

CHANDELIER DAPPLED

A BULB CULTURE COLLECTIVE ZINE

ARBOR DAY
APRIL 26, 2024





LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

It's impossible not to think of Spring as a time of new beginnings. A time to take a deep breath of snow melt, to watch saplings bravely push their ways into the world, to welcome back the songbirds and their songs. Like last October's Guttering, Dappled is collection of poetry and prose centered around a particular theme.

Arbor Day, to us, is a day of collective conscience. When you plant a tree, you have to get in the dirt. You can't avoid feeling the soil work through your fingers or the touch of warm sunlight on your skin. You can't ignore nature when you're in nature.

When you read this incredible collection of writing written by some of the most talented and insightful writers we've encountered, we hope you'll be awed and delighted. We hope you'll gain a new appreciation for the world.

Go outside today, plant a tree (or several), and look up at the blue sky. Let the absolute grandeur of the day wash through you. And when you're ready, perhaps under the shade of an oak, or in a garden with butterflies flitting by, take some time to read the wonderful offerings we've gathered here.

L.M. and Jared

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ON COLLECTING

BETHANY JARMUL

Slimy, colorful leaves, like tree-fingers, cling full-bodied to the damp, dark wooden deck. Asher, my two-year-old son, peels one off like the Band-Aid on his finger.

He, toddler-amazed, carries the wet, paper-bag leaf inside, layering it on the window sill like paper-mâché—reminding me of the paper-mâché doll that I made in elementary school, kept in a box underneath my bed alongside skeleton keys, pyrite, rose quartz, and arrowheads, foreign currency, and journals of gel-pen thoughts.

Asher returns, chooses burning embers, emeralds, blazes, brown swirls of rot—in partially-eaten and mostly-eaten-leaf shapes.

“Look leafs, Mama!” He holds them up for me to inspect, admire, or reject—the same way that, before he was conceived, I held up the pregnancy tests, squinting, heart full of hummingbirds. When I found my two-lined test, I kept it in my nightstand drawer, brought it out to admire it like a four-leafed clover.

“Yes, leaves, baby.” I hold my phone to capture him, to crystallize this moment, to lock it away in my memory museum, encapsulate billions of atoms with the imprint of my finger on the glowing glass.

I am a collector of memories, tucking them into my pockets, behind my ears. Sometimes I use photographs as memory-traps; more often I wrangle them with words.

Like a leaf that dries between the pages of the family Bible, or in wax paper, or behind plastic in a scrapbook—pressed until it becomes a flaky, paper-thin wafer—so the moments get compressed, transformed, pasted onto construction paper, painted over with finger paints or traced with stencils, and hung from the fridge where the sun fades them.

With written words, I make meaning of the memory, transform it. I try to taxidermy time. But a moose head hung on a wall does little to showcase its swift trot, solitary soul, summertime swims in the cold stream.

“I want more leafs, Mama.”

“Here’s a yellow one.” I point with my toe.

“No, I want—green one.” He grabs my hand, pulls me to the edge of the deck where a maple tree’s branch hangs, bursting with buds, leaflets, broad leaves all bottle green.

Chlorophyll, the leaves' green pigment, captures light transferring it to energy-storing molecules. Like chlorophyll, my words can capture, reveal in-color truths. And even in the deterioration, the breaking down of chlorophyll, of fact—vibrancy is revealed—burnt orange, ruby red, and glittering gold hues.

I pluck a handful of the leaves for Asher. He uses them as blankets, shields, curtains—to hide his toy cars. Then, he pulls the leaves away one-at-a-time, revealing his tiny treasures beneath, squealing with delight.

In my writing, I cover up then uncover, rearrange then reveal, find delight in grasping memories—frosting smeared on my son's face, the roar of Niagara Falls, the tickles from my husband's beard—as they float toward the ground. But I also peel up the slimy ones—the unwanted touch, a friend's suicide, religion-fueled shame—and give these memories a home on a sunny windowsill, a place for their crinkly, rotting selves in my collection.



A CERTAIN TYPE OF LIGHT

DAVID BREHMER

-For Liebe and Linda

There is a certain type of light
in a certain type of garden
where the sun does not bake
or pry or cover.

It lays atop each leaf,
patient to be received,
radiating the potential of each
green and hovering moment.

Hushed and buzzing green,
glowing bright and cool and ready.
Stirring, patient green,
glowing ageless and new.

But, not ageless, ancient.
The fence post disappears inch by inch.
Shadows cut new angles
as the leaves grow dense with summer.

The sun arcs across the casually evolving landscape,
stretches and sinks each day closer
to pristine and rotting fruit.
Flies and blossoms buzz in turn,

