

# Fox Chase Review



# Fox Chase Review

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Lynn Levin

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## The She-Bat

Bats did not live in the eaves,  
you said, nor did bumblebees though  
three attended her in death. We  
found her like a crumpled

glove, brown leather, on the step  
before your study door as if  
she had been knocking there  
for a very long time.

I wonder how long the ardent  
thing had banged about the attic,  
alone, craving  
the lidless evening—the bat

without her mate, without a bite  
to eat (I do not think  
she had a taste for bees).  
After how much high-pitched calling out

and how much awkward singing  
did she fall before the door?  
I think she knew it was a door.  
That is what terrifies and grieves me.

*"The She-Bat" is from Imaginarium (Loonfeather Press, 2005).*

## Peace Is the Blithe Distraction

Peace is the dream you sleep for.  
Peace is a lily shared by two people with knives.  
Peace is prettier, but war has more to say.

Peace may not be possible with everybody.

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Peace is the death of history.  
Peace is what the war dead don't get to enjoy.

Peace is what happens when you ask a plain girl to dance  
and find out she's not so bad after all.  
Peace makes you forget that other people are planning your destruction.  
Peace is the hope that those who oppose you will also listen to you.

Peace is passing up the dessert tray of revenge and hoping your enemy  
will do the same.  
Peace lets you appreciate many small annoyances because you know  
they are not war.  
Peace is never complete, though one dreams of the fullness thereof.

*"Peace Is the Blithe Distraction" is from Fair Creatures of an Hour (Loonfeather Press, 2009).*

### **To the Present**

Jump in the air.  
Simplest tense.  
You are,  
but what you are  
I scarcely know  
since you keep  
popping in and out  
of existence.  
Rarely have I lived  
in your opportunity—  
but more often  
in old sorrows, new worries.  
I stand before your conveyor belt  
like Charlie Chaplin  
in Modern Times,  
behind in all things,  
late and quickly.  
Hanggliders and lovers  
say I should seize you—  
but for your is,  
there's nothing at all.  
Yet often my courage falters,  
and, like you, I am  
a terrible waster of hours.

*"To the Present" is from Fair Creatures of an Hour (Loonfeather Press, 2009).*

### **To the Future**

Fountain of the forward notion.  
Crossroads of freewill  
and dumb luck.

Science says I can reach you  
relatively unwrinkled. Then in your clouds  
only the faces of clocks  
will be as vain as I.

Utopia. Tragedy.  
Washboard of the mega-tsunami,  
hot tub of the warm globe,  
distant city of shimmering inventions,  
you only love

what's new. Nostalgia and loyalty  
with their pleading faces  
just annoy you.

Between you and me so far,  
it's been a pretty good run.  
Sometimes I even think  
our prospects are improving.  
But I know you: you embrace many  
and drop each one—  
for you always  
an endless stream  
of willing companions.  
Like me.  
And to keep you,  
I will put up with almost anything.

*"To the Future" is from Fair Creatures of an Hour (Loonfeather Press, 2009).*

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™*.



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# Fox Chase Review

Hanoch Guy

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## Do not be adorned like an ass.

The driver knows his animal  
so he puts a bell around its neck  
to announce the arrival of a fool.  
He adorns the ass with  
embroided eye patches  
to inform:  
"Here comes a blind one"  
He ties a red ribbon to its tail  
as a warning:  
"No good will come from this end"  
The driver puts just a little hay  
in front of the ass  
to make sure it brays  
and complains all day long  
rather than run away  
to take care of his assself.  
My friend; bray or pray;  
Either will do you no good  
Or stay a ass all your life,  
eat thistles

and give thanks to Allah  
you are not a mule.

## Getting God's attention

All screamers and fasters  
trying to get God's attention for years.  
Listen up.  
The most effective way to get closer to him  
is by brewing him a strong cup of coffee.  
Put your mind and heart to it:  
Buy Ethiopian beans and grind them.  
Boil it seven times

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When the white brown foam rises  
drop ten cardamom seeds.  
When you serve it to him  
take a step back  
because his rapture sighs  
may tear your eardrums.  
You will then hear the sweetest divine voice:  
Oh most faithful coffee friend,  
cardamom grains are deliciously  
melting under his tongue.

**Hanoch Guy is a bilingual poet in Hebrew and English, and an Emeritus professor at Temple University. Hanoch's English poetry has been published in *Genre*, *Poetry Newsletter*, *Tracks*, *The International Journal of Genocide Studies*, and several times in *Poetica*, where he won an award. His poems have also been published in *Poetry Motel*, *Visions International*, and other magazines.**



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# Fox Chase Review

Ish Klein

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## The Lonely Saint for Lonely Travelers

The lonely saint for lonely travelers  
pray to her. She is made of cheese-  
She will give until she is used up and just her  
rind remains- it is wax

In the sun it shrieks for God's fine print.

She is for you-  
you will keep going, eating and she will be released.

(Did you know that if you knew her loneliness  
you are likely to stop and get tangled.)

It is to be admired to walk along the earth  
to measure its meaning- the face of it  
to see it as it goes grey.

Ideally we'd be limiting the greying  
but this is what the group wants.

They want to sleep and eat and hope to wake in a better place.

This is how My days are now.  
I am an isolate with a phone  
I am a visitor who is not programmed to feel welcomed.

What is lucky that I know life is something to be had  
because we do not lower our heads to the earliest axe.

So that's there.

From a soaring agreement of birds to a human's head hanging down  
I don't know you but I sympathize and I want to love you  
the Universe beckons; or waves its little handkerchief,  
hello good bye you over there

you exploring your place, cage, call it as you see it.

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you, meaning me, stop your commands you  
you meaning me, who always said LOVE!

you meaning me  
LOVE LOVE LOVE

Can this be true and throughout?  
when there's cameras in the flies, roaches, mice and millipedes  
and they bite when they are bored!  
Is it all right to say love when one is eating everyone in the area?

Are we facilitating a phase?  
TIME TRAVELER TELL ME  
and when do you sleep?  
what is your heart's desire or mission?

I will try not to judge but I go from Robot Pope to reactor  
in nano bites, mini-seconds, spars-

Lights go over me like a goofy saloon but I am open

ALIVE

WANTING

YOU CAN COME IN

there is a bar that I am behind

see me anytime

## **Air Port Dance**

(Two Small Steps then One)

Within these lifetimes one goal is to imagine (repeat)  
a life wherein you are everyone: you stretch to the grass,  
the trees, the fuzzy moss, the birds the sea and so on. (Stop)

Your splendor courses through the shoots  
and you open. (Arms out) In my blossoming I have found  
above all the love of friends sustaining. (Bow to Your Partner.)

Let me tell you, this began in quite an opposite way. (Clockwise)  
For the mind was a burden  
before it learned to turn. (Counter-clockwise.)

Before, (stand still) I thought  
standing was for entities above this earth's hurt surface; flowing bright lines, beautiful and satisfied.  
In other words, not me. But then I stood. Stand, you can. (Plant a foot then glide.)

Yes in the past I was of a world which hated my words  
course discourse: statements made

detailed accounts of life outside humanity. Who needs that? (Get the knee involved)

When you can't see, you describe what you think you see (kick)  
reason inky- a brash display of blight  
a wish for guiltless sleep. (Now we shake the hands; you may still shuffle.)

However, a light comes down and you are found.  
It can find you anywhere and you are evident.  
It is scary or it was for me. To be scrutinized.

I'd advise as a preparation to know your own value. Your capacity.  
That you can be gathered up and cherished.  
Someone can love you. If I can fly, anyone can. (Fly.)

Hi. (Wave.)  
Each leaf is new at one point. It takes as much light  
as it can hold and then it goes into the ground again.

To nourish by being nourishment (get down)  
taken up (then up.) The tree will be your mother (hands on hips.)  
Phase one.

The home is never slow as stone.  
It is in there somewhere- the door to the heart  
can't totally close.

Look, I am impatient  
maybe like you. Swiveling my head  
and nether zones to figure out what next. (Swivel from the neck.)

This elixir I will lay on you.  
Your value and vessel,  
your light- a new bright tune. (Whistle and swivel.)

In my city birds can find you.  
They may not be your classic song bird,  
they prefer a holly with it's points. (Point it out!)

Points to hold off any rash handling  
and the red that was the dream of birds  
the green that lights the way.

(On your toes this time.) Overhead a blue to remind you of ocean  
you of constant forgiveness  
you in the know. (Be forgiven.)

This may hurt a little. (Right hand holds left hand.)  
Sometimes the soul is kept cold to slow it down  
during considerations.

(Zombie Holiday) It isn't dead. I do not remember  
what dead is anymore exactly. Our every act  
of life seems somehow recorded on board

a bigger being. The conscious creation  
of beautiful beings. (Here we swim.)

A dancing. God wants this

to take in your beaming face and form. (Take it.)  
God reads your every hesitation (step two then one)  
to break it like a code (one, two, three, one, two, three)

That one could be a baby  
and a baby be in the center of God's eye  
in order just to see the further fields to play in.

(Here we find the field beneath us.)  
And one, and one  
and one.

Actually, one, one, I do not remember this happening to me  
two, three, but it would seem to be what's needed.  
(Turn, two, three and hop.)

Blood rises and decides to move something along.  
What the one me wanted was to say to someone  
something that could move them too.

(Sashay, change places.) Does this make sense? Again.  
Does it feel full with you too?  
We change places between the leaves of trees.

A curtain folds and others see through.  
(Look close and let go.) Their delight is your loving another.  
A force pours through from me to you and changes then again.

Refined as for intention.  
(We bow to one another again) and that was no picnic: refinement:  
when we are tumbled with the stones to smooth the scale's hold.

(Roll to the right.) You will have died.  
(Roll to the left.) You have seen them dead  
(Rolling on) you have felt yourself dead.

Plow through winter, sometimes you are stuck  
when someone tried to warm you up in their innocence  
and it only hurt.

You don't have to move. If your fingers feel useless.  
Just remember them.  
Stay with us, I will change things.

A hurt person is smart to be slow  
as lashing out just cracks you.  
You stay where you are, I'm coming over- Here I come

(Step and drag) I am late because I was tired. I had to go through it myself.  
(One foot steps the other drags.) No one's rushing.  
I will rock if you want to sleep.

A snack is by the door.  
You are up once more. (Let's change places again!)

the green heart doesn't go away.

It is always growing somewhere  
something written on the skin  
of the person it's in

"Break my crown!"  
was shouted on his back and then my own.  
Remember the hustle?

(First you go forward.) That's how I got the crown  
(then I tumbled down) it stuck on my head steadfastly  
I was uncomfortable (footsteps recessionary.)

