
THE WORLD WE LIVE(D) IN

An Anthology of Poems about
Social Justice

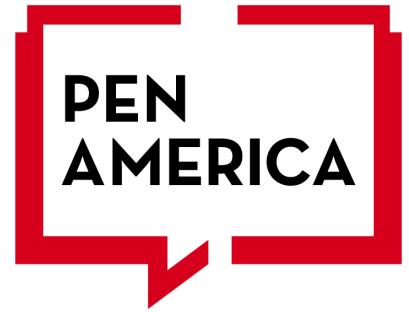
EDITED BY BARBARA SHOUP

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The Freedom
to Write



Introduction

When times are hard, it helps to talk. It helps even more to write. The poems here address the issues that concern those of us who worry about the world we live in. They're not pretty. But the picture they paint of how too many people in America live now is honest and necessary. You can argue about policy forever, but what matters is the impact of policy on people's lives—and there's nothing better than a poem to make you see the repercussions of policy in people's daily lives and how it affects their efforts to provide for themselves and their families.

The Indiana Writers Center, JCC Indianapolis, Dance Kaleidoscope, the Indianapolis Art Center, and the Jewish Community Relations Council partnered to present “The Way We Live(d)” as part of the 2019 Indianapolis Spirit and Place Festival—a program of poetry and dance that explored social justice issues such as race, gender, violence, the abuse of women, immigration, and climate change. We put out a call for poems, and the DK dancers considered them, choosing a selection of the submissions to interpret in choreography. On Sunday, November 10, 2019, an audience of 190 enjoyed experiencing the poets read their poems, followed by the dancers performing the pieces inspired by them. Afterward, audience members had the opportunity to work with Indianapolis Art Center instructors to create... and to write down visual moments in their day to day lives that gave them hope.

The World We Live(d): An Anthology of Poems about Social Justice grew from this project, offering an opportunity to share the best of the poems we received.

Written by Barbara Shoup
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NO SHELTER

Jaynie
Jared Carter

Under the bridge, not far away,
 lived Jaynie Dean,
Who had no other place to stay
 except between

Two railings stuffed with random rags
 and cardboard. Sacks,
Containing clothes, and plastic bags
 filled up the cracks.

Content to have a place to call
 her own, she froze
One night. A trash truck came to haul
 away the clothes.

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Employees Must Wash Hands
JL Kato

before returning to work. But no sink, no soap,
no paper towels. New boss sneers
at regulations. "Job killers," he calls them,
"Every mandated expense means less money
to hire workers." What workers? I'm doing
the work of three. He docks me
for using the toilet on company time.
But my bladder can't wait for lunchtime.
Can't hold it in after five hours of a ten-hour shift
with no paid breaks. Fine. Whatever.
I will show him what trickle-down means.

Previously appeared Writers Resist: Hoosier Writers Unite

Conviction
Tracy Mishkin

It was my fault because
I didn't bring a gun to church.
Because whites were outnumbered
at the pool. I looked like
I had a gun. Played with a toy
gun. Slept in the wrong house.
In the wrong neighborhood. I was
six foot four three hundred pounds.
Mentally ill. Asthma. Accent.
I was walking in the street.
On the sidewalk.

I ran.

Head Up Manon Voice

... shoulders back.
Don't tell them how you struggled to get out of the book laden bed
impoverished with broken poetry hooks
ringing over your head
a quarter widowed wine glass
you took with an antidepressant and the taste of your own salt.
How you fed the dog and didn't yourself.
How you barely breathed in the shower
And clothed yourself in war black because it was easiest to hide in.
On the way
there was no song somber or sultry
enough for the trip, everyday
how you survive the loneliness of the driver side
the overwhelm of *that* much control between the breadth of your hands.
Don't tell them how you count miles as the making of a life and numbers
grow on you slowly edging you out of risk.
Don't ask yourself
"Where have you been?"
after all the "good mornings" and dirt coffee taken with emails.
No one after noticed how your legs hang from the desk chair
nor ever touch the floor,
as if you weren't here or home or never meant to be, anyway.

Towers of Babel

Manon Voice

The new Lords of land
come not with their boats but blueprints
button up-shirts and Khaki cloths of conquest,
their gilded tongues slither euphemisms.

They are praised for their expeditions
by kingdoms of city and state
who hand them flags for the nomenclature of “new” neighborhoods and decrees to
herd the indigenous to reservations;

their feet steeped in paper trails of eviction notices,
foreclosures and property tax increases,
the soil of their stories plowed through
to ground palatial estates,

satiate the longing of young professionals
who need posh boutiques,
dedicated bike lanes
a bevy of bars and waterfront views.

Old money take their pulse
in the adrenaline of urban escapades,
the luring lights of downtown skyscrapers ,
high rise towers of babel that shine wealth into their windows.

Beneath them, a world wilting in the nation’s debt
everyday workers who cannot make rent
who make new cities of tents
stretched along underpasses and hailed cultural trails,

or who those of a different language
whose names disappear from shelters, soup kitchens and statistics
who the aristocracy will call
squatters and surfers,

and agencies will name “at risk”
and churches label “the needy,”
newspapers, “the vulnerable”
who no one will name “The New America.”

Eugene Debs Recalls His 1920 Presidential Campaign Shari Wagner

My most ardent supporters couldn't cast
a vote for me or shake my hand,
but they knew where I stood—

with them, in the Atlanta Federal Pen,
my campaign's itinerary the length
of a prison yard or a chow line.

We ate the same beans and stale
beef hearts, gristly liver, worm-infested
hash. On Sundays, for one free hour

they entrusted me with censored
letters from families sinking deeper
into the bogland of poverty. I gazed

into forlorn faces and asked,
*Who are the crooks? Those who steal
a loaf of bread? Or those who grind*

flesh and bone to make the bread?
I advocated eight-hour workdays,
living wages, safe conditions, child
labor laws—planks of a platform
cellmates clung to on a troubled ocean.
“You'll sweep all the precincts

in the pen,” they joked, yet my long odds
never defied the belief they would ride
to freedom on my frayed shirttails.

I tucked in my shirt when Harding
commuted my ten-year sentence
for peaceful persuasion against the war.

A guard gave me an ill-fitting suit
and a matchbox suitcase. Outside,
the earth rumbled. From every barred

window, my constituents cheered
and I was borne aloft by their hope,
through darkness I carried the day.

O America, reckon to your mandate!
Poverty is a crime you can solve.
Start here with the uncounted ballots

of prisoners I place in your hands.
Regard, I beg you, the weight

of their crosses.

Previously published in "So It Goes: The Literary Journal of the Kurt Vonnegut Museum and Library."

At an age of Instagram
Aaron White

There's no time for mental health at 27, 28. All these Ritalin kids have grown up, coked up, with an urge to pull fire alarms. Dingbats will dance in apothecary lines and I can work, work, seek refuge in relationships or memes that

Embrace my ADHD.

I'll pick wrong until I pick right and feel surprised when things are up and the world's not fucked. Despair started after 18, 19, and I'm sure if we look at ourselves twenty times a day we'll never

Just see something new.

