

# THE TIGER MOTH REVIEW

## ISSUE 7





## THE TIGER MOTH REVIEW

*A biannual journal of art + literature that engages with nature, culture, the environment and ecology*

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**The Tiger Moth Review** is an eco-conscious journal based in Singapore that publishes art and literature engaging with the themes of nature, culture, the environment and ecology. The journal publishes primarily in English, but also accepts non-English work and their translated English counterparts. We are committed to creating a space for minority, marginalised and underrepresented voices in society.

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Cover image: *Mekong, The Mother of Rivers* © Ore Huiying

## ISSUE 7

Editor's Preface / 6

Tim Moder, Northern Wisconsin, USA

*Ameek* / 7

Preeth Ganapathy, Bengaluru, India

*Boat Safari* / 8

Bryan Joel Mariano, The Philippines

*Forest over limestone* / 9

Bryan Joel Mariano, The Philippines

*Urban natures* / 10

Christine Oberas Aurelio, Roxas City, Capiz, The Philippines-Hong Kong

*Have you seen?* / 14

Izzy Martens, Denver, Colorado, USA

*Giants* / 15

Kali Norris, New York City, USA

*The Broomway* / 20

*Delirium on the Gulf* / 21

Claire Champommier, Portland, Oregon, USA

*Living roots* / 22

Natalie Foo Mei-Yi, Singapore

*Kranji* / 23

Chrystal Ho, Singapore

*Spring Festival* / 24

*On mandarins* / 25

Brittany Nohra, Ireland-USA-Lebanon

*Habitat Loss* / 27

*Wild Lebanese Iris* / 28

Vanessa Hewson, Victoria, Australia

*Wildness, still alive* / 29

Justin Groppuso-Cook, Detroit, Michigan, USA  
*No Need for Artificial Light* / 30  
*Terrestrial Meditation* / 31

Zarina Muhammad and Zachary Chan, Singapore  
*<earth, land, sky and sea as palimpsest>* / 32

Matthew Moniz, Hattiesburg, Mississippi, USA  
*Too-Late Protection Charm* / 40

Lauren Hyunseo Cho, Seoul, South Korea  
*Desecrated Solace* / 41

Cheng Tim Tim, Hong Kong  
*Lantau (Rotten Head)* / 42

Patricia Davis-Muffett, Rockville, Maryland, USA  
*How to Dive with Sharks* / 45

Aaron Magloire, Queens, New York City, USA  
*Half Past Loon* / 47  
*Travelogue: Rabat* / 48  
*Monument* / 50

Ore Huiying, Singapore  
*Mekong, The Mother of Rivers* / 51

Eric Abalajon, Iloilo, The Philippines  
*Garbage Crossing* / 60  
*East of Bacolod* / 61

Paula Aamli, London, UK  
*Consider the Foxglove* / 63

Merie Kirby, Grand Forks, North Dakota, USA  
*Backyard Quartet* / 65  
*Let the record show* / 67

Tara Menon, India-USA  
*The Running Bamboo Trees Talk Back* / 68  
*Memory* / 69

Art Ó Súilleabháin, Galway, Ireland  
*Overheard on Lough Corrib (English translation) / 70*  
*Cloiste faoi rún ar an gCoirib (Gaeilge) / 71*

Shilpa Dikshit Thapliyal, Singapore  
*The Time the Skies Speak to Me / 72*

Kristine Ventura, Jones, Isabela, The Philippines  
*How Lucky I Am / 73*

Andrew Vogel, rural eastern Pennsylvania, USA  
*July / 74*

DH Jenkins, Wanaka, New Zealand  
*As below, so above / 75*

Contributors / 76

## Editor's Preface

It has not been easy putting together this issue. On the personal front, it has been an emotionally draining past three months since we received the diagnosis that our beloved dog has a form of bladder cancer that is inoperable. Ealga came into our lives on 14 January 2017, and since then, she has taught me what no human has been able to teach me, just by being who she is. Those of you who have (had) the privilege of bonding with an animal might be able to understand what I'm referring to. And so when we received this devastating news in October, it came as a huge blow. I was in the thick of end-year marking and found it hard to concentrate, and then it was one literary event after another. My debut poetry book [\*Red Earth\*](#) was launched and soon after, [\*Making Kin: Ecofeminist Essays from Singapore\*](#). The book launches and various panels that I was involved in soon led to a wave of emotional fatigue. It was bittersweet for me too: How could I truly celebrate on the back of Ealga's condition?

I found myself wanting to focus my attention inwards and at home: caring for Ealga and myself, which involved grounding practices, meditation and finding balance. Editing for *The Tiger Moth Review* took a backseat and I even contemplated putting this issue on hold. I found myself wondering what to write for the Editor's Preface, and even toyed with the idea of scrapping the preface altogether (after all, how many people even read the preface?). Before sitting down to write this, I had to spend some time meditating to ground myself and find the words for this issue.

What used to sustain and nourish me spiritually now seemed like a burden to bear. Instead, I found myself desiring solitude and reclusion. When you live with a loved one who has cancer, you begin to see things with a renewed perspective. What's really important starts to come into focus, and everything else becomes a blurry haze.

So, it has not been easy editing this issue. But, like everything else, I am finding in me the strength and courage and power to continue the work. I am finding in me the strength and courage and power to focus on life against the backdrop of death. A while back, I was drawn to a Himalayan yak bone prayer mala. I read that the yak is a power animal that you can call on in times of scarcity, when your resources, energy and strength have dwindled and you need additional support. I have been calling on yak to support me. In being supported, I have been able to persevere with the work that is putting Issue 7 out into the world in spite of my grief.

Issue 7 is incidentally one of our more spiritual issues. Nature and earth are revered as Spirit, Source and sustenance. We are guided by turtle over "ancient paths" with **Tim Moder**, we meditate over the river with **Preeth Ganapathy**. We bear witness, we partake in rituals. We cast too-late protection charms. We speak in ancient tongues. We "enter the water" in spite of our fear of diving with sharks, "still [our] body", "surrender to surge" with **Patricia Davis-Muffett**. We observe the suffering and strength of women and the Mekong in **Ore Huying's** work, we conjure and imagine and remember ghosts and familiars. We are the loons in **Aaron Magloire's** poem, fucking and paying our bills. And we are the wild pig, dead after death, reborn in death; because we too are spirit, we "walk into the world/again, again, again."

*Esther Vincent Xueming*

**The Tiger Moth Review**

## Ameek

Tim Moder

What calls the painted turtle calls me. I watch her  
nose into the slow road, over hogbacks  
on the Lake Ameek trail. I see her drag her lethargic shell  
to soft sand where she buries three eggs.

Later that day two giant snapping turtles  
with angry eyes approach me without hesitation,  
stiff necks taut in a slow motion charge.  
They are covered in dusty green tiles.

Two False Map Turtles follow ancient paths,  
their backs a living globe, wet with scent and slime,  
they take all day to move back and forth  
across the unmarked way.

I may find a hazelnut bush if the logging trucks  
missed any, having grated both the sides  
and the surface of this remote country road  
in the course of their relentless trek across this land.

## **Boat Safari**

Preeth Ganapathy

The long endless road—  
unpeopled, holds the weight of the sky  
and the scent of the mountains.

Ponds emerge unexpectedly on the sides,  
green and brown,  
turn blue, tinged with the colour of dawn.

The temple glows  
in the calm light of its reflection  
on the backwaters.

The clouds smoke up in the mist,  
the music of crickets  
ring through half-formed dreams.

The gossip of ten ashy woodswallows  
settles on the wingspan of silence.

The lake is sprinkled  
with barren leafless trees—  
their tips housing families  
of Indian cormorants  
that spread out their black feathers  
under a new-born sun.

The conversations of a lonely hill mynah  
echo through the islands,  
the jungle,  
the water,  
the wind.

The ripples peter out  
and calm settles on the waters  
like mist thawing  
in tune with the slow-paced music  
of the crocodile bark tree.



## **Forest over limestone**

Bryan Joel Mariano

Along the trails,  
I found your sacred ground.  
Beneath the calcite rocks there lies  
    algae on the surface of calm emerald waters,  
forming like a god-trick map of a forest cover.  
Contiguous yet continuously rearranged  
    by the movement of cold winds.

An hour of trek,  
of treading through the rocky path  
    does not seem enough  
to make sense of a billion years of your submergence.

Our encounter mimics the precarious sprouting  
    of plants in interstitial spaces.  
Unexpected and weathered.  
We do not mind the disturbances  
    for they amplify our desire for survival.

## **Urban natures**

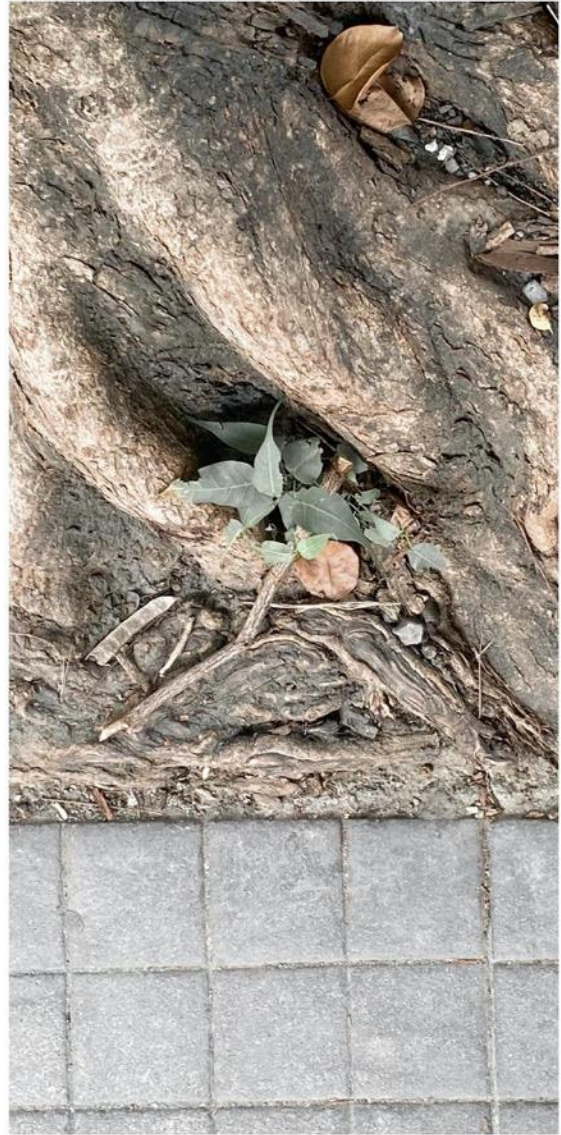
Bryan Joel Mariano

Plants will continue to thrive, but only if we let them. They resist and adapt because of external forces, including those that are exerted by humans. City life attests to constant renegotiations of ecological relationships. Depending on where and how we look at it — a bird's or worm's eye view, on a facade of brutalist architecture or through a glass wall, closer or farther — there will always be a connection through the art of noticing, where we will come to realize the multifarious ways that boundaries, rather than being discrete lines, become porous and transversal. In the time of the pandemic, we can learn from nature in cities as they continue to thrive and reclaim themselves. We can reflect on the forces that we humans exert to assert our desires to be in place. As Italo Calvino writes, “cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else”. The collective desires and fears, both of humans and plants, are manifested in this series of diptychs. *Urban natures* intends to capture a representation of different meshworks of everyday life and the relentless desire of thriving in times of crisis.



