



Around Poetry

Spring 2016

AROUND POETRY

Spring 2016

Around Poetry is a Detroit based online and print publication supporting the works of artists from many different backgrounds.

We are eager to foster a creative sensibility within the various communities we engage in, and possess a strong desire to explore the capabilities of the written word. This collective group of artists is dedicated to providing a free edition, and as such, have put forth their own resources to print the materials. We hope you are inspired by the poems that appear here. Enjoy.

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Please visit **AroundPoetry.org** for submission and donation details.

Sean Rust: Editor-in-Chief

To You

Little yellow sunrise Bird
over tiny cups of bittersweet coffee
and a new pair of hips

This new found freedom
with all its potholes
and short lived exhaustion
will never spoil
with the summer strawberries

-Emily Erdman

Commune

We decided to buy this
long, brown land,
with grooves like orange peels
dividing its thick green
carpet into colors
of camouflage
There is a loading deck
shaped like a seesaw-
Arrive, and you receive a
gentle
squeezen-ing
We offer the
brown of our land
for your scraping, a
scalpel, that you
dip into glue
which strips away
what you see leaving
what you didn't
A place to sit for tapas,
suggestions on
how to be nicer hanging
down like Calder
Listen and touch
carefully,
because our glass walls
because your hands
will be sticky from
the paste when you
squeeze our
dandelions too hard

-Dina Paulson

Fever Dreamt

I never talk about June's grass-stained

Sundress,

draping taupe leggings come late

August,

as angel tears and dogpiss deliquesced our sidewalk-block

Frescoes,

settling also on the guarded taupe

Shade,

when on the first day colder than the one before I learned why we
never rest in unchecked

Heat.

-Nick Tallidis

Isabelle

I thought you would jump Isabelle, us holding hands, we decided together, another crazy go around, besides, this white formal wear was unbecoming and a bit safe for our taste. I remember now. On

the count of three, standing

together on the mossy edge of this fateful precipice of reincarnation, the purple vortex playing off the love in our eyes, a product of projection in this ever after ethereal

romance, we dove. And as I began my swan, darling, your delicate hand slipped from mine. In my fall I spun back to meet your gaze from where we stood, where you now stand, before you realized that it was me that needed to go back. That it was me the world needed. When our eyes locked,

I could see the honest love you held for me inside every tear rolling across your angelic features, I could feel every drop, and for each, I blew a kiss for you to catch. I hope you caught them love. I

am grateful you will be safe,

for I know the big bands will keep you cheerful, I know

you will have no trouble finding company,

company as pleasant as mine, I sincerely doubt,

but company, nonetheless.

So you wait, keeping my heart and my grandfather's cuff links safe

until the day I return. Isabelle love, I understand, I understood

then, I knew you couldn't bear it, this last go wore on you harder I

think, besides, they discontinued your favorite scent around the

50's and so far I've only found empty bottles with ghost's of you trapped inside. There is a product they call YouTube, yes, a funny

sort of thing, but it has led me to some of our favorite melodies

and I was

reconnected darling, I remember, we had the best of times in the worst of times and I could not have gone on without you then and

I am finding it hard now, but I am managing quite well I think. At

least for the moment I have the music, in my dreams it plays from

the trees, the two of us dancing slow, my arms behind your back

toying gently with the lace on that favorite gown you never cared

to wear out over and again. Dear, in that little clearing up at

Cynthia's past the stream, when I poured your glass a little too
graciously, when we went out for air... There was snow on the
ground that night and remember how I boasted that our tracks
were the first and you spotted some from a rabbit and I kidded
they were a bear's? It is just that when the music decrescendo's as
the moon grows brighter and I lean in for a kiss, feeling the cold
on your nose as I move in closer
holding you tighter,
and just before we meet...
I wake.
I love you darling.

-Amoxi Raj

wallpaper grapes

hands matching eyes,
eyes matching feet,
wandering bones, wandering alone

and this is where it hurts.

olives and peaches all down a row.
faithful fruit,
ripened a bit too soon.

and this is where we say what we mean.

you wanted red,
got purple instead.
and adapted a softer palate.

we're all just skin and teeth here.

