

Colleen Addison
Johannah Bomster
Jennifer Browne
Chris Clemens
Renee Emerson
Laura Foley
Jessica Goodfellow
Taisa Jenne
Merie Kirby
Marjorie Maddox
Mark Mitchell
Nina Prater
Susan Roberts
Becky Ventura
Lois Perch Villemaire
Susan Vinson



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submission guidelines

Our submissions are open the full months of October, January, April and July of each year.

- We welcome work on any subject, including and beyond works celebrating reading, libraries, and books.
- New and established writers are welcome. 18 years or older, please.
- Please find our full submission guidelines on our website.

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Susan Roberts' poems have been most recently published in *The MacGuffin*, *The Bangalore Review*, *Dovecote Magazine*, *ellipsis*, *The RavensPerch*, *The Tishman Review (RIP)*, *Salamander*, *The Brooklyn Quarterly* and *Sharkpack Annual*. She teaches literature and writing at Boston College and divides her time between the gothic homestead in central Vermont where she was raised and the busy weirdness of Commonwealth Avenue in Boston.

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Susan Vinson lives in South Central New Mexico with her husband of 41 years, 2 young dogs, and a 17-year-old cat. Their three grown children live nearby, along with 7 grandchildren. This is her first published poem.

about us

LFLM is a journal founded with the aim of publishing quality short form writing. Like “little” pockets of kindness which exist solely to help one another, we think small works can have a big impact. Our mission is to celebrate our wonderfully diverse world of writers and readers by reaching them wherever they are.

Each issue is published both online and as a PDF, each available for free. We hope readers like you will help bring our lit mag to any place someone might enjoy finding a bite sized read.

Share it with friends! Keep a copy for yourself! Pass it into the hands of a kindred spirit who might like it! Please visit our website if you'd like to download the free pdf to this issue to keep, print, or share.



Made to Share

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The Pantther	Renee Emerson	7	Jennifer Browne falls in love easily with other people's dogs. She is the author of <i>American Cow</i> (Beltway Editions, 2024) and some other stuff, too. Find her at jenenniferbrowne.com or drinking coffee at Clatter in Frosthurg, MD.			
New Family Order	Jessica Goodfellow	8	Chris Clemens lives and teaches in Toronto, surrounded by raccoons. Nominated for Best Microfiction and Best Small Fictions, his writing appears in <i>Invisible City</i> , <i>JAKE</i> , <i>The Dribble Dribble Review</i> , <i>Apex Magazine</i> , and elsewhere.			
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Poems	Susan Vinson	14	Laura Foley is the author, most recently, of <i>Sledding the Valley of the Shadow</i> (Fernwood Press) and, coming in February, <i>Cream for Lunch: A Grandparents Handbook</i> (The Poetry Box). She lives with her wife and their two romping canines on the steep banks of the Connecticut River, in New Hampshire.			
Adam's Wives	Merie Kirby	15	Jessica Goodfellow's books are <i>Whiteout</i> (University of Alaska Press, 2017), <i>Mendeleev's Mandala</i> (2015), and <i>The Insomniac's Weather Report</i> (2014). Her work has appeared in <i>Best American Poetry</i> , <i>Scientific American</i> , <i>The Southern Review</i> , and <i>Verse Daily</i> . A former writer-in-residence at Denali National Park and Deep Time Pearl.			
Blood Moon	Taissa Jenne	17	Mendeleev's Mandala (2015), and The Insomniac's Weather Report (2014). Her work has appeared in <i>Best American Poetry</i> , <i>Scientific American</i> , <i>The Southern Review</i> , and <i>Verse Daily</i> . A former writer-in-residence at Denali National Park and Deep Time Pearl.			
Monster	Taissa Jenne	17	Taissa Jenne is a writer, poet, and educator living on Wet'suwet'en territory in Northwest Canada.			
Poetry Reading With	Marjorie Maddox	20	Merie Kirby grew up in California and now lives in North Dakota. She teaches at the University of North Dakota. She is the author of two chapbooks, <i>The Dog Runs On</i> and <i>The Thumbleina Poems</i> . Her poems have been published in <i>Mom Egg Review</i> , <i>Whale Road Review</i> , <i>SWIM</i> , <i>FEARL</i> , <i>Strange Horizons</i> , and other journals. You can find her online at www.meriekirby.com .			
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contributors

