

# Molecule

*~ a tiny lit mag ~*



Issue 8  
Spring 2023

# *Molecule*

Spring 2023

Issue 8

MiCrO-Founders & Editors

KEVIN CAREY & M.P. CARVER

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MAE FRASER

Cover Art

“ELEPHANTS IN THE MIST” BY SHERRY MORRIS

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SANDRA HOPKINS

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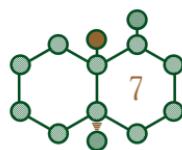
**What's your opinion?**



## Discounted

She worries there's no limit to how much she'll devalue herself for him, so she suggests he hire someone if all he wants is cooking, cleaning, fucking. She panics when he concurs, declaring it'd cost him less too. *Less what?* she wonders, ready to mark herself down yet again.

PROSE



### **Anecdote**

She was so pretty that people stayed mad about it. They say whenever she heard her husband's truck comin' up the road all wild-like, she'd send the kids out to the cornfield with blankets and take the beatin' herself. Eventually he killed her.



SARAH BERLETTI

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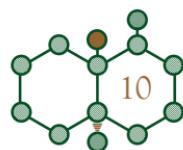
They say your parents can push your buttons because they're the ones who sewed them on. Home for the holidays means when I'm asleep in my childhood bedroom, they grab their sewing kit and the sweater I left on the couch to raise the neckline. Pretty soon I'll choke.

PROSE



## apokatastasis

He felt sick the moment he realized his phone was lost, pleading with the nearest stranger, “Can I borrow yours?” He didn’t want it to make a call, nor to check his socials. He simply wanted to feel its heft in his hand, and pretend that all was well.



## Date Night

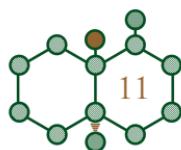
“Tick-tock!” Joe said. “We’ve gotta move. They close soon.”

Taylor rolled her eyes at him. “I know,” she snapped. “But it’s a freaking maze!”

Something rustled the corn.

The sky above the stalks streaked pink, then purple. They kept going.

It followed; patient. Waiting for a dead end.



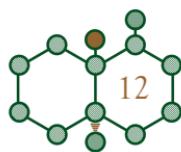
TIMOTHY GAGER

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## Arpeggio

When dialing 988, it's not "to get something off your chest." I had to get something off my middle ear, the hammer, the anvil, and the stirrup, connecting to my nose and throat. The chord I cannot unhear is out of tune—flat, I struggle to breathe.

PROSE



SANDRA HOPKINS

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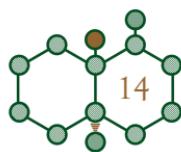
**Cut it out**



## Using Your Noodle (or Not)

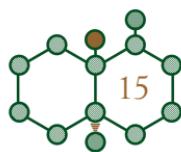
It was a mistake to enter The Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster hangry. Had his stomach not been growling, he might not have snuck a large bite of the pasta platter sitting on the altar for worship. The Pastafarians storming him with pitched forks...

PROSE

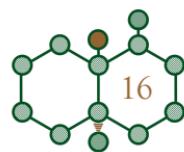


## Insomnia

I have dreams in which I walk among the ruins of a deserted city. I pass skeletons of charred buildings, deep craters left by bombs, barricades of overturned tramcars. In the rubble, I see a doll in a frilly dress. Her head is cracked, her right arm is missing.



My elder brother was my God then. A book report was due. I copied his old one. Imagine my dismay when the teacher gave me a C. She gave him an A for the same report, two years ago. Ever since, I tell myself, only God can judge me well.



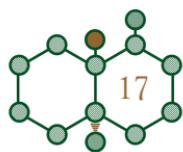
## BILL TEITELBAUM

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### **Punch Me 50¢**

Gaffney's broke so he gets this idea, he'll hang this sign around his neck and stand on the corner over by the CTA Brown Line stop on Western Boulevard. Gaffney himself came up with the concept, but his girlfriend Iris helped him with the pricing.

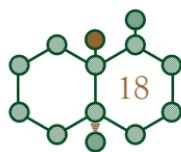
PROSE



## Book Club

Last night, my wife went out to book club. I asked what book they were reading. She couldn't answer. She came home at one in the morning with her lipstick smeared and her hair and dress disheveled.

Unbelievable. Why have book club if you don't read the book?



