

Molecule

~ a tiny lit mag ~



Molecule

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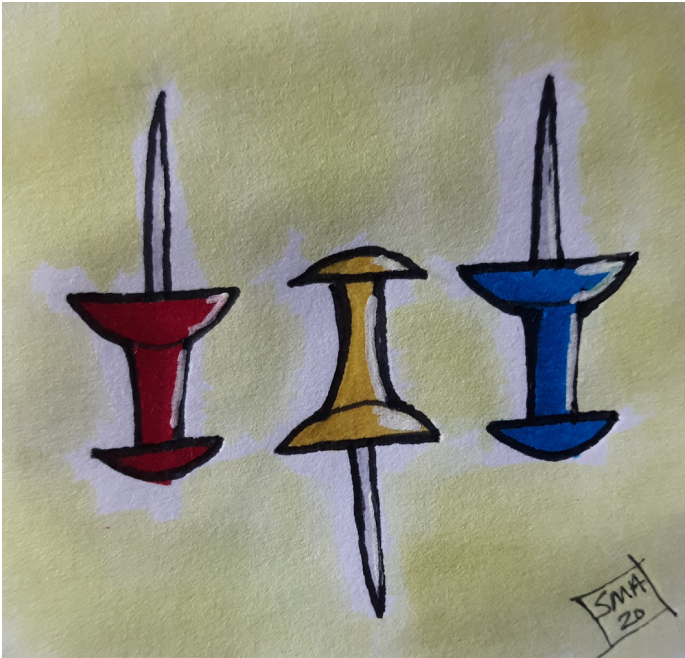
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SARA ATKINS

Thumbtacks



From the Little Book of Myths: Adonis

Adonis was so beautiful that his own mother desired him. Fighting off women became his métier. But then he got fat, drank too much, and moved back home. Overjoyed, his mother removed all the mirrors and baked him whoopee pies every day.



Chef's Table

That is the point, isn't it? The old story, the defining difference between art and craft. Every instant of the great chef's life comes to the table with each dish. That time his mother yelled at him for wetting the bed? That's in there. Somewhere in the sauce.



Of Two Minds

I have a friend who always tells me exactly what I want to hear. I would like to tell him I know he's doing this, but I'm afraid that if I say anything, he will stop telling me exactly what I want to hear.



MIMI AYERS

Flag Dragonfly



My Friends

I live with six ghosts.

All of their names start with the letter “J”: James, Jocelyn, Jill, Jonathan, Jose, and Johann. Johann is the favorite, but don’t tell Jocelyn; she’ll hide the forks for a week.



Trick or Treat

Despite living alone, the chocolate bar was hidden in the crisper underneath the fruit.



Science Class

He says “yes” to being my lab partner. A fish dissection under fluorescent lights makes for an enchanted afternoon. Our scalpels touch. This must mean we’re married now.



Second Trimester

Emma hated the changes pregnancy brought with it: the wings, the feathers, the large egg nestling between the sofa cushions.



RENÉE COHEN

Stirred



Background

He watched from his stoop as a young man with a smartphone at the end of a stick walked past, addressing an unseen audience.

“Did I just become a background actor in someone’s web series?” he wondered.

Somewhere in the soil, Zhuangzi struggled to comprehend.



Odysseys

Half of *The Odyssey* takes place at home.



MARTHA ENGBER

Castor Bean Tree Seed



Summertime, Lakeside

It's all bronze bodies on towels in the grass.
Then there's me, the pig in a blanket. The sole,
leftover hotdog. My sweat slick skin is an ant's one
stop shop for their picnic salts and grease. Everyone
is kissing. I'm slapping bugs.



For Sale

1997 Red Mustang GT (*dad's mid-life car*), five speed V-8 (*flew attack helicopters in Vietnam, loved fast*) convertible (*under SoCal sunshine*) new top (*drunkenly crashed through garage door one 6 AM*) fair condition interior (*fumbled cigarettes*) low mileage (*neuropathy, suspended license*) \$2000 (*half price, just take it!*).



My Uncle

My uncle is in a catholic hospital dying. Cerebral meningitis—what we tell everyone. For lack of a more euphemistic word, we resolve to pick this among a list of other diseases. We don't say it is HIV. We want friends to visit him on his sickbed.



