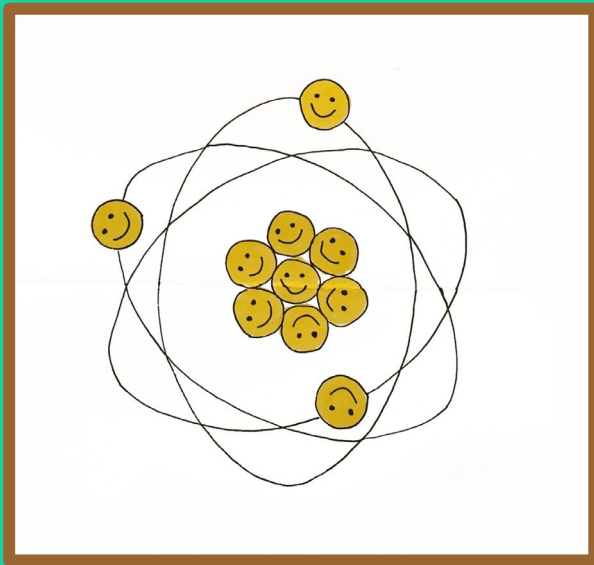


Molecule

~ a tiny lit mag ~



Fall 2021

Molecule

Fall 2021

Issue 5

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Founded & Edited by Kevin Carey & M.P. Carver

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Issue Design: M.P. Carver

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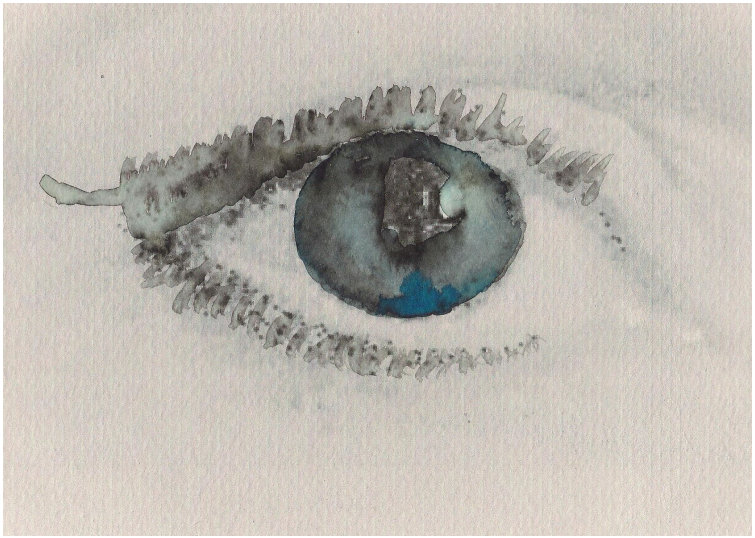
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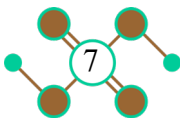
SHEILA DUANE

My Eye



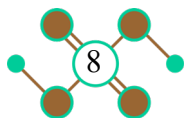
The Invasion

The dawn revealed thousands of Goths on the hillside, poised to attack. Before we could organize a defense they swept in and occupied our village. And for a week the streets were filled with creepy-looking teenagers and you couldn't get in to see *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*.



Instructions

Do not go to 1967, instead, choose 1989, or 1999, for that matter. No accidentally traipsing on butterflies, or becoming your own grandfather, grandmother, or grandperson. All of this is strictly prohibited. Hang out at parties. Go to bookstores. Talk to strangers. Consider the future inside your past.



The Struggle

“It’s ok. Don’t be embarrassed.”

She sits on the bed, taking my hand in hers.

“I never thought this would happen to me.”

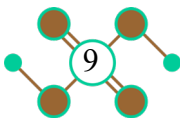
She smiles.

“I know. But we’ll fight it. Together.”

I gaze, momentarily struggling to recognize her.

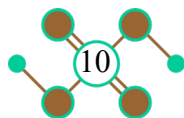
Something. Anything.

She’s no idea it’s already this bad.



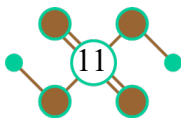
I had a pet

thought. It lived in my head. One night it escaped. I didn't know what to think. A few days later I thought it came back, but I was wrong. It was just a memory of my pet thought, pretending like nothing happened.



