



Leave them something

**Indiana Writers Center
Dance Kaleidoscope
Kurt Vonnegut Museum and Library
JCC Indy**

2021 Spirit and Place Anthology

Introduction

Since 2014, the Indiana Writers Center, Dance Kaleidoscope, and JCC Indianapolis have partnered with various community organizations to present a program for the annual Spirit and Place Festival, bringing writers and dancers together to explore an issue of importance to our community. This year we were thrilled to partner with the Kurt Vonnegut Museum and Library to explore the 2021 theme, “Change,” by way of the KVML’s exhibit of environmental paintings by Edith Vonnegut.

I fell in love with these paintings the first time I saw them and my pleasure grew over the several months I worked with them. Each time I looked at a painting, I saw something or thought something new. Then, as the poems and stories began to arrive in my mailbox, I saw and thought about them again, through the eyes of the writers whose work they inspired. Vonnegut’s images are troubling and beautiful and strange. They cry out to us to change the way we live in our world and show us what will happen if we don’t.

“The painting *Leave Them Something* was inspired by the sadness I felt when I had small children (1980’s) and could see how the planet’s air, soil and water were slowly getting poisoned and used up with no regard for future generations,” Edith Vonnegut wrote. “The red headed girl in the painting is a friend of mine’s daughter who is now in grad school studying microbiology. Her name is Roxanne. I’ve always used my friends’ children for paintings and now I’m using those children’s children and my own grandchildren for paintings because it’s the same sad story and seems to be getting worse. I’m trying to be upbeat about the future though and have great hope that we can save this place with brilliant innovation, science, technology and of course the arts.”

Like Vonnegut, “I believe words and art and dance and music and all the arts can seriously affect the world in a positive way as much as any political movement especially when they are combined.”

I know you will enjoy and be moved by her paintings and by the work in “Leave Them Something,” which eloquently call out for change.

Barbara Shoup
Writer-in-Residence
Indiana Writers Center

View Edith Vonnegut’s paintings at:
<https://www.vonnegutlibrary.org/edithvonnegutexhibit/>

The online performance of “Leave Them Something” will go live at 2 p.m. on Sunday, November 14. It will be available for viewing through Sunday, November 28 at 5 p.m.

Here’s the link:

<https://dancekal.secure.force.com/ticket/#/instances/a0F1G00000PZghFUAT>



Spirit & Place Festival

New connections. New directions.



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Colonizing Mars

Michael Baumann

Deer

Those first few frail fragile faltering
fawn baby steps into the dawn, into the

unknown—trembling, intrepid, and treble cleffed;
cloven-hoofed, doe-eyed, and spindly
though they may be—maybe

Those first few steps will be
the way for you, for me,
eventually to
encounter to
conquer our baby deer-fear
 our crazy-sheer fear
of running
[of falling
(of failing)]. Maybe
Those first few steps will transform
into rushing
into dark night,
into dark,
into. & when you

Take those first faltering
baby steps, dear baby deer, recall:
how we all got here—
how we all got here—
how we all got to this desperate jump-ship exigency,
 this desolate earth-exit strategy
how we all broke her
how we all beer bottle
drenched, pickpocketed, flamethrowered, and
starved baked potatoed her
how we all burned up
smoked out, tear gassed, broken glassed, and
exhausted her: exasperated,
gasping only,
gasping, only
gasping no more
exhaling, only famine-
fasting our mother:
earth, a guilt-dirty rock of a home to rocket off of alone. We are:

victims and villains, wicked and hurt, and when you

Take those first
fawn-baby steps, deer,
there will be a greedy, needy, hungry
evolution: pushing our bodies slowly over time so we (eventually)
can cut our astronautical umbilical cords, so we (eventually)
can cut off our oxygen dependence, so we (eventually)
can switch it up, so we
can suck it up, so we
can move on to
carbon or hydrogen or
helium from some sun some solar system a sum of
lightyears from here but
“hey” (as my 5th grade biology teacher would say)
“live migrate or die.” I
wonder: where would we wander?
Which planet did we
plan when we
went there
first in our minds? (Mars, naturally.) I
wonder: who would be invited to
go, who would be forced to
stay, everyone feeling as
tho
they were in the belly of the whale. &when you

Take those first, frail steps,
dear, the first year of your life will seem like a life-
time but the longer you are alive the faster it goes because
time is relative and
your life is (a constellation,) a group of relatives
trying to tell the same story together—whether
cosmology (the stories of how you and me came to be) or
astronomy (the anatomy of a galaxy). So yo when you

Take those first few steps,
dear me: it will be.
out. of. this. world.
literally, figuratively, physically, emotionally you are:
neither guilty nor guilt-free, dear little deer,
during your new dawn
during this long yawn &when you
Stretch your little
fawn legs past the atmosphere, how
will you move-?-forward? Trembling,
spindly, sometimes rushing into the

unknown—into the frontier—always
growing (up) always tempted to look (back).

Deer, in concert with Vonnegut's other strong female subjects, indeed features a doe or, as I interpret her in "Colonizing Mars," a fawn. Amidst the trash clutter, this queen pierces the viewer with her accusatory stare and, backlit by a halo sun, she beckons, invites us to escape with her, leads the way.

“Colonizing Mars” was interpreted in dance and performed by Dance Kaleidoscope dancers in the 2021 Spirit and Place program, “Leave Them Something.”

Drought

Michael Baumann

Drought

You wake up belly-down, back-baked, sun-stepped, heat
clamped to the back of your neck like a handshake.
Your lips part like a cloud, trying—failing—to rain.

Before unfolding eyelids, you recall all your names—Gaia, Terra, Earth.
Then you say them softly in your head, ritual of your own making.
Then you say them softly aloud, talisman on your tongue.

Then you look at yourself, at your arms, and you look around yourself:
thin cloud smears, greedy with their rain, hazing low, empty
foxholes, whole snakeskins, skinny roots mouthing for moisture.

The desert, you conclude. Then you walk: feet
crunch on sandpaper steps, boney cracks in fissured mud,
sagging out maps and constellations. It seems you walk for days.

Now you stop. You wriggle burned toes into the ground—but how?
You look down: it's cool. Muddy salve. Burn balm. Under-sole squish.
You look up: a puddle wells, swells from a rock like a symphony. Like

Moses, nourishing fat trees and luscious ferns, and it smells like oasis, so
You drink: a long, stooped slake. Gasp for air when finished. You
notice a gnarled stick propped up—a silent guard, some old friend.

You turn, revolve slowly like the earth does, and you see a constellation
gouged in the mud all around you, hundreds and hundreds of words:
Hope. Thank you. Help. Heal. Live. “Gaia, Terra, Earth,” you whisper.

You grasp the stick and gouge your own word into the mud. Then,
belly-down, back-baked, sun-stepped, you awake—again.

Drought personifies our abandoned, exhausted, supine, stripped, burnt planet. This painting juxtaposes an incumbent apocalypse with a passive softness in sleep. A desert dream is, in essence, a mirage; in hers, Gaia conjures a healing image of the future. May we do the same while we're still lucid.

Constellation

Michael Baumann

Single Use Plastic Flotsa

Astronomers and mermaids ask similar questions
Noting outer space and deep ocean parallels
Noting constellations in everything: freckles, seafoam
overcrowded cloud of space debris
overflowing ocean of plastic trash, rash of stars
What is the difference between a galaxy and a bruise? They ask.

What if we lived on Mars, once? Astronomers and mermaids murmur.
What if, once, we dried the rivers into red rust dust, and
we came to Earth—long ago—but like cicadas we forgot, and
we are drying the rivers again? So
where will we go? They wonder.

Planets dance concentric around suns
Olympic divers, synchronized swimmers
extraterrestrial, celestial, submerged, subaltern
Astronomers marvel at orbits;
Mermaids appreciate the tides.
What is the gravity of litter, of rubbish? They muse.

Astronauts, divers don suits
for oxygen, for pressure, for temperature
A compensation for weakness, an admission of fragility
Will we last? They ask.

I've been drawn to merfolk for as long as I can remember, and what strikes me most in Single Use Plastic Flotsa is our mermaid's elusive expression. Is she puzzled or is she pissed? Inquisitive or apathetic? Despondent? Vengeful? Afraid. A siren surrounded by pollution, bound by it, she ruminates on the impossibility of escape, so deep is our human footprint.

Pretty Sneaky Sis

Tony Brewer

Connect Four with Tornadoes

I get kidlike
preoccupied
with my game
here @ the end
One funnel
Two funnel
Slip a chip
then another
tic-tac-toeing
victory
playing alone
black slick
spreading
column of storm
ignoring signs
weatherproof
in my mind
a winner
without the sun

Thinking about how oblivious children are to climate disaster let alone something as slow-moving as climate change. Raising children can be a competition for some parents – a game children play along with until they realize too late what are all the ramifications.

Apologies

Tony Brewer
Clear Cutting

Apologies these days come with a but
negating everything thereafter

I'm sorry but we needed wood
I'm sorry but humans trump birds
I'm sorry but it was on sale
I'm sorry but when you're older you'll understand

Confused birds don't wait
for the right kind of tree to grow
Telephone poles are native species
Even squirrel takes a quick look
& moves on – nuts

It's the emptiness of the promise fulfilled
that gets Nature Girl looking back
on a 50-yr movement morphed
into a wish for what coulda been

Bluebird does not think we're better
off in highly regarded cages
but he's in there hoping
not to be the canary
saving someone who doesn't even care

I'm sorry but she cares
Do you not see the antlers
filled with birds with no place
else to land?

She cares atop the dais of our making
One for everyone to step up to struggle
To speak for the trees
Sorry is nothing without action
& there it is as expected: but

Thinking about the resolve of those who have worked in environmental justice – and their hopelessness, especially encountering a scene like this. The birds pecking around their former homes. It also brought to mind Greta Thunberg and her tough talks to world leaders, who are usually so dismissive: "This is just the way things are, kid."