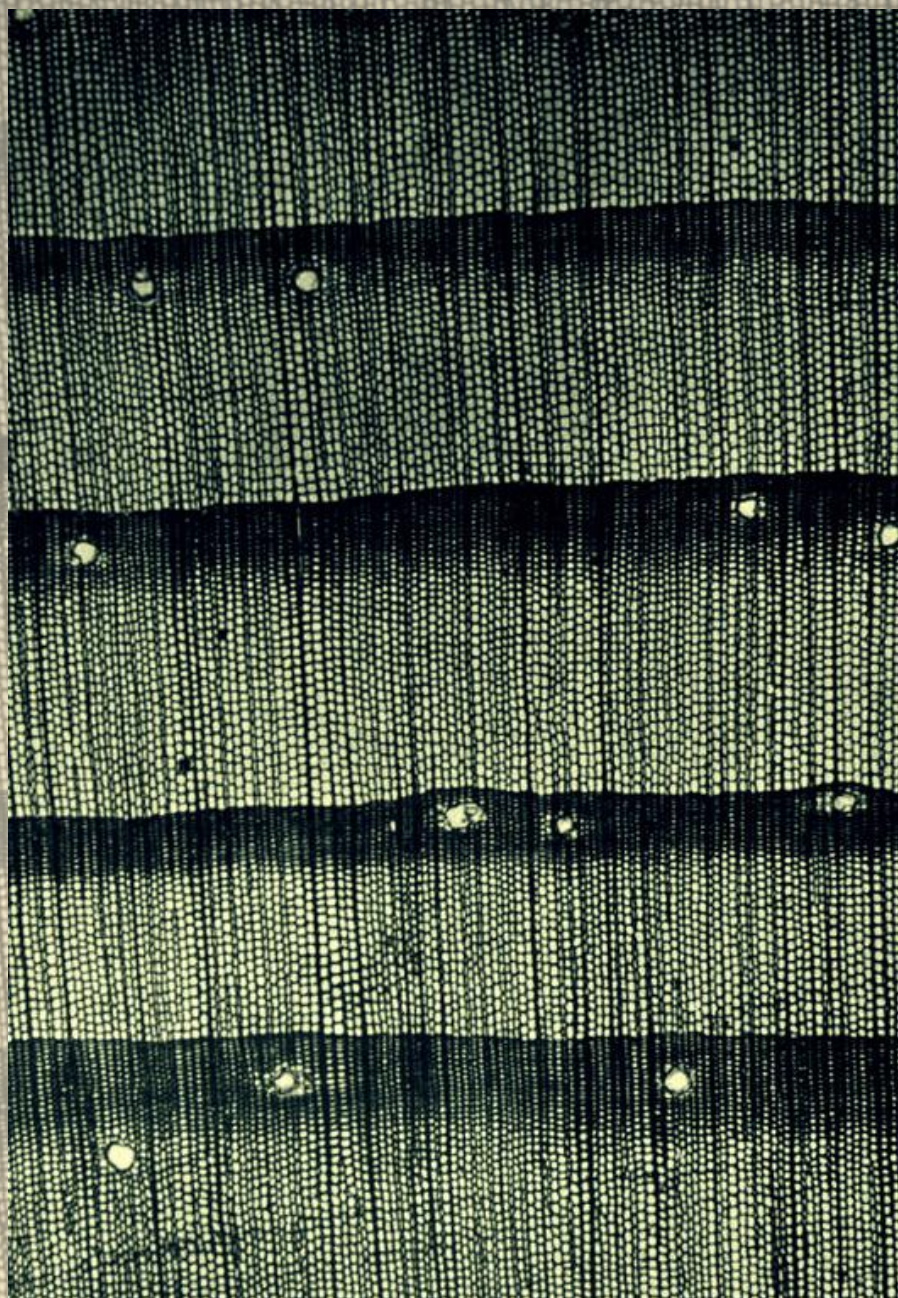
bloom and wither and burn and be.
Beneath the sun the garden pulses,
hushed and standing, reaching imperceptibly towards
compost.

But to walk in that light, to taste
the peaches appear and swell,
to know the figs at each stage of their existence,
to smell the green and living world

caress and make way for and tower above
your silly, magnificent steps.
You smile and sit and join with her
and the Earth and everything.

The sun will find your upturned palm
and lay like her hand atop yours,
patient to be received.





THE GRIEF OF TREES

DIANE ELAYNE DEES

Joined at the root, two tall pines
form a "V" that reaches toward the sky.
Their marriage, an inosculation,
is forever. Each is allowed to grow,
yet they never leave each other,
for their foundation is strong.

They once had a child—
a gnarly vine with bark
that stayed close to the parents,
while—like all children—
it explored the environment,
swaying in the breeze.

But breezes became strong winds,
and—over time—the trees lost
their offspring. The mighty pines
continued to sway and grow,
though who can discern
when a tree is grieving?

Not far from where the bereft gemels
stand, I, too, had a partner,
and hoped to grow while rooted
at our base. But the wild wind
of betrayal weakened our structure,
and an ice storm blew through
and detached us. No child was lost
in our storm, for there was never a child
to lose—an unseeded forest is also a loss.

Who can discern when a tree is grieving?
I grieve for them, and I observe them,
as they continue to thrive, joined securely
at their base, able to withstand the winds
that tear down the framework of those
whose roots do not reach deep into the earth.



THE UNBEARABLE LIGHTNESS OF SEED PODS



MIKKI ARONOFF



A drizzle of pale green. Paper-thin globes float to ground — so light the branches don't lift from their absence. I wait, then pick one up, feel the lack of heft my eyes already measured.

So many have departed this tree. More to tumble when weather wreaks its windy tricks and twists.

They say a soul weighs 21 grams. This hot summer day, more untether from the world. A half million

now adrift — impossible to consider. We flounder for remedy, work fast, wave our wands. Beetles

the color of checkerboards stream, wait piggy-back for the bounty to dry, to spill its hard seed.



THE SPEECH OF TREES

CYNTHIA GALLAHER

If there is a musical world,
a hidden side to the one we know,
it is filled with the speech of trees.

Between our insistence on high-speed motion
and broad destinations reached by gas,
trees prefer staying put.

Part memory, part nested bird, part grave,
roots push and drink deeply of rainwater,
branches view the same land

day after day,
sap droplets create lenses,
each sway, a different snapshot.

Between our insistence on finding
our place in the sun, trees shade us
before we collapse from arrogance.

Between our perfection slipcased
between tempered steel and glass,
trees encase themselves in natural error
and chance,
with bumpy and thick bark,
no two leaves alike.

Left to its own device,
imperfection reaches an exquisite height,
lives an immortal eternity, compared to us.

And trees' elevators — birds
as passengers — color and sound
in autumn bright foliage and percussive
branches,

and if we don't have the sense
to raise our arms and pick fruit,
food is thrown right at our feet.