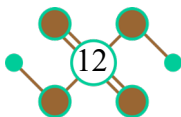
Unfiltered

His was the first voice she heard without the filter of a microphone, a phone, a mask, a memory. She kissed him first to taste the sound.



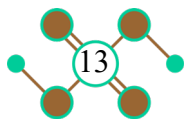
Autofiction

There's a road I need to cross when I come home from the shops, and whenever I cross it I imagine what that day's bag of shopping would look like if I got hit by a car; what it would look like spilt, what would be all around me.

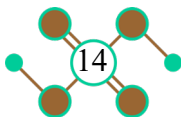


Baby Jail

I know what you think of me, the girl that follows all the rules, but just yesterday, my sister stretched out her fingers towards me from her timeout crib. I set her free, breaking the oldest family rule; because let's be serious, she'll be around a lot longer than them.



My 88 year old grandmother ordered a dildo. When it arrived, she called to tell me it had come and that she had too. Apparently it was designed for the older vagina. She named it Bjorn. Bjorn is my husband's name.



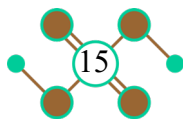
Pizza

My father frequents a pizza joint that makes change for ten when he hands them a twenty.

“They take advantage because they see the white hair,” he says. “I always catch them.”

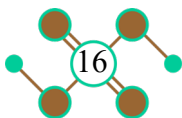
“Why keep going back?” I ask.

“I like their pizza,” he says.



Lowell November

In the autumn, great herds of frigid cumulonimbus clouds migrate into a patch of sky over the valley and suspend everything in a rigor mortis atmosphere. All around town, bodies balloon up against the cold. They lean against faceless concrete walls, smoking their breath and waiting for winter

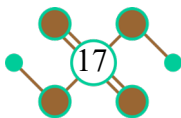


The Power of Dreams

Sheila discovered a latent psychic power in her fifties. She could kill at a distance those who had betrayed or hurt or ignored her. They would die in their sleep after having a dream about her.

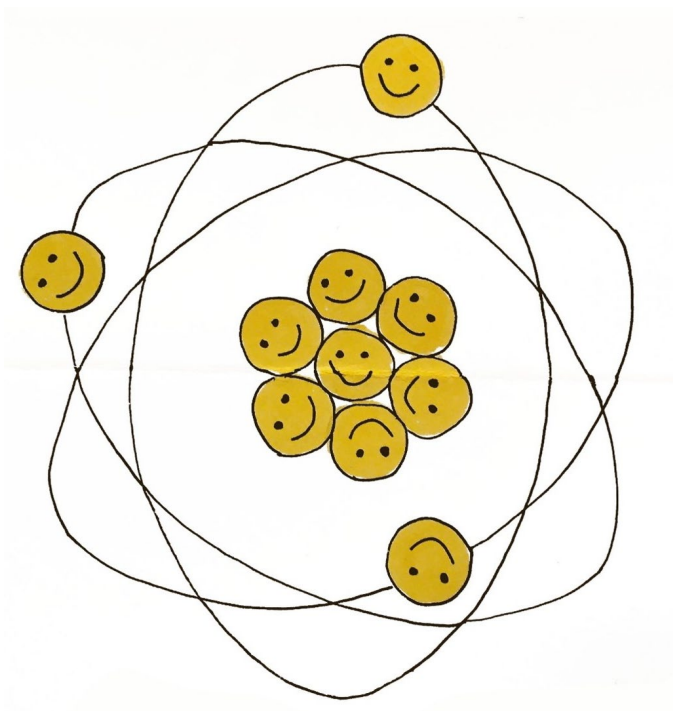
That's what Sheila believed.

Her only real power was self-delusion.



ANN MATTHEWS

Happiness



Interview:
with Meg Kearney

Q: Your biggest challenge as a multi genre writer?

How do you navigate it?

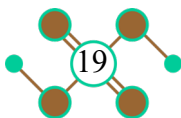
Swap “challenge” for “opportunity.” Why limit yourself to one genre or target audience? Just write; figure out genre after.

Q: Favorite bird(s)?

Ravens and crows: intelligent, entertaining birds with a historically bad reputation.

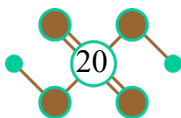
Q: Advice?

READ.



