

# Fox Chase Review

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# Fox Chase Review

## 2009 Winter/Spring Contents

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**Michele A. Belluomini**

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## Haiku 1

cold shakes my small bones  
shoulders hug earth for some warmth  
inconsolable

## Haiku 2

sunlight on pine trees  
mountain jay raucously calls  
heart lifts in response

## Haiku 3A

rain during the night  
shaking the leaves above me  
lightning shivers the sky

## Haiku 3B

night—rain and lightning  
shaking trees and sky above  
morning—all clouds gone!

Photo  
Unavailable  
at this Time

Michele A. Belluomini is a poet, storyteller, and librarian. Her work has been published in many journals including *Poetry Motel*, *Philadelphia Poets*, *Haddonfield Speaks*, *COMMONWEALTH: Contemporary Poets on Pennsylvania*, and most recently in the on-line journal, *The Foxchase Review*. She has read in many places throughout the

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area, most recently at the Chapterhouse Café and Robin's Bookstore. Her chapbook, *Crazy Mary & Others*, was published by Plan B Press. For the last 15 years she has helped coordinate the *Monday Poets* reading series at the Free Library of Philadelphia.

#### Haiku 4

dawn in the mountains  
translucent clouds overhead  
illumination!

#### Haiku 5

Mt. Shasta morning  
birds twittering in the pines  
sunlight warms us all

#### Paired Haiku 6

Mt. Shasta meadow  
small sounds—water dripping on leaves  
this quiet morning

lowing of cattle  
gurgling creek running by  
sleep still in my eyes

#### Haiku 7 Morning

fireside small talk  
crow glides through blue sky  
carries our words away

#### Haiku 8

mystical mountain  
drumbeats call in the spirits  
prayer circle hums

Haiku 13

Haiku 14

Haiku 15

### Haiku 9

sacred sweat lodge rite  
steam rises off burning rocks  
impurities gone

### Haiku 10

silently sitting  
mountain peak glimmers  
light flashes within

### Haiku 11

Medicine Lake shimmers  
beaming sun warms shoreline rocks  
volcanic caldera

### Haiku 12

whirring of fast wings  
dragonflies circle around  
gold sparkles the air

### Haiku 13

swirl and swoop and dive  
feeding on sweet nectar  
hummingbirds flit by

### Haiku 14

walking in silence  
we climb mountain's ridge  
some small bird screeches

## Haiku 15

quarter moon rises  
red from the smoke all around  
fires consume all

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# Fox Chase Review

J.J. Campbell

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## imagining the death of my father

hopeless

the haunting  
cries of the  
frantic woman  
on the other line

soon despair  
will set in and  
the inevitable  
will arrive

ahead of schedule  
of course

and i being the only  
real asshole in the  
room will try to  
crack a joke

make up some  
nonsense that at least  
he didn't die on the  
shitter or inside a  
hooker



J.J. Campbell lives, writes but mostly dies a little each day in Brookville, Ohio. He's been widely published in the small press, most notably in *Chiron Review*, *Thunder Sandwich*, *Zygote in My Coffee*, *Nerve Cowboy* and *Babel Magazine*.

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besides, aren't we  
irish

shouldn't we have  
alcohol on hand for  
these occasions

i'll keep going until  
they finally ask me  
to leave

which is all i really  
wanted for i never  
really cared for the  
fuck

simply wanted to be  
seen in case the will  
will be in question

### **nothing but disappointment**

i often find myself  
thinking of you

the kids  
the husband  
the god knows  
what in your life  
right now

part of me is happy  
for you

for i know i would  
have brought you  
nothing but  
disappointment

but part of me is sad

for i believe that  
disappointment  
would have come

years after some of  
the greatest sex in  
my life

i'm sure you can  
imagine what part  
of me that is

and as i lay here  
tugging away another  
boring day

i can't help but think  
that little fucker was  
probably right

### **my cynical soul**

happiness seems fleeting at  
best at times when i see the  
devil in your eyes grasping  
for a blackened heart that no  
longer belongs to me

this bottle and i have  
traveled a long way

all to end up here

the sweat, blood and endless  
chances of disease

for this

no wonder the kids are stuck  
inside in a virtual world

where happiness is a three  
second come on in a chat room

where imaginary people give  
other imaginary people an  
imaginary life

while my cynical soul dances  
to some drunk drummer with  
a john lee hooker beat