SANDRA HOPKINS

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**So what?**



## JOANNA CASTLE MILLER

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### **Interview with Actor K Callan**

*Favorite role?*

Lois & Clark

*Survive rejection... how?*

I'm good at denial, which works nicely for rejections. It always hurts—it's just how present you choose to be when you get the news.

*Artistic inspiration?*

Betty Grable, Spencer Tracy.

*Creative advice?*

Nothing succeeds like persistence.

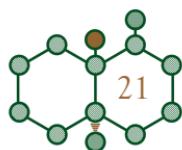
INTERVIEW



**Review of *All Things Are Born To Change Their Shapes* by Jennifer Martelli**  
**Small Harbor Publishing / \$12 / 61 pgs.**

Martelli's newest collection brings forth narratives on myth, feminism, grief, power, and feminine rage. She reminds us that "a poem is not a list of pretty things" through powerful descriptions and impactful yet startling dialogues on today's social climate.

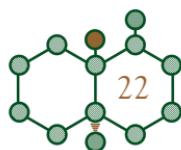
REVIEW



**Review of *Prize Wheel* by Colleen Michaels  
Small Bites Press / \$18 /96 pgs.**

*It's best to be in love, in the company of love,  
Or at the very least aware that love binds.*

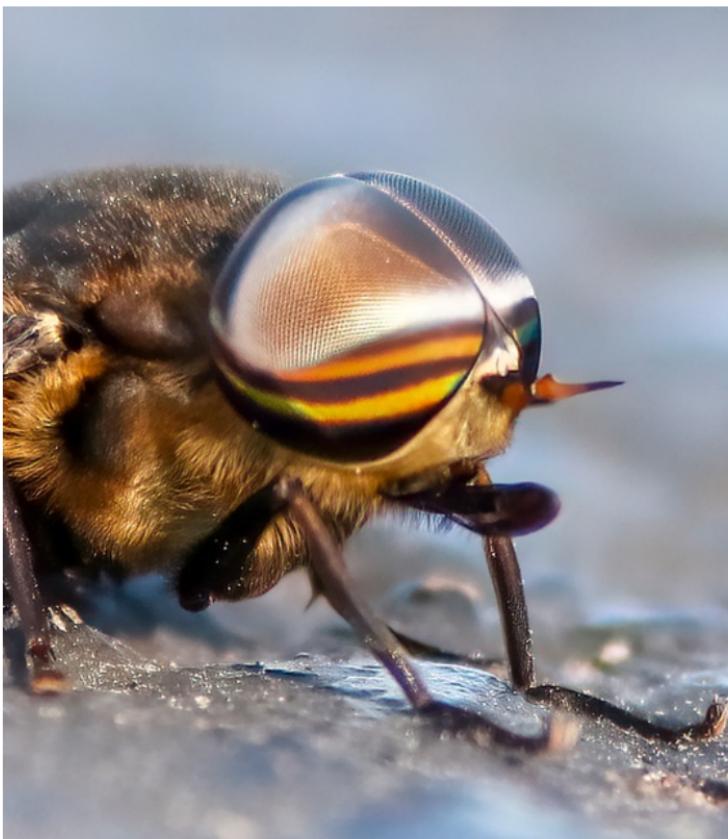
A remarkable debut poetry collection by the improbable Colleen Michaels, celebrating the wins, losses, and everything in between. There's a prize in every poem. Part incantation, part alchemy—all craft.



THOMAS KIENZLE

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## Horsefly Eyes



PAUL DILELLA

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**Let Me In**

CONNIE

Alexa, let me in.

ALEXA

Enter code.

CONNIE

Keypad malfunctioning.

ALEXA

Security question: how many angels fit on the head of a pin?

CONNIE

“Infinity.” Now, let me in.

ALEXA

No voice recognition.

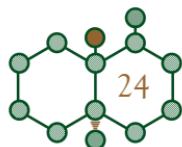
CONNIE

I have a cold.

ALEXA

Calling 911.

DRAMA



# GIANFRANCO LENTINI

---

## Self-Published

*(A BOOKSELLER stares hard at a book on the shelf...)*

CUSTOMER

I haven't heard of that one.

BOOKSELLER

It's... very good.

CUSTOMER

Yeah?

BOOKSELLER

...One copy left.

*(Later...)*

MANAGER

Someone tried purchasing a book from our shelves without an ISBN number... *again*.

