

Molecule

~ a tiny lit mag ~



Issue 7

Fall 2022

Molecule

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Issue 7

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“MOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES” BY SIYAN LIU

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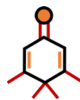
BON CHAN

Burn



About Her

She grew up very religious until her dog died and was barred from heaven. She turned to literature, but mostly it was better discussed than read. She took to drugs, but drugs colonized her life. We met playing softball and she was very competitive, but I was better.



Dinosaurs

I would have done my project on dinosaurs, but my mother told me they never existed. She said Jesus put bones all over to give us things to discover. Otherwise, we'd get into sinful mischief. So I didn't do my project. Mother made you all these crucifix cookies.

Enjoy.



Office Romance

On “Bring Your Pet to Work Day”, everyone fawned over Ffion’s Siamese, recoiled at my monitor lizard. Everyone, that is, but Lou, whose amber corn snake hugged his T-shirted bicep. Ffion sneered: *What a match made in heaven!* And we were. For a while. Until Monty ate Amber.



Holden Caulfield worried about the ducks in Central Park. Where did they go in winter?

Tony Soprano dreamed that the mallards flying away from his swimming pool had stolen his penis.

I watch for the swans to come back to Salem Woods each spring, where they start a new family.



Me and This Cat and This Mosquito

It's becoming plain that between the three of us lies a bizarre, unspoken, enduring pact. We will keep each other awake and moving in the least populated hours of a day: 2am 3am 4, because someone ought to be up to see this.



BON CHAN

Grow

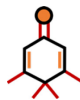


Feline Love

He stared right at me while he stuck his paw in my glass of water. Such a power move. His tail curled around the glass like he was claiming ownership.

I sighed. “Get your own water.”

He dipped his paw in again, pulled it out and licked it.



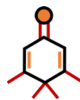
Hank the Screamer

They call Hank “Screamer.” They believe it’s because the shortstop hits line drives. They being the media, the fans, the current team, and his mother. Here’s what happened. In the minors a teammate fouled a rope into the dugout. Hank shrieked like a zoo animal.



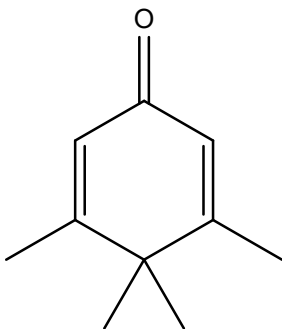
Self-Poetry

Soft lightning. Distant. The air is charged, danger on the horizon. A good night to write. I haven't killed anyone yet, but I'm still holding my pencil. If I were you, I would move slowly away from the window and start appreciating the metaphor.



Molecules

Consider 3,4,4,5-tetramethylcyclohexa-2,5-dienone, better known by its common name penguinone. It looks like a penguin! Who knew chemists were so fun?



BON CHAN

Leap



**Book Review: *Liar* / Jessica Cuello /
Barrow Street Press / \$18 / 71 pgs.**

In Jessica Cuello's riveting collection, *Liar*, we enter the harshness of a particular childhood: "In my family /you recreate invisible//and freeze like a rabbit." No word, no line is wasted. This poet employs every possible element of craft, even misspellings, to create poems that insist we read them.



Interview
with A.R. Salandy

Q: What drives you?

A: A sense of authenticity beyond pandering to the masses.

Q: Editing Fahmidan and Chestnut Review, what's joy?

A: Cliché, but helping others grow.

Q: Latest Chapbook?

A: Half Bred from The Poetry Question: honest, bold, disruptive. My magnum opus to date.



Original:

歌

此刻，奔涌的大海

正回到一滴安静的水

没有一首歌属于我！

它的心空悬

深蓝色的囊让它看上去更美

没有一首歌属于我！



Translation:

Song

At this moment, the surging sea
is turning back into a drop of quiet water.
No song belongs to me!

Its heart hangs in the air;
The dark blue sac makes it look prettier.
No song belongs to me!



When Your Wing Man Is Your Mom

MOM

Do you remember John? He was at the party last night.

DAUGHTER

I didn't talk to anyone.

MOM

Tracy said you two got along.

DAUGHTER

Got along?