and i'm convinced my prize  
for this adventure will be a  
cancer of some kind

hopefully untreatable

so i may die long before  
anyone gets the chance to  
not care

**poem written while the president orders me  
to go shopping**

sitting here struggling  
for the right words  
as i so often do

never quite sure what  
words exist to succinctly  
capture the hate and rage  
the love and remorse the  
despair and endless tortured  
moments of desperation  
that has become our  
meaningless lives  
here  
in this town  
this state  
this country of misguided  
fools

where the presidents  
are treated like deities

where the monkeys  
dancing while playing  
the drums are immortalized

while the teachers go on strike  
the homeless freeze to death

and the diseased stand in line  
for their bright red X

i'm just cynical enough that  
it all makes sense to me

but by no means does that  
make it right or just

of course, this poem would  
mean so much more if i had  
the cash to splash a 30 second  
commercial everywhere

sadly, all my silver spoons  
were traded in so i could  
keep the family land

just as the rich fucks always  
wanted it to be

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# Fox Chase Review

**Doug Holder**

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## The Woman Who Sat on the Toilet for Two Years

The Boston Globe, March 13, 2008

(Wichita), Kansas. Authorities are considering charges in the bizarre case of a woman who police said sat on her boyfriend's toilet for two years.

And when you  
Think of it  
It is only a hassle  
To get up from  
What you will revisit  
Time and time  
Again.

All that you  
Take in, in  
This life  
Is a wash  
Anyway.

All your slick  
Posturing  
The endless histrionics  
Will wind up  
In a dance  
Cheek to cheek

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the Dudley Bus  
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Doug Holder's work has recently appeared in *Cause and Effect*, *The Toronto Quarterly*, *Reconfigurations*, and others. He is the founder of the Ibbetson Street Press, and the Boston editor for *Poesy Magazine*. His poetry collection, *The Man in the Booth in the Midtown Tunnel* was released in the summer of 2008 by the Cervena Barva Press.

Above the bowl.

All your  
Upstream paddling  
Leads to those  
Placid waters  
And royalty  
Yes  
Even a king  
Will make his  
Royal flush.

*\* From the collection The Man in the Booth in the Midtown  
Tunnel (Cervena Barva Press)*

### **I Saw Myself on the Dudley Bus that Day**

I saw myself on the Dudley bus that day  
The eyes: a blinking, flirt  
With the mid-winter's sun—  
Watching  
The slow, fade  
Of a dying afternoon,  
His face shadowed  
In five o'clock.

Half-light,  
No hair.  
A bus of exiles  
Each mired  
In their personal  
Affairs.

And that man,  
Perhaps me?  
Looked a million  
Miles away.

I believe I saw  
Him briefly yesterday  
And for a first time  
On that day  
We saw each other  
And quickly

Turned away.

*\* From the collection The Man in the Booth in the Midtown Tunnel (Cervena Barva Press)*

### **Stampede at Wal-Mart**

*\*(AP) A Wal-Mart worker was killed yesterday after an Out of control throng of shoppers eager for post-Thanksgiving bargains broke down the doors at a suburban store, knocked him down and trampled him to death.*

They pressed  
Against the doors  
Their heated breath  
In conflict with the very cold.  
Religious fundamentalists of sorts,  
In a murderous stampede  
To their Mecca  
Breaking down the door  
Their leaden feet  
Pounding the brittle bones  
Of the fallen—  
For gifts  
When a baby Jesus was born,  
For discounts, their fervor,  
Their bloody, blinding storm.

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# Fox Chase Review

Peter Krok

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## Existential Licks

The  
jazzman  
perches  
under an eave  
while his sax  
riffs  
corners  
until  
the closing  
of lights  
when  
dragging

h  
i  
s m  
u  
s  
i  
c  
h  
e  
f  
a  
d  
e t.  
s u



Peter Krok is the editor of the *Schuylkill Valley Journal* and serves as the humanities/poetry director of the Manayunk Art Center where he has coordinated a literary series since 1990. Because of his identification with row house and red brick Philadelphia, he is often referred to as "the red brick poet." His poems have appeared in the **Yearbook of American Poetry**,

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Go](#)