KRISTIN FAUSKE

Insect on Shasta Daisy



Iluminación

Como todas las noches, Antonio y Morgana salieron a pasear. Mientras caminaban por la acera cogidos de la mano, un poste de luz interrumpió su camino; ella avanzó por la derecha y él por la izquierda. Luego de unos minutos, terminaron su relación. Habían sido iluminados.



Enlightenment

Like every night, Antonio y Morgana went out for a walk. As they walked along the sidewalk holding hands, a streetlight interrupted their path; she walked to the right of it and he to the left. After a few minutes, their relationship ended. They had been enlightened.



Interview:
with Rhina P. Espaillat

Q: Whitman asked, “Do I contradict myself?” Do you?

A: Everyone does, and so does reality. Poetry is the perfect way to reflect reality, because it can say opposing truths simultaneously. Those who love poetry learn that early, and choose poetry subconsciously, to tell the truth as we experience it.



Interview:
with Kevin McClellan

Q: “I was raised by canaries.” True?

A: “Yes”, said the canary.

Q: What is “the throat/of a poem”?

A: Duende.

Q: What lies beyond your line?

A: Myself. The unknown. The past-reliant future. A boyfriend who may need to find me.

Q: Poetry and film: sisters?

A: Unidentical and fraternal, but twins nonetheless.



MELANIE FAITH

B.S. Gilbert Bottle



**Book Review: *The Blood of San
Gennaro/Scott
Harney/Arrowsmith
Press/\$20.00/74 pgs***

“I love this life because there is no other,” Scott Harney writes in his first (and posthumous) book. For all their flirtation with transcendence, these luminous poems never relinquish their foothold on the physical world. Turning from them, “we can face / the bright flat wash of just another day.”



Ring Shopping

Jewelry shop. Afternoon.

ANA

Something for your wife?

ROB

No.

ANA

Daughter?

ROB

No.

ANA

Girlfriend?

ROB

(awkwardly) Um...

(Beat).

ANA

What's the occasion?



ROB

It's...a...

ANA

...Anniversary?

ROB

No.

ANA

Engagement?

ROB

No.

ANA

(frustrated) So, what's the occasion?

(Beat)

ROB

(brandishing revolver) It's a robbery.

BLACKOUT



The Mirror Self: A Play

ACT 1, SCENE 1

Bar restroom. At sink with mirror. Dim.

DRUNKARD: Hey.

REFLECTION: ...

DRUNKARD: You solid?

Fade to black. Curtain.



Worry About It

SETTING: A kitchen. WIFE disinfects everything in sight, including Dog and HUSBAND who reads newspaper.

HUSBAND

Worrying about it won't resolve it!!!

(A PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIAL enters, carrying a sign that says "RESOLVED: YOUR WORRYING HELPED." He gives the WIFE a trophy, and exits. THE END.)



SHARON GAYEN

Sans Extinction



Hope

Book store, autumn.

ANNA

Can you direct me to the 'Self Help' section?

CLERK

Well, that would defeat the purpose, now wouldn't it?



**I Don't Want To End Up As A
Douchebag Character In One Of
Your Plays: A Play**

Marie and Henry have just broken up.

Henry: I just... don't want to end up as a douchebag character in one of your plays.

Marie looks out at the audience.

END OF PLAY



Today in Covid

I sterilize my mail. A little soggy and hard to read, but okay after getting out of five-day quarantine. Job interview on Zoom. Coat and tie. Told Fritz—my German shepherd, “No barking! Even if someone’s breaking into the house, just lick my leg.” No pants.



Molecules

Have you seen my wife,
whose molecules late disbanded,

whose words flew into poems
when she was sad,
whose remembered words
are still my brain's best atmosphere?
Her prayers stood up for others.

Has she still a voice
or just whatever noise gold makes?



An Other Creation List

*—In this info-age, every posting is a
new post of news.*

Day one: Wall Street Crash

Day two: Wall Street Harsh

Day three: Wall Street Chars

Day four: Wall Street Cash

Day five: Wall Street Rash

Day six: Wall Street Ash

Day seven: Blackout for e.rest



MAHIMA GIRI

Cashew Butterfly



**What happens when a neutrino
crosses the Einstein-Rosen
Bridge?**

Weightless subatomic sigh,
Breathed into a black hole,
Spiraling back through time—
Destiny's loophole.
Because intrusion on the past,
Transforms the present to perhaps.



A Tuesday That Became a Sunday

A Tuesday afternoon
that became Sunday morning
in the coffee shop
over scones and latte
with the shopkeeper
next door,
looking for his tabby
snuggled in my lap.
The park across the street
is full of people,
tearing off their clothes
and lying down in pools of sunlight.



