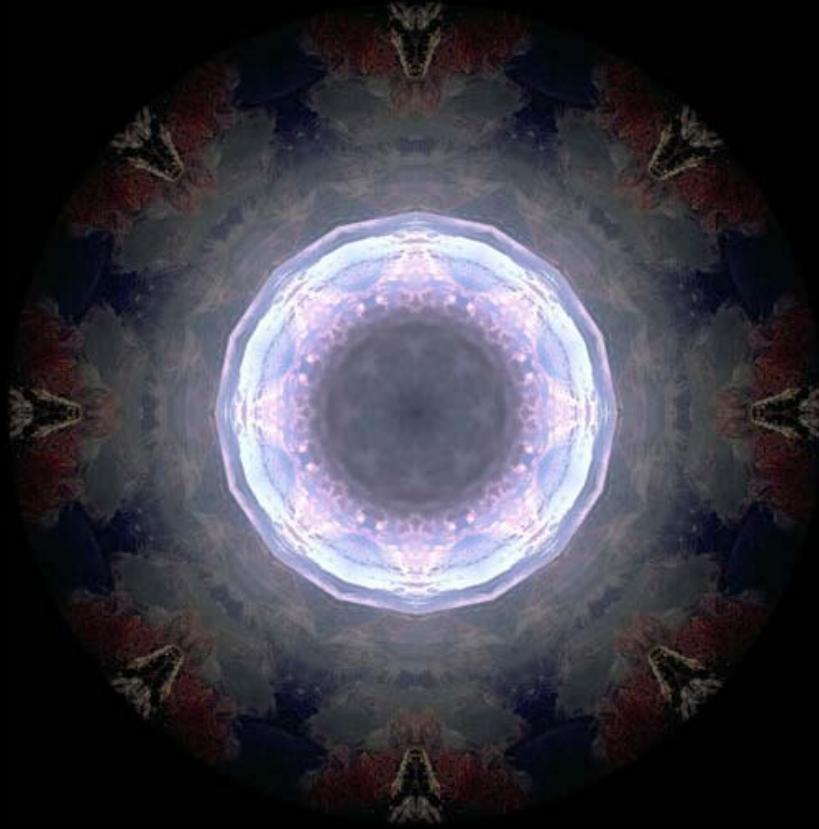


Fox Chase Review



Fox Chase Review

| [Home](#) | [Events!](#) | [Current Issue](#) | [Archives](#) | [About FCR](#) |

2012 Winter/Spring Contents

[cover](#) / [contents](#) /

Writers

Jenny Billings Beaver

[Dog Lady](#)

Jane Chakravarthy

[Time](#); [Decisions](#)

Natalia Cherjovsky

[Boxing Up Martin](#); [The Exorcism](#)

Will Cordeiro

[Lucubrations](#); [Ars Longa](#)

D.B. Cox

[the home](#)

Rudy Garcia

[Mer-Maiden by the Shore](#); [Perfumed Red, Red, Rose in Total Bloom](#)

Alexandra Isacson

[The Snake Charmer's Arms & Other Altered States](#)

Laura Kiesel

[Hair](#)

David P. Kozinski

[Last Letters](#); [Counting Days](#)

Leslie Anne Mcilroy

[Trying On Death](#); [After Age & Poachers](#)

Richard Okewole

[Circumference of the Sea](#)

Hayden Saunier

[Giving Blood](#); [Not Quite Spring](#)

Maria Takolander

[Electronic Music Studios](#)

Fox Chase Review

| [Home](#) | [Events!](#) | [Current Issue](#) | [Archives](#) | [About FCR](#) |

Jenny Billings Beaver

[cover](#) / [contents](#) / [jenny billings beaver](#) /

[Previous](#) | [Next](#)

Dog Lady

is already walking
up the hill, her flowered skirt
blowing in the breeze, eyes smiling
through wide wraparound sunglasses
as she waves wildly in your direction.

She rocks back and forth on orthopedic shoes
and talks to your dog, hands clasped
behind her back, thin whips
of short brown hair escaping
her toboggan.

She doesn't know what kind of doggy
she should get...15 minutes later, I tell her
we need to go in, she's disappointed
but turns to walk back to her bare house
dragging an empty leash behind her.

On this Page

[Dog Lady](#)

[About the Writer](#)

Jenny Billings Beaver is a native Charlottean, with a MFA in Creative Writing in Poetry from Queens University of Charlotte and a BA in English from Wake Forest University. She lives in Charlotte, North Carolina currently with her husband, Justin, and Shih Tzu, Tola. Jenny has been writing since elementary school. Her first poem appeared in a local newspaper when she was in the 6th grade. Jenny teaches English at Rowan Cabarrus Community College and works as a director at NOMAD Aquatics and Fitness, as a poet and as a freelance writer for *The Charlotte Observer*. She is also the poetry editor for *Referential Magazine*. Her work has appeared or is to appear in *Referential Magazine*, *Southern Women's Review*, *The Penwood Review*, *H.O.D.*, *Sliver of Stone*, *Poets for Living Waters*, *Girls with Insurance*, *vox poetica*, *The Dead Mule of Southern Literature* and *Writer's Advice*.



Previous | [Top](#) | [Next](#)

All Written Works Copyrighted © by the Indicated Authors

Fox Chase Review

| [Home](#) | [Events!](#) | [Current Issue](#) | [Archives](#) | [About FCR](#) |

Jane Chakravarthy

[cover](#) / [contents](#) / [jane chakravarthy](#) /

[Previous](#) | [Next](#)

Time

The monotonous beat, beat, the pulse to my feet
and I dance ...

Clear head now, don't need to think
let go, memories haunt me

Darkness around, yes, I closed the door
Left the light on outside
oh, I needed that safeguard

I fell, but restrained, emotions are claimed
through my veins, my head
my feet, my toes, and it rains
Soaking

But I focus on the beat, now
you on no street, but holding
a hand I know might just burn
any time

Decisions

The light dims from your existence;
the one, you danced with for many years.
The floor-board holds the imprint of your heel
A biography that is now cataloged at the back of your mind
now clouded by existential folly

Your shoes may break and your feet may bleed
but your flesh and mind will live

On this Page

[Time](#)

[Decisions](#)

[About the Writer](#)

and all of your existence is yours alone

Jane Chakravarthy, visual artist and poet. Jane's work is an exploration of her inner consciousness, creating her work is spiritual/emotional catharsis for her. She likes music, reading and vegan carrot cake. Jane's poetry has or will appear in the *Divine Revolution*, *The Luciole Press*, and *The Wilderness House Literary Review*, *Zygote in my coffee*. She is the author of *Love, its Wrath and Others*, a collection of poetry and artwork now available on Kindle.