THE ORCHARD

A.R. WILLIAMS

The dainty hand plucks a Gala apple.
Under the tree, I open the bag-
space for one more.

Walking back, the cicada chorus
whirrs, like a biker revving her engine
before speeding off.

Summer is nearly over; fall is imminent,
and yet, the heat continues
to linger.

As the daylight fades, we stop,
plant ourselves, and eat an apple together,
as dusk turns to darkness.

WORSHIP WHAT KEEPS YOU

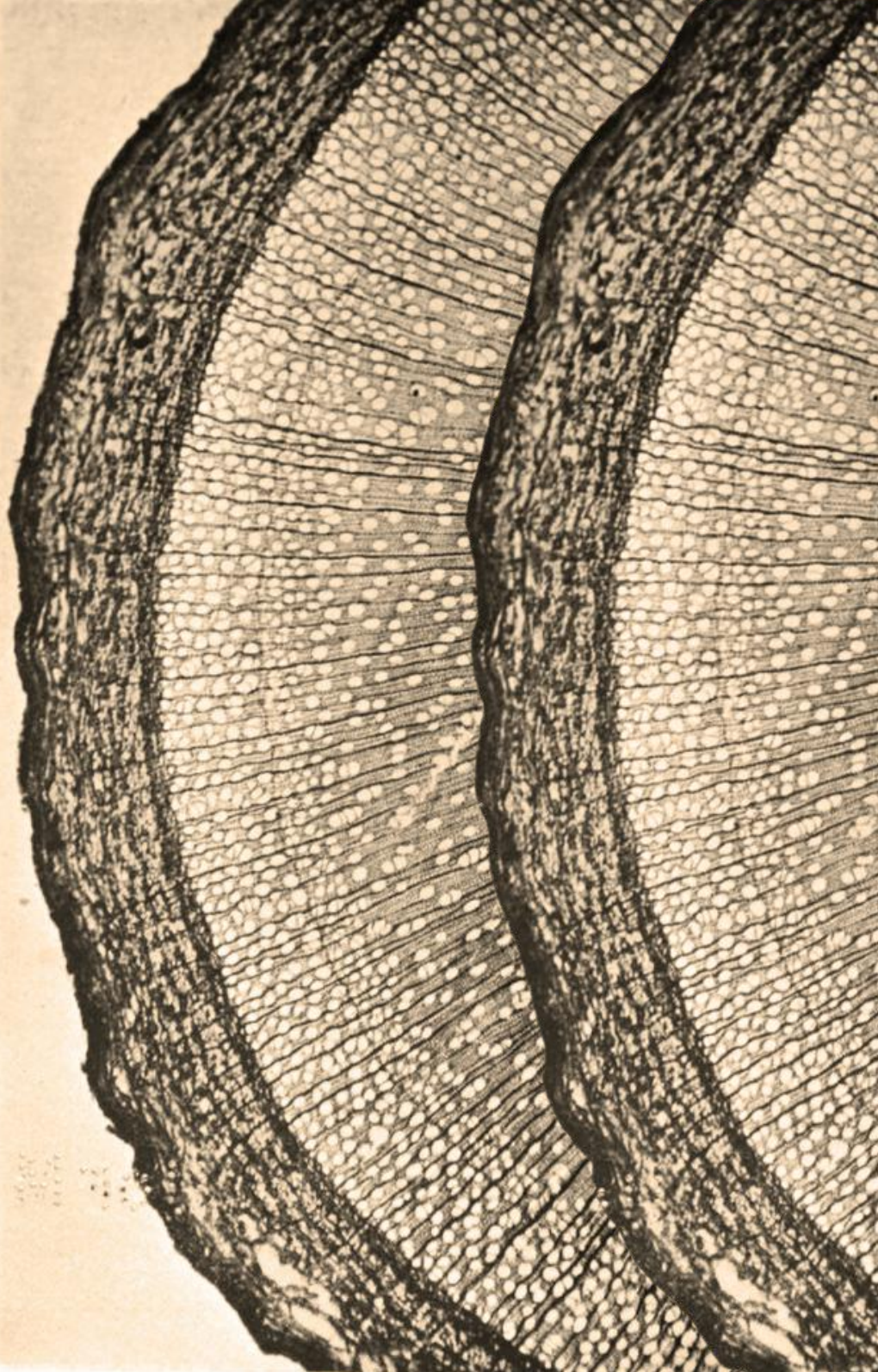
ALIVE

CHELSEA STICKLE

Hurricane Florence is barreling toward us. To prepare we buy sandbags, candles and non-perishables. We hide out in the bathtub, the four of us—Mom, Dad, Gretchen and me—with the floral couch cushions over us like the grass over a grave. In our parents' arms, Gretchen wants to hear ghost stories. Stories about the undying. Stories about what will happen to us. Dad tells a story about a man with a hook for a hand. Mom says everyone dies, even ghosts meet an end eventually, change is the only constant. But we've been in this tub for hours and nothing's changing, Gretchen whines. Mom says we have to take the long view. So we yank threads from the floral cushions, cut them with our teeth and start braiding them together for survival bracelets. Gretchen's is all shades of green in a staircase. She weaves mine in pink chevron. Our teeth fracture granola bars and send the crumbs down the drain. We drink the water in bottles around our legs until they're empty and we have to turn on the faucet, wetting our feet whenever we need refills. Gretchen wants to sit underneath and fill herself up.