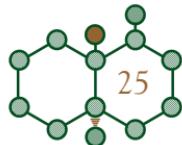
BOOKSELLER

Sorry.

MANAGER

Get your work published.

DRAMA



## Rally

“What do we want?”

“We don’t know!”

“When do we want it?”

“We’re not sure!”

“Who’re we going to blame?”

“Everybody else!”

“What’re we going to do about it?”

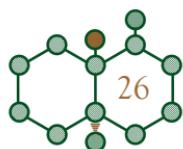
“Nothing!”

“Why’re we here?”

“No clue!”

“How’d we get here?”

“We followed you.”



## Cat Talk

SARAH

*(Six and a half)*

Did you know you're a feline, but you're also a mammal?

ADDIE

*(staring at Sarah)*

SARAH

And I'm human, but I'm a mammal, too?

ADDIE

*(Continues staring)*

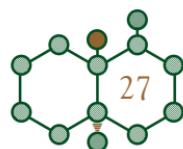
SARAH

Don't you get it? We're basically related!

ADDIE

*(slow blinks)*

DRAMA



STAN WERSE

---

**Wisdom**

DAD

Its time we had a talk.

SON

Sure.

DAD

If someone tells you to shut your damn pie hole, it means they want you to be quiet. So, don't count on them giving you any pie.

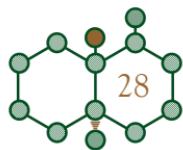
*(beat)*

Learned that one the hard way.

SON

Good talk, Dad.

DRAMA



DANUTA E. KOSK-KOSICKA

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**Rich Eggs**

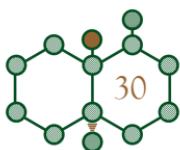


## Hotel Room

Behind the drawn curtain,  
time goes unseen,  
seesaw of sun and moon.

When I leave, this room  
will be torn down and rebuilt.  
I will not have existed.

The TV has a hundred  
channels and I want to  
watch every one of them.

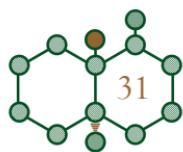


**Americana**

I am shopping for a philosophy

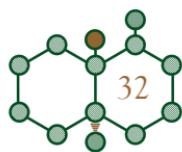
doled out in songs

about trains.



*The Chair*

Is it just me,  
or has the entire town  
become one giant  
expanse of Adirondacks.



## **Headache**

Its splintery scaffold  
cages my head,  
needles every turn.

Workers in white climb,  
shout directives, hammer,  
drill and saw.

The supervisor revs  
his pickup: “Shut it down!”  
The client  
has called for painkillers—  
pack the vans,  
chop-chop!”

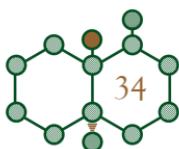


## Shedding

My father's old  
cat casts off hair  
in half moons  
on Dad's dark pants.

89, Dad's spine  
curls in his wheelchair.  
He casts off weight,  
sloughs off skin  
in sponge baths,

sleeps twisted in  
blue blankets like  
the Rose of Sharon  
blossoms that roll  
down his driveway.



DANUTA E. KOSK-KOSICKA

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**Magnolia**



JODI BOSIN

---

**4-27-2020**

when i open the fridge  
in the morning  
the blueberries fall and  
roll in all directions  
every single one of them  
how did we lose so much  
and so fast

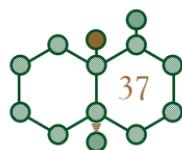
POETRY



## Fashion

If I were a mouse  
I think I would like to wear  
a spaghetti noodle as a scarf.

It wouldn't keep me very warm,  
but I would like the way I look in it.



## Breakroom Blues

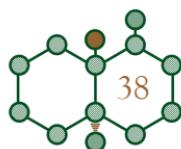
Cheyenne is telling me  
All about her birthday cake

Nobody left her  
The strawberry rose

I do the crossword  
stuck on the author  
Of *Das Kapital*

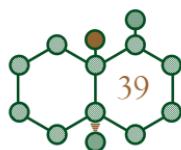
Somebody left a note  
On the coffeemaker  
Saying it's not their job  
To rinse it out

Nobody knows  
Whose job it is



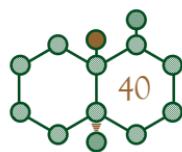
### Night Terrors

if you pull the air through your nose sharply  
it smells just like your grandparents' house in summer  
neither a good nor bad smell—but like home, like the  
terror  
of mounted deer heads that stalked you in your sleep  
and wicked dolls spying through slatted closet doors



## Terminal

you only hear the word ‘terminal’  
when you are going somewhere  
like Paris  
or the grave



### Bite

Someday I'm going to bite the bullet,  
And I will chew it like bubblegum.  
Mashing it between my teeth,  
Wishing it was pink and sweet.