[Previous](#) | [Top](#) | [Next](#)

All Written Works Copyrighted © by the Indicated Authors

Fox Chase Review

| [Home](#) | [Events!](#) | [Current Issue](#) | [Archives](#) | [About FCR](#) |

Natalia Cherjovsky

[cover](#) / [contents](#) / natalia cherjovsky /

[Previous](#) | [Next](#)

Boxing Up Martin

My husband doesn't look like himself now that he is dead.

It's that placid expression on his face; it's completely wrong. Martin never looked that serene while alive. I should have asked the mortuary to do something about it, but it's too late now. They can't just wheel him out, casket and all, to the back of the church to touch him up. The peculiarly tranquil look will have to do.

I know people will probably blather on; they will say it was my doing. The ones who know about the events last Thursday may even take it as a final '*screw you*' on my part. The rest might see it as a grieving widow's ill-advised good intentions. I had no part in it. Now, the pink shirt under the suit is a different matter altogether: that is indeed for my own private amusement.

The last time I locked eyes with my husband, his face was barely visible, protruding ever so slightly from between a woman's open legs. It was my fault: I deviated from our routine. Had there not been a misunderstanding with the reservations at the restaurant, I would have taken longer to finish my meal, and he would have had sufficient time to finish his before I returned home.

I knew about the women. It was to be expected—we hadn't touched in years. I can't remember who stopped first, and it no longer matters. Martin and I argued about everything, and his solution was to flee. The first few times, I rebuked myself for irritating him with my quirks or pressuring him with questions about work. I was certain that if I could just be a better wife, he wouldn't need to leave to seek peace, but find it in my company. Eventually I wised up: I was a good wife; he was just a lousy husband.

People arrive in droves and pile into the church. I'm not surprised. Martin was popular, but the fact that the ushers have to keep pointing me out to mourners so they can express their condolences is a testament to my role in his life—or perhaps I don't look distraught enough to be a widow. Even my friends' support is laced with hesitation. Still, no one has asked the one question on everyone's mind, whether or not I killed him.

I wish I could take credit for his death. I am not sure I can. My last words to him were, 'Just die, Martin,' which he then proceeded to do. He clutched his chest, a horrid grimace on his face, toppled

On this Page

[Boxing Up Martin](#)

[The Exorcism](#)

[About the Writer](#)

over, and rolled down the stairs. I must say that, sadly, this was the only time he so summarily complied with one of my requests. He rolled past me in a blur of flailing arms and legs. When he reached the bottom of the stairs, I heard a hideous noise which took me back to my short stay at my uncle's chicken farm in Kentucky: the unmistakably unique snapping sound of a neck breaking.

The medical examiner's report, required by the insurance company, stated Martin had a heart attack—the product of exertion from his sexual arousal and the jog to catch up with me as I ran out of the house, even if those details won't make it to the official document. The cause of death, however, was trauma to the neck. He might have survived had it not been for the fall.

Of course, I didn't completely mean what I said to him—it was merely an expression of frustration. His infidelity suited both of us. I had no problem with him taking his prurient needs elsewhere, as long as I could pretend not to know. When the lid was violently blown off, I could no longer keep up the pretense. I knew I would have to consider the unthinkable: divorce. I would much rather be a widow than a divorcee—no messy division of assets or unnecessary airing of dirty laundry. Death is tidier. Only my dreams betray me now. Martin is in them nightly. His actions are not the kind that belonged to him in life, at least not in the last ten years. He is nicer, softer. They are vivid dreams, and every morning, in the protective cuddle of my somnolence, I relive the loss and begin my mourning anew, the way a woman who loved her husband might. Until I am awake enough to remember. Then the feelings recede, and I am numb again.

"At some point, you have to give in to it, and let yourself feel it, Ginger," my psychiatrist said the day before the funeral. My best friend thought she was doing me a favor by summoning professional help. I don't even know why I saw the woman twice a week for eight years. I have never been much for emotional vomiting.

"Feel what?"

"The pain."

"There *is* no pain."

"Anger then." She knew about the women.

"Fuck him," I said. "There. That's as much anger as I am willing to invest in him."

Once the funeral and the reception are over, and everyone has cleared out of the house, I decide to box up Martin. I feel the urge to eradicate all traces of him from the house and reclaim his space as mine. I start by removing every single one of his photographs and replacing them with pictures of friends and family. It's funny how the absence of photographs can almost negate someone's entire existence. I do not burn them or shred them. I organize, box, and label his belongings. Later, I'll ship them to my daughter under the pretext that I miss him so much that seeing his stuff around only upsets me. I have spared Trish the truth about her father—just because I have no love or respect left for the man, it doesn't mean she should be deprived of either.

The bedroom is easy enough. Martin all but exiled himself from it years ago. His insomnia worsened over the last decade, and he spent most nights reading in his study. I can't remember the last time he was in bed next to me when I awoke. Still, after clearing his nightstand, I dispose of the old cotton sheets and replace them with new satin ones, the type that Martin couldn't sleep on because of his allergies. It is a silly detail, but it feels like an act of emancipation.

I tackle the walk-in closet and bathroom next. His wardrobe, which consists of expensive high couture suits and ridiculous golf outfits, fits into two large boxes; his toiletries don't even amount to half a trash bag. I move to the kitchen, where I discard the take-out menus and frozen gourmet dinners that were the mainstay of his diet.

There isn't a trace of him left anywhere except in his study, his lair. It is the last room I pack up. Unfortunately, I can't just dump the contents into a box. I have to leaf through paperwork more thoroughly. There are important documents I need. I have promised his partners I will gather all material pertaining to the company for them. Gene, our lawyer, will be by within the week to sort out most of the affairs. Even if he failed as a husband, Martin was a good provider. He made sure I would be taken care of financially in his absence.