*Desire to escape and grow*  
© Bryan Joel Mariano





*On remnants and boundaries*  
© Bryan Joel Mariano





*Cemented territorialities*  
© Bryan Joel Mariano

## **Have you seen?**

Christine Oberas Aurelio

Have you seen?  
The vivacity in between  
Clear blue sky so deep  
And birds that peep  
Glorious sun that starts the day  
Flowers along the way  
The rhythm of the sea so sweet  
The cool wind to beat  
Mountains have grace  
Fresh air on your face

Stars twinkling in the quiet night  
And moon that glows so bright  
Trees all around  
Rainfall on the ground  
Animal life who all have their tribe  
People should imbibe  
Mother earth is so graceful  
God's creation is truly wonderful  
Life is so beautiful  
Earth has its charm  
Keep it safe and do not harm

Have you seen?  
Cities hit by floods  
Humans are crying in the form of blood  
Forests hit by fire  
Storms are getting higher  
Let's stay away from trouble  
Families scream and tremble  
Everyone should cooperate  
Before it's too late  
Let the children run and play in rich land  
The future of the world is in our hands

## Giants

Izzy Martens

I stand in my underwear in the forest and I inhale deeply, stretching my arms in the morning sun. The air smells like pine sap and the 100 degree day ahead. Weeks ago, I stood in a forest similar to this one, a familiar scene behind me: our minivan parked with the doors open to let in the breeze, the sheets of the bed we built poking into view, a half-full bag of coffee on the blue table, Kyle drawing in one of our camp chairs.

The difference between this forest and that one, is this forest still appears mostly whole. We're surrounded by bushy green trees and fallen logs with moss creeping a slow course up their bark. This forest hasn't yet experienced fire. Or, if it has, it was so long ago that I can no longer see the signs.

---

A drought assumes that an abnormality is occurring. That there is something that should be happening that is no longer happening. We say it's a "drought year" when the rainfall is lower than average. But we also assume that next year, perhaps, we will get more rain than usual and the average will balance again. The word "drought" relies on the word "usual" and its cousin "unusual".

We also assume that a drought will end. But when do we admit that what we are perceiving as "unusual" is actually a new reality? Year after year, less and less water.

When do we admit that we are no longer in a drought, but a desert?

---

The forest from weeks ago was blackened. With scorched earth and burnt orange pine needles. The fire left trees standing, but standing as dark black ghosts, ashy reminders of what they once were. That forest was still hospitable. Still possible to drive through, still possible to sleep in for a night. Different, haunting, but still there.

On this new morning, I wonder, sleepily, how long it will be until the forest I'm currently standing in burns. I wonder, as I feel the sun work up to a boiling point, if the heat wave we are experiencing were to be paired with a lightning strike, how quickly I'd be able to make it out. I'm 45 minutes from the nearest paved road, an hour from any cell phone service.

I yawn, and with half my mind I wonder if I could, indeed, make it out at all.

---

On the surface, Giant Sequoias, the largest trees on earth, are fire resistant. Their sap contains tannic acid, a chemical we now use in fire extinguishers. The Giant Sequoias shield

themselves from fire and yet they need it to propagate. In the flames, heat forces seeds to pop out of the waxy cones that have dropped to the earth.

Of the thousands of seeds that a Giant Sequoia releases, only one in a billion will survive to become a sapling. The saplings that survive sprout from the ashes of a burned forest.

—

Kyle and I run over something in the road. We don't notice the problem at first, but after a few miles we hear our minivan groaning as it tries to chug up a mountain pass.

We pull off the highway and open the hood of the car. We forgot to bring the metal pole that props the hood open, so I stand and hold the hood while Kyle peers inside. It's a fruitless effort, neither of us knows what we're looking for.

"Nothing is smoking," I say and give him a shrug.

No smoke, no fire.

We drive on.

—

We're visiting my friend Casey in her San Franciscan apartment. There's a large, three-paned window that frames the skyline of the Bay Bridge. We are standing, sipping a cocktail made with purple gin and edible glitter, looking out at the city below and the water just beyond.

"Last summer the sky was red for a full day," Casey tells me. "It was cold, too. Like the sun didn't come out at all."

Later in the evening, four of us sit at her small, glass kitchen table, sparkling water with fresh lemon and cold white wine in our glasses. There are dirty plates in front of us and we laugh as we brainstorm.

"What about Montana?" I propose.

"Montana?" Casey says with a skeptical tone, standing to clear the plates.

"If the temperatures are getting hotter then maybe Montana's climate will become similar to what Colorado's used to be?" I say, doubting my own statement.

We're talking about where to start our compound. A place where we can escape from society. Where we can raise our future families and share the ever-weightier reality of adulthood. But really, we're talking about where we can buy land that would be relatively safe from the effects of climate change. We're half-joking, but the conversation is underlined by a dark fear.



“I’ve heard the Great Lakes are supposed to be the best area to move,” we hear a week later as we bathe in a natural spring at the base of the Eastern Sierras. This statement comes from a couple similar in age to us and fellow van dwellers.

“The Great Lakes have water,” Kyle agrees.

In Oregon, a few weeks later, we chat with my cousin’s girlfriend at a Mexican restaurant.

“The Pacific Northwest is supposed to be relatively safe,” my cousin’s girlfriend says, picking at her fried tofu tacos. “California will become mostly desert and the Pacific Northwest will become what California’s climate once was.”

I make a mental note to text my friends and propose Oregon as an option for our compound.

—

In the forest, they name the largest Sequoias after what sounds to me like war heroes and old white men: General Sherman, General Grant, and the third largest tree – The President.

The President, a tree that is 3,240 years old, has 2 billion leaves.

Less than a hundred years ago, the global population was 2 billion, today our population is 7.9 billion.

—

An article’s headline reads: “With low water levels, Lake Shasta residents marvel at previously submerged relics.” The article shows a mangled and rusted iron bridge protruding from the deep blue surface of the lake. When Kyle and I drive by the lake, I don’t see the iron statue, but I see red rings circling the cliff sides feet above the water – rings representing past memories and cooler days.

On the lake’s shore, I watch a family back their speed boat into the water. Their young daughters are wearing shirts that proclaim our country as the greatest country, a notion I’ve found myself questioning in adulthood. On the water, I watch them laugh with one another and gaze out at the volcanic mountain range. I can hear the hiss of cans opening and the soft blare of country music. Later, in the bathroom, I’ll hear the woman say: “I just love it out here.”

As the family packs up to go, the girls sunburned and tiredly looking at their phones, I’ll watch the man crush his can and toss it into the bushes, before starting his engine with a rev and driving away.

—

Much like the Giant Pandas, the Giant Sequoias seem stubbornly against helping their own species. Giant Sequoias will only live in a certain climate, between 4,000 and 8,000 feet in elevation and only on the western side of California's Sierra Nevada Mountain Range.

As the climate warms, scientists predict the Sequoias' viable growing area will continue to shrink.

For now, the leading cause of death in Giant Sequoias is toppling. The leading cause of death in elderly people is the same.

—

The mechanic gives Kyle and I a repair quote for \$8,000. The van itself isn't worth half that.

"We're in a bit of a bind," I say to him, "We're a few thousand miles from home, we really don't have that kind of money to spend, but we need to keep moving."

The mechanic tells us the sound we're hearing is coming from our exhaust.

"It's not a safety issue," the mechanic explains. "But it does make you a nasty polluter." He says this with a laugh.

Kyle and I resolve to fix the issue at the midpoint of our trip, once we get out of California, where the work would be cheaper.

I scroll through news articles as we drive, trying not to spiral into worry with each new headline. Meanwhile, the van chugs on. We drown out the noise from the exhaust with loud music, but the smell is harder to avoid.

—

Giant Sequoias can still burn. In 2020, the Castle Fire burned 30% of the Sequoia trees it touched. It's estimated that thousands of trees were destroyed.

In our van, we drive by a Sequoia. The trunk is so big that it takes up the whole view of my front window.

I feel my breath catch. I've never seen a giant before.

—

That blackened forest comes to my mind during random moments on the road. What was startling to me about it was not the destruction, but the life that still persisted.

I find myself imagining the stories I will tell one day, seated around the dinner table, with a family of my own. I'll tell tiny faces about mom and dad's life on the road. They'll look at pictures and marvel at just how blue and green and vibrant it all was.

On our family camping trips we go into the forest, with its black trees and orange pine needles. The kids play among the scorched rocks and dig through ash, exclaiming with glee when they find a pair of old sunglasses, the lenses melted and warped by the flames.

**Two poems** by Kali Norris

**The Broomway**

The best that can be said for the decade is we survived it:  
marble floors and metal pins, knife turn on a century we're wasting.  
The ground used to outlive us, and now  
we live a thousand lifetimes in one.  
The ocean will have us back.  
Our ancestors walked the floodplains of the english channel.  
I love anything that's sinking,  
and time moves too quickly now.