Book Review:
***Pelted by Flowers*/Kali
Lightfoot/CavanKerry
Press/\$18.00/112 pgs**

Reading Lightfoot's *Pelted By Flowers*: free paper sleeping bags and berry-stained scat; half my life went by before I understood; Death rides a pale horse named Binky; Lucas bangs a gavel to adopt us; the apples do not care; and I remember I'm afraid of the dark—and naked.



Ride

PASSENGER get into Uber DRIVER's car.

DRIVER

1111 Brickell Drive?

PASSENGER

Yup.

DRIVER

AC okay?

PASSENGER

Fine.

PASSENGER

I'm your first ride?

DRIVER

Third.

Silence. Passenger puts on headphones

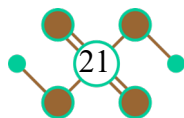
DRIVER

Plans for the weekend?

Silence, Driver notices the headphones.

DRIVER

I want to kill my wife



Blue River

As fire approaches, two bats rest high in a fir tree.

DARYL

I can't —

FRANKIE

Contract!

DARYL

What are the steps of a dying star?

FRANKIE

Jesus! Fuel runs out, core cools. Now off you go!

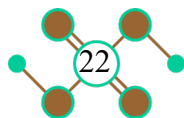
DARYL

Where?

FRANKIE

Towards the sound of combustion.

FRANKIE flees, DARYL following.



**Gordan Ramsay Eats Subpar Sushi
in a Small Restaurant in Venice,
Italy**

GORDON

Right then, what's the specialty here?

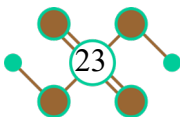
*Five WAITERS enter, holding a single slice of salmon
sushi between them. GORDON
pops the sushi in his mouth.*

WAITERS

When rice is taxed, the poor eat their shoes.

GORDON

Under-seasoned.



Coffee Shop Interview

EMPLOYER

Why do you want to work here?

HUGO

To excel at poker.

EMPLOYER

We serve coffee...?

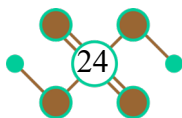
HUGO

Yes, but apparently the worst coffee in town. So when I tell customers to have a nice day, I'll be practicing my poker face.

(Beat)

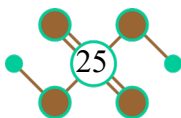
HUGO

Am I hired?



A Review of the Fox That Screams Outside of my Window

0/5 stars. Very loud and horrible. Made me see death. Bought a coffin. Didn't need it. Couldn't return it. Do not recommend. Also do not recommend Al's Coffin Surplus Store.



Greens

Dinnertime.

ELLA

Take your Razadyne today?

AGNES

I... dont remember

ELLA

I'll count the pills tonight

AGNES

You cooking greens?

ELLA

Mhhm.

AGNES

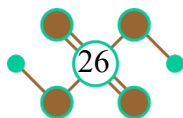
My Ella hated greens, always cried about them.

ELLA smiles.

AGNES

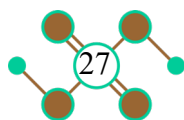
I miss my baby, she don't come around no more.

ELLA sets the table.



Green

I had my heart set on a cruise to Anchorage this summer. Instead, I'm slow-roasting like mother's lamb shoulder—with shallots!—on this effing rowboat with a granddaughter who dresses like Kermit the Frog! Green. Only green! At the lunch buffet?—she looked more edible than the sautéed broccoli.



Deathbed

Old Man lays in bed, family surrounding him.

OLD MAN

Please, come a bit closer.

They do.

OLD MAN

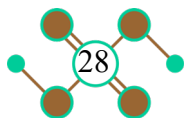
This, I think, is the last thing I shall ever say...

Tears.

OLD MAN

I... I... I... wish I had watched more
commercials. People worked hard on them.

Death.



BOBBY MILLER

Cheerio



Special Section:

THE LANFORD NEW AMERICAN PLAY FESTIVAL

For this issue we are honored to showcase two of our favorite pieces work that was created as part of a 50-word play writing session, held at the 2021 Lanford Wilson New American Play Festival this past June. Special thanks to Kitt Lavoie, Artistic Director, for making this possible.

The Lanford Wilson New American Play Festival
supports new plays that feature robust roles for college-aged actors, while providing a laboratory to train students in the skills of working with living playwrights. The festival is a program of the Dobbins Conservatory of Theatre & Dance at Southeast Missouri State University

Bloodline

SIS: Ready?

BRO nods.

SIS: I'll miss you.