Merie Kirby

Echo of tectonic plates

I sink into the earth where I'm set down,
mineral roots seeking community, tentative
among all the deep prairie taproots, slow
to mingle and entangle. Tectonic plates of home
shift thousands of miles away, vibrations pass
root to root through granites, sediment,
limestone, sandstone, through ice plant and sagebrush,
fir, and aspen, cactus and sunflower,
willows, waving grasses, mixed with hoofbeats,
train clatter and road noise and waterfall, and finally
the letters that reach me are so garbled and cross-written
by so many hands that the only words that can be read
say *home, home, home*, and when I write back
everything will say *I am, I am, I am*.

Jennifer Browne

Lumbricus terrestris | Common Earthworm

Eyeless, earthworms tunnel
root-paths, routes for water.
Nothing appears without
something readying its way.
Last night, I drove a moon-
bright road thought of the
other ones you've loved.
Could there ever be a word
to name what they made in
you, what they broke open?
I taste a bit of apple peel
and see the loam, the fungi,
the sun, and the worms. None of us
can last alone. Let's feel our
blind ways forward, pulse
with all those extra hearts.

Watching Kurosawa's *Dodes'ka-den* at the theater,
 in the early days dating my film processor,
 his tweed beret cocked, his arm in the dark
 pressing into mine, mine pressing back. Strolling
 through Washington Square Park after rain,
 vivid park lights shine in the black night
 like constellations. Like train tracks clacking,
 I feel my life tugging *dodes'ka-den, dodes'ka-den*,
 an inexorable rumble pulling me into my future,
 or is it the sound of our unborn children, calling?

Dodes'ka-den, Dodes'ka-den

Laura Foley

TIME AND THE ONIONS

Mark J. Mitchell

For herself

You build the soup slowly. She's gone away
 for mercy. She's coming home tomorrow
 and soup's better the next day. The onions
 want to soften, grow gold. You've just begun.
 Let them melt into broth and get to know
 each herb, meet the barley. A second day
 will do it. They'll grow close as her plane flies
 into home airspace. Let your hands defy
 time and fire, while she gets tender work done
 in a middle time zone. You slice onions
 misses her mouth, even after fifty years,
 but keep working on her welcome meal. Tears—
 that's the small price you pay for all she's become
 and made you. You're not crying. It's onions.

Marjorie Maddox

Poetry Reading with Drumming

-Bethany Retreat Center

Each is a beat on repeat,
the organs of voice and vision

syncopated. Tapped rawhide
alternates New Age and Ancient:

pulse of the body pa-pumming
thud of the syllables tha-thumping

in chest and wrist, ear and larynx,
cardio and poem

circling the room,
rocking the earth, in the deep

green-blue of beginnings,
holding and healing me.

Nina Prater

Balance

I like to dull the knives
and you
like
to
sharpen
them.

Self-Portrait as the Loch Ness Monster

Renee Emerson

I do not need anyone to believe in me.
I am the shadow beneath still water,
feeding in the depths on rumor.
Still, they do believe—with t-shirts,
They need to hold their beliefs in two hands.
I am not afraid of them but do not
want them closer, the frantic pairs
of oars, knifing my sky.
In lightless places, I crunch bones,
the cold water, heavy as stone,
on my strong body, little
as the current, toad-green.
They do not know
what they are headed for.
I am the word for their loneliness
arching into the mist on the far shore.

