake

slithering through tall grass or glistening on the bank.

The streams terse edge, rocks, water, the places I was afraid to cross or come close to.

Someone always was struck with the urge to push you over into the deep end—The unsafe waves,

the caved in hill, our bikes peering over. like small animals looking down

over the length of the fall—the gravity of You first! No. you! and chicken. That irresistible force that heats up a boys blood,

ignores the danger of popped chains, stitches, our mother's screams standing on porches or leaning out of windows,

still haggardly pretty and we, too young to see it. A truth we were getting close to,

like the bodies of beetles, those mosquitos I kept in the open air grave under my bed.

Specks of matter intangible as dust, so fragile that when you touch them for the first time,

some of them would stay there, unable to move and others flying off as if wakened by your touch.

thirst

by Kirsten Imani Kasai

lake bottom beast, muck-dweller she re-emerges

i swim, i sail, i cast my nets in calmed waters while the myth sleeps but safety is short lived she re-emerges again rocking the boat

stay submerged, where you belong until my yearning to see your sleek head break the lake's skin calls you up again from the deeps

come and gone

by Christopher Mulrooney

I prescribed
I being the doctor in this case
two eyedropperfuls of medicine being the standard dose
myself and other things as well
sunlight and shade rest and plenty of exercise
a bit of the other in fine

banquet

by Christopher Mulrooney

a railroad yard full of hoboes every boxcar inviting Edna St. Vincent Millay hears the whistle

sertaline as a family tree

by Eric Silver

168: What things are too personal to discuss with others? 1

only after I admitted to seeing a therapist to my mom did she show me the unearthed part of herself, the secret door in the basement repainted rough wood to match the floorboards.

This is how antidepressants affect a tiny body over decades.
This is how your father liked tiny bodies and how I talk about my ass like a misbehaving dog.
This is how I cry for you over breakfast because I know.

Depression is still a sallow monster, but it works well as a secret handshake.

¹ From The Book of Questions by Gregory Stock, Ph.D.

the way most people play two truths and a lie

by Eric Silver

181: What do you like best about your life? Least? 1

I can make a mean bloody mary and I am loved and most days I do not believe I deserve it.

¹From The Book of Questions by Gregory Stock, Ph.D.

Collage

by Howie Good

The most difficult stage is filling the last space. Everything gives the appearance of something that is absent. Atomic clouds linger in a kind of faceless brooding, skyscrapers burn without leaving a visible mark. You can't even see the wind blowing as there's nothing for it to touch or move. It's a circular path into nowhere. Spiraling, even. Beneath a twelfth-century sky yellow with age, clerks of nostalgia gather shattered pieces, the latest of which is a Madonna in peacock feathers.

Gelato Fiasco

by Michael Albright

Maine, like the state, Street, Brunswick, Friday at 3:00 PM, and 25 degrees, so there's a discount, and this, this *this* is so people full, like a Sunday afternoon July, there must be 30 flavors, it's been over two years since you've had gelato, clocks have just been set ahead, an equinox a week away, it's a beautiful day, and nothing will ever be the same.

Man with a backpack said, I meant something, to talk you for five minutes about a new flavor I found in Belgium, just like the first time you tasted Nutella, except when he says, but it's *not* Nutella, it's *better* than Nutella, the counter guy says, I've never tasted Nutella, everyone in the place says, you never tasted Nutella? in unison.

She's making it here the old-fashioned way, by grinding the beans individually, pouring and filtering gradually, swirling water more and more as they go, everyone acts like they know each other, all cheerful and totally lacking in guile, moms gabbing while kids scream and tear through the store, it's a beautiful day, and you will never be the same.

Then—old guy with a black fedora, long black coat walks in, everyone watches him walk one end of the place to the other, pointing, tasting everything, taking everything he hasn't had, no one cares, they just keep giving him tastes, all thirty flavors, they don't care, he doesn't care, he just keeps on taking, tasting, keeps taking until he's tasted it all—

You never wanted to try anything, nothing you hadn't been tasted before—what would you taste if I brought you here now? dark sea salt chocolate caramel orange moxie—stracciatella—blueberry Christ, you never want to try anything and now it's too late—

Come back, come and stand with me now, it'll be better this time, it's not too late, I'll be better this time, I'll forgive you and you'll forgive me, it's *not* too late to taste it all, there's time to taste, to try again, try that, take this, come back, come back, and taste it all again. Again.