Being in his room feels inappropriate. I am an intruder in my own home. After we stopped communicating, Martin took to locking himself up in his study as soon as he set foot in the house, only venturing out for sporadic morning jaunts to the garden and frequent sojourns to the kitchen and bathroom. The room smells of stale cigar smoke—Montecristos, if I remember correctly—and his Polo aftershave.

His desk and cabinets are in utter disarray. There is no apparent logic or pattern to his filing. Nothing that merits the term 'method.' I start sifting through the papers in no particular order, making provisional piles. In the back left corner of his top desk drawer, tucked under a manila folder, lies a stack of papers secured with a rubber band: letters. There are a few dozen of them, addressed to his P.O. Box in round, neat cursive: a woman's handwriting. The sender is Dinah Peterson—a name I recognize. I know her as an industry associate, but it is obvious from the care that has gone into safeguarding these letters that they are no ordinary business correspondence.

I hesitate, unsure whether I want to be privy to details. The call girls were one thing; he had expensive taste and his indiscretions routinely showed up on our joint credit card statements, suitably tagged as 'entertainment.' I'd even assumed he'd had the occasional fling while out of town. This is different—a protracted relationship presupposes a level of intimacy I am content to believe he was no longer capable of. A stable partner would mean he just wasn't capable of it with me. I open the envelope with the most recent postmark date, take out the single page, and unfold it.

*Dearest Martin,
I received your letter yesterday, and it made me smile. I'm glad Trish is doing well in Prague. It reminded me of our trip through Europe. Do you remember? We were so young. We knew so little. And yet, we were so very happy.*

It's great to know business is good. I never fret about your finances. You were always destined to do well. Maybe you ought to relax a bit, take some time off. It would give you and Ginger the time you need to find each other again. It sounds like things haven't improved. I'm so sorry. I could sense the sadness in your tone.

Talk to her, Martin. Tell her you are sorry—as many times as it takes. It can't be easy for her to forgive; or forget, for that matter. Why can you tell me how much you love her and miss her, but you can't tell her? If she knew, she might change her mind. I admire her. She is a stronger woman than I am, Martin. Had you done that to me, I would have walked away.

Anyway, that's irrelevant now. Everything here is going well. Of course I will keep you posted on the new venture. Keep your fingers crossed for me.

*Yours always,
Dinah*

For the first time in a decade, I cry—mostly for the blunders, and the words that will remain unspoken; for the expanse between us, which we were unwilling or unable to traverse, and the needs we starved, originally out of spite, and then just out of habit.

One letter isn't enough to undo the damage inflicted over years of indifference and neglect, sadness

and loneliness. Yet I decide to keep one picture of Martin and me. It sits on the desk in his study. It's a candid Trish took with her first camera, before photography became her life. Even then, before the pricey art college tuition and the even more expensive soul-searching year in Europe, she had a natural flair for composition. She captured the essence of what we had been. Martin stands behind me, holding my body to his. We are both laughing and looking away from the camera, squinting at the setting sun.

Life without Martin is not that different than it has been for the last decade. Still, when the need strikes, when I find myself in a wistful mood, I unlock the door to Martin's room. I sit at his desk while one of his Montecristos smolders away, perched on the glass ashtray. Sometimes I pull out Dinah's letter and reread it. Occasionally, I cry. But when the craving for nostalgia subsides, as it inevitably does, I return the note to the drawer, snuff out the cigar, turn off the lights and lock Martin back up in his room.

The Exorcism

"I am not going to be angry," she told herself as anxiety took her stomach hostage. "Anger is weakness."

She was starting to regret her decision; she shouldn't have come. She had planned this trip with the sole purpose of making peace with the site—an exorcism of sorts. She had been hoping for closure, not resentment.

Walking the same streets she had walked so often, the odd sense of familiarity surprised her. Despite the fact that she had not set foot in New York City for twenty years, she knew the way. Completely oblivious to her commands, her eyes combed the surroundings for evidence of him. She read a hint of recognition into every red head of hair in the crowd. Perhaps she was looking for proof that he had indeed existed, that he hadn't been her creation, a grotesque figment of her overactive teenage imagination.

Before she realized, she was there, on her old street—his street. Being this close, even as violently distressing as it felt, was a private act of defiance, proof that she had survived, confirmation that there had been life after him and in spite of him. Coming to Manhattan had been an exercise in assertion, an opportunity to reclaim the city as hers also; a tiny step towards the larger goal of seeing it as a neutral location and not as his domain, a place where she needed his permission to exist.

Part of her was incensed that he had mattered this much, that he still had this grip on her mind, that he had been the reason she had spent five years in an institution after a psychotic episode. The scars of his transgressions were invisible. The only physical evidence, in the shape of thin scars across her arms and legs and two thicker ones along her wrists, he had inflicted by proxy; self-harm had been the main outlet for her torment, a materialization of his abuse expressed through her own hands.

From the corner where she stood, she counted down the doors. It was the sixth one on the right, number seventeen. She let her eyes travel from the door up to the window. How many times had she stared out from it, trying to focus on something other than how he felt inside her? She became instantly overwhelmed.

Something moved across the room, and she instinctively sought refuge, fearing recognition. If he saw her, then maybe she'd somehow be his again. She knew her fear was unfounded. She was thirty-five now, and she did not look like the fifteen-year-old he had preyed upon. She wouldn't have even if she had not had the nose job and the cheek implants ten years before, when she was still desperate to escape from herself, from her past, to crawl outside the boundaries of her skin, as if physical morphing might somehow signify a rebirth and a chance to get it right.

Lost in her own thoughts, she had started to walk towards the buildings. She stopped in front of number fifteen. The pavement in front of the door still bore the E and C she had traced on that hot day when the concrete seemed to be taking forever to dry. She wondered whether Eliza still lived there as well. She had meant to keep in touch with her. She had written several letters but could never bring herself to mail them. It was almost as if she didn't want any part of her in New York—not even an extension of her, in the shape of something she had written.

The first time she had met Eliza, Celeste had been sitting on the curb, disoriented and numb, unaware blood was trickling down her inner thighs and dripping onto the pavement. A year younger than Celeste, Eliza had had the presence of mind to comfort her and take her up to her apartment, where she'd helped her out of her clothes and into a hot bath.