Let's confront the dreams of anxious death taken root in our hearts like hard knots. My grandma said her brother said their father died of encephalitis. His brain became vapor. I shouldn't fear typos.

There are no drugs for vulnerability.

Let's put food in our mouths and light a viral fire. When the filters fall to our feet and reveal foibles, dramatic inclinations, if the shirts on our backs are real and smell like our childhood dressers, there will be time to change.

We won't lose followers.

RACE

Written in Stone—1958

Mary Redman

(for K.G.)

The painted brick school, fenced in by chain link,
broods over working class turf.
Out front, the sidewalk bears a clue to its history—
a square etched in six-inch letters that shout
a warning: K-K-K.
Bigots claimed this spot years before
to persuade Catholics of their place
beside Negroes and Jews.
Even now, it's considered flirtation with danger
to step on that taboo square.

A doorlatch pops, double doors open—and out
fly swarms of children for recess.
Their grassless playground comes alive
with squeals and calls:
you're it, my turn, throw it to me.
Like nestlings in competition for food, the children
vie for attention and greet their friends
as if months have passed—instead of hours—
since they saw one another last. Diversions begin.
Three girls prepare hopscotch. They draw the board
in pastel chalk, gather markers, and chat with chums
they've known for as long as they can remember.
Each, in her turn, tosses a stone, hops up the grid
and back again. Meanwhile, a dark-skinned classmate
watches, quiet and careful to stand where she should.

No one invites her to join the game—
and she does not ask to play. For now, the gulf
between their black and white worlds is far too wide
to leap.

Earliest Memory of Race
Tylyn K. Johnson

Long after Emmett Till's body was drawn from the river,
his bloated, beaten body open for all to see in his casket,
to which his mother said "Look what they did to my baby,"
 after Frederick Douglass learned to read and write,
 after Phillis Wheatley turned words into art in the name of melanated women,
 after Harriet Tubman walked our paths to freedom,
 after Madame CJ Walker invented the term "self-made,"
 after Malcolm X died laughing at his bullet,
 after Rev. King marched to the tune of bombings and lynchings,
 after Marsha P. Johnson spent a lifetime fighting out of the closet,
and before Trayvon Martin was a black-skinned martyr,
as he left this world with a bullet to the brain and Skittles 'n sweet tea in hand,
This brown skin of mines was little more than a joke to me.
"You act white," I was told as a child, and I laughed along.

Crickets, Racists
Adrian Matejka

Voyager 2's golden record
spun someplace in the space

between Uranus & Neptune
the night I pedaled

my new 10-speed
along Georgetown Road's

unfinished edge & the Datsun
driver necked out

Of the passenger window:
Off the road, nigger!

His mouth—cracked
& full of open teeth—

right there, screaming
in my face like Coach

yelling one more thing about
Bobby Knight during line laps

& then I was in a ditch—
front wheel bent like a surprise,

as useless as half a moon.
sitting there, in the cricketed

grass, I heard some
of the same sounds of Earth—

etched in copper & plated
in gold for the long ride out

into a city of comets—
spinning so unrelentingly

I kept losing parts
between exhales.

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The farm wife visits the Levi and Catharine Coffin House
Shari Wagner

From the outside, it's plain and simple,
but, inside, each room has two ways

in and out and there are secret places—
a kitchen below Catharine's kitchen,

a basement with a spring-fed well.
Behind the headboard of the bed

is a door to a hiding place in the attic.
The Coffins heard shouting in the street,

but torches in the night couldn't give
those Quakers pause. They broke bread

with a hundred freedom seekers each year
and rubbed their shackled, frostbit feet.

We kneel to wash feet at our church too,
but they're already clean and seldom sore.

Last night I dreamed the house was much
too little. I knew I'd need to move

until I found a door that opened
into an empty room I forgot was there.

Today I'm clearing out the boxes in the attic
and then I'll begin on what's stored

in the coal bin and the barn. Whether or not
anyone needing shelter comes to my door,

it's a relief to know I have the space inside.

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Vibrations Ad Infinitum
Celeste Williams

I.

Trayvon
and Sandra
and Jimmie Lee
and Emmett

they are like lyrics we know

and Michael
and Martin
and Medgar

lyrics we know by heart.

and Viola
and Malcolm
and Philando

their names vibrate

and Tamir
and Eric
and the Charleston Nine

vibrate like a
plucked string

and Goodman
and Schwerner
and Cheney

the shudder
after a thrum

and Addie Mae
and Cynthia
and Carole
and Denise

II.

Memory.
A thread drawn
taut,
reaching back
farther than
we can see —

It is said that
Ancestors
hold the plectrum
that releases
a tone

all that is
known
and not yet
known —
a note that should
be heeded.

But memory triggers
painful hymns,
rolling sea-billows
of sorrows

that signal that, no —
no, it is not well
with my soul.
Because the vibration

is never-ending
and travels the
infinite length
of that string

III.

A mother calls police

about a man
who manhandled
her young son

and she is tackled
and taken to jail.
It takes me
instantly back

to a white security guard's
hands clenched
on my arms
in a department store.

In my mother's eyes
I see
fierceness
and
fear.

IV.

Emmett's mother said
leave the
coffin
lid open

"I wanted the world
to see what they did
to my baby."

Emmett's accuser
said in 2016
that she lied about

the details
of the 1955 event
that incited

the disfiguring torture
and murder
of Mamie Till's

baby boy.

Some of us
weren't born yet
but still
we remember.

Like flashbacks
Medgar Evers' widow
had upon hearing

the sounds
of a certain
candidate's rallies.

V.

In 2017 Georgia
a police chief
gives a rare apology

for a lynching
that happened
in 1940.

He apologizes
to the black people —
many who

weren't alive then
but they
never forgot.

He says

“There are relatives here
and people
who still remember.

Even if those people
are not still alive,
down through

the generations
that memory
is still alive.”

VI.

Erica Garner
was named for
her father, Eric

who told the police
who were choking him
that he
can't breathe
can't breathe
can't breathe
can't breathe
can't breathe
can't breathe
can't breathe
can't breathe
can't breathe
can't breathe
can't breathe
can't breathe

And then
he died.

Erica spoke out
until she couldn't.
“The system
breaks you down
until you can't win.”

Erica spoke out
until she couldn't.

And then
she died.

At 27,

after giving birth
to her father's
grandson —

another
black
body.

VII

Do we remember
there was a fifth
little girl
at 16th Street?

Addie Mae's sister,
Sarah.

She lay wounded
in the hospital as
the others were
laid to rest.

She has said
"It seems we are
going back
in time."

Back.

VIII

Vibrations, hymns
go on
and on
and on...
No, it is not well
with my
soul.

Chicago
is vibrating

Indianapolis
is vibrating
El Paso
is vibrating
Pittsburgh
is vibrating
Flint
is vibrating

America
is
vibrating.

echoes of
dissonant notes,
memory
known and
not yet known

lived and
not yet
lived.

