



STRAIGHT FORWARD

Issue Eight

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Lois Always Sings Off Key

by Jason Dean Arnold

Your body left last summer, but
she'll blink you back to life
forgetting
to leave on your onion skin

Sunlight soaks stained-glass,
as transparent you

You disappear
behind the dinner table,
leaving music loud enough
to keep her
awake until morning

the fall of sakuras

by April Mae Berza

witnessing the fall of sakuras
is waiting for love to go
beyond love

love is but a distance,
from the tree, the flowers
plunge into the abyss
like my heart into yours

the pink petals, one by one,
descend in the rhythm of
the wind as the sunlight
draws its lines, painting
radiance

this winter I embrace
maidenhood with a smile
I am afraid the sakuras
will soon wither

Confucian Gentility: 4 Floral Haiku

by Yuan Changming

1/ Orchid

Deep in the valley
Alone on an obscure spot
You bloom none the less

2/ Lotus

From foul decayed silt
You shoot clean against the sun
Never pollutable

3/ Chrysanthemum

Hanging on and on
Even when wishes wither
You keep flowering

4/ Plum

Your brave bold blood dropped
As though to melt all world's snow
Before spring gathers

Bill Mitchell's Legacy

by Carb Deliseuwe

Bill Mitchell was the key food chemist who
concocted Pop Rocks, quick-set Jell-O, Cool Whip, Tang,
and powdered egg whites, an inventive zoo
of products with a punchy fun-substantial bang.
Bill Mitchell's first success came during WW2
when a new substitute for tapioca sprang
forth from his fertile brain, a non-cassava mix,
which the United States WW2 infantry
called "Mitchell's mud." Some still recall as kids,
the rumor passed along, that if one dared to eat
Pop Rocks and drink a pop, one would get inside kicks,
and then explode into a hundred pieces—sweet!

Wednesday Morning #88

by Darren Demaree

Cannonball, I have neither
the rippling belly, nor the carnival
to make you a profitable angel.

Wednesday Morning #89

by Darren Demaree

I did not
mind
losing

my dream,
it was nice,
simple.

I knew
I was
sleeping.

Wednesday Morning #90

by Darren Demaree

Obligation
to the audience

of my dogs,
my cat, etc.,

I would be
naked.

Damn
children!

A Man Turning Thirty

by Colin Dodds

I wasn't looking when the future came
Lost among the lost, in a forest of sex
I wasn't winning, but I was still in the game

You forgot it again, but what's in a name?
I lived for what would happen next
I wasn't looking when the future came

My pants didn't fit, shirts the same
I climbed the nights, I clung to necks
I wasn't winning, but I was still in the game

Watching the sky and the mail for something to proclaim
I saw paradise, but only in flecks
I wasn't looking when the future came

With the years, we all accumulated blame
But I made friends and cashed checks
I wasn't winning, but I was still in the game

Sniffing out new springs of pride and shame
Inside the kind of magic that's immune to special effects
I wasn't looking when the future came
I wasn't winning, but I was still in the game

(A)Counting What Became of Us

by Karie Fugett

Goodbye is the only time one is too many.
So why do I beg the Night for my chance to say it?

When considering legs, two is the most satisfactory.
Two fingers for drive-by peace signs.

I lie awake when ghosts frolic at three.
I'll take any form – see-through, black shadow – just come.

The fourth month of a year is cool showers and fools in love -- unless you're in Iraq.
Then it's hot sand and foolish death.

At stage five, the final cycle of reincarnation, souls are old.
How much longer until my soul finds peace?

Johnny Cash track six.
Remember me, will you?

It took you seven damn years to ask me to marry you.
It felt lucky like getting the last red skittle in the bag.

I found the back of your brunette head in eighth grade English.
I can't stop writing about it.

If you multiply a number by nine, then add the remaining digits, it always comes back to nine.
If you and I were a number, it would be nine.

Zero is nothing like the space where you once slept.
Refer back to the loneliest number.