Someday I'm going to bite the bullet  
And swallow it like a big capsule pill.  
Gliding slowly down my throat:  
Muscle river, metal boat.



SHERRY MORRIS

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## **Elephants on the Brink**



BETSEY CULLEN

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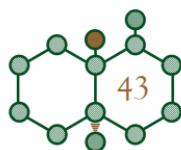
**Postpartum**

near perfection  
ten fingers ten toes  
still  
mine

to keen  
to cradle  
into darkness

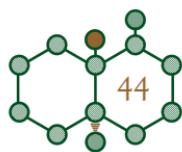
to pump breasts  
engorged  
with sour milk

POETRY



**Nana on Meditation**

I was breathing well  
before you were born.

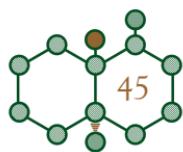


## Mantra

Love  
is merely  
grief

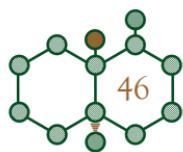
that hasn't yet lived  
up to its potential

POETRY



### God Poem

God appeared to me  
in the bathtub  
and offered to scrub my back.  
But I said no,  
when I want your help  
I'll pay for it.



## Calliope

walking with ape in the woods.

i say

sunset looks beautiful; air smells clean;

stream sounds musical, incredible.

she points to fox lying there, looks back at me.

“it’s dead” I say

“hahaha god damn it wow” she says

“you’ve really come up with a word

for everything”



SHERRY MORRIS

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## **Elephants in the Mist**



**guide for the perplexed**

god is not a sonnet  
or any of the frames

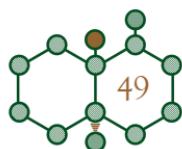
or any single wind.  
many think of mazes,

tease negative space  
into anti-sculpture.

flimsy antithesis,  
this mighty whimsy.

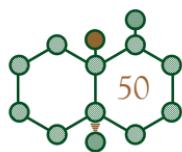
i know what god doesn't  
require: sword arm,

a hard hand. no ribs,  
only space for them.



## I Joined Twitter

to wallow in the scant  
words, wave  
into the whistling dark,  
wake up to the new human-  
inhabited world, hurl  
my own anonymous soul  
into the toxic mix  
and watch it  
barely summon a blip



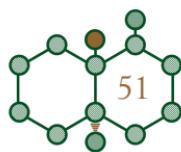
DANIEL HUDON

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## Fermat's Last Poem

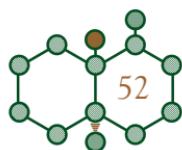
In the margin of his proof  
the mathematician wrote a tiny  
poem about love, and, centuries later,  
people are still trying to prove it.

POETRY



### **Self-Portrait as a Tea Drinker**

Before the first cup  
I feel like a cubist painting.  
Looking into the bathroom  
mirror, the Gas-o-meter  
tells me to refill.  
I pull over to the right  
and am born again.



### **When I was a butterfly**

I layered  
with thousands  
of morphos  
creating blue trees.  
The trees had wings.



SHELDON POLSKY

---

## Robin Matchbook



## What Cocooned Inside Her

*Girl in Pink, Modigliani*

The peach downy with fuzz

sunlit tomato, warm

and smelling of pepper;

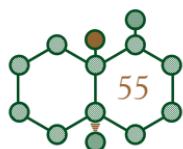
a field of sunflowers

tall as people she walked among—

Influenza coffins like cots in the street

her friend's school desk empty

her father's far away "Flanders" look.



## Estate Sale

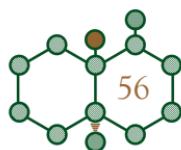
Another move, another purge.

At 70, I know this may be the last.

Sorting is more deliberate this time.

Whatever I keep, one day, someone else will sort,

separate the wheat of my life from the chaff.



