



Issue 17

JUSTE MILIEU

like a hunger

Winter 2024

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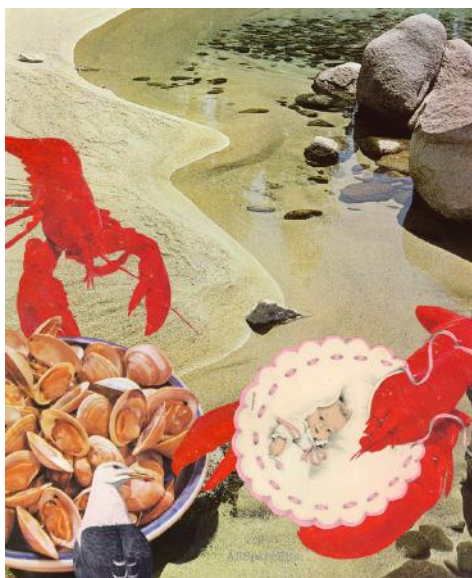


Edited by Zuri McWhorter

Sandra PARIS



Kathy Brown



Butter Haiku

Brooke Spalding Ford

I want to motor-
boat Julia Child in

her rich, French kitchen.

Butter Sonnet

Brooke Spalding Ford

I want to be room-temperature butter.
Wipe like mayonnaise, coat like mayonnaise
but taste like heritage, flesh, animal.

I want to whistle when I touch heat. Melt,
spin, coat, pirouette until the whole slab
glitters with my shiny unbecoming.

I want to be pure fat. My edges to
bubble. Become the crisp, brown boundary
that sings when cut, bitten or torn apart.

I want to be used generously. Spread
with abandon, licked by the beam of a
butter knife, melt nutty on the palate.

I want to be on the counter, spilling,
pooling, gushing, glowing, golden, golden, golden.



Shammi Farook



Self-Portrait as a Chicken

Brooke Spalding Ford

I'm a little chicken smelling
of sage. My beak is glossed with lard.

In water my fat blooms in cornsilk colored
circles. No hound will save me, his mouth

just puddles at my scent. I've heard death
described as light: Lavender fizz, yellow halo,

bright and bright and bright. The tunnel
is rarely painted black. Under

water, I hear the dull chant. They sound
too much like god. They say

thirty minutes til' tender, two minutes
til crisp, they measure with too much

confidence. They kill without
tradition. I deserve a prayer.



Rhiannon Davis



CM Spears

Ed's Food Review

Edward Obuszewski

Last weekend in Echo Park
some kind of jazz fusion concert was going on.
Food vendors were everywhere.
Near the port-a-potties I saw Walt Whitman shoving
a bacon wrapped dog in his face.
Food for the soul?
Not one to hop on the bandwagon of a literary god
but i did get one of them.
Shit.
They are tasty!



grocery list

for marinating femininity

oil to lubricate boneless flesh to make it look luscious and fresh and for richness in character

cloves to make the flesh taste hard and for warmth and sophistication at the same time

cinnamon for adding rich layers of complexity and hint of sweetness

chillies for fire and passion; integral part of femininity

lemon zest for adding refreshing elements and vibrancy

salt for purity and grounding

red chilly powder for giving an extra kick and intensity

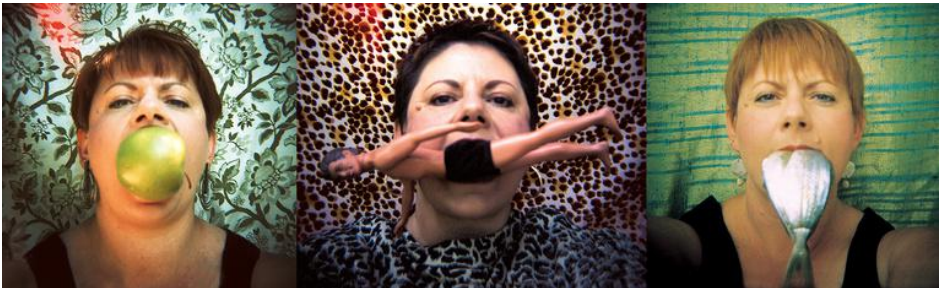
honey for tinge of sweetness and to symbolize nurturing side

ginger to spice up things and add on strength

cardamom for touch of exotic and aromatic essence

coriander for infusing connection with nature and aroma

- (ayyeemaann)