-Niobe Marasigan

Refined Taste

Among other features, humans
evolved two sets of teeth

ONE: For grinding gristle

THE OTHER: For tearing meat

and just a soft wet muscle
crushed against a hard palate
so that we may taste something,
anything.

“To not keep moving means death”
spoken before words, wrought
in blood red faces grimace
and shriek and vanish
back into wilderness--
leaving their fallen behind.

The first butcher was us,
the mammal who emerged
from green trees in thin skins
to scavenge and hunt and scour
the desert in packs, howling
awareness into darkness

in search of something
besides flesh to eat.

-Rory Mencia

For Bridgeport, Chicago

My dream of writing about shit has fin
Ally [not] come true. Ten syllables as
An excuse to be myself. Excuse you,
I have pardoned myself as God, god, dog

“Can you hear me now?” Or did you hear me
Last night stuck beneath gunshots shaped like nip
Ples, the gansta-ist gangsters wrapped up in
Foil teeth, starched t-shirts red, yellow, blue

Flashing police cameras above my
Gallery ridden street recording dog
Shits and gang tags but never knives or bet
Ter, legs forced open by Nights pelvic duet.

I love this place covered in trash, wetter,
Whiter than your face after I fuck it.

-Breanye Riddle

Window Shopping

One day I wanted to go for a walk
But I had a hole in my shoe
And the ground was wet
So I stayed inside
Bored
And a little afraid
That I might already be dead
Or at least losing my mind,
But not in a way that's entertaining
To the self,
Or others.

-Sam Perez

Bull

Sitting there, spread out against her furry papasan chair, her fragile body just dangling there, like a little miss Pamplona girl shaped piñata doll, showily dressed and smiling, her belly seemingly teeming with sweets, she grins and she stares.

And me, well, I want to cover my eyes, grab my bat, and swing to destroy, or at least to strike that vital blow, as would any boy my age, but from the looks of her, from the look of her face as it looks so menacingly at mine, it's much too late for that. The niño's have come, they've played, had their fill, and grown old, so old, so old that they don't play like that anymore, so old that they don't even remember ever having played like that, with blindfolds on their faces and sticks in their hands and candy for everyone. Yeah, she's flimsy and fake, a shiny silver candy wrapper with no candy inside, a hollow piñata doll.

So what can I do? What *should* I do?

I sit there, I lean back, I lean back into my mind as I lean back into my chair, and I trust my instincts, because mine are the only instincts I can trust.

-Jeff Garland

KID

snow cone summer haze
recall the race, the smoke rings, the slow fading rays
remember when you thought
the sidewalk
in the low afternoon sun just before it set
stayed hot because
the earth emanates its own heat
just as your lazy dog does
and your sundress felt cool against it
and you sucked ice from a cup
remember the screech owl at night
you thought was probably aliens talking
remember when you thought
that tree was the biggest thing you'd ever see
scratching at your window
telling you god's watching, don't slip up, say your prayers
remember the backseat
counting the licks on your sucker
imagining the blue on the windshield
was the beginning of the sky

-Savannah Melcher

Offerings

In this, our Detroit summertime, warm animals drip smoke.
You can taste the slow burn of their sex past your teeth and
into the back of your throat

Some drunk pilgrims ignore their baser urges and bow
their heads at an ancient relic - The Dequindre road sign,
pushed down hard in an overgrown Highland Park field

These are the offerings to our home. Two bodies entwined
in finite union and the inebriated prayers of sozzled monks.

If you listen carefully you can hear them even now, in Autumn:
pleasured shrieks and hail marys
the chorus of the city

-Elia Hohausen-Thatcher

1966 fall

you drank two cans of coke

now three

you smoked ten cigarettes

now twelve

and how many miles separate us now

(i never began counting)

now

i've shot one-hundred panes of glass

it won't

save me

forever

what good will it do

it won't save me

now

i've shot one-hundred and one panes of glass

-Claire Cirocco

First Rain

It rained this morning
And the goats thanked me for the heavily anticipated hydration
Unbeknownst to them
Their matriarch supplies me with her liquid life force
White gold

Don't thank me Maté
Though my actions would suggest otherwise
I cannot summon the rain

-Daniel Hurwitz-Goodman

In Regards to the Cyclical Nature of Things

Lost in these words like in this world.