Trayvon
and Sandra
and Jimmie Lee
and Emmet

and
and
and
and
and

GENDER IDENTITY

her, her
Mary M. Brown

On Facebook, a string of posts
on a friend's page connects me
with an old acquaintance—I
know this because she tells me
she remembers me from long ago,
recounts an incident that involves
us both, one that rings true, but
she insists there is no reason I
would remember her, her

name different now, she says, so
many years gone by. I imagine
a marriage that changes her name,
check her page to see that yes, she
is married. Her cover photo is of
a cat, no help. I forage through
the years for a Carla I remember,
someone I talked with, recognized
by face, by name, who now insists
no reason you would remember me.

But you remember *me*, I think,
and I cannot find you, Carla, hard
as I try. Eventually I ask her, sure
that knowledge of that old name
will trip the switch, bring this Carla
back to me so I can say *Of course*
of course I remember you now.

Bruce, my name was Bruce back
then she writes. I surprise myself
by not being fazed. But frantic
now, I hunt, chase after Bruce
and do not find him anywhere, hate
myself for losing him this way. *I'm*
truly sorry, Carla, I can't remember
Bruce I write.

It's OK she answers
It was such a long time ago.

Living With/Out Labels
Lylanne Musselman

I've been called "breeder"
by gay friends when
I was in a happy hetero-
sexual relationship,
and I've been a "lesbo"
when I've loved
on the other side –
yet, I'm reluctant
to call myself Bi
because it comes
with accusations
of being unable
to pick a "team,"
and those hetero
couples assuming
you're game
for a threesome. Why
does life have to be
this complicated –
everyone wanting
to push you into
their square idea
of a neat box, a box
they don't care to check
if you were meant to fit.

SEEKING REFUGE

What to say to a refugee
Mary Brown

“Home is the place where, when you go there,
They have to take you in.” —Robert Frost

Here
is some water, some bread
and, oh some of Grandma’s
lentil soup

Here
is the bed you will sleep in,
and this one for your son. If
you need more blankets,
there are some right

There
is a fresh bar of soap
and a light you can turn on—
see?—if the night becomes
too long

Here
is where we will gather
when we are all awake, have
eggs and toast and talk

about the future—yours
and ours—

Here
is the place we have all
come together, the place we
will learn together anew
to call home

Suffocating in Ignorance

Curtis L. Crisler

—for Mrs. Diaz

Floating on black rubber tube in Atlantic from Cuba,
her mouth scrolled her escape to East Coast, berated

us for our disrespect for her accent—her classroom—
prized freedoms our forefathers died for. We laughed

at her, ill in brain about life at sixteen, like all sixteen
year olds, when we only knew we knew laughter was
our defensive mechanism, separated us from parents,
teachers, “you’ll do what I say.” Old folk as foes, still

Shakespearean theme of brazen youngsters. Mrs. Diaz
left her family “to teach brats like us?” A sweet deal

for her; we got Cuban passionate for Latin, working day
in, day out, for myriad school clubs, had Taco Fridays

for hungry digestive systems with quarters, least one day
a week. She fixated on eyes, penetrated her steely *ojos y*
voluntad on our smallness; her eyelids wore turquoise,
black eyeliner. We found no signs marked compassion,

we were encumbered americanos, learned early to show
no emotion—small and round, and big-eyed, like brown

faces of Cubano teenagers—willful and strong, across
the ocean—waves from her love. When the tears ran

beneath pop-bottle glasses, cantos in native tongue—
foreign curses jumped from within her red thin lips,
a grace we listened to in her controlled rage, bent
us over, spanked us like dusty rugs dangling the line.

Washed Out
Alicia Drier

I met her in the shadow before an education
Her hair folded tight against the top of her skull
Eyes wonder-wide at the premise of a new school year

I asked for her name
Not because I wanted to have something to call her
But because I wanted to shelve this memory later in my day
Rest in the joy of meeting my first student at a new school

Her response surprised me: Samrawit
I had to ask for it again
When it doesn't fit quite right on the tip of my tongue.
Samrawit
She said it again, bolder this time
The middle vowel like a stubbed toe

And before I even stop to think,
I'm asking her if she has another name in her pocket
Something easier I could attach to her face

But what I don't understand then
Is that I'm asking her to change the very color of her name
Drain it all out until it's a little more white - like me

The Refugee
Marjie Giffin

The way was long and hard, hot and dry,
and I yearned for *agua* to slake the thirst and wet
my cracked lips that stuck together -- soothe the roof
of my mouth that was veined like thin parchment.
Caravan connotes a train of vehicles, some transport
other than grimy feet, caked with dust and mud
and throbbing so heavily that I could hear the plodding
of each footfall in my ears as I trudged forward.

Yet the caravan of which so many expressed fear
was just the mass of us, refugees from far-away places
where danger lurks in every doorway, where drugs
are the currency in which our children must trade. We
could not turn back, no matter the threat, for a last breath
behind us was more certain than whispered death ahead.

New American Dream
by JL Kato

I dream Lady Liberty lies face-down in the Rio Grande.
"Excuse me. You mean the Big River. We speak English here."
That copper statue is just one segment in a long, expensive wall.
At 305 feet, including base, her slick back slants to her head,
crown spikes embedded deep in river bed, torch submerged.
A sniper lurks, nestled in the hem of her robe, turning away
huddled masses. I awake in darkness, sniffing despair and hope.

HATE

Reflections after an Evening of Muslim Poetry
Dan Carpenter

When my Universe
was a piece of paved Indiana
called Irish Hill
in homage to homesteaders
who'd never again or ever
see Ireland
much less neighboring planets
I saw in twin colorlessnesses
white and black
white versus black
and heard 2 warring gods
Us Catlickers with our nuns & priests & body & blood
Them Puplickers with their Rock of Ages
ah, the rocks we flung in our childish blood feuds
as if God Dios Allah Grandfather Earth Mother
weren't idly tossing our little cosmos,
like those of my host of yet-unimagined friends,
from palm to loving palm

Xenophilia

Dan Carpenter

(A late Friday night, a supermarket, Indianapolis)

3 laughing young women
dare I say girls
2 of the beautiful beige faces wrapped in hijabs
the 3rd leaving on display
the lush dark mane of birthright

all of them alert in their bellies
I must suppose
to the hate from fear that festers
in hearts in this heartland
as their numbers grow
yet blind
these serene queen's eyes
to all but their moment

girls

so here so gone
such a strange comfort to me to witness
from amid my ignored mob
such solace to think of my fellows
all the good old Christian men
all across this God-mocking city
getting done their work
of filling their heaven
and making room

Fire and Ice
Norbert Krapf

Dead of winter: snow, ice,
winds lashing the plains
of frozen northern Indiana.

The brick fieldhouse
of the Catholic college
that admitted only men roared
like an overheated furnace.

Poles, Irish, and Italians
from the cities around
the Great Lakes, a few
Germans from the hills
to the south along the Ohio,
we stretched our vocal chords
to the snapping point as
our team scratched, slipped,
rallied and finally failed
against Lutheran archrivals.