Holiness

by Mitchell Grabois

The Dalai Lama reclines
on a red velvet couch
as he flips through Readers' Digest
large print edition
laughs at the jokes
His favorites are:
Humor in Uniform and
Life in These United States

It's easy to be content
when a nation has worshipped
you as a God
since birth

Soul

by Mitchell Grabois

When I was a boy I milked the goat
Mother did it until she died
quite young
in a rock slide
at the edge of our village

I put the first few squirts
in a bowl for the cat
who ran up
and greedily lapped

At these times
Nicholas and Alexandra
my Toulouse Geese
looked at each other

then Nicholas stole forward
and bit the cat on the base of her tail
who jumped as if electrified
The geese laughed

So I knew early on that cats have short memories
and geese have a sense of humor
and I figured out one day
that if they have a sense of humor
they have a sense of tragedy

and if they have a sense of tragedy
they have souls
and suffer

I took my geese to church one day
but the priest yelled at me
and kicked us out

Not Roses

by Nels Hanson

In the story red roses
bloomed as a young
woman slept and it's

true but not the roses.
A sunflower's golden
face blazed watching

at her window so she
knew it was pale sun
not a platinum moon

she steered for across
the dark waters of her
long years of slumber.

Shoulda Woulda Coulda

by Karen Paul Holmes

Didn't.

Now get on with it.

Range

by Sid Orange

I wired,
bolted and bludgeoned myself together,
like an electric cooker.
I was sturdy and reliable.
It was easy to clean me.
But no one wanted the work.
Then the years of filth
began to drift from my oven and hob,
as if filth was a draught.
It crept deep into the corners of every room.
The draught leapt at strangers.
I stopped cooking dinners.
Instead,
I baked fruitcakes.
I was very proud that my fruit did not sink to the bottom of the fruitcakes.
But I stashed them squealing like children,
who itched to jump at you from dark cupboards.

The Only Woman I Ever Loved

by Madeline Schwartz

Her hips shred helter skelter.
Her voice frosted luaus.
Her skin pigeon buttoned.
Her knuckles bitter,
and hungry.

She preferred her coffee black,
with scorpions.
She laughed like dried up whiskey,
and twisted the necks of whatever jack rabbits.
She took her playdates in crow-frittered alleys,
and prayed to fermentation.
She sunk the coals of cigarettes into the milk of her tongue,
and kept her hair like a broken train.

She fucked with her hair down and her neck back
All the way
Back.

She whispered to the rotten street wolves
on where to find their snatches.
She lamented like a prophet
to all the mothers with lost branches.

Her innards frothed for her kin,
and low rent curbsides.

She would slowly melt her eyes closed when she spoke of Amsterdam,
“Like chickens in the house.”

I remember,
She was the unsinkable boat.
Her steps dragged and smacked the earth
like hookless anchors.
I remember,
She had a habit
of spitting
on cunts
like us.

Each Spring

by Carol Smallwood

Each spring I say I'll taste it day by day
and not be surprised by summer's end
when sand castles are no longer play.
Each spring I say I'll taste it day by day--
it's not like I want it served up on a tray,
or say it never happened-or pretend.
Each spring I say I'll taste it day by day
and not be surprised by summer's end.

Originally Appeared in *Northern Cardinal Review* March 16, 2013

Falling Leaves

by Carol Smallwood

swirl and when you think
you know the prevailing wind,
scurry like brown mice
or thoughts when trying
to sleep

The barn is obscured
by new development and
the house is now gone—
the barn still red, hangs
tight

Nearby stands one tree
with fallen leaves crumpled
by sea change without
having seen the sea

Each day you drive by
you feel more the stranger

Originally Appeared in *Forge* 2012

Kitchen Prophecies

by Amanda Tumminaro

Don't spare me your dry ice
to keep the kitchen mat rolled out under me -
it has a pattern of being made of glue or sap.
I want to live by the pulse
of my own heart, not someone else's.

The apron shall not become my habit,
snug around the hips, and homemade pie
at bell's notice. I'm much too bitchy for that.

I don't want pregnancies.
I want to live by my own drive
and not gossip inspired by Veronica Lodge.



Jason Dean Arnold

Jason Dean Arnold is a former elementary and high school teacher with a doctorate in Educational Leadership. As the Learning Systems Architect for the University of Florida's College of Education, he leads the development of courses and software applications that creatively enhance teaching and learning online.