It's late afternoon at the end of a week. Night grows shorter in the lengthening day. It's cold, but the sun, my god, the sun— It's a beautiful day, but you're still not here, and I will never be the same.

sinking

by Nicole Chin

my mind never quiets it is a hull, a husk departing

a coming pulse

no erasure

its movements are slight snakes around childhood past mind-track evading

rollicking thoughts quickening blood a mind clenching jaws it clicks—

my mother at the sink at midnight the piss on the bathroom floor mould on the white open ceiling red meat spat on plates slumping bodies, aching limbs a hallway to the red-eyed, the bleary.

no patience for the apologetic. a mouth, never dry

my bloodline is cacophony set alight.

Strange Shores

by Ori Fienberg

A man's head was filled with water. In summery months it teemed with glittering fish-like thoughts that he'd lure with the subtle bait of meditation. In the winter it became a frozen ocean that he could skate effortlessly across.

His life was governed by small ever-changing tides produced by the irresistible pull of different peoples' gravities.

Some nights storms raged within him. He'd wake up in the morning drenched and on the strange shores at the edge of his mind. Then there was nothing to do but paddle out on the still water in search of fish.

Memories of Water

by Ori Fienberg

There is water that lives below the earth that has forgotten how to fly, but still seeps up, forming mirrors for flimsy clouds. An oasis is all that the desert remembers of oceans.

Smoke was created when birds wished to visit a cloud, that traveling nursery for rain (those gently glittering children). The smoke and clouds mingle like shy, young lovers, till they are too heavy to just talk, and they grow up by falling down.

One bird mistakenly lands at the oasis. It peers into the mirror and drinks from the water, and just as it begins to rain, the desert remembers, and flies away.

With Severe Thanks

by Les Wicks

The underleaf subterranean suntan orchestral mutters her heart wore gutters threw one at that weddinglow confettimillimetres up into that hostile gravity complete drum-bums with business cards & shattered emotion.

Partial to the martial off our heads downpipe bagpipe our puny paradise has free beer & a local bus service matrimony.

Enough is everywhere, a bit spazzy in the park dressed up for a night out mid-afternoon acting so wonderful 'cept that feral smile.

I love it then maybe all retire for staunch napping.

Your Last Friend is a Shadow

by Les Wicks

So said, it all comes down to unacceptable bits.

Around seven years old we start to pack them away. The collective copy becomes a construct of all we suppress, armoury of crushed grass.

Kill the doctors, call me Carla read my mother existence through decay.

Significance is a crook - comfort foods in psychosis.

We lurch toward light though lamps are all phoney.

Pretend to be men, women brittle boats cowards in coats cavort about our disease applause for our hopes.

Complaining souls heat, wool & cracks the Jung deep-flip.

Massage warms the page but parades never stop until crowds have all crusted.

Comrades share the dire with their dinner.

Who won is the last question stuffed deep in our luggage beside pianos & guilt.

the gods prefer a wasteland

by Cassandra Morrilly

those times when the wind picks up the dust, slinging the stinging particles of earth the tourists don't much care for but I tell them that dryness and the emptiness is worth coveting and they are led willingly along, though they stumble and cough.

there are signs everywhere, warning of dangers in the grass of slithering things and crevices unseen, falling rock and abandoned mines.

they are no longer obstacles to overcome, but pictures taken with long black lenses.

one last piece of virgin earth, a photo to be loved briefly, left to languish on a website, password soon forgotten.

someone might stumble upon it one day and stop to admire dust, red rocks and prairie grass untouched by man.

these are places where the gods still linger. the gods prefer a wasteland.

civilization lives down the road, breathing its unnatural breath reaching out, stretching, scratching the sacred out of existence too much unkind paving and unnatural glows,

a paradox as awful as it is beautiful -

there is no waste in a wasteland. that is the monopoly of a hungry, teething civilization created by man in the name of the gods, created by man for comfort and blindness.

the gods allow for beauty, they stretched it out as far as an eye can see or a mind experience. a wasteland, begging to be filled with man's desires.

the gods gave us these, as sure as they gave us wind and rocks, as sure as they gave us pain and uncertainty, which we mislabeled as things to be anesthetized.