A Trike Now a Bike

Front yard full of toys

Outgrown, overgrown

Kudzu tombs



Costillas/Ribs

A cage behind which paces

a lion, *un tigre*,

a snapping, swamplandic, scaled

alligator

she slithers between bones

my serpent, Black Mamba

my Heart.



KATHLEEN GUNTON

Macrolophus Spider



Karmic Physics

Why does the p-b & j
always land goo-side down?

Gravity, mostly,
but it could still mean

the universe
hates you.



Beauty

isn't
the rose

it's
the thorn

its kiss
upon

the
fingertip

the gift
of one red

drop
that's

traveled
through

the
heart



[Blank Verse]

, . :

, , , . .

(). —

, . .

, “ ?” —

“ ?” — “ ...” —



one dry leaf

catching

branch

after branch

as it falls



Fortune



Scansion

Wrap tight your slight
form on me, deaf
to my want, like
stone. Might I
write no bawdy
tome in tune to
your taut form.

For I'm taught with
form in mind—but
lessons lessen
if you wrap warm
and break the
syncopations of
sclerotic skin-song.



Tramadol

The label very clearly states
alcohol may intensify the effect.
I wash the pills down with beer.
Angels hoot all night in a tree outside
the National Museum of Death.



In a Texas Bar

no masks

drink up

shout and laugh
and spit and cough

no one near
gets out alive



MAROUN RACHED

Ant Feast



**While Googling Adrienne Rich
the Internet Gives Me Adrienne
Barbeau, Known for Her Two
Enormous Talents**

“No one was even listening to me.

They were just watching my breasts precede me.”



Sewing Circle

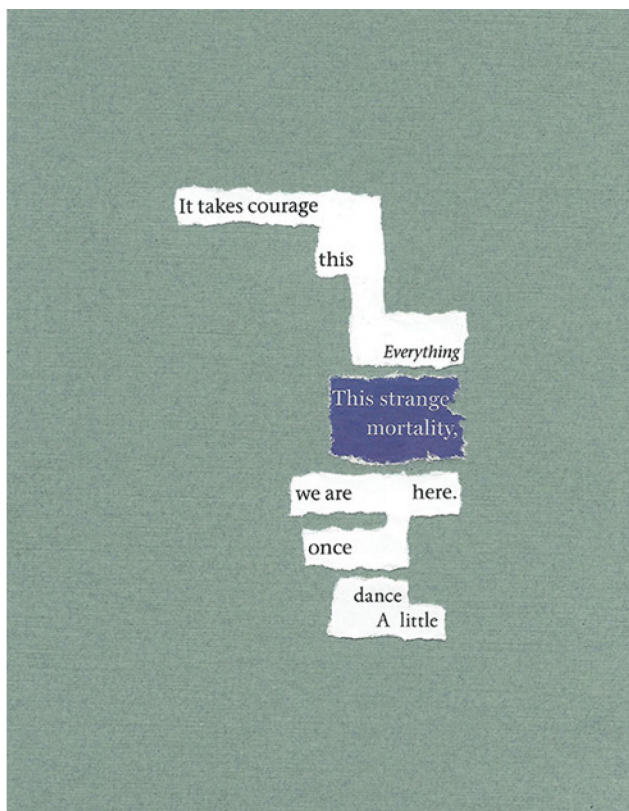
He modded all his clothes:
added leather, velvet, ornate buttons.
He was handy with thread and needle.

Imagine walking into The Pit
to see him sitting back against
Out of Town News

surrounded by a group
of gutter punks, all
earnestly sewing.



It takes courage



**tennessee williams choked to
death on a pill bottle top**

so just about anything can happen to anybody
and when anything someday happens to us
I want you to know
of all the world's incomprehensibilities
you were my favorite



February, 2:00 AM

The field of snow reveals the stars
to themselves in the blue dark
of late winter, while the trees,
limned in ice, shimmer and dread
the crack of spring.



Intellectual Property

I swear I left the right
hemisphere of my brain
along with my pangolin
scale cuff links
& A Field Guide to Self-
Illumination
 on this table
beside the folds & scars
of Brontosaurus thighs
on a Moreton Bay fig.
Correction.
 Self-Immolation.



OORMILA VIJAYAKRISHNAN
PRAHLAD

Cherry Dusting



Something's Cooking in Ocean Park

The free-for-all heated up. Cooking meat smells
filled the oasis. Everywhere coals burned, a thousand
crimson eyes in the darkness.