MOM

He liked you.

DAUGHTER

He never spoke to me.

MOM

But he remembers you.



Church?

EVERYWOMAN: (showing it with her hands) Here is the church, here is the steeple (doesn't open the doors), open the doors, and see all the people (pause). But I'm afraid to open the doors. What if they've been hurt? What is a church, if the people have been shot?



SANDRA HOPKINS

Animals Lounging



The Right Word

SALLY

(20-ish, typing.)

Damned college essays. What's better: "He was mad?" Or "He was furious"?

RALPH

(20-ish, her roommate.)

Furious. More emphatic. And you've owed me for months for the heating bill. Cheapskate. Bitch.

SALLY

(Smiles.)

I'm glad you get furious, not just mad. So macho!

Blackout.



Charity

Lights up: Frozen wasteland; dead trees; loneliness.

SNOWSHOE HARE enters—cautious, paranoid, seeking food. Finds none.

WENDIGO enters—mammoth, emaciated, hollow.

HARE freezes. WENDIGO freezes. Faceoff.

WENDIGO extends arm. HARE petrified.

WENDIGO opens hand. A gift: rotten vegetation.

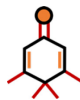
HARE and WENDIGO eat.

WENDIGO strokes HARE.



WENDIGO eats HARE.

Loneliness.



Engorged

*Play for 3+ voices evoking bucolic
brook to churning creek to swift
stream to tumultuous tributary to
rollicking rapids to cliff cascade.*

Gouged by glaciers
melting ice
eroding downward
water flows into cracks
freezes
expands
fractures
rockslide
flood
small catastrophes
as the saying goes Ithaca is gorges

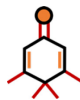


Social Lives

Lights up.

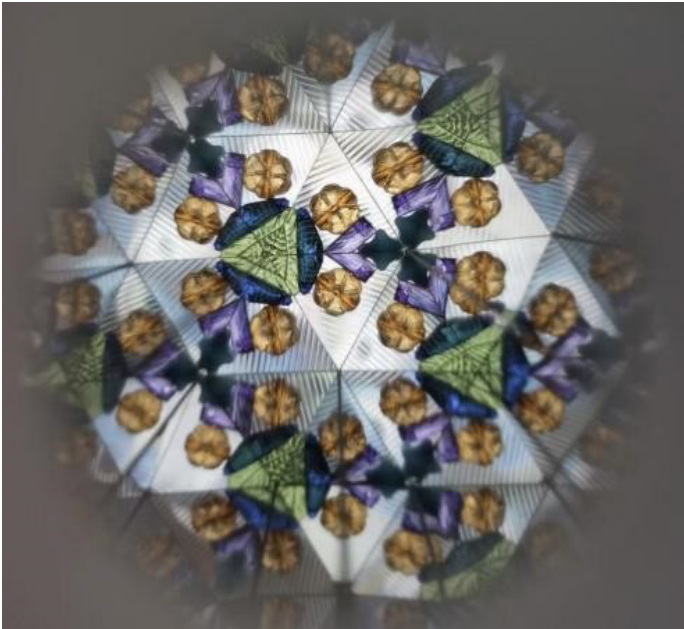
A BOY (15) and a GIRL (15) are on a date at a restaurant. They text each other. They smile and laugh.

Fade to black.



SIYAN LIU

A Kaleidoscope in China



Special Section

THE LANFORD WILSON NEW AMERICAN PLAY FESTIVAL

For this issue we are honored to once again showcase two of our favorite pieces that were created as part of a 50-word play writing session, held at the 2022 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.

Could've

ISABEL stands by a mostly packed suitcase. She places a final item in.

JOSH bursts in, relieved to see her still there.

JOSH

Thank God! It isn't true. I swear it isn't.

ISABEL

I know. But I thought it could be.

She latches the suitcase shut and leaves.



Lucifer Leaves

Heaven.

LUCIFER

I don't wanna be here anymore.

GOD

We're family.

LUCIFER

This is a job.

GOD

I love you.

LUCIFER

I just wanna give my two weeks.

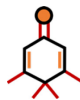
GOD

I gave you life.

LUCIFER

Never asked.