Next Big Thing

Tony Brewer

Cleaning the Oceans and Flotsam in her Hair

When I touched the hem of her net
garbage coughed out my lungs
I had been soaking in it
stoked to get the Next Big Thing
before fully using up the old
Now all old is fully exhausted
chewing its way through the young

She casts & casts spells
rain down acid burning throat
of chimneys belching smoke
of unrecyclable concern for recyclables
(no one tell her the ships sail
round the world with garbage
till they lay me down with Davy Jones)

Stars are wrinkling
Muscles atrophy
She's alla time out there
cleaning the oceans
in her quaint lingerie
of tires & bags twisted to net

Hear her – listen
in the doldrum where blooms rule
wading deep into the marsh
slick water line at her shapely calves
Angel, don't get distracted
get to work!

Thinking about how beauty can be a distraction from the work that must be done to clean up oceans. Sometimes the litter and distress are used as a backdrop or a prop. Also thinking how angels can't just wish litter away – even with wings, they must bend to the earthly work.

When in the evening, you ask me

Mary Brown

Clear Cutting

I tell you: I remember how the sky
 hung blue before the dark cloud gathered
in my windpipe, before the tiny birds
 started wrangling, fussing in my throat,

how once the rivers angled their way
 through meadows, lakes wiggled
their waters into the earth's soft craters,
 all around them a deepening green

that asked only to be called *valley*. This
 was before the fires spread through
the forests of our bodies, before our arteries
 became the alleys of the godless

burning we used to call *hell*. This was when
 the flat stumps you see around us were
living towers we looked up to, sprouted
 bird homes we called *branches*, grew.

Once there was a notion we called *time*,
 marked by a dance of color we called *fall*,
by a shock of bleaching, by small wonders we called
 seeds that shimmied in dirt.

This was before our necks got stuck looking
 back toward what we've lost, when some
creatures still knew how to fly, before we began to confuse
 concrete, engines, and wires, with *future*.

This was all long before you were born, child,
 when the earth spun faithfully around the sun,
and light and dark were two different
 things, each day a mindful movement

toward tomorrow, no doubt it would come.

The young woman in Clear Cutting made me think about my granddaughters--what they might live to regret, what they might have to explain to their own granddaughters. I can only hope that the world is not so changed by then that we can still sit down with our children and yearn with them to keep or reclaim what is beautiful on this earth.

Mermaid Ascendant

Daniel Carpenter

Single Use Plastic Flotsa

At last
There is nowhere on the Earth
I cannot inhabit
Alas, nowhere I do not reign
My realm vast as my dreams
And a waking nightmare
My subjects few now and every day fewer
Slipping one by one obediently beneath the waves
Bobbing by and by to the strewn surface
Spread prostrate as if in homage
No more at my service than the plastic trash and turds

I absolve those so-called seers
Who anointed insects the heirs
To the one-third of globe once denied to me
The Cassandras with their vision
Of green and brown of human birthright
Incinerated to ghostly ash
By a toddler race playing with matches

The notion that even this would remain
Amused and saddened me
For who among the priests of their science
Would know as I've known
The insatiable desire of the waters
Whose love for my perfection
Would swell to engulf a burning planet
And lay it before me in final peace

I, the legend, the apparition,
Recline calmly now over drowned New England
Attested to in valediction after valediction
By those who believed no more in their doom
Than in the reality of me

How terrified for centuries they made me
Such loneliness their folly shall bring me
Queen of my private heaven, their creation

I chose Single Use Plastic Flotsa as my ekphrastic model because it best captures for me the squandered beauty of our natural inheritance, and ironically enthrones a personification of harmony who finds herself "reigning in hell" -- with none of Lucifer's

sense of triumph. Another piece of irony the work evokes for me is the paradox of rising waters alongside desertification, with the former perhaps prevailing and grimly ending the heat wave. The mix of sadness, disgust and contempt in the mermaid's face and carriage put me squarely in my place as an accomplice in the destruction whose evidence surrounds her.

Interstellar Ark

M.A. Dubbs

Flood

After the sins of our ancestors
God promised Noah
that he would never flood
the Earth again
to punish us
for our humanness.

So now God sits back and watches
as we take over
our own destruction.
Watches the seas surge
and take back the land
as mother and child
lap salt water
from the puddles
of former crop fields.

Who will be our modern-day Noah?
Build us a ship
to flee from our planet
and litter our trail
with space junk?
A Lewis and Clark expedition
mapped with satellites
and silicon
and other mined materials
that no longer sparked joy.

My piece is based on the painting The Flood due to its striking imagery of the harm humans have done to our own future generations.

Oil Spill Communion
Jodie English
Oil Spill

Oil blackens the blue mirror
of the sea,
strokes the throat of the delta,
and clogs the mermaid's scales,
shrouding her flukes
with its slick black sheen,
fouling her hair with the stench
of gasoline.

Unable to face
the flames and smoke
spewing from the offshore drilling
she stares
at a shrinking sandbar, black
as obsidian,
where a flock of ibis strains,
then lifts, wings
flailing, legs
leaden with oil.

Her lungs mimic
the lungs of the wetlands,
cat tails exploding in the heat
of the offshore breeze.

Below,
while she embraces
her mystical body, her fish-sisters' gills
fill with diesel. Now they gasp
their last breaths, eyes crazed,
their frail fins twitch as they die.

She shudders in fear and anger,
cradling her blackened biceps,
her coal-black crown of thorns
anointed, as the altar boy mutters
the liturgy, he too, knowing
she will soon return to the sea
and swim
towards her dying.

Black sludge: My body;
Bloody oil: rank wine.

My poem is a meditation on Edith Vonnegut's Oil Spill a painting which so powerfully portrays the desecration of innocence, the natural world, and the desecration of the body of Christ.

"Oil Spill Communion" was interpreted in dance and performed by Dance Kaleidoscope dancers in the 2021 Spirit and Place program, "Leave Them Something."

Mother Grim

Marjie Giffin

Flood

I fear to leave my children here
to wade the rising waters.
I foresee boots and stilts as footwear
in lifetimes of flooded hopes.
They say northern lands like Canada
will offer needed refuge; imagine
what the geese will think when
hordes of damp Americans
descend upon their homes.

I dread to leave my children here
to flee the raging flames.
I squint and see the Western skies
ablaze in reds and orange.
As heat beams scorch and the sun
beats down, where will my children
run? With forests in ash and seas
all awash, they might seek crags
and peaks and high mounts above.

I ache to leave my children here
to face relentless scourge. As
illness spreads and new threats
emerge, who knows the throes
of disease they may constantly
confront? If medicines run out
and suffering runs wild, I would
hate for any innocent child
to live in this hapless world.

I hate to leave my children here.

Edith Vonnegut's painting, Flood, perfectly captures my deep concern about the future well-being of my children and grandchildren, as well as all who will have to survive on this planet. The reckless disregard of climate change by governments and citizens across the globe has jeopardized the health and viability of all who will follow us here. In Vonnegut's painting, the principal Angel/Mother Figure leans from a ladder to grasp a child in danger of drowning, as flood waters cover the surrounding landscape. A submerged dog and car and several burning homes signify the damage wrought by the deluge, as another Mother Figure "swims" across the sky with additional children clinging to her back. In my poem, "Mother Grim," I express the various aspects of

climate change that threaten my own children and grandchildren and all young people who must combat the consequences of our past inaction.

“Mother Grim” was interpreted in dance and performed by Dance Kaleidoscope dancers in the 2021 Spirit and Place program, “Leave Them Something.”

An Agreement

Melissa Glenn

Sleeping Beauty

the others retained it
their innate ability
to be tender with her
attuned to her sighs and shifts.
the creeping floating crawling ambling sprouting spreading
all alive remembered the contract
but as she spun on
not us.
our desire to conquer what nourished
drove us beyond the boundary of decency
and the depths of her soul were exposed
particulates in the sky
murky rainbows in the water.
currents collide
always thicker, heavier, angrier, hotter.
her body burns, scars, melts, recedes
she wants to feed every child but cannot.
she's grown pale, suffocated
our neglect strewn about her feet
...and yet.

there is still delicacy
springing up from her sick bed
her offer of shelter is not revoked.
she presents flowers at your ankles
and raindrops in your hair.
the creatures sharing space with us beasts
cling close
and wait
for a resurrection of responsibility.

when enough of us remember
late
but not too late
our agreement to protect instead of pillage
we will rouse her not with tender whispers
but impassioned declarations.
they say
there will be tipping points.
milestones which no one aspires to
will be achieved.
but here it is, you animal.
you and I

will see worse
but then
we'll see someone
make something better
again and again and again.
there is no reason to give up
we have not lost Sleeping Beauty yet.

I chose to write something for the Sleeping Beauty piece by Ms. Vonnegut because its quiet, tender, but sad foreground paired with the ominous backdrop was a vivid portrayal of our current state of standing on a precipice. Even with so much potential for destruction, hope remains.

Gunsmoke Sunset

Angelita Hampton

Connect Four with Tornadoes and Deer

Connecting dots like fireballs falling from the sky,
we huddle under golden arches, all with blank faces in the ash,
tiny specks in the universe, all of us are insignificant now.

Humans fail as power outages flicker with our arrogance,
flashing signs of warning warm us now with actions glowing,
lighting bombs free falling as they play God.

I am melting into pots of people clamoring to jump into the fire;
but no one thinks
to turn the burner off.