A door opened, and an older woman walked out. Celeste recognized Irene Wolf immediately. She looked older and exhausted, but she still had those unique dimples, even if they were now forming on sagging skin. Irene waved her hand from side to side to attract her attention.

"If you are here about the room, you're at the wrong door, dear," she said as she motioned her to come over; to Celeste's relief, there was no trace of recognition in Irene's eyes.

"I'm Mrs. Wolf. Come in, dear," she said moving out of the way to let her in. "I'm sure you want to have a look. Shall we?"

Celeste followed the old lady into the building and up the narrow staircase. The place still smelled of spices from Mrs. Pathak's kitchen. She used to make the most delicious Indian dishes and let Eliza and her sample them until they were stuffed. She would let them watch her cook and tell them stories about monsoon season in her village in Maharashtra.

"I'm sorry, dear," Mrs. Wolf said once in the sitting room, "I don't think I caught your name."

"Oh, I'm sorry, I thought I'd said," Celeste responded, briefly disoriented. "I'm...Angela."

"Oh, you are British." Her face lit up. "We had a British exchange student once. It seems like ages ago now. Celeste was her name. She was lovely. Actually, the room we're renting was once hers." A loud thud broke the silence. Mrs. Wolf hurried towards the back room. Without even thinking, Celeste followed her. The wooden floorboards creaked under her feet—a noise she had learned to hate. An older man lay on the floor, groaning. He had fallen out of his wheelchair. His legs were twitching and he sobbed quietly.

"It's OK, poppet," Mrs. Wolf said, as she helped him sit up.

Celeste stood in the doorway, inert. The room appeared smaller than she had remembered it, less intimidating. It reeked of bleach, which almost successfully masked the lingering tang of stale urine.

"This is my husband, Charles," she said as she picked up the chair, which was lying on its side, its wheels still spinning inches away from an oxygen mask attached to a tank. "He was diagnosed with Alzheimer's two years ago. That's why we need to have a tenant. We need the extra money. Would you mind helping me get him back in the chair, dear?" She asked as she sat on her heels carefully.

Celeste didn't move from the safety of the doorframe. The thought of touching him repulsed her and scared her equally. Mrs. Wolf, who had already assumed her position to hoist her husband up, looked up, her eyes searching hers. Celeste felt the urge to turn around and leave; instead, she walked up to where Charles sat and crouched next to him, imitating Irene's pose. He looked even worse up close. Badly stained clothes clung to his withered body, which smelled of rancid sweat and cheap cologne. His skin looked parched and scaly and he had a horrible rash on his face. Karma, it seemed, had handled retribution quite appropriately.

On Mrs. Wolf's count, they both lifted his body above the chair and then down into it. As she was releasing him, he latched on to her wrist with surprising force for an incapacitated man. He locked into her eyes. There was recognition in his.

"Celeste?"

Celeste tried to pull away but his grip tightened.

"No, darling, this is Angela." Mrs. Wolf bent over, so that her face was at his eye level, and articulated slowly, as if she were talking to a child. She took his hand off Celeste and held it, patting it lovingly. "She is here about the room." She straightened up and turned toward Celeste. "I'm so sorry. He is mostly out of it nowadays. He has few coherent moments. He thinks you are the girl who used to stay with us. It must be your accent." She shook her head, as if trying to thrust aside a clingy thought, perhaps the realization that she hadn't said a word in his presence. "He just really loved that girl, and he was so sad to see her go." Her eyes grew misty. "I think she was the daughter we never had. I couldn't...you know..." she trailed off, her hand reaching for her stomach instinctively.

Celeste shuddered. She had often wondered if Irene had known. She had often thought she had to have known, which made her an accomplice. A thought got stuck in her mind: had Irene given her up in sacrifice, to compensate for her inability to give him a child?

"Oh dear." Mrs. Wolf looked agitated. Celeste followed the old woman's eyes. Charles's leg was bleeding and the blood was soaking the leg of his pajama pants. "And I haven't bought new bandages. Would you mind terribly if I just ran to the corner store?"

Before Celeste could digest those words, let alone react, Irene was gone. She was alone again with him—a moment she had dared envision only in her most intimate daydreams. Except in her fantasies, he was still young and healthy and she had become, by some sort of divine intervention, a heroine equipped with a range of superpowers, which included an insoluble courage and a mean right hook.

She'd pictured herself kicking him to the ground, standing over him, finally telling him exactly what he had done. How he had, in one drunken afternoon, robbed her of her ability to trust. How he sent her home a broken girl, repulsed by even the once familiar touch of her own father. How he had molded her to his desire: nihilistic, prone to self-harm and self-destruction.

But words were meaningless now. It was true he couldn't hurt her anymore, but it wasn't by virtue of her inner strength. He had been rendered frail, vulnerable. The victory didn't belong to her but to chance.

"Celeste?" He said.

She nodded.

"I'm sorry," he started. He was holding her eyes, and she saw the expression in his change. "I'm sorry," he repeated, his tone completely different, "I didn't fuck you more often while I had the chance."

He started giggling, like a little boy. His body convulsed as the laughter poured out more freely, becoming a cackle, then a cough, until he was wheezing. His thin arm shot out, his index finger pointing insistently. Celeste followed his gaze toward the oxygen tank. She looked back at Charles, whose lips were quickly losing their soft pink hue in favor of a faint bluish tint. And all she could do was stand. Stand and watch him run out of precious breath. The anger she had been holding back rose in her uncontained, uncontrollable. She lowered herself so their eyes were level. His breaths, shallow and labored, came at longer intervals.

"Well, Charles," she said with a viciousness of which she didn't know she was capable, "I guess you can

consider this me fucking you.”

With that, she walked out of the room, dragging behind her the oxygen tank, which she stashed under piles of heavy winter coats in the closet by the entrance, before leaving the apartment, the building, and getting lost among the masses on the street.

Natalia Cherjovsky was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Her two loves are teaching and writing. She earned a Ph.D. in English from the University of Central Florida, in Orlando. She currently teaches communication at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Her work has been featured in the City University of New York's *The Word*, *The Gender Gazette*, *Front Porch Magazine*, *Verbatim*, and *Open Wide Magazine*.