On the Fourth, freedom is a burned hot dog, potato
salad warming nearby, washed down by an ocean of
hot spilt blood.



A Good Dance

She liked the shadow
that her dessert fork
made on her paper towel.

She imagined
that she was dancing
in the negative space
between the dark tines.



Dear Horoscope

Please, define *soon*



Casino Magic



Morning Offering

I sip coffee,
the news spilling out.
I cannot begin my day
any different.
Rain, shine or virus,
the *saili* tree outside my window
bends in exaggerated shame
as the wind lifts her leafy skirts.



taxes pay their salaries

today i bought
a bag of crisps

salt and vinegar flavoured
with 10% vat
i ate them with my wife
watching Queen & Slim

if things were fair i
would have choked



The Alligator

Once there were some alligators
Who loved to cook up fried potatoes
No, I mean fried potatoes
Cooked by hungry alligators



Suppose

Suppose Adam & Eve
listened to the whispering

of the apple,
instead took a bite

out of the serpent,
and developed a taste

for rattlesnake steaks,
would we all still be

luxuriating in Paradise,
with nothing to dread

except for ourselves
being bitten by treacherous,

venomous fruit?



DEBORAH CHAVA SINGER

Danger Blooming



My Tiger Roommate

She moved in after she
Was cut from the reality show
Now she's going to auditions
Reading scripts
Waiting for a callback for the next big break
She cleans up her dishes
But that barasingha carcass in the freezer is
Edging out all my otter pops



The Resurrection

It's not just the garden that regenerates in the spring
It's me, I unfasten and open, shedding layers
of fleece like petals in the grass.
My pores drown
in sun.



On the Libyan Revolution

I can taste
blood
at the back
of my mouth.

It tastes like coins

and I can't
spit it out.



LOUIS STAEBLE

Nail in Place



CONTRIBUTORS

Sara Atkins is a young aspiring artist. She lives in Upstate New York with her boyfriend and several exotic pets.

Mimi Ayers is a University of New Orleans Creative Writing Workshop Playwriting graduate. Her plays include *MAN 2 MAN*, *CIRCUS TALES*, and *DEFENDING EULALIE*.

Jesse Baird plays guitar every day and teaches goat ballet.

Matt Blease can be found on Instagram @mattblease, Tumbler: mattblease.tumblr.com, or at mattbleasegeneralstore.com.

Nancy Brewka-Clark highly favors flash fiction, haiku, epitaphs, and epithets. Her debut poetry collection *Beautiful Corpus* was published in March 2020 by Kelsay Books.

Blake Campbell grew up in Pennsylvania and lives in Salem, MA. His chapbook *Across the Creek* is now available from Pen and Anvil Press.

Yuan Changming (Vancouver) edits *Poetry Pacific* with Allen Yuan. Credits include Jodi Stutz Award in Poetry and *Best of the Best Canadian Poetry* (2008–17).

CONTRIBUTORS

Justin Chatwin is a Toronto writer and actor (not that one). He's currently writing a play about Ellen Fairclough, Canada's first female Cabinet Minister.

Renée Cohen is a freelance writer and artist from Canada.

Roger Collins is an African American professor emeritus with the University of Cincinnati where he received the university's Cohen Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Catherine A. Coundjeris volunteers as an ESL Coordinator with the Literacy Council of Frederick County. She is very passionate about adult literacy.

Dominic DeAngio graduated from the College of William and Mary and now leads the Virginia Law Foundation's Marketing and Communications department.

Olivia Delgado is an elementary school teacher in Tampa, Florida. When she is not shaping young minds, she writes poetry, short stories, and screenplays.

Winston Derden writes from Houston, Texas. His wit and humor sometimes earn questioning looks. Seventy-percent cacao chocolate is his favorite source of caffeine.

CONTRIBUTORS

Martha Engber's next novel will be published in October by Vine Leaves Press. She lives in California with her husband, bike and surfboard.
<http://marthaengber.com>

R.G. Evans is retired—get off his lawn. His latest book of poems, *Imagine Sisyphus Happy*, will be published later this year. www.rgevanswriter.com

Jon Fain's tiniest fiction has also appeared in *50-Word Stories*, *The Daily Drunk*, *A Story in 100 Words*, and *The Dribble Drabble Review* (forthcoming).