“Tornadoes” features several tornadoes in the distance with a child on the shore playing connect four. The desolation of the scene and smoky looking tornadoes reminded me of explosions and ash, mushroom clouds and gun smoke and all the manmade disasters which affect our climate. We have become the storm and the threat on the horizon. The other painting I referenced is called Deer and shows a deer standing in a foreground littered with rubbish, with a McDonalds in the background. I thought about what we destroy versus what we value. War and profit are higher priorities than people or the environment. We have the power to stop the destruction, to “turn the burner off.” In the wake of climate ruin, we are all in the same position and have to come together to change.

“Gunsmoke Sunset” was interpreted in dance and performed by Dance Kaleidoscope dancers in the 2021 Spirit and Place program, “Leave Them Something.”

Mirage

Janine Harrison

Drought

Heating pad sand
warms my flat, bare flesh
through a bright beach blanket.
I lie on my tummy,
eyes closed, head resting
upon folded, golden arms.
Above, the steady flap of gulls' wings,
the shrill cry as they
call and swoop for food.
Around, toddlers giggle as they
dash into and out of
still cold surf. Simple, a world.
A need-a-nap baby fusses
in mommy's arms
as a sandcastle strategy
forms but feet away.
I hear the revving of a dune buggy
in the distance.
A sunny sigh escapes
as I drift to sleep.

Lizard skin sand
bites her naked belly
hard-packed and sizzle-hot.
Eyes shut, head turned away from
the Sun (the Giver, the Taker),
lolloped on crossed arms.
Stillness is loud,
no oasis in sight.
She drifts into blistering oblivion.

Mirage is a euphemism
for delusion.
The sand should be
too dense
to harbor
buried heads.

I chose to write a poem about Edith Vonnegut's painting, Drought, because our seasons

are obviously changing, weather warming. In the climate prediction for 2050, we experience longer, hotter summers, with crop seasons different and difficult or crops unable to grow due to severe aridification. Every aspect of our and future generations' lives hang in the balance. As I studied Vonnegut's work, I couldn't help but think that we simply don't have time for denial or selfishness; we must face the climate crisis now.

Angels

Joseph Heithaus

Flood

what's there to do on
a roof what makes a good
flag for waving how
much can you hold on
your head how do you put
out a fire who has
a ladder to climb which wires
are live and could kill
us can a car float
for a while will fish
swim into our houses
can anyone tell me who
did this is everyone trying
to stay dry where are
the boats when we need
them how many people
can trees hold will there be
angels to pull us up by our
britches how long
can a dog swim before
drowning?

Flood with its overwhelming angel figure in the foreground made me wonder what it will be like as more floods come. I thought a lot about the small people in the background of the piece. The poem, I think, is from a child's perspective. I imagine a four-year-old asking a breathless set of questions.

Mermade on the Showre
Joseph Heithaus
Oil Spill

When I's asked who's
bareed in da
sea, I mack
crude

jokes, split
eel, I main, spilt
isle, i'll,
I'll spell it--

O-I-L, it's oonder
water, oonder
me skin, me ice,
me eyes. I's oonder

a spell. Soomdays
I think I'm mad
of i'll, i's bareed
in dead stooff

cooverd in slick,
burnin into fairy fiery
clouds, clods
of a whirled wirl

peepel I once was
made. Not the sea
I come to
after me spell, but

this ruinous thing.
Was a time before
all when
it was only

sea and wat
luved and lived
below. Then we
fish crawld out.

I wants me sea back
but it's goon.

Oil Spill presents us with a mermaid out of the sea covered in oil and I somehow began to play with what a mermaid might sound like, what a mermaid's speech might be. The poem plays with sounds and puns and language, but, I hope, it carries the message that the sea for her is gone. That the place from which land life emerged can no longer sustain itself.

Queen of the Forest

Joseph Heithaus

Deer

I don't make trash, I burn.
I find it hard to run.
I'm afraid of fire.

I find it hard to run.
I'm tired of the moon.
I'm afraid of fire.

I'm tired of the moon.
I have a plastic crown
I'm afraid of fire.

I have a crown
of fire. I hate when tires burn.
I'm afraid of fire.

I hate when tires burn.
I'm a cart overturned.
I'm afraid of fire.

I'm overturned. I'm tired.
I've seen a cardinal lose its flash
I'm so afraid.

I've seen a cardinal lost
I wonder where I am.
I hate. I find it hard.

I wonder where I am
I don't make trash.
I burn.

Deer led to a sort a pantoum/villanelle inspired form because the trash around the figure of the deer is mass produced. That scene of trash – tires, McDonalds, an overturned grocery cart – is repeated all over earth. All consumers' trash is all made by the same conglomerates. So, it felt like a repeating form might work to show that. The poem's form sort of falls apart as it moves along. It circles back to the beginning, but by then the speaker, the deer herself, seems utterly lost and forsaken.

By Design

Janice Hibbard

Deer

The Design is perfect.
The grand patterns, evident.
The flaws reside in we the people.

Born with sin?
Born unto our only world,
our greatest sin: Her destruction.

We battle against
the very ground
beneath our feet.

From our first to last breath.
Locusts with thumbs,
seemingly carry no remorse.

Refusing to live in harmony
With Her.
With she who is our home.

Arrogance can not be eaten.
The Ego can not quench our thirst.
Dogma can not fill our bellies.

To cure, to cleanse,
To change all,
All but We.

We,
the Universe's
favorite mistake.

The inspiration to write about my love for the environment and what poor tenants of the Earth we humans can be came from the painting Deer. It reminded me of plastic CVS bags that hang from the trees in the woods behind my house. The garbage riddled bird and squirrel nests. The skinny coyotes running across 38th Street who now have nowhere to hunt or sleep due to the developing of scant remains of Indiana woodlands and forests. The trash that floats down the creek in my backyard. It's all there in that painting. And it's all here, in real life, before our very eyes.

2247

Corbin Katner

Mermaid Bound in Nantucket Sound

The sky remained clear and the water flat as their old skiff slapped and bounced its way through the waves. The motor sputtered and spat but ground along all the same, not yet deigning to make useful the replacement they'd brought along. It was nearing 10 am, and Kalad was trying – and failing – not to think about everything that could go wrong. Bento, their climber, was up front, slight frame spread like a starfish on the windshield and singing something ear-splitting. Kalad couldn't hear the words over the wind and didn't need to hear them. Moe's hulking figure was reclined in one of the seats with legs crossed and a book six inches from his camo shades. In the seat to his left was Philman, their resident mechanic, gripping the armrests with white knuckles and staring unwaveringly at the horizon. Kalad could hear him muttering things under his breath.

"How goes it, Philman?" Kalad said over the wind.

Something like "Fuck off" left his mouth. His eyes didn't leave the horizon.

"Grease monkey don't like the waves," said Moe, turning a page.

Twenty minutes later and Kalad saw them. Little specks on the horizon, growing into tiny little fans, motionless, still growing. He saw Bento point at them and start singing something else, something more dramatic. Kalad still couldn't hear the words, but the tune fit. *Some of the generators and other good bits should be untouched. Once the doors flooded over and rusted shut, who'd be crazy enough to scale those fucking monsters?*

And they were monsters. They grew and grew and grew until they dominated the skyscape. Kalad saw the healthy coating of rust on those sheer metal surfaces, wondered all the same whether it would be enough. Bento could supposedly find purchase on anything, and he was usually up for a challenge, but this... this might just be impossible.

They finally arrived at the base of one especially rusty thing, and dropped anchor. It wasn't deep. This land had only been underwater a hundred years or so – they were several miles off the coast of a place still occasionally referred to as *Orlando*, but more often nothing at all. It was new ocean. They gazed up at the colossal structure, taking in the hulking turbines and seemingly endless shaft.

Bento looked bemused. "When you told me I was climbing a tall windmill..."

“Just try, Bento.” Nothing else.

The man whistled, shook his head. Then he donned his ribbed climbing gloves, slipped into a poncho for skin protection, slung an enormous 200-ft coil of rope over his shoulder, and began feeling around at the bottommost part of the thing still above water. Kalad watched. He knew part of the reason he’d convinced Papa Tom to try this idea at all was the potential profit margin. If the plan just failed here, that would be tragic. People would continue to die in pointless conflicts; Kalad would have to think of another way to engineer peace between Tom and Emilio’s crews. Things would be different when Kalad was in charge, sure – but for now he was just an upstart little kid trying to change things.

Moe gave a loud grunt, and Kalad realized that Bento had left the ground. He was three feet up now, balancing his weight on various rusty protrusions. “It’s gonna get old quick,” Bento called down, “but I think I can make it up there.” He was laughing like an idiot.

“Fucking Lemur,” Moe said, grinning, and Kalad grinned too. Philman was scowling, but that wasn’t unusual.

Bento kept at it, navigating the patchy surface like some kind of bee on a honeycomb, and Kalad felt a surge of affection for the old friend. Only Bento was crazy enough to climb this thing. Only Bento’s abilities made this plan work. Kalad had proposed the idea of making a peace offering to Emilio’s crew knowing Papa Tom would need convincing, maybe even bribing. So he had volunteered this plan of nicking valuable materials from the engines of old rusted, half-sunken windmill behemoths he remembered sailing by as a kid – an idea which he’d kept cached for just such an occasion – which could then be used as their peace offering. Tom had, skeptically and condescendingly, permitted Kalad to “do his best”. He had even, shockingly, shared the idea with the whole crew, despite their general hatred of all things Emilio. He was clearly trying to keep Kalad under pressure, which was fine, so long as it meant – could it really? – no more *dumbfuck* killings because the two gangs thought they needed rivals to be *real* gangs? It was probably too good to be true.

They watched Bento’s progress as he approached the top circuitously, but steadily. It was some five-to-seven minutes later that the man finally pulled himself onto the curved dome at the top and lie there, probably catching his breath. Several minutes after that, Bento was prancing around and shouting, and then throwing down a rope, and then Philman was scuttling up the side of the thing like the water was chasing him and Kalad

was grabbing their bag of tools and following, praying as he hauled himself step after vertical step that Bento's knot could support someone heavier than a twig like Philman.