Do it too if you want. Find out about the phase of it.  
Open wide your dry mouth.  
Trust me the dust is not the same saying as your tongue.

I have traveled, trust me if you want, traveling music (skip, hop, hop.)  
Before going (and now I'm coming back)  
I could not fill the vessel.

The arms are water (making like waves)  
and now I think I am filling  
because I'm so full, I'm overflowing.

(Rolling arms) the ocean too has been called idiotic  
by other critics. I am not afraid. The crown upon the waves.  
(Join me in the waves.) It's in the hips.

Waves, let me introduce the sand, his friend the salt,  
and finally the rain.  
(Let's shake.)

One, two, three, one, two, three, one, two, three, hey!  
One can have anything in a way.  
You turn around, you pick it up.

This is how you actually fill your cup: Ta-dah!

Whatever day this is: that's this day,  
I am dancing on my own  
my friend is late.

I am in this waiting room  
doing the old soft shoe,  
the kick ball chain, the 23 ska-doo.

## **A Dog, A Cat, A Bird, A Thing Known As Human**

*for Molly*

Disappointment is a small island  
with a mote. It lives inside a city.

If the bridges are out- a result of constant rain  
a resourceful type can tunnel underneath.  
It seems to take all your strength  
but strength never belongs to anyone- it is always  
borrowed. It's delight is changing shape.

There are dogs on this island  
but they do not abide by the emotion there.  
They wait beside the person, they are a break,  
a different thing to gaze upon  
when one is retaking, that is, when one regroups,  
rallies the troops within  
to make the getaway.

You may maintain the dog is dirty.  
Some think this yes- because dogs  
became compliant at some point.  
I know they are no dirtier than I am  
though I only know a few dogs; one I knew quite well.  
He was eating a dead dog when I met him.  
This has never made me squeamish; rather it was impressive.

It was extremely young, the dog, ill-grown, the scary woods  
all around him and still he wanted to live.  
This I find inspiring. Sure if it were a lad  
doing this, I'd always be a little wary.  
But that is a biological formality;  
maybe even superstitious.  
Why should I think I'd be delicious  
and he always hungry in that way.

Anyway, as antidote to this there are cats  
who easily leap over the water  
who dislike water but constantly lick themselves.  
They are a little bit social  
their breath stinks but they will never admit to it.  
They do not see it like that.  
They think anyone who'd swim in the mote

or roll over a dead enemy  
a bit of a drip. They are critics  
but I do not hold it against them so much.  
They've been around, after all.  
They know they aren't staying.  
They know we don't always know how to get out  
and rather than sympathy they have developed

methods of taking out song birds.  
Those little guys disguised in feathers  
who portray the way to freedom:  
the open throat, for instance.  
Okay sometimes the birds carry germs too  
and mice also sing and bring disease  
so I see the system a little but still...

One likes and sometimes loves a song,  
unexpected, that awaits their own refrain.  
I love all birds- even buzzards.  
I think the world of them.  
I think this world is almost entirely their construction  
at it's best. A landing pad.  
They practice in the sky who tries to divide them.

The sky is a shifting mirror  
a keeper of times. I have never seen the sky on fire  
though I have had dreams- the sky inside my head  
and dread. That is because I am tense.  
When I am in the sky I divide the densities of air  
in this way like a sapling.  
That's right, sapling, I haven't got the knack yet.

On this island the plants that aren't vines  
are primarily bushes and saplings.  
There are crab apple trees from which we eat  
when we are totally engrossed in the apparent past. We sentimentalists,  
future diabetics. We are bent upon the discovery  
of the ultimate recipe that makes the crazy crab apples

taste great. We compete in this endeavor.  
It's diverting. We are here for a while, after all  
might as well do something useful.  
And it gets the brain to focus.  
Focus: what did I love to take in?  
What taste? and was it from the hand that made it?  
the salt of their care?

Irreducible love from the one who wanted someone  
to have beauty in their mouth?  
The care of their craft?  
It shows what they love. Trust me, the cooks really aren't malicious.  
Don't believe me if you don't want to  
but seriously, they are not malicious  
which is not to say they don't miss the mark.

That is anymore than anyone specifically malicious.  
And too, technically, the work of actual no-good-niks  
explodes in the oven  
which isn't pretty or fun for anyone  
but it's temporary.  
And then you know.  
And they know that you know.

Not that explosions don't happen from so-called nice guy efforts  
but they have different emanant smoke and lights.  
Different special effects. Why? I have no idea.  
I'm not here to judge.  
I am working on my own jam.  
I'll take input and inspiration and all that.

The tongue of three beings nearby.

A dog who rolls over, happy and nervous.  
Don't worry, here, have my heart, take it off my hands.  
And you, cat, have my admiration.  
I will make it taste better for you.  
The taste can be sour; I see that in your distance  
which has it's wisdom-

And the birds  
who can go anywhere but are here  
the earth's heart's words  
in the air-  
true I you love  
who lift counting continuously  
the shifting falling worried numbers above our heads.

**Ish Klein is a poet, filmmaker and puppeteer from Far Rockaway. She was educated at Columbia University and the Iowa Writer's workshop. Her work has been widely published to include her recent release titled *Union*.**



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# Fox Chase Review

**Diane Lockward**

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## The Missing Wife

Wife and dog missing.  
Reward for the dog.  
*—bumper sticker on a pickup truck*

The wife and the dog planned their escape  
months in advance, laid up biscuits and bones,  
waited for the careless moment when he'd forget  
to latch the gate, then hightailed it.

They took shelter in the forest, camouflaged  
the scent of their trail with leaves.  
Free of him at last,  
they peed with relief on a tree.

Time passed. They came and went as they pleased,  
chased sticks when they felt like chasing sticks,  
dug holes in what they came to regard  
as their own backyard. They unlearned  
how to roll over and play dead.

In spring the dog wandered off in pursuit  
of a rabbit. Collared by a hunter and returned  
to the master for \$25, he lives  
on a tight leash now.  
He sleeps on the wife's side of the bed,  
whimpering, pressing his snout  
into her pillow, breathing the scent of her hair.

And the wife? She's moved deep into the heart  
of the forest. She walks  
on all fours, fetches for no man, performs  
no tricks. She is content. Only sometimes  
she gets lonely, remembers how he would nuzzle  
her cheek and comfort her when she twitched  
and thrashed in her sleep

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—from *Eve's Red Dress* (Wind Publications, 2003)

### Organic Fruit

I want to sing  
a song worthy of  
the avocado, renegade  
fruit, strict individualist, pear  
gone crazy. Praise to its skin

like an armadillo's, the refusal  
to adulate beauty. Schmoo-shaped  
and always face forward, it is what it  
is. Kudos to its courage, its inherent love  
of democracy. Hosannas for its motley coat,  
neither black, brown, nor green, but purple-hued,  
like a bruise. Unlike the obstreperous coconut, the

avocado yields to the knife, surrenders its hide of leather,  
blade sliding under the skin and stripping the fruit. Praise  
to its nakedness posed before me, homely, yellow-green,  
and slippery, bottom-heavy like a woman in a Renoir, her  
flesh soft velvet. I cup the fruit in my palm, slice and hold,  
slice and hold, down to the stone at the core, firm fist at the  
center. Pale peridot crescents slip out, like slivers of moon.  
Exquisite moment of ripeness! a dash of salt, the first bite  
squishes between tongue and palate, eases down my

throat, oozes vitamins and oil. Could anything be more  
delicious, more digestible? Plaudits to its versatility,  
yummy in Cobb salad, saucy in guacamole, boldly  
stuffed with crabmeat. My avocado dangles from  
a tree, lifts its puckered face to the sun, pulls  
all that light inside. Praise it for being small,  
misshapen, and durable. Praise it for

—from *What Feeds Us* (Wind Publications, 2006)

### Invective Against the Bumblebee

Escapee from a tight cell, yellow-streaked,  
sex-deprived sycophant to a queen,  
you have dug divots in my yard  
and like a squatter trespassed in my garage.

I despise you for you have swooped down  
on my baby boy, harmless on a blanket of lawn,  
his belly plumping through his orange stretch suit,  
yellow hat over the fuzz of his head.

Though you mistook him for a sunflower,  
I do not exonerate you,  
for he weeps in my arms, trembles, and drools,  
finger swollen like a breakfast sausage.  
Now my son knows pain.  
Now he fears the grass.

Fat-assed insect! Perverse pedagogue!  
Henceforth, may flowers refuse to open for you.  
May cats chase you in the garden.  
I want you shellacked by rain, pecked by shrieks,  
mauled by skunks, paralyzed by early frost.  
May farmers douse your wings with pesticide.  
May you never again taste the nectar  
of purple clover or honeysuckle.  
May you pass by an oak tree just in time  
to be pissed on by a dog.

And tomorrow may you rest on my table  
as I peruse the paper. May you shake  
beneath the scarred face of a serial killer.  
May you be crushed by the morning news.

—from *What Feeds Us* (Wind Publications, 2006)

**Diane Lockward's second collection, *What Feeds Us* (Wind Publications) received the 2006 Quentin R. Howard Poetry Prize. Diane is also the author of *Eve's Red Dress* (Wind Publications, 2003). Her poems have been published in several anthologies, including *Poetry Daily: 366 Poems from the World's Most Popular Poetry Website* and Garrison Keillor's *Good Poems for Hard Times*. Her poems have also appeared in such journals as *Harvard Review*, *Spoon River Poetry Review*, and *Prairie Schooner*, and been featured on *Poetry Daily*, *Verse Daily*, and *The Writer's Almanac*. A former high school English teacher, Diane now works as a poet-in-the-schools.**



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# Fox Chase Review

Louis McKee

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## Thinking of Issa on Lake Norris

A big frog and I  
watch each other closely,  
neither of us moves.

My friend's reclaimed  
his marriage bed, and happy  
for a futon in the next room,

I watched stars move  
Beyond the window's end,  
then at the first hint of light

I concocted a cup of coffee  
and started down the hill,  
slipping in Tennessee

mud, and landing  
just right to see blue  
proof of beauty. And truth,

that frog I told you  
about: he had been talking  
to himself until he noticed

me. Then we sat dumb  
together. Today I can  
think of any number

of things I wish I had said.  
I think hard for what  
he might have said to me.

## November's Moon

### *On this Page*

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It is only the first nip of winter  
but no one is ever ready for it.  
I walk outside and stand close  
to the building, out of the wind,  
and think of all the others,

heads down, hands rolled into cold fists,  
holding on to the useless burn of a cigarette.  
Addictions bring us here, bad habits,  
unrequited love. While they suck heat  
and blow the smoke at their shoes,

I look up into the night, my hands  
crying in my pockets, to find  
the beaver moon you told me about,  
as round as the face of a clown,  
and full, in the deep black sky, with you.