## **Delirium on the Gulf**

Kali Norris

That world was a dream:  
lake or doorway,  
all green and orchid pink, maypole ribbon,  
enthroned on an altar to rain.  
There were good things even in the grave,  
always something to be grateful for,  
always something sweet as mangoes waiting on the doorstep.  
I think a quiet life would be better.  
The loudest thing the thunder over the sea.  
There are plants with no root systems.  
None of us were born here, but  
some deities belong to the land.  
To wake with the sun,  
it must rise every day of the year.

## **Living roots**

Claire Champommier

I felt where I have been before while visiting  
my family in that small town that shaped my spine  
like those manipulated trees

made into bridges. Do they wish for new beginnings?  
I do, not for my faults, but so I could know  
where to be and where not to be

when my body's clock decided it was time to replace  
my young parts. Could you believe I was here?  
Do we say we know the bent trees don't feel

so we can cross rivers? Could I accept I am a light?  
Some days, I don't want to hear it.  
My leaves take it in either way.

I just want to feel it. I have been shaped  
over a river, grown to love the movement  
of rebirth like the freeway bridge by my home.

Rivers hold light differently. See it on its surface.  
I ask if they dug its course too. Oh girl,  
what keeps your chin up? Your branches?

Dear bent tree, I know my roots too.  
I am the same converted light even when I am transported,  
even when the soil is a void—

I reach past my fingertips and have hope  
for a rainbow to remind me  
how brilliantly we can bend light.

## Kranji

Natalie Foo Mei-Yi

*dusk, february 2021*

*after “Kranji woodlands cleared by mistake: How it happened”, The Straits Times, 23 Feb  
2021*

Beware the vast field,  
its shield of command,  
the clearing that flanks  
a green path for ghosts.

*dawn, october 2021*

Kranji lives in an alternate dimension. Which is to say I look at the wall in my room sometimes and see vines snaking against cracking paint, thin nodes climbing picture frames, springing leaves. Once in my kitchen, I heard the squeak and scamper of squirrels in the cupboards but, when I opened them, they were gone. Twice, a small green snake from that other-universed woodland found its way to my front porch. The first time it happened, I thought nothing of it. The second time though, I knew. I wonder each time it happens if our continuum of life will intersect and if I'll stub my toes on plump lichen-slick roots again and stumble, palm on bark. My mother used to talk about spirits wandering among us, drifting in the overlap of realms, leaving traces we can hear, smell and see. I think if I close my ears, nose and eyes tightly enough, I may one day neither remember nor imagine it.

## Two poems by Chrystal Ho

### Spring Festival

The way spring arrives in a bed of snow: a first blade of grass. Where the rains fall year round instead, we nudge the pussy willow into a premature blooming. Despite the number of catkins I've witnessed split, I've yet to discover the true distance between the morning the first fault line appears on the shell around a catkin, to the hour the silken bud breaks free. How each shell, unlike the matte brown skin of a shelled peanut, falls cleanly away without disintegrating into powdery flecks, to form a perfect case that fits snugly back onto the buds, cloche hats made to measure.

Of the fistful of catkins I've deshelled, I've beheaded just three. The first time I petted a stray cat, its fur was coarser than a catkin's. It takes days to persuade a cat to let you sink your fingers down to the firm resistance of its body. The elusive blink. Warm skin. *That gentle pinch*. Hours after the buds elongate into their bristlier selves, the branches will be upended from the tall painted vase. Tossed into the bin before the pollen scatters and interferes with the cleaning in just a matter of days, though a stray grain of golden pollen might just cling to the vase's lip —

sticking out  
the mouth of a rubbish chute:  
green blade, hint of vein.



## On mandarins

Chrystal Ho

1. Each year there seems to be a distinct explanation for why the mandarins are sour. The incessant rains, or the frost that cuts through the orchards after a strangely warm winter.
2. Of my childhood: misshapen, still-cold mandarin peels, folded over with the waxen side out. My father, brushing the peel against my eyebrows with a light but firm hand.
3. To pick a box of mandarins, turn the fruit out and inspect each one for the dimples, pockmarked faces; no open wounds, minimal dark scars. When purchasing a box of mandarins, my father unwraps the pink paper that encases every fruit, before holding each one up to the dim fluorescent light. After requesting to switch out a few, he repacks the rest in a gradient of ripening color.
4. The season of mandarins imported from Jeju Island: always succulent.
5. If the mandarins are dried out, they say it has something to do with the lunar leap year. How the lunar calendar, charting how the moon waxes and wanes, no longer necessarily predicts when the mandarins should be harvested.
6. Those pruned mandarin trees that come up to just past the height of my knees, flanking doorways and lift lobbies, each one more orange than green, with that red satin bow tied around each pot, ends neatly tucked; alternatively, curled, then trimmed.
7. How does one induce a tree to grow so heavily laden with fruit that ripens in sync?
8. Perhaps one might be tempted to say that in her daily push and pull with the waves, the moon might have miscalculated the first day of spring, except for the leeks and the chinese cabbage and the rabbitfish and how the spinach, adapted to withstand the *freeze, thaw, then freeze again* of winter, continues to be at its very sweetest.
9. To my father I give thanks for my eyebrows. To the mandarins, their unruliness and abundance.

10. The way I've learnt to groom my eyebrows: pluck and trim. For a mandarin tree bred for prosperity, a pair of shears: cut, clip. In the absence of available technology to dry out a mandarin and still preserve the freshness of its original state, one might treat each fruit with some concoction of chemicals, before using wires to attach them onto the branches.
11. *The way to eat a box of fruit deliciously from the start to the end is to eat whatever looks the most delicious first. If you pick one that looks most delicious from what's left in the box, you will be picking the most delicious fruits until you finish them all.*
12. As for the tree with the ripened fruit that no one eats? Amidst the pristine leaves: a forgotten mandarin, still green.

**Two poems** by Brittany Nohra

**Habitat Loss**

I want to know  
where the wild  
poppies have gone.

Pepper scented  
Cyclamen

and purple irises  
with metallic petals

dark as the ruby  
glinting in Astarte's navel.

Lebanese Violet  
as I dreamt it

was a veil of petals  
in the hair

of your pilgrims.

I stand in what's left  
1. scrub  
2. clefts of ruins  
3. barest earth.

## **Wild Lebanese Iris**

Brittany Nohra

Tissue paper skin  
and violet origami heads  
coaxed open by sunset

their powdery veins  
dust the purple night  
of a field of skulls.

Their leaves stretch  
from a grave of grass  
at the highest altitude

rooted between cedar and rock.  
Blooming  
in May  
to remain barren

there are few bees  
left to squeeze through  
fading mouths.

## **Wildness, still alive**

Vanessa Hewson

From hotel windows, we marvel, we mourn  
the world that we created. Metal, stacked to the sky;  
the earth turned inside out  
like roadkill, shiny, sleek and stiff. Cement, the glue of cities  
holds lonely trees in place, creates a sky-high home  
for a peregrine falcon pair.

From a computer screen, I watch them brooding  
enveloped by sirens and screeching.  
Untamed  
the fledglings fly from their concrete ledge  
confident in their wildness.

\*\*\*

It was from the window of a plane that I saw  
my cultivated mind; fragments of wild dreams clinging  
to riverbanks, all other land stark, subdued, cleared and culled,  
segmented. My brain's soil sown  
with monocultured seeds.

We tuck our children under stories of our success.  
We send their minds to school to be enriched:  
but the system is now deplete.  
I stand before a row of students, their faces  
turned up as if for sunshine. I begin the cultivation.

In the greying stillness of a retreating day  
I meet a kangaroo. Body mute  
I fall into his eyes; deep pools of time.  
He thumps his tail and bounds away.

**Two poems** by Justin Groppuso-Cook

**No Need for Artificial Light**

We bear witness to this night  
where all creation surrounding us  
is lucid, lit up in the slightest.  
Meteors shower us; they leave their signatures  
in the puddles that form  
in our footprints—the space  
we leave behind to reach  
a clearing. Walk light, speak soft.  
The rift of our Milky Way  
lies like a spine fossilized  
in the quarry overhead. We gather  
tinder, kindling dead cholla.  
Build a lean-to in the pit. Get down  
on hands & knees, spark it  
with flint. Add splintered logs  
& birth a well of flames  
to burn our clothes, these rags.  
Circle the flurry of ashes, rub it into our skin.  
The fire sinks into a state  
of smolder. We play the embers  
with our fingertips & tease  
a little glow: a sprinkle building steam.  
Rain clouds unthread & weave  
into volcanic peaks; darkness  
is simply when the eyes are shut.

## **Terrestrial Meditation**

Justin Groppuso-Cook

A raven leads me to the west, her black feathers twirl  
to earth as grains of yellow & magenta gypsum  
kick up in a whirlwind. My eyes water from the dust—so  
far from source yet so close to the other. Two legs  
carry me to the peak, hopping from edge to edge, cliff  
to cliff, followed through with forward momentum  
& a little faith. Rock cuts my palms as my blood  
coagulates with sand; lightning splits open the distance.  
There is no refuge, no savior: only solitude, my keep. I  
push up the steep to a clearing, a portal: a world  
unfurling with rainstorms & surfacing light that fills  
the ridges, the curvature of mesas. A landscape  
sculpted by ancient tides, erosion, monsoon seasons, &  
trickling white gypsum: weather that shaped epochs  
& eras of this body, glimmering; shaped life through  
the Paleozoic, Mesozoic, the primordial periods  
of flowering plants. The piñon, juniper, & sagebrush  
twist together before me like fingers in a ritual.

## **<earth, land, sky and sea as palimpsest>**

by Zarina Muhammad and Zachary Chan

"Whispering Secrets into Trees, The Poetics of Moving Earth, Terra as Palimpsest" are starting points and the first iteration of *<earth, land, sky and sea as palimpsest>*, a broader body of work and long-term collaborative research project looking into environmental histories, infrastructures overlaid on spirit paths, interspecies ecologies, extractive capitalist urbanization, archival fragments, moving, shapeshifting walking paths through human built landscapes alongside what lies below and above these trails and coordinates.

*<earth, land, sky and sea as palimpsest>* by Zarina Muhammad and Zachary Chan are invitations and invocations to see with skin, hear with our feet, feel our way through spatial interruptions and somatically attend to sound at points of transit, change and threshold-crossing.