[Previous](#) | [Top](#) | [Next](#)

All Written Works Copyrighted © by the Indicated Authors

Fox Chase Review

| [Home](#) | [Events!](#) | [Current Issue](#) | [Archives](#) | [About FCR](#) |

Will Cordeiro

[cover](#) / [contents](#) / [will cordeiro](#) /

[Previous](#) | [Next](#)

Lucubrations

The bulb above my head swings on a hook,
out-casting luring shadows cross the room
where lately I have dusted-up on books
until my skull feels cratered as the moon.
I read toward some secret center, off

into my gloom. Shades blot each care. I pause
discerning every line—to no avail,
my errand gazing past a crux of gauze
where tremors in a mirror flair and fail,
dream-dark from wings of one tremendous moth.

Ars Longa

In the cold garbage-heap of night, the wind
teases out something like terror from among the leaves:
but quieter, not as final as the moment's urgent
evasion of always giving us what we never want: the rest
may say life is prose, but a few will press an instant
until it bursts with song. Before his death, Socrates learned one
last melody on the flute. The useless waste of it, the old
fingers still so inscrutably simple and right . . . It is late.
The moon is lost. The sun is made of cheese.

On this Page

[Lucubrations](#)

[Ars Longa](#)

[About the Writer](#)

Will Cordeiro has worked as a NYC Teaching Fellow, a staff writer at the theater magazine *offonline*, and an assistant editor of *Epoch*. He has an MFA in poetry from Cornell, where he is currently a Ph.D. candidate studying 18th century British literature.

He is also the co-founder of Brooklyn Playwrights Collective and have had several plays produced in regional and off-off-Broadway venues, including a libretto performed at the Johnson Museum of Art. For two years he has have been the Artist-in-Residence at Risley Residential College. Will has also received residencies from the Provincetown Community Compact, Ora Lerman Trust, and Petrified Forest National Park.



[Previous](#) | [Top](#) | [Next](#)

All Written Works Copyrighted © by the Indicated Authors

Fox Chase Review

| [Home](#) | [Events!](#) | [Current Issue](#) | [Archives](#) | [About FCR](#) |

D.B. Cox

[cover](#) / [contents](#) / [d.b. cox](#) /

[Previous](#) | [Next](#)

the home

—to my many brothers and sisters of Connie Maxwell Children's Home

time passes
like a breeze
grazing the tops
of un-barbered heads
disconnected kids
no longer able
to believe in humans
not knowing how
to believe in gods
we worked
we played
we stayed busy to forget
we no longer questioned
or expected
we learned that "silence"
was a response—
at night
we lay in army-surplus beds
& hummed softly to ourselves
lullabies
composed of resignation

on sunday mornings
we'd march to church—
the preacher
would tell us
how jesus loved
the little children
& we'd sing this tune:

On this Page

[The Home](#)

[About the Writer](#)

“jesus loves me
this i know
for the bible
tells me so...”

sometimes—after church
my grandfather
would drive down
in his hudson
& take me for a ride—
i’d sit next to him
listen to songs
on the radio
& admire that old fedora
he always wore
i wondered why
there were no songs
about my grandfather
i wondered
what kind of car
jesus drove

through fields of summer
burnt boys walking
red dirt turned inside out
by mule-powered plows
down endless rows
clods breaking
under bare toes
all day bent low
broken scarecrows—
stiff fingers
picking okra
picking beans
picking worms
from collard greens
cicadas droning
work songs
each one the same—
sweat-streaked faces
looking toward
unrelenting carolina skies
flying tiny
prayers for rain
that bounce off
heaven’s jammed doors

six-years old
& i knew fighting—
rage always ready
waiting like a rock
in my pocket

half-clad gladiator
caught inside
an impromptu
circle of laughter
glaring at my opponent
calculating the sum
gathered in his eyes
focused
slow-breathing
deaf to any sounds
that might distract
from the task at hand
reptilian brain
devising tactics
of pain—
a need to move
forward & back
at the same time
watching
for that first fist
to arc toward the face
world reduced
to a primal point
strange lessons
more real
than golden rules
that could not hold—
while some kids
filled hollow characters
in dime-store coloring books
we painted each other
by the numbers

these days
i still dream
of running away
slipping
into highway night
headed
for my father's old place
hopeless box
of bad times
decaying landscape
where echoes linger—
faint outlines
of old battles
that will remain unfinished

my mother:
voices in her head
drip
drip
dripping

like a broken faucet
louder & louder
until she ran for the door
like the house was on fire
i cannot recall
her face anymore
no photo smiles
frozen in place
her voice gray
like something gone

my father:
sleeping alone
behind closed doors
lost in drunken dreams
an imagined world of order
where everything
is still in its place—
outlaw time
is on the run
i cannot hold him
in my brain
features forever fading
i strain my ears
to hear a ghost
mumbling to himself

D.B. Cox is a blues musician/writer from South Carolina. His poems and short stories have been published extensively in the small press, in the US, and abroad. He has published five books of poetry: *Passing For Blue*, *Lowdown*, *Ordinary Sorrows*, *Nightwatch*, and *Empty Frames*. Rank Stranger Press has recently published his new collection of short stories, called *Unaccustomed Mercy*.



[Previous](#) | [Top](#) | [Next](#)

All Written Works Copyrighted © by the Indicated Authors

Fox Chase Review

| [Home](#) | [Events!](#) | [Current Issue](#) | [Archives](#) | [About FCR](#) |

Rudy Garcia

[cover](#) / [contents](#) / [rudy garcia](#) /

[Previous](#) | [Next](#)

Mer-Maiden by the Shore

You smiled at me
As provoking mermaids seductively smile at restless young mariners
And weathered seafaring old men, who spend their whole entire life
Sailing cupidity upon the sea
But unlike them,
Whose rum induced inebriated spirits raise an animated cup and toast
Falsely boasting of carnal rendezvous with such enchanting creatures...
I shall keep your bewitching and captivating smile private, solely just for me.