Here with the great dull echo of nothing.

It's like staring into the mouth of a crater.

Sifting through the rubble and smoldering chaos—

not looking for anything, yet excited to find what remains.

It's cold and we treasure the warmth that's left.

In a place like this it seems ludicrous the urge to create.

But no matter how many times we destroy,

we were given these hands to rebuild.

We were given these hands so that we can give ourselves away.

Eventually you will have to face yourself alone

and answer for what you have made,

for what you have given and what you have not.

-Connor Kreger

Naked

orange peel mosaic,
concrete gangsters,
insecure beingz,
lusted laughter, shiny dirt overcoat,
pound cake dawn,
spittin relics lyke Rembrandt,
magic doll,
humming eyes,
whimpering flesh,
cigarette halo,
lushed out,
eye'ma playa & eye crushalot,
intrrrrstellar slum,
nostalgia museum where
yr childhood home movies
play on mute,
school free drug zone,
pass tha passion plague,
race thru america's highway spine,
hot green wild,
real love you are my mirror,
moss bed,
suddenly swallowing (w)hol(e)y,
rotten queen of fuckboiz,
spliff talk circle circle dot,
my heart; a sun porch.

-Eleanor Oster

Onion

Are you an onion?

Cause you make me cry so...

Much time has passed you still

Make me...

Make me...

Laugh like a crazy person...

I am one.

-Zoë Hollis

City Chicken

Heard two, a crocus
Pictured are huevos rancheros
Imagine two green peppers
Drooping and bare-skinned
A soft cock

-Julia Callis

Signs We Get From a Well Worn Sidewalk

Step in measure toward a new hip street.
 Count each cement square as a letter, as 1, 2, 3.
 By the digitized time that I arrive, a sentence is formed on the
 sidewalk.

Videotapes hidden under horseshoes hung on high beams.
 Watch with breath like we forgot. Even a birth could be a movie
 an underdeveloped plot.

Native flowers pulled from toxic drought clay
 stuck them back in wet worm soil. They grew new
 Rode the plastic train around a ten foot track.
 All-the-while smiling back at you.

At ends of sun cracked driveways, in the unfair exhibition of June
 Lift lilac amethysts from backyard dirt
 push summer tractors down winter's sledding hill,
 then slip into an invisible space where loss and let go stand still.

Escape to robin egg blue. Miniature castles on manicured lawns.
 Good boy dogs behind electric fences.
 Baby bunnies rest in nests below
 yellow plastic swing set slides.

Raise yourself and raise each other, until
 something strong swoops in.

Not to choose which spot you will sprout from.
 Not to know which way you will sin.

The free press papers pile up,
 homes swallowed back into sore gum ground.
 The whole of the city is a street sign
 Warning!
 Every turn is a dead-end sound.

Except I found a passage there
where beat up cars got stopped from driving through.
I could find the way to explain it, then share those secrets with
you.

-Leslie Schott

House of Mirrors

I'm scared of contentment,
I'm scared of you loving me,
How could you?
I gave you all I had,
Every ounce given leaves
Me more malnourished,
And I'm still too full to
Finish what's in front of me,
(Would you like a bite?)
It's selfless,
We're selfless yet -
We both exist,
This paradox leaves me
In a full sprint drenched -
In a collective of tears
All falling for reasons
I can only feel -
Running to the place where
We both perceive ego
A house of mirrors.
(Would you like a bite?)