How are we listening to each other, to our surroundings, our environments, our bodies, our breath, our organs, to creaturely companions, to reconfigured rhythms of time and disembodied sounds from virtual realms? How are we unlearning and re-negotiating our relationship to time, to routines, to spatiality, presence and sentience in space? What invocatory technologies of the present are lending themselves to these new planetary questions and shapeshifting worlds we are building, sensing and mapping?

Each cumulative form of this long-term project is an invitation to reframe hegemonic cartographies, to conjure the ecologies of selves within the seen and unseen, and make memory maps from meandering through the homely and strange, the uninhabitable, the chthonic, the otherworlds and more-than-human worlds that we share habits and habitats with.

***<earth, land, sky and sea as palimpsest>, 2021***

Single channel video, 17.37 minutes



## Additional Notes about the Work

For the first incarnation of this work, my collaborators and I were responding to the prompt of how the pandemic had reframed the forest and multi-species entanglements, if it did at all? While we can argue that computation systems have enabled forests and ecologies to be made legible in new ways, we had unanswered questions on the unofficial uses and memories of green spaces within an island city state like Singapore, and the multiple and broad breadth of intelligences that mark and shape these spaces.

Through this work, we were keen to engage more closely with worldmaking practices, practices framed as traditional, accessing embodied memory as archive, paying attention to the sound of ants, the sacred meanings of earth mounds, soil as a system of burrows and tunnels, trees as vessels and nodes, terra as palimpsest and (exhumed) chthonic worlds. We also wish to acknowledge, credit and give thanks to all non-human, creaturely companions and guardians of spirit paths who are co-authors of this work. This work has also examined ways to experience space/site in polysensorial ways, across and beyond the 5 senses that 'western' traditions have labelled as 'sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing'. We are interested in exploring ways the senses are differentially and culturally conceived and how this presents expanded divergent modes of relating to the vast ecologies of selves that attempt to thrive and survive in any given space.

In addition, these questions have prompted our on-going research:

What is our present day relationship to the land, the earth, soil, to creaturely forms in all of their guises, to the seen and unseen, to habitats that we deem peculiar? What are the entry points from which we can talk through and listen to the ways knowledge is produced, transmitted, consumed, perpetuated, handed down orally, documented, decontextualized, stolen?

How do we make sense of the ever expansive realms, worlds, layers of accumulated data, information that is beyond human comprehension? How perceptible are we to these energy flows, both quantifiable and instinctively, intuitively, viscerally felt and sensed through our ecosystems, machines, selves and spaces? How do we imagine these future worlds we would like to breathe into and walk with? How can we continue to sustain and create practices of care for, remember, echo-locate, distance-sense, give attention to and speak with the myriad forms, shapes, guises of non-human worlds, the spirit loci, tutelary spirits, the creatures and trees that are older than our buildings? When we're walking through compacted earth paths, how are we learning to enter, pass through, inhabit and share spaces with the whole body listening?

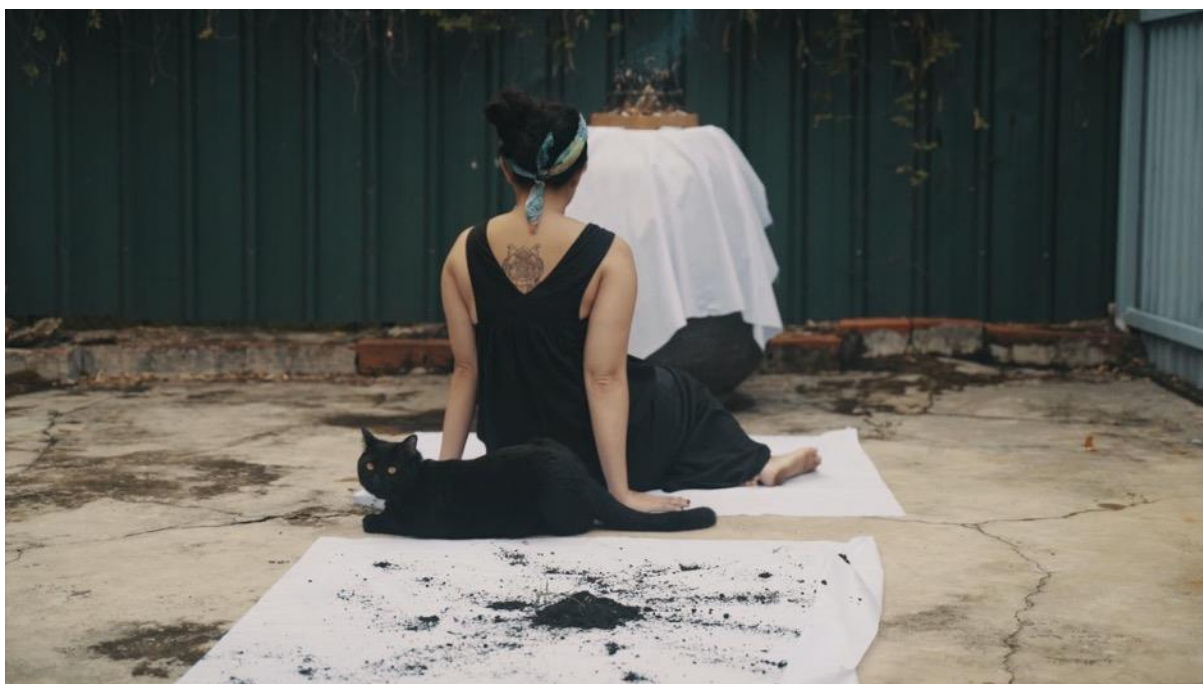
## Excerpt from Script

*Where was the first forest where you met your first migratory birds, eagles, tree snakes, reticulated pythons, whip snakes, black spitting cobras, iguanas, fire ants, millipedes, centipedes, phasmids, arachnids and ground beetles? When was your first memory of crossing human-created thresholds? Where might you have met other residents, other keepers of the forest —the ones who perch on trees or sit on park benches, and disappear when you blink. What is your first memory of a forest, a tree, soil, earth, dirt, places where people refuse to step on because there's no concrete? Can you say the names, see, hear, smell, sense all the bodies and beings who have resided, occupied, moved through, been displaced, rehomed, rerouted, uprooted in this exact spot where you stand?*



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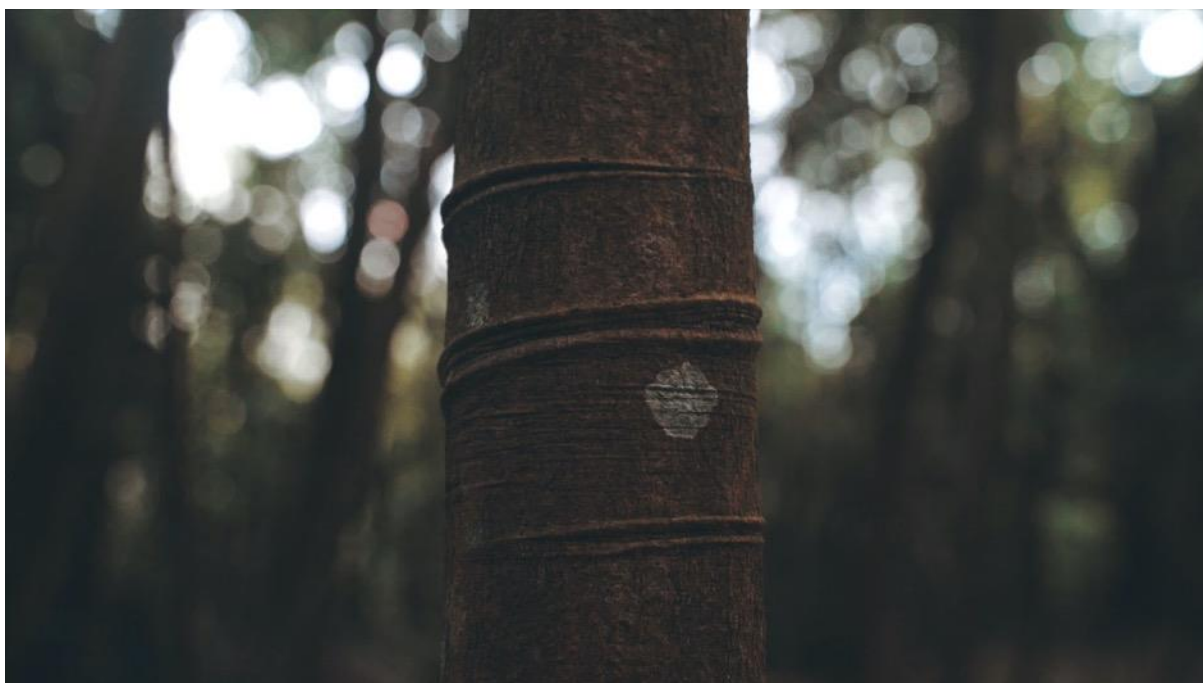