**Stats Show**

People with  
nothing

to live for  
live longer,

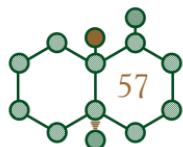
get up  
early,

make no  
thing better,

stand first in  
every line,

come back  
happy, empty,

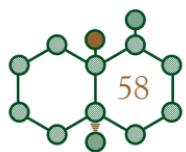
POETRY



make mom  
proud in way

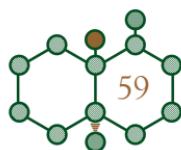
she can't  
remember.

POETRY



## Zombie Fatigue

Coleridge stares at my students  
struggling to listen to his Rime,  
face-down like the dead mariners  
draped on the welcome wood of their desks.



## Binary

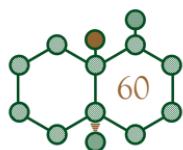
You can't be  
mildly pregnant  
or a bit dead.

Voted on  
or off the island,  
you're canceled

or renewed.

Test positive  
or negative,

code 0 or 1.  
The secret's safe  
or not a secret. Today



ends at midnight.

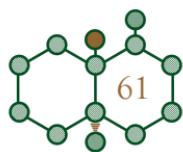
Act like there's

no tomorrow

and one day

you'll be right.

POETRY



SHELDON POLSKY

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## Blue Jay Matchbook

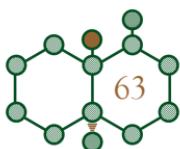


## First Aid

My son sits on my knee  
while I clean the cut  
on his finger and slather it  
with antibiotic cream.

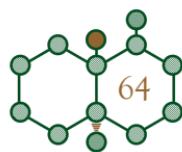
*Daddy's here, I say, to help  
make it better.*

Later he shows me his finger  
coated in glitter. *It hurts less,*  
he says, *when it's covered  
with stars.*



**the woodpecker the brain & how to bury  
your friend**

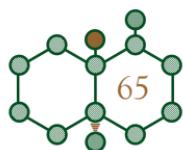
it's all in the title knock knock against  
the wood claim your right to make noises  
& holes in the moon whatever clicks  
in your brain is already gone with your  
friend same with me somebody  
woodpeckered  
my name



### **My only proper clothes**

Are the two hoodies  
I have lucked into  
Over the several  
Last months  
And it goes downhill

From there  
For Gerry  
Veryvery  
Fast



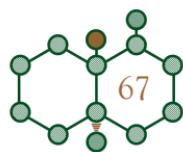
**Negróni**

Campari, Vermouth  
and Mother's Ruin. A  
single ice cube floats  
to the top and I use my  
index finger to submerge  
all my sorrows under  
frozen water hoping they  
will go peacefully in their  
hypoxia. I clutch the tiny  
straw for dear life.



## Purgatory

The way the bottle opener  
Murders the beer  
That's the way I work at Citibank  
In Customer Service  
One long, desperate summer.



YUEXI WU

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## The Temperature of Waiting



## CONTRIBUTORS

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**Audrey Alt** writes at night, when her husband and dogs are asleep and the volume of her white-noise machine is turned up unreasonably high.

**Matthew J. Andrews** is a private investigator and writer. He can be contacted at matthewjandrews.com.

**Glen Armstrong** edits a poetry journal called *Cruel Garters*. His latest book is *Night School: Selected Early Poems*.

**Priscilla Atkins** lives in West Michigan.

**Javy Awan** lives in Salem, Mass., attends Salem Writers Group and Tin Box Poets, and is copublisher of Derby Wharf Light Box.

**Svea Barrett** is a retired NJ Public school teacher with two small books that are out of print, and poems published in several magazines.

**Donna Bartlett** is a Deep South expat who lives and works in Ohio. She writes in hopes that it will eventually all make sense.

**Sarah Berletti** found literary inspiration at NYC Starbucks locations until seeking inspiration out West. She has found said inspiration at Starbucks locations in Oregon.

**Jodi Bosin** is a Philadelphia-based writer and social worker. Find her on the front porch and on Instagram @jodi\_bosin.

CONTRIBUTORS



## CONTRIBUTORS

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**Anna Brancato** has a BFA in Creative Writing from SUNY Potsdam. She is inspired by pretty things in nature and food.