The view at the top was spectacular, if you were into that sort of thing. Kalad could see the surrounding gaggle of windmills in its entirety, and almost started to ponder the (rather heavy-handed) metaphor of the tides literally overtaking a field of giant renewable energy machines, before shutting that part of his brain down. Humans didn't have a great track record of not being stupid. That was an unfortunate truth he had to deal with.

The generator and all the important bits were clearly meant to be housed in a giant metal bulb sticking off in one direction, and there was a rust-covered hatch at the very peak of the dome which Kalad started hacking at with a small axe. He finally dented it enough that a corner popped up, and they managed to widen the hole enough to slip through. And in they went.

Cobwebs were slashed aside, revealing a pit with a ladder going down, and to the right...

"*Fuck me.*" Philman had dusted off a few of the machine-looking things and was gazing around in awe, saying names of things along with delicious-sounding words like *platinum* and *cobalt* and *iridium*, and when he said to throw him a wrench...

§

It was four sated and giddy scavengers who disembarked at sunset. One of them sagged from a day of climbing and sliding down the sides of windmills – he whistled a tune. Another whistled as well, heaving numerous bags of goodies from their boat onto the dock (the first time his prodigious muscles had been used all day). A third manipulated a trinket with wires sticking out of it, encircling water entirely forgotten. The fourth was ruminating obsessively on the future, deciding exactly how to maximize profit and influence from this success. *If this shit is as valuable as Philman says...*

None of them noticed the guns pointing at them. Not until they cocked, and Moe jumped so quickly that he dropped a bag into the sea.

Kalad almost laughed as he saw Scary Johnny, one of Emilio's higher-ups, step out onto the pier with a sad grin.

"Let's not do this today, John," Kalad heard Moe say quietly behind him.

"No can do, Moe," he said. "We heard what y'all are doing. You got a war on your hands."

...what.

The men raised their guns.

“Wait!” Kalad cried, just as Bento yelled something in Spanish, Philman screamed, and Moe closed his eyes.

“Wait, please, we were just gonna share them with you! As a sign of goodwill! Really, that’s all! We weren’t gonna trick you! Can’t we all just work together? Why do we always have to *do* this?” He gestured.

Scary Johnny paused, considering. “You’re a good actor, kid. But we heard it through the grapevine you and your little mechanic are looking for parts to build something scary... a weapon, or something. What’s the likelier story?”

Kalad had a few seconds to feel the sting of humanity’s final betrayal. Some idiot in the crew had gotten the wrong idea about the peace offering and blabbed about what they thought the “real” plan was. Or...

Papa Tom. He’d leaked something like that, so Kalad and crew would get killed, and he’d have an excuse to go to war. Maybe even come out on top. Enemies were more useful than friends to men like Tom, these empty men who’d inherited the world. Kalad hadn’t been clever enough. He might’ve grown cleverer, if he’d been allowed to grow older.

Tom had probably had the same thought.

The bullets came quickly and ended quicker. Kalad fell to his knees, tears and blood leaking from him. Then he keeled over into the water, to join the windmills.

This story was inspired by the Edith Vonnegut painting Mermaid Bound in Nantucket Sound. Ironically, the titular mermaid actually plays no part in my story. What really struck me about this painting was the field of flooded windmills in the background. To me, this presented such a visceral metaphor for the floundering efforts of humanity to combat climate change; eventually, nature will just literally, physically, overtake our efforts, because it is implacable. It will not adjust because we are making our “best effort.” I thought I would use this image (and this theme) as a backdrop for a little dystopian story about a world which has been largely defeated by climate change and try to drive home some of those emotions.

Wooden Queen

Joseph Kerschbaum

Lucy as Tree

On a morning bright as a hammer,
 she wakes exhausted & dehydrated.
Blazing through a thin sky,
 the sun burns unhindered
where the reprieve of shade trees
 has been eradicated. Their dried stumps
protrude from the ground
 like a field of old headstones
no one visits anymore.

Reluctant royal, she wears
 a fragile crown of sticks & mud
constructed by homeless sparrows
 who needed a makeshift dwelling
for their chirping fledglings.
 Last autumn the sky was alive
with southward migrations, as expected.
 This spring the air is quiet
with absence except
 this tiny hollow boned family
& their desperate coronation.

Being crowned the wooded queen means
 she can become a beginning. She chooses
to evolve. Her relationship with the sun changes.
 Skin stops burning & starts turning
light into nourishment. Feel her toes
 dig into the dry soil. They reach out
like roots to drink the rain that will come again.
 Limbs stiffen to branches. Reach up
as if she's found something to praise
 in an empty sky. Her voice turns
to the sound of leaves in the wind.

A forest must start somewhere.
 Next season her seeds will take flight.
Her children will tend to the soil.
 Years pass & remnants of her old self fade.
The wind stirs a chorus of leaves.
 Birds return & sing
as they flutter in the branches.

In the background of Lucy as Tree are tree stumps along with a color palate that creates a feeling of desolation and isolation. But the primary figure of the painting, Lucy, possesses strength and confidence. She has a stern look in her eyes as she gently holds a nest which conveys a sense of protection. Lucy looks to the future with determination rather than the destruction behind her. My poem, 'Wooden Queen,' sourced this imagery and narrative as a starting point for exploration.

“Wooden Queen” was interpreted in dance and performed by Dance Kaleidoscope dancers in the 2021 Spirit and Place program, “Leave Them Something.”

Anticipatory Loss

Joseph Kerschbaum

Inspired by the collection of Edith Vonnegut's work

Like staking a sundial gnomon into the ground
to capture & release the passing hours,
 I have walked this path every morning for months
 to keep the days from expiring anonymously
& observe the trees transitioning between seasons
as autumn signals its arrival in vivid golds, lush reds
 & darkening days. Staring upwards, I often appear
 in conversation with a deity or an apparition
which has been appropriate considering
my casual state of wonder & awe
 that even a mundane morning stroll elicits
 on a paved trail I could navigate blindfolded.

Nothing was wrong yesterday morning
 in the same way missing strangers
 smile on junk mail next to pictures
of their older, simulated selves
 that asked *Have you seen me?*
 as I dropped them in the recycling
on my way out the door. Distant warning siren
 was misplaced with no signs
 of severe weather. Nothing
but scattered cumulus clouds
 as far as I could see. Somewhere
 a storm was brewing, but barely
a breeze whispered in the trees.

Leaves swaying look like fire waving
 as if they are trying to convey
a voiceless message. Maybe a warning
 or a farewell, but we aren't listening.
Leaves me wondering how many autumns
 we have left because lately feels
like I'm strolling through a long goodbye.
 Brown, crisp grass crunches under foot
as I picture uncontrollable wildfires out west.
 I remember the stream that is now a dry scar
overgrown, easy to miss if you don't explore
 this path every morning. Walking this trail
& observing these occurrences, is starting
 to feel like stroking the matted fur of a sick cat
that will be put to sleep
 in the coming hours.

Apology for Oil Spills to a Grandson

Norbert Krapf

Oil Spill

When you visited us here in June from Germany
with your Colombian mama, Grandson, you
both went to the pool in the heat and you learned
to paddle and stroke as your African American

“auntie” acted as your mermaid and showed you how.
But what would you do if no Mama or Mermaid
were there and you suddenly tasted on your tongue
and felt all over your six-year-old body oil -

an oil slick, as we call it? Who would rescue you?
Buoyant, irrepressible, you who love to dance,
dance, dance with Lizzo and go absolutely gaga
for Lady Gaga, Gaga, Gaga with your mama

who also loves them both and dances with you?
How would it feel, Peyton, to be left alone
in the middle of an iridescent oil slick caught
in a sea of water you thought was your heaven,

a Paradise, you who love Harry Potter and ride
your unicorn with your magic wand? And
how would it feel, to be all on your own,
and suddenly feel your hands caught

in the trap of plastic holders for bottles
of beer or juice of one kind or another?
It tortures me to ask, but what will it
be like for you to smell thick smoke

from an oil rig not very far away
as you try to find your way toward
any distant shore your smoke-filled eyes
might be able to see as flames flicker?

And in the Inferno-like smoke drifting
toward you, you feel with your bound
hands the scaly legs of a mermaid
in shallow water whose long hair

is messy and twisted with reeds
and weeds and you hear her sob
uncontrollably for what we all

have done to her once pristine

world as her bottom squats on sand
and she looks inland squinting
sadly in hopes of finding an escape.
With my hands also tied in

a different way, I reach out to
you, pull you close and hug you,
mumble a prayer for forgiveness,
say I am sorry over and over.

What Sleeping Beauty Holds

Norbert Krapf

Sleeping Beauty

Oh my, Sleeping Beauty, what you hold
in your deft hands is most precious,
as if you are preserver and custodian
of everything beautiful that lives

as you lie on a board bed on your back.
In the round, coiled nest you hold are three
blue eggs and a mother bird with red crest
and tail feathers balanced on the edge.