## Metamorphosis

Some nights under covers  
rantings disturb my skin.  
I change within. I take on claws  
and grin. I prowl the yards, dark alleyways  
chasing shadows and any moving thing.  
On the look-out for a scent. A squeal..  
Perhaps you've seen at night  
a yellow glow that lies  
there in my lit-up eyes  
or my stare by wheelwells.  
Always on the move, always ready,  
I pick my way and roam.  
The living entertains my eye—  
but the sight of the silver mouse  
flickering in the moonlight  
is the catch that most satisfies  
my tongue. When I slip  
the silver beast between my teeth,  
the streets hear my howl

## So Much Needs to Go

I think about you waiting for a bus to  
take you  
to your early morning job picking up the trash  
of others  
when you've left so much. So much needs to be  
hauled  
away. So much needs to go. I've thought about  
you  
rising in the early morning to get to the bus  
stop  
by 5:45. I've imagined you poised between  
darkness and dawn on a corner  
standing with a lit  
Marlboro.

*America, Mid-America  
Poetry Review,  
Midwest Quarterly,  
Poet Lore, Potomac  
Review, Blue Unicorn  
and numerous other  
print and on-line  
journals.*



The many times I tossed you a  
ball and  
taught you how to stretch your swing and plant  
your feet at the plate. Now you must make  
your own stance. You never liked  
your glasses. Now contacts cover  
the failings of your sight.  
May you find the way  
and see the light.

May the needle's end not be your end.  
The last withdrawal have been your last.  
May the double-dealer not spot you  
in an alley seeking that fix that  
is no fix. May the morning star  
that hails the way find you  
on the corner waiting.  
May tomorrow find  
you rising.

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# Fox Chase Review

**Lynn Levin**

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## **Annie Morris**

Pinot noir is the new merlot.  
Mustard the new salsa.  
Zoloft used to be the new Prozac,  
but now it's Lexapro.  
Wireless is the new wired.  
Words aren't printed anymore:  
they're posted on the net.  
Who knows if in ten years  
there will still be books  
or either one of us?  
Marriage is the new divorce.  
Abstinence the new desire.  
Before I met you, Annie, I didn't know  
how meek I was or how angry

## ***Poems on this Page***

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Lynn Levin is the author of three collections of poems, *Fair Creatures of an Hour* (forthcoming in 2009), *Imaginarium*, and *A Few Questions about Paradise* (2000), all published by Loonfeather Press. *Imaginarium* was a finalist for *ForeWord*

Magazine's 2005 Book of the Year Award. Her poems have appeared in *Cimarron Review*, *5 AM*, *Boulevard*, *The Schuylkill Valley Journal of the Arts*, *Hunger Mountain*, *Margie*, on Garrison Keillor's show, *The Writer's Almanac*, *Verse Daily*, and many other places. Lynn Levin teaches at the University of Pennsylvania and at Drexel University, where she is also the executive producer of the TV show, *The Drexel InterView™*.

or anyone who'd lived  
as many lives as you,  
the long-haired and entirely romantic,  
the always-looking-thirty-five.

So much has changed  
the old routine. You've married  
your bonnie boy and moved away.

Now to whom can I complain  
my same old complaints and  
to whom can I open my heart?

To no one, dear friend,  
have I ever opened my heart.

### **Avalon**

About to seek a new life overseas, as if to  
Avalon

he goes, he speaks so strangely of his taking  
leave—

no job, no flat, no health protection  
for his grave disease. My friend confessed  
to me that what he held most dear was not  
his chaired professorship, his academic work  
the decades he spent steering students  
through the cantos and the odes. But those two  
years

with his man—their nights of books and talk,  
wine with friends, chicken in the pot:  
the old rages roaring but the heart caught.  
Now the good lease is up. His Arthur's in the  
vale,  
salted in the urn, and my friend's gone  
to seek the grievous world again or Avalon.

### **Sleepless Johnston**

*About Norman Johnston, who almost got away...*

When the city lights came on  
and the air turned gray,  
Sleepless Johnston finished filing through  
his bars and ran away.  
He flew through Pennsylvania  
in a green hot-wired Olds.  
He left a dummy on his cot  
made of prison clothes.  
Had coins to call his cousins  
and marathon running shoes—  
the gifts of a nurse who loved him  
or wanted some of his loot.  
Johnston, they said, had millions tied  
up in high-tech stocks,  
or hidden away in Cayman banks

or stuffed in a cardboard box.