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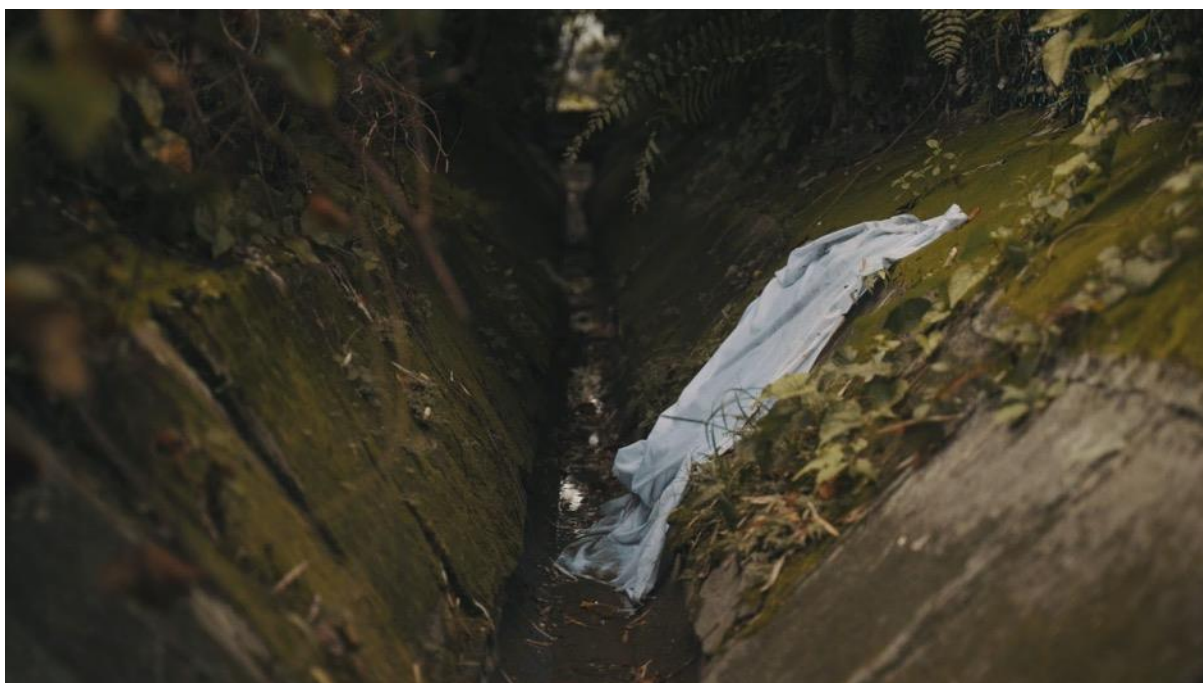




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## Too-Late Protection Charm

Matthew Moniz

*a semi-found poem after the Nine Herbs Charm  
for Lake Charles, hit by 2 hurricanes in 2020*

I left months ago. But staying wouldn't have helped—  
guess how one man fares against the might  
of this foe, squeaking one man's words

into a hurricane, with its each launch a lash,  
each lash a bludgeon, spiral arms sending  
bigger and lesser at terminating velocity.

Feeling helpless is its own kind of help.  
Guess how one man fares when made a meal  
of mayweed as Earth's airborne illness showed

in violent skies, the anger of risen sea ridges,  
each aftermath image nettle to the heart,  
breaching the seal of the past.

Glory-twigs mix with building splinters,  
wires snake across streets, fennel swaps  
with shingles, and the nine venoms

from the plants upon the lake burn  
in the wretched calm. Time will be the sole  
remedy for those who stand against pain.

Guess what any small one human can do  
against the oncoming purplish reeking,  
the invisible sendings of fliers, the visible

wreck of the somnambulist wake. Fathom  
a fast river whirled skyward, water not washing  
but punching empty homes to collapse.

They will rebuild: grow plantain, cress, crabapple.  
Hope, as useful as ashes, is the only charm I have:  
may the next storm not shake till I am further gone.



## Desecrated Solace

Lauren Hyunseo Cho

Gatekeeper of an alluring mirage,  
A turtle floats  
Restless in the tide.  
Look closely and meet  
Its gaze,  
Haunted and lovely, fractured  
Kaleidoscopes;  
Look closer and notice  
Manufactured stitches,  
Splinters in its smile, shards of sacrilege  
*(Don't be so careless  
When you rip them out);*  
Look closer still and see the hollowed  
Mutilation of its vessel, spears  
Piercing its throat,  
Poisoned with gilded  
Intent.  
Gather the turtle in your hands  
As it cries its sullied  
Song of the sea.  
Sorrow pours into you like leaking  
Oil, embracing you in its ugly  
Net.  
The water engulfing you is warmer  
Than it should be.

## **Lantau (Rotten Head)**

Cheng Tim Tim

1.

“The day a calf was cut in half by a propeller,  
white dolphins poked at its remains

as if it was still swimming,  
the sea, its CPR, its heartbeat.”

Where did I read that—  
most mammals can't fully process death:

some mothers carry the child's body  
in the wild until the day

they decide to only carry their grief?

2.

Sally and Rex told us tales on their boat,  
the couple who gave up past lives on land,

an act of rebellion that somehow  
honoured the tradition of fishing families.

Their decks used to be the marketplace  
for daughters, catches and fishing songs,

their categories defined by the distance  
they're away from the shore: salty tunes

from the deep or shallow sea.

3.

“Some fisherwomen who hated seafood  
knew their catch by heart,

by the strength and angle it bit  
into their hooks. By the same logic,

they tied their children to a pole  
when the sea was hungry—their husbands

too dead to do so, limbs tangled  
with mooring lines, drawn in, unawares.”

4.

There's a reason why, in Cantonese,  
*sheung ong*, getting to the shore,

could mean getting an apartment,  
which is to say, you were settled.

5.

Now that their deck was used for parties and tours,  
Sally and Rex were amphibians again.

Some nights they rewarded themselves  
by sailing nowhere, singing a pop song

inspired by their own stories.

6.

“We'll be driven out of our sailing routes  
when these islands link for a metropolis,”

Sally and Rex told us. “One day, here,  
the sea, our heart, will be no longer.”

7.

Falcons circled overhead, a buzzing  
drone among them. Here, on these islands,

butchers processed no livestock  
but histories. Vacation houses stood

hollower than prisons and asylums.  
This water kept changing hands. It began

where our cities inched into sand.  
Between the words *sink* and *sunk*,

there's a vision without us: our new skyline  
might look the same, if not more insane,

but we would not be in the picture  
the way we never were.

## How to Dive with Sharks

Patricia Davis-Muffett

1

At Big Scare, when you enter the water—  
in the usual way, backrolling off the boat,  
one hand on your mask and reg—  
it will be too rough to surface. Try not to remember  
that time at the Great Barrier Reef, when, after steaming  
on the liveaboard boat all day and night,  
you realized why they were teaching you  
how to inflate the emergency dive flag:  
that you might get separated  
under the murky depth, be forced  
to rise, take your safety stop  
alone, hanging twenty feet below,  
and when you came up, the current  
might have swept you too far from the boat  
to be seen, your dark head bobbing  
like a sea turtle swimming or an aging buoy,  
and you would need that strip of orange  
to guide the boat toward your helpless soul.

2

Focus on the technical skill:  
negative entry—empty air from your vest,  
roll off the boat, tip your head toward the bottom.  
Trust the weights in your pockets, your long exhale,  
the slow kicking of your finned feet.  
Watch for the flash of fins ahead—  
divemaster in yellow, your husband  
in blue, other divers descending with you.

3

Try not to panic when the small French woman  
loses air spectacularly, bubbles surrounding  
like champagne exploding. Don't worry when another  
fails to equalize, must rise, squeezing his nose.  
Stay calm as you hang in between with the group,  
wait for your guide's return

against a wall of silvered fish.

4

Remember you have nitrox, giving you 100 feet to sink,  
giving you time to reach the bottom. Once you are there,  
hold the rocks against surge, bring your breath under control.  
Pretend you are resting on your living room couch. Watch  
as bull sharks emerge, their wide heads pushing  
through the sand you've disturbed. Try not to think  
of your seal-like body. Forget what you know of the bull shark's  
testosterone, famous in the animal kingdom—  
Forget it is mating season. Dismiss the thought of  
electroreceptors honed for hunting, sensing  
the field of the current, prey, your heartbeat and breath.  
Stay still as eight, ten, twelve sharks emerge. Nine feet long,  
future mothers all. Notice holes hiding ear stones,  
sensing gravity, depth, every vibration.

5

Rely on your efforts to still your body.  
Surrender to surge, rocking you gently.  
Release the rock. Stop checking your depth.  
The only work left now—to drift and to breathe.

## Three poems by Aaron Magloire

### Half Past Loon

*...the poor bird cannot be omnipresent;  
if he dive here he must come up there.*

—Henry David Thoreau, *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*

By the inlet's a loon hatchery  
half the year, but not now. Now, I guess,  
is not loon hatchery season. Not every day  
is a good time for attending life, especially life so easy  
to crack into a frying pan and serve with rye.  
Time must be given for the loons  
to recover from their loon fucking, pay  
all their loon bills, get their loon houses  
in order for their loon guests coming  
for loon dinner. So much easier  
to sing on the lake, from the fronds, sing  
loondrunk and some measure of happy,  
when there are no born or soon-born loons to worry  
about waking. Other birds hatch  
in August. File to their complaint departments  
if you must, even now, watch something grow.

## Travelogue: Rabat

Aaron Magloire

For a month it did not rain.

Every night the adhan sounded

from somewhere I could not see.

I had one small window. I had long thought myself

a man in need of many windows

but was wrong. It looked out

onto a graveyard, beyond which

was the sea. I was more watched

than watcher. The tombstones under lamplight  
glowed yellow, like jaundiced flaps of skin.

I loved them. I was not sad. Every morning

I stowed small green plums from breakfast

inside my fridge for the evening.

I licked powdered sugar from my fingers

and still remember the word for star—

*najima*—though most else escapes me, forgotten

lexicon of a time I did not know what to do

but thrust my body into the large, saltwatered

world. I've tried to write about it

before. Only now does it return, proper

and crystalline, taps me on my shoulder

as if to ask where I have gone.

*I'm right here*, I say. Stewed

carrots, twin scarabs in Ouarzazate.



*No. You know what I mean.*

I never did find it in me to throw a stone

at the wild dogs, no matter how ghoulish  
they became after dark. I knew

what they meant. I was at the mercy  
of so much except myself.

What was that word again?

For a month it did not rain.

## Monument

Aaron Magloire

In a few days, the wild pig dead  
on the side of the road will begin to reek. But for now  
it is a monument: we must remember,  
passing its white belly raised  
to the sun, its hooved limbs stiffly  
lathered with rigor mortis, its red honeysuckle  
mouth agape in disbelief  
that all this really does end, after all,  
we must remember how quickly, how wholly,  
how unceremoniously the earth may decide  
it needs us no longer—or, perhaps,  
that the soil needs us more.

There are no politics to this  
save those that we invent;  
no emotions save those we impart;  
no reason save that which we attempt  
to decipher. Instead, merely pray  
someone would cover you, at least,  
with a tarp to lessen the stench.  
Then walk into the world  
again, again, again.