-Khalil Heron

House of Mirrors II

Here we are,
 You, me -
 Both of us on the laid
 On the table -
 Sweat drips since there are
 More important things to repair
 Than the AC
 You, me -
 Naked to every crevice of
 Flesh that composes us,
 To every freckle that blossoms
 In the summer sun since there are
 More important things to prepare
 For - than Vitamin D,
 You, me -
 We
 Intertwined in signs
 That are slowly stroking my neck,
 Grasping my voice -
 Strangling thought, since there are
 More important things than
 Saving me,
 You, me -
 It's sometimes too simple to see,
 I misplaced myself in the house
 Along with a lighter and -
 Pair of keys,
 Without a voice - I hope
 You can see the light
 Reflecting from me,
 I'm good at hide and seek -
 Close your eyes,
 And count to infinity.

-Khalil Heron

Morris the Mamatoon

There was once the most malleable monster named Morris the Mamatoon.

Morris slithered and shrieked, crawled and clawed,
dodged and darted, flailed and farted.

Folks woke up early and tried to catch Morris the Mamatoon

Morris would simply slip away and be home by noon

They tried everything: nets, traps, snares, and snarls

Morris would simply evade them with still enough time to call his friend, Carl

Morris' secret was his skin

It was slimy and slippery

Frictionless as it were

So, as the poachers approached

Awaiting with bait

Morris would wait

In no rush, Morris cleaned his coat

Knowing the shine would buy him some time

and prevent those hunters from turning him into lunch

But this time the men had a hunch

They expected Morris to evade their first attack

So they would lure him down the road with a tasty snack

Once Morris caught whiff of this tasty treat, he would surely continue down the street

And there waiting for him would be a large hole, dug into the ground

And this is precisely what happened to Morris the Mamatoon

He fell into that hole in the ground and that is still where he is to be found

Because no can grab hold of that slippery little bug

Now Morris is a tourist attraction and his face is on this mug!

-Phillip Dage

Modern Myth

Dear facebook, you scare me,
This new world feeds off me,
Modern myth is privacy.

Dear police, you scare me,
Protection's lost to the "free,"
Modern myth is sanctuary.

Dear first world, you scare me,
Everything is run by technology,
Modern myth is humanity.

-Maura Gibbons

It Gives Me More Material

It gives me more material..
That's nice, thankYou.
I See myself doing It again
that's nice thankyou.

It's You..
I Am

There's that Green light again.
Again.

-Shelby Murphy

The Cutting Wheel

With the cutting wheel, I hit steel
and bee's fly.

Depending on the angle

the sparks,
they could go here

or there,
Or continuously against the window
screen, underneath the glass

meshed against my face
they shoot out

like an excuse
after a long night

with nothing to show
sometimes I slip and hit bronze,

or was it skin,

it is the portrait:

leaving small impressions
cast-iron dust on flesh
titled, 'I Want to Go Home'

My skin shows a rash,

after a few stings

I'm breaking out
of iron bars, or were they leaves

that line the body underneath skin
Blue and then Red and then,

it is the Cutting Wheel
that slits the yellow sky

and from the wound comes
a long letter to the wrong address.

Today, it is

Raining

but there's no telling what.

The Human Heart

Just keep it coming
Sandpaper it down
Til it's so smooth
And shiny
And perfect
That it will never slip up again

-Emily Erdman

A Moment

Sitting in a taxi
stuck in traffic
under an overpass
next to a shit-colored river
I see a shirtless man
with leather skin
stretched over protruding ribs
kneeling and then standing
and then kneeling again
with his hands clasped together
like some lost saint
searching for salvation
amidst the urban sin.

-Connor Kreger

128

I touched a lamb this morning

It had rained

And every time I neuter a pig

A Rainbow materializes

Divine intervention testifies

What I'm doing

Might be ok

-Daniel Hurwitz-Goodman

Bodies

My interest in bodies
holding sanded dreams
starts off with erections
from limbs, areolas touching
bent knees / fingers grasping
plastic wrapped mountains, the
pur of historic, faithful lovers arriving