Perfumed Red, Red, Rose in Total Bloom

You pass me by and enter the cool, gentle, aqua-marine gulf water swells,
Barely knee deep, you rise on your pedi-tippy-toes
And skip your goose-skinned, sensuous-sensitive body over the surging tide
Skillfully, as the balletic, leaping dolphins do
You dive once, dive twice, dive trice, resurfacing, moist and glistening wet
The goose dimples are replaced by your semita skin coating itself with tasty sea salt,
Your mer-mane hair slicks back and floats atop the aqua blue water
Slowly, your lucent Rapanzel hair...fans open and wades on the surface invitingly
Surrounding you with a million entrapping love petal tentacles
Laid out and waiting, to tangle me

On this Page

[Mer-Maiden
by the Shore](#)

[Perfumed Red,
Red, Rose in Total
Bloom](#)

[About the Writer](#)

Rudy Garcia is an educator by vocation and a poet on occasion. He has been published in several poetry anthology books, *Telling Tongues*, *Escuchame*, *Border Tales* and others, as well as some literary magazines. He is a member of the Narciso Martinez Writers Forum, co-founder of the Laguna Madre Writers Forum.

**Photo
Unavailable
at this Time**

[Previous](#) | [Top](#) | [Next](#)

All Written Works Copyrighted © by the Indicated Authors

Fox Chase Review

| [Home](#) | [Events!](#) | [Current Issue](#) | [Archives](#) | [About FCR](#) |

Alexandra Isacson

[cover](#) / [contents](#) / alexandra isacson /

[Previous](#) | [Next](#)

The Snake Charmer's Arms & Other Altered States

1. Temple Meditations

While belly dancing, bending deep into her thoughts, sibilant voices flowed through her: *Always take your veil off slowly The more you work with your veil, it will become your friend Always wear pants beneath your tribal skirts Never dance to the man, always dance to the lady Yoga will make your spine strong Open your heart center, and visualize white light shining from a beautiful jewel on your chest Touching your hair while dancing is not an invitation, but never touch your body*

2. Kali's Hands

Her violet hair fretted & feathered into wild turquoises & peacock blues as she danced to an off beat duet of noir accordion & violin. Her belly tat fluttered, & she tangled in her snake arms while her vintage python spine necklace wound tighter with each rushed note. At last, back to the audience, & facing the musicians, she flashed her glassy third eye, hissed profanities, & spun back around, poised like a swan.

3. Sugared Absinthe

Between barefoot can-cans in gothic tribal fusions of drums & zills, her gypsy consciousness skirted into the Moulin Rouge. Her palms flamed with candles, & her tongue sparked with sugared absinthe. Other times, tented in a pearl of sinuous silk veil swirls, she waded into the salty body of the ocean, giving birth to Venus.

4. Honoring *The Women of Algiers*

Lounging with her harem sisters in the lush of velvet tasseled pillows & tapestries in Delacroix's envisioned canvas, she felt a mystical oneness. Exhaling *houkah*, her breath body danced with fluttering silks & jingling bangles as opium smoke floated through the Louvre.

5. Dark Night of the Soul

She was thrown off balance by the new moon as the wings of her soul flung open. She soothed herself by sloshing around beads in an ocean drum. During the alters of dusk & dawn, between the refined spaces of her thoughts, her body could never forget him.

6. Burlesque

On this Page

[The Snake Charmer's Arms & Other Altered States](#)

[About the Writer](#)

She practiced burlesque glamour girl moves while listening to Jill Tracy's "Evil Night Together." Inside the mirror, she loved peeling off her satin opera gloves but hated boas stitched together with cheap turkey feathers. Once she inhaled a fluffed feather and just about choked, coughing for days. She always saved her peacock feather boa, pasties, & dusty rose ostrich feather fan for special occasions & the stage.

7. Cinnamon & Cocoa Butter

She ensconced herself in Middle-Eastern music. An ice cube slowly melted down her back while she slid her head through temple arms & shimmied her hips like a washing machine. During chest undulations, cool raindrops slid off the centers of her body. Her tips always doubled when she wore cinnamon oil & cocoa butter.

Alexandra Isacson is an Arizona State graduate who lives & works in the Phoenix area. Her writing has been nominated for both a Pushcart & The Best of the Net Anthology! Her work appears in *>killauthor*, *Grey Sparrow Journal*, *Emprise Review*, *decomp*, *PANK*, and other awesome places.



[Previous](#) | [Top](#) | [Next](#)

All Written Works Copyrighted © by the Indicated Authors

Fox Chase Review

| [Home](#) | [Events!](#) | [Current Issue](#) | [Archives](#) | [About FCR](#) |

Laura Kiesel

[cover](#) / [contents](#) / [laura kiesel](#) /

[Previous](#) | [Next](#)

Hair

Somewhat like a strand of hair gone gray, I attempt
To rip you out right at the root.

Astonished by the sudden shock of opaque,
I gape at the white line, the white sign,
That tells me something sick is penetrating the shaft.

Like some skunk strike branding my skull.
(Is it my skull or soul I rip you from?)

And is it just a single strand, or the symptom of many to come invading,
Until my head stands—a canyon of colorlessness?
grass sprouting up aghast against a white winter?

I itch.
Could it be dandruff? Or the snowflakes swooning down from the sky
caught in my tangled mass of hair like netted butterflies?
I scratch until the skin sloughs off and the bone beneath bleeds.
At least blood puts some color into my braid.

Each weed I pluck out produces two more in its place, until I've been bleached,
The brown and burgundy shades replaced by signs of premature age.

I have been blotted out by your betrayal.
As all my pastels go pale, the hues and blues of my mood cinder
To a cool ice cube void of color.

My fingers beg for baldness and
Trichotillomania takes over.

Each yank is like its own small surgery:
A tumor taken out, the shoot of the chemo syringe up the tender vein.
Each pull is the whip against my Puritan skin.

On this Page

[Hair](#)

[About the Writer](#)

A field of gray

And

Once a Repunzel in the making,
Sloping her hair down the tower, entreating you to climb,
With a shining head of hair, thickly-braided and fine.

I have severed the staircase—
Step by step and strand by strand.

Once I had a mane of glory.
Now I wear a wig.