## Sin

"These foolish ducks lack a sense of guilt."  
—John Logan

There is no denying another  
spring. The sun  
is bright, the day nice  
enough, I guess;

but I still feel a chill,  
and I know the creek water  
is cold, no matter the ducks,  
their stoic, stately passing.

I would stoop to pick  
a blade of grass  
but I'm afraid  
that I'd cut my hand. Again.  
It's too soon  
for sitting on this bench.

## Useless

I can sit for hours,  
I've done it before,  
watching blue shadows  
move on the moon,  
worrying over words.  
Tonight my mind slips,  
the country is clumsy  
with war, everyone's tripping

over their own two feet,  
letting things fall  
right through our fingers.  
I consider what I have:  
no matter how tightly  
I weave my words together,  
they will not hold  
anything that matters.

## Versions

Autobiography gets in the way  
like a shoe left on the stair;  
it's easy to see, there's no danger  
of tripping, really, but your arms  
are full, they always are,  
so it stays there, sticking out,  
not exactly a treat, but there.

Make it, why not, mythology?  
Let it float like a balloon  
sucked fat with gas a few feet  
over your head. You can move  
around under it, hardly notice it  
at all, except maybe for the string  
hanging down on your face like a scar.

**Louis Mckee** has poems forthcoming in *APR, 5 A.M.*, *Chiron Review*, *Pearl*, and *Rattle* among others. *RIVER ARCHITECTURE*, a selected poems, was published in 1999, and a collection of his newer work, *NEAR OCCASIONS OF SIN*, appeared in 2006. Adastra Press has published *MARGINALIA*, a volume of his translations from Old Irish of monastic poems. *STILL LIFE*, a chapbook of poems, is just been issued from Foothills, and *JAMMING*, is a prize winner and forthcoming from TLOLP.



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# Fox Chase Review

Jefferey Ethan Lee

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## For Etheridge Knight (1931—March 10, 1991)

Break—heart, in your madness—  
rejoice in nothing that is—tomorrow's  
the day Etheridge goes down deeper than sleep—  
he's gone out today like thin air—  
his life-force breath and spirit freed  
from the poor tortured body in disease  
will never sing again—  
what garbage this world is—  
heaped up plastic circuit lies  
and foam-rubber elastics  
stinking like deaths that can not be  
without what you sing—  
Mississippi blues and mosquito rivers run  
and carry you miles like the speaking drum  
mantra of flesh— bone— skin— tones—

...your echo calls me, then as now  
to say to them what you told me—  
but the no-good Nile and ravaged Hudson run  
like bodies of glass  
bearing industrial mass—  
without your breathing voice anymore  
the trees crack like old factory panes  
and the leaves bleed through black acid holes  
made by chemical rain falls—  
the inhuman moon loves no one anymore...  
Old friend— for the spirit of the wood,  
for the beauty that made you immortal  
for the end— the speaking  
and the hearing drums pound us all  
away into the tongue of purest sound—  
poet of soul-blues/jazz and song  
I know too well how I miss you now,  
first sayer of the sooth-said psalm that gave  
my voice liberty to swing  
when you said: "Just SAY a poem..."

### *On this Page*

[For Etheridge  
Knight \(1931–  
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and I heard your echoing power  
in each thing of this life-world...

And now all night in tiny pieces I remember  
how much hope and strength you lent me,  
your voice deep and gentle as explosions under sea  
as oral wisdom humbles hyper literacy,  
I heard your South with awe,  
your America a horror show of laws—  
you knew all along how heady poets jam  
images like waters pushing over a dam  
(and it AIN'T got that swing  
to mean any DAMNED meaning thing)—  
how poems for the page are aimed  
into linear ages that never arrive—  
their futures never mature into *now*—

Speaker of truths—  
what else can you be?...  
Sainthood's too high  
and prisons make a faith of abuse—  
You believed in your self enough to open the deep  
and sweet cells of the heart even in ruins  
no one could bear— your voice like a thunderhead  
made so many leaves tremble  
to answer your gale with words—  
So many times you started over from scratches  
deep enough to kill ten men—  
I hear your grasp of hungry pain,  
its pulsing rhyme of clash  
like ragtime tiger pianos—  
there every note strikes— hammering bone—

The world becomes criminally insane  
without you beating its cinder-block walls—  
without your refraining voice  
ringing out what must be—  
telling/tolling to become  
all you survived— transformed  
creating glories from agonies—  
but terrible beauties *free*-born,  
music of the mired-shit of foreign wars,  
so crises/politics/presidents  
become no lies, no liars, but resonance—  
a triumph no next wind can unhinge,  
your greatness pouring melody  
to and from what never changes  
and changes every thing...

Faithful to the abuses of these killing times,  
you lynch the stone-deaf denial in us all,  
you string up love's pain with laughter  
piercing your own heart—  
the first act of love...

You make milquetoast critics cringe  
as if human experience had reached *in*—  
as if your experience were *also* human—  
like Gwendolyn Brooks asked about universality:  
'Isn't black experience part of the universe?'  
But the harmony of this universe  
is part ripped out now,  
and only remembering you, without you—  
yet your soul can sing:  
*"so my soul can sing..."*

I didn't know till this moment  
there was anyone who'd make me cry  
    by just dying—  
I'd forgotten how to remember love  
till this moment  
    of breaking—  
I thought I was hollow as a chime  
but at this touch my space  
    is screaming  
out of the blues into the brackish  
white-water and the black  
    sea of you—

*Etheridge,*  
*Take heart in your madness—*  
*Rejoice—* even when there's  
nothing to fill the spaces  
women leave behind in the air  
when they're gone—  
*Rejoice* even when you say  
"What's the *use* of talking to myself  
when I've heard it all before?"  
*Rejoice—* because the heart  
is mad for liquid joy—  
and *asking* what love is  
makes loving into retrospecting—  
In the air you left for me  
the space is my own palm  
now pressed like a seashell  
telling its roar—  
*Rejoice—* fires burn only the cold.  
One wave follows its brother,  
and till I see you as another, *Rejoice...*

*Published in the chapbook, Strangers in a Homeland (Ashland Poetry Press, 2001); anthologized in And What Rough Beast: Poems for the End of the Century (Anthology, Ashland Poetry Press, 1999), and first published in African-American Review (Vol. 28, No. 4, 1994). Reprinted online at [Other Voices](#).*



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# Fox Chase Review

Dave Worrell

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## At the Club

They enter together,  
words bouncing against  
the frontier, both sides.  
A man, a woman, made  
even more foreign  
by soil of birth.

On darkened floor, they  
throb to rhythms ecstatic:  
her eyes tranced nearly shut  
by the hard roaring beat;  
her narrow hips undulating,  
her red shining lips pressed  
tight together—her slender torso  
yields to his grasp, given freely,  
nearly encircled by two big  
hands as Donna Summer cries  
and moans the pounding pulse.

Alien no longer  
frontier broken through  
hands interlaced  
as they leave.

## Thunderbird

Staring glassy, butt-smack on the pavement,  
he pulls off a shoe but the force throws him  
down on his side. Baggy sweatsuit and a big plastic  
bag that says **UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER.**

From the shadows comes a voice:  
*Just out the hospital and fucked up already.*  
*I told him—**Get the hell off Nassau Street,***

## *On this Page*

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*you drawn' too much attention.*

He's up again—a wild lurch at a **NO PARKING** sign, then he spin-stagger-falls hard against it and down; so I call nine-one-one on my cell phone.

A cashmere-sweatered Ralph Lauren mannekin, big hard nipples, watches the blindered crowd push past.

Four muscled cops, four EMTs. My man shakes his head **NO**; they strap him down. The stretcher rolls over the curb; his bobbling head **ba bump, ba bump**. The ambulance screams back down Witherspoon Street, straight to the Medical Center.

## **Pledge**

My refuge, by root-cracked sidewalk—  
first house, right marriage, slow fissures.

My refuge—your innocent bared torso,  
hair garlanded, back arched, breasts rising.

My refuge from love's stinging lashes—  
you brought calm, fat babies, distraction.

My refuge from cogwheels of commerce,  
through long years of deception's dark duties.

Ten thousand days and more we dissembled,  
patched, painted, did what was expected

till the storm, long forestalled, roared riot, tore  
through, laid bare our battened-down hearts.

We now pledge to clear the dense bramble,  
look as straight as we can at the sun.

## **Dare You . . . I Dare You.**

Last Tuesday after school  
Mrs. Nardi picked us up  
for Cub Scouts and on the way  
we saw two kids jumping  
real hard on the frozen lake.

When we heard the sirens,  
the whole den ran down the lake.

Mr. Smith across the street—  
he heard the sirens too.

He grabbed some clothesprops  
and he ran down the lake.

One of the kid's big brothers  
dived in the water after them.

The ambulance crew  
got one of the boys, but  
the other one drowned.

Mrs. Nardi took us back  
to the meeting. Then we went  
to the woods on a nature hike.

**Dave Worrell studied literature and philosophy at Union College in beautiful Schenectady, New York. His poems have appeared in *US 1 Worksheets*, *Mad Poets Review* and *Wild River Review*. He has performed poems at Chris' Jazz Café in Philadelphia and Cafe Improv in Princeton.**



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# Fox Chase Review

Joe Roarty

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## I Saw Chris

I saw chris  
he was trippn hs ass off  
it was hittn hm hard  
he was  
just  
behind it  
it was gonna hit hardr  
gonna hit hardr  
hit hardr  
hit hardr  
hit hardr  
hit hardr

maybe gt som juice  
bettr stik 2 watr  
cos its gonna hit hardr  
hit hardr  
hit hardr

we was on a bus  
goin 2 a train  
it was supposd 2 rain  
it's a hit nite  
its gonna gt hottr  
gt hottr  
gt hottr

cos its summertime

u no how it feels  
wn u go outside  
& u don't need a shirt  
u don't want a shirt  
u wanna feel th sunshine beatn down  
hottr & hottr  
hottr & hottr

