Tanasi River Review

Vol 1. Issue 2 Fall 2026

Tanasi River Review

Volume 1, Issue 2
Fall 2026

Editor: Sam Calhoun

Cover Photo: Backwaters of the Tennessee River, Joe Wheeler State Park, AL

Copyright 2026 All Rights Reserved

Contents

foreword

Jack Bedell
Pointe Noire 9
Matt Clark
ENDINGS 10
Eric Smith
Humus 11-12
Tammy Rullo
Nostalgia 13
Cindy Bousquet Harris
One H*aiku* 14
Sharon Hoffman
Talking About Myself 15
Allan Lake
List: Noun & Verb 16
Martin Goldie
Eagle 17
Roberta Beach Jacobson
Three Tanka 18
Arvilla Fee
Do You See? 19
Fred Gerhard
The Key 20
Mark Pennington
Silhouette 21
R.G. Evans
OUTLIVING 22
Christine Jackson
Air Smells Like Rain 23-24
Erna Kelly
November Dandelions 25
Victoria NicIomhair
C Sick 26-27
Brian Cronwall
WAI'ALE'ALE 28-29
Marianne Tefft
L'ANSE AUX MEADOWS 30

Kelsey Mahaffey
Missing You at Three Mile Road 31
Dark Morning 32
Jenny Coates
step into 33
Each Year 34
Ken Hada
A Cloud 35
Tamara-Lee Brereton-Karabetsos
Midnight Blue Captivity 36-37
Patricia Watts
When the Water Reaches You 38
Laura Selenka
Hiking the Wild with a Strong Woman 39
Caroline Wellman
Gone Nearly Five Years, My Dead Father Refuses to Let Me Mourn 40
Elizabeth Kerlikowske
Breath 41
Rachel Tennant
In a previous life 42
Richard Williams
Cuckoo 43
S. Kay Murphy
The Manzanita Painter 44
Patricia Haddock
One Haiku 45
K Anand Gall
Scattering the Ash 46-47
Patricia McLean
Purple Snow 48

Contributor Bios, 49-55

foreword

It has been a hotter than usual summer here in the Tennessee River Valley of north Alabama. The heat and drought have made for a trying time in the garden these last few months, but moving into fall means less to do in the garden. Everything feels on the move. I put up two additional hummingbird feeders as our following on the red deck continues to expand. I'm adding more butterfly friendly plants to the garden as I've seen an uptick in monarchs this year. I'm hoping this swelling also translates into a little more writing time personally and creative energy.

We've got another great set of poems here in issue 2. Again, thank you all for meeting me here, and trusting me with your work. Let's get to reading...

Sam Calhoun
EIC/Founder

Jack Bedell

Pointe Noire

—a film by Pat Mire, 2026

Even the way his people
move in the kitchen,
the sounds they make
after tasting their first
cup of coffee in the morning,
the movement of trees
outside the back door glass,
the sound of truck tires
crunching over oyster shells—
it's all home to me.
The light, the music playing
somewhere in the house,
how these people show
the smallest signs of love,
the whole of it brings
a soft breeze through every
frame, just enough to rattle
the screen door of memory.

Matt Clark

ENDINGS

Even as a child they
pitter-pattered lightly round me
though I scarcely even noticed
how the concrete darkly dotted.
Ends of ballgames, ends of sermons,
ends of TV shows or movies,
ends of trips or holidays:
a vague malaise that passed away
with many dawns ahead of me.
Asleep, awake, asleep, awake.
And bobbing now amongst the billows
breathing them; all black and salty:
Ends of seasons, ends of decades,
of naivete, of mercy,
ends of things I didn't think would end,
of marriages, and lives,
and lives, and lives, and lives, and lives
like little cups poured in the ocean.
Motion-sick and treading water,
Every breath I breathe is one
I will not ever breathe again.
Inhale, exhale, inhale, exhale
as little angels blow their trumpets.