-Dina Paulson

Cut N' Paste

Swim as you wish
 Breathe as you do
 Everything you see
 Is up to you
 If all you have to do is die
 Then life's a dream
 So feel free...
 To be a character
 Go ahead
 Tumble with me, out of your lawn and into the street.
 I'm waiting to see if you'll grow wings, because you gave me things
 I didn't know I wanted.
 How are your scars? It's been awhile since we've touched. Have
 you been bleeding yourself? Like you've been known to do. I wish
 I knew how to help you.
 You have no hope
 It's starting to show
 If there's no reason to stay
 I can't find one to go
 All that was lost but never had
 Must be tossed aloft into the sand
 And within the lions heart lays the key
 To pry the chest of misery
 So if you lie devoid of grace
 Wipe the smirk upon your face
 For soon the time will be yours
 To fuck the folly of idle chores
 But...
 Can't you see I'm just playing here?
 Just playing
 Just waiting for that moment you crack
 And either meditate your life away
 Or Ebenezer across a Burger King with a Tommy gun and a sneer,
 There seems to be no alternative that doesn't involve ripping
 tickets somewhere.

There is the other way
But you don't have the talent for that
You're not pretty enough for that
You're not smart enough for that
You're not made for that
You belong here
With us

-Sam Perez

CARCINOGENS

feel the apathy setting in again via weeks of the same obscurities
 and car-sin-o-gens
 sat sucking fumes
 breathing w the dead in a graveyard room
 again
 car-sin-a-mon
 sit-on-it / have-the-fit / let-it-slip
 indebted to fashionable fibs tailored to fit fantastic forgeries
 easy-dreamy-ice-creamy lies passed from generation to gen-o-sin-
 er-ation
 I ran the plank and STOPPED
 classic case of a basket case
 boredom belies brilliance
 tinny din of dissonance eclipses sentience
 you envy life or you envy death there is no in-between until
 car-sin-on-sin / marred chin to gin / sip-on-him
 chops n chaps to pay rent / chew-it-up
 mars kid out den / little hen
 choking smoke
 car-sin-o-gen
 do you sleep at all kid?

-Savannah Melcher

Dream Above Woodward Avenue

I wander carpeted hallways with some serious protection.
 I can identify them, the one's who've lost their souls.
 I see them begin to vanish. I have to make them vanish
 completely.

They swarm me. I levitate over their heads and zoom off.
 Fly into the foyer, down the spiral staircase,
 past the contortionists, the polished gargoyles,
 and escape out onto the city street.

The sidewalk is empty, did they all disappear?
 The windows are sheets of duct-taped plastic Kroger bags
 hands reach out from sewers at my ankles,
 hands reach out from shadowed door frames.
 They do pull me in.

White tile locker room. Water-drip faucet shower stalls
 more wet plastic bags crumpled in piles in the corner,
 what is that red on them? Near white wet towels
 Demon apparition lift me up against the wall.
 I reach my hands above them and by the seem, unravel

Jump through the brick wall. I am beside myself
 I hover between worlds

-Leslie Schott

Mother Earth's Children

Here, at a clearing in this great American wood, we children dip our fingers into the womb of Mother Earth, and then, without hesitation, gesture, or glance, in the way our country's native peoples used to do in preparation for a spiritual dance, we smear Her menstrual blood across our faces and fall into a trance.

A Universe above us,
An Ocean below us,
Oh Lord! in your infinite wisdom,
Where will you throw us?

No longer are we boy and girl, man and woman, male and female.
No longer do we have arms for embracing and legs for striding.
No longer are we human.

We are the shy stones softly sitting beside the river where we watch and listen, untouched, unharmed, until we are plucked from our perches and hurled across the water by human hands—strong enough to move us, but not enough to drown us—so we skip; our bellies wet, our backs dry in the sun, until we reach the other side where we sit softly again to watch and listen.

We are the deceived honeybees somehow being shunted from the world—so tortured by proximity and crippled with fear and insecurity that we can't fly now (are our wings no good?)—but through the window we can see that where we need to go, is right in front of us; so keep flapping forward we must that we might eventually find the westward bound breeze that will set us free.

We are the true troubadours singing our songs—our stories— to the hummingbirds in the trees or to the leaves of the trees—to anyone around or to no one at all—but all around us the music keeps playing, so we keep on singing along—singing and shouting that we are here and here we are!