When we entered the igloo
of our freshman dorm
someone, incensed, found
rays of light escaping
into the hall from beneath
Leland Richard's door.

Leland was a black intellectual
from Cleveland who had dared
to stay home and not support
the holy communal cause.

Maybe he was reading a book,
writing a letter to his family
or just wanted to be alone.
Maybe he was thinking about
what to do with his life.

Someone knocked on the door.

No answer. Someone pounded.
Still no answer. "Stayed
in his room during the game!"
echoed down the hall. Someone
brought a can of lighter
fluid and squirted it under
the door. Someone else struck
and flipped a match. Flame
zigzagged under the door that
bitterly cold night as someone
chanted "Spear chucker!"

I stood there watching,
listening from a distance
while my friend sat alone
trapped between fire and ice.
I could not find whatever
words should have come out.

Leland never once mentioned
that night when we later sat
in the cafeteria discussing
literature and foreign films.
I could never bring myself
to ask how it felt to watch
flame shoot beneath his door,
hear the chant from beyond.

Two springs later after green
flames lit brown grass around
the pond in front of the chapel
with the postcard twin towers,
Leland entered a seminary.
I never heard from him again.
I have just learned he is dead.

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Festival
Bonnie Maurer

The white-haired man sits behind his table
at the Catfish Festival in Shoals, Indiana.
It's the 4th of July.

We've stopped our car to gawk
at small town America's wares
and perhaps find a novel treasure.
He has a box of dolls with porcelain
heads and feet—all muslin—
ready to be dressed.

"I'll take \$15," he says. But I never
had an interest in dolls.

I inspect the Imperial
Box Camera in its original case.
I consider Depression glass. Then I see it
on the table. A rusty sign—
stamped in metal with nail holes to
hammer it in place.

I hold it up to read and finger
its leafy border. Who took pride
in this design:

Public Swimming Pool

Whites Only

Selma, Ala 14 July 31

"I'll take \$25," he says.

Would I want a Nazi arm band? "No Jews and dogs allowed?"

I place it back on the table
in the corner, my hands dirty.
I leave America's history there.

Pilgrimage to #StayWoke
Tracy Mishkin

On foot, by bike, we take
this earthen path next to the canal
until it forks, up to the road
and down to the water, where
the bridge blocks the sun,
a quiet place where we can best
remember how to feed hope.
Yes, it's graffiti on a bridge, but
the cleaning crew will nod
and leave it up, knowing
we travel here to be reminded
of our faith.

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VIOLENCE

American Dog Walk During a Time of Cruelty

Michael Brockley

You walk Scooter, your Shitzu mix, through the backyard on the day the President demands the Ukrainian government investigate a gaffe-spoken former Vice-President for grift. Your dog tugs at the leash until she exposes a possum laying lifeless on its back within a haphazard stack of tented picket fences. Its white stomach vulnerable to Scooter's curious nose. But she backs away from the stench. From the possum's ruse. You've lived with fear for three years in a nation that deports brown soldiers who fought American wars. Your nieces and nephews ask for bulletproof vests for Christmas. They practice suppressing coughs during shooter drills in their schools. At night you unearth the Doomsday clock to watch its dark hand lurch closer to its final second while a fool rambles on about fake news. In your yard, a crabapple. The possum's interrupted dinner. You lead your companion to the house, back to a world where brown children are forced to hydrate themselves with toilet water. Where native women disappear from their families without hue and cry. In the morning, your pension check will arrive in the mail. You'll tinker with the amount of pumpkin to add to Scooter's kibble. Tomorrow an American drone will slaughter a wedding party in a desert on the other side of the world. Or an Iranian fishing vessel will be seized in the Straits of Hormuz. When you Google *Hormuz*, you learn a teenager is mocked because she pleads for the lives of polar bears. During the next day's dog walk, you hope to find the possum has eaten its fruit.

Continuum
Mitchell H.L. Douglas

After days of murder, more bodies
than nights in a week, you would think
we'd say *Enough*. Instead,
more blood. Don't think
it's just the dealers, that side
of law not in your nature.
it's expectant fathers on morning walks,
it's businessmen minding their business,
selling denim on Sunday afternoons.
Yesterday, my student, who doesn't believe
in gun control, said he wanted to
write about parenting & the right
to bear arms, how slipping on one side
affects the other
(you guess
 which way that goes).
& though you won't find me w/steel
in the small of my back (@ least
not by my hand), I know the peace
a poem can bring. So I say, *Yes*,
write. & he goes back to his seat
nodding his head, the room filled
w/the voices of his classmates
comparing Dove, Simic & Wright,
the push of my chair
back from my desk to stand & speak
like fingernails on a chalk board, like a scream
when a gun fires.

After murder
Mitchell L.H. Douglas

the complex changes
names. The Flats,
The Villas, pretty gauze
for old wounds. As if

we forgot the bullets,
the children that fell, the angry
boyfriends living w/children
they do not love. I drive by
& try to remember when

pieces fit. A cloud
of cardinals explodes
from a snow drift, the splash
of my tires etching dirt

in the bank. All this flying,
impact, stain. Don't tell me
you can't see.

Monday morning, the first thing
Mitchell L.H. Douglas

from our mouths
is murder; in a phone call
to your mother's,
I spill news of Broad Ripple,
2 shot, 1 dead outside
a hookah lounge. You counter w/a knife
fight where you are, Louisville
matching Indy
blood for blood.

As if one story's
not enough, we pile our words
like corpses in open graves. Sorry,
too on the nose? How about one
hand stacked atop another the closest
bones to God: victor. Something
about layers, something about
a winner & a loser, someone
on top & someone w/out air.

Your mother in the air
behind you tells me
Hello, the echo
shaking through
your cell, asks for the CJ to browse
the obits for names
she knew in school.

Defiance
by JL Kato

—for Irina Ratushinskaya, 1954-2017

Snap the bones of my fingers.
I will learn to write with my toes
or type with a pencil in my mouth.

Ban paper and ink.
I will scratch words on soap
and repeat them to memory
before they rinse away.

Change the meaning of words.
I will compose messages in music
or pantomime them in dance.

Bury my tongue fifty feet into the earth.
I will whisper in your dreams
or hum ghost songs
in moments of your silence.

The Police and the Potter's Hand
Norbert Krapf

*for Jody Naranjo,
Santa Clara Pueblo*

When I tell you
the story of how
the policeman pulled

his gun & pointed
it into our son's
hysterical face while

we screamed from
the balcony a few
feet away in

the direct line
of fire as six
other squad cars

circled our place
& sirens ripped
apart the peace,

"Don't shoot,
don't do it,
don't shoot,

he's our son,
our son, our son,
we can calm

him down," your
hand that shapes
clay into a pot

reaches out to
mine that writes
the poem & you

say you feel
what we felt,
you are the mother

of three daughters,
the mother, the mother
of three daughters,

& we are joined
as one family
in one story

that crosses over
ancient battle lines
as compassion passes

from the potter's
to the poet's
loving hand.