Cheers

Meredith Kirby

to my grandma, cheap chardonnay at her side,
white over ice, and her formula for equilibrium:
if there's only wine, add more ice, tightening
Old Solitaire, lining up her access after dinner,
to Phil, horrified I'd never had a Manhattan,
apologizing for not having better bourbon for my first,
to Tony, making G&Ts in 16 oz plastic cups
to my dad, keeping track of stores that stock
wine in restaurants, scotch on the couch,
to Jill and Tricia, to Terri and Mark,
we drink in his name, cut through with Bailey's
and Kahula, cold winter mornings and late afternoons,
to my husband, quietly placing a glass at my side,
ice cubes linking in single malt amber, fueling
late night sessions reading first-year papers,
sweetening the grades.

Chris Clemens

Deep Time Pearl

Once I dreamed I was a pearl
deep beneath the blue
ejected from my shelly bed

tangled up, askew

a little push, a tiny shove

forever missing oyster's love

I try to wake, but can't - you see

pearl time moves quite differently

a hundred years or more might pass

and a pearl would never know

Renee Emerson

The Panther

A panther stalked the scrub woods
of Hickory Withe, Tennessee;
a shadow, specter, half-truth
or complete lie, like most
of what my father ever told me.

I never saw it up high in tree limbs,
on porches, prowling ditches,
down on Donelson Drive at dusk
(he swears—right over his car).

What danger in it anyway, a beast
so foreign to our settled squares
of farm and field as to be Dragon,
Kraken, Grendel, lurking
in the darkest places outside our home.
My father, sometimes a good father,
did not want his daughters to roam.

Blood Moon

Taisa Jemne

Look!
Low moon.
Blood-blown.
Blooms.
Not of holly
or thornwood,
not of pond
or coy brook.
Moon of gold gloss.
Moon of ghosts.
Moon of blood on snow,
of cold floods,
of old, old worlds.

As I reach down to shake awake my sleeping father,
his 4 o'clock pills rattling like dice in my left hand,
I don't know which father he'll be. He may startle awake,
I dodged all my life till dementia gentled him—not that dad,
and know me, and be my Dad—though not the scolding dad
Or I might lightly touch his shoulder, then gently prod it, whispering
gumming the air with strangled sounds not quite words, not knowing
this room in this house he bought thirty-some years ago, not knowing
me—he might not be my Dad. In this moment, still asleep as I reach
for him, he is both Dad and not-Dad: he's Schrödinger's dad.
And I am my own stepister.

New Family Order

Jessica Goodfellow

Johannah Bomster

Adam's Wives

There's a man and a woman.
A tree in a yard.
A car in the drive.

They could be any man
and any woman
standing side by side.

Back then, the tree so young the man
could wrap his fingers right around it,
and then the woman says

I'm not cutting my hair just for you.
She has snipped herself
from the wedding photos
and taken herself away.

Later the man remarries,
but this wife's no better:
she trims all the hedges too closely,
she plucks all the fruit from the tree.

You don't believe me,
the woman tells him.
You don't believe
I'm shoring up the world.

Colleen Addison

Duvet

Before the operation, I went sheet-shopping, hard to rest
when all around you might rip. Already in pain, I stepped
cautiously through the store entrance, my faltering feet
drawn to the duvet covers. This year's themes were birds,
botanicals, and all aspects of nature. Unaccountably
though, I noted, the manufacturers had left out the
fiercer fauna. There were no lolling lions, no
hippopotamuses heaving their hefty bulks out of rivers or
lakes. Certainly, there were no chimeras or sphinxes. No
one, it appeared, wished to sleep in a roc's nest or
gryphon's lair. As sick as I was, I understood. *Do you like
this one?* asked the saleswoman, selecting a package. The
sweet sedge beckoned, and I sighed.

Louis Perich Villemarie

Books Are Our Friends

Like a prayer
my mother repeated
teaching us to respect
those printed pages,
fostering love of reading.
She grew up walking
to her local library.
She often reminded us we placed
from the library on the kitchen table
leaving through stories and poems
eager to hear our favorites
our eyes on familiar images.