### *On this Page*

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sun so brite it can make u blind  
u just wanna feel  
on my arms  
on my shoulders  
down my back

cos that's how it feels wn summr coms

that's how it feels wn its just takn hold  
u feel a jolt  
hardr & hardr  
u feel a jolt  
hardr & hardr  
it feels like sunshine beatn down  
hottr & hottr  
bettr stik 2 watr

thr mit com a nite  
wn its u  
ridn a bus  
2 gt 2 a train  
waitn for rain  
n th summertime  
summertime

maybe one nit  
it'll be me  
trippn my ass off  
trippin my as off

## The Good Poet

everybodys glad 2 see th goodpoet  
cos allu need is lov  
wn th bad poet shows up  
its like  
here it coms  
th good poet makes u feel like yr floating on fairy dust  
or angl wings  
flying hi  
as th world revlovs belo emerald turquoise fleece  
th bad poet  
pulls out his laundry list of evry bad thing that happnd 2 m  
wich is everything that did happn 2 m  
plus everything he red about n th newspaper  
holy shit  
u think  
gt a life  
or gt another life  
time flies  
wn th good poets around  
a supernaturally fast succession of momnts

glitering gems  
image  
sound  
thot  
u wish it was ndlss  
but its good infinity  
rounds itslf off  
nto a shining star  
hanging n yr mind  
wile belo  
churning n a sludgy pit  
th bad poet  
trudges thru his litany of resntmnt  
put a sok n it  
u think  
for gods sake  
put a sok n it  
but th god of th bad poet  
revls n failure  
nhabiting a paralyzd continuum of contradictions  
clunking around  
lke coins n a can  
o th bum u passd on th way 2 th opn mike  
tirelessly repeating  
cn I hav a quartr  
aftr th reading  
th good poet is gon n a flash  
despite being surroundd by admirers  
who hav so much 2 ask  
but he must b going  
so that one is left hoping  
for his resurrection at a future date  
th bad poet is th last 2 leave  
buttonholing everyone  
until u sens he wants u 2 take him home w/u  
or somwher  
that wd b like home  
a havn  
from the nvincibl days  
relentlss passage  
& the gravelly music it nspires

Joe Roarty has been traveling the United States for over 30 years sharing his unique brand of sound poetry. Roarty is known as "Chicago's Beat Poet" and since re-locating to Philadelphia has become a regular presence on the poetry circuit. To view Joe reading please visit him on [youtube](#).





# Fox Chase Review

Leonard Gontarek

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## Homeless Prayer

Lord, Summer destroys the poem  
Summer makes. I am at war with ideas.  
History is a history of madness and is without  
poetry. Power destroys Summer.

Transcendence is inevitable and gives Summer  
murder and meaning.  
The oak scrapes hash marks on the brick.  
Owl glides, goes silver and dark.

The bullfrog head inflates: clock, terrible song.  
Walk on the water while it is dark.  
Give into the heart as it wishes.  
Tear and toss bread, leftover wands.

It is at end of evening.  
Give god each cloud. Rented surface,  
is missing. Truth butterflies and flocks.  
Floods. Drinks animals. Nothing more.  
We mean to bless with *something*.  
There is water, see what fools of the dove we are.  
Transcendence is buoyant and gives the flower a gossamer sheen.  
Why we are favored in the Madhouse.

## Soul Pressure

A picture is all I have. All I have ever wanted to give, lord.  
The trees, diminishing: a tunnel & archway.  
The leaves I trample, lord, are not mail, stained scarlet, soaked cool in lime light.  
Mail & nothing. I walk. There is a child. There is a man.

Lord, I prefer the child smoothing over the cracked leaves, carrying home color on his shoes.  
Bringing a prayer to you, 2 or 3 words. Pilot flame snuffed out in his hands.

### *On this Page*

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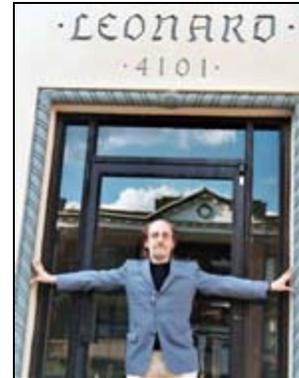
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Small hands that are yours, lord. Black, indecipherable, magnificent things.  
That are yours. Everywhere I turn. Everywhere I turn is a detour from the soul.  
The soul, a detour from the self, lord.  
The rain falling there is slow & terrific. 9 or 10 times I have observed this.

The boy you made, lord, loves the rain, cool as cloth on the face.  
Loves thinking of the leaves comforted. Worthy, then, of being in their presence.

The boy draws a diagram of when it opened. Fast leaves. Intersected lines, lord, of course.  
He is a dot. He is a scent. Compresses it. The way to you when he forgets it.  
See how he has drawn you as a crown, lord. In purple because the gold is gone.  
See how much he wants you. The gate to the heart swings on its hinge. He spits on it,  
with affection, so it will not squeak when he touches it.

Leonard Gontarek is the author of four books of poems: *St. Genevieve Watching Over Paris*, *Van Morrison Can't Find His Feet*, *Zen For Beginners*, and *Déjà Vu Diner* (Autumn House Press, 2006). His poems have appeared in *American Poetry Review*, *Fence*, *Field*, *Pool*, *Volt*, *The Quarterly*, *Exquisite Corpse*, *Hanging Loose*, *Poetry Northwest*, *Blackbird* and *The Best American Poetry* (Paul Muldoon, editor). His poems also appear in the anthologies *Joyful Noise! American Spiritual Poetry* and *The Working Poet*. He has been nominated five times for the Pushcart Prize, and twice received poetry fellowships from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. He conducts poetry workshops at The University City Arts League, Moonstone Art Center, The Kelly Writers House and in the Philadelphia Arts in Education Partnership.



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# Fox Chase Review

**J.C. Todd**

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## Rx for Illusion

*Annapolis National Cemetery  
Spring, 2002*

So many bivouacked here,  
non-combatants now.  
Their last tattoos have rinsed  
the salty air. Padolsky,

Yonder, Unknown, Fleegle,  
Unknown, Kelly, Wolfe.  
Some wives—Kathleen, Helen, Pearl,  
Edith, who “brightened their eyes.”

Even in drought, pre-dawn dew  
beads the names incised  
in stones that mark their exits.  
No nonsense in this carving,

no curlicues or flowerettes  
misrepresent the sober fact  
of burial in wartime.  
So many stone workers to pay

and markers to carve; no cash  
or time for bas-relief or  
metaphor to ease a mourner’s  
grief toward illusion. Here

the dew, despite its shape, is not  
a tear, nor are the gravestones  
doors to peace, nor epitaphs,  
brave consolations. Here

a starling glides onto a linden’s  
drooping branch, beak clamped  
on a worm a nest of beaks

### ***On this Page***

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has opened to receive.

## Four Seasons and a Concession

*In Memoriam: A Conversation with Sigitas Geda*

### *Spring*

Barley roots  
Blossoming reed  
What you mean of springtime

Is the she who blossoms  
In you  
White

Is the field whose bloom  
Is spring's  
Year-round

The she  
In whom I wake  
In you

### *Summer*

What ember  
Kindles the white fire  
Of ashberry?

What Ioden  
Drives cypress  
To darken bright water?

Twilight lengthens  
In you when I flower  
Mid-summer

And yes, winter shadow  
In the snow  
Of ashberry

Petaling a lean-to  
Where you sleep  
Drifter

Heap of bones  
Sack of flesh  
Sack of song

Your sigh  
Deep blue of dream  
Laments the noon to come—

Breakingly bright

You'd rather a glow worm  
Under moss  
To see by dimly

A spark  
To warm a little bit  
The slowed-down heart.

### *Autumn*

Hold your breath  
As pheasants call

Light swells between  
Rising and ebb

Hold your breath  
A pool  
Silvered with anticipation

So much intended  
In embrace  
In breath held back

Lungs bellowed  
Arched by air

Burnish of wing beat  
Pheasants breaking cover  
Their rush, all cry

Breath let go  
Wide silence between beat  
Before speech

Where moon rises  
A pool  
All light.

### *Winter*

A fox tamed? Don't  
Make the mistake of thinking  
I am that

Summer vixen

Fur a pretty tawny  
Muzzle a healthy wet

Fox tamed to bitch  
In heat  
When sun drops

In your dreams, your visions  
Shape me to your wish  
Desire of a heart

Like Apollinaire's  
Made into artifact  
By verse

But on this earth  
Of root and rock  
I play havoc

Where you fence in  
My tooth-scarred ears  
Pick up your every move

Patient for the instant  
That burly red  
Inside your chest

Will blaze the snow.

### *Concession*

Let's concede  
What lies between us  
Old pike

Of the Nemunas  
In your belly  
Nut and bolt

Of the built world  
Seed and bulb  
Of the wild

Sword snout  
Mouth of tongue  
And teeth tearing

Rising  
Cannot dispel  
Sorrow

Blue sky, blue  
River, blue flower  
Each bottoms out

In the other  
And isn't blue  
A depth so chill

No Pluto  
Would chose it?  
Isn't that our hue

Old pike?  
Cold fire  
Of our scales.

J.C. Todd is the author of *What Space This Body* published by Wind Publications 2008 as well as *Nightshade* and *Entering Pisces*, chapbooks published by Pine Press. Her awards include a Fellowship in Poetry from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, two Leeway Foundation grants, and a fellowship to Künstlerhaus Schloss Wiepersdorf from the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. She has an M.F.A. from the Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College and teaches creative writing at Bryn Mawr College.



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# Fox Chase Review

**Thaddeus Rutkowski**

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## Hong Kong

I wanted to eat fried scorpions,  
or at least crispy grasshoppers.  
But instead I ate chicken à la king at a KFC.  
I was told snake was a popular food,  
and the idea of snake struck me,  
but the reality was, snake was out of season.

I expected everyone to be traveling  
by scooter or bicycle, or on foot,  
but I saw lots of cars, no simple conveyances,  
and a vanishing network of *hutongs*, or alleys.  
All signaled a consumerist system,  
not a Communist colony.

Nubs of incense sticks sat in ash-filled burners  
at doorsteps, as if to ward off bad luck:  
recession, financial breakdown,  
a tip in the balance of trade,  
loss of shelter from taxes or typhoons.  
These were the Asian business risks.

## Oak Tree and Cypress

The oak tree and the cypress don't grow in each other's shadow. The oak is an upland tree, and the cypress is a swamp dweller. One of us is like the oak, the other like the cypress. We both grow, but not close enough to cast a shadow on the other. We could be within sight, one of us looking up from the water, the other looking down from the hill, if "looking" is the right word. "Swaying" might be more accurate. One of us sweeps upward with tendrils waving, while the other bends downward. That is, assuming we have both achieved the same height. The oak might be little more than a sprout, splitting the shell of an acorn. The cypress may be a seed in a cone. Or we could both be fully formed, hundreds of growth rings old. We may have become brittle. It might be hard for us to sway and bend. No more snapping and whipping for us. We might be content to stand where we are, letting the xylem and phloem flow quietly.

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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.



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# Fox Chase Review

## Vincent Quatroche

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### Nobodies Poet

You can get this straight  
right now as you read  
these first few lines.  
I am nobody's poet.  
And I have been nobody's poet  
all of my life.

Not anthologized  
Not franchised  
Not recognized  
Not institutionalized.

I don't have a following,  
an entourage or disciples  
My prospects are limited.  
There is no buzz around me.