But maybe he had nothing left  
and was after black revenge,  
was weary of doing life in jail  
and had to go home again.

He dreamed his mom would fry him eggs,  
let him bathe and sleep  
a good long sleep to die for  
on daisy-covered sheets.

But Johnston was a menace—a thief  
and murderer as well.

He shot three young men at least  
and killed a teenage girl.

Forty grand the lawmen promised;  
a price they swore they'd pay  
to any soul who'd help them catch  
this cunning runaway.

In a tavern a trooper saw him  
having a smoke and a beer,  
but Sleepless fled like a vision of Elvis  
when the cop came near.

Oh, there were plenty of sightings  
though most of them were fake.

Line workers called in phony clues



for slippery Johnston's sake.  
He haunted all the pay phones  
begging cousins for a bed.  
Yet most hung up when Sleepless rang.  
At last one kinsman said:  
The law has us surrounded.  
You can't come over here.  
Keep running, man. Wing like a bat  
or hide like a deer.  
But after twenty years in jail  
familiar woods were few.  
Developers had subdivided  
the countryside he knew.  
Patrol cars right behind him  
in front the rising sun,  
Johnston went down a cul-de-sac.  
Folks called 911.  
No dogs, no guns, no searchlights  
only rest and peace  
were the things that Sleepless wanted  
as he walked to the police,  
and gave up by a bird bath—  
exhausted, nearly dead.  
Sleepless held out his two hands

for cuffs, some chow, a bed.

He hadn't any millions

just his pants and shirt

and those fancy track shoes,

and the lost hope of the nurse.

*Note: This ballad is about Norman Johnston, a member of the notorious Johnston crime family, which had operated in and around rural Chester County, Pennsylvania. Norman Johnston escaped from Huntingdon Prison in central Pennsylvania and was on the run for 18 days in August of 1999 before being caught in Pennsylvania near the Maryland border.*

*"Sleepless Johnston" first appeared in Lyrical Ballads.*

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# Fox Chase Review

**Jim Mancinelli**

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## Voci

The perfect lamps  
of syllabic light  
giving life to stone  
and sinew to ashen bone  
they are the tender call of vecchio stile  
grabbed by the ear  
across time and time and time.  
They are the voices of rose and needle  
they are all the colors of vowels  
and all the moments of beauty  
carved from the passes of the Abruzzi.

They are my voci  
my blood sounds  
our cantata.



Jim Mancinelli is a living, writing, working Philadelphian. His first chapbook, *Primer*, was self-published. His second chapbook, *In Deep*, was published by Plan B Press. His writing is informed by the spirit, the earth, the

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## Grace

I was walking along, looking

And I found a twig shaped like a man.

I picked it up, but didn't name it.

I carried it all day, as though it had a secret to tell

And I was the lucky ear.

As we walked, I knew that this Human one, this stick of elements

Bore many many blows. It came to me that we shared everything

Seen and unseen.

It came to me that this stick of brokenness died so that I may live with it for this day.

This stick taught me that looking is different that seeing and loving is different than all else.

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Elizabeth Pallitto

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## Ash (after *Sweet Fire*)

All that is left of our afternoon  
is the ash from your cigarette,  
seeds from the sesame *kurabiye* biscuits,  
and some tea leaves—alas—I cannot read.

Would that we had kissed, sinned, burned,  
that we were reduced to ashes,  
and that these ashes were all that remained of  
the blaze.

Are we too old, too sensible, or too afraid,  
of the dolce foco, in which I'd gladly burn  
touching the sun and never look back  
like Phaeton—

or die more slowly with excruciating pleasure  
ascend in the entwined smoke  
of two cigarettes?

But *le vent l'emportera*,  
the wind bears it all away,  
fire, smoke, ash, and the sweet smell  
of Contradiction.®

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[Ash](#)

[Legacy](#)



Elizabeth Pallitto received her Ph.D. in Italian and Comparative Literature from the CUNY Graduate Center in 2003. She has taught English literature, French, and Italian at several universities, including CUNY College of

Staten Island, Baruch College, and Boston University. She currently teaches English at Fatih University in Istanbul, Turkey.

## Legacy (for Catherine Carlo Pallitto)

*Their work is prayer,* says Sister Mary of the monks' coffin-making labor.