How long will the baby birds last, if they
do succeed in breaking through their shells?
Would it be better for these chicks never
to be born? With what care you hold both

generations in your delicate hands!
Mother bird looks down at your
gentle face as well as her eggs.
At your other end, a fawn looks ready

to nuzzle your ankle. The white around
her eyes, in her ears, and circling
her mouth, shines like a search light.
All creatures love you. Look at

how the tiny chipmunk on the stump
of a tree holds an acorn with its paws.
Light shines on its soft fur as well.
Awakened Beauty, light shines on

your smooth and soft forehead.
Your long sensual strands of brown
hair reveal yellow streaks and flares.
You look like a guardian angel drawing

toward you all creatures threatened.
Below your reddish-blue gown billowing
over the side of your makeshift bed
sits a plump rabbit hunched up, ears

pointed back, with a dark eye looking toward
me as I look at all of you. Near the chipmunk's
stump table is a green plant with white flowers

beaming their tiny lights toward you. Beyond

your bare left toes glows an apple that looks
like a heart beating for you and your animals,
as if keeping all of you alive in the dark.
These creatures under your spell feel you

as their guardian angel who gives them
the will to stay alive. In the double darkness
that spirals and turns toward you and your
grateful followers comes the black smoke

of oil burning and the grim smell of death,
like giant devils ready to burn the life out
of all of you. Oh Sleeping Beauty, staying
awake to save your vulnerable devotees,

I want to place a kiss on your lips
and lead you all away from this charred
place despoiled by human greed and give
you back the harmony you so deserve.

The Clear Cutting Blues

Norbert Krapf

Clear Cutting

You stand there on a stump, cut off
from other humans, standing in boots,
but not yet quite ready to jump off.

Dressed in a diaphanous gown
you see water ahead everywhere
in which you could easily drown.

Ahead only stumps sticking out of water.
You look like perhaps the only daughter
of a man whose chain saw slaughtered

tree after tree while you moaned out loud.
In the sky above you see only heavy cloud.
Earlier this quiet place made you proud.

Those who are left with you wear feathers
that are mostly red, yellow, green & blue.
Stumps are the only homes, ringed & irregular.

Across the water is a blurry, fading green.
Abstract trees are all that can be seen.
Chain saws way ahead still scream.

Your brown hair has turned into branches
on which silent birds sit sad & stranded.
You & your feathered friends are blanched.

Your left hand holds a transparent wire cage
in which on a perch sits a skinny bird disengaged.
You look like you wish you could be enraged.

This was the woods in which we would meet.
How happy and excited I was to be able to greet
you back then when our future looked so sweet.

I yearn to put my hand on your shoulder
but can't hop over water from a boulder.
It hurts to feel what we once had is over.

For fifty years, I have been writing about nature and the environment, but I have also written and published many ekphrastic poems inspired by German (a cycle of 15 poems

about Dürer) and northern European art, Andrew Wyeth (an even longer cycle), and others. So this felt, shall I say, natural for me to do, this kind of topic both in terms of subject matter and approach. Like all of us in our senior years, I think about the climate crisis and the effect it will have on those younger, including our German-Colombian-American grandson, Peyton, who is part of the first poem.

The Goddess Rán

Emma Lashley

Flotsam in Her Hair

Have you ever heard the tales of the Goddess Rán?
A Norse God of the sea.
But also of vast fishing nets,
In which she would catch the souls
Of men who dared to traverse her power,
Dragging them to her hall, deep in the sea.

Unless they paid her a token,
Some sparkling jewels to adorn her.
But in equal measure,
Swords and shields and spears.
They must have known she was a warrior
Protecting her home
From those who entered unwelcomed.

Known as robber, ravager, and plunderer,
But also as mother.

What bounty she must have once caught,
In her net so grand it was borrowed by the trickster god Loki.
But some days I wonder
What now she catches in her net.

Once jewelry
Now jewels of multicolored plastic,
And rings which once adorned a collection of cans.

Once weapons
Now bottles, and detritus.

I wonder if this has angered
A goddess known to be as changeable as the sea itself.
Perhaps we should worry that she might take her net,
Now clogged with our own filth,
And capture our souls in it, dragging us into the sea.

Perhaps she already has
Perhaps she sends storms, lashing at our shores.
Imposing her realm upon our own
Reminding us of her power.

When I saw Edith Vonnegut's Flotsam in Her Hair it immediately reminded me of Rán, an ancient Norse sea deity, often associated with a great net. Although instead of looking powerful, and immortal, the woman in this painting looks forlorn, like she has been beaten down and abused time and again. But there is still something piercing to her gaze, like she is imagining the downfall of those who have mistreated her.

I ended up falling down a rabbit hole of research about Rán. I loved the binary of her. She is both a wrathful representation of the sea who drags men below the waves, and a mother who birthed the 9 goddesses of the waves. Sailors used to sacrifice gems and gold to her for safe passage, but they were just as likely to gift her swords and other implements of war. I read excerpts from the poetic edda and sagas that mention her, and I knew that I wanted to write a poem about her. Something that was reminiscent of the original Norse poetry that preserved her stories, but also as modern and raw as Edith's painting.

A Thread

Dheepa Maturi

Clear Cutting

I.

From you, a thread—
a history,
a song through millennia.

From me, a thread—
the ears to hear it,
and a voice to sing it, too.

On your trunk—
the rings of time
spiral backward
through cosmic dust,
further than my
comprehension reaches.

On my palm—
the rings of time
circle and coil,
and at last, I understand.
My rings
are also yours.

In your core, an offering—
I exist in you,
and you exist in me.
We share this life,
on this Earth full of life.

In my heart, a gratitude—
I exist in you,
and you exist in me.
We reflect the same light.
We hold the same thread.

II.

Human existence means
forgetting,
and so, we cut the thread.

Now,

you are broken,
and now,
we are broken.

If only
human existence meant
remembering.

Trees and topsoil comprise the fragile skin nourishing every living being on Earth. When I observed Vonnegut's Clear Cutting showing the decimation of those trees and topsoil, I visualized humanity recklessly cutting the threads connecting us to people and planet, to the detriment of all.

No Angels Came to Save Us

Martina McGowan

Inspired by *Deer*, *Oil Spill*, and *Act Now or Swim Later II*

Dear Reader,

I hope this note finds you safe...

No angels came to save us, and we unmade the world we knew and thought we loved.

The air is mostly dark. There is no orderly rhythm to the light, or the climate. Chaos reigns. Yes, it rains and rains and rains. The acid rain soaks through everything, leaving an oily residue behind Impossible to clean. Not that cleaning is a priority.

It is not too cold, I think. The air is poison to our lungs and burns our skin. So, we wear suits and metal masks with information-laden visors whenever we need to go outdoors.

I started this note with angels. There are no angels here, but still people flock to religion; the two or three remaining. You can see the sacedots in their white soutanes throughout the city, still proselytizing and prophesying, even as we row past them. A few still want to believe in something they cannot see. In something or someone in control, beyond the poor human design which has led us here.

On a positive note, we do sometimes see the moon at night. More rarely, the sun can be spotted through the clouds and fog and smoke. This gives us writers hope and so, we write these notes for future readers; to help you see and remember.

Work is okay; albeit mind-numbing. But us worker-bees are not meant to think, only produce. Produce and make, to replace the work of the insects we no longer have around.

At my job, we crank out manufactured meals that look different from each other, but they all taste the same. Makes sense since they are made from synthetic proteins fabricated in the factory next door. The factory next to that makes the oxygen we breathe indoors.

No one has been able to make them smell different, though I guess that's tougher to do. Everything smells of stale and acrid sweat. The suits keep the perspiration inside for later dumping and recycling. No water wasted on bathing or cleaning.

We are pretty much confined to small districts, for working and living. There are so few of us its beginning to feel like interbreeding. There does still seems to be enough random DNA floating around that most babies are ok. But I worry about the next generation or two. If the air stays this wet, they will soon need to come with gills to breathe, even indoors. Who knows, maybe our skin will need to adapt as well.

Here, the travel is mostly on foot, by personal canoe, or water-taxi when the creeks and sewers rise too high. The water is painted black from all the oil spills, fracking and leaks. An irony for the times, all potable water must be purchased from the converted fuel (gasoline) stations. Of course, there is black market water...

I guess no one "in charge" believed the "Act Now or Swim Later" signs and advertisements, and here we all are, stranded. When the Big Change finally hit, all cars were abandoned, left to the elements. Closer to the big, shiny cities, there are water subways with expensive transfers To the Silver Magnet Train system.

I've got to go. My factory shift begins soon. I will write more later when I can find paper and a plastic bottle to leave my note inside.

Sincerely,

Citizen Writer # 1975312

My primary inspiration for this letter to a future reader is the painting, Act Now or Swim Later II. While this painting seems to depict angels, as many of the pieces do, these specific angels appear to be in a similar predicament as the humans, unable to escape the destruction of the earth. There is a person dressed in priestly garb in conversation with someone dressed much more drably, which I took the liberty to interpret as an enviro suit. Although there is a dove of peace holding an olive branch, I think "Act Now or Swim Later II, represents the step just beyond the tipping point to avert global disaster. I have also incorporated elements from Deer and Oil Spill to paint a more vivid and complete story. We, humans, somehow persevere and continue to live in hope, so all is not lost...

"No Angels Came to Save Us" was interpreted in dance and performed by Dance Kaleidoscope dancers in the 2021 Spirit and Place program, "Leave Them Something."

Not Your Grandmother's Fairy Tale

Lylanne Musselman

Sleeping Beauty

In repose, Sleeping Beauty's salty
sweat beads as she swelters
from the winter heat. She takes solace
in providing a sullen deer with dopamine.

Tree stumps litter the landscape.
She yearns for those trees
that once provided her with shade,
oxygen to breathe, a gentle breeze.

Oil fields flourish, replace corn and
wheat crops to sustain an appetite
for fossil fuel. Smoke from oil fires
hang thick in the air, choking her.

Why did she fall in love with those
red Solo cups? Find it so easy to drink
from plastic bottles and straws?
The chipmunks and rabbits
could easily digest them, mistaking
them for the food they yearn for.

With weakness she holds up
a bird's nest giving it a place to rest.
The mother cardinal worries over her
incubated pale blue eggs
with wonder and regret.