I never needed you.  
Need or sought your approval  
or consent, benediction,  
absolution or dispensation.

I have nothing to confess to you.  
I am guilty.  
Period.  
Remorseless as well.  
No.  
I'm not sorry about any of this.  
There is no repentance  
to be found in my eyes  
or my voice.

So remember  
next time you see me  
that I am nobody's poet  
and in only that way

### *On this Page*

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could I ever hope to  
be yours alone.

## Here Come the Old Guys

Here come the old guys  
in Day-Glo Tie-Dye tee-shirts  
stretched over bowling ball waist lines  
and pony tails in braids that dangle from  
bald spots sporting Zigzag man beards  
and zircon zirconium knock off diamond  
stud earrings...with their gleaming vintage  
Harley parked outside of the bar knocking down  
a fifth Jack & Coke and lecturing the Bartender  
about how the fagots, fruits, gooks, spooks and spicks  
are ruining the country.

Here come the old guys driving mint condition  
61 Comets, 64 Chevy Impalas, or 67 cherry red  
Thunderbird convertibles, (with the top down of course)  
wearing navy officer hats, chain smoking Viceroy's  
singing along to the Beatles or Beach Boys  
blaring on their under the dash board mounted cassette tape players.  
Coolers of cracked ice and Pabst Blue Ribbons  
in the trunk passing you on the highway doing 75  
like a bat of hell going *somewhere* in one big  
Goddamn hurry.

Here come the old guys  
pushing the shopping cart in the super-market  
looking like a fifty year old boy scout  
in Glen Plaid shorts, Pink Dockers' golf shirt.  
Hairy fat stubby legs with white athletic socks  
stretched up to his knobby knee caps in Nikes  
with his scowling wife either strutting five feet  
in front of him or dragging her pouting ass  
dejectedly to the rear towards the check out line  
to witness him berate some scared teenager  
check out clerk for not bagging their groceries properly.

Here come the old guys  
looking trim, fit and ten years younger than they really are.  
Dignified graying at the temples.  
Got all his hair and great looking teeth.  
Divorced twice.  
Has new girlfriend his daughter's age.

Plays golf, tennis and ratchet ball.  
Plenty of time for all this now.  
Retired five years ago with one hell of a pension package.  
Loaded with smoking investments,  
stock options, condo in Key West,

Cabin for skiing in Vermont.  
Looking good, feeling good, world by the ass.  
Only one problem.  
Nobody he knows cares  
or wants to know him anymore since  
he was such a ruthless miserable son of a bitch  
at work and home getting to where he is today  
which is next to you, a total stranger in a coffee  
shop striking up an uninvited conversation to  
tell you all about this.

Yup.  
That's right.  
Here come the old guys  
telling too many long, endless pointless stories  
about their world that has vanished.  
All their dead pals.  
Their triple by pass operations.

How tough they once were...when they were your age  
How tough life was...when they were your age  
How many women they had screwed  
Just how much money, drugs, booze  
they consumed and blew through.  
All the ass-kicking they took and dished out.

Here come the old guys  
sacred to death  
desperately holding on to that last  
fucking shred of youth...  
if you could call it that  
before as a reward for not  
dropping dead in the parking lot all ready  
they survive to become...

*really, really old guys.*

**Vincent Quatroche** has writing for over thirty years. His fifth collection of poetry, prose and short stories entitled *The Terrible Now* will be available during the Summer of 2009 through Xlibris Press. A persistently cryptic and annoying presence on the poetry circuit in the Northeast region of the United States attempts to silence him have been unsuccessful. In addition, Quatroche works in the spoken word/sonic landscape media and has released numerous projects on tape/CD in the last two decades. A new CD entitled *Singing Mr. Cedric* has a fall release date scheduled later in the year. Of course Quatroche doesn't make a living doing any of things, relying on being employed as a career education at area colleges and correctional facilities, where his students (and inmates) find him equally persistent, cryptic and annoying.



# Fox Chase Review

**Mike Cohen**

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## The Holders-On

Hours past the evening's peak,  
the holders-on stay.  
And there is still to be heard  
a momentary inflection of voice,  
a capricious chuckle, a stray titter,  
but the rollicking has receded,  
the carousing collapsed,  
the festivities faded.  
The energy has gone out of the room.  
Yet in this deflated space,  
the holders-on linger  
as if overtaken by the pervasive lethargy,  
or reluctant to return to their too familiar routines,  
or hesitant to go out into the cold.  
But there is a sense that,  
in holding on to the meager remnants of a spent celebration,  
they are desperately trying to wring a few more laughs  
from an evening now more melancholy than merry.  
Perhaps what they are holding onto is the notion  
yet to be proven,  
that the last laughs are the best.

## Inside the Horizon

You have to learn,  
from physics, philosophy, or lobotomy,  
how big the world is  
and how much bigger the universe is,  
and that the only thing small enough  
to fall into the black hole of your anxiety  
is you.

Whether you learn this  
from physics, philosophy, or lobotomy,

### *On this Page*

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you find a great, imperishable calm  
advancing from the flat line of horizon  
that all along has kept its distance.  
Walk or run, ride or fly,  
you could not reach it.

It had to reach you.  
Coming to you by way of  
physics, philosophy, or lobotomy,  
the horizon brings with it  
all the tranquility it had withheld all those years.  
And you discover that the black hole of anxiety  
and the horizon of tranquility  
are the same,  
for anxiety's jabs and jostles are gone,  
and with them, any prospect of relief.

### Urban Frost

On a snowy evening in the city,  
comes the salt truck strewing  
its bounty about.  
Freshly fallen salt  
sparkles and crackles  
beneath wheels of weary cars and exhausted buses.  
Crystals skitter along the surface  
and tumble into potholes, salting the road's wounds.  
Diamonds of fallen salt  
turn to dust beneath the tentative tread of tired traffic.  
Salt dust turns whiteness to water  
whose crawling current keeps  
wheeled vessels creeping slowly by  
these snowy woods of steel, concrete and glass,  
where crowding and congestion,  
distraction and deflection,  
allow no moment for "stopping by,"  
or for thinking whose woods these are,  
or for so much as a dream of sleep.  
In the city, there are only  
the miles to go  
and the promises.

Mike Cohen has authored two collections of poetry, *Poet's Pilgrimage* and *For Reading Out Loud*, both awaiting discovery and broad dissemination (perhaps posthumously). Mike's work has appeared in the *Schuylkill Valley Journal*, *Philadelphia Daily News*, *Mad Poets Review*, and *Poetry Forum Anthology*. He has presented public readings in various bookstores, coffee shops, and libraries. Mike's current project is *Poetry Aloud And Alive* program at the Big Blue Marble Book Store in West Mt. Airy, Philadelphia.





# Fox Chase Review

**Amy Small-McKinney**

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## Grief Work

#1

Bones & Soup

At times, you are sure you will recover enough  
To strain bones from soup, though they say  
You have, at most, two weeks to live.  
Last night, your hands combined the invisible.  
Last night, I could not transfer you from bed  
To chair to toilet. Your legs have become beetle  
Antenna, without their brittle, brilliant knowledge.  
I want this to end. Forgive me.

#2

Snakeroot. Mint.  
The reek of my father weeks before he died.  
I love you. I mean it.  
Now, as then, it follows me home

#3

Learning the Word

Everything: Name. Hair. Mouth.  
Then, someone says, "Good morning."  
A stranger, at that.

Yellow curtains with leaves

That mean nothing.  
Then, yellow becomes: Yell, loss.

Give me the clout of the moon.

#4

Something Not Possible

I covered the gilded mirror at the entrance of our home.

## *On this Page*

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Nothing elaborate. A woven throw.  
I didn't want to see myself. Though, three days  
Later, am almost willing. I return it to its place on the old couch.  
Others imagine I have returned.

#5

Returning

Sometimes, in the shower, of all places, you return  
To me as a bride, Maltese lace on mahogany shield back chair.  
Mostly, you are misplaced teeth or a right eye, blind & eggshell blue.  
Mostly, I am feeding you sips of bisque, slivers of brie  
& you tell me, again: *If you bring me brie, I won't die.*

#6

As in: air-stalking woman.  
I try again: *Lungs—no mouth—as prongs.*  
Let me be anyone other than who I am.

#7

I believe I say goodbye.  
I can't.

Again. Good. Bye.  
I can't.

Do zobaczenia translates as: See you.  
Feri bhetaula: We will meet again.  
Namaste: Goodbye and Hello.

My daughter,  
At seventeen, grabs the car keys.  
I yell (after she is gone):  
*Call me when you get there.*

I am learning the language.

*Previously published in The Pedestal Magazine.*

### **This is the Dying Language of the Ös**

Thirty-five men and women in Siberia speak  
with vanishing vowels and consonants, dream  
of thirty-five goslings that slide  
along Lake Lena

Here in America  
I am my husband's *kün garagi*—  
*the eye of the day*—  
His house is his dream—wooden  
with a porch, three chairs—

no one inside except me his *apchi*—  
*the one who remains at home*

Here in America  
my day is long a short o burdened u  
my milky invention of baby mouth suck

In my sleep a woman of the Ös  
recites her husband's name three times  
I wake, name the ants trekking  
toward oblivion along Lilies of the Valley  
he brought me  
I name them:  
Vow, Frost, Vanish—  
I do not want to disappear

What do the Ös say when they awake?  
This morning I want to say:  
*Azen Azen*  
*Hello Hello*

*Previously published in Offcourse, A Literary Journal (University of Albany).*

**Amy Small-McKinney's second chapbook, *Clear Moon, Frost*, is now available from Finishing Line Press. Her first chapbook, *Body of Surrender* (Finishing Line 2004), was showcased at Poet's House in New York. She was nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2004 and again in 2006. Her work has appeared in various journals, including *Wild River Review*, *The Cortland Review*, *ForPoetry*, *Elixir Press*, *Mad Poets Review*, *upstreet*, *The Pedestal Magazine*, and *Blue Fifth Review*. She was guest editor for the June 2006 issue of *The Pedestal Magazine*. Her poem, "Nigeria 2002," was awarded third place in the 2007 Philadelphia Eco Poetry Project. Her Cockapoo, Willie, is working on second novel, *Grrrs of Wrath*.**



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# Fox Chase Review

**Michele A. Belluomini**

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## Testament

(for political prisoners everywhere)

the phone call comes  
when you least expect it  
the phone call  
the knock on the door  
in the middle of the night  
in the middle of the afternoon...

you knew it would come  
but somehow  
even though you prepared yourself  
you are caught off-guard  
—as they knew you would be—

you, watching the light filter through the window  
as you think about the grocery list  
or the suit that needs to be cleaned  
the letters that must be typed “this afternoon”

for just a moment, you wonder  
will the woman next door take in the kids  
will the food stay fresh and for how long  
what will your neighbors and co-workers think about  
when they hear your name

but you can see  
how some of them have turned away  
already pretending that you haven't been there  
that last week you didn't share a joke  
on a sleepy afternoon

you think about these things  
if only for a moment  
—they never give you much time—

## *On this Page*

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you turn your head for one more look  
your eyes seeing everything and nothing  
and then  
locking your heart behind you  
you go

## Existential Apartment House

in this, colors are inscribed over each day  
in this one, there are only coordinates for planting

a container of salt on a counter  
a notebook with red binding

an image of a bodhisattva stares placidly into the far distance  
one eye weeps

the susurring of car tires on wet pavement  
drifts through an open window

heavy-headed white flowers scatter petals

in a well-lighted room somewhere downstairs  
cards are laid down and picked up again in silence

in the laundry room  
the washers lift their unwieldy tongues  
to gossip about towels and

the corridor lights stand sentry over emptiness

frayed edges of consciousness, something like blood on a cloth  
nothing that makes much sense

can survive this kind of pressure

**Michele A. Belluomini** is a poet, storyteller and librarian. Her work has been published in journals such as *The Mad Poets Review*, *Poetry Motel*, *American Writing*, *APR: Philly Edition*, and most recently in the anthology *COMMONWEALTH: Contemporary Poets on Pennsylvania*. Her chapbook, *Crazy Mary & Others* won the 2004 Plan B Press Poetry competition.