Mom and Dad tell more ghost stories to distract from the hunger. When we run out of granola bars, Gretchen forages for mushrooms unfurling along the edge of the tub. Pops one into her mouth like she's sneaking a cookie. She chews slowly like she's savoring it. My stomach rumbles. Our hands dart into the unsafe space outside the cushions. There are always fresh mushrooms waiting. We lift up a corner and peek outside. The mushrooms had multiplied across the top of the tub, down the side and across the floor. Dad says all mushrooms are connected, that they communicate through an underground network. Kill one and another will rise in its place. Perhaps the closest thing to immortality in the natural world. Gretchen whispers undying like she's found her answer. There are no ghosts, only fungi. She strokes the nearest one. In the corner we spy the original mushroom holding its umbrella high over the others. Immortal Mother Mushroom, we praise as we eat Her children, destined to die and rise again. Our mouths full. Our tongues tingling. Everything good comes from Mother Mushroom. When Sunday comes along we use mushroom caps for the Eucharist. We adapt hymns. We brew stews. We've never been happier.







ECONOMIES

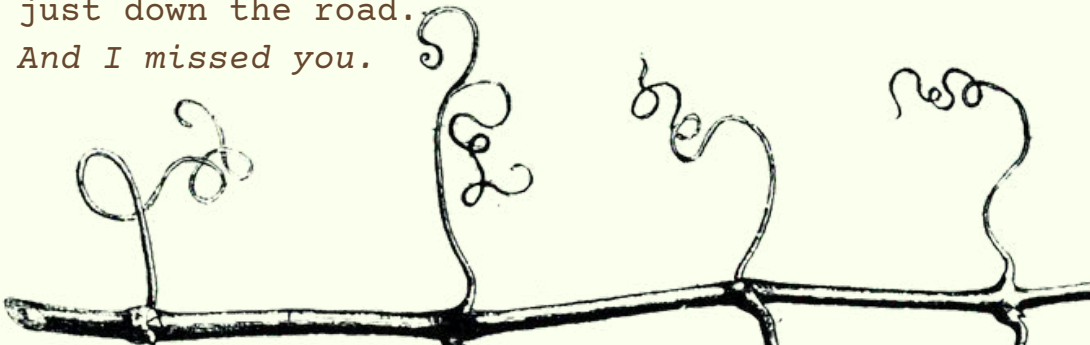


KOSS

Great Grandma Ella
Thank you for leaving me
your handy longish ape arms,
frog-colored eyes, and buxom cheekbones.
I carry you . . .

I recall your hulking figure
faded sleeveless sack dresses & snow white
cotton strands, your hair "bobbied"
to your temples, and the mysterious ever-bruise
of your cheek, a fallen fruit.

Last week, I hovered over your bodied
leftovers, resting below a mossy stone
just down the road.
And I missed you.



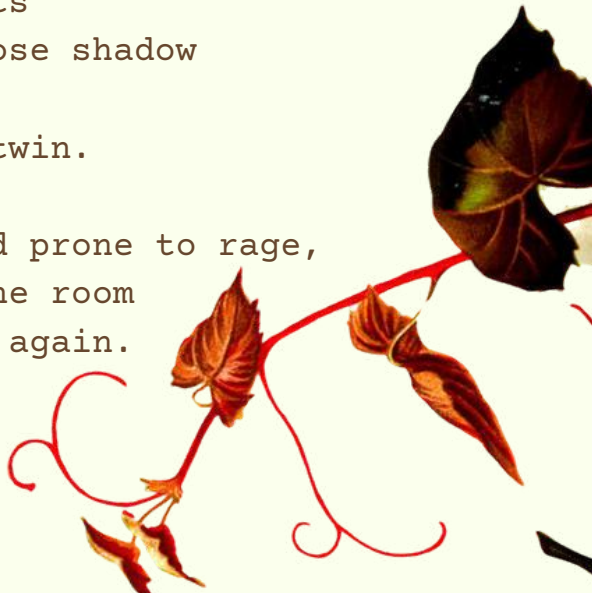
Thank you for not giving me
a birthday sewing machine.
I was filled with dread
each time you threatened
to gift me. At five
I was bewildered, but at seven,
terrified.

I know you didn't mean
to toss my Mexican jumping beans
the day you babysat and made me
a bologna sandwich with just bread—no condiments.

You were losing your sight, had grown forgetful,
and I was too afraid
to speak. I was like that. I gobbled every bite.

You were Grandpa's long-armed
double (save for breasts
you later lost), in whose shadow
he was harmless.
He could've been your twin.

Mercurial as he was and prone to rage,
when you walked into the room
he became a docile boy again.

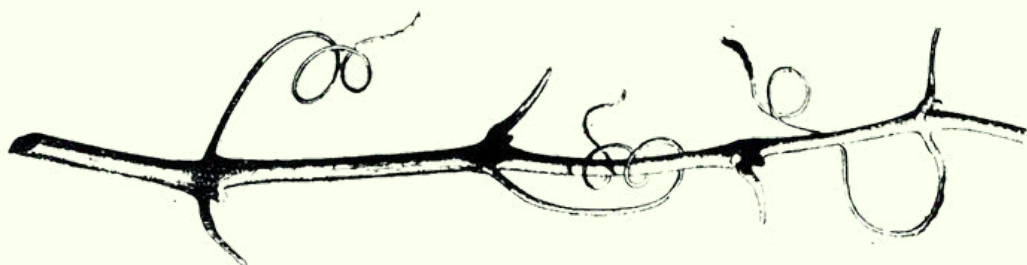


We're all someone's child
including you, Grandma Ella.
Who was your mother—your pa?
Were they tender to you ever?

And what of your thick-legged,
muscled love, a gentle short man,
that West Virginia logger who relished
your warm tin bucket lunches
in the forest where he floated
trees upstream in the ice-cold winter river?

By the end of his life, his thighs had become blow
fish,
blue and huge and shivering,
his last breath spent in your arms,
leaving you a widow
with three young kids.

So many lives bled for money,
West Virginia's Industrial Revolution,
Allegheny's ruin, women and men,
mountain people, just struggling to survive.