I was drawn to write about Sleeping Beauty because I love animals and birds and it is certainly not what we think of when we think of the fairy tale. It's usually cheery animals and chirping birds, here the animals and the heroine are in distress in an ugly world - one of our own making. My poem, "Not Your Grandma's Fairy Tale," was inspired by those dire images contained in the painting.

Flabbergasted Flock

Lylanne Musselman

Clear Cutting

The last birds of earth
will not have the joy
of sitting on tree limbs,
swinging in the breeze,
tweeting on a twig,
singing amongst the leaves.

They'll be sitting still
on tree stumps, stumped
over what's happened
to their habitat. Looking
for a place to perch up high.
No will to fly.

They may choose your hair
as their new home, a safe place
to nest, to chirp. They might
hitch a ride on your Doc Marten's
until they feel they can trudge
through this wasted world
on their own.

I had to write about Clear Cutting because of the young woman and all the birds depicted in the painting, because of my love of birds and birdwatching. In this painting, Vonnegut has included many species of birds of which I love to view in the wild: Northern Cardinals, American Goldfinches, and Indigo Buntings (or the bluebird). Bluebirds are always associated with happiness but this painting certainly depicts the opposite. I worry about birds in our environment these days, hence why I chose this painting as inspiration for "Flabbergasted Flock."

Foster Mother Nature

Lyanne Musselman

Lucy as Tree

When their trees are gone
your head becomes sacred perch,
birds can thrive, survive.

I wrote "Foster Mother Nature" as a haiku because I wanted the poem to feel scant like the background in the painting. I wanted to focus on the birds and the woman in the painting, Lucy as Tree. I also wanted the poem to show that birds can survive if humans lend them a hand...or head, if needed.

The Storm

Pat Petrus

Connect Four with Tornadoes

Grace Kinsey watched the storm from her front porch.

It was miles away, still more felt than seen. The black clouds merged with the horizon, separated, and merged again. A faint ray of sunlight broke through, painting the clouds around it red and orange. Distant fleeting specks--birds combing the farmland for an evening meal--fled from the impending violence.

Grace Kinsey could not flee.

From behind her, she heard the metallic scrape of the screen door opening. Her father appeared behind her, a worried look on his face. His eyes immediately gravitated towards the storm. Her father seemed so tall, tall enough to reach up and push the clouds somewhere else.

Grace's father could not alter the course of this storm.

An arc of lightning raced up the wall of clouds. Grace did the trick her father taught her during the last big storm and started counting. *One-one-thousand, two-one-thousand, three-one-thousand...*

Just as she reached twenty and was about to give up, a slow clap of thunder unfurled itself, traveling through her, a strange red carpet of sound for the storm to arrive on. She let out a sigh of relief. Good thing she didn't have to count any higher. For all her kindergarten education, she still had trouble remembering what came after twenty.

Her father put one arm around her and hoisted her up. "We gotta go to the basement now," he said in a calm voice.

"I wanna watch," Grace said, and pointed to the clouds. They were close enough now that she could just barely make out their motion. They swirled back and forth, dancing around an invisible center.

"We can't watch any longer. We have board games down in the basement."

"I don't wanna do board games." She pointed a stubby finger at the wall of clouds. "I wanna watch."

"Sorry sweetie. I'll give you a snack downstairs."

Her face lit up. She turned towards the kitchen, where she knew her mother was hiding a gallon-sized cardboard package of goldfish crackers. Her head nodded up and down, and her legs kicked with joy.

She was so focused on her snack she didn't notice the nearing clouds twisting and morphing into funnels, spindly fingers reaching towards the row of houses down the road.

Grace had only ever seen her father cry once. The first time, strangely, was at her fifth birthday party. Their whole family was gathered in their backyard, where a small

plastic table had been pitched beneath a canvas awning. Lemonade flowed. Watermelon and goldfish crackers littered the table. The strong smell of hamburgers on a grill made Grace's mouth water, even though her stomach was stiff and bulging with snacks. And there was still cake to be eaten later! She didn't know how she was going to do it.

That was when she looked over and saw her father, seated at the edge of the table, watching her other two sisters playing in the yard. Tears ran down his face in two neat little lines.

Grace stood up and tottled her way over to her father. "Don't cry," she said, and did her best to wrap him up in a hug. Her arms only made it about a quarter of the way around.

Her father laughed and wiped the tears from his stubbly cheeks and hugged her back. His arms enveloped her all the way, and then some.

"Don't worry," he said, "I'm not sad."

"But you're crying."

"Sometimes people cry when they're happy."

Grace frowned in confusion. "Oh."

This revelation failed to process. Tears were sad things. Maybe it was like how laughs sometimes sounded like sobs but meant very different things. Or how the wrestling she'd caught her parents doing in the bedroom one night was different than the wrestling she sometimes saw the neighborhood boys partaking in. Things were so confusing sometimes.

That's why she liked goldfish crackers and watermelon and lemonade so much. They weren't confusing. All they did was taste good.

The second time Grace saw her father cry was right after the storm. When they emerged from their house, Grace in her father's arms, her father stepping carefully around the torrent of broken glass littering their living room, and the splinters in the entryway, and the shredded ruins of the front porch--when they made it through all that, they emerged to find that their house was the only structure standing for five hundred yards in every direction. The whole street was gone.

When her father cried, Grace couldn't tell if he was sad for the neighborhood or happy their house was still standing. Things were so confusing sometimes.

She wriggled in her father's arms so she was facing opposite him and put her head on his shoulders. Without any homes or trees or power lines to obscure her view, she saw the full breadth of the storm as it rolled away into the east.

The sky cleared above them. Sunlight poured down. The storm, black and shapeless, roiled soundlessly in the distance like an oil spill floating on clear blue water.

At first glance, the titular storms of Edith Vonnegut's Connect Four with Tornadoes reminded me of images of the first Gulf War, of oil wells lit on fire and left to spew smoke

and crude into the sky. I love the minimalist vibe of this piece, the feeling of impending calamity, the serenity of the child... it's all so essentially Edithian!

Cat's Cradle

Caitlin Price

Connect Four Winds with Tornadoes

Your fingers twist, tangling in polyethylene
stiff, six-pack rings replacing string
while moving from "Cat's Eye"
to "Fish in a Dish"
to "Cat's Cradle"
then, you spit out, "Go ahead, reach in,"
and I become tangled too,
mixing in repurposed garbage with a soda residue.

For this poem, I imagined a world where all that was left was trash. Instead of video games, children are playing with six-pack rings on polluted beaches. While all of Edith Vonnegut's work showcased on the website inspired me, Connect Four with Tornadoes in particular was my main inspiration for this poem.

Deer

Linda Neal Reising

Deer

Madonna of destruction,
clad in crown and corona
of light, have you brought
us a savior from floods
and fire, from man's desire
to acquire more and more,
to discard without regard
to the refuse, to refuse to hear
what even the cardinal, harbinger
of death, is trying to warn?
We are a land of abandoned
tires, cast aside cans, plastic
rings choking our waters,
and still we worship before
the golden arches, altar
of artificiality, always asking,
seeking, not the redemption
of the Last Supper
but of the Happy Meal.

To me, Deer is filled with religious imagery, but it is a faith based upon a belief in commerce and industry rather than God. There is an irony in the painting because faith should lead us to the eternal; however, this work shows how we offer devotion to that which is disposable. Instead of being concerned about the future and creating a planet to last, we focus on the immediate and the convenient.

Sleeping Beauty

Linda Neal Reising

"Sleeping Beauty"

Our world is a sleeping beauty,
not prone on cushions of regal
ermine but laid out on a morgue
slab, guarded by giant oil
derricks and toxic plumes,
poisoned by the heart-shaped
apple of commerce, fallen
into a coma of denial—
the convenience of water bottles,
plastic straws, red Solo cups.
But there is still hope—
a cluster of daisies or forget-
me-nots, three perfect blue eggs
inside a cardinal's nest, woodland
visitors in positions of prayer
near the altars of sacrificed trees.
There will be no prince
to awaken this sleeper,
only the solitary tongue stroke
from a fawn, still young enough
to dream.

In Sleeping Beauty, I found the intersection between fairy tale and stark reality. Amid the devastation that our society has perpetuated upon the earth, lies a sleeping beauty. Along with the animals and flowers depicted in the painting, I feel that she represents a hope of re-birth for our planet.

Angel, Bound in Plastic

Mary Sexson

Angel Bound by Plastic Six Pac Holder

The bondage of plastic
cuffs her wrists, almost
like bracelets only she's held
by them, held back, held up.
No jewelry, this, instead
the outline of her demise,
the map to this earth's end gig:
swallowed up by its endless want.

The soft flesh
of her hands and wrists
will show that mark, the stamp
of our spoils wrapped around her,
the bondage of our twisted longings.

Let us lay her down gently,
let the waters wash over her,
let her wings enfold her,
her hands uncuffed, unbound.

"Angel Bound in Plastic" was interpreted in dance and performed by Dance Kaleidoscope dancers in the 2021 Spirit and Place program, "Leave Them Something."

Mermaid, Adrift

Mary Sexson

Oil Spill

She no longer felt
the scales of her fin
as she wove a circle
of green to wear,
her sodden crown
of modern times.

This notion cuts,
its sharp edges go
deep, through her once
beautiful hair,
her real crown of glory
so damaged now from living
in the oil and sludge.
And the flames are no
comfort as they burn
what has spilled
into her precious home.
I weep for her,
for the withered flowers
for the fear
that shines in her eyes

Both paintings were deeply emotional for me. I was drawn to both by the looks on the faces of each subject, the angel's eyes, the sadness of the mermaid's face, and how they were surrounded by our world, and what it had done to them.