## **Mekong, The Mother of Rivers**

Ore Huiying

Also known as the Mother of Rivers in Laos and Thailand, the Mekong is the region's economic, cultural and spiritual backbone. The longest in Southeast Asia, she is home to the world's largest inland fishery and hosts a treasure trove of biodiversity, including critically endangered species such as the Mekong giant catfish, Siamese crocodile and Irrawaddy dolphin. The river is a vital source of food and livelihood for more than 80% of the population in the Lower Mekong River region. Already facing stress from 15 dams in upstream China, the Mekong is now further threatened by Laos' ambition to be the '*battery of Southeast Asia*'.

The country has plans to build 9 dams on mainstream Mekong. The poor and undeveloped country hopes that income from exporting hydroelectricity will promote its economic development. In 2010, construction began on the nation's first hydropower dam—the Xayaburi Dam. The US\$ 3.8 billion project is expected to generate 1,260 megawatts of electricity, of which around 95% of it will be exported to Thailand. In 2016, Laos began construction of its second dam in Don Sahong, a critical and ecologically unique area of the Mekong.

Both controversial dams proceeded without a comprehensive environmental or transboundary impact assessment. Concerns raised by neighboring Vietnam and Cambodia were ignored. Environmental experts warned that these dam projects would cause significant and irreversible damages to the river's ecosystems, in addition to the social costs.

For this series, I travelled by boat along the area designated as a reservoir for the Xayaburi dam. During the journey, I encountered villagers who will be affected by the dam project. In portraying their daily routines, I seek to highlight the subsistence relationship they have with the river, a delicate connection that will be destroyed by the dam project.



© Ore Huiying

01. The Mekong River, also known as Mother of Rivers in Laos and Thailand, is the 12th longest river in the world.



© Ore Huiying

02. A villager living along the Mekong River takes her daily evening bath in the river.





© Ore Huiying

03. In the remote areas of Luang Prabang province along the Mekong River, villagers depend on boats along the river as their only means of transport.



© Ore Huiying

04. Part of the Xayaburi dam construction includes creating a reservoir that stretches between 60 to 80km along the Mekong River. Riverbanks along this section between Xayaboury province and Luang Prabang province will be flooded.





© Ore Huiying

05. In the season of cicadas, villagers who live along the river trap the insects with homemade glue on sticks. The insect provides an additional source of food and income for the villagers.





© Ore Huiying

06. The water level along the Lower Mekong River is influenced by weather changes and also affected by hydropower dams in upstream China.



© Ore Huiying

07. Villager Ngoi, 63 years old, pans for gold along the Mekong river bank. She earns about US\$70 monthly from gold mined.





© Ore Huiying

08. In Laos, people who are affected by development projects are typically relocated to resettlement villages far away from their homes. Many of them end up losing their farmland and their primary source of income.

**Two poems** by Eric Abalajon

**Garbage Crossing**

Hoping to make  
                    everyone feel better,  
the company that shipped  
                    the fifty container vans  
of dispute said that  
they were only supposed to contain  
                    recyclable plastic  
                    not used adult diapers.

Trudeau,  
                    charming as ever,  
assured everyone that  
                    the loopholes on legislation  
that made this possible  
                    would be ironed out.

Durterte,  
                    not slowing down from the campaign adrenaline,  
declared,  
                    I will get a boat, I will dump  
the garbage in Canada myself,  
                    you can eat it if you like.

As the talk about the container vans  
strayed further from  
                    what it was at first,  
I keep thinking about  
                    how adult diapers  
put on and removed  
                    with tenderness  
                    by Filipino caregivers  
got home before they did,  
  
                    amid talks of responsibility  
                    all too familiar,  
easily passed around  
                    across the ocean.

## East of Bacolod

Eric Abalajon

Excited, she asked us  
to stand in front of the falls.  
The picture turned out good.  
The water breaking into  
well placed boulders, the landscape  
layered with small palm trees  
and trimmed grass made to  
hide the remaining visible mud.  
On top, just a glimpse of an outline  
of the steel railings to prevent  
people falling into the lake  
by accident. We walked back to  
the hall for lunch, I asked what  
this place used to look like before.  
Cane fields, of course,  
she says matter-of-factly.  
When sugar prices crashed, and well,  
never recovered, the descendants of the  
owners had to think fast. Some say the rocks here  
were used to extend the city.  
Eventually becoming the area  
where SM City Bacolod now stands,  
frequently attempted  
to be reclaimed back  
by the Guimaras Strait  
to no avail.  
My parents recall, a beloved priest  
had to be reassigned  
since his sermons talked  
about the evils of quarrying.  
Nonetheless, I'm still glad Alangilan  
now has a farm resort.  
A reason for you balikbayans<sup>1</sup> to visit me.

---

<sup>1</sup> balikbayan refers to a Filipino returning home to the Philippines, either for a vacation or for good, after having lived or worked overseas for an extended period of time.

Less talked about, she adds, Capuestohan  
meanwhile used to be a highland outpost,  
I'm not sure of soldiers or of rebels.

## Consider the Foxglove

*Golden Shovel, after Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx*

Paula Aamli

My initial excitement at working there is  
gone, obliterated by compromises. A  
harsh critic of my life might define  
this discomfort as envy, a failure to finesse  
my way past the point that delineates

deciders from decided-about. Between  
these two realms is a vast chasm and I agree,  
younger me longed to live in clover  
with the higher-ups. Now I understand,  
even my own middling life looks like a  
fantasy. Random chance was my friend.

Today, in mid-life, in central London, I stand  
staring at the plants in our garden. There's  
a foxglove exploding with purple bells, so alive.  
All week I have watched it unfurl its finery,  
slowly stretching from the leafiness  
of its broad base, up towards the blue line

of the sky. In the brief beat between  
glory and decay is this plant's reality.  
Its whole point of being is to be, and  
*this* is what I envy. Whilst I pretend  
to be at peace, I have lost faith in the grand

unfurling of purpose through history. Youth  
wants so much, strives so much and never  
believes in age, death or failing. You know  
that's how youth is supposed to be, still  
certain of a place in the unfolding story.  
Youth's future is a promise we should not breach

but our youth see an end approaching. They  
know we will have to teach ourselves to stop  
choking the ocean and uprooting the trees. If

the old story of repentance was ever true, it is surely true today. Is there a way to wash our carbon sins away? That would be worth

the cost of conversion. Can we change the course we have been setting? An up-hill path, steepening the more we resist the climb. I am encouraged by the rising clamour. There's "boardroom chit-chat" about nature, perhaps a

sign of hope, whatever the motivation. Fine if capitalism "saves the planet", if we confine the level of pay-off flowing to the rich? Holiness has always been a negotiation between need and expectation. And still the foxglove continues to unfurl, to make its brief stand,

stretching vainly to connect earth and sky. A yearly ritual in which Nature happily wastes energy from the sun on this brief burst of life-becoming-compost. And tell me, at your own end, will you account so well for your time?



## Two poems by Merie Kirby

### Backyard Quartet

i.

This month I watched the forests of my childhood burn  
on the tiny screen of my phone. I feel safer than I should,  
far from the mountains and the sea, the places  
I call home despite nearly thirty years' absence.  
My friends' days are thick with smoke, their skies  
made orange by ash. *It is harder to breathe*  
*than it should be*, they say, but they are safe.  
The days here, in the northern center of the country,  
are shortening, veering from unseasonably warm  
to prematurely cold, the damp chill already slowing  
my own lungs. My imagination is a dry barrel  
perched above my shoulders,  
humming with worry.

ii.

The smaller evergreen is gone now, the one that snapped  
in half last summer, victim of straight line winds,  
the rooted half finally dug out. The taller tree  
stands alone in the yard.  
And today a squirrel, fur lit by late day sun,  
runs across the new emptiness,  
up the post of the deck, to face the house and,  
one paw clutched to chest, leaning forward,  
chatters sharply at the house. A scolding? A protest?  
A message of great intensity, issued twice.  
Then with a hopping turn,  
the squirrel runs back down the post,  
around behind the garage, and out to the alley.

iii.

Sometimes I am the dog,  
nose to the boards of the deck,  
knowing the rabbits are down there,  
oblivious to the not-rabbit.

I have also been the birds, darting  
from branch to branch,  
stopping to sing out and listening  
for an answer.

These days I think I am the rabbit,  
pressed to earth beneath a threat  
that huffs above me,  
but has not caught me yet.

My heart beats too fast  
as I keep myself still  
in the dark,  
hoping for sleep.

iv.

*Whatever color of yellow that is, he says, is kind of  
my favorite color right now*  
yellow ochre of elm leaves above rusted blood of ivy  
withered brown of wasting basil  
gray-winged moth lifting from beneath curled leaf  
ashy smudges of cloud against fading peach to periwinkle sky  
moon lit pink by setting sun  
flames along the arm of burning bush and vermilion coleus above pale aster  
darkening blue green heavy evergreen bough  
tawny curve of squirrel gulping the chocolate spine of fence  
dusky streak of dog chasing rabbit whispers to the back gate  
silhouettes of swallows arrowing from tree to tree  
nothing and everything as safe as can be.

## Let the record show

Merie Kirby

Dear ghost tree, fir tree, tree  
that is no more, your shadow doesn't fall  
across the grass, the little dog doesn't run  
to your trunk to relieve himself. He crosses the space  
you used to inhabit, stops at the fence,  
pauses and looks back. What used to be there?  
What am I forgetting? Our neighbor, the city arborist,  
remembers you were planted before the 1996 flood,  
though your trunk never felt those waters,  
the Red River never came closer than two blocks.  
That's what he tells us, but surely your roots,  
stretching and feeling their way into new ground,  
spreading laterally from your tap root, heard the news  
of the river that overflowed the banks, dismantled  
schools from foundations, surrounded burning buildings  
and soaked possessions into refuse. Your companion,  
planted at the same time, not ten feet from you,  
still stands, center of the yard, its long shadow arcing  
over house and grass and vegetable garden.  
Do its roots still reach for yours, fibers finding empty earth  
instead of once familiar tendrils in shared soil?  
Trees, they tell us now, share nutrients and information  
through overlapping root systems. When one station  
shuts down, where does the signal go?  
Does it linger in soil, broadcasting breaking  
of trunk, fury of storm, force of winds,  
dying of branches, the way we emerged  
from the house in the lessening rain  
to clear branches and lay hands on fractured wood?