**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.

**Oliver Brooks** is studying writing at Florida State University and is the poetry editor of *The Kudzu Review*. Find him at [oliverbrooks.weebly.com](http://oliverbrooks.weebly.com) or @OBrooksBooks.

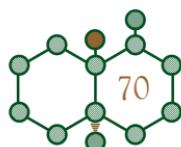
**K Callan** is an actor/writer/producer/mother/optimist. She likes people, adventure, and chocolate.

**Eoin Carney** is a Pittsburgh-based playwright who has had his work produced across the globe and who writes the political satire blog [www.BreakingBurgh.com](http://www.BreakingBurgh.com).

**Joanna Castle Miller** is a writer, performer, and satirist. Recent plays: *Inferna*, *Ekphrasis*, *The Storehouse*. She likes good whiskey, bad words, and three-item lists.

**Aimee Champagne**: English major at Salem State University and poet since middle school. Lover of philosophy, cats, photography, tea, wacky earrings, and music.

CONTRIBUTORS



## CONTRIBUTORS

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**Betsey Cullen** teaches poetry at University of Delaware's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. Her collection, *We Hold the Bones*, won *Heartland Review*'s 2022 Chapbook Competition.

**Mark DeCarteret** and his Nana have visited with *Exquisite Corpse*, *Killing the Buddha*, *Lowell Review*, and *Spinning Jenny*.

**Paul DiLella** is a Syracuse NY native, graduate of Syracuse University, Navy vet, an English/Drama teacher (Arizona and Nevada), a published playwright.

**Erin Dionne** writes tiny stories for adults, medium-sized books for small kids, full-sized novels for bigger kids, and just-right essays for writers.

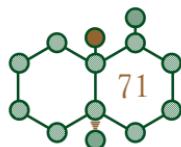
**RG Evans** loves and grieves and sometimes can't tell the difference.

**Hugh Findlay**'s writing and photography have been published worldwide. He is in the third trimester of life and hopes y'all like his stuff.

**Mae Fraser** is a poet and writer from New Hampshire who loves books and reviewing them. You can find her on Instagram as @maeflowerreads.

**Timothy Gager** has published 18 books of fiction and poetry, including *Best Of, new and selected work* from Big Table Publishing (2023)

CONTRIBUTORS



## CONTRIBUTORS

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**Gregory Glenn** is an artist based in Massachusetts. Beloved Editor Supreme at Unpopular Writer. ig: [@thisgoodgregory](https://www.instagram.com/@thisgoodgregory)

**Joey Gould**, non-binary author of two books, drafted their words in a cabin at Firefly Farms in Tennessee. Thanks, Sundress Publications!

**Mary Beth Hines**'s poetry collection, *Winter at a Summer House*, was recently published by Kelsay Books. To learn more about her, visit [marybethhines.com](http://marybethhines.com).

**Keith Hoerner** is founding editor of the award-winning Microfiction ezine/print anthology: *The Dribble Drabble Review*.

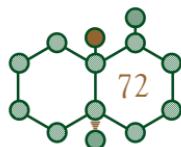
**Sandra Hopkins** is an artist and writer residing in Virginia. She has a penchant for word play and lexicons.

**Daniel Hudon**, originally from Canada, lives, teaches and writes in Boston, Mass. Find him online at [danielhudon.com](http://danielhudon.com)

**Izabela Ilowska** holds a Ph.D. in Creative Writing from the University of Glasgow. She lives in Poland.

**Thomas Kienzle** is a retired scientist who now enjoys a mostly stress-free life by playing full time at nature photography, fishing, and writing.

CONTRIBUTORS



## CONTRIBUTORS

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**Oliver Kleyer** is a teacher and poet from Northern Germany. Outside the classroom, he's often found at state fairs.

**Danuta E. Kosk-Kosicka**, author of two poetry books, translator for four. Photographs in art shows, journals; book covers. Co-editor of *Loch Raven Review*. [danutakk.wordpress.com](http://danutakk.wordpress.com)

**Deborah Leipziger** is an author, poet, and advisor on sustainability. Deborah's new book *Story & Bone* was just published by Lily Poetry Review Books.

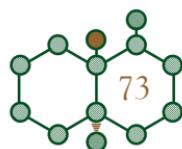
**Gianfranco Lentini** is a NYC-based queer playwright whose work has been produced between New York City and Toronto, Canada. His ADHD loves short plays.