BRO smiles.

SIS: Will you come back?

Pointing to the ashes.

BRO: No, but she will.

They embrace

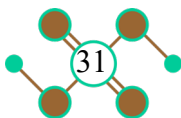
SIS: Goodbye.

BRO eats a handful of ashes. He collapses. A moment.

His eyes open.

SIS: Mom?

BRO: I'm home, sweetie.



Girl

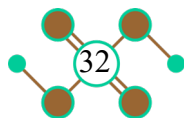
with head bandage—nervous/excited

1: Girllll, you finally got the antenna removal! You always had potential, but now you're **THE** second hottest girl in the galaxy. You lose 5 pounds?

2: The nub pokes out... and I'm dizzy.

1: The pain only lasts a millennium... C'mon!

2 smiles.



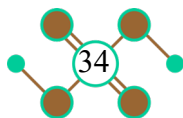
BOBBY MILLER

Clover



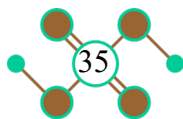
Sex

It should be more
like popping pimples. A little
bad and gross, but satisfying
for the way it lets you draw
matter out of flesh. Mostly,
though, it's just that you can watch
other people do both online,
where everything is swollen
full of artificial light.



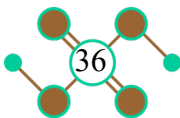
Low Tide

The lucky shell
rolls in
the restless waves.
No child grabs it
to show to his mom.
No old lady bags it
for her jewelry project.
And no hermit crab
proclaims it home
to crawl inside
and drag it on
its wormy journey.



Quarantine Evening

under such a glistering moon,
we two crows could fly
on and on, wingtip to wing
out to the end of everything
which seems to be coming soon.



**Permanent and Temporary Signage
at Fresh Pond Seafood**

[*Found Rte 2A Arlington, MA*]

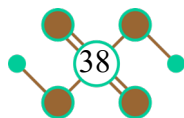


Wild Salmon

Help Wanted

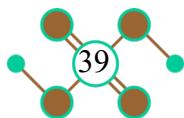
Bent-over Woman

I picked up the baby, heard my bones crack.
No longer a woman but a gnarled tree,
a pot past mending, set on a shelf.
I prayed to the empty womb of sky.
Night's silence answered me.
So long since I have seen the stars.



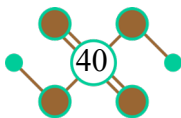
Ocean

The little girl swallowed
mouthful
after mouthful
of the
salt-brined
sea until
when cut,
she bled
only
plastic.



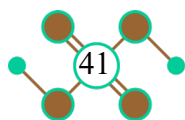
Enlightenment

o moon
I don't
think I
have it
in me



Eye Land

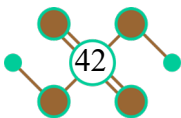
An island is land
you see at sea, you see.



Cd

Cadmium

Van Gogh's
mustard fields
of sunflowers
and wheat
born from
a tube
of deadly
paste;
poison
and
madness
leap
from the
canvas
like toxic
frogs.



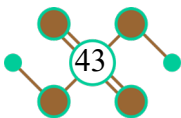
Empathy

limbs fold
into origami
on the shower floor,

flattened by a paperweight of grief.

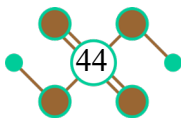
water drips like
h o n e y
along ridges,
softening.

empathy
is not always
what it seems.



South of Sleep

Trading shots with him,
I chased Pancho Villa
on horseback last night
through burning dreams
of the Chihuahuan Desert,
and when I woke up dry-
mouthed and sweaty and
feeling as if I had never slept,
the rain falling in the street
sounded like the clicking
claws of Mexican scorpions.

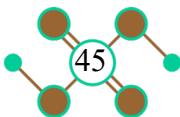


Ninth Floor
[*Oncology*]

Seven geese in formation

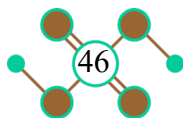
 level with the seventh floor,
rain, pavement, streetlights still burning,
dark morning and dark feathers seen from above:
seven strong, wings reaching to pull
against the sky, ascending the clear path,
 seven never doubting.

He will watch them climb and never fall.