Did Great-Grandfather speak of Sycamores
rumored to be 45-feet round?

Or the thousand-year oak amputee, whose remains
were frozen beyond the amber lens, its flesh
split

by axes, young sons crawling over the piles,
practicing their early deaths?

Y'all knew about destiny and what the mountains
and rivers promised.

And could a woman who cooked meals from nothing
mixed with fat, shoot a buck, ride a horse, and
make a thing

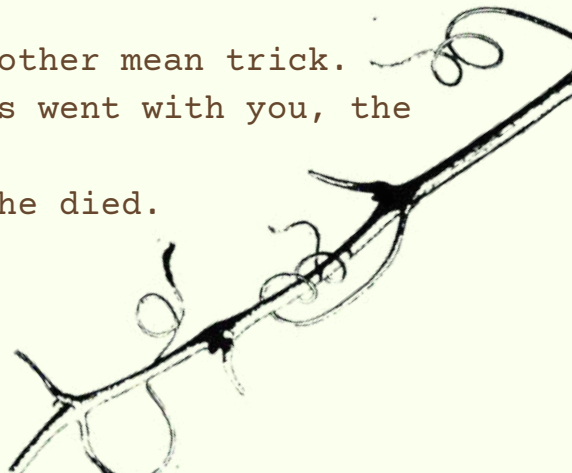
grow? A shack is a home is the nighttime
moonshine store.

You knew how to run a business.

Your economy was your 'magination, the thing I
also took
from you.

Eventually, you tried to beat destiny by heading
north.

Henry Ford's Detroit, another mean trick.
Your new man and two kids went with you, the
other held
down the mountain 'til she died.



A factory without a union is bodies spent
and no place for a woman they said.
But husband number two

snagged a job on the line, but soon disappeared
after a week-long drunk.
So you cooked, brewed and sewed, did the things
you knew, to keep food on the table
and fire in the pot, but never, ever
did you thrive, nor your kids.

We survive, Ella. We do. And when the trees grow
back, and the auto plants all close,
wind still passes seeds,
the sun continues to glow, and our bones unknow
their significance and rest and rest



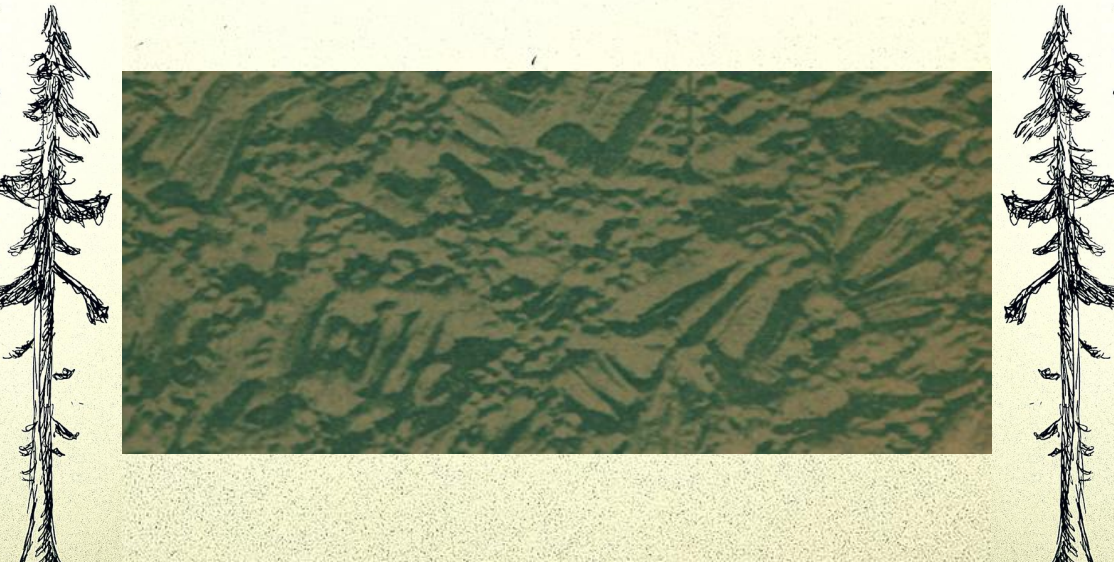
SUBSUMPTION

JANIS LA COUVÉE

In wildest fantasy
Push back salal branch: step into never-ending green
gloaming
Disappear among kinnikinnick, lichen and fern
Tread pillow-soft path: leaf-crumble underfoot
Tree crown branches creak and rub—
Soughing against wind, blown in from storm-whipped seas
Surrounded by time and space, peace in the wandering
Surrender of self to an all-encompassing world hidden from
view
Trudging forest trails muddy with run-off, pools trickling
into streams
Roots abound, pushing through rock, tangling feet
Careful consideration, poles in constant motion, measuring
risk
A handhold, a jump
Fear has no meaning here
Rocked in the womb of earth, held close to perpetual rhythm
This is my known world, a place of refuge.

Slime, mold, smut and wort-complicated web, linking life to
death
Recumbent giants, returning to earth
Remnants of desecration, hillsides barren once
Moldering stumps now bedecked in finery-tight moss cloches,
elegant lace of huckleberry.

On a ridge, looking down, down, down
Wafts sweet scent signature of dry foliage—impossible to
pinpoint provenance
Later, deep in underbrush, damp and dank, air redolent of
musty earth
Inhale—capture peculiar and particular odours: skank of
skunk cabbage, ozone drifting in from
sea
Subsumed—pulled by deepest desires to walk on, forever



THIS OAK

ROBERT OKAJI

Never rooted in Tibet,
has not watched a whale breach
a November Pacific dusk, or guzzled
bitter beer near Vesuvius. Nor has it
absorbed the warmth of a loved one's
hip on a frozen morning long after
the embers' glow has greyed
and the windows blossomed
white. It cannot know the beauty
of disparate instruments playing
in joyous harmony. It will whisper
no incantations, does not smile,
won't ever feel the anticipation
of a first kiss after a complicated
courtship. The bouquets of Bordeaux
elude it, as do tears or the benefits
of laughter. Why, then, do I envy it so?