Loralei R. Byatt

Strawberries are God's Candy

Lilia Voss



Strawberries are God's Candy

If you get one that's not too juicy, you can split it apart with your fingers and the inside looks sugar-coated. I've always loved that sweet yogurt dip from the plastic fruit plates you can buy at the store 🍓



The Michelin Star

I am who I am
My obsession is cooking
My name is Chef Ian
I make pine apple preserves
I make wild hibiscus jam

I make cookies with a cutter
I make crab cakes with butter
I make ice cream with cherries
I make muffins with dewberries
I make pasta-foia tarts
I make chocolate almond bark

You are who you are
You are what you eat
You are the sweetest treat
You are the big fish
You are the main dish
You are the big bacon
You are the pork less taken
You are the cookie jar
You are THE MICHELIN STAR

We both like Banana Pancakes Sushi and Truffles
mustard on our hot dogs oysters and Mussels
We consume oranges cloudberries
and Cannabis gummies

We spill spices
Create exotic recipes
hysterically laughing
with full tummies

Steph Neil Gill 2000+27



Oceanside Pizza

Stephen Neil Gill

Pizza Man Pizza Man
works at the shore
does not have a tan

When business is slow
he makes a lot of dough

On cloudy days
he listens to Purple Haze

In the early mornings
he puts out the table awnings

He is the master of the garlic knot
To some
steamy
spicy
Red Chile Peppers Hot

The waitress is Portuguese
Large pizza
Light cook
Blonde crust please.

Nobody Goes Away

Salvatore D'Alco

A charitable view would grant the rough fellow a modicum of dignity. Sleeping under a bridge like a troll does nothing for the complexion.

“Do you need food?” A shake of the head means what exactly? “Do you need drink?” A nod suffices. A drink means a drink, however, not water. “I can’t help you with that, sir. It’s prohibited.”

The charcoal tracings of the face—how do they come about? He resembles a coal miner. A shower would help. But then everything might come loose after all these years stuck together with spit and shit.

“Who do you think you are?” comes the question.

I am nobody, I’d like to say, that’s how low my self-esteem is these days. A conversation isn’t possible, is it?

“What’s your name?” He would wear fingerless gloves and his fingernails would be blackened and cracked as though he had been hand-digging graves and exhuming the bodies for midnight snacks.

“You and me are the same,” he says, “exactly the same.”

I don’t sleep under a bridge yet. “What’s your name?” I repeat.

“Sam,” he spits, “and I know your name is Sam, too.”

How the fuck does he know that? Lucky guess, I guess. Sometimes shits like him have a kind of antennae. They pick things up from the air. Vibes and so on. I take a closer look and he scrunches up his face. Good teeth, surprisingly. He could eat a steak.

“So Sam,” he says, “I give it two months, two months tops for you to take a spot here right next to me—or maybe just replace me. Does that trouble you, Sam? Does it get under your skin?”

I shake my head. The ravings of a lunatic have never held sway for me. I seek and esteem rationality, lucidity, cleanliness of thought, call it what you will. By cleanliness, I mean not pure or chaste but free of filth and falsity. I suspect Sam here has a head full of nonsense, that nonsense probably steered him toward the wrong roads of life. I know, I have also been steered away from the good path, but with enormous inner resource and fortitude I have managed to

Nobody Goes Away

Salvatore Difalco

negotiate my way back before suffering too much harm. Nevertheless, I am still damaged, and I believe my efforts at a little charity and active compassion will redeem my fallen past to some extent.

“Do want me to pray or something?” he asks.

What? What does he think I am? True, my neighbourly gestures and tokens stem from my Christian upbringing, but I am not actively pursuing the path of Christ or espousing his message.

“Sam,” says the man, “would you let me stay at your place a few nights, just until I get rested and cleaned up a little, you know.”

Ha, I guess he’s calling me on my horseshit now. “Sam,” I say, “you know that’s not going to happen. If roles were reversed, would you let me stay with you?” He smiles. As mentioned, he has good teeth, evidencing superb hygiene, or the past expertise of his dentists, suggesting a monied or at least middle class past. His clothes could not be more raggedy but materially—merino wool from the looks of it, and silk and cashmere—also indicated a different class than the run of the mill bum or crackhead.

“I like you, Sam,” he says. “Any smokes?”

I shake my head. I’m tempted to offer him a 200 mg edible, but fear he may be schizophrenic for which cannabis products are contraindicated.