Significant Moments in the Life of My Mother

by Taylor Grieshober

After Margaret Atwood

My mother was born the year the Rosenberg's were executed. She grew up on a farm. Her father bought the farm when he was only eighteen. The barn was red, is still red. The house was white. My mother was born the middle child of two brothers, who were for the most part kind and good enough.

At the start of second grade, my mother was stricken with St. Vitus Dance, a preventable disease that causes jerky, uncontrollable movements in children. She remembers little of this time except that she slept a great deal and missed most of the school year. Subsequently she was held back a grade. Because of the nature of the disease, my mother couldn't grip a pencil. She often says, "Get a grip" when she thinks someone should.

My mother remembers the day JFK died. She was in the fourth grade. The principal announced the news over the loud speaker. Her classmates cried. My mother did not.

Once when she was fourteen, my mother had an accident on her dirt bike. A bee flew down her shirt and she lost control of the bike. The Honda fell on top of her and the momentum sent the bike, with her underneath, skidding down the hill. This was before the road was paved. Gravel and dirt clung to the cuts in her bare legs. Her friend, who had ridden behind on her own bike and had seen the whole thing, came running to my mother's side. Her friend was crying. My mother was not.

My mother was a healer. She took in animals and cared for them until they were better. There is a picture of my mother when she was peroxide blonde and leggy. She's in a bikini, sitting up on a beach towel in the yard. Next to her is her pet raccoon, Rocky. There is another picture of my mother with an opossum on her shoulder. She cared for a family of opossums for a time. My mother and her family even saved a blue heron once, after a neighbor had shot it. Years later, when a deer got caught in our fence, and the wire wrapped around it's leg and snapped it, and the bone glowed in the night, my mother called another neighbor and had it shot.

My mother passed out in the field before her high school graduation party. All she remembers is setting up the keg. She thinks this might be why she doesn't like to drink.

My mother met her first husband when she was 22. They met on a blind date at a fair. The wedding took place in the farm's pasture. She wore a white muslin dress and a crown of flowers on her head. My mother's second husband was her divorce lawyer. The wedding took place at an old inn. She wore a pink suit and earnings.

When I was little, my mother made popcorn and ice cream sundaes, and we'd watch horror movies. With a

belly full of sugar and salt and grease, I often fell asleep before the big pay off. My mother would shake me, saying go on now, get.

When my mother was younger, before the first husband and the second, she worked the graveyard shift at a department store. With the money she earned she bought a light blue Volkswagen. She drove home through the fog each morning, blasting Buffy Saint Marie from the eight-track, cigarette to her lips, coffee in her blood.

11/18/82

by John Duncan Talbird

That year I had such grand plans. And I remember it down to the time of day when those plans changed, 8:08 p.m., because I had just glanced at my watch right before it happened. I was hanging out in the 7-11 playing pinball with Robbie. It was the brand new, sparkling clean 7-11 on the other side of 34th Street as opposed to the dumpy Magic Market closer to home which smelled like fried onions and only had Ms. Pac-Man. Robbie had gotten a multiball play and won an extra game right before the guy came in. The guy had on an orange Gators cap and acid-washed jeans. And then, right after that, a bunch of dirty children burst in, running up and down the aisles making a racket. A couple of them chased each other around the island where they keep the coffee and soda machine and the cashier—a middle-aged guy with Jheri curls—yelled, "Kids! I told you kids not to come in here and make all that racket and shit!" The guy in the Gators cap put a six-pack on the counter and then pulled out a gun and waved it around. "This is a stickup!" he yelled as if he was in a movie. I think it came out later that the cashier was the store owner and a former cop or mercenary or something; he grabbed a gun from under the counter and fired off a shot before I could blink.

I continue to think of that moment, especially as its anniversary approaches, even though it's been thirty years and I'm far from Florida now, spending much of the interim moving around the country until, solidly in middle age, I decided to stay put in NYC, take the sightseeing exam and get my license. The fear is never far, particularly on cold days like today, when I take bundled up tourists out on the boat to circle Manhattan and narrate what we're seeing as we pass the Freedom Tower or Yankee Stadium or go under the Brooklyn bridge. It's nearly always in my head, even while I'm lecturing about Robert Moses' impact on New York or the history of the Alexander Hamilton Custom House: any one of these listeners could have a gun hidden somewhere, in fact, even the people I work with every day—Sonny, who serves beer at concessions or Rodriquez who steers the boat or little blond-haired Tammy who sells T-shirts, they could all be armed.