Don't scribble, write, or color inside
the pile of picture books
she often reminded us we placed
from the library on the kitchen table
leaving through stories and poems
eager to hear our favorites
our eyes on familiar images.
We under stood—
No pencils, pens, or crayons
shall be used on these pages.
except my youngest brother
who secretly scribbled
stick houses, triangles,
houses, and doodles
with a red magic marker
on the pages of The Gingerbread Man.

Only one card in the classic deck features winter: the five
of pentacles, the card of your own misery holding
barefoot and inadequately clothed through snow while
everyone else is snug in a building whose stained glass
windows glow like vacation photos from the tropics. But
here I am, March 15, one hour south of the Canadian
border, snowbanks on either side of the sidewalk above
my knees, a packed path of ice and snow obscuring
concrete. No wind and above zero, so it is a beautiful day.
Yes, the sky is grey and yes, three more inches are coming
our way, but right now my coat is warm, my scarf a bright
yellow plaid shot through with violet, my grey wool
mittens patched with bright blue felt, my son's knit hat
pulled over my tangled morning hair. At my feet my grey
dog thrusts his nose into snow,uffs the footprints on the
ground, stops and listens until I hear it, too, another dog
barking three blocks away. He gives a brief bark back,
returns to the work of tugging me forward to the next
scent. We both stop and look up when we hear it - a song
blooming like a bright spring rose on a bare branch - a
robin, somewhere, somehow, at last.

The Fool and her dog

Merie Kirby

Susan Vinson

Poems

*When you come back to me
it will be crow time
and flycatcher time*
-Ruth Stone, "Poems"

When you come back to me
it will be hummingbird time
and mockingbird time,
with rising choruses of cicadas
beyond the yucca plants.
The ground will be powdered,
cracked, and inviting
drifting seeds, brittle weeds.
The hummingbirds, their iridescent
bodies, whirring
toward the red blossoms;
distancing, ruby-throated;
squeaking and flashing
And on the ground
I find you stilled, stunned
the stain-glass poppy shining from the window.
In the warmth of my hand
I feel your warmth.
Resting the tip of your beak
in a shallow lid of sugar water –
Revived – you lift and dart,
returning to hover.

Becky Ventura

Taos Speaks

Taos speaks thunder-rumble and water-trickle
Taos speaks mountain peaks and gnarled sagebrush
Taos speaks buzzing fly and prickly pear
Taos speaks xeriscape, dirt, and dung beetles
Taos speaks stumps, roots, evergreens, and wind-whistle
Taos speaks green pine cones dripping with viscous sap

A robin, flying through tall trees,
chirps her favorite song

Jennifer Browne

poor-will

Antrostomus vociferus | Eastern Whip-

Whip-poor-will, here you
are, a caution appearing
on the sill. Little corpse-
bird, the body is already
cold, and there is no one
else to tell the stories
of their red-soil Alabama
childhood. What can any
of us do but try to be still,
be safe, feathered bleniding
with the fallen leaves,
and in the dark, dark night,
sing the only song we have
in conspicuous throats.

Once, in a pasture, I lay on my back watching a fadling
brown, two of them side by side, soar across the sky
day when a thunder crossed over me: bellies of speckled
back roads. It does poorly on highways.
its leap will transact space and it often does on lonely
A deer will not yield to metal and glass: it believes
and carrots, the lettuce you'd planned on for supper?
How do you handle them feeding on your trips
the periphery.

It has its own rhythm of exchange: a duivere
insistence that violence lives just beyond
or after it winter brings too much snow.
A deer is a kind of death: half-life of badger
to shimmerring tail lashed to a pickup's hood.
making it easy to track:rawn to doe to buck
A deer doesn't travel far from where it was foaled,
the old limbs tremble at the lips' dark gloss.
A deer can cause a storm in an apple tree. Watch

Cervidae

Susan Roberts

and into a stand of firs. Gone.