“That’s too bad, Sam,” he says. “No one smokes anymore. It’s a crying shame. Can’t even dig up good butts anymore. They say cancer, they say cancer, they say cancer, but I don’t give a fuck about cancer now, do I? Give me cancer, man. I welcome it. Why not? I don’t give a fuck.”

Next time, I’ll remember to bring him a pack of smokes. Least I could do. If there is a next time. I leave him two bottles of water, a pocket med-kit, and give him twenty dollars.

“You have a good heart, Sam,” he says. “At least, you think you do.”

With that I walk off and emerge from under the bridge. I’m stopped by a middle-aged woman who asks me if I need help.

“We all need help,” I say, and continue on my way.

"Redacted,
Claudia Wysocky

Routine is the devil of a stranger:

A death spell is different only in name.
18th century England--the rise of industrialisation,
the first factory system—the spilling out of a Satanic rage.
Alone, for I sought you everywhere.

In Spain, at five paces away from me,
Your torso moving gracefully like a flower blooming—
So perfect you were; I should have found a way
to grasp the beauty in it:

To be with you was to be good, filled with God's love,
But in that moment my heart dared leap out of my chest

In the frantic-ness to make time stop for us... To make us both strong enough to last eternally—
To love us amidst the world's fear of each other— It is not as easy as it seems...
It is enough that we are together.

You are here beside me. And that's enough.



woodcuts by François Desprez come from 1562's *Recueil de la diversité des habits*

"Close To Me.,
Claudia Wysocky

It's lovely, the number of times
you look down on me and forget to see,
as if from your corner of the sea—

You could not hear once I begin to plead;
It takes a little time before you come,

To coax me back again up to the dreams.

That there is no moon,
only we are nearer the stars—

I am but asleep. And yet, here we lie: Far apart.

At some point I think to wake myself up,

To make sure I haven't been lying,
And when finally I realize it's true—

I find myself so faint; Holding too tight; Too cold.

I think it may be time for a change after all.

But as things are today—or so it would seem—I'll sleep here alone under the covers awaiting
you to come, more closely to me at last...

The Man Who Loved Peanut Butter and Jelly

Eli S. Evans

A man who loved peanut butter and jelly so much that he ate it nearly every day for lunch, and sometimes even for dinner, developed a small lump on the side of his leg.

“Maybe you should make an appointment with the dermatologist,” his wife proposed.

“I think I’ll just pick at it incessantly instead,” said the man.

“Good idea,” replied his wife, who had no interest in arguing over inanities.

With that being settled, the man right away undertook picking at his lump, and went on picking and picking at it until eventually it became no longer a lump but a hole, at the rough, scabby edges of which the man continued picking and picking until one day the hole had grown so large that the man up and tumbled right into it. In other words, the man was now inside of himself, where he hardly could have been surprised to discover that, with the exception of a few bones and organs bobbing about here and there like unmoored buoys, there was pretty much nothing but peanut butter and jelly.

In every direction the man turned, peanut butter and jelly came at him in waves and whirlpools and frothy cascades; and when, realizing that he could not find his way back out of himself, he opened his mouth to call for help, it immediately filled up with so much peanut butter and jelly he couldn’t make a sound. Naturally, he realized he was going to die.

Of course, death never really makes for a happy ending, but in light of what I said earlier about his love for peanut butter and jelly, and taking into consideration the high value our society places on dying doing what one loves, you’re probably thinking that of all the ways the man in this story could have died, choking on peanut butter and jelly was probably one of the best; unfortunately, when I said this man loved peanut butter and jelly what I really meant was that he loved peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and in his current situation he alas did not have any bread.



Laura Ogden



Belle Dorcas



Montanez Baugh

I am What I Consume

Mahnaz Minavand



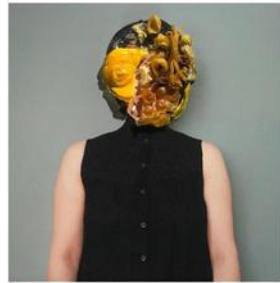
January 24, 2020



February 7, 2020



January 24, 2020



February 7, 2020



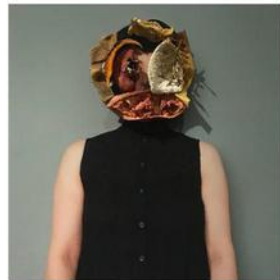
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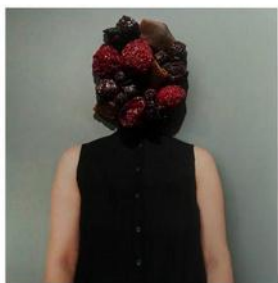
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The Serving Girl