-Jeff Garland

A Street in Chicago II

Fullerton, you are my crooked uncle.
Half constipated by construction,
traffic and cripples

Your blacktop is a worn down tan.
A reflection (not of sunlight)
but the millions of wheels that turn
on your ugly face

Some horns honk in unison.
Green traffic lights slow down
to yellow, then red. Those
tyrannical fire hydrants laugh -
decide who lives and dies

But there has never been a death
on Fullerton Avenue. Not a robbery,
murder, heart attack or stroke.

Only the burning rash of the traffic jam,
cigarette smoke pouring out of windows,
drunk bus drivers weaving.

Going somewhere, anywhere but here.

-Elia Hohausen-Thatcher

Finally

if the wind
pulled yr petals
and
the wings
god made of wax finally
melt
and yr soul feels the
sand, and the soil
in yr fingernails
becomes
darker than the ocean
while the moon
hides behind a cloud—
clarity, curiosity,
and cities
where art bleeds
and we walk 4 miles
to desolation train yard
hearts loving in frames
minds made chained
then broken.
a poet made in the
land of silence
finally feels the
freedom of being

-Eleanor Oster

Patent Leather

Porcelain foot hole beyond the fruit trees
I think of peaches
from pale skin
She found near the alley behind the house
Peaches
They live here
On the balls of her feet
Early in the morning when she walks
Peaches

-Julia Callis

Imperial Hands

We have exhausted the black magic of Manifest Destiny
The underlying motivation of Empire reveals itself
Amerika: land of the thief and the home of the slave
The Marines are advertised like Doritos

Capitalism presents the opportunity for
Repression, suppression, oppression
Learn this lesson: you're a commodity
Profits precede people

It's on days like these; I wake up and tell myself
"I don't have to live underneath this behemoth, I can choose a
different way."

I open my eyes and see TV screens, smart phones, and ipads
Technology: Empire's greatest foot soldier

Is it possible to live humanly in this ever-increasing hostility?
With Buddha, Jesus, or Mohammed there is a chance
But practice prudence
For nothing is left untouched by Imperial hands

-Phillip Dage

einsame nacht

your white forehead split open - oh and if only
it was a long and steep fall
and the hard ground would greet me
it broke me i did not break it

where is your Blond Hair
the telephone has melted
and drips between the cracks in my fingers
 i will catch you
 i will find you again
 some day

-Claire Cirocco

Drama

Lady,
I like the way that you are seasoned,
But all the drama that you've been bringing,
Has really,
Been making,
Your flavor be weakened.

-Maura Gibbons

How to Dig Up

I recovered

From

Burnt bridges,

Split personalities,

From "hi my name is Jack"

To "hello, I'm John, let's talk about Windows"

And "I got you next week, I'm good for it"

Quarter life crisis

featuring

No power there

No heat after

No water here

now.

I recovered from your good news

I recovered

From

Grave-yard-half-mile-walks to stamping

70-hour-weeks-my-check-missing-hours

Being written off by strangers

Being written off by loved ones

Being written on and washing the x

Off

my-hand-in-the-cafe-bath-run-some-water-through-my-hair-keep-

that-corporate-pay-check.

For her

And him

Because that is

what your job is

I recovered from youth

I recovered

from albums,

From text messages,

From love letters,

from voice mails,

from cover letters,

all with no response
I recovered from not being qualified
"We are looking for a different kind of you"
I recovered from being a bitch about my problems
I recovered FROM paper cuts
I recovered AND learned a lot
I'm recovering from recovery
That's life
That's life
How to dig up.

-Jack Droze

Suspenders

Pants and socks

There's the pepper,

Morning too,

It's Saturday in kisses

Hold up,

The trees are talking

When the wind

Rustles their feathers

There's the salt

But I'm bitter enough

So I prefer sugar and suspenders

to hold me high

It's Monday in pickles

Lingering on forever,

A lecture with no point

I'd rather enjoy the daisies in the sun

and point outwards

to you, with your nose in a book

and say, energetically,

Hello!

-Ted James

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