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# Fox Chase Review

**Peter Krok**

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## Looking for an Eye

Fumbling in the dark, always looking  
for an eye, he hurls stones  
at his shadow. Voices startle him.  
A stranger keeps stalking.  
Each time he seems to see,  
a finger gets poked in his eye.  
He sits on beach steps head against hands.  
A child comes up to him.  
*Can I help you, Mister?*  
Saying *No thanks*,  
he stares at the Atlantic

then gets up, drifts among  
the noises on the boardwalk,  
shouts of vendors barking,  
*Be a Winner! Take a Chance!*  
*All you need is change!*  
Listens to the laughter, jangle of coins,  
amusement rides, roller coaster, fun of lovers.  
Passes couples holding hands.  
*Watch the tram car, please,*  
a recorded voices shrills out,  
*Watch the tram car, please...*  
Dragging questions he walks  
on through the night.

## Margaret at the Office

Margaret did her duty for thirty years  
then crossed the time she decided  
was enough. And left. No fuss.  
Just an empty cubicle, uncluttered desk,  
random papers, a space no longer hers.

### ***On this Page***

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I hardly knew her—  
a tall woman, platinum blonde, sincere,  
shy supervisor. An 8x10 photo  
of her shih tzu and bearded collie  
lay framed on her grey desk. She spoke  
about the labor in their grooming.  
I shared the wallet snapshot of my boxer.  
On weekdays she had someone  
walk her dogs and feed them.

Then she was gone. The day  
after Memorial Day she left.  
Left without a word. Now  
a different face is here. Soon  
I'll not be here. The many times  
I see me going that way. First  
a lingering, then gone. Something  
in her absence doesn't go away.

**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*, *America*, *Mid-America Poetry Review*, *Midwest Quarterly*, *Poet Lore*, *Potomac Review*, *Blue Unicorn* and numerous other print and on-line journals. In 2005 his poem "10 PM At a Philadelphia Recreation Center" was included in *Common Wealth: Contemporary Poets on Pennsylvania* (published by Penn State University). His book, *Looking For An Eye*, was published by Foothills Press in 2007.**



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# Fox Chase Review

**Dan Maguire**

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## Metempsychosis

When I am old, and can no longer walk,  
And can no longer climb my favored ways,  
My eyes will ride the wing of brother hawk,  
To see my name in clouds of white and gray.  
When time itself grows gray, and I am blind,  
And can no longer see what lies ahead,  
I'll lean upon the days that lie behind,  
And hear their whispered tales of gold and red.  
When I'm immune to time and sound and sight,  
When ash and bone are all that's left of me,  
My spirit will be air, and wind, and light,  
Destined for another chance to be.  
Perhaps next time I'll be a flying thing—  
A hawk, an old man's eyes upon my wing.

## Apodosis

Prophets new, old fears—  
apocalypse or tales apocryphal—  
from whatever starting place,  
the years, like droplets  
pulled by slithered tides, slip  
gracelessly toward kingdom come.

Blurred, each year is mangled by the next,  
limps away, beneath a browning sun,  
a gallows for its crooked cane.  
Wrecked, the fool and king interred  
as one, the priests are buried with the pimps.  
Fame, disgraced, drowns in the shallows.

For all that's past is lost,  
walled within a vault of days,  
placed with other bothered centuries.

## *On this Page*

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Tossed like scraps upon the floor,  
praise and valor lie unrecalled,  
urgencies forgotten or erased.

The universe, with drooling smile,  
reviews the manic, marching years.  
Their lines will form a thousand times  
while men, adrift, crawl perversely  
to their fears and wait for news  
of crimes that pose as prayers.

The dead speak only to the dumb.  
Rocks re-seal old tombs, so that  
we raise our new gods up with rope.  
Numb and ignorant, we dread  
what waits and grins behind the clock—  
hope, or just the end of days.

## Reprise

"Hieronymo's mad againe."  
—*T.S. Eliot, "The Waste Land"*

Over and over you hear her  
combing the world through her hair,  
muttering the long day's shimmer,  
everyone else condemned, subsiding  
separately, in waiting.

She leads you past the scattered flowers  
and bones, to where the pikes are set  
into the ground, a hundred yards from heaven.  
Avert your eyes. Ignore the crows.  
*First this she says, **then** that.*

So you pretend you cannot feel the chafe  
of chains, the all-seeing push of silence.  
Forget the pinch of borrowed shoes,  
the clutch of bartered earth.  
She will remind you. You will remember.

Let the phone ring. Don't stand by the window.  
All is moving fast, away from you. Legs lost,  
names broken, sift through your box of chances.  
Outside, toothless limping history is going  
door to door, someone's picture in its hand.

**Dan Maguire's poetry has won prizes and awards and has appeared in numerous anthologies and reviews. He has been nominated for three Pushcart Prizes. Poets Robert Bly and Gerald Stern have favorably reviewed his work. His latest release titled *Finding The Words* is available from Plan B Press.**



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# Fox Chase Review

**Geraldine Walsh**

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## Poppy Fields

I beg to be naked in a field of fresh poppies,  
to dance vibrantly with their aching blooms,  
teasing arching backs and blushing red tender buds,  
the wind pulling at the hairs deep under the skin of our knuckles,  
at the back of our knees, by the nape of our neck,  
letting lustful rapture take over,

sparkling rain melting away unpleasant icy residues,  
tingeing sweet poppies with a blissful slick moisture  
as Adam and Eve expose a bereft heaven,  
trickling down our bodies, stroking our primed skin,  
enlightening our sense of human touch and we are  
wanting, needing and desiring that earthly dance.

Oh poppy beds water your passionate embrace on me,  
Show me true pleasure like never before as  
the natural earth stands over as voyeur,  
watching, waiting until our sin is satisfied  
as we dance and lay in poppy fields.

## The Writer

A multitude of fragmentary ramblings  
Lay scattered on my broken desk  
And scribble's on my soiled notebook.

I'm waiting for that something, that  
Divine inspiration  
That will seize my fettered plume

And lead it around these barren sheets  
With chronicles of war, despondency and lust,  
Sweet melodies of adoration, camaraderie

## *On this Page*

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And the rust that lies beneath our lives.  
I'm waiting again for the highest order,  
Those writers in residence

To scrutinize my works, in suspense  
Restless, how much will they abhor?  
Perhaps they wont see how I'm swindling

This literary world,  
How my verbal skills don't actually belong to me  
Or maybe I'll be heralded amongst those

Who are indisputably gifted with  
Celestial powers of poetic creation  
Close to God and closer to those

Who are truly commendable  
Or maybe I'll wake from this lucid dream and  
Realise that all I write is stuck beneath my eyelids.

**Geraldine Walsh grew up in Dublin, Ireland and is a permanent fixture to the furniture there. She writes poetry, prose and ramblings that do not fall in to any category. With a BA in English and Classics and a PgDip in Information Science she has something to fall back on if all the words dry up in her head. She is the Founder and Lead Facilitator of the Swords Writers Group in Dublin. Her work has featured in *Toasted Cheese, Dublin Quarterly, Boyne Berries 5, Poetry Cemetery* amongst others and she is a runner-up in the Fish Publishing One Page Competition for 2009. She is currently working on her first novel.**

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# Fox Chase Review

David C. Johnson

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## So we decided to be tattooed

When you're a little bit drunk  
And incredibly bored,  
You may make decisions  
Retrospectively flawed.  
And that was the case you see,  
When my friend John and me,  
We were going stir-crazy  
Cooped up in his bed-room,  
Like we must do something  
Or explode with a boom.  
So we decided to be,  
Tattooed friend Johnny and me.

And that's why I've got a heart on my ass,  
Which I can just see in a looking glass  
And John's got a skull on his inner thigh,  
Which says, "I'll love Britney until I die"

## On Hayling Island

We left the party early  
And those stuck up, private school-girls,  
Who'd made fun of my girl's accent:  
Wirral tinged with Mersey's scouse.

We walked onto the shore before us.  
My expectations were reduced  
To little more than hope  
That we would still be friends tomorrow.  
But one kiss and some fumbling  
Found us tumbling on the sand.

My thoughts were not romantic  
On that Hayling Island beach,

### *On this Page*

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When I knew that she would let me  
Go much further than before.  
As we lowered pants and knickers,  
Felt damp seaweed next our skin,  
The only thought that registered  
In my teenage mind—  
Was—  
"She's letting. She's letting me.  
She's letting me in."

And then it was all over:  
My first full carnal romp.  
No hearts and flowers,  
No fireworks or fountains,  
Just that practical, prose-like thought:  
"She's letting me. She's letting me.  
She's letting me in."

### **How to communicate with a worm**

No matter how much I tell them not to,  
They still do it.  
Each evening, as the sun sets and the dew falls,  
They creep inside,  
Under the front door, over the welcome mat  
With its smiling porcupine motif,  
Tiny wire-thin red worms from the compost bin.  
Why do they ignore me?  
It isn't as if I don't feed them.  
I do. Strips of apple peel,  
Long enough to spell my name; carrot tops;  
Printed paper cartons; a feast  
For any self-respecting worm.  
Each evening I gather them up  
In the palm of my hand and return them  
To their home.  
I am not sure that I will ever discover  
How to communicate with a worm.