Gladys May Casely Hayford

The calabash wherein she served my food,
Was smooth and polished as sandalwood:
Fish, as white as the foam of the sea,
Peppered, and golden fried for me.
She brought palm wine that carelessly slips
From the sleeping palm tree's honeyed lips.
But who can guess, or even surmise
The countless things she served with her
eyes?

three pieces by Francesca De Angelis



sustenance poem

austin anthony

air smells like pine + fresh cold
cuts & his shaving cream searing
aftermaths of mornings spent
in bed/in
love listening to city streets just
falling asleep again 'cause we can
coffee bean + soup bowl with
rummages of the lotion spread out / burning recalled within
his hands on my body gentle
enough to taste his snout's a little lover so
when he's off at work I just lay by myself 'til I'm sick
and missing high school lunches, me & him twined together
with no future to feed on and most nights it feels like we're
drifting through eternity in our own personal void—we pack
only the essentials: food to eat; air to breathe, and
shall he ever attain pictorial power over a planet,
he has previously stated that he would ordain an empire of
cherry red velvet cake & tiramisu
& long mornings filled with more time spent together
to just be hungry for love & nothing else



Punk Rock Patty

by Jenna Ange

Punk rock Patty
Nourish this soul
Fuel me up on
Rock and roll

My jacket may be leather
But you're all beans, baby
Giving me
Everything I need

I'd let you
Eat my heart out
But I know
You're vegan





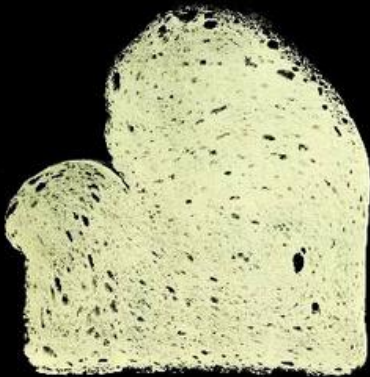
Section of Square (or Sandwich) Tin Loaf.
(ACTUAL SIZE.)



Section of Crumby Loaf.
(ACTUAL SIZE.)

Prescience
Holly Day

I find the little cache of dog food and sunflower seeds
carefully tucked into the insulation of the attic
brought up from two whole floors below, and I wonder
if the mouse or rat who brought all of this food so far up here
knows something I don't, is tapped into some cosmic channel
that warns only rodents of coming ice ages or cataclysmic meteor strikes.
I watch the squirrels out the window as they
get fatter and fatter as the trees give up and drop their leaves
wonder if they know something about the upcoming winter that I don't
if I'm doomed to be trapped in my own house without food
eventually find myself in the frozen tundra of the yard
searching frantically for the acorns these same squirrels have left behind.



Section of Tin French.
(ACTUAL SIZE.)

**AMOUNTING TO
SOMETHING**

I taste
your salt
you break apart
with eager fingers
my steamy bread
I kiss
the scars
on your arm
where once
you cut yourself
you touch
where my wounds
would be
had I ever
thought
to try

Egg supply and demand

Marie-Eve Bernier

The first thing I want is an egg. It's not like I think of it as soon as I wake up but once I feel a little less numb, I know that it will be my first food. Nutritious, easy and versatile. A little consolation snack for my aching soul and body. Quid pro quo. It's basic math, one out and one in.

Still fuzzy from the anesthetics and surprisingly not hungry after fasting, I choose how I will eat my egg. My preference would be hard boiled, but I know it could never be replicated as perfectly as my grandmother's, I can't cope with anymore disappointment. Scrambled over sourdough toast is an option I rarely turn down but even that seems like more than I could stomach. There is a loss-like sensation in my abdomen that's difficult to fill. I finally decide on a pan-fried egg from my husband. I feel guilty requesting such a snack as there is an egg shortage at the moment, both in and outside my body.

The shortage has caused prices to go up, what was once affordable is no longer accessible. Just like mine, rarity is increasing its value. Women are panicked and I feel it too. What will it mean if we run out of eggs? There is a sense of urgency and with reason.

Even though I am grateful for my fried egg, I don't feel deserving. Still steaming on my plate, I look at my lone egg and can't help but notice how wrinkled and defeated it looks. I wonder about my own, would it, could it, do the job this time? I take a first bite and as I chew, I feel a pinch of hope, it is perfectly delicious. Perhaps I should not have judged it by its appearance.