GARDENING

RACHEL MALLALIEU

You won't need the shovel,
the earth is pocked
and collapses with the slightest touch.
This spring, our kitchen brimmed
with tomato seedlings.
Now, they languish beneath
a premature sun.
In the winter, we composted
our egg shells and clementine peels
to fortify the soil,
but the lawn is uncooperative and
wilts, despite your ministrations.
The neighbor's grass is green
though red eyed cicadas
litter the yard with primeval husks.
You've always loved
their evening clamor—
a hum ancient as the dinosaurs.
They shed their shells
like luminous ghosts
and their deserted frames
fix straight legged on
our pear trees.
You've been dropping pieces of
yourself lately.



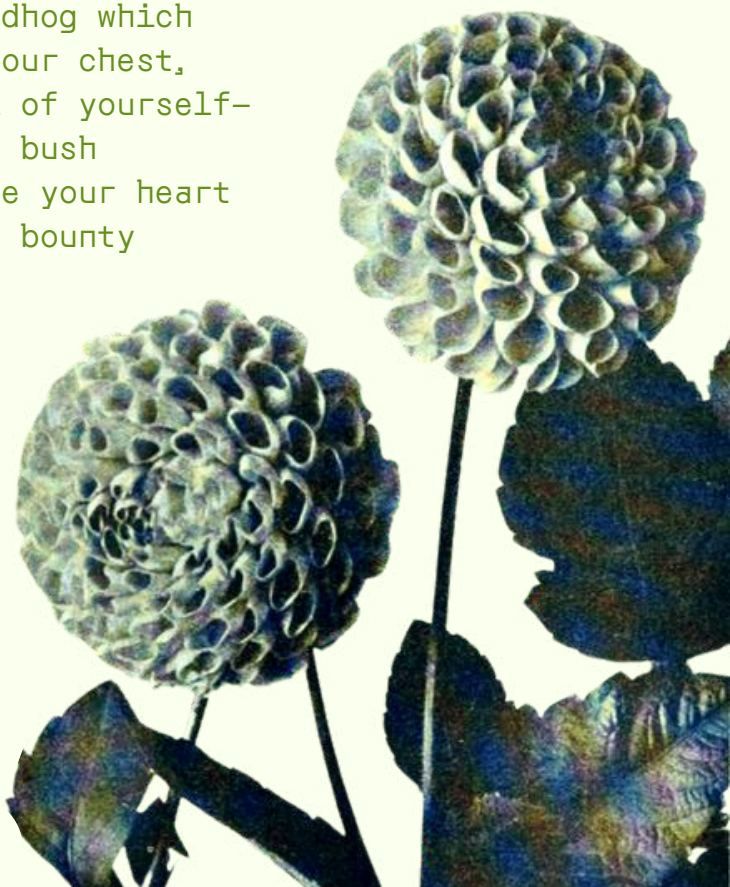
Perhaps you didn't notice
when you left a shard of your
lumbar spine in the car
you crashed.

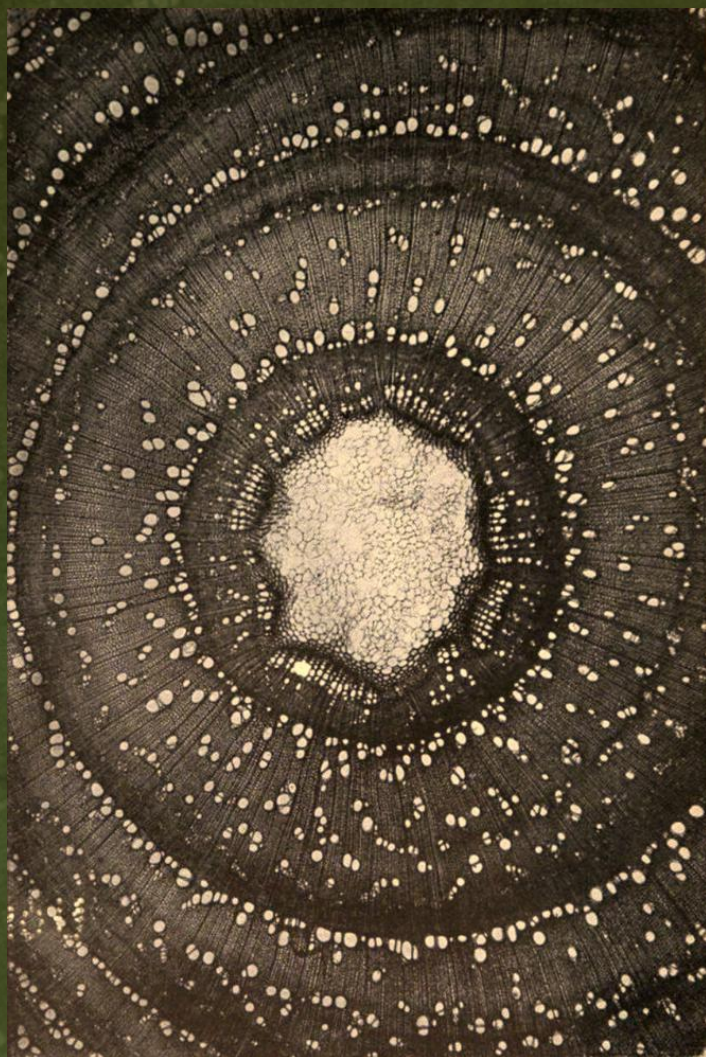
A fragment of your
frayed tendon still dirties
the garage floor.