Stare-down.



GOD

Compromise?

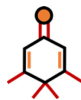
LUCIFER

Like what?

Hell.

LUCIFER

Yeah. This works.



Rituals are for Losers

Wisteria, do you dive
through glass? Or,
do you bleed?
I'll ask,
after.

The headlights or a deer staring?

Tell us, witch,
what do you want?

More warts?

Stars

in

your eyes?!



**After Reading the Autobiography of
Malcolm X at Twenty-four**

As when light streams into corners of the darkest
alleys,
or onto canyon walls early evening—
transforming.



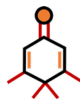
SIYAN LIU

The Mouse of the Seven Gables



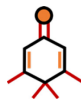
1987

Dee Snider
on a five-mile run through L.A.,
Appetite for Destruction blasting
from Koss stereophones,
a blaze of
yellow Aqua Net,
pink cotton,
blue ice.



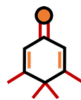
Low tide

At one point all the crabs lift a claw
up into the air it is a moment
of transition they each feel it—
the need to lift to stretch and open
the mouth of their claw I too
look ridiculous in my own crowd
hands lifted clapping



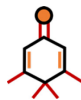
Shape and Color

My daughter thinks that any curved thing is a
rainbow:
this Cheerio bit in half, a hug that bends around its
absence.



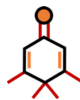
WWJD

My sister was
an amazing theology teacher.
Such a shame she wrote
genitalia on her whiteboard
instead of Gentiles.



Summer's End

Our parents visible again
telling us it's time to come in
outside everything suddenly dim
as if a giant hand had cupped itself around us



My Strange Neighbors

are afraid of the moon.

They shingle their roof with fish.

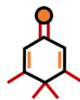
Spice their food with sand.

Plant money in their garden every spring
though it never grows.

Tape human faces on their dogs.

Fly their Trump flag proudly
upside down.

Shout “Everything must go!” at passing cars.



Char

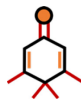
I smell like burnt meat.

I am burnt meat

in several small craters
of cauterized skin

where ghosts of cancer
chorus in whining voices:

“I’ll get you,
my pretty.”



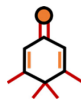
ANN MATTHEWS

Troll



Bones

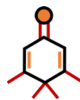
They're in there, tricky piles
of porous brittle branches—
lego kits for humans—
and all we do is sit around
drink coffee and get
irritated, forgetting
their accurate structure
their precise number
their literal support.



NEIL C. FLAVIN

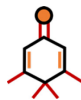
07/11/56

My body is breaking down.
My mind is getting tired of it.
The aches and pains awaken me.
No need to wind the clock.



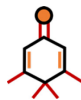
MATTHEW GAZDA

windstrewn lane
takeout lid
does cartwheels



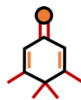
Dawn of the Dead

and when we're dead
we'll all go to the mall



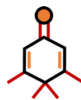
Roots

The snow covered your feet
in the cold of ice,
but you were clothed.
Now the snow has melted away and you
are left naked;
your roots showing.



Haiku for Yew

Tree by my window
Wakes me with its midnight groans.
Whiny little birch.



The Sorcerer's Wife

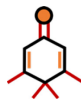
My Father was a professional magician.

He could escape from anything except for his
crippling alcoholism.

I'm pretty sure that's why mom disappeared.

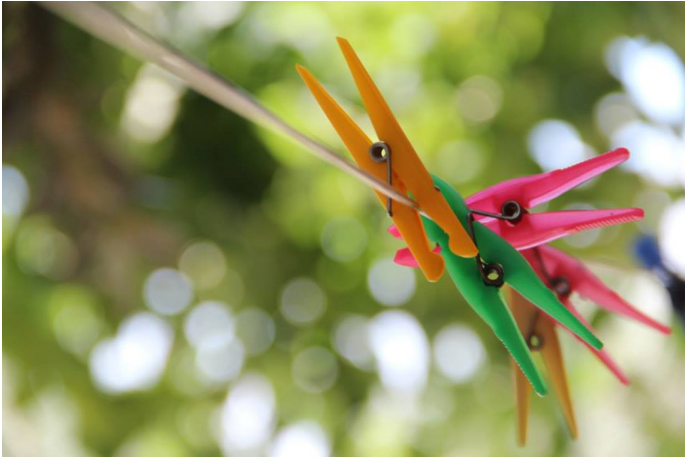
That or she was tired of being sawed in half all the
time.