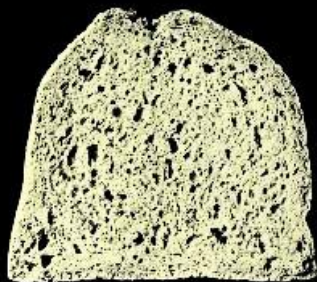
To suppress any lingering feelings of guilt, I remind myself that eggs are a nutritional powerhouse, filled with vitamins and protein. All things my body could do with. Never mind the financial burden, this is a necessity.

I am advised to focus on eliminating as much regret as possible. I am told that when I look back, I will be glad to have made it a priority. As I come close to exhausting all my options and may be forced to end what is a long and complicated journey, I wonder if this will be true. Will the loss feel lessened by a lack of regret? The egg shortage is not showing any signs of slowing down.

I wonder if there will be a next round. Will I have any eggs left, to use and to eat? The lack is making it insatiable like a hunger.

But maybe I've been looking at this the wrong way. There are many ways to access eggs. I've limited myself to hen eggs from grocery stores and farmers' markets. My hunger is motivating me to consider creative solutions. I could possibly get duck eggs or quail eggs even. In times of shortages, one can lean on its community. In times of need, people are generous. Unlike egg supplies, generosity is not limited, there are plenty of strangers who could be willing to donate. I don't think I'll be starving just yet.

No, it's not over. My stomach is rumbling, I am hungry.



Section of Wheatmeal Loaf.

(ACTUAL SIZE.)



you are my fast food boyfriend
pop-the-bubblegum love
two buns and some hot sauce
your chewy and dense
high caloric romance leaves me
salty, sweet, and fried

at midnight
I long for your meatiness
when the world's rough I desire your cheesiness
I have to be careful to ingest you slowly
or you will give me
heartburn

Vic Pientka



Scott Millington

In the Next Yard

Helen Hoyt

O yes, you are very cunning,
I can see that:
Out there in the snow with your red cart
And your wooly grey coat
And those ridiculous
Little grey leggings!
Like a rabbit,
A demure brownie.
O yes, you are cunning;
But do not think you will escape your father and mother
And what your brothers are!
I know the pattern.
It will surely have you—
For all these elfish times in the snow—
As commonplace as the others,
Little grey rabbit.



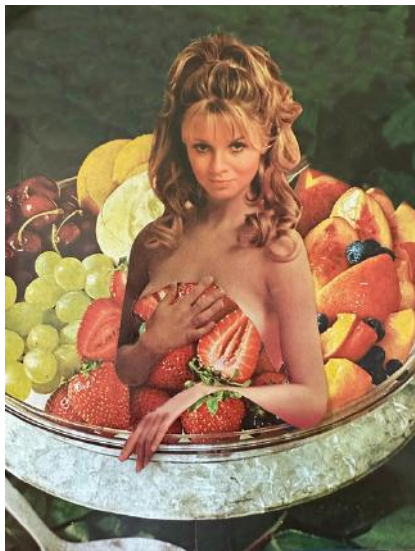
KINDRED

J.M. Huck

I could eat her
ingest musical scores whole,
flapjacks tall as my mouth
can muster, ample as my hands
can hold, drenching me 'til I
swallow her—cover to cover, note for note,
and burst.



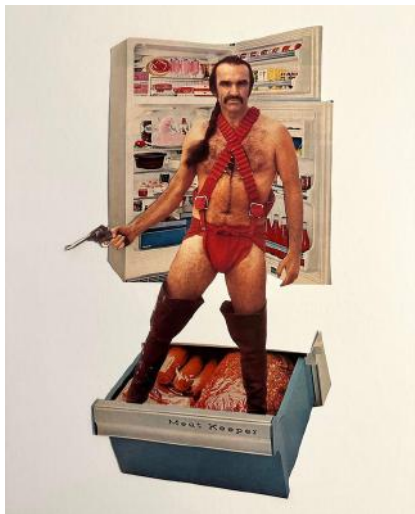
Zahra Mohamadi



Crumbs

Paul Hostovsky

Whenever she ate she talked about food, all the magnificent repasts of her past, with her mouth full. And he'd sit across from her and watch the food on her plate grow smaller and more insignificant with each description of some towering feast or exquisite confection of her youth. She'd close her eyes and remember, shaking her head as if to say, "No, you can't see it from here." Then she'd open her eyes and he'd feed on them—beautiful, distant, bored—until she looked away again. And he'd swallow hard.