Regal cheekbones  
nose proud as a bird's  
hair, tufts of feather  
the faraway look of one  
perched before flight  
the hospice bed but a temporary nest  
for this bird-like creature.

Family history: tales of  
my Italian grandmother, mythic to me  
once breathed into life in words  
from my aunt's parched lips.  
inaccessible, now.

"Water?" I ask;  
*"Why bother?"*  
is the fierce retort,  
from this fierce kind creature,  
this three-time survivor  
of a new heart  
nestled into her chest the way  
she might have held a child,  
the way the tumor nestles inside her.  
That is all that grows now.

Yet the instinct to nurture is there still.  
Though she can no longer eat, she asks me:  
*"Honey, do you make your own gravy?"*  
And I: "I do, sometimes."  
Wishing I could feed her  
as she has fed me,  
she who cannot eat  
But I only ask for her recipe.

I imagine a rich sauce simmering all day,  
such secrets aunt Catherine, then a young wife,  
wrestled from Betty, née Donata, over  
white mountains of laundry from nine men,  
from the family outcasts she'd housed.  
*"Somebody had to do it,"*

she'd explained.

And then:  
she crooks a claw-like finger  
and I bend closer  
to hear the secret of life,  
my bequest from Aunt Catherine,  
She should know:  
happily married for 63 years,  
"keeping company" for 68.

*"Did you ever hear of Francesco Rinaldi?"*

*"Yes," I say.*

*"Well, I add a little garlic, chopped up.  
We like it."*

She nods in that conspiratorial way  
specific to Italians of that generation.

Just so, my aunt, the wife of my godfather  
Uncle Tony,  
whispered to me the secret of happiness.  
before she died, soon after.

It is the secret I share with you.  
It's that simple.

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Jack Powers

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## Communication

This, the anniversary of Jack Kerouak's  
Birthday,  
I never met him although I was in San  
Francisco  
In 1959, all the dudes were gone,  
What's to communicate if you show up alone,  
With all the dudes, that you want to  
Speak to, fulsomely, expressively, gone,  
That is a bust, circumstance, we will  
Gather that phrase to our carefully  
Wrought interior selves, as  
Mitigating sense of our care,  
Meanwhile, we will plummet  
Into clouds, which surround us,  
Then glint and fascinate the neophytes  
On our way, to redefine our  
Purpose,  
Disposed by all, we hold, the truth,  
No matter, what expression,  
It is ours, longingly,  
We are one...

## Feathers/Fantasy



Jack Powers started the *Stone Soup Poetry* reading series in 1971. It has continued to meet on a weekly basis for nearly 40 years in thirteen locations around the Boston area and currently resides at the *Out of The Blue Art Gallery* in Cambridge. In the course of that time, he has published over 100 books of poetry, ranging from local authors such as Carol Weston to Lawrence

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We once used feathers as writing  
Implements. The quills  
Satisfied the job they  
had to do. Soft as a feather  
Pillow in my mother's home  
The extremes of use, likely,  
Bedazzle us.  
We will never concur in  
The expression of limitation  
Concerning feathers.  
Fetishistic fantasies  
Be dammed.  
Free write, is freely given  
As our right, to explore,  
The Universe through  
Those toys we had with  
prismatic glass, instead  
Of telescopes

Ferlinghetti. His most  
recent chapbook is  
*The Inaccessibility of  
The Creator* from  
Ibbetson Street Press.

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# Fox Chase Review

**Thaddeus Rutkowski**

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## **Anarchist Manifesto**

I believe in anarchy,  
but not if everybody goes wild.

I want to be the only wild one,  
among the law-abiding citizens.

I want to be the hyperactive youngster  
among the fuddy-duddies.

I want to run amok  
while everyone else goose-steps.

I want to be the loon  
among the obedient geese

## **Pigeon Landing**

When Stewart was 6, a pigeon landed squarely on his head. The pigeon landed squarely because Stewart's head was square, or more like a cube. There was a flat area on the top just big enough for a medium-sized bird to land on, without falling off. Or maybe that was just how the pigeon saw Stewart's head. The pigeon might have had square pupils in its eyes, which