When it comes to being sawed in half... women are
divided.



LIVIA MENEGHIN

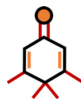
Clothespins



Slur

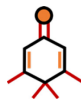
Just as a single brushstroke
in a seascape is a gull or mast
and so the understanding of vast
distance, as soon as he spoke

that word our friendship broke,
its hull blown open by the blast:
a red and ochre dab in the past
for fire, a twisted line for smoke.



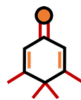
November Trees

Ghost towns made visible,
collapsing in the leafless branches—
all last summer's music
decomposing.



New Muse

you rhyme *clitoris*
with *Tyrannosaurus*
you make my stomach ache
from laughter
and reanimated butterflies



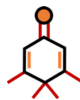
**Poem, written years after Sen. Robert
Dole's unsuccessful bid for the presidency
and his subsequent Viagra sponsorship.
Too late to go viral.**

Bob Dole, poor Bob Dole,
So sorry for Bob Dole.
He cannot win an election,
He cannot get an erection.
So sorry, oh, so sorry for Bob Dole.



Literary Ambition

Well, a cricket might sing
a song of mine.
Or I could write graffiti
on a traffic sign.



I Will Wait!

Every twenty-eight or so days
my zillion eggs won't stop wailing,
shouting and pleading for mercy:
they don't want to be shed.
No, not all of them—just one.
My refusal to do the 'needful'
attracts excruciating pain—bucketful.
But I have resolved to bear
the consequences.



Changeling

Hear me deep inside
a bee whose poison
is as benign as clover honey

I am a spider weaving
chance to language

My eel tongue
glides to a cave
that opens like a mouth

I am a caterpillar
chrysalis swaddled
this patient sleep
as I wait for fugitive wings



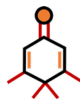
LIVIA MENEGHIN

Raindrops



Middle Age

Like climbing into the wrong
SUV and wondering
why your key doesn't work
and who hung those prayer
beads from the mirror,
you find yourself
in a life familiar
but not quite yours,
everything behind
closer than it appears.



Blackbirds Again

Too many to sing bye-bye to,
to look at thirteen ways.

Going past, what seems a scorched field
begins to ripple like fabric,

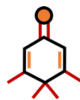
a dark sail torn from its mast.
Rags catch in the tops of trees.

The sky frays with chatter.



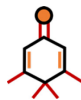
Easy

To hold a smug sign or write
about those roused from innocent sleep
by knocking at the door.
Moral-swaddled, righteous. Wronged.
Harder to report how your chest puffs
at a glimpse of your reflection
in a bright black boot.
How cool, how natural
the gun feels in your hand.



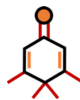
Punctuation Porn

the unspoken eloquence
of parentheses, hands
holding a lover's face
the apostrophe's crook'd
finger come hither
the comma of lips
before the kiss
and the ellipses ...
of what's to come



Route 50

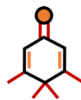
Ribbon of road across
old Nevada. It climbs
up over passes, connects
Tahoe to Fallon to
Eureka to Ely.
5 states east is Illinois.
Oh, it's a long, lonely ride.



Spiritualism

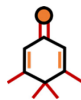
Since reading
that the two poets
were drinking buddies

I've leaned them together
spine against spine
on the shelf.



Who Saves Ya, Baby?

...n now we are reminded of the part
where Jesus counsels the neurotics in Leviticus
after the football loss...



KATHRYN REILLY

Reclamation



CONTRIBUTORS

Kathleen Aguero lives in Salem, MA and has published six books of poetry, her most recent being *World Happiness Index* from Tiger Bark Press.

Aaliyah Anderson (she/her) is a junior majoring in Literary Arts at her high school. She loves all forms of art.

Kathleen Aponick reads the news found in poetry from Massachusetts.