Cicada young feast upon
their parents' remains,
but I can't feed our children
such meager offerings.

So please, slip your weary skin
and manage the garden
before summer comes.

Tend to the groundhog which
burrows through your chest,
and till the soil of yourself—
let the blueberry bush
which roots inside your heart
finally yield the bounty
it pledged.





THE WRITERS

BETHANY JARMUL

Bethany Jarmul is an Appalachian writer and poet. She's the author of two chapbooks and one poetry collection—This Strange and Wonderful Existence (poetry chapbook, Bottlecap Press, 2023), Take Me Home (nonfiction chapbook, Belle Point Press, 2024), and Lightning is a Mother (poetry collection, ELJ Editions, 2025). Her writing was selected for Best Spiritual Literature 2023 and nominated for the Pushcart Prize, The Best of the Net, Best Small Fictions, Best Microfiction, and Wigleaf Top 50. Connect with her at bethanyjarmul.com or on social media: [@BethanyJarmul](https://www.instagram.com/BethanyJarmul).

DAVID BREHMER

David Brehmer's poems have been featured in small rooms throughout the East Bay and in/on The MacGuffin, Humana Obscura, Hyacinth Review, Persephone's Fruit, Alien Buddha, and Ginosko Literary Journal. His first non-self published collection, Life, Death, Love, and Babies, is now available on Finishing Line Press. He writes to prove how much he loves life, despite his thoughts and words. He would like to think it will get better and suggests everyone take a walk in the woods at least once a week.

DIANE ELAYNE DEES

Diane Elayne Dees is the author of the chapbooks, *Coronary Truth* (Kelsay Books), *The Last Time I Saw You* (Finishing Line Press) and *The Wild Parrots of Marigny* (Querencia Press). She is also the author of four Origami Poems Project microchaps, and her poetry, short fiction and creative nonfiction have been published in many journals and anthologies. Diane, who lives in Covington, Louisiana—just across Lake Pontchartrain from New Orleans—also publishes *Women Who Serve*, a blog that delivers news and commentary on women's professional tennis throughout the world. Her author blog is *Diane Elayne Dees: Poet and Writer-at-Large*.

MIKKI ARONOFF

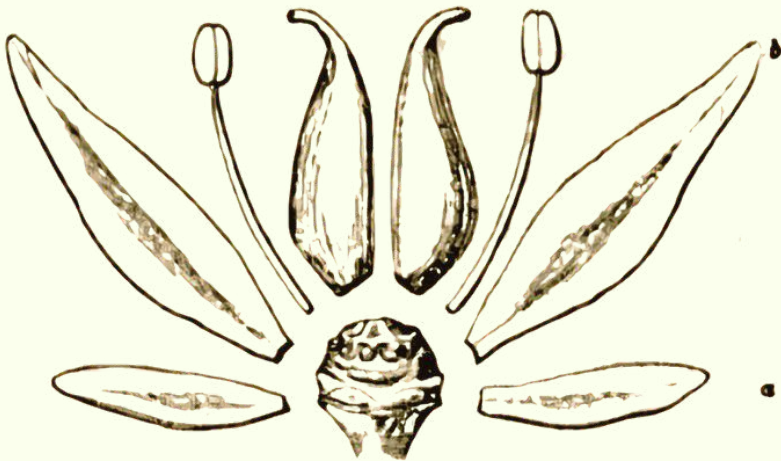
Mikki Aronoff's work appears in *New World Writing*, *MacQueen's Quinterly*, *Flash Boulevard*, *Bending Genres*, *Milk Candy Review*, *Gone Lawn*, 100 word story, *Atlas and Alice*, *trampset*, *The Offing*, *Midway Journal*, and elsewhere. She's received Pushcart, Best of the Net, Best Small Fictions, Best American Short Stories, and Best Microfiction nominations.

CYNTHIA GALLAHER

Cynthia Gallaher, a Chicago-based poet, is author of four poetry collections, including *Epicurean Ecstasy: More Poems About Food, Drink, Herbs and Spices*, and three chapbooks, including *Drenched*. Her award-winning nonfiction/memoir/creativity guide is *Frugal Poets' Guide to Life: How to Live a Poetic Life, Even If You Aren't a Poet*. One of her poems will be sent on NASA's flight to the south pole of the moon later this decade.

A.R. WILLIAMS

A.R. Williams is a poet from Virginia's Shenandoah Valley (USA), Editor-in-Chief of *East Ridge Review*, and author of *A Funeral in the Wild* (Kelsay Books, 2024).



CHELSEA STICKLE

Chelsea Stickle is the author of the flash fiction chapbooks *Everything's Changing* (Thirty West Publishing, 2023) and *Breaking Points* (Black Lawrence Press, 2021). Her stories appear in *Passages North*, *The Citron Review*, *Peatsmoke Journal*, *McSweeney's Internet Tendency* and others. Her micros have been selected for Best Microfiction 2021, the Wigleaf Top 50 in 2022 and the Wigleaf Longlist in 2023. She lives in Annapolis, MD with her black rabbit George and a forest of houseplants. Read more at chelseastickle.com.

KOSS

Koss (she/they/them) is a mixed-race, queer poet, writer, and artist with publications in *Chiron Review*, *Michigan Quarterly* (Mixtapes), *Cincinnati Review* (miCro), *Spillway*, diode poetry, *Five Points*, *Petrichor*, *Moonpark Review*, *Beaver Mag*, *Sage Cigarettes*, *Spoon River Poetry Review*, *MoonPark Review*, *Gone Lawn*, *Variant Lit*, *Anti-Heroin Chic*, *San Pedro River Review*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Bending Genres*, *Bulb Culture Collective*, *Prelude Magazine*, and many others. They have work forthcoming in *Reckon Review*, *Sugar Sugar Salt Lit*, *Midway Journal*, and the anthology, *Ovation*. Other anthologies include *Best Small Fictions 2020*, *Get Bent*, *Beyond the Frame*, and *Punk*. They've received numerous award nominations and won the 2021 Wergle Flomp Humor Poetry contest and have a chapbook, *Dancing Backwards Towards Pluperfect* coming from Diode Editions in '24. Find links to their work at: <https://koss-works.com>. Connect on Twitter @Koss51209969.