Eric Smith

Humus

We are stardust,
I heard Joni sing,
we are golden.

But what could be
more ordinary
than dust of stars,

what could be more
common than the drab
gray ruins of

this wide cosmos:
interstellar soot
and ash of suns.

How much better
to be soil, to make
a spine of loam.

How holy is
an earthen body,
dirt under nails,

the gift of birth
an inheritance
of a billion

existences,
each one gathering
bones to make bones,

each one finding
a new sustenance
in history,

each life sending
organic compounds
to its children.

The universe—
drifting regolith,
stardust in piles.

How golden then
to become humus
in our dying.

Tammy Rullo

Nostalgia

That July, beneath the lunar landing,
we shoved our way
through a labyrinth of bushes
bathed in the *tztzzz* of cicadas
and wiped spittlebug foam
in sweatshirts already soaked
with air that hung in trees
satisfied when the aluminum pan
missing a handle was
filled with rolling blueberries
and the occasional ant.
Shading my eyes
with indigo stained fingertips
I searched for astronauts
on the thin crescent,
a bite taken
in the morning sky,
pale orange like the kumquats
my teacher shared
in class that past winter.
An experience. Alien.
Sunshine slices,she said…
That moment in the bramble,
staring up it felt important
to know if somewhere,
children in the world
picking kumquats
staring up, too,
saw a blueberry.

Cindy Bousquet Harris

One Haiku

Black thread
across the moon,
stitched by geese.

Sharon Hoffman

Talking About Myself

I've told you everything day and night
my obsession with dark threading
its black vein through each poem
I'm tired now I've exhausted the subject
and I want something else something
with moss and bark on it I've got irony
I've got ambivalence but where's the well water?
the pine cones? where's the woman weaving
a basket big enough to carry a baby?

Allan Lake

List: Noun & Verb

She curses wattlebird squawk at dawn
while I smile at her and it. Stewed rhubarb
on rye toast is no Sicilian breakfast but
she tastes and adds single approving
syllable. A perfect crema on a perfect
espresso is foundation upon which this
twosome was founded, hasn't floundered.
I like light jazz in any cafe in any month,
including December when she ignores
Xmas earworms as I growl and squirm.
We walk after dark to dark part of park.
Any size moon is our honey.
Mossy rocks beneath waterfall speak
a foreign language we both understand.
Sparling water in blue glass and gratitude
for little things that refresh.She converted
to slightly green bananas. Imperiled
duckings on the canal: tenderheart counts
them too often but I love her voice.
We arrive back home annually despite
homing in opposite directions.
Clothespegs, zippers, small clamps,
hugs – small things hold us together
but lengthy list can abbreviate here
as one lists toward the other after
switching off lamps and finding
each other warm as ever.

Martin Goldie

Eagle

If you make the effort
and turn the card with good fortune;
you can watch its unknelled
rise to the unclouded sky.

And paused below the blue,
above you, in from a cliff
or beyond the lilac coast;
see an eagle soar.

Muscles and tendons taut,
eyes scan the hills that shake,
ears twitch to the merest rustle,
an echo in the breeze;

a vole, a hare,
a shifting grouse,
fattened
before the coming frosts.

In a silent scream
it pierces the emptiness,
drops to moss and stone;
like a gannet to the wave.

Roberta Beach Jacobson

Three Tanka

a fairy
hides from the raindrops
under a leaf
soon to ride on a sunbeam
into a gossamer web

I feel
the disapproving stares
as I proudly
lace up my pink skates
to twirl on the icy lake

packing up
some old books to donate
I discover
my senior high yearbook
from when we had big hair

Arvilla Fee

Do You See?