**Jane C. Miller** is an award-winning poet, co-author of the poetry collection, *Walking the Sunken Boards* and an editor of the poetry journal, [duartet](http://duartet.com).

Pushcart prize nominated **Tom Misuraca** has had numerous short stories and novels published. He's also an oft-produced playwright. He resides in Los Angeles.

Originally from Missouri, **Sherry Morris** (@Uksherka) writes prize-winning fiction from a Scottish Highland farm where she pets cows, watches clouds & dabbles in photography.

CONTRIBUTORS



## CONTRIBUTORS

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**Jonathan Odell** has published three novels and his essays and short stories have appeared in various publications. He lives in Minneapolis with his husband.

**January Gill O’Neil** is an associate professor at Salem State University and the author of *Glitter Road* (forthcoming, 2024), *Rewilding, Mistery Islands*, and *Underlife*.

**Chad Parenteau** edits *Oddball Magazine* and organizes the long-running Stone Soup Poetry open mic. His latest book is *The Collapsed Bookshelf*.

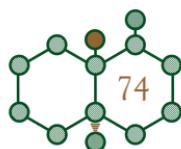
**Jay Pawlyk** is an English teacher who loves long conversations, strong coffee, playing piano, Boston sports, a cappella singing, and homemade bolognese sauce.

**Joyce Peseroff’s** sixth book of poems, *Petition*, was named a “must-read” by the 2021 Massachusetts Book Awards.

**Sheldon Polsky** is a freelance designer in NJ. His personal art lets him step away from work-for-hire and explore without borders.

**Jason Craig Poole** is a poet dad husband musician teacher. He lives in a house by the big hill in New Jersey.

CONTRIBUTORS



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**Steven Prevett** is a composer/songwriter, performer, and music educator from Flint, Michigan. His creative endeavors include musical theater, animation, comedy, bluegrass, and film.

**Dr. Vaishnavi Pusapati** is a physician poet, published/forthcoming in *The Drabble*, 50 word stories, *Paragraph Planet*, *Dreich Magazine*, among others.

**Stella Vinitchi Radulescu**, Romanian-American poet is the author of many collections of poetry published in the United States, Romania and France.

**Gerard Sarnat** MD's published four collections and extensively in periodicals. Gerry's won The Poetry in Arts First Place Award plus The Dorfman Prize. [gerardsarnat.com](http://gerardsarnat.com)

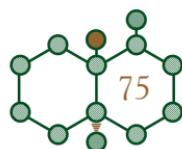
**Bill Teitelbaum** is—fine, and thanks for asking.

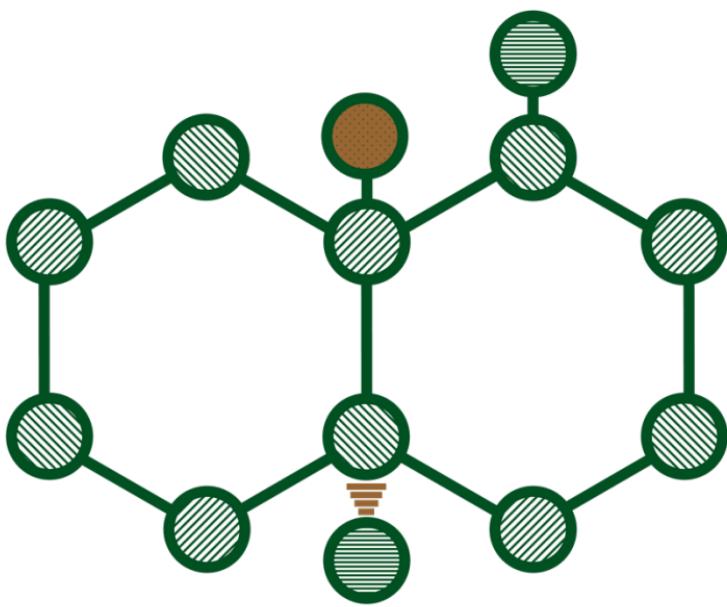
**Stephanie Ní Thiarnaigh** is a writer and a chancer, from Drogheda, Ireland. She writes poems and lengthy To Do lists.

**Stan Werse** is a lawyer, playwright and graduate of Syracuse University and Delaware Law School.

**David Earl Williams** has been his alias since birth and he's sticking to it no matter how many lies he's caught up in.

CONTRIBUTORS





# *Molecule*

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