Laura Kiesel's poems have been featured, or are forthcoming, in *Upstreet*, *Amethyst Arsenic*, *Naugatuck River Review*, and *Ibbetson Street*. She has a B.A. in English and Creative Writing from SUNY New Paltz and a M.S. in natural resources from the University of Vermont. She currently resides in the Boston area and works as a freelance science writer and editor.



[Previous](#) | [Top](#) | [Next](#)

All Written Works Copyrighted © by the Indicated Authors

Fox Chase Review

| [Home](#) | [Events!](#) | [Current Issue](#) | [Archives](#) | [About FCR](#) |

David P. Kozinski

[cover](#) / [contents](#) / [david p kozinski](#) /

[Previous](#) | [Next](#)

Last Letters

for Judy

This is to say
we read your message
to take, eat
what's in the larder,
the food and even the liquor,
to go shopping in your closets,
that the maid was here and left
clean sheets on the bed,
that there is dry wood
stacked for the fireplace;

that you won't be coming back
and there is another missive
that delineates what should be done
in your absence and might spell
some inevitable questions;
that you felt alone
and very, very tired,
breaking in mind and bones,
angrier than anyone
could know

and to say
that we might comprehend
your reasoning would be
as close to a truth
as love can bring us;
to say peace follow you
and that we wish you'd stayed
at least until today,

On this Page

[Last Letters](#)

[Counting Days](#)

[About the Writer](#)

that we aren't hating you but resent
for now the bright, faceted, dynamic space
where you stood moments ago.

Counting Days

*"I wore my .44 so long, Lord it made my shoulder sore."
-Roosevelt Sykes*

If I could bind my time in a book
I'd count with a few fingers
the pages turned and understood,
the mornings I've awakened
with a clear mind and certain strides.

Between the ranks of lockers
next to the boiler room we sang
They Put Me In My Grave Too Soon ----
old favorites to be that sprang,
composed, from our young heads.

Onward Christian Soldiers
in the auditorium after dawn
put an old time religion
from a crumbling tome in my hands ----
fiery bellies, sordid guts and plundered lands.

"There once *was* a man who chopped
up his wife and washed her down the drain,"
brother Byrne intoned. Whistling
that one hustled me past the wrestling
room's thuds and grunts of pain.

Who brightened the sky with me, charged
as we joined like a bulb and socket?
Who stole with me through the stones,
picked pockets as we shed
our shrouds in a beggared world?

Days now are overcast with morbid
mortgages and false securities, caveat emptor
our default. A string of nights the pill jar
twists open and shut,
the dose unchanging.

David P. Kozinski won the 7th Annual Dogfish Head Poetry Prize for his chapbook, *Loopholes*, published by the Broadkill Press. He has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize by the editors of the *Schuylkill Valley Journal* and the *Mad Poets Review*. He received the Dr. Eugene J. Szatkowski Achievement Award from the Americans of Polish

Descent Cultural Society (AMPOL) for his poetry and visual art.



[Previous](#) | [Top](#) | [Next](#)

All Written Works Copyrighted © by the Indicated Authors

Fox Chase Review

| [Home](#) | [Events!](#) | [Current Issue](#) | [Archives](#) | [About FCR](#) |

Leslie Anne Mcilroy

[cover](#) / [contents](#) / [leslie anne mcilroy](#) /

[Previous](#) | [Next](#)

Trying On Death

He works for Batesville Casket Company,
wears death like a ring on his finger.

He's seen more love selling burial boxes
than most see in a lifetime, tears and wrung regrets

as the survived-by shop the display room, pausing
at the slightly damaged, limited-time-only models.

He keeps this in his face as he explains options:
cherry vs. pine, *Millennium Steel*, *Primrose Bronze*

laid out in a fancy, four-color tri-fold, the cost always
tucked inside his briefcase, hard as the bodies he fits.

Sometimes he dreams of his own funerary—mahogany
with gilded handles and an embroidered overthrow,

*the warmth, beauty and personality natural wood brings
to death*—the moon shining velvet on his quiet end.

Once, alone in the dead hours of the afternoon,
he dared lay down in it, surrounded by sweet billows,

crossing his arms in approximation, forever landed,
an eternity of forgiveness, almost ready—exhilarated.

But when he suggested to Mr. Batesville that they might
let customers try out a casket—test drive—so to speak,

his boss shook his head with the weariness of a moneyed angel
and said, "You get 'em in there, they'll never come out."

On this Page

[Trying on Death](#)

[After Age &
Poachers](#)

[About the Writer](#)

After Age & Poachers

I have a shed in my chest,
a place to store things too frail
for the heart, things that can't bear
the beating; insistent lung wind.

It is soundproof, so organs can't
be heard dying, vessels popping;
the bloodstream is more like
a trickle and cancer has a soft "c".

In here, I keep the never kiss,
the salesman's ring, bookends,
boots and a bottle—a toolbox to fix
love after age and poachers.

It is simonized and shingled,
boxes stacked over the damp
corner where storms seep in
despite the sealant, the stripping.

Come in with me now if you
need something—the seeds
we never planted, turpentine,
shellac, a shovel, a nail, a vice.

But remember, when you shut
the door, the heart is silent,
the light, stingy, and the one thing
you want, impossible to find.

Leslie Anne McIlroy won the 2001 Word Press Poetry Prize for her full-length collection *Rare Space* and the 1997 Slipstream Poetry Chapbook Prize for her chapbook *Gravel*. She also took first place in the 1997 Chicago Literary Awards Competition judged by Gerald Stern. Her second full-length book, *Liquid Like This*, was published by Word Press in 2008. Leslie's work appears in numerous publications including *American Poetry: The Next Generation*, *Dogwood*, *The Emily Dickinson Award Anthology*, *The Ledge*, *The Mississippi Review*, and the *Nimrod International Journal of Prose & Poetry* and *Pearl*. Leslie works as a copywriter in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where she lives with her daughter Silas, and writer/guitarist, Don Bertschman, with whom she also performs poetry.



Fox Chase Review

| [Home](#) | [Events!](#) | [Current Issue](#) | [Archives](#) | [About FCR](#) |

Richard Okewole

[cover](#) / [contents](#) / richard okewole /

[Previous](#) | [Next](#)

Circumference of the Sea

Her body sliced against me
like some cold inanimate thing

pulls me closer into her palm prints
the new patterns in my world.