Late for Lunch

Edward Obuszewski

He was driving a lot faster than the posted speed limit of 35 mph. Coming down from the hill he lived on.

The gas pedal somehow became the brakes.

Lost control of his Jaguar.

Crashed into a palm tree.

The tree pretended the wind was blowing a little harder.

The car sustained extensive front end damage.

He was alright.

Air bag in his face.

Used his cellphone to call triple A.

Smoked a Marlboro.

Smoked another Marlboro.

By the time the tow truck arrived his left arm was sunburned.

His stomach was growling.



four pieces by @kitschycollagist







two paintings



by Jess Ray



Jess Ray

turning the tables

the table is laid, Satan is sitting in the middle
with a bit of shine and luminescence still left
and a huge scar that Zeus gave him by using his secret thunderbolt weapon
souls of Faustus and Frankenstein sitting on the other sides
sipping the fiery elixir in Brouhahaum
Satan has briefed them - a plan - a whisper
to satisfy the hunger and lust for power and to climb rungs of superiority
the plan is straight and simple to create a female creature
surpassing Helen of Troy in beauty
and any other woman on the planet.

Satan promised as many years of life to both his new supporters as are equitable
to number of seconds Zeus couldn't find out the reality of this facade
Faustus is to use his necromancy and find most beautiful women either living or dead
while Frankenstein is to pull out the best and most beautiful parts
and stitch all of those together with a golden string
and is to blow life in the creature who would seduce Zeus and distract him
satisfying his hunger
meanwhile Satan would act on his devious plan and will win the war against God
with the help of a woman
this time as a seducer and not the one being seduced.

Mange Bien

First night falafel stuck in teeth while no bus comes and the métro only every 30
Sunday used to be silent the 11th open, Gefen, fruits pate sugar getting stuck in teeth
Hyperbaric, a lick of milk, back to yours or mine? Turtleneck and corduroy, Laurent smoking at
the bar, girls-too-loud, we woo girls. Sorority of sex and sevens. Cheese hung in plastic bags
out of fourth floor balconies in winter because no fridge. Eating your mouth June night
swallowing orange blossom lined alleys, sadness, gulping air in the underpass, the first meal I
Had with you was the last, a marmalade at Paddington, visiting human trafficking cells for vegan
curry in a guidebook, the tink of the tongue piercing against teeth, errors, street panini,
commodity wine - red and white- from the beverage dispenser at The Cité U dining hall, tartine
tarts, blind encouragement, pre-y2k, journeys to the Jardin des Plantes just to check email over
dial up, minitel supremacy, one sickly sweet bottle of cassis on the desk, huge parcels of just
baked baguettes stolen for light sabres by the girls singing patsy cline linked-arm sunrise stroll
home via pere le chaise, baguette theft in doorways, strawberries in winter, children, street
panini and poppers, fake ecstasy, fake jamiroquai on quays, sangria with jeremy scott, the
opposite of the banquet years, the opposite of a moveable feast.

Monica Storrs





Rhiannon Davis



Dani Felice



Mustafa Sarp Danisoglu

ISSUE 17 WINTER 2024

FEATURED

WRITERS & ARTISTS

- AUSTIN ANTHONY
 AYYEEMAANN
 BELLE DORCAS (FRONT COVER)
 BROOKE SPALDING FORD
 CHERIE SAVOIE TINTARY
 CLAUDIA WYSOCKY
 CM SPEARS
 DANI FELICE
 EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY
 EDWARD OBUSZEWSKI
 ELI S. EVANS
 EMMA CUSINATO
 FRANCOIS DESPREZ
 FRANCESCA DE ANGELIS
 GLADYS MAY CASELY HAYFORD
 HELEN HOYT
 HOLLY DAY
 J.M. HUCK
 JENNA ANGE
 JESS RAY (BACK COVER)
 JOHN GREY
 KATHY BROWN
 LAURA OGDEN
 LORALEI R. BYATT
 MAHNAZ MINAVAND
 MARIE-EVE BERNIER
 MONICA STORSS
 MONTANEZ BAUGH
 MUSTAFA SARP DANISGLU
 PAUL HOSTOVSKY
 RHIANNON DAVIS
 ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
 SALVATORE DIFALCO
 SANDRA PARIS
 SCOTT MILLINGTON
 SHAMMI FAROOK
 STEPHEN NEIL GILL
 VIC PIENKA
 ZAHRA MOHAMADI