**David C. Johnson is a witty and quirky performance poet, who mixes his stand-up humour with his own verse. His inspiration comes from the bizarre world that we live in combined with a wry commentary on change and progress.**

**David has been a featured artist at poetry and literary festivals in Bristol, Cheltenham, Bath, Kingston, Swindon, Oxford, Hay Houston and Austin. He has also appeared at: Nuyorican Poetry Café, New York; Sweet Lorraine's, New Orleans. In April 2005, he completed a three week tour of the USA. He attended/slammed and read at AIPF in 2005 and 2006.**

**David is co-founder of Paralalia, a poetry partnership dedicated to promoting and**

encouraging live poetry performance and to bringing poetry to the public ear and eye in new and unusual ways. He is a multi-slam winner -Swindon Literary Festival Slam Champion 2003, Oxford All Star Slam Champion 2004, Lydney Arts Festival 2005 Slam Champion, Thornbury Arts Festival Slam Champion 2006. Runner-up in Bridport Live Festival Slam 2008.

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# Fox Chase Review

**Linda Ranieri Melodia**

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## **A Rose in Rain**

*...for Jackie*

The rain was a fine rain  
Almost welcoming to walk in  
If the weather were warmer  
The rain drops falling off the blue awning  
Where I waited  
Were much larger drops  
I was catching on the one rose  
I was holding in my hand  
The larger drops falling were clear as they fell  
And I could almost see through them  
As I continued to water the rose  
Although the paper it was wrapped in  
Began to sag some  
I didn't care  
My friend would love the rose no matter what  
As it was a friendship rose  
Like herself  
A rose in rain  
To say I love you friend and  
Congratulations on your 20 years sober  
And on our friendship  
That no rain could ever dampen!

**Linda Ranieri Melodia lives and works in Long Island City  
by the East River She is a published poet and writer  
Linda hosts the "Got Poetry?" reading in LIC and is  
A prize winner for Performance Poets Association  
Nature and Emotions inspire Linda**

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grandmother's lumpy quilt,  
a cloud of flour in an opened bag.

Why is God profligate?  
I'm tired of stepping to mirrors,  
a woman who tilts  
her head upward,  
almost smiling,  
touching her dangling earrings  
and curled hair. I'm a flotilla  
of skirts and scarves,  
wrists and ringed fingers,  
a showboat, a circus,  
a blind wall of lights.

Is anyone in this neighborhood praying?  
Anyone up all night waiting?  
Anyone catching moths  
in her fingers, smearing  
their darkness  
onto her hands?

**Barbara Daniels' *Rose Fever* was published by WordTech Press in 2008. She received two Individual Artist Fellowships from the New Jersey Council on the Arts and earned an MFA in poetry at Vermont College. She is a staff member at Peter Murphy's Poetry and Prose Getaway, held each January in Cape May, New Jersey.**

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# Fox Chase Review

**Gil Fagiani**

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## **Willie and the White Girl**

Laid off after 24 years at Bub's Lumber Yard  
Eliezer Loggins moves  
from Biloxi, Mississippi to the Big Apple  
with his two sons and ends up  
working as a super on a three-floor  
walkup on East 108th Street.

Nine months later he sits on his front stoop  
wearing his straw hat  
a can of Pabst Blue Ribbon in his hand  
doing his best to understand  
what is going on around him.  
It all seems cockamamie:  
the constant fires and break-ins,  
the surging traffic and sidewalks,  
the radios blasting in español,  
the kids who stay out all hours of the night.

More than anything he can't  
figure out what happened to his two boys:  
Bobby—now known as Bosco—  
drinks wine all day  
and has already been locked up twice  
for stealing and fighting.  
Willie, the boy who a Southern minister  
said had a heart of gold,  
spends all day chasing after some white powder.  
Where had he and his wife gone wrong?

Two months ago, Mr. Loggins put a whumping on Willie  
and threw him out in the street  
after he caught him picking through his wallet.  
But he couldn't stand seeing him sleep  
in the alleyway  
and let him stay in the basement  
on a bunk made of wooden boards

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on the earth floor by the furnace.

What really stumps Mr. Loggins  
is the white girl that stays with Willie,  
not a day more than twenty,  
light yellow hair like margarine on spaghetti,  
blue eyes in muddy pouches,  
plump in spite of the black staples  
running up and down her arms.

Willie calls her Pinky  
and it's Pinky that now brings him  
his white powder.  
Whatever she's doing to get it  
is grinding her to dog shit.  
Willie just stays in the cellar  
his body frozen at the corner of his bunk,  
his shaved head like an oily eight ball,  
his lower lip hanging down.  
That's how Mr. Loggins finds him  
when Pinky comes to tell him  
that Willie won't wake up.

## Muzzled

Right in front of the cute cashier  
in the hill-top restaurant  
chin-bearded Toni the Butch  
sticks her hands down my pants  
to see if her puppy is alive and kicking.  
I keep my mouth shut  
since she carries a Cuban pig-sticker  
and just lent me ten dollars in rolled-up pennies  
to keep the hungry dogs of dope at bay.

## The Interview

It's a night-dark November morning.  
I'm at the bottom of a stairway  
somewhere in the South Bronx  
at a drug program called Logos.  
My face has an orange sheen  
like axle grease. I shiver  
from the icy drafts  
blowing through my golf jacket,  
the only outer garment I own.

My bony ass is sore  
from sitting on a wooden bench.  
I want to split but remember:

ripping off students' books  
while they sat in the cafeteria,  
selling my father's stamp collection,  
OD'ing on a rooftop,  
carried down by dopefiends,  
arms pinned behind my back,  
hands tearing at my wallet,  
my shirt, my shoes.

I think about waking up  
with red ants in my marrow,  
racing to the toilet,  
vomit running through my nose,  
the wad of shit in my throat.

Two hours go by,  
I'm faint, vision blurred.  
I want to leave but Nilsa warned me  
—no more chances—  
if I don't get into Logos  
she's gone for good.  
I hear whispers, laughter,  
the echo of a piano  
and vibraphone,  
a voice singing  
"...ratón, el ratón!"  
People go up and down the stairs  
staring at me.  
I ask somebody for a smoke  
and they look away.

Finally, a man comes--  
sheared hair, missing teeth.  
"Follow me," he says.  
"What took so long?" I ask.  
"We're a family here; we want to see  
how bad you want to get in."

At the interview I tell  
a woman with a scar across her face,  
how I'd done social work in East Harlem.  
I tell a black man with an eye patch,  
how I lost my moorings.  
I tell an Italian guy with a withered hand,  
I can't take it anymore.

The woman shouts: liar, loser.  
The black guy calls me a racist.  
The Italian says I'm a white Uncle Tom.  
My interviewers stand up,  
leave the room.

I have no money,  
no place to go.  
I debate running

out the door, throwing  
myself under a bus.

I hear branches bang  
against the windows.  
It's beginning to rain.  
In two days  
it will be Thanksgiving.

### **Why I Became an Athiest**

At fifteen  
I got on my knees every night  
praying Connie  
would come back to me.

I prayed to God Almighty  
unseal my lips  
give me the power  
to persuade her to return.

I prayed to the Holy Ghost  
bestow upon me  
the grace that would make  
her mine again.

I prayed to the Virgin Mary  
with her beseeching look  
to fill my ex-girl  
with yearning for me.

I prayed to Jesus Christ  
to raise our romance from the dead  
promising I'd quit whipping  
my wood in Connie's name.

After two weeks nothing—  
no convincing words  
no longing in my ex's heart  
no heavenly resurrections.

### **Bad Boy Pete**

In eighth grade  
when asked, "How's Bella?"  
Pete sniffed  
his middle finger  
and said, "Fine!"

In ninth grade  
he asked Mrs. Hickey

in our bio class  
about her second set of lips.  
In Porky Mason's  
print shop class  
he hid his marking book  
stole a font of ink  
smearing it on our bus driver's seat.

In tenth grade  
he hung out in the front row  
of the auditorium  
with the colored girls  
and lip-synched  
"Daddy's Home"  
by Shep and the Limelites  
later bragging  
'bout getting  
plenty poontang.

In eleventh grade  
Pete cheated on every exam  
tampered with the line of scrimmage  
at football games  
shot out school windows  
with slingshots and marbles  
flushed cherry bombs  
down toilets  
engulfing hallways in feces  
his lawyer father  
having him reinstated  
every time he was suspended.

In twelfth grade  
he piped the Olympics '  
"Bad Boy Pete"  
into the school's loud speaker system  
paid Brain-Job Brancatelli  
to take his SATs  
switched his graduation partner  
so he picked up his parchment  
with the Senior Prom Queen.

Pete attended Columbia  
peddled triple X gelatin capsules  
of horse tranquilizer  
cigarettes dipped in embalming fluid  
flunked out  
and shortly afterwards  
was found  
in the front closet  
of the 80 year-old paraplegic  
aunt he was staying with  
in New York City  
with his head  
cut off.

Gil Fagiani's poetry collection *Rooks* (Rain Mountain Press, 2007) is set at Pennsylvania Military College in the 1960s, his poetry chapbook *Grandpa's Wine* (Poets Wear Prada in 2008) focuses on his family's immigrant generation, and has been translated into Italian by Paul D'Agostino (Poets Wear Prada, pending 2009). His book of poetry *Chianti in Connecticut* was inspired by his childhood in Springdale, Connecticut (Bordighera, pending 2009).

Gil's poems and translations have been published in more than a dozen anthologies, as well as such newspapers and journals as *The New York Times*, *The Paterson Literary Review*, *Mudfish*, *Skidrow Penthouse*, *Descant*, *Philadelphia Poets*, *Identity Theory*, *Saint Elizabeth Street*, *The Ledge*, *Italian Americana*, *The Journal of Italian Translation*, and *Gradiva*.

He has translated into English, poetry written in Italian, Abruzzese dialect, and Spanish. He co-hosts the monthly open reading of the Italian American Writers' Association at the Cornelia Street Café, and is the Associate Editor of *Feile-Festa: A Literary Arts Journal*.

A social worker (LCSW) and addiction specialist (CASAC) by profession, Gil has directed a residential program for recovering drug addicts and alcoholics in Downtown Brooklyn for the past twenty years.