The cashier shot the guy in the shoulder with a sawed-off shotgun which spun him around but didn't kill him so that he squeezed off two more bullets. A big hole appeared in the back of Robbie's head at some point in all this. I was already on the floor, but the pinball machine was flashing and dinging and Robbie was standing there like he was still playing and trying to win another game.

A Haiku Story

by Chella Courington

Noriko sits on her knees in a gold and black kimono, wide sleeves holding fragile arms, palms on her lap, thumbs hidden. With white hair pulled back, cheekbones rise under eyes deep in memory of Manzanar. In Block 25, she lived with her mother and father next to an ancient apple orchard he pruned and tended, picking yellow fruit and storing baskets in a cellar the other men built for the skin to turn red and sweet. Being the oldest Issei man, younger than his daughter is today, he was given no work, left to himself while his wife made rounds as a dietician, using rations to plan menus for those suffering illness, and Noriko learned how to diagram English sentences, sticking words on limbs. The Sierras ten thousand feet above, her father hiked the creeks, no one believing an old man could escape the wire. He brought home branches of myrtle. Noriko would watch him sit for hours, carving boughs into lamps and table legs. Once a night heron emerged from his hands, short neck and short legs. Her father placed him at the edge of the steps. Alone to wait for the rising moon.

A Study

by Clyde Liffey

I now know the engine of my exile was already purring when my metal chair scraped against the flagstone on the patio that early to mid-morning weekday in late spring or early summer. We'd taken to breakfasting out there on days it wasn't raining. A pitcher, more precisely, a plastic container, of orange juice lay on the metal table between us. The juice, reconstituted from concentrate, was already half-rancid.

I was lulling myself into my daily breakfast time rut, that is, comparing my wife and me to Holmes and Watson, though I hadn't read Conan Doyle since my childhood lo! those 50 or 60 years ago. I couldn't decide who was which, turned various kinds of role play over in my infertile mind. My wife spoke: "The grass needs cutting." I grunted (to mask my secret pleasure?), returned to the article I'd been reading.

A couple had spent the last 20 or 30 years moving around NE (was that the Northeast? New England? It was a region in any case) always to smaller and smaller properties. Wherever they went they brought their Adirondack chairs with them. As their yards got smaller, their circumstances more straitened, the assignments more difficult and less remunerative, the chairs loomed larger and larger. There were photographs. In the most recent one their bare knees were almost touching. I couldn't tell if I was reading the business or the lifestyle section.

I put the paper aside, scanned our own little patch of Wordsworthian splendor. The sun was shining or partly shining, the birds were pecking, the grass was still microscopically lengthening, small yellow flowers or tips of weeds swayed arrhythmically, my back ached. I returned to the article. There was a large check mark made on an advertisement from our local Ivy League school on the last page:

Volunteers Needed

Earn \$50-100 per Day Depending on Qualities
Room and Board Covered
Must be over 65
Mostly Drug and Alcohol Free
Partly to almost Fully Lucid
Unattached or Barely Attached

[&]quot;What's this?"

[&]quot;I thought it might be a good way to supplement our income."

[&]quot;Do we need the money?"

[&]quot;I want to see my sister in New Jersey."

[&]quot;That's not so far away."

"Your pension isn't very good. I want to stay there for the summer. I'll need new bathing suits and pin money to treat her to the movies and occasional dinners. I want to be the perfect guest."

"And me?"

"I'm sure you'll do well in that study."

I squinted at our lumpy lawn, imagined our daughter or a simulacrum thereof at 3 and 33 gamboling in that restricted space. Anticipating grandchildren or, more likely, plain lazy, I never removed the rusty swing set. The shadow approached me, her hands sticky. "Go," she whispered. I turned my head away. Why did I decide to replicate my unclean genes? I glanced at the small juice spill on a high button of my shirt. "I suppose I qualify though I'm not sure about the last requirement."

"I called."

"So that was the sound I heard this morning."