Reflecting on Clear Cutting

John Sherman

Clear Cutting

north of the vonneguts
lies the remains of the limberlost
the wetlands so cherished and promoted
by another hoosier writer

yet we saw so much drainage
allowing farmers to use ploughs and combines in dry soil
to harvest crops wanting water only from rain
corn and beans oats and wheat instead of habitats and inhabitants
gene stratton-porter would shudder
would cry out would write about
edith vonnegut's clear cutting
clear: such a positive word shown so negatively accurate
our landscapes denuded
while our limberlosts shrank

slowly slowly attempts are made now to return
the merely damp to pure wet
farmers reluctantly agree to allow their grandfather's west field
to be flooded bringing back the wildlife and the vegetation that thrive
in this restored environment not seen on these spots for so many years

so too reforest the sites of the cuttings
give back homes to multitudes of the disappeared
bring again the thousands of leaves
providing shade and solace to all us creatures

so too must those cut trees be stumps amid new vigorous growth
reaching to the heavens the upraised branches
seeming to be choristers voicing the love of nature
praising writers and artists who too sing
of the deserved natural environment
the beauty of a once rare bird's call
the returning flowering water plants drawing bees and butterflies

let us live in hope along with the ediths and the genes
while we bear down and fight
in this present day
for a future that was the past

I was drawn to Clear Cutting immediately as it caused me to think of Gene Stratton-

Porter and the Limberlost—and its near-demise. The original boundary of the Limberlost extended into our family farm in Jay County so I feel a connection to these wetlands and to the woman who wrote about them. I could see a similarity to what happened to the Limberlost and the destruction shown in this painting. I also wanted to write about the potential for restoring both the desecrated woods in the painting and the Limberlost.

Witness of the Woods

Laurel Smith
Clear Cutting

1.

Once upon a time,
Daphne runs from Apollo
 crying to the trees
who listen, who absorb her
frantic hope to stop him:

a god determined
to ravish beauty against
 her will. He fails.
The forest arranges her
rescue by transformation:

Apollo reaches
for Daphne as her limbs change
 to branches, her flesh
to wood: she is the tree whose
blossoms cluster in triumph.

2.

We did not study
enough: we sounded out *clear*
 and *cutting* without
the sum of loss conveyed by
two joined words, their prelude

to *mudslide, wildfire*.
We dismissed the healers who
 would cure disease by
finding allies on the forest
floor. Lumbering was work we

did for generations,
but we should have asked how
 to balance the beams
of a house with pond and web,
how to shelter a planet.

3.

Daphne stands on

a shaved stump in a forest
 battered by machine:
no birdsong, no triumph, no
chrysalis in sight.

Now what?

4.

Trees talk, protect their
neighbors, use timely data
 from a network launched
before Olympus, before
science acknowledged tree-code:

life support by root
and breath. Let an old log feed
 small souls in your yard,
cultivate milkweed, plant for
the cravings of bird and bee.

Learn to say *listen*
in the language of firefly,
 your accent nearly
as wild as Daphne's hair caught
on the wind, leafing skyward.

Vonnegut's Clear Cutting caught my attention on two levels: first, the damage to the forest—not only disappearing beauty, but lost habitat/resources. The birds are drastically homeless, but humans are losers, too. Second, the female figure who stands in the center is arresting. She is presented as an ally to the creatures who remain—the birds do not fear her. More than that, the strands of her hair are turning to leaves. She is otherworldly. Like a divine being or mythic hero, her presence conveys liminality.

Vonnegut's painting reminds me of the Apollo and Daphne myth, which is alluded to in my poem. It also invokes Richard Powers' The Overstory, a haunting novel of ecological crisis and potential healing. Humanity should act with less greed and more compassion, obviously. We also have much to learn from the forest, especially the ways that trees communicate. Art and myth, storytelling in all its forms, may be the only way humans can listen.

Poem Inspired by Edith Vonnegut's "Deer"

Grant Vecera

Deer

I once jogged almost smack into one
at Eagle Creek Park, a 12-point buck,
or maybe not, I did not count.

I just stopped, and felt lonely,
like someone should know.

Then he sprang
like your room going dark
when it is time to sleep
but you want to move
as agile as the moon-blue fog
that blankets pines
after the the mild roar of crickets
has gone mute until next summer.

I promise, our eyes met.
He recognized me.

With his arrow eyes.

Edith Vonnegut's painting Deer inspired my poem by the same name because it spoke to me personally, probably because in my most recent past life I was a wolf that liked to chase and eat deer, which is a way of saying that wolves and deer and all sentient beings are us and we are them. When I look at Edith Vonnegut's Deer, I think that expresses exactly how I feel. I am grateful to her for all of the art she has created.

Sleeping Beauty

Shari Wagner

Sleeping Beauty

A hundred years have passed,
and the mighty forest of *Once Upon a Time*

has been decimated for a new supply
of spindles. Hurricanes and the rising sea

have swept away the castle. Long ago
the thorn-hedge bowed to drought

and a tossed match. And what of the prince?
Asthmatic as a child, he choked

to death on fumes. So hurry, Sleeping Beauty,
the future is brewing. Smog envelops

the moon. Red and maleficent eyes
on oil rigs creep closer. What will it take

to wake you? If not the orphaned fawn
licking your leg or the homeless bird's nest

in your hands, then let it be this morning's sun
come around once more to brush your face.

I chose this painting because of its interesting tension between hope and despair. Despite the bleak, oppressive background, a group of animals has gathered near Sleeping Beauty and there's an unseen and gentle source of light illuminating her.

We Strike the Rock

Shari Wagner

The Only Animal That Uses Oil

We strike the rock
and expect pure water
to gush from the wound.

We deplete polar ice caps
and gamble the rising sea
circumvents our castles.

We clear cut Douglas fir dating back
to Shakespeare and assume twig crowns
will filter our air.

We choke the ocean with plastic bags
and pray bluefin tuna leap into the net,
humpback whales croon us a song.

We spray bee-killing pesticide
and hope the promised land
flows with milk and honey.

I selected this painting because I was drawn to the wounded hand. In an ironic way, it reminds me of the rock that Moses struck, releasing a stream of water in the wilderness. As I wrote the poem, that image beget more images, all of them pertaining to how we expect nature to bless us while we simultaneously harm it.

“We Strike the Rock” was interpreted in dance and performed by Dance Kaleidoscope dancers in the 2021 Spirit and Place program, “Leave Them Something.”

Bios

Michael Baumann has headlined at over 20 performance poetry venues in Indianapolis, a city where he also teaches writing and public speaking. Michael also enjoys his partner, his puppy, his plants, and his powerlifting. michaelalbertbaumann.com

Tony Brewer is a poet and live sound effects artist from Bloomington. He is executive director of the Spoken Word Stage at the 4th Street Arts Festival, co-producer of the Writers Guild Spoken Word Series, and president of the National Audio Theatre Festivals. His books include *Homunculus*, *The History of Projectiles*, and *Tabletop Anxieties & Sweet Decay* (with Tim Heerdink). More at tonybrewer71.blogspot.com.

Mary M. Brown lives with her husband Bill in Anderson, Indiana. Before retiring she was a literature and creative writing professor at Indiana Wesleyan. She's the current poetry editor of *Flying Island*

Daniel Carpenter

Dan Carpenter is an Indianapolis freelance writer who has contributed poems, stories and essays to many publications. He has published two books of poems, *The Art He'd Sell for Love* (Cherry Grove, 2015) and *More Than I Could See* (Restoration, 2009); and two books of non-fiction drawn from his former career as a columnist with The Indianapolis Star. He blogs at dancarpenterpoet.wordpress.com

M. A. Dubbs is an award-winning Mexican American and LGBT+ poet and writer from Indiana. She released *Aerodynamic Drag*, her first collection of poetry and short fiction, earlier this year. You can find more of her work at her website: melindadubbs.wordpress.com

Jodie English is an Indiana death penalty defense lawyer, a capital mitigation specialist, and an adjunct professor at Indiana University in Bloomington. Jodie has taught criminal defense attorneys in 27 states and Moscow, Russia. She earned her MFA in Creative Writing from Butler University in 2014. She is an avid outdoors woman whose life has been enriched by Unitarian, Buddhist and Quaker teachings. She was born in Niagara Falls and has been enamored with water all her life.

In 2021 her essay "Defending the Damned, Death Row Michigan City" was published by Oxford Magazine and her poem "Our Circle City" was the 3rd place prize winner in Christian Theological Seminary's "How to Love a City" Competition. In 2020, Barren Magazine, published her poem, "Death Machine," which appears in Issue 13, "In Solitary Light." <https://barrenmagazine.com/death-machine/> and her poem, "Ode to My Student Who is Starving," was choreographed for Indianapolis's annual Spirit and Place Festival in November of 2020.

Marjie Giffin is an Indianapolis writer who has authored four regional histories and whose poetry has appeared in *Snapdragon*, *Poetry Quarterly*, *Flying Island*, the *Kurt Vonnegut Literary Journal*, *Saint Katherine Review*, *Northwest Indiana Literary Journal*, *Blue Heron Review*, *Tipton Poetry Journal*, *Agape Review*, and the anthologies *The Lives We Have Live(d)* and *What Was and What Will Be*. Poems are also forthcoming in the anthology *Reflections on Little Eagle Creek* and as a feature by Heartland Women Writers. Her first chapbook, *Touring*, was published in January 2021. Marjie is active in the Indiana Writers Center and has taught both college writing and gifted education.

Melissa Glenn is a former communications specialist, freelance writer, and photographer who lives in Fishers with her two young children and is currently focusing on a renewed dedication to storytelling.

Angelita Hampton is a writer, visual artist, activist, sister, and daughter. Her undergraduate studies in Psychology and African American Studies at Earlham College and graduate studies at The Ohio State University, along with her time living abroad in Mexico, deeply inform her creative work. She identifies as a Black feminist revolutionary inspired by and dedicated to social justice. Angelita is an Indianapolis native who enjoys the arts, nature, and maintaining close ties to family. She has self-published several books of poetry in addition to having poems published in *Rigorous*, *Bay Windows*, *RagShock*, *Coffee People Zine*, *Zoetic Press* and others.