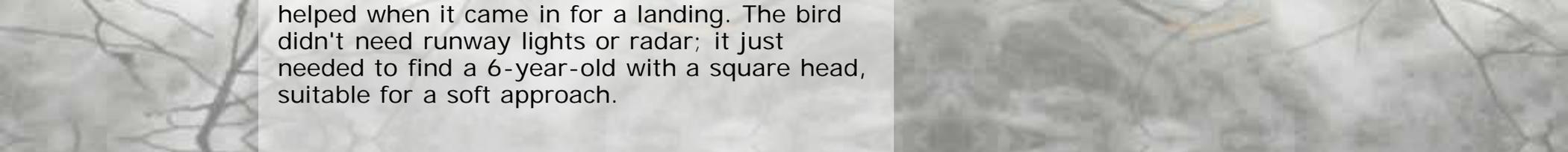
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Thaddeus Rutkowski is the author of the novels *Tetched* and *Roughhouse*. Both books were finalists for an *Asian American Literary Award*. Thaddeus teaches fiction writing at the *Writer's Voice* of the West Side YMCA in Manhattan.



helped when it came in for a landing. The bird didn't need runway lights or radar; it just needed to find a 6-year-old with a square head, suitable for a soft approach.

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# Fox Chase Review

Amy Small-McKinney

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## While My Mother Dies

Leaves brush against a window.  
One branch breaks, almost pierces an ancient  
screen.  
Within five dark brown sacs, spiders wait. I  
smell history:  
A glue gun. An owl fashioned with craft feathers  
by a grandchild. A gnome. The German word  
for garden gnome: *der Gartenzwerg*.  
Twelve bills unpaid: *Is there a grace period?*

*Oh, remember the print from India, the girl with  
no eyes  
and a basket? Surely, going somewhere.  
A, I am tired of being tired. Don't worry,  
I will split off the limb. Why aren't the maple  
leaves  
more ample this season? It's true,  
without them, we wouldn't be sure of the  
breeze.*

This season, the woman whose twig thin legs  
remember,  
wake to *Stardust* beneath her green throw, is  
called what?

Maybe happiness.



Amy Small-McKinney's second chapbook, *Clear Moon, Frost*, is forthcoming from Finishing Line Press. In 2004, Small-McKinney's chapbook *Body of Surrender* was published by Finishing Line and showcased, that same year, at Poet's House in New York. She was

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## Dillsburg, PA *for Pui*

The frogs have begun whistling.  
Black Walnut trees, their green globes  
the size of tennis balls, have not begun to shed,  
or to make their mess, though they secret  
walnuts inside. There is a retention pond,  
not useful any longer, but once good for fire,  
if one happened nearby, or for thirsty cattle.  
Now it is moss, chomped through branches  
carpet its surface, probably poisoned by juglone.  
I imagine, like to imagine, below  
there is ancient water, water that is glass clear,  
where my dead daughter can drink and murmur

along with the frogs. I imagine, beneath the  
jade  
smut and decay, the story of every person  
who has ever visited this house, who has ever  
tucked the sheer curtain behind the brass leaf,  
opened a window, at least once, for air or to  
look away  
from a stupid mistake made over and over, the  
story  
of every person who has needed to hear the  
high pitched  
whistles and squeaks, is gathered, and finally  
understood,  
while the frogs offer the only advice possible—  
Listen.

*\* previously published at r.kv.r.y. literary journal.*

## Letter From A Scarred & Aging Body

Dear X,

This is my ankle. Its slit of infinite e.  
This is my belly. Its brittle scab  
Of question mark. I told you  
About the car that buckramed

nominated for a  
Pushcart Prize in 2004  
and again in 2006.  
Her work has  
appeared in on-line  
and print journals,  
such as *The Cortland  
Review*, *The Pedestal  
Magazine*, *ForPoetry*,  
*Elixir Press*, *upstreet*,  
and *Blue Fifth Review*.  
Small-McKinney was  
guest editor for the  
June 2006 issue of  
*The Pedestal  
Magazine* and  
interviewed Pulitzer  
Prize nominee poet  
Bruce Smith for their  
April 2006 issue. Her  
poem "Nigeria 2002"  
was awarded third  
place in the 2007  
*Philadelphia Eco  
Poetry Project*. When  
not writing poetry,  
she works as a  
counselor for children  
and young adults,  
facilitates groups  
dealing with  
psychosocial issues,  
does mounds of  
laundry, and is raising  
a teenage daughter in  
her junior year of  
high school, so you  
know what that  
means!

Into mine. I do love these breasts  
Suckled nearly two years.