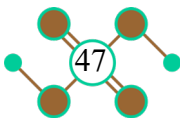
Chorus 46

Aristotle was a Greco super-model
Sashaying down the runway of Truth
In his youth he got so rail thin
Through pursuits of revelation
That he made the cover of Athens 'Vogue'
And his toga's sold
all over Rome.



Fame

We rarely saw ourselves on TV.
Then we spotted Aunty Razia
In a documentary, unaware,
Browsing a market stall. We were
All excited and told her all about it.
The programme aired three times,
She never saw herself once.

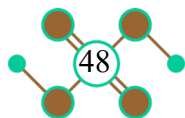


Cutbacks

Economy

E' con

O' my

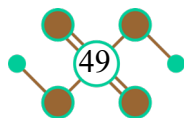


Small Talk

The talk got smaller and smaller
until it was only the memory
of a word.

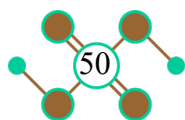
Then a syllable, *em* I think.

Then silence.



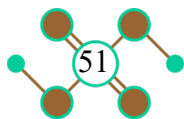
Stigma

“Till death do us part”
is a challenge to death,
to life, petals pried
from the bud, flayed
and littered like slips
of fish along Via Aurelia—
Love, uncured will
not protect you.
Gather your flowers.



Here's Why

I love the Dollar Tree
Everything is a dollar.
Family Dollar is not.
Family General is not.
How can they be called
A dollar store?
Don't know—just go.
Buy best tasting
Animal crackers.
Eat 17 for 110
Calories and smile.



BOBBY MILLER

This Little Piggy



Divinations

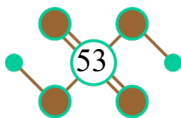
Tonight I puzzle signs.
Midnight blue sky sliced
by an opalescent jet.

In noonday sun, an owl
hooted, startling.

Now the sky bleeds profusely,
upwelling darkness.

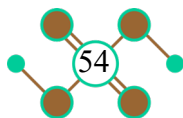
With an eraser I mark out
past mistakes—

that look you gave me
as if all the songbirds of heaven
plummeted to earth.



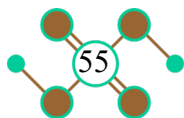
the land at the end of age

chocolate cake wasted
unlimited supply of
ice cream and candles
babies everywhere
crawling the web for guidance
tangled up in feeds
who should be mayor
of a de-aging city
where trauma stunts growth?
sagging banners boast
no cause for celebration:
happy unbirthday!



Never, Often

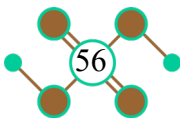
We never got a dog
even though my father
often went out
to see a man about one.



Googling Psalms

Translate the shortest psalm
in the Good Book
thru all the languages
in this Great World
and this is what you'll get:

All countries accept donations.



Aspirations, 2012–2021

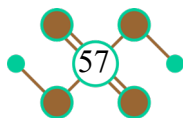
My ambition pounces on the premonition
of songbirds: feathered success

struggles between her perpetual
teeth. Her jaw locked—

she can't open wide enough
to chew or tell the ending.

Here lies my starved
aspiration—unable

to release her quarry, unwilling
to swallow her pride.



In the Mirror

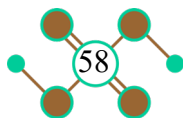
shocked
seeing signs of winter.
frost crackles my head,
a field
of midwinter wheat.

life scuffs its heels,
seasons plough smooth ivory
into deeply felt furrows.
once dewy, now dust.
once silken, now stubble and rust.

a crazy summer sun
blazes out my eyes.

Not yet, Winter.

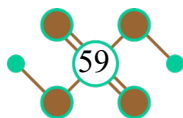
Not yet



The Grudge

I held it close, a coin
more valuable the less
I could tell heads from tails,

both sides rubbed smooth
as any plug nickel, all mine
to spend in full.



E m e n d a t i o n

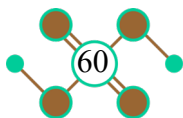
Frank Sinatra (1915–98)

In 1969, Frank Sinatra sang

I did it my way.

In 1998,

God did it His way.



BAILLIE PUCKETT

Knick-Knack Club of 2021



CONTRIBUTORS

Leah Roth Barsanti is kinda tall and has always had a complex about it. Being in a magazine about small things is a dream!

Lily Beaumont's creative work has appeared in publications including *Open Minds Quarterly*, *Ligeia Magazine*, and *Prolit*. She lives in Central Texas.