Janine Harrison wrote the memoir/guidebook, *Turning 50 on El Camino de Santiago: A Solo Woman's Travel Adventure* (Rivette Press, 2021), poetry collection, *Weight of Silence* (Wordpool Press, 2019) and chapbook, *If We Were Birds* (Locofo Chaps, 2017). Her work has also appeared in *Haikus for Hikers*, *Veils*, *Halos*, and *Shackles: International Poetry on the Oppression and Empowerment of Women*, *Not Like the Rest of Us: An Anthology of Contemporary Indiana Writers*, *A&U*, *Gyroscope Review*, and other publications. She teaches creative writing at Calumet College of St. Joseph, freelance writes, and serves as a teaching artist and activist throughout Chicagoland. Formerly, Janine was a Highland (IN) Poet Laureate, an Indiana Writers' Consortium president, and a poetry reviewer for *The Florida Review*.

Joseph Heithaus is the author of two books of poetry *Library of My Hands* (2020) and *Poison Sonnets* (2012). His poetry and prose have appeared in many journals including *Ruminate*, *Southwest Review*, *Poetry*, and the *New York Times*. He's often contributed to the projects of Indianapolis's Brick Street Poetry Inc. He teaches at DePauw University and lives in Greencastle, Indiana.

Janice Hibbard is a Playwright and Performer who has lived on the east side of Indianapolis for 15 years. She has worked with many central Indiana Theaters as an Actor, Singer, Writer, Director, Stage Manager, Props maker, Producer, and Costuming team assistant. Beginning in March 2022, Janice's newest play, *Plutonian Grove* will premiere on the Lilly Theatre stage at the Children's Museum of Indianapolis. You can find her works online through the New Play Exchange. In her moments of downtime, Janice likes to go on walks with her husband and pit bull son, take long naps with her

fifteen-year-old cat, learn new things (like the nunchucks, harmonica!) through doing and reading.

Corbin Katner is a twenty-one-year-old student at Oberlin College, where he is majoring in creative writing and mathematics. He's from Indianapolis, Indiana, where he attended to Shortridge High School, the alma mater of Kurt Vonnegut.

Joseph Kerschbaum's most recent publications include "Mirror Box" (*Main St Rag Press*, 2020) and "Distant Shore of a Split Second" (*Louisiana Literature Press*, 2018). Joseph has been awarded grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Indiana Arts Commission. His work has appeared in journals such as *Hamilton Stone Review*, *Panoply*, *Flying Island*, *Ponder Review*, *In Parentheses*, and *Umbrella Factory*. Joseph lives in Bloomington, Indiana with his family.

Norbert Krapf, former Indiana Poet Laureate, has published fourteen collections, the latest being *Indiana Hill Country Poems* and *Southwest by Midwest*. In 2022 he will see publication of the collection *Spirit Sister Dance*, about his stillborn sister, and the prose memoir *Homecomings*, which covers the fifty years of his writing and publishing life.

Emma Lashley recently graduated from Purdue University with degrees in Anthropology and Classical studies, as well as a minor in English. She is currently in the process of applying to grad school to study Archaeology. In the meantime, she's been working as an assistant librarian, which has inspired her to expand her passion for writing by trying to get in the habit of writing regularly and trying to write things outside her normal comfort zone, including poetry. She has strong feelings about protecting the environment and a great interest in art, so when she discovered "Leave Them Something" she knew she had to try to write something for it.

Dheepa R. Maturi enjoys exploring the interactions between cultural and spiritual traditions over time. A graduate of the University of Michigan and the University of Chicago, her poetry has appeared in *The Fourth River*, *New York Quarterly*, *How to Write a Form Poem*, *Crosswinds*, *Every Day Poems*, *Jaggery*, *Canyon Voices*, *Hoosier Lit*, *Flying Island*, *The World We Live(d) In*, *The Indianapolis Review*, and elsewhere. She lives with her family in Indianapolis.

Martina McGowan, MD, is a physician, poet, writer, artist, advocate, activist in the wars against social, racial, and sexual injustices. She is the author of *i am the rage*, (February 2021, from SourceBooks), award-winner in the Social Change category of the 2021 International Book Awards, and Poetry Editor for *The Elevation Review Magazine*. Her work has been published in several literary magazines and anthologies.

Lylanne Musselman is an award-winning poet, playwright, and visual artist. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Pank*, *The Indianapolis Review*, *Rose Quartz Magazine*, *Flying Island* and *The Ekphrastic Review*, among others and is included in many anthologies. She is the author of six chapbooks, and is author of the full-length poetry collection, *It's Not Love, Unfortunately* (Chatter House Press, 2018).

Musselman's poems are included in the Inverse Poetry Archive, a collection of Hoosier poets, housed at the Indiana State Library.

Pat Petrus is a twenty-five-year-old writer and musician from Indianapolis. His work has been previously featured in the literary magazine *Headway Quarterly*. His second collection of short stories, *Sextet*, is coming soon to Amazon.

Caitlin Price is an undergraduate at IUPUI, working on a double major in English Literature and Creative Writing. They aspire to write and publish poetry and literary fiction.

Linda Neal Reising, a native of Oklahoma and a member of the Cherokee Nation, has been published in numerous journals, including *The Southern Indiana Review*, *The Comstock Review*, and *Nimrod*. Reising's work has also appeared in a number of anthologies, including *Fruitflesh: Seeds of Inspiration for Women Who Write* (Harper/Collins) and *And Know This Place: Poetry of Indiana* (Indiana Historical Society Press). She was named the winner of the 2012 Writer's Digest Poetry Competition. Her chapbook, *Re-Writing Family History* (Finishing Line Press), was a finalist for the 2015 Oklahoma Book Award. In 2018, her work was nominated for a Pushcart Prize by the editors of *So It Goes: The Literary Journal of the Kurt Vonnegut Museum & Library*. *The Keeping* (Finishing Line Press), her first full-length book of poetry, won the 2020 Kops-Fetherling Phoenix Award for Best New Voice in Poetry. Her second full-length collection, *Stone Roses* (Kelsay Books), was published in 2021.

John Sherman has published three books of poetry, more than 100 poems in various literary journals and anthologies, and two spoken-word CDs. He has received more than a dozen Individual Artist/Advancement and Arts in the Parks and Historic Sites grants from the Indiana Arts Commission and a Creative Renewal Arts Fellowship from the Arts Council of Indianapolis. The manuscript for his third book of poetry, *Marjorie Main: Rural Documentary Poetry*, was a Finalist in the Walt Whitman Award competition sponsored by the Academy of American Poets. Sherman is also the librettist for the opera, *Biafra*, based, in part, on his experiences in the Nigeria/Biafra Civil War. He is the author of six books on history and photography.

Mary Sexson is the author of the award-winning book, *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 *Tipton Poetry Journal*, *Laureate*, *Literary Journal of Arts for Lawrence*, *Flying Island Journal*, *New Verse News*, and *Last Stanza Poetry Journal*, among others. Her most recent work is in *Reflections on Little Eagle Creek Anthology*, and *Anti-Heroine Chic, an Online Literary Journal*. Her work is archived in INverse Poetry Archives, for Hoosier Poets.

Laurel Smith lives and writes in Vincennes, Indiana. Hooked on creative writing since her grade school days in Muncie, Smith taught English for many years at Vincennes University. Now retired, she and her husband Steve support initiatives to promote literacy and the arts. Smith's poetry has appeared in numerous journals, including *Flying Island*, *Natural Bridge*, *New Millennium Writings*, *Tipton Poetry Journal*, *JAMA*:

Journal of the AMM; also in the following anthologies: *And Know This Place*, *Mapping the Muse*, *Visiting Frost*.

Grant Vecera's poems have been appearing off and on again in various periodicals for about three decades, most recently *Pinyon Poetry's Commemorative Issue*, *Louisiana Literature*, and *The Indianapolis Anthology*. He teaches reading, writing, and thinking at IUPUI & Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Shari Wagner, a former Indiana Poet Laureate (2016-2017), 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 *North American Review*, *Shenandoah*, *The Writer's Almanac*, and *American Life in Poetry*.

Spirit and Place Program November 14, 2021

Angel Bound by Plastic by Mary Sexson
Choreographer - Manuel Valdes
Dancer - Emily Franks

Oil Spill Communion by Jodie English
Choreographer - Holly Harkins
Dancers - Paige Robinson, Natalie Clevenger, Manuel Valdes

Gunsmoke Sunset by Angelita Hampton
Choreographer - Sarah Taylor
Dancers - Emily Dyson, Marie Kuhns

Colonizing Mars by Michael Bauman
Choreographer/Dancer - Stuart Coleman

Wooden Queen by Joseph Kerschbaum
Choreographers/Dancers - Natalie Clevenger, Justin Rainey

Mother Grim by Marjie Giffin
Choreographer/Dancer - Aleksa Coffey

We Strike the Rock by Shari Wagner
Choreographer/Dancer - Cody Miley

No Angels Came to Save Us by Martina McGowan
Choreographer - Eduardo Zambrana
Dancers - Natalie Clevenger, Holly Harkins

To learn more about DK's dancers, visit:
<https://www.dancekal.org/learn-engage/company/dancers>

Leave Them Something will be **virtual**. The program will stream from 2 pm on Sunday, November 14 through 5 pm on Sunday, November 28:
<https://dancekal.secure.force.com/ticket/#/instances/a0F1G00000PZghFUAT>



Spirit & Place Festival

New connections. New directions.



View Edith Vonnegut's paintings at:
<https://www.vonnegutlibrary.org/edithvonnegutexhibit/>