Jason's poetry has appeared in online and print journals and his musical-poetry hybrid composition, "Unrecognizable Beauty," was performed at The Museum of Contemporary Art in Jacksonville in 2010. His paintings have been shown in several galleries, and he has provided artwork for Sir Kidd Jordan's album, *Palm of Soul* (2006). He has been interviewed about his artwork by *Draft Journal* (2013). He has performed his music at the University of Florida, University of North Florida, University of Georgia, University of South Carolina, Suwannee Music Festival, and numerous other venues since 1998.

Jason lives near Jacksonville with his inspiration and frequent collaborator, Anna Rossano-Arnold, and their daughter, Kendyl Leigh. He can be found online at: www.temporarytranslation.com

April Mae Berza

April Mae M. Berza is a member of Poetic Genius Society. She is a Kilapsaw fellow of Linangan sa Imahen, Retorika at Anyo. Her poems and short stories appeared in numerous publications in the US, Canada, UK, Romania, India, Japan and the Philippines. Her poems are translated in Crimean Tatar and Filipino. Some of her poems are published in *The Siren*, *Contemporary Verse 2* and *Metric Conversions* to name a few. Her poem "E-Martial Law" is broadcast in IndoPacific Radio on KPFA 94.1FM/kpfa.org. She lives in Taguig, Philippines.





Yuan Changming

Yuan Changming, an 8-time Pushcart nominee, is the most widely published poetry author who speaks Mandarin but writes English. Tutoring and co-editing Poetry Pacific with Allen Qing Yuan in Vancouver, Changming has poetry appearing in 919 literary publications across 30 countries, including Best Canadian Poetry (2009,12,14), BestNewPoemsOnline and Threepenny Review.

Carb Deliseuwe

Carb Deliseuwe is a poet who likes to eat, and write about eating. Among some of his early influences were William Carlos Williams and William Shakespeare.



Darren C. Demaree

Darren C. Demaree is the author of "As We Refer to Our Bodies" (8th House, 2013), "Temporary Champions" (Main Street Rag, 2014), and "Not For Art Nor Prayer" (8th House, 2015). He is the Managing Editor of the Best of the Net Anthology. He is currently living in Columbus, Ohio with his wife and children.

Colin Dodds

Colin Dodds grew up in Massachusetts and completed his education in New York City. His poetry has appeared in more than a hundred fifty publications, and has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize. The poet and songwriter David Berman (Silver Jews, Actual Air) said of Dodds' work: "These are very good poems. For moments I could even feel the old feelings when I read them." Dodds is also the author of several novels, including WINDFALL and The Last Bad Job, which the late Norman Mailer touted as showing "something that very few writers have; a species of inner talent that owes very little to other people." And his screenplay, Refreshment, was named a semi-finalist in the 2010 American Zoetrope Contest. Colin lives in Brooklyn, New York, with his wife Samantha. You can find more of his work at thecolindodds.com.



Karie Fugett

Karie Fugett is pursuing a BA in both English and Sociology at the University of South Alabama. She serves as Editor-in-chief of Oracle Fine Arts Review, was Poetry Editor of Oracle 2014, and is an Associate Editor at Negative Capability Press. Karie was chosen as a nonfiction finalist in the 2013 Tucson Festival of Books Literary Awards and was awarded a partial workshop fellowship from the Summer Literary Seminars Unified Literary Contest for a chapter in her memoir. Her work can be found in Oracle, The Birmingham Arts Journal, and an anthology entitled Social Issues First Hand: The Iraq War. After graduation, she plans to pursue an MFA in Creative Nonfiction and an MA in Literature and Sociology.

Mitchell Grabois

Mitchell Krockmalnik Grabois' poems and fictions have appeared in over six hundred literary magazines in the U.S. and abroad. He has been nominated several times for the Pushcart Prize. His novel, *Two-Headed Dog*, based on his work as a clinical psychologist in a state hospital, is available for Kindle and Nook, and as a print edition. He lives in Denver.