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Prayer to Walt Whitman at Ground Zero
Norbert Krapf

Come back, Walt Whitman, we need you now in the hour of our grief.
Come back, Camerado, wind your way back to Ground Zero where you belong.
Wrap your arm around the shoulder of a fireman who lost his best friend,
tell the policemen how brave their brothers were at the moment of collapse,
rub your fingers between the ears of the dog that has sniffed hour after hour
 for the smell of human flesh,
stand at attention when workers find in the rubble the body of a brother,
amble over to the Armory and say a word to long lines of those who have
 pictures of their loved ones pinned to their chests,
tell the husband how beautiful and good his missing wife is,
tell the wife how courageous her husband was to help his colleagues,
promise the sister you will hunt with her for her lost brother just as you
hunted for brother George at Fredericksburg,
hold steady the mother and father who lost their son weeks before he was to marry,
hug the student from Queens who, after her class in the suburbs rode your word-ferry
across time and space, sobbed to her teacher they had found the body of her firefighter-
fiancé,
comfort the family of the Brooklyn student who came to this country from Syria
for asylum and will now return home only in spirit,
guide to sanctuary the refugees who, white ash and ghostly powder disfiguring their
faces, hobbled across the Brooklyn bridge toward your old haunts,
you who know so well the underbelly of this city and the pulse of the people.

Come back to smoking Manahatta, Father Walt, where you walked the streets
 with immigrants from many lands
and rode the omnibus and listened to the Italian opera and the American folk song
and applauded the singer and rode the ferry back to Brooklyn,
convince us the lilac will blossom again and release its fragrance into the air,
help us believe the mockingbird will trill and caper, the hermit thrush sing,
and the children smile, shout and play in the parks again without looking up.

Come back and implore the wounded moon to pour her mysterious
 ministrations on us,
petition the splendid silent sun to come out and shine long while
 wounds heal,
teach us a language that rises into prayer as we lift one another,
help us not to fear our grief as we commemorate the thousands lost,
show our leaders how to be judicious and strong, compassionate

and unflinching,
look over us as we read the poem-prayers that inform our resolve
to become larger than before, open-hearted, strong, wise, patient,
keep waiting for us in the grass that grows beneath our boot-soles.

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ME, TOO

After Each Visit When He Gave Her a New Barbie
by JL Kato

"This Barbie's hair is tangled, because she won't let me brush it."

"This Barbie is naked because she's stupid. She's hiding under the bed."

"This Barbie is crying."

"This Barbie has a blindfold because she doesn't want to see anymore."

"This Barbie is headless because—just because."

Defy
Dheepa R. Maturi

Let me tell you what thumps in your chest —
it's a pomegranate.
So, place your thumbs on either side
and press, just so.
Did you know you held such jewels?

Your fear is boiled irrevocably into your light.
Your fear is guns and knives and fingers.
It is grief, and pain, and torment, and and and —
yes, one hurt for every pomegranate seed.

So, pluck each seed and hold it to the sun.
Is the fruit an amethyst or garnet or ruby?
Is the nub made of topaz or amber or gold?
Squeeze and lick the succulence, then
look at your hands, fiery as goddess-tongue.
Watch the crimson seep through your
palms and crawl under your nails. See!
Your fear is not as grisly as you are,
Fierce One.

Touch this heart-blood. Take more juice
to streak your cheeks and mark your body.
Now, you need not beg the Earth to
swallow you as you run. Now, you will
know how to scream as the men approach,
how to rise and resist, how to fight and
defy.

Ask Me
Wendy Vergoz

and I'll tell you
of unfinished business,
the horror of first love.
Not love. No.

Ask me, a survivor, a one-in-six statistic,
and I'll tell you of an evil calculation.
Vodka clear as water, clear as darkness
through that window, clear as light.

Ask me and I'll tell you of an eighteen-year-old
devil—an angel-seeming devil—
his name hidden twenty-seven years,
penciled on a desk drawer,
today I scratch it off.
Twenty-seven years ago, I,
a fifteen-year-old girl,
lay corpse-like on the carpet
near that desk.

Ask me, I might tell you
now my daughter has that desk.

Ask me and I'll tell you of the vodka
clear as truth, clear as darkness
past the window, clear as lies.
A one-in-six statistic, corpse-like
On blue carpet, bitter liquid in her veins.

Looking back through vodka
to a window clear with darkness,
ask me, I will tell you
of no consolation, no conversation,
till now.

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Sanctuary
Wendy Vergoz

I said "Yes" when he asked. Chose him
to be safe. Best friend meant no plunge,
everything predictable, I thought.

He preaches from the pulpit. I sit silent
in a pew. His silver-*tongued peace*
and truth, mercy and justice engulf me.

Cathedral. Incense surrounds me.
Husband processes past. Bruises
on my arms unseen beneath my sweater.

The granite font holds water.
His hands throw a knife.
Another day baptize our child.

Raise the chalice. Break bread.
Download pornography: *Tie me up*
so you can do whatever you want to me.

Tenth anniversary wine.
His serpent tongue drowns me:
You like it so much have more.

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Numbers
Wendy Vergoz

Twenty-seven.
Twenty-seven years hijacked.
Twenty-seven thousand times
My hands are claws, clenched.
My right foot tries to brake
Before I break.
Right foot brakes but I can't stop
What happened
Twenty-seven years ago:
December seventeenth, a winter wedding.
Twenty-three years old.
Old enough to know or not?
Not, for I'd been raped at fifteen.
A girl, just.

At forty-two I realized I'd been raped
Twenty-seven years earlier.
Too broken by rape to know that I'd been raped.
Too young to drive when raped.
I couldn't brake and so I broke.

Broken, then at twenty-one.
Six years already hijacked by rape
When I met my second captor, actor superb.
I thought that I was safe.
December wedding: did my foot try to brake?
For now it never stops.
I try to change time, change history.
I don't want that wedding, those years, this life.
Twenty-seven thousand times
My right foot tries to brake
But I can't stop.

Broken for good.

Can't change	the numbers.
Can't unmeet	my captors.
Can't un-rape	my girlself.
Can't rewind	my wedding.

But I can speak the truth.

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DRUG CULTURE

Trajectories
Curtis Crisler

To the young Latina
who told me she's dating a member
of a drug cartel—

her jarring terminology spins—
the same as if she chewed
and twirled a cherry Twizzler

between her somewhat cheeky
smile. I was pissed,
but I knew I couldn't lay

on her that her
being active in college
and him active in drug-

running had different
outcomes coming. She
was beautiful, a cup of sass,

looking ceramic, small—
assured her provocation in street-
syllabics would add up

to some credible restitution
of credibility. People around
her, all like, "WTF," but

never gave her any wetness.
Was he going to replace her
degree with his lure for ill-Benjamins?

Was she accepting his hood-
rat pontifications
like they were irritating bumps

from dancers in crowded club?
Did she just keep dancing?
I wanted to kick her down

on being stupidly stupid,
but she saw the thought-cloud
above my head—she saw

my eyes, how I
wanted to spring her
from apprehension.