Bruce Bonafede is a playwright based in California. His plays have been produced nationwide. He is a member of the Dramatists Guild.

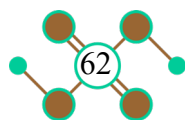
Joyce Compton Brown enjoys writing and reading. She also likes art and folk music. A Pushcart nominee, she has published two books and awaits a third.

Cameron Cai is a Junior transfer at Southeast Missouri State University studying Musical Theatre. This is his first published theatrical piece. Instagram: @cameron.cai

Wendy Taylor Carlisle lives and writes in the Arkansas Ozarks. She is the author of four books, and five chapbooks. Her website is wendytaylorcarlisle.com.

Carl Carlsen is a writer and retired professor. His most recent book *Brickyard Stories 2.0* is an oral history of a Lynn, MA neighborhood.

Playwright **Rachael Carnes** has been produced internationally, is a fellowship recipient and award-winner. Mostly, she's a dog mom to Mochi, Togo and Huckleberry. rachaelcarnes.com.



CONTRIBUTORS

Neely Caudle is a performer and writer from Arkansas. She loves consuming as much art as possible and is thrilled to be featured here!

Ian Chong (they/them) is a playwright and scholar currently based out of Chicago, IL. They can be found on Twitter as @antiauthentic.

Jane Mary Curran (Asheville, North Carolina) is the author of *Indiana Girl, Poems* (2019), and *Midwives of the Spirit: Thoughts on Caregiving* (2002).

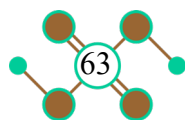
Via D'Agostino is a writer, activist, dog lover, and hiker of mountains. She spends most of her time reveling, dragon-esque, in her book hoard.

Mark DeCarteret's 7th book *lesser case* will be published by Nixes Mate Books later this year.

Winston Derden is a poet from Houston, Tx., who is considering changing his name to Les Moore sooner or later.

Sheila Duane is a playwright, painter, and community college instructor. She loves Hamlet, Andy Warhol, and Tom Petty. She also loves her dogs.

Cornelius Fortune is a playwright, poet, essayist, journalist and educator.



CONTRIBUTORS

Robert René Galván, born in San Antonio, resides in New York City where he works as a professional musician and poet.

Randi Garon is a social worker with a love of using written word to convey the deeply complicated experience that is life.

Tegan Garon is a high school math teacher from Vermont. When he is not solving calculus problems, he enjoys writing plays in one act.

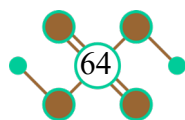
Nicky Gee is an expat musician, writer and educator living a life of sushi and sake in Tokyo, Japan.

Howie Good is the author of more than a dozen poetry collections.

Bill Griffin is a naturalist in rural North Carolina. Discover his tiny essays, photos, and a hundred Southern poets at GriffinPoetry.com.

Emily Hageman is a playwright who thought she couldn't write a fifty-word play. Emily Hageman was wrong which never happens.

Jason Heroux's most recent book is *Amusement Park of Constant Sorrow*. He is the current Poet Laureate for the City of Kingston, Ontario, Canada.



CONTRIBUTORS

M.A. Hughes spent too much time trying to figure out her bio. See website for details:

mahugheswrites.wixsite.com/website.

Terence Patrick Hughes writes drama, fiction, and poetry. Born in Lawrence, MA, Hughes, his wife, and children live in Woodstock, NY.

Yasmin A. Hussain is a poet from Yorkshire. Her recent work is featured at Freedom Studios, Buglight Theatre, and forthcoming in *Women in Lockdown*.

Melinda Jane is author of the poetry books *Nature's Nuptials* and *Bite Me* and the children's book *The Currawong and the Owl*.

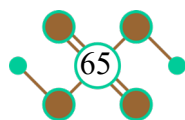
Meg Kearney, author of poetry collections, verse novels, a heroic crown of sonnets, and a picture book, directs the Solstice MFA Program (Massachusetts).

megkearney.com.

Eve McLachlan lives in Scotland. She wrote a game about tapeworms that she really quite likes. Her twitter is @strangepdf.

Linda Malnack has published two poetry chapbooks, *21 Boxes* and *Bone Beads*. She is an Assistant Poetry Editor for *Crab Creek Review*.

Gina Manola is a poet and visual artist living in Los Angeles. Her recent work appears in *Esthetic Apostle*.