Melanie Faith is a poet, photographer, and professor. Her latest book, *Photography for Writers*, is available at Amazon. Learn more:
<https://www.melaniemfaith.com/> and
https://twitter.com/writer_faith.

Kristin Fauske is fascinated by intersections between art, mathematics and science, which she investigates through macrophotography and other intricate art forms.

Jesse Fowler is a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV). He received a BA in English from Biola University in La Mirada, California.

Robbie Gamble's shelter-in-place is a notebook.

CONTRIBUTORS

Sharon Gayen is a part-time artist inspired by the sea, literature and geometry. Her works include Pointillism, Kirie and Psychedelic art. Loves rain and caffeine.

James Gifford has taught in six countries on two continents. His recent writing is in *SADmag*, *Abridged*, and *Nashwaak Review*. He tweets at @GiffordJames.

Mahima Giri lives in Houston, TX. She loves to explore art and poetry. Her poems draw an aesthetic crowd at www.allpoetry.com/MahimaGiri.

Rosalind Goldsmith lives in Toronto and writes short, sometimes very short, stories. Recent work has appeared in *Chiron Review*, *Fiction International* and *Fairlight Books*.

Howie Good is the author of *The Death Row Shuffle*, a poetry collection forthcoming from Finishing Line Press.

John Grey is an Australian poet, US resident. Work upcoming in *Plainsongs*, *Willard and Maple* and *Connecticut River Review*.

Kathleen Gunton's artwork graces the cover of *Arts & Letters*, *Flint Hills Review*, *Thema*, and *Studio One* to name a few.

CONTRIBUTORS

Pauletta Hansel's most recent book is *Coal Town Photograph*. She was Cincinnati's first Poet Laureate. She is tired of only seeing people on Zoom

Austin Hendricks writes from Indiana about whatever he wants. Upcoming works appear in *Taco Bell Quarterly* and *This Present Former Glory*. Follow on Twitter @hnitsua.

D.W. Hirsch writes memoir, living the lessons learned from her father. Find her in New Jersey coffee shops taking PokemonGO AR photos. www.dwhirschwrites.com

Mary Ann Honaker is the author of *Becoming Persephone* (Third Lung Press, 2019). Her work has been nominated for a Pushcart prize.

Hank Kimmel, an Atlanta-based playwright, is a founding member of Working Title Playwrights and board president of the Alliance for Jewish Theatre. www.hankkimmel.com

J.I. Kleinberg's found poems have been published worldwide. Artist, poet, and freelance writer, she lives in Bellingham, Washington, USA, and on Instagram @jikleiberg.

Gary Koppel is working with the City of Los Angeles teaching memoir writing and storytelling to older adults.

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Kate LaDew is a graduate from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro with a BA in Studio Art. She resides in Graham, NC.

K. T. Landon is the author of *Orange, Dreaming* (Five Oaks Press, 2017). She likes the serial comma, birds, & data engineering.

Anthony Lawrence writes poetry. He lives and works on Moreton Bay, Queensland.

Tain Leonard-Peck: High-school student. Skier, sailor, fencer, farmer. Cave-dweller, shark-diver, not defenestrated by temperamental donkey named Shakespeare. Frequently bitten by geese.

Alison Lowenstein is a freelance writer and authored guidebooks, children's books, and plays. She also leads creative writing workshops.

Alex MacConochie lives in Hartford, CT, and in 2020 received the Connecticut Poetry Society's Nutmeg Award, for a poem 184 words long.

Kevin McLellan—author of *Hemispheres*, *Ornithology*, [*box*], *Tributary* and *Round Trip*—also won the Third Coast Poetry Prize and Gival Press's Oscar Wilde Award.

CONTRIBUTORS

Kate McMorran writes to dismantle gender roles. Her plays *Love Child*, *The Registry*, and *In Character* went up in NYC. katemcmorran.com, @kate.mcmorran

Nandini Maharaj is a writer and dog mom. She can be found on Twitter @NandiniMaharaj_

Ermelinda Makkimane loves thinking poetry. Her work has appeared in online journals and anthologies. She has recently published her debut book *Her Story*.

Jennifer Martelli is the author of *My Tarantella*. She is co-poetry editor for *Mom Egg Review* and a Massachusetts Cultural Council Fellow and Finalist.

Ann Matthews has been drawing, painting and writing for over twenty-five years. More of her drawings can be seen at annmatthewsart.com.