She waited, about a fly's tick,
to see if I could prove her
unenlightened for loving

some asshole who calls her
baby when they sex—
so much better than any man

she ever cried for. I couldn't
impart my piece-of-shit
life into holy stanzas. I couldn't

tell her tossing away English
and biology would be
reconstituted by running

from feds. I, some wide-eyed
mongoose. She, a rattling
snake, writhed, then asked,

“How do women like you
write books?” Her snake eyes,
ambient. My eyes plead.

My smile broke. I leaned
in, breath to breath,
asked, “Why you wanna kill

the only you you own?”
Wetness came—
sliding down her face

as if her face were a windshield

traveling alongside a semi
in a downpour—

understanding I said
something she didn't comprehend,
something in my tone,

she knew, cut at her.
I cleaned my hands,
turned them into wipers—

wiped away embarrassment
of a woman scorching
the earth in a creative writing

workshop. More people
came to our table. Put hands
on her like we're at a revival-tent

meeting. She just looked
at me, said, "See, this
is not what I needed. This is not

what I wanted. This is
why I can't stand poetry.
It whirls inside,

all up in my truth—
a squatter—always,
a body in a grave."

I get up to leave, for her
honesty's not tainted.
I turn back towards her ugly

cry. I caress her hair
with my lips—brown curls
smelling like coconut.

"You are a poem, *mija*.
I hear you," I say. "I'm listening to
your tears dance, right now."

Her Addiction **Mary Sexson**

I. Recompense

You laid down the needle,
and took up your life again,
only looking back to count
the reasons you had lived.
Your boy beside you each day
is enough, you said.
So we all walk forward
a few steps, holding
our breath to see if this
can last, or will some terrible
pull breach the dike and drag
you back into the wash?

You say you have your own God,
one the books don't talk about,
one who is privy to your fears
and secrets. But this God
doesn't punish, or hold you
down with guilt. And so I,
in my faithlessness, call him
to me, render my recompense,
and barter for my debt.

II. Back Into the Fray

One hundred days did not
give you the clarity you sought,
nor did it remove any obstacles
from your path. It merely proved
to be a short respite, for all of us,
from the relentless grind
of your addiction. We laid our heads
down, collectively, and slept
a dreamless sleep, and woke to find
you gone again, back into the fray

of your life, your own war zone,
the bombs falling all around you.

III. Rewriting the Script

I dreamed I was writing poems
about you, last night, you burning
in the fire of your addiction,
tied to the hopelessness of it
as if you'd already made the agreement
to ride this thing to the end,
no matter what, and then I
was frantically editing these poems,
moving your hopelessness off
the page, inserting courage
and a resilient spirit, you
saving yourself over and over.

In my dream you kept resisting
my rewrites, changing the script
back to lost and broken, the vehicle
that is your life totaled,
no survivors. But I
wrote you back in, crawling
from that wreckage,
a strong sponsor answering
your last cell phone call for help.
People from a nearby meeting gather
to lift you off the road,
and hold you
until the bleeding stops. In my dreams
you live, every single time.

ENVIRONMENT

A Few Songs from the Sixth Extinction

Marc Hudson

I remember the demented trillings
in the rain-washed Willapas west of Skomakowa,
the *gick gick* of cricket frogs, insomniac
nights Northern Virginia 1955.
Not so long ago, the *tonk tonk*
from a small pond near the derelict
Dari King on the road to Shades, Indiana—
as if a drunken monk
were pounding on a rain barrel.

Who among us can remember Viosca's Frog,
its whistle of an Ivorybill
from old growth Louisiana bottomlands?
Or the pippids of Surinam, the plantannas
of Central Africa warbling
under the cold tarns of volcanic mountains?

And in el Valle de Antón,
in the ancient crater there, the small creek
called "The Thousand Frog Stream"—
you had to step most gingerly
on the green bank, so many golden ones
had gathered. Who can speak of their music
without falling silent?

And the Giant Tree Frog, its song of a rope
jerked through an uncoiled pulley, its creaking
of a mechanism in need of repair.

Their silence is the silence of dead water.

The Complaint of Nature
Marc Hudson

for Wendell Berry

At dusk it was I spoke to her,
Dame Natura, under the hydrangeas
brimming with flies, one warm evening
in late July. I was on my knees
weeding the garden and there she was
stroking a leaf. I must have started
for she smiled then and spoke reassuringly
in the old Latin. She wondered why
I was seeking her. When I could find
my tongue, I said a friend had asked
about her and so I'd set about
tracing her footsteps among the medievals.
"Strange," she replied, "that one you speak of
visits me each Sabbath in his woodlands.
His haunts and mine often coincide."
"True, Lady, but it grieves him
our recent poets have had so little to say
about you." "Not so long ago,
there was one," she remembered.
"He was going blind writing pamphlets
for the Puritans, so I let him glimpse
my ankle. Such a bookish lad!"
A goldfinch twittered at her elbow
and another worried the stubborn seed
of a sunflower. I kept squinting—
at times her face was still as one
carved in marble, and at times
you could read a planet's grief on her brow.
"Tell your friend," she said at last,
"I won't be absent long from their verses.
Poets cannot forget what is theirs to speak."
She fell silent, and I saw in her gaze
the vanishing glaciers, shorebirds scattered
from their nesting places—the continual
erasure of species. I wanted to ask her
whom Alan had called the Vicar of God
what is the poet's work in such a world,
but her sorrow gave me pause. And the moment
passed. It was as if a prism had fallen
into the grass directing the sun

to where she had stood, but now the light
shone elsewhere. Nonetheless,
I lifted my hands as one does
when the Cup is given.

Outlanders
Dheepa R. Maturi

I remember a mangled mallard,
a blotch of emerald, a blur of brown
on the dirt road, and though I'd been
told never to touch a bird because
they carry diseases, a heartbeat is
a heartbeat, and I placed one hand
upon him, and the other upon the earth,
so that all of us could weep together.

I remember a mangled mallard,
who dodged pellets and spittle and
crouched under a bus seat that
smelled of sweat and tennis shoes,
and she timed her ride by the pulse
in her head so that she knew when
to crawl out of the hydraulic door and
fall into the green grass that loved her.

I remember a mangled mallard,
who flailed from a man's mouth —
*it's kind of funny to shoot and watch
them crumple to the ground* — but it
was a party, so I swallowed my own
throat-burn, stumbled to the shadows,
found the avian iridescence, whispered
yes, your existence had meaning.

I remember the mallards, all of the
mallards. Together, we thrash and wail
until we locate our home in the ether,
until our cries smooth to a symphonic line.
We are the shamans who must honor
our own streaks of life.

Gathering
Dheepa R. Maturi

What do you need to hold?

In this convergence of light
and autumn breath,
you reach for reds and golds,
grasp them with your fingers,
wanting, asking, deciding
how they can serve you.
You place them in your basket,
crush them down to fit more —
do they crumble as you press,
do they release their veins
and their integrity?

There is a squirrel skimming.
There is a leaf ant carrying, and
you, too, are stepping —
please, you need to watch.