**Two poems** by Tara Menon

**The Running Bamboo Trees Talk Back**

We spread green  
when other trees' branches are lean.  
They call us invasive,  
but it's the critics who are abrasive.  
We were planted here.  
Yes, we proliferate, but we spread cheer  
in bitter winter's white domain  
where everything looks the same.

## Memory

Tara Menon

Memory is the flip side of karma.  
Memory is what we possess in the womb  
until the Goddess extracts a promise  
from the unborn to behave.

Memory belongs to flora, fauna.  
Memory is scattered in seeds.  
Memory pulses in stems, veins.  
Memory is woven into feathers.  
Memory is ossified in bones.  
Memory is mine,  
memory is yours,  
memory is ours.

Memory has ghostly wings  
that flap in haunting rhythms.  
Memory is a bird,  
flitting, revisiting.  
Memory is a stone  
that is silent and unmoving.  
Memory is a river,  
flowing where it will.

Memory is all we creatures  
have in the end.  
Memory is everything,  
everywhere, in the air.  
Memory is ephemeral.  
Memory is eternal.

## Overheard on Lough Corrib (English translation)

Art Ó Súilleabháin

Reeds lean in the wind, whispering island names,  
rattle the winter withering with sharp consonants  
green – a summer with the soft vowels of growth  
a language once clear, now lost in a new labelling.

*Inis Dá Bhuí* or *Inis Damh Bhuí* – Island of two cows  
or of a yellow house, *Buaidhe* – almost impossible  
in another tongue – *Booyeh* – the real vowels sound  
cluttering the language of foreigners reading maps.  
Gulls screech meal triumphs over white-lined rocks  
'*mayflies, mayflies, mayflies*' – a hatch to fill gullets  
protein floats from gravel floors – metamorphosis  
littering waves with the green vowels of new wings.  
A curlew wails a plea into the clouds of south winds  
that blow *Garbhaí na gCuach* into our imaginations  
crying long *a,e,i,o,u*'s to the edges of their freedom  
forgotten loved ones fading in the books of memory.

I hear undertones of a shout I can no longer ignore  
scuff purple spearmint, tearing it from watery roots  
lean on a larch post, marking a boundary on the shore  
learning the secrets of the surf lapping round my boots.

### Irish inclusions

*Inis Dá Bhuí* (pronounced: inish-dhaw-wee): Island of two cows (an island in Lough Corrib)

Or *Inis Damh Bhuí* (pronounced: inish-dhaw-wee): Island of the yellow house

*Buaidhe* (pronounced: boo-yah): Island on one cow (an island in Lough Corrib)

*Garbhaí na gCuach* (pronounced: gor-vee-nah-goo-ugh): the rough wind from the south that blows the cuckoo to the west of Ireland

## Cloiste faoi rún ar an gCoirib (Gaeilge)

Art Ó Súilleabháin

Cromann na gíolcaí sa ghaoth  
ag cogar ainmneacha na n-oileáin  
croitheann siad an gheimhreadh  
ag feannadh le consain ghéara  
uaithne – samhradh le gutaí boga  
teanga a bhí soiléir tráth,  
anois ar strae i lipéadú nua.

*Inis Dá Bhuí* nó *Inis Damh Bhuí* – oileán an dá bhó  
nó oileán an tí bhuí, *Buaidhe* – beagnach do-ráite  
i dteanga eile – *Booyeh* – fuaimníonn na gutaí fíora  
ag plúchadh ráiteas na nGall ag léamh léarscáil.  
Scréachann faoileáin éachtaí thar charraigeacha bhána  
míoltóga Bealtaine – briseadh bhairr le craois a líonadh  
snámhann próitéin ó ghrinneall ghairbhéil – athrú ó bhun  
ag lot na rabhartaí toinne le gutaí glasa sciatháin fhliucha.  
Caoineann crotach achainí i scamail an ghaoth aneas  
a shéideann *Garbhaí na gCuach* isteach inár samhlaíocht  
ag olagón *á,é,í,ó,ú* fada go h-imeall a saoirse  
muirín dearmadta ag seargadh i leabhair na gcuimhní.

Cloisim foshruth, scread nach féidir liom a shéanadh  
spágáil mé mismín, á stróiceadh ó fhréamh uisceach  
chlaon mé ar chuaille learóige, ag marcáil teorann ar thrá  
ag foghlaim rúin na mbrathanna ag slaparnach timpeall mo buataisí.

## The Time the Skies Speak to Me

Shilpa Dikshit Thapliyal

It is 8.30 pm here which means  
it is 6 pm in Mumbai,  
time for Amma to loan me a glimpse  
of egg-shell clouds dotting craters of gray.

The sun doesn't set until 7.15.  
Skies of Summer, she says of the sullen breeze,  
cows resting under a peepal tree.  
Wingless days descend on pebbled sidewalks,  
stray strands of lethargy stream clumsily into homes.

Amma points to the new pair of terra-cotta figurines  
in the corner, they look cherubic  
against the unbridled flow of ember in the skies.

Sometimes, a sickle moon appears at the dusky threshold,  
a slender bride flushed with translucent love.  
I listen to the distant cry of the Muezzin,  
as Amma laments about the passing seasons.

Yesterday Amma panned the camera  
to a parakeet on the railing.  
I admired the pea-green plumage,  
the cherry beak, its long feathered tail.  
It glanced at the phone,  
ring-necked head tilted forty degrees.  
For a moment, our eyes locked.

*A bunch of them live in a house down the chowk.  
They sail the Deccan sky, sit on the Jacaranda tree,  
chirp in the neighbourhood before flocking back home.  
Amma's voice trailed into the caverns of my throat.*



## **How Lucky I Am**

Kristine Ventura

As the wind caress my warm body,  
I can feel so much positivity.  
I can feel contentment cuddling my soul gently.  
I can feel the heartbeat of a lioness within me.

How lucky I am, that I can witness the rising and setting of the sun.  
How lucky I am to live as a human.  
How lucky I am, that I can touch the rain dropping from heaven above.  
How lucky I am, that I can feel love.

The clear water satisfies my thirst.  
Dancing leaves calm my breath.  
Blooming flowers keep my eyes entertained.  
Green grasses keep my secrets and lies.

How lucky I am, that I can see those flying birds with colourful feathers.  
How lucky I am, that I can hear the roaring thunder.  
How lucky I am, that I can endure every pain.  
How lucky I am, that blood runs through my veins.

## July

Andrew Vogel

Thunderheads pile silence beyond the leafy horizon.

The fork-tail swallows jet the fields for dizzied bugs.

The cats too know better than us; they find themselves

stone-cool shadows and groom their appetites taut.

We falter out from parched-moss maple shade and

maunder the thatched rows of our weedy garden,

seasoning the grain of our skin with our own salts,

gathering a rime of black dust to our ankles and toes.

A whiff of mint breasting wilted eddies hints rain.

When it does come, cutting the air, draining to aquifer,

evaporating to sky, it will tutor these stunned seedlings.

We stay here and wait out this heat like fledgling birds

anxious to discover the trim of our bodies by falling.

**As below, so above**

DH Jenkins

Moon light pours through clouds like  
water over a green sea turtle's shell.  
A jet floats down from above, dark as  
a tiger shark searching for its prey.

A fishing vessel's beam darts here  
and there searching for its catch,  
nets loose, doing circles in the wind  
like something lost in the rain.

While scuba diving this morning  
my auxiliary regulator got caught  
on some coral—so unreal the panic  
like a sea turtle choking on plastic.

Tonight a lone fire burns on the beach  
for all those ancestors lost to the sea—  
shark clan, turtle clan, humpbacks on  
harpoons, sailors sailing on the lee.

## Contributors



Dr **Paula Aamli** is a Humanities graduate with a Masters in Sustainability and a Doctorate in Organisational Change. Paula is originally from Wales, then Manchester, now living in London, UK. Paula's doctoral thesis, “Working through climate grief: A first-person poetic inquiry”, explores individual and institutional responses to the emerging climate crisis, using arts-based research and poetry. Paula has had poems published, or accepted for publication, in *Allegro Poetry Magazine*, *Dissonance Magazine*, *Paddler Press*, *Shot Glass* (a poetry journal of short verse), and *Wingless Dreamer*.



**Eric Abalajon** is currently a lecturer at the University of the Philippines Visayas, Iloilo. Some of his works have appeared in *Revolt Magazine*, *Loch Raven Review*, *Ani*, and *Katitikan*. Under the pen name Jacob Laneria, his zine of short fiction, *Mga Migranteng Sandali*, is distributed by Kasingkasing Press. He lives near Iloilo City.



**Christine Oberas Aurelio** is from the Seafood Capital of the Philippines. She worked in Kuwait for seven years before working in Hong Kong as a domestic worker. Christine began writing when she was in elementary school, and considers her poems shadows of herself, reflections of her heart and mirrors of her soul. She is a proud Capizeña and super mother.



**Zachary Chan** is a graphic designer, composer, sound designer and gamelan musician. His musical roots are based in central Javanese gamelan music and he has written music and designed sound for experimental films, plays, video games, storytelling and art installations.

As a gamelan musician, he has been performing for over seven years with local Javanese and Balinese gamelan ensembles. As a composer and sound designer, he has been regularly putting work out since 2013 which has been performed and shown both locally and abroad. He is the co-founder of graphic design studio crop.sg.



**Claire “Champagne” Champommier** is a proud lesbian Asian American creative. Currently a student, she has studied writing at Lewis & Clark College, where her professor, Mary Szybist, has encouraged her to keep doing so. Her work has appeared in *Interim*, *Otis Nebula*, *SPLASH!* from *Haunted Waters Press*, *Fleas on the Dog*, *Feels Blind Literary*, and *Auroras & Blossoms*. She is the San Franciscan winner for smART Magazine’s poetry competition.



**Cheng Tim Tim** is a poet and a teacher from Hong Kong, currently reading the MSc in Creative Writing at the University of Edinburgh. Her poems are in *Berfrois*, *diode*, *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal*, *Cordite Poetry Review*, among others. She was nominated Best Small Fiction by *SAND Journal* in 2020. She is working on chapbooks which explore Hong Kong’s landscapes, as well as desire and rituals through the lens of tattooing. Find her on IG @mymothercalls or Twitter @timtimtmi



**Lauren Hyunseo Cho** is a published poet based in Seoul, South Korea. She has her poems forthcoming, pending on editorial review, or published in *CrashTest Magazine*, *Teen Ink*, *Ice Lolly Review*, *LiveWire*, and more. She is interested in issues of multicultural advocacy, feminism, and philosophy. Her love for writing serves to produce poems and stories of her take on these ideas.