Jennifer Moore was the first UK winner of the Commonwealth Short Story Competition. Her children's books (writing as Jenny Moore) are published by Maverick.

Rick Neale is studying Creative Writing at the University of Sydney after which he'll return to Cape Town and continue teaching high school English.

CONTRIBUTORS

Alfred Nicol collaborated with **Rhina P. Espailat** and illustrator Kate Sullivan on the chapbook *Brief Accident of Light: Poems of Newburyport* (Kelsay Books, 2019).

Corey Pajka is a Brooklyn, New York-based playwright and author. He's married to another playwright, and they have a corgi named Sancho Panza. <https://www.coreypajka.com>

Anna Perkins is a musician based in Kenosha, WI. She loves big ideas, tiny things, and drawing and writing with a cup of tea.

Tyler Powell has won awards in 15 play contests. His work has been performed in New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Massachusetts, Florida, and Ohio.

Oormila Vijayakrishnan Prahlad is a Sydney poet, artist, and improv pianist of Indian heritage. She can never sit still.

Maroun Rached lives and works in Beirut. Architect by trade, writer by passion, he wrote political articles, reviews, screenplays, and a blog on Lebanon.

CONTRIBUTORS

Page Rhodes is a student. She adores the Beatles and her cats.

Jerry Robbins fruitlessly attended college and other places AND equal foolishly published three books and too many articles.

Lawrence Schimel writes in both Spanish and English and has published over 120 books for readers of all ages. He is also a translator.

Deborah Chava Singer is originally from California, but after some detours, mistakes, pseudo-epiphanies and two years in Canada, she resides in Washington state. www.latenightawake.com

Chris Sobczak has a writing degree, which is like studying sports management and expecting to be a pro baller. Find them on Twitter @chrispnugs.

Louis Staebler, fine arts photographer and poet, lives in Bowling Green, Ohio. Web page: staeblerstudioa.weebly.com; Instagram @louiestaebler

Paul Szlosek is a poet living in Worcester, Massachusetts who just placed third in the 2020 Frank O'Hara Poetry Prize.

CONTRIBUTORS

Peter Urkowitz lives and works in Salem, MA. His *Fake Zodiac Signs* chapbook was just published by Meat for Tea Press.

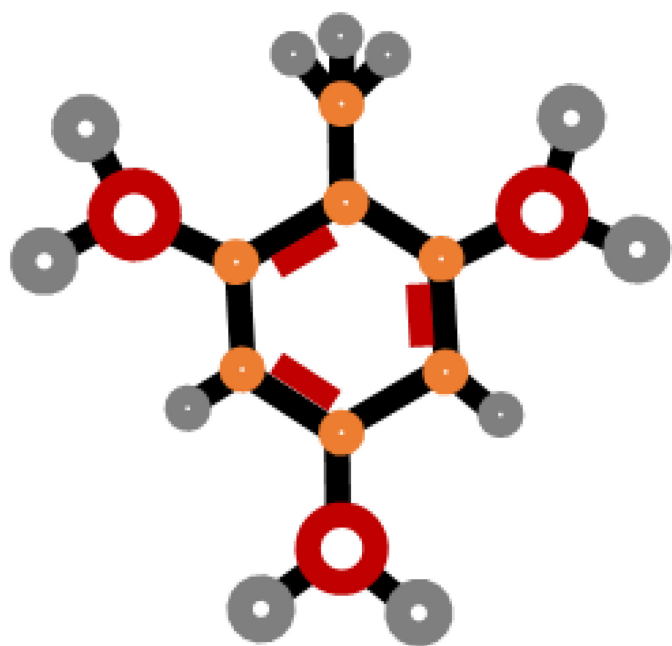
Rony Vásquez Guevara is a Peruvianian microfictionist and editor of microfiction journal *Pleiosaurio*, in its twelfth year.

Elisabeth Weiss of Marblehead, MA, teaches writing, works with refugee resettlement and is a local history buff.

An army brat with a BA in English and writing, **Shay Wills** is a divorced dad of two teens with forthcoming stories and poetry.

Eugene Yakubu writes from Nigeria. His stories have been shortlisted for GeraldKraak Prize and Writivism nonfiction prize.

Sarah Yasin facilitates writing workshops in the state of Maine. Her poetry has appeared in various literary journals, including *Lydwine Journal*, and *J Journal*.



Molecule

**Submissions for our Spring 2021 Issue
open December 1st. See guidelines on our
website:**

moleculetinylitmag.art.blog