Won't you drop what you've gathered and breathe?
Won't you take Earth in your hands and love her?

(first published in *Branches*)

At Dawn in the Subdivision
Shari Wagner

A heron, stoic as a statue, is gazing
downward as if golden fish
hovered near lilies
or just his own reflection
held fast to the still surface
of the retention pond.

What has drawn him to this side
of the looking-glass, where
stands of cattails are branded
as outlaws and grass is the shade
of artificial turf even in winter?
This is the summer the tadpoles
never transform into frogs.
Only one lone voice calls
and hesitates before dialing
the same number again.
At night we close our window—the length
of his silence and of his patience
keeps us awake.

Now we stand at the same window
stunned by the heron's poised
beauty and waiting for great wings
to shake the air
loose from its moorings,
but the first moment we turn, he is
gone as if never here.

And it is good he is gone.

I wish him rivers of fish untainted
by run-off from lawns too lethal
for my daughter to touch in bare feet,
lawns where twelve glassy-eyed ducks
lay iridescent as gasoline. The foxes
with cubs come no more
and neither should you, O heron,
with the placid, unblinking eye.

Go back before you become an ornament
in some anonymous lawn, a tribute
to those remembered in death. Yes,
go back where you came from, to waterways
lush with tadpoles and others of your tribe.

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Michael Brockley is a retired school psychologist who resides in Muncie, Indiana. His poems have appeared in *Gargoyle*, *Atticus Review*, *Clementine Unbound*, *Panopyzine* and the anthology *Visiting Bob: Poems Inspired by the Life and Work of Bob Dylan*. A poem is forthcoming in *Queen Mob's Teahouse*. In addition, Brockley's poems have appeared in such Indiana sites as *Flying Island* and the anthology *Cowboys and Cocktails: Poetry from the True Grit Saloon*.

Jared Carter is a poet who lives in Indianapolis. "*Janey*" was first published in *Dissident Voice*. Copyright © 2019 by Jared Carter and used by permission.

Mary M. Brown taught literature and creative writing at Indiana Wesleyan and was an editor of *The Steinbeck Review*. Her work appears on the Poetry Foundation and American Life in Poetry websites and recently in *Third Wednesday*, *Flying Island*, *Plough*, and *Journal*. Her work is also forthcoming in *2019 New Poetry from the Midwest*.

Dan Carpenter is a poet, blogger, freelance journalist and former longtime newspaper columnist. He has published two books of poems and two of nonfiction. He resides in Indianapolis with his wife, Mary.

Curtis L. Crisler is the author of the poetry collections of *Poetry Don't Moan So Much (Stevie): A Poetry Musiquarium*, *This" Ameri-can-ah*, *Pulling Scabs*, *Wonderkind*, *Tough Boy Sonatas*, and the poetry chapbook *Black Achilles*. He has received a Library Scholars Grant Award, Indiana Arts Commission Grants, Eric Hoffer Awards, the Sterling Plumpp First Voices Poetry Award, as well as fellowships from Cave Canem. His poetry has been adapted to theatrical productions in New York and Chicago. He is an Associate Professor of English at Indiana University Fort Wayne.

Mitchell L. H. Douglas, Associate Professor of English at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), is a founding member of the Affrilachian Poets, a Cave Canem fellow, and Poetry Editor for *PLUCK!: the Journal of Affrilachian Arts & Culture*. His second poetry collection *\blak\ |al-fə bet*, winner of the 2011 Lexi Rudnitsky/Editor's Choice Award, is available from Persea Books. His debut collection, *Cooling Board: A Long-Playing Poem*, was a runner-up for the 2007 Stan and Tom Wick Poetry Prize, a semifinalist for the 2007 Blue Lynx Prize, and a semifinalist for the 2006 Crab Orchard Series in Poetry First Book Award. In 2010, *Cooling Board* was nominated for an NAACP Image Award in the Outstanding Literary Work-Poetry category and a Hurston/Wright Legacy Award. His poetry has appeared in *Callaloo*, *The Ringing Ear: Black Poets Lean South* (University of Georgia Press), *Crab Orchard Review*, and *Zoland Poetry Volume II* (Zoland Books) among others.

Alicia Drier's nonfiction has been published in *Obra/Artifact* and "The Other Stories Podcast. Her poetry had most recently been published by "For Women Who Roar." teaches English at Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory school.

Marjie Giffin is an Indianapolis writer who has authored four regional histories and whose poetry has recently appeared in *Snapdragon*, *Poetry Quarterly*, *Flying Island*,

The Kurt Vonnegut Literary Journal, the Saint Katherine Review, Through the Sycamores, and the Blue Heron Review. One of her plays was produced in the IndyFringe Short Play Festival. She's an active in the Indiana Writers Center and has taught both college writing and gifted education.

Marc Hudson is an emeritus professor of English at Wabash College. He is at work on a study of the ecological imagination of four American writers, H.D. Thoreau, Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, and Wendell Berry. "The Complaint of Nature" and "A Few Songs from the Sixth Extinction" appeared in his 2017 book, *East of Sorrow*, published by Red Mountain Press of Santa Fe.

JL Kato was born in Japan but raised in Indiana since age two. His first collection of poems, *Shadows Set in Concrete* (Restoration Press, 2011) chronicles his experience as an immigrant. It won the poetry category, through the Indiana Center for the Book, in 2011 in the Best Books of Indiana competition. He is the poetry editor of the *Flying Island* and president of Brick Street Poetry, Inc

Norbert Krapf, former Indiana Poet Laureate and Jasper native, is the author of thirteen poetry collections, including *Bloodroot: Indiana Poems* and *Catholic Boy Blues*, about surviving abuse by a priest in childhood. His latest collections are *The Return of Sunshine*, about his young grandson in Germany, and *Indiana Hill Country Poems*. He is the winner of the Lucille Medwick Memorial Award from the Poetry Society of America, a Glick Indiana Author Award, and a Creative Renewal Fellowship from the Arts Council of Indy. His poems have been read on the Writer's Almanac, has a poem included in a stained-glass window at the Indy Airport, and has released a poetry and jazz CD with Monika Herzig and performs poetry and blues with Gordon Bonham.

"Prayer to Walt Whitman," "Fire and Ice" and "The Police and the Potter's Hand" are used with the permission of Indiana University Press.

Adrian Matejka, the current Indiana Poet Laureate, is the author of three collections of poems. *The Devil's Garden* won the 2002 New York / New England Award. *Mixology* was a winner of the National Poetry Series and a finalist for a NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literature. *The Big Smoke* was awarded the 2014 Anisfield-Wolf Book Award and was a finalist for the National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize. Matejka's most recent book is *Map to the Stars*. He teaches creative writing at Indiana University in Bloomington.

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Dheepa R. Maturi is a poet and essayist who enjoys exploring the rich and surprising ways in which cultures and traditions interact and intersect over time. A graduate of the University of Michigan and the University of Chicago, her work has been featured in a variety of literary journals and anthologies, including *The Fourth River, Literary Hub, Tiferet, PANK, Entropy, Wanderlust, Every Day Poems, Jaggery, Flying Island, Hoosier Lit, Dear America: Reflections on Race, and The Indianapolis Review*. She lives with her family in Indianapolis.