We're all dying, he says,
the dad who has made
90 trips around the sun

I nod in agreement
although I'm not ready
to let him go just yet

See the doe and fawn?
he points across the field
at velvet noses nudging grass

and it's *these* things
I'll remember—him pointing
telling me to look—*look*

see the way the old oak
bends its branches
over the pebbled creek

and there, on the wire,
how the brown hawk has his eye
on a foolish, wayward mouse

see the tumble of gray-cotton
clouds coming from the west
like wild horses, fat-bellied with rain

We're all dying, he says again,
and I shake my head, take his hand
and tell him to hush with that talk

I tell him to just show me
more of the world

Fred Gerhard

The Key
after W. S. Merwin

I began to believe the heated morning
of early autumn mouthing the words of sky
and pavement grass-hot dew sweet in my nostrils
and mouth repeating open awe gratitude for
no-thought no-time no-me who forgot my keys perhaps
atop my chifforobe or the outer pocket of a blazer
not brought arriving at my office met by brass knob
and wooden door locked in place as it was also
locked from life an oak whose slow seasonal pulse of sap
heartwood and bark was severed from expanding
in sunlight in ferns I pushed up the window to my
waiting room hoisting myself by arms remembering
the press of life and then to push a little higher a pulse
just enough to raise my hips and waist to the lintel
sit and carefully crane a leg into the wooden room
and enter where I let in that green heavy waft
of morning aroma along with me and it did not matter
that I had no key for any of this or where or how I left
the entrances I had closed so securely only yesterday

Mark Pennington

Silhouette

Swallows under pink skies
leave telephone wires
to breach warped shiplap boards
on the roof of the shed
the green felt
covered in bramble
caked in algae
flaps in wind
sagging on its water damaged year
it is a stranger
like a drifter in yellow rainslicker
and labour trousers
whose silence is punctuated by grunts
of a woodcock
beyond heathlands
nightjars churr
at sudden fall of sun
and people curate their lives for screens
in a world of polyester
ignoring the dead blue husk
of summer as it gives way
spraying the magma of the skyline
into a ferocious
jagged silhouette
and oatmeal yellow is the colour
of the church
whose neighbour is the yew tree
that will
outlive us
saving us from
our relentless
lonely
blue apartments

R.G. Evans

OUTLIVING

The tortoise wins another race
while the hare is nothing but
memory and bones.
A Greenland shark swims
the same icy waters it swam
when Shakespeare wrote
The Tempest and his famous epitaph.
Another friend dies,
older or younger, no matter.
No older now.
In lieu of flowers,
I touch his lapel in the coffin
and place a laurel wreath
upon my balding head.
A dirge that sounds like a fanfare
fills every living ear.

Christine Jackson

Air Smells Like Rain

Salt breezes over the old harbor
brush the bluff overlook,

ruffle my hair. Like the ferry,
bad weather is on its way.

The place looks sideways, collapsed
under layers of salt and time.

I grew up here and escaped,
prestigious job, high-priced condo.

My father's office was a drafty
shed across from the dock. Gone now.

He brought me here sometimes. I loved
the clanging waterfront, shouting men.

Now stacks of lobster traps encase
a row of ramshackle fishing huts.

Crooked dock pilings sit
at odd angles like rotted teeth.

Slate clouds blowing from the west
let loose with curtains of rain.

Two dripping men in yellow slickers
strain to ease a dory into harbor.
The scarred craft rolls high
over splashing swells, disappears,
bobs up for the next menace. Rowers
cling to the gunwales but stay
upright over dark currents.

Maybe it's my time to come back for good.
I tuck my scarf close around my neck.

Erna Kelly

November Dandelions

I saw you today, huddled close to the sidewalk
on a misty morning walk to work.
Your spring yellow nestled against damp
concrete, amongst brown and orange leaf
litter, made me smile but like warm evenings
and frostless mornings, you worry me.
This enveloping mid-November warmth
seduces like a dream ready to take a left turn
into nightmare.
Seasons in sync giver surer footing: November
ice, more solid than November mist; dark
November nights with brittle points of white,
more reassuring than mornings of bunting blue.
Only the grey of postponed dawns and early dusks
tell me winter is coming.