"Your hearing's better than I thought." If she was discomfited, I didn't notice. "You retired less than a month ago. You might not qualify next year."

I half-spread my arms. "And this place?"

"What about it?"

"Will I come back to it?"

"You may come back a better man to a better place."

The Beers Went Warm

by Anna Lea Jancewicz

It was so hot that the beers went warm in our bottles before we could drink them down. The long minute of silence between us stretched out across the rooftop, across the bruised black sky, while I felt the sweat surge from my pores and trickle down, spilling over each of my vertebrae like my spine was a rain chain on a downspout. Summer in Baltimore, the dog days, and I knew he was sick of me. He'd made it clear. The silence became a wilderness, a waste so dense and desolate that I understood how a man could be moved to eat locusts, how a man could cling to wild honey and see God in the interstices.

I uncrossed my legs, and they resisted the gesture, sticking together. An airplane passed overhead, and the lights studding its belly glowed like the cherry of his cigarette, the red pulsing as he took shallow drags in rapid succession, lighting a new one from the last. I had wanted once to be like that smoke infiltrating his lungs, had wanted once to edge myself into his body and corrupt it from within.

He'd left me at a gas station in the Salinas valley, two-thousand-five-hundred-some miles from home. I'd had only a handful of loose change that I'd thieved from his center console. The air had been choke-thick with the scent of ripening strawberries, and all the signs had been in Spanish. I'd sat down in the dust and cried like an orphan before getting up, sticking out my thumb, and heading back east with vengeance scalding my veins. I'd come knocking at his door. I'd stabbed him with his own kitchen knife, then driven him to the hospital to get his leg sewn up.

Then we sat opposite one another, on the rooftop. And it was so hot that the beers went warm in our bottles before we could drink them down.

Do you remember the night we met? An arrow into the badlands, piercing the hush.

He cleared his throat. You were wearing a dress with little brown bats on it?

Yeah. And you pissed on the pavement right in front of me.

I did? He laughed.

Yeah, but I was so smitten I reckoned it an intimacy.

I remember kissing you that night, in front of the record store. Do you remember that?

I remember your flannel shirt smelled like milden, but your neck tasted like umeboshi plums.

He laughed again. What?

Salty and sour and sweet all at once.

He shifted in his lawn chair, tenderly fingered the stitches in his thigh. A scrap of cloud passed over the moon, drifting like a jellyfish, translucent. He exhaled and launched his cigarette butt into a long arc over the edge of the roof. It plummeted into the street below, a little meteorite.

We could go down and get in bed one last time he said, and a lock of swarthy hair fell with a clever grace to cover his left eye.

I know the sheets will be covered with dog hair. It was the squalid truth, but my lips swerved recklessly into a grin, in spite of it.

He hoisted himself from his seat, and limped across the distance between us slowly. More slowly than necessary, even with his wound. When he stood over me, he paused, looking down at my bare legs, then he snatched my wrist and pulled me up from my chair. My body was loose. We stood inches apart, unflinching.

Does the dog hair really matter? he asked.

Does it matter that I shanked you?

A glint ghosted back and forth between our eyes. There was another long minute of silence, and the wilderness burned, thickets of thorn ablaze but unconsumed. Sweat tickled the backs of my knees. A pearl of it gathered in the divot above his lip, in the space where his moustache parted. I leaned in and licked it away, the tip of my tongue quivering.

Salty and sour and sweet all at once.

And it was so hot that the beers went warm in our bottles before we could drink them down.

CONTRIBUTORS

Teresa Petro has publications with Dressing Room Poetry, Bluestem Magazine, Weave Magazine, Coal Hill Review, and Dot Dot Dash, among others. She is a 2010 recipient of the Laurie Mansell Reich Poetry Prize, and she earned her MFA in Creative Writing at Chatham University. Teresa currently lives in Durham, North Carolina.

Steve Klepetar's work has received several nominations for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. Recent collections include Speaking to the Field Mice (Sweatshoppe Publications), Blue Season (with Joseph Lisowski, mgv2>publishing), My Son Writes a Report on the Warsaw Ghetto (Flutter Press) and Return of the Bride of Frankenstein (e-chap, Kind of a Hurricane Press).