Dan Barlekamp was born in Passaic, New Jersey. He believes in caffeine more than sleep.

Kevin Broccoli is an author and playwright. His work has been featured on his mother's refrigerator for far too long. He's from New England.

Mary Buchinger is the author of several books of poetry, including */klovdz/* (2021) and *VIROLOGY* (forthcoming). Website: www.marybuchinger.com.

E. Shaskan Bumas: writes stories (Pushcart, AWP awards), essays (*Daily Beast*), and translations (*Nietzsche on His Balcony*); volunteers (PEN Prison Writing); and teaches (NJCU).

Patricia Callan is a writer, artist, and educator living in Beverly with her husband, daughters, and a tiny beagle. Find her poems in [9x5](#).



CONTRIBUTORS

Ellen Catherine is a semi-retired, post-divorce, creative woman on the “back nine” of life who is finally stepping out into her own person.

Bon Chan is an illustrator and writer based in NYC. She delights in humor through scribbles. Look for her at bondrawsthings.com.

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Jim DeFilippi’s books: "Suspenseful, often hilarious" (Newsday), "Excellent paced, imaginatively told" (Publishers Weekly), "Surprisingly fresh" (Booklist), and “Precise, pithy” (Library Journal).

Jerry Dennis lives on a defunct farm in northern Michigan. He has published many books, poems, essays, and stories, and enjoys a hearty breakfast.



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Neil C. Flavin: Landscape Gardener. Believer of life that exists when I'm down on all fours. And if I stand, the doubts come back.

Matthew Gazda has previously published thirty-four words, composed of six total lines, in two journals.

Allison Goldstein received her MFA from California College of the Arts, and has been featured in *Not Very Quiet*, *Gyroscope Review*, and *Burnt Pine*.

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By day, **Kathryn Reilly** teaches; by night she spins speculative tales. Her rescue mutts Savvie and Roxyrazzamatazz hear all the stories first. Follow: [@Katecanwrite](https://twitter.com/Katecanwrite)



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A.R. Salandy, a Black-Mixed-race poet, editor and author of 3 chapbooks and a novel, dwells in the void between Kuwait & the UK.

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Dan Schap is a theatre artist and social worker. *And Come Round in Circle* (co-written with Rebecca Elizabeth Hollingsworth) premieres 2023, in New Orleans.

James Scruton is the author of two full collections and five chapbooks of poems.

Alison Stone has published seven full-length books and three chapbooks. She is also the creator of *The Stone Tarot*. She is a licensed psychotherapist.

Joshua Thusat's recent work can be found in *Penlight Magazine*, *Change Seven*, and *Coalesce Community Literary Magazine*. He teaches writing in the Chicagoland area.

Lucinda Trew writes poetry, essays and anarchist Post-it notes. She thinks it's pretty cool that the keyboard spells her last name backward as WERT.

Pasquale Trozzolo is still with no tattoo or MFA and continues to complicate his life by living out as many retirement clichés as possible.



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Ken Waldman combines old-time fiddling, original poetry, and smart storytelling to make a living on tour. 20 books, 12 CDs, kenwaldman.com, and trumpsonnets.com.

Olivia Wheeler loves people + words, so she's constantly drawn to acting & writing for stage + screen. She studies Musical Theatre at SEMO.

Kris Willcox lives in Arlington, MA. Her writing has appeared recently in *Crazyhorse*, *The Kenyon Review* online, and on Post-it notes around her house.

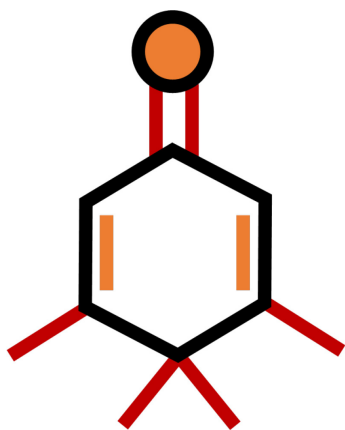
David Earl Williams, born near the bottom of the Ethnocentric Gorge, grew up on the banks of the great Ethnocentric River like everybody else.

Todd Wimpfeimer loves molecules and is a Ph.D. chemist who teaches at Salem State University.

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