Still I disappear

Need I disappear?

\*\*

I love the brown brick buildings. Limestone.  
Do you?

My daughter and I. Light swipes  
A silver door. Someone is singing:  
*Oh What A Beautiful Morning.*  
We walk quickly because he is tone deaf  
And annoyed. We walk quickly

Though notice the boy with black hair  
Notice her and I remember

A boy with black skin  
Lifting my skirt.

I remember everything now.

Everything

\*\*

Inside this body—  
Memory—  
The hokey song  
Inside the scar.

It promises  
I will remain  
Light against your door.

Its promises  
Are not to be believed

As always, A

\* *previously published in Blue Fifth Review.*



# Fox Chase Review

**A.D. Winans**

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## Poem for D.A. Levy

It's all a lie  
Nothing changes  
The trees shed their leaves  
Like a summer tv special  
The undertaker quietly  
Goes about his business  
The walls hide messages  
Like greedy beggars  
The doorbell rings  
The telephone rings  
Nothing changes  
It's all the same  
The old man is thinking  
Of death  
The young man is thinking  
Of riches  
Poets have become exotic  
Merchants of death  
Butterflies are beautiful  
They have no desire  
To fly to the moon  
Like Bob Kaufman said  
"Poets don't sneak  
Into zoos and talk  
To tigers anymore."  
It's perfectly alright

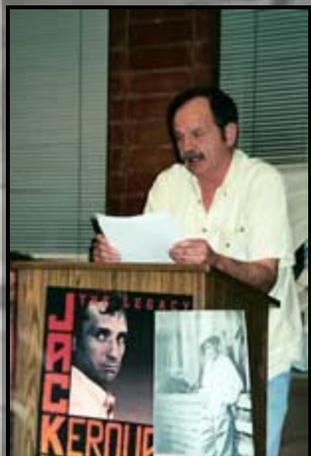
## *Poems on this Page*

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A.D. Winans is a native San Francisco poet and writer. He is the author of over 45 books and chapbooks of poetry and his work has appeared world-wide. In 2005 a poem of his was set to music and performed at Tully Hall, NYC. In 2006 he

was awarded a PEN Josephine Miles award for literary excellence. In 2007 Presa Press published a book of his Selected Poems. Cross-Cultural Communications published his book "Love Minus Zero" in January 2009.

To cast the first stone  
If you have more than  
The other person  
The Avon lady walks  
On water  
The blind man sniffing  
His way up her leg  
Nothing changes  
The boxing matches  
The bullfights  
The football games  
Go on  
And we go on too  
Like a tired tongue  
Resting between the legs  
Of a bored woman  
The truth is that  
D.A. Levy was right  
"some people just cannot  
Beat the system  
And poets can't even  
Pretend they're beating  
The system

#### **40th Birthday Poem**

I remember William Wantling  
Saying he'd carry a lunch box  
Just like the rest of them  
If only the strange muttering  
Would leave him alone  
Now at seventy two I feel pretty much the same  
Standing naked as a deadman's shadow  
Wishing I had been blessed with  
The skills of a union carpenter  
Instead of these heavy words  
Locked inside these aging brain cells  
72 years old  
Feeling like the worn impression  
On a buffalo head nickel  
Holding on to these fading visions  
Like an immigrant unable to escape  
The old country

The moods coming and going  
Like cloud banks  
Sinking slowly like the Titanic  
The ghosts dancing on the deck  
Dressed in fire  
And as each day brings  
Yet another illusion  
Harsh as a hobo's dream  
I sing the song of my chosen grave  
The lines dancing like a ballerina  
On a high tension wire  
While a friend of mine  
A success in the business world  
Tells me that like him  
I should make a list of priorities  
And stick by them no matter what  
But the hooks are too far in  
Too high up into the gut  
To do anything about  
A poet is like a train  
A romantic trip  
Back into another time  
He is good for a laugh or two  
Someone to converse with  
Occasionally sleep with  
And always someone to stay away from  
When he is down and out  
America is no place  
For a poet to grow old in  
A poet is not a thing  
I would want my child  
To be