Victoria NicIomhair

C Sick

The roiling whirlpool of routine
halts – driftwood reaching ashore.
The kitchen sustains its ebb and flow,
maintaining these rituals on board,
as I silently swallow the chaos.
The word, churning –
an anchor, a heavy burden below.

A baleen-whale breaching surface.
The sounds distort, the pressure
pounds – dragging me under,
yet, I'm steadied by the rise
and fall of my pulse –
soothing swells sustain me.

Adrift

I splutter, heaving the heft of syllables.
It sullies the air – lingering,
leering at me, uninvited.
Daring me to accept it.

My first mate, my sister,
suddenly struck
speared like an angler fish.
Reality splashes our once serene seas,
the tides now
tumbling
in
turmoil.

We face the uncertain horizon, bow forward.
She readies her ship. A captain.
The C sickness smacks again,

ticking,
circling below,
it sings a warning.

A battle looming –
our white flags locked away.

Brian Cronwell

WAI'ALE'ALE

1.
Dawn greets the clarity of Mount Wai`ale`ale,
Kawaikini's reach towards the sky's blue canvas.

Mornings like these, I wish my words were
a palette of paint. After I finish papaya, yogurt,

and almonds, clouds cover the peak
like guards protecting and sheltering

cliffs. Shadows protect wrinkles,
etched deep as blockprints, from the aggressive

new sun, allowing kupuna ridges to soften
into warm voices telling swirling stories,

old tales whose wisdom lies in layers of sound,
a language where rain can mean

flood or fall, green and red, refreshing, incessant.
And now my pastels and oils nearly dry, gray edges

2.
of clouds, bird-wings, long swooping flight
into light. By afternoon, even the mountain-base

is invisible behind low, dark clouds. All day,
radio announcers have predicted showers island-wide,

though the sun, like a bodybuilder's power,
has sweated through. Now, the winds spiral

into green leaves, fronds, pink petals, birds
singing in blue notes like jazz jugglers. I know

what is behind the cloud's wall, the trail we know
to get there. If it is too wet, we will go only part way.

The sun lowers into an easy chair, a shadow sliding
behind the ridge. My lips are brushed with

3.
cookies and oranges, tea sighing toward evening,
night's spirit bodies traveling in breath, awaiting

the moon. Orchids teach crisp lessons. I write
into the shadow of my hand, my pen trusting

the words and images. In the silence
of the mountain's wisdom, dark green ridges

stark against blue wind, shifting clouds, the bee
landing on my writing hand, circling like a hen

then flying off to the chorus of clapping bamboo,
waving branches that hum this near-dusk moment.

Clouds lure green truth, revealing, simplifying,
beginning to teach the heart to see.

Marianne Tefft

L'ANSE AUX MEADOWS

Only once I met him
That boy who must have seen
Just a few more winters than me
When my father took his rest
After his days at the forge
And my mother had no more thread
For me to wind beside the fire
I loved to walk among the lindens
And hunt for the tender fruit
I knew would come with the sun
In the time of long shadows
As I topped the grassy hill
That overlooked our huts beside the cove
There I saw the boy with locks
Bound on his head like mooring lines
And skin as warm as butternuts
He must have found me strange
With my braids the color of autumn straw
And cheeks flecked with spots
That grew stronger every summer
Yet his smile opened to show
His teeth like the snowy shells
I gathered from the beach
Even when the elders met in the fire-glow
To speak of their days and explorations
In this sometimes harsh and still-new land
I never told another soul
That we had pressed our palms together
In a gesture of both greeting and parting
And I knew the world could be small and warm
If only we would allow ourselves to know it

Kelsey Mahaffey

Missing You at Three Mile Pond
for my daughter

The lake is low, clearer than years past—
a window to the mermaid
forests rooted down below.

Alone except for the minnows, Dad & I
swim out to the floating dock, gliding
over treasures that await you.