It would be easy to say that
she more than anyone in it

deserves the time to create her
own new impermeable space

but her love is like the Circumference
of the Sea

and I can only swim her channels
towards whatever unending disaster

I may drown in.

On this Page

[Circumference
of the Sea](#)

[About the Writer](#)

A teacher by trade and writer at heart, Richard Okewole fuses his life in his native home of Nigeria with his experiences in the states to create poetry that speaks on many different levels. With an African father and Jamaican mother, Richard touches on topics in his writing that force readers to think outside the conventional box. His set of unpublished poetry have been featured in *Polyphony Magazine* and *Anthology Philly Volume 1*, but he spends most of his time teaching fourth grade in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he resides.



[Previous](#) | [Top](#) | [Next](#)

All Written Works Copyrighted © by the Indicated Authors

Fox Chase Review

| [Home](#) | [Events!](#) | [Current Issue](#) | [Archives](#) | [About FCR](#) |

Hayden Saunier

[cover](#) / [contents](#) / [hayden saunier](#) /

[Previous](#) | [Next](#)

Giving Blood

In the elementary school gymnasium
a woman asks me if I've had sex in the last five years
with anyone from Cameroon
and it's the most surprising question
I've been asked in an elementary school
since the one about the solar system I nailed in third grade
to Miss Grant's astonishment, planets lining up for me
in proper orbit, spinning past on cue like beauty pageant queens.
Now, Pluto's not a planet anymore, demoted to a dwarf
for disobeying rules of mass and orbit
and HIV's been with us thirty years
so I think of brilliant Joel and James and Skip and Meg
all gone, among my early losses.
I spin a globe inside my head, try to pinpoint Cameroon.
Where is it? Did we call it something else in school?
Did they even teach us African countries?
The woman's looking at me sharply.
I've hesitated and asked questions.
She clearly disapproves of this. I'm suspect now.
She's going to check a box and throw away my blood.
I shake my head: *no*. No, I haven't had sex
in the last five years with anyone from Cameroon
so I'm allowed to climb up on the table,
close my eyes and give my blood,
eat my cookie, drink my juice,
leave with a bright red sticker on my heart.
I drive home with open windows
waving up at Joel, James, Skip, Meg, Pluto,
watch the bright bruise on my arm bloom like a galaxy
as I take down the atlas of the world.
We call it Cameroon. We always have.

On this Page

[Giving Blood](#)

[Not Quite Spring](#)

[About the Writer](#)

Not Quite Spring

Rain moves over the farmhouse
speaks first language
 to roof slates
 and rafters I sleep beneath

and everywhere this morning
 water's utterance

gluts each runnel
 each gully and rill

 from meadow to creek. Run-off
scours the dump

for fresh debris, unearths
 a rubber boot, a toddler's rusted folding chair

 sends them down the steep-sided
 wash with its boundless spew

of glass shards, bent cans, picture
 tubes, a sunken toilet tank.

I swear I'll hire men some day
 bring in trucks. I'll clean it at the source.

 Till then, there's consolation
 in sound and excess

 how underneath
the splash and gush down ditches

 water goes about its quiet business
 of ticking through dark leaves

 unclicking locks in the bloodroot and privet,
 skunk cabbage and cress

which, in less than a week
 will cover all.

Hayden Saunier most recently won the 2011 Pablo Neruda Prize for Poetry from *Nimrod International Journal*. Her work has appeared widely in journals such as *5 A.M.*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, *Drunken Boat*, *Margie*, *Nimrod*, *Rattle*, and on the poetry site *Verse Daily*. Her first book, *Tips for Domestic Travel*, was the finalist for the St. Lawrence Award and was published in 2009 by Black Lawrence Press. She won the Robert Fraser Poetry Prize in 2005 and her work has been nominated twice for a Pushcart Prize.



Fox Chase Review

| [Home](#) | [Events!](#) | [Current Issue](#) | [Archives](#) | [About FCR](#) |

Maria Takolander

[cover](#) / [contents](#) / maria takolander /

[Previous](#) | [Next](#)

Electronic Music Studios

The impresario, trapped by the light, comes across as moth-like and religious. You are to hear, he announces, what you are here to hear. It is all perfectly English, upper-middle class. Picture the audience below him in their sixties gear of various colours of vomit: the women's hair like turbines, their eyelashes curved like steel; the old gentlemen with their arms crossed; the middle-aged music journalists with pencil stubs. The beige curtains part, and on the wooden floor of the stage is the C-O-M-P-U-T-E-R. Purchased with a wedding tiara, the price of a house in Putney, it is unprepossessing as a box. A man in mismatching trousers and blazer, and a woman in a mini and skivvy, press buttons and walk away. It begins. Hesitantly there appear cinematic visions of the future: the absurdity of R2D2; the flashing emergencies of James Bond film sets; the paranoia of HAL. Finally, there is boredom. The three partners of the Electronic Music Studios claim on TV that music is nothing but an arranged pattern of sounds. Pink Floyd and a lesser-known band, led by a bus-driver who transformed himself alongside bare-breasted women on stage, buy the VCS3. But then the company's benefactor—she of the sold tiara—leaves for a sex-toy manufacturer. (That last bit, unfortunately, is made up.) EMS go bust. In a gesture of utopian largesse they donate their collection to England. The government stiffly declines. Removalists dump the lot in a cellar prone to flooding, where the hulking post-war machines date faster than time. In despair, one of the members retires to Adelaide, South Australia, where he resigns himself to writing symphonies and string quartets. In the end: Americans get the credit for inventing the synthesizer.

On this Page

[Electronic Music Studios](#)

[About the Writer](#)

Maria Takolander's poetry and short stories have been widely published. She is the author of a book of poems, *Ghostly Subjects* (Salt 2009), which was shortlisted for a Queensland Premier's Literary Award, and her poems have appeared annually in *The Best Australian Poems* (Black Inc) or *The Best Australian Poetry* (UQP) since 2005. She is also an award-winning short-story writer, with her first book of short stories, *The Double* (Text Publishing), due out in 2013. She is a senior lecturer in literature and creative writing at Deakin University in Victoria, Australia.



[Previous](#) | [Top](#) | [Next](#)

All Written Works Copyrighted © by the Indicated Authors