### **City Cowboys**

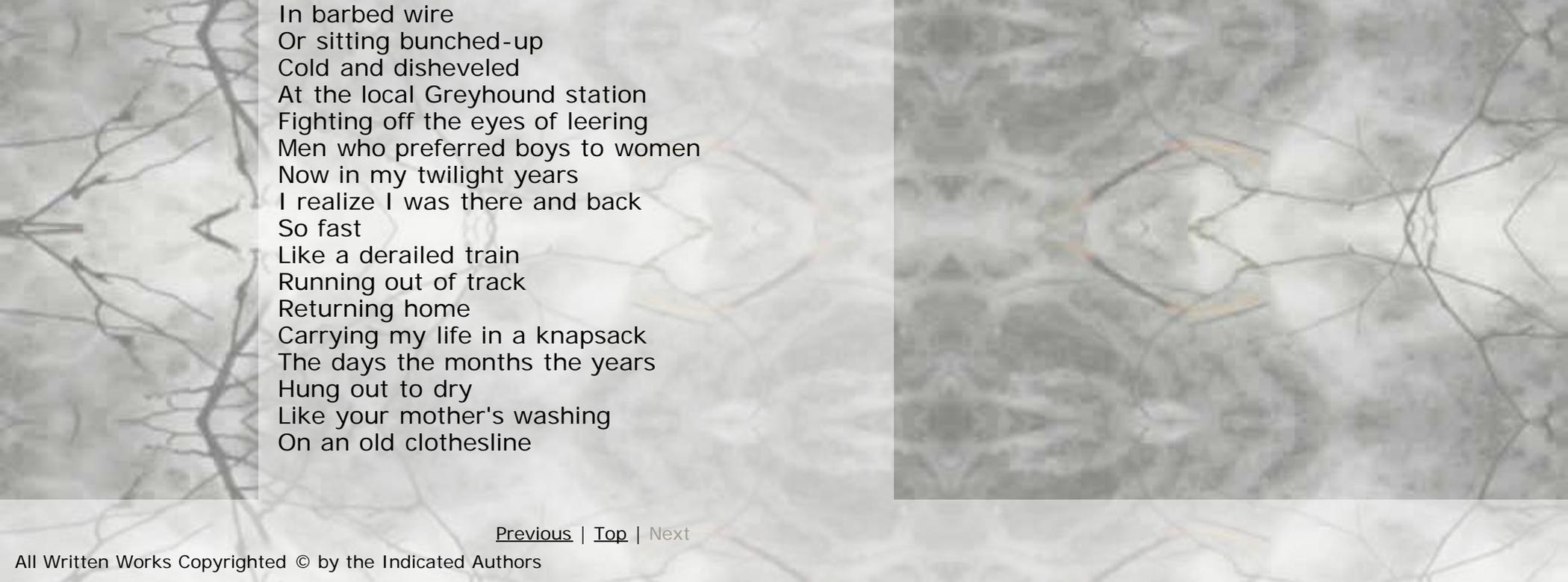
They look like rejects  
From an old western  
Wanted poster  
With faces no respectable  
Bounty Hunter would  
Be interested in  
They feed the slots  
In Reno and Vegas



Like lost Zen masters  
Carrying one-way tickets  
To Waco, Texas  
Thinking of all the women  
They have dug  
Their spurs into  
They wear their grins  
Like a sombrero  
Two sizes too big  
Their minds hitchhiking  
A ride to the past  
Surrounding you with looks  
Sours as lemon drops  
Their dog day breath  
Smelling like yesterday's  
Vomit on a sawdust  
Bar room floor

### **Going Back in Time**

I was looking at my scrapbook  
The other night  
While listening to an old  
Woody Guthrie record  
Scratchy as a smoker's cough  
After twenty years  
Of lung destruction  
And there I was in my youth  
Hitchhiking from California  
To Arizona and places  
Further West  
Heading in so many directions  
That it was like getting lost  
In the trick mirrors  
At the fun house  
And there were the women  
Then young girls  
Free flowing spirits  
Who gave their minds and bodies  
At the slightest invitation  
And nights too laying alone  
In tangled sleep  
Feeling like a deer caught



In barbed wire  
Or sitting bunched-up  
Cold and disheveled  
At the local Greyhound station  
Fighting off the eyes of leering  
Men who preferred boys to women  
Now in my twilight years  
I realize I was there and back  
So fast  
Like a derailed train  
Running out of track  
Returning home  
Carrying my life in a knapsack  
The days the months the years  
Hung out to dry  
Like your mother's washing  
On an old clothesline

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