Side by side, we lay like two caught fish—
silver skins sizzling in the sun.
Back & forth until our cradle finds a rhythm,

its sound a wet toenail creaked on wood.
Eyes bobbing, we watch light lick each crest
and think, What kind of heaven

would make us give all this up?
A loon's summer song calls us back
too soon; the pearl-boned bottom

plays hide & seek with my toes.
At the landing, we bow to the bent ladder,
today a queen—her jeweled throat

glistening with webs. A moss-caked floor
keeps steps soft, quiet.
A cool breeze wakes our skin.

Backstage, a young Strawberry
Moon dresses for her debut,
that pretty baby—

ready to rise
low in the eastern sky.

Dark Morning

Deep in low morning fog, I rise—
the sun still resting
from a heavy day spent blazing.

I've been here before, this narrow space
between waking & dreaming,
no light for the shadows to touch.

I follow the stretch-marked Earth
down to the dark river,
where the beaten path calls—
stamped through time by deer.

Sleeping in its skin, the river sits
unquestioned, like a slow death
primed for arrival.

No martyr,
I've come with pockets full.

One by one, I touch each stone
before casting them
among the mossy rocks. Their cries
vine along the twisted roots of cypress
before crossing to the other side.

Washed up, half a catfish head
steams in its stench,
and when I start to think this
a punishment for daring to kiss
the river's mouth,
an old wind begins to sigh—

a great, grey ghost
passing through the moon-
dark morning.

Jenny Coates

Each Year

Fall tells me of life in the balance
with its crisp slanted daylight and sharp
teasing gusts saying drink time now
or forever
hold your peace.

It is a step into the window
ahead of darkness, the brief meeting
of arrival and departure.

Through its panes, I see the bird
before it was an egg,
the sweeping cedar before seeded
in my yard, my own future
tumbling into my daughter's as
it crosses
paths with my mother
and her mother.

I wonder how we happened together
into this dream, this exploding
reality which seems to
paint us as we try
to paint it.

Only faintly do I remember waking
into its whisper, the call
from silence still
always just beneath
the rustle of
leaves.

step into

the thick ether of silence
where time stops
and your bones merge with
moss

coating tree roots
and ancient fragments
of earth
on the forest floor.

names are useless, for
nothing
owns you more
than anything else
—your presence both
a response to the happening

and the happening itself.

you float oddly
uninhabited,
at last free from war, loss,
the ache of
caring.

you dissolved here.

are you the hum of insects or
the tingling breath
of eternity
at your back?

it is not a question.

the answer is always
yes.

Ken Hada

A Cloud

The way imagination dulls
with the rising sun,
everything looks the same
until a cloud parts
the dim horizon.

I notice mud stuck
to my bare feet
and smile like a doll
in a box on a shelf

waiting.

Tamara-Lee Brereton-Karabetsos

Midnight Blue Captivity

The sea looks free at midnight.

That's the trick of it.

Beneath the blue-black surface,
currents pull in directions
the moon never reveals.

The old boat drifts quietly,
its ropes creaking
like tired thoughts.

Far from shore,
far from the glow of windows,
I should feel liberated.

Instead,
I find myself carrying
every unfinished conversation,
every regret,
every road not taken.

The water keeps them all.

They drift beside me
like shadows beneath the hull.

A gull cries somewhere in the darkness.

No answer comes back.

The horizon has vanished.

Sea and sky
have become the same deep color,

and I can no longer tell
where one ends
and the other begins.

The midnight blue wraps itself
around everything—

around the boat,

around the silence,

around me.

Not all cages
are made of walls.

Some are made of memory.

Some are made of longing.

Some are vast enough
to feel like freedom

until you realize

you have been drifting in circles

all along.

Patricia Watts

When the Water Reaches You

The farmer's belt bows beneath the ample overflow
of his belly. As if anything can be contained.
A lone pole in his soggy cornfield remembers
the Flood of 1964 at his gut, '84 his gullet.