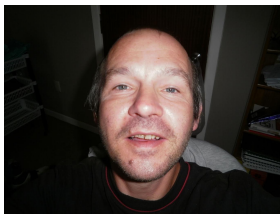


Nels Hanson

Nels Hanson has worked as a farmer, teacher and contract writer/editor. His fiction received the San Francisco Foundation's James D. Phelan Award, Pushcart Prize nominations in 2010, 12, and 2014, and has appeared in *Antioch Review*, *Black Warrior Review*, *Southeast Review* and other journals. Poems appeared in *Word Riot*, *Oklahoma Review*, *Pacific Review* and other magazines, and are in press at *Sharkpack Review Annual*, *The Straddler*, *Four Chambers Press*, *Stoneboat*, *Meat for Tea*, *Squalorly*, *Hamilton Stone Review*, *Sediments*, *Carbon Culture Review*, *Works & Days*, *Blotterature*, and *The Mad Hatter's Review*. Poems in *Outside In Literary & Travel Magazine* and *Citron Review* have been nominated for 2014 Pushcart Prizes.

Karen Paul Holmes

Karen Paul Holmes is the author of the poetry collection, *Untying the Knot* (Aldrich Press, 2014), which tells a story of loss and healing "with grace, humor, self-awareness and without a dollop of self-pity," according to Poet Thomas Lux. Karen is a freelance business writer, poet and writing teacher who founded and hosts the Side Door Poets in Atlanta and the monthly Writers' Night Out in the Blue Ridge Mountains. She received an Elizabeth George Foundation poetry grant in 2012. Publishing credits include *Poetry East*, *Atlanta Review*, *Caesura*, *POEM*, *The Sow's Ear Poetry Review*, *The Southern Poetry Anthology Vol 5: Georgia*, and the forthcoming anthology of Georgia poets from Negative Capability Press.



Sid Orange

Sid Orange has been published in *Brickplight* and *The Projects Voice*, magazines. He is recovering from drug addiction. He left school at 15. He now studies poetry privately.

Madeline Schwartz

Madeline Schwartz is graduate of Earlham College and has been previously published in *Northwind Magazine* as well as *The Crucible*. She was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois and has had a knack for writing ever since she won her 2nd grade poetry contest with her poem, "Why I hate Poetry." Ever since then she's been quite fond of raising reader's eyebrows through her writing, as well as with her self-taught snappy dance moves. With a taste for the uncomfortable and the vulgar, she continues to intrigue her readers around the world with topics ranging from her experiences of being arrested for stealing a bikini, to her studies in the Red Light District in Amsterdam. She can now be found roaming the streets of Seattle hoarding too many egg white cocktails, cursing at cars driving under the speed limit, and nature peeing alongside her handsome companion Andouille, the french bulldog.





Carol Smallwood

Carol Smallwood's most recent books include *Water, Earth, Air, Fire, and Picket Fences* (Lamar University Press, 2014) and *Writing After Retirement* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2014). Carol founds and supports humane societies.

Amanda Tumminaro

Amanda Tumminaro lives in Illinois with her family. Her poetry has appeared in *Hot Metal Bridge*, *Squawk Back*, *Wild Quarterly*, *Oddball Magazine* and *Three and half point 9*, among others. She will soon be going to school to get her degree in art.





About

Straight Forward is a labor of love with the goal to find and publish beautiful poetry that doesn't hide it's power from readers.

Founder and Managing Editor

Lindsey Lewis Smithson has her MFA from UCR's Palm Desert Low Residency MFA. She is the Managing Editor for The Coachella Review and the Founder and Managing Editor of Straight Forward Poetry. Some of her poetry has appeared on The Nervous Breakdown, This Zine Will Change Your Life, Word Riot and Every Writer's Resource: Everyday Poems. She also reads for Hobart and The Whistling Fire.



Submit

Poetry

There are no restrictions on length or form, but we are looking for poetry that is clear and honest. We will consider previously published writing as long as the earlier publication information is provided at the time of submission. Submit no more than six poems at a time.

Essays and Guest Blog Posts

In addition to poetry we will also consider guest blog entries and academic essays about poetry. There is no deadline for these submissions and accepted pieces may appear at any time.

Photography

We would like to expand the look of our journal, so please submit your best scenic photos that can be used as headers and on various pages, in addition to each issue.

Cover Photo: Tamra Carraher
About Photo: Symanntha Renn

Biography Photo: Symanntha Renn
Submit Photo: Roman Sirotin