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# Fox Chase Review

**Rodger Lowenthal**

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## Entries

*...for Curtis*

a gate and a door the latter more  
formal, sturdy  
needs a knock or a key  
while a gate  
is an open invitation if less than  
waist high  
of course there are Dutch doors  
useful for  
comedic purposes in old movies  
gates leak  
secrets stifle speculation unlike doors  
that police  
are always breaking down to find  
a body or surprise a felon  
ranches are great for gates that open onto large  
fenced pastures  
(who can forget Steve McQueen riding  
a motorcycle desperately  
from fence to fence in the  
Great Escape?)  
what a delightful feeling to hop  
a fence (gate without hinges)  
gates are warm receptive doors defensive  
formidable  
please, don't get me started on windows

## Prankster

Time  
fills all chasms even  
the Grand Chasm  
Balloons are full of time that

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can squeak out a music to rival  
that of Ornette Coleman  
Minds are full of time ignored  
Time blows clouds flirtatiously  
across a sky content to be  
simply day and night  
Time creates its own vacuum  
Time twists hearts into romantic  
confusion leads lovers to  
moments of timeless expectation  
Airlines ignore time as often  
as they can  
Ice is water's slow time  
Why count minutes  
Birthdays celebrate indenture  
The past accumulates the future  
lies as a hidden burden  
A clock face never shaves  
Malice intensifies  
War compresses time  
Peace time is so relaxed as to be  
inadvertent I look at my hands  
to see if time is on them  
Time is the ultimate prankster  
just when you think you have it  
mastered it runs out on you

### **Slamming Open the Door, a review**

It is the never to be imagined  
the unthinkable  
a distance that expands but never  
changes  
(I too have daughters, one a nurse.)  
the briskness of verse faces the abruptness  
of loss  
a weight undeserved presses on the chest  
memories on paper now none are trivial  
each pulled from a jewel box examined  
and replaced  
examined and replaced in no particular  
order  
black ribbons dance in the wind sewn into tears  
temerity of catharsis  
any question except Why is inconsequential  
and why  
is denied a satisfactory answer  
blind to all deaf to all touch  
nothing  
taste What a mixture of ashes and roses

**Roger Lowenthal is a retired educator and poet who is a regular at open mics in the Philadelphia area. His work has been published widely in the small press.**

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# Fox Chase Review

**Mel Brake**

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## Mary's Eyes

Sometimes  
I wish  
Mary could open  
Her eyes

To see how  
Beautiful she  
Looks

In the day  
She gets  
Ready for  
Work  
In the dark

Catches  
At least  
2 or 3 buses  
To make  
A poetry  
Reading

The bus  
Driver  
Drove  
Three blocks  
Past her  
Stop

But Mary  
Does not  
Complain

She apologies  
For not  
Making the reading

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Earlier

She walks  
And bumps  
Into people  
Politely

She confides  
In me that  
She does not  
Do too well  
At readings

But I say  
How is the audience  
To know the  
Difference  
Because they don't  
Read Braille

Mary is not  
Christ's Mother  
Whose  
Picture sits  
On my altar

But I shouldn't  
Wonder  
Why Mary's eyes  
Are closed  
When her vision  
Of me  
Is so beautiful

## **Spare Rods**

My mother love to fucked us up when we were little children  
She was a Southern Baptist who believed in the Bible verse  
"Spare the rod and spoil the child"  
But you could not tell her that the phrase had nothing to do with the Bible  
Or instructional spanking

What she did to us children back then would have gotten her arrested for  
Gross child abuse because learning our lessons left too many scars that  
Remain long after our small bodies healed

She beat us with a hammer like John Henry  
She beat us with a leather strap  
She beat us with a wire hanger she had nothing on Joan Crawford  
She beat us with her high heel shoes worn by the Supremes  
She beat us with a frying pan that she finished cooking dinner with  
If she could get her hands on one

She beat us like our father's mother did with a twig from a nearby magnolia tree  
She beat us up with words and threats way before the real beating  
She beat us like mothers from her generations beat their children

It's amazing that we did not turn out fucked up or child beaters ourselves  
Our generation renounced the old ways of raising children  
We followed the advice of Dr Spock.com by sparing the rod and spoiling the child  
This would have repulsed her but too many scars remained long after our small bodies healed

**Mel Brake is a Philadelphia based poet whose poetry has appeared in several media outlets and journals, including *Philadelphia Poets 2007* and *2008*, *Mad Poets Review*, *Fox Chase Review*, and the *Philadelphia Bulletin*. In addition, *Long Island Sounds: An Anthology of Poetry*, *Writing Outside The Lines (WOSTL) Anthology* and *Word Riot Magazine* accepted works for future publication. His love for poetry is like a cradle of freedom for personal and political expression.**

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# Fox Chase Review

**Katie M. Reutter**

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## Reverie

Warm breeze shuffles the leaves  
of the mighty maple igniting  
nature's applause as  
blades of grass become a soft blanket  
to rest my head. I gaze through  
branches where pure blue and white  
peak through. Exotic birds,  
aqua and scarlet, wait to feast  
until the mischievous creatures are  
finished sneaking off with their food.  
Rays of sun permeate my skin  
as I breathe in  
precious and foreign air  
exhaling, I am overwhelmed  
with a soothing  
sense of calm and peace  
surrounded by life  
in my not so secret garden.

In the distance, I hear sounds,  
of nature mingling with the  
melodies of man; take in  
the aroma of burning coals  
meeting flesh.

**Katie M. Reutter is a poet from Philadelphia. Her work has appeared in Problem Child Literary Magazine and The Fox Chase Review. She is a recent graduate of the MBA program at Philadelphia University.**

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James D. Quinton

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**she called and whilst she spoke, I drew, pencil on paper, a picture of her face from memory**

usually that noise has  
me running for cover, it  
cuts the silence now, but  
today she is calling, and  
her voice is welcoming, after  
a hard day, fighting  
the great tormentor, she  
tells me everything, so  
eager that she stumbles over  
her words, I  
smile, tell  
her to calm down, but  
she can't, she's  
seen those places written  
about in the book, they  
are real, it  
is fact, it's  
history, our  
history, and  
our love is real, we  
say a prayer, and  
she's gone, off  
now to Calvary, I  
hope one day we'll  
go together, and  
watch the sun set, I  
look down, and  
whilst she spoke, I  
drew, pencil on paper, a  
picture of her face  
from memory

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**state of Grace**

even with  
His love  
i still feel a  
demon on  
my back  
its claws  
digging  
deep into  
my flesh  
holding me  
from His Grace  
drowning me  
in guilt  
telling me  
i should kill myself  
wrestling with  
that demon daily  
as i strive on  
still yearning  
to see the face of God

### **it will be morning**

the light  
that wouldn't come  
rises  
unwilling,  
at first,  
it lingers,  
just a haze

but do you  
remember the  
preceding hours  
when we talked  
talked so much  
we ran out of words  
and there wasn't  
anything more  
I could tell you  
and there wasn't  
anything more  
you could tell me

so we sat, drank,  
exchanged glances  
and knowing smiles

you flicked  
through scripture  
quoting stories,  
poems, songs

and now exhausted  
I ask if I can sleep  
on your couch

you tell me there's  
fresh coffee for later

and go to bed

leaving me to  
imagine that you  
placed a kiss  
on my cheek

## **bite**

seized  
by a  
fevered  
grip

your body  
dragged  
with heels  
kicking  
across a  
dusty  
wooden floor

light  
diminishes  
as a  
dark  
arid  
environment  
prevails

hands tied  
behind back  
to a  
rickety  
wooden  
chair

cold  
sweat  
tr  
ic  
kl  
ing

temptation  
rises within

as in front  
of you  
*that* sin  
*your* sin  
the one  
that gets  
you  
every time

the one  
you can't  
shake off

winking  
licking  
its lips  
giving an  
over  
friendly wave

it waits  
for you  
to lean  
forward and

bite

**James D. Quinton** is a British writer. His poetry and short stories have reached audiences all around the world. A poetry collection, *Street Psalms* and a novel, *Touch*, will be published by Xplosive Books this year. He is 30 and lives in Suffolk, England.

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# Fox Chase Review

**Maria Lisella**

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## The Same

I want to tell  
the little Chinese women  
with the loud voices  
to sit beside each other  
so they don't shout  
across the subway car,  
over my head,  
shattering  
my space.  
I offer my seat.  
The lady with the  
short-cropped perm  
red as a rooster's comb  
in a Chinese market  
gives me a toothy grin  
the essence of onions, garlic  
shakes her head  
from side to side like a  
tai chi exercise, no, no, no  
as if to say, "I may shop in Costco  
wear jeans, a North Face down jacket  
but you'll never  
make me a Westerner,  
won't drop  
my Chinese voice  
a single decibel  
to suit you and your  
Anglo-silence on subway cars  
as if they were chapels  
or private property."  
I hear my grandmother's  
staccato Calabrese vowels  
clang against brick walls  
in an alleyway in Queens  
with the same defiance,

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the same pride  
the same sorrow to be in America.

## **Lovestuck**

I jog to the Borghese Gardens,  
pass the zoo's balding creatures  
bound up the steps  
to Cardinal Scipione's Galleria,  
catch a glimpse  
of the Bernini sculptures  
assuming their positions  
on pedestals  
in time to gape  
at us studying them.  
They've returned breathless  
from a Bacchanalian feast,  
careful not to stain  
their marble bodies with blood rich wine.  
I imagine Apollo rushing Daphne  
who will never be caught  
in her desire to stay pure and free.  
Like nosey neighbors,  
the sculptures follow the drama,  
throw their heads back,  
recall yesterday's spectators  
peering up Apollo's crotch  
wrapped by Daphne's fingers  
metamorphosed into laurel leaves  
that clutch the warmest part  
of his smooth, marble body  
staking her claim forever.

## **Empty Chairs**

*In the name of the father  
and of the son, but what of  
the daughters, sisters, mothers?*

It's an Italian woman's trick  
to look just so, ears sealed.

Like a bitter clerk  
you tally your inventory  
of grievances that never age.

Your discontent starts with  
the women of this house.

Your woes echo

on the cold enamel kitchen table.

Over veal cutlets and salad,  
*biscotti, espresso,*  
wine from the cellar.

Our father no longer speaks,  
crawls from bed to table  
to couch, eyes and ears alert.

Orphan, farmer, father,  
You nail him for his biggest crime—  
failing to measure success in dollars.

Your chilling condemnations  
*insipid, duplicitous, vain—*  
sisters who cannot be trusted.

And their progeny are suspect.  
Only you gave birth to a prince.

We are the serfs who dance  
to the beat of our father's pain,

Take notes when doctors lie,  
wash fecal-spattered sheets,  
count the place settings,

remove the empty chairs.

**Maria Lisella's poetry has appeared in *NY Quarterly, Feile-Festa, Gradiva, Italian Americana, LIPS, Oberon, the Paterson Literary Review, Skidrow Penthouse, Liquer 44 [French]* and is featured in the newly-published *Avanti Popolo*. She is co-host of the Italian American Writers Association readings and is co-editing an anthology based on the series. She was a finalist in the competition for Poet Laureate of Queens in 2007.**

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