CONTRIBUTORS

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

Pamela Reingold Mayer

Writer,

Loves creativity.

See her on YouTube.

Read her stories in books.

Awaiting fame any minute.

She's Funny.

Frederick Charles Melancon lives in Mississippi with his wife and daughter. More of his works can be found on Twitter @fcmwrite.

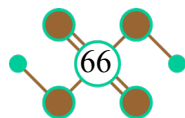
Bobby Miller: Librarian. Amateur photographer. Cat dad. Bon vivant. bobbymillerphoto.com

Dayquan Moeller is a multimedia artist who hasn't updated his LinkedIn since high school. Dayquan Moeller was never any good at selling himself.

Susan Morse lives in Oregon. Her chapbook, *In the Hush*, was published June 2019 by Finishing Line Press.

AR Nicholas is a filmmaker, playwright, author, mother and environmentalist. More at arnicholas.com.

Russell Nichols is a speculative fiction writer and endangered journalist.



CONTRIBUTORS

Joseph O'Day writes personal essays exploring family relationships and life transitions. His work has appeared in *Biostories*, *Adelaide Literary Magazine*, and *The Salem News*.

Ellie O'Leary is the Poet Laureate of Amesbury, Massachusetts, the author of *Breathe Here* (North Country Press, 2020), and co-founder of Fall Writerfest.

Drew Pisarra is the author of *Infinity Standing Up* (sonnets), *You're Pretty Gay* (short stories) and *Publick Spanking* (also short stories).

Baillie Puckett has an MFA from Hamline University. Find her on Twitter and Instagram @BailliePuckett.

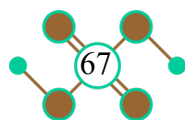
While most data suggest the presence of **Emilia Ranger**, the author's existence has yet to be proven by modern science.

Danielle Roberts is a queer poet from California. Find more of her at sonnetscribbler.com.

Donna Scheer, a poet, jazz vocalist, and retired teacher, lives on Cape Cod in Massachusetts. She hosts the monthly FCTV show *Poetic License*.

J.D. Scrimgeour continues to write: jdscrimgeour.com.

James Scruton is the author, most recently, of the chapbook *The Rules* (Green Linden Press, 2019).



CONTRIBUTORS

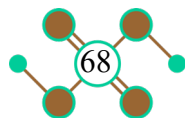
Originally from Ukraine, **Askold Skalsky** has published poems in the USA and abroad. A first work, *The Ponies of Chuang Tzu*, appeared in 2011.

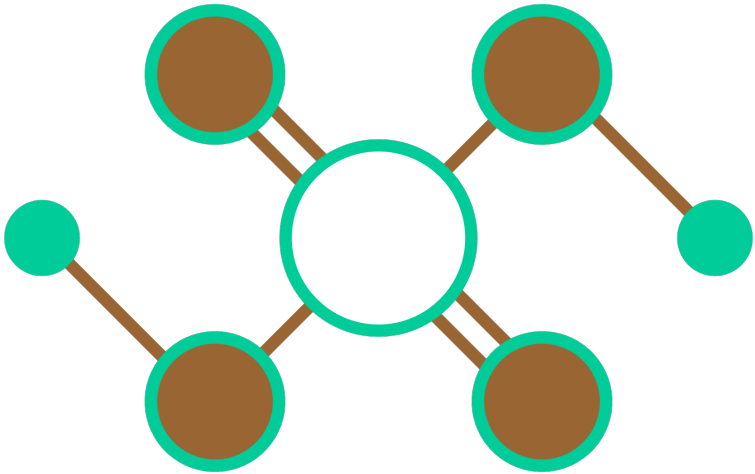
Bara Swain's plays and monologues have been staged in 185+ venues in 28 states and abroad. Visit BaraSwain.com for more info.

Cindy Veach is the author of *Gloved Against Blood* (CavanKerry Press) and *Her Kind* (forthcoming). She is co-poetry editor of *Mom Egg Review*. cindyveach.com.

Stan Werse is a lawyer and playwright. His book of short stories, *A Glimpse of the Unseen*, is on Amazon.

Alexander Wolfe lives in the Midwest. He feels like an alien sent to study humans and love cats. Brevity.





Molecule

The reading period for our Spring 2022 Issue opens
December 1st. See guidelines on our website.

moleculerinylitmag.art.blog