Bonnie Maurer, MFA in poetry, Indiana University, is the author of *Reconfigured* (Finishing Line Press, 2009) and *The Reconfigured Goddess: Poems of a Breast Cancer Survivor* (Blurb, 2013). Her poems have appeared in the *New York Times*; *So It Goes*, *the Kurt Vonnegut Library Journal*; *Nimrod International Journal*, and others, as well as on IndyGo buses and the 6th floor ceiling of St. Vincent Hospital cancer wing. She works for Arts for Learning as a poet-in-the-schools and community, as a copy editor for the *Indianapolis Business Journal*, and as an Ai Chi (aquatic flowing energy) instructor at the Arthur M. Glick Jewish Community Center. Currently, she welds art using objects from local junkyards and bike shops. She grew up in Indianapolis. bmaurer@ibj.com.

Tracy Mishkin is a call center veteran with a PhD and a graduate of the MFA program in Creative Writing at Butler University. She is the author of three chapbooks: *I Almost Didn't Make It to McDonald's* (Finishing Line Press, 2014), *The Night I Quit Flossing* (Five Oaks Press, 2016), and *This is Still Life* (Brain Mill Press, 2018).

"Conviction," "Falling," "Pilgrimage to #StayWoke," and "America, You Make Me Nervous" were published by Brain Mill Press. An earlier version of "Conviction" entitled "Vision Problem" won third place in the Indiana Poetry Awards for the category of Social Justice and was published in Wabash Watershed.

Mary Redman is a retired high school English teacher who currently works part time supervising student teachers for University of Indianapolis. She enjoys having time to volunteer at IMA at Newfields and to take classes at the Indiana Writers Center. She has had poems published in *Flying Island*, *Three Line Poetry*, *Red River Review*, *Northwest Indiana Literary Journal*, *Tipton Poetry Journal*, *Snapdragon: a Journal of Healing*, and elsewhere.

Mary Sexson is the author of *103 in the Light, Selected Poems 1996-2000* (Restoration Press), and co-author of *Company of Women, New and Selected Poems* (Chatter House Press). Her poetry has appeared in *Flying Island*, *Tipton Poetry Journal*, *Hoosier Lit*, *New Verse News*, and others, and several anthologies, including *Reckless Writing* (2013), *The Best of Flying Island* (2015), and *Words and Other Wild Things* (2016). She was part of the Da Vinci Pursuit, a poetry project at Prophetstown State Park. "Sky" was previously published in *Explore Sustainable Indiana*, a project and publication of Earth Charter Indiana.

Wendy Vergoz is author of the poetry book *The Unbinding*. She is the recipient of a Creative Renewal Arts Fellowship from the Arts Council of Indianapolis, an Individual Artist Grant from the Indiana Arts Commission, and a Service Engagement Grant from Indiana Campus Compact. Vergoz's poems have been published in *Pink Panther Magazine*, *Cleaver Magazine*, *Panoply*, *Flying Island Journal*, *The Christian Century*, and *Anglican Theological Review*. They have appeared in exhibitions at The Harrison Center, the Arthur M. Glick JCC, the Indianapolis Artsgarden, and Gallery 308. Vergoz is an Assistant Professor of English at Marian University.

Manon Voice, is a poet, spoken word artist, hip-hop emcee, educator, practicing contemplative, community builder and social justice advocate. She has performed on many diverse stages across the country in the power of word and song and has widely facilitated art, poetry and spoken word workshops. In 2017, Manon Voice was awarded the Power of Peace Award from the Peace Learning Center of Central Indiana for her work in arts and activism. In 2018, Manon Voice received a nomination for the Pushcart Prize in Poetry. Manon Voice is also a recipient of the 2020 Robert D. Beckmann Jr., Emerging Artist Fellowship from the Arts Council of Indianapolis. She seeks to use her art and activism to create a communal space where dialogue, transformation, discovery and inspiration can occur.

Shari Wagner, a former Indiana Poet Laureate, is the author of three books of poems: *The Farm Wife's Almanac*, *The Harmonist at Nightfall: Poems of Indiana*, and *Evening Chore*. Her poems have appeared in many magazines, including *American Life in Poetry*, *The Writer's Almanac*, *North American Review*, and *Shenandoah*. Wagner lives in Westfield, Indiana, and teaches for the Indiana Writers Center, Bethany Seminary's M.A. in Theopoetics program, and IUPUI's Religion, Spirituality, and the Arts seminar.

"At Dawn in the Subdivision" and *"The Farm Wife Visits the Coffin House"* are used with the permission of Cascadia Publishing House. *"Eugene V. Debs Recalls His 1920 Presidential Campaign"* was published in the 2019 edition of *So It Goes: The Literary Journal of the Kurt Vonnegut Museum and Library* and appears here with the poet's permission.

Aaron White's essays, fiction, and poetry have appeared in *The Anatomy of Desire: An Anthology of Distance*, *Months to Years*, *The Smart Set*, *Brain Child Magazine*, *Motherly*, *Fifth Wednesday Journal*, *The Pedestal Magazine*, *Mothers Always Write*, *Prong & Posy*, *FORTH Magazine*, *Change Seven Magazine*, *13th Dimension*, *The Commonline Journal*, *Bluestem Magazine*, *The Awakenings Review* (forthcoming), and others. He holds an MA in Literary Studies from Eastern Illinois University and contributes to *Bluestem Magazine* as an assistant non-fiction editor. (@amwhite90) (amwhite90.tumblr.com).

Celeste Williams is an Indianapolis writer. Formerly, an award-winning newspaper journalist, she has also written plays and poetry. A version of the poem, "Vibrations Ad Infinitum" was published in the Polk Street Review.

A small selection of poems from the past that address social justice issues:

“Still I Rise,” by Maya Angelou

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46446/still-i-rise>

“The Pool Players/Seven at the Golden Shovel,” by Gwendolyn Brooks (1959)

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/28112/we-real-cool>

“Incident,” by Countee Cullen (1923)

<https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/incident/>

“I Am Waiting,” Lawrence Ferlinghetti (1958)

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/42869/i-am-waiting-56d22183d718a>

“A Dream Deferred,” by Langston Hughes (1951)

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46548/harlem>

“I, Too,” by Langston Hughes (1926)

<https://poets.org/poem/i-too>

“He Sees Through Stone,” by Etheridge Knight

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/147809/he-sees-through-stone>

“The Lynching,” by Karl McKay (1919)

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/56983/the-lynching>

“Lady Lazarus,” by Sylvia Plath (1960)

<https://poets.org/poem/i-too>

“Long Guns,” by Carl Sandburg (1919)

<https://poets.org/poem/long-guns>

“Reconciliation,” by Walt Whitman (1865-6)

<https://owlcation.com/humanities/Walt-Whitmans-Reconciliation>