JANIS LA COUVÉE

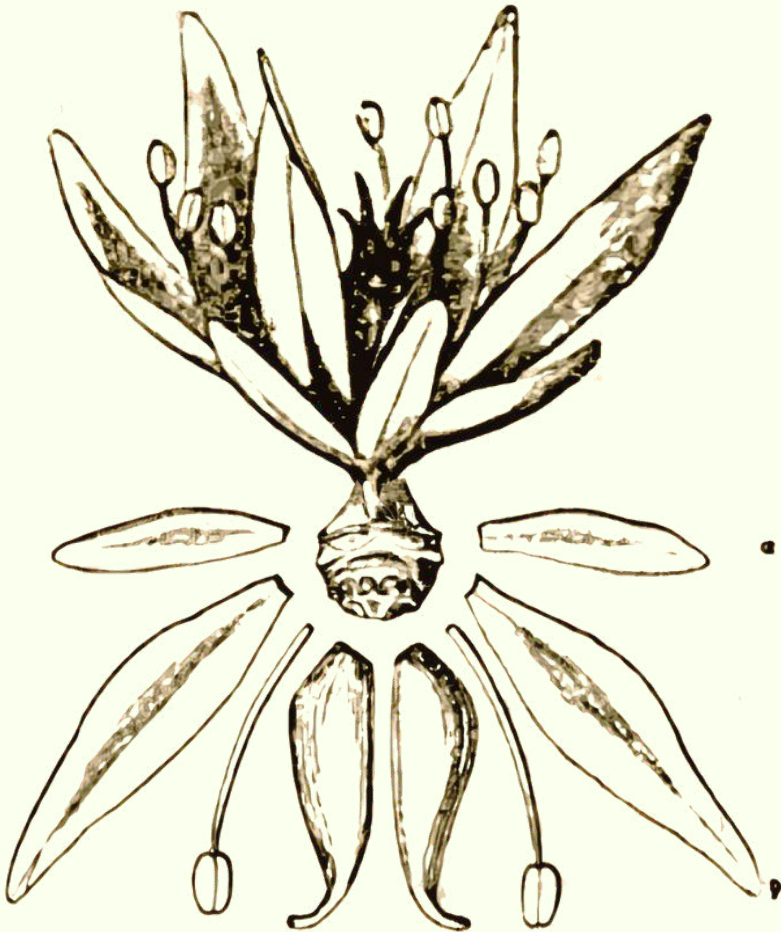
Janis La Couvée (she/her) is a writer and poet with a love of wild green spaces, dedicated to conservation efforts in Campbell River, British Columbia—home since time immemorial to the Liḡwít̓ax̓w̓ people. Her work is published or forthcoming by the League of Canadian Poets, Short Reads, Pure Slush, Harpy Hybrid Review, among others, and has been anthologized in New York Writers Coalition's Common Unity and the 2023 New Feathers Anthology. Her poem The Man is Not was short-listed for the inaugural Van Isle Poetry Collective contest. Online at janislacouvee.com @lacouvee on X, Mastodon and BlueSky

ROBERT OKAJI

Robert Okaji was recently diagnosed with late stage metastatic lung cancer, and lives, for the time being, in Indiana with his wife, stepson, and cat. His full length collection, Our Loveliest Bruises will be published by 3: A Taos Press sometime in the near future (not posthumously, he hopes). His poetry may also be found in Threepenny Review, Only Poems, Vox Populi, Evergreen Review, North Dakota Quarterly, The Big Windows Review, The Night Heron Barks, Indianapolis Review, and other venues.

RACHEL MALLALIEU

Rachel Mallalieu is an emergency physician and mother of five. She is the author of *A History of Resurrection* (Alien Buddha Press 2022). Some of her recent work is featured or forthcoming in *Nelle*, *Rattle*, *Chestnut Review* and *Whale Road Review*. Much more of her poetry can be found at Rachel-Mallalieu.com.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

"On Collecting" by Bethany Jarmul was originally published by Identity Theory, 2022

"A Certain Type of Light" by David Brehmer was originally published in the author's collection, *Life, Death, Love, and Babies* (Finishing Line Press, 2023)

"The Grief of Trees" by Diane Elayne Dees was originally published by Sparks of Calliope, 2021

"The Unbearable Lightness of Seed Pods" by Mikki Aronoff was originally published by Global Poemic, 2020

"The Speech of Trees" by Cynthia Gallaher was originally published in *Sycamore Roots* (Ice Cube Press & Sycamore Roots Regionalist Guide, North Liberty, Iowa, 1997)

"The Orchard" by A.R. Williams was originally published by Red Eft Review, 2021

"Worship What Keeps You Alive" by Chelsea Stickle was originally published by Cheap Pop, 2022

"Economies" by Koss was originally published by San Pedro River Review, 2022

"Subsumption" by Janis La Couvée was originally published by Van Isle Poetry Collective, 2020

"This Oak" by Robert Okaji was originally published by Slippery Elm, 2019

"Gardening" by Rachel Mallalieu was originally published by Jarfly, 2022



THANK YOU FOR READING!

Bulb Culture Collective:
Chandelier

Editors: L.M. Cole + Jared Povanda

Images and design by L.M. Cole