Robert Walicki's debut chapbook is A Room Full Of Trees (Redbird Press). His work has appeared in Blast Furnace, Stone Highway Review, Pittsburgh City Paper, Hartskill Review, Grasslimb, and on the radio show Prosody. Most recently, he has won first runner up in Finishing Line Press' Open Chapbook Competition in 2013 and was awarded finalist in the Concrete Wolf Chapbook Competition (2013). He lives in Pittsburgh where he curates a monthly reading series, VERSIFY.

Kirsten Imani Kasai is the author of three novels: 'Ice Song' and 'Tattoo,' about the adventures of a gender-swapping single mother and the half-human inhabitants of the frozen Sigue; 'Private Pleasures,' concerning desire and the sex industry; and a short fiction/poetry collection 'Rhapsody in Snakeskin: Tales of Erotica and Horror.' She's also the editor and co-founder of Body Parts Magazine and holds an MFA from Antioch University. She lives in California with her children and her girlfriend. Connect with her online via IceSong.com, Facebook.com/kirstenimanikasai or Wattpad.com/kimanikasai.

Christopher Mulrooney is the author of symphony (The Moon Publishing & Printing), flotilla (Ood Press), and viceroy (Kind of a Hurricane Press).

Eric Silver likes loud music, cardigans, and staying up late reading books. He is the co-founder and four-time team member of Slam! at NYU, the most winningest collegiate slam poetry team. A recipient of the Emerging Jewish Artist Fellowship from the Bronfman Center, he self-published the first run of his chapbook Post-Awkward Expressionism. He has work published or upcoming in Potluck, Black Heart Mag, Borderline, and anthologies from Great Weather for Media and Write Bloody Publishing. A high school English teacher in Brooklyn, he wants to be somewhere between Robin Williams in Dead Poets' Society and College Dropout Kanye.

Howie Good's latest book of poetry is The Complete Absence of Twilight (2014) from MadHat Press. He has several poetry books forthcoming, including Fugitive Pieces (Right Hand Press) and Buddha & Co (Plain Wrap Press).

Michael Albright has published poems in various journals, including Tar River Poetry, A Narrow Fellow, Pembroke Magazine, Cider Press Review, Revolver, Moon City Review, Blast Furnace, Uppagus, and others. He lives on a windy hilltop near Greensburg, PA, with his wife Lori and an ever-changing array of children and other animals.

Nicole Chin is a fiction writer and a recent graduate from Queen's University. During her undergraduate degree she studied creative writing under Canadian poet, Carolyn Smart. She has been the recipient of the Helen Richards Campbell Award for excellence in creative writing, as well as the McIlquham Foundation Prize in English for best original short story. Her work has been published in Queen's University's Undergraduate review and the anthology Lake Effect 6. She was longlisted for the House of Anansi Press Broken Social Scene Short Story Contest and her short story "Shooting the Bitch" has been published as one of House of Anansi Press' Digital Shorts.

Ori Fienberg has had fiction published as prose poetry, prose poetry published as fiction, and each published as they are in many places including Diagram, Pank, Mid American Review, and Subtropics. By day he telecommutes to work for the College of Professional Studies at Northeastern University in Boston, MA. By night Ori explores, with his fiancee and her dog, the finest bridges Pittsburgh, PA, has to offer. Occasional long-form musings can be found at ojconfesses.blogspot.com, and more frequent short thoughts @OJConfesses on Twitter.

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Taylor Grieshober writes from her home in Wilkinsburg, PA. Taylor is a staff writer at The New Yinzer, an online magazine. Her work has appeared in Weave, The Pittsburgh Post Gazette, and Monkeybicycle, among others.

John Duncan Talbird's fiction and essays have recently appeared or are forthcoming in Ploughshares, Juked, The Literary Review, Amoskeag and elsewhere. An English professor at Queensborough Community College, he has held writing residencies at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and the Lower Manhat-

tan Cultural Council. He is on the editorial board of Green Hills Literary Lantern and lives with his wife in Brooklyn.

Chella Courington is the author of three flash fiction chapbooks: Love Letter to Biology 250 (forthcoming from Porkbelly Press), Talking Did Not Come Easily to Diana, and Girls and Women. Her stories have appeared in numerous anthologies and journals including SmokeLong, Nano Fiction, The Collagist, and The Los Angeles Review. With another writer and two cats, she lives in the West.

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