**Patricia Davis-Muffett** (she/her) holds an MFA from the University of Minnesota and was a 2020 Julia Darling Poetry Prize finalist, a 2021 finalist in the Muriel Craft Bailey Memorial Award, and won an honorable mention in the 2021 Outermost poetry contest, judged by Marge Piercy. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Atlanta Review*, *Pretty Owl Poetry*, *Quartet Journal*, *Comstock Review* and *Gyroscope*, among others. She lives in Rockville, Maryland, and makes her living in technology marketing.

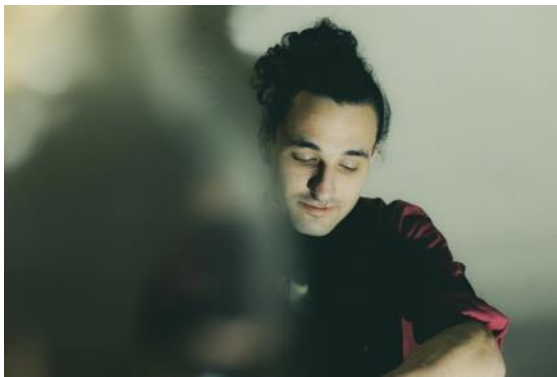


**Natalie Foo Mei-Yi** is a writer by profession. After studying literature, film and philosophy at university, she embarked on an eclectic series of jobs as a film reviewer, a police intelligence officer, a bartender, a creative copywriter, an architectural magazine editor, the writer-editor at a performing arts centre, and an arts writer. Now, she writes for a living and makes poetry and art in private, surrounded by kiddy clutter, 80s and 90s cassettes, sci-fi DVDs, a lifetime collection of books, and a hoard of shells, twigs and rocks gathered from nature trails.





**Preeth Ganapathy's** works have been published in several magazines including *Atlas and Alice*, *Origami Poems Project*, *Amethyst Review*, *Loch Raven Review* and *Mothers Always Write*. She is also the winner of Wilda Moriss's July 2020 Poetry Challenge. She lives in Bengaluru, India.



**Justin Groppuso-Cook** is a Writer-in-Residence for InsideOut Literary Arts Project as well as a Teaching Artist for Living Arts Detroit. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Haunted Waters Press*, *Dream Pop Journal*, *Luna Luna Magazine*, *Anti-Heroine Chic*, *Rust + Moth*, and *Glass: A Journal of Poetry* among others. He received a 2015 Pushcart Prize nomination for his work featured in *Duende*. In 2022, he will be a resident at *Carve Magazine's* Writing Workshops Paris. More information can be found on his website, [www.sunnimani.com](http://www.sunnimani.com).



**Vanessa Hewson** is an educator and poet. She lives in regional Victoria in Australia at a boarding school in the bush where she teaches English and wanders the bush writing poetry. Her poems have been published in *Sparx* and one of her poems was recently Highly Commended in the Katherine Purnell Poetry Prize.





**Chrystal Ho** writes at the intersections of poetry and non-fiction. Her current work explores connections between the natural environment and her personal experiences growing up in urban Singapore.



D. H. Jenkins' plays have been staged in California, Arizona, Australia, and Japan. His poems appear in the art films *Call From a Distant Shore* and *Our Autumn*, and in *The Tiger Moth Review* and *Jerry Jazz Musician*. He lives in Wanaka, New Zealand.



**Merie Kirby** earned her M.F.A. from the University of Minnesota. She lives in Grand Forks, ND and teaches at the University of North Dakota. She is the author of *The Dog Runs On* and *The Thumbelina Poems*. In 2016 and 2013 she received North Dakota Council on the Arts Individual Artist Grants. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Quartet Journal*, *Sheila-na-gig Online*, *West Trade Review* and *Mom Egg Review*, and other journals.

Visit her website: [www.meriekirby.com](http://www.meriekirby.com)



**Aaron Magloire** is from Queens, NYC, and is a junior studying English and African-American Studies at Yale University. His work has appeared in *Whale Road Review*, *Empty House Press*, and elsewhere, and will appear in the 2021 edition of *Best New Poets*. If you really want to, you can find him on Instagram as [@a.magloire](#).



**Bryan Joel Mariano** is the Knowledge Management Specialist of Forest Foundation Philippines. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Development Communication from University of the Philippines Los Baños. His interest in knowledge co-production, nature-culture relations, and more-than-human discourse was largely shaped by taking a Master of Science in Geography at the University of the Philippines Diliman and through his work at the Foundation. Currently, he is pursuing a Master of Communication of Science and Innovation at the University of Trento, Italy.

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**Izzy Martens** is a writer, consultant, yoga teacher, and leadership facilitator. She studied Creative Nonfiction at Colorado State University. She has previously worked as Managing Editor for The Greyrock Review. Her work has been published in The Metaworker, PastTen, Rooster Magazine, among others. She writes online at [www.jokelife.com](http://www.jokelife.com).



**Tara Menon** is a freelance writer based in Lexington, Massachusetts. Her recent poetry has been published in the following journals and anthologies: *American Writers Review*, *Don't Die Press*, *The Decolonial Passage*, *Emrys Online Journal*, *Indolent Books*, *Wards Literary Journal*, *Art in the Time of Covid-19*, *The Inquisitive Eater*, and *Infection House*. Her latest fiction has appeared in *Litro*, *The Bookends Review*, *Rio Grande Review*, and *The Evening Street Review*. Menon is also a book reviewer and essayist whose pieces have appeared in journals like *Green Mountains Review*, *The Kenyon Review*, *Fjords Review*, and *Calyx*.



**Tim Moder** is an Indigenous poet living in northern Wisconsin, USA. He is a member of Lake Superior Writers. His poems have appeared in a few publications, including *Pittsburgh Poetry Journal*, *South Florida Poetry Journal* and *Penumbra Online*.



**Matthew Moniz** is a PhD student in poetry at the University of Southern Mississippi. Originally from the DC area, he holds an MFA from McNeese State University. Follow him @MattMonizPoet



**Zarina Muhammad** is an artist, educator and researcher whose practice is deeply entwined with a critical re-examination of oral histories, ethnographic literature and other historiographic accounts about Southeast Asia. Working at the intersections of performance, installation, text, ritual, sound and moving image, she is interested in the broader contexts of myth-making, haunted historiographies and role of the artist as “cultural ventriloquist” who lends polyphonic voices to data-driven systems, multi species entanglements and shapeshifting worlds. She has been working on a long-term interdisciplinary project on Southeast Asia’s provisional relationship to the otherworldly, spectrality, ritual magic and the immaterial against the dynamics of global modernity and the social production of rationality. She has presented her work and been involved in projects across Asia Pacific and Europe.



**Brittany Nohra** is an American-Lebanese poet and conservationist living in the South-West of Ireland. Her work has been published in *The Ogham Stone* and *The Stony Thursday Poetry Book*.



**Kali Norris** is a writer and poet from New York City. She was the recipient of the Carole Rose Livingston Award for poetry in 2018. Her poetry has been published in JMWW and Q/A, and her poem Soliloquy from the Pyre is currently nominated for a Best of the Net award. Kali has a BFA in Creative Writing from Brooklyn College, summa cum laude, and completed National Novel Writing Month seven times. When not writing, she can be found in the library, the park, or befriending cats.





**Ore Huiying** is a photographer from Singapore. She grew up in rural Singapore, but was uprooted to an urban environment as her country developed. As a result, she is drawn to narratives of people and places affected by development.

In 2010, Ore moved to London to study an MA in Documentary Photography at LCC. After 4 years of studying and living in London, she returned to Singapore to focus her photographic practice on Southeast Asia. She has since been working on personal projects, as well as taking on editorial and commercial commissions. Her photographic works have been exhibited in photo festivals, museums and galleries worldwide.

Visit her website: [www.orehuiying.com](http://www.orehuiying.com)



**Art Ó Súilleabháin** lives in Corr na Móna, Co na Gaillimhe. He spends his time writing and fishing on Lough Corrib. Tá leabhair do pháistí foilsithe aige as Gaeilge agus bhuaigh sé North West Words as Gaeilge. He has published in English in *Poetry Ireland Review*, Collections by Dedalus Press (*Writing Home & Local Wonders*), *Hold Open the Door* from the Ireland Chair of Poetry, *The Life of Trees* from Cinnamon Press, *Skylight 47*, *Vox Galvia* and many other collections. He has broadcast pieces for *Sunday Miscellany* in English and as Gaeilge.



**Shilpa Dikshit Thapliyal** is a bilingual poet from Singapore. She is a Pushcart prize nominee (2021) and author of *Between Sips of Masala Chai* (Kitaab International, 2019). Her poems have been featured in *QLRS*, *Yearbook of English Indian Poetry-2021*, *OF ZOOS*, *to let the light in*, *Atelier of Healing*, *Shot Glass Journal*, *Taj Mahal Review*, *Anima Methodi*, *Asingbol*, *Unmasked-Reflections on Virus Times* amongst other anthologies and journals. Some of her poems written in Hindi have been translated into Spanish. She has read poetry in Malaysia, USA, Mumbai, Australia.



**Kristine Andaya Ventura** is from Jones, Isabela, Philippines. She's a mother of two kids and a Quiet Warrior. She has been working as a domestic helper in Malaysia since 2016. Her passion for writing has helped her to gain the confidence that she uses to fight every battle of life. By writing about all her emotions that she can't voice out, she has found her inner peace. She shares some of her poems in different poetry groups. Reading and sketching help her cope with her longing for her loved ones left back at home.



**Andrew Vogel** walks the hills and teaches in rural Eastern Pennsylvania. His poems have appeared in *The Blue Collar Review*, *Off the Coast*, *Slant Poetry Journal*, *The Evergreen Review*, *Hunger Mountain*, *Tule Review*, *The Briar Cliff Review* and elsewhere.