Above them all, 1993's high water mark
hovers like a cloud. Still the tales of inundation
flow. His old Ford pick-up floating away,
stalks of silken-haired corn submerged,

the Jersey cow—three days' milk in her teets—atop
the pitched roof of the barn.
It's as if I can remember
flooding into my mother's world,

ready for the ripe globe of her love.
And that day years later.
She at the kitchen sink, river of water
running over a mess of fresh-picked green beans.

How she turned from her task, pressed her damp
fingers into the dry button of my elevator heart.
Upstairs we sat on the bank of the bed
my unopened suitcase an island between.

Downstairs water gushed out of the basin, spread
its warm self over countertops, cascaded to the floor,
and green beans swam like fish over a dam.

When the water reaches you, you remember its mark.

Laura K. Selenka

Hiking the Wild with a Strong Woman

At each unlucky pile of roadkill
her Catholic shows—
she crosses her heart—
and keeping the moment buoyant
I say how nice to bless
the meal the buzzards are about to partake,
and she laughs as she does at all my jokes,
and I want to see the world like she does
loving without hierarchy
loving beyond the fur and the feather
seeing the bone, be it hollow or marrowed
always seeing a pearl in my mouth
instead of ink.

Later, as we amble next to a river
I smell, then see, a bloated buck
tangled, laid out on display
on brush gathered in shallow water
but since she hasn't noticed
and I can't bear to wound her
I ask her to tell me
what color the sky was
when we met.

Caroline Wellman

Gone Nearly Five Years, My Dead Father Refuses to Let Me Mourn

For there is sunsift and brooksong,
earth mold and squirrel-quarrel,
and the old knowledge that comes
of walking the labyrinth of trees
at the top of the hill

There is rainsmell and dewdamp,
turtle-scrabble from the rocks,
minksplash and pondlight
that lets you see them all
swimming just under the surface

There is deersnuffle rising
from the trees beside you, the rampant
blooms, the infinite tiny spicules
of Queen Anne's Lace, and tree-root buckle up-
ending the mudsilted path

And there is child-balance, handheld
along the old stone wall,
toddler-waddle, toddler-babble
& the woodpecker's call, over & over,

all making the welkin ring.

Elizabeth Kerlikowske

Breath

If your words are damp on my cheek
and even, we are already intimates.
If your breath smells like the splash
of a trout or spring water, like moss,
that's perfect. If your skin applies its
summer solstice to my January body,
then we are even. If your sigh paddles
down my neck, we will likely meet
at the rapids. If there are syllables,
they are smooth from decades of talk,
all jaggedness pummeled into submission,
no, eased into grace. Depends on the day.

Rachel Tennant

In a previous life

these old weather-weary oaks
spoke to me.
All else was silent.

Now from a hard-boiled blue sky
a cool-green light filters
through a haze of photosynthesis
condensing beneath the canopy.
I am underwater floating in the moist
woody-breath of tree exhalations.

My hearing is a hydrophone delving
deeper, tuning in, amplifying each sound.
A plaintiff pew-pew of a bullfinch
whitethroat's soft churr-churr and
chiff chiff chiff chiff chiff chiff-chaff
chiff chiff chiff chiff chiff chiff-chaff.

The contented mumble of bees
in creamy honeysuckle blossom.
Xylem thunder of water from root to tip
the final soft release of a fern frond
unfurling, freeing the tight weight
of winter-past from my shoulders.

I don't mind
that the trees don't
speak to me anymore.

Richard Williams

Cuckoo

Sometimes the missing is not in the not-seeing
but in the off-key reverberance of silence
no two-note call echoing around the Mendip Hills

Sometimes the silence is a crescendo
and the missing is in the flight path connections
that end at the edge of old maps

My childhood seems so long away now

S. Kay Murphy

The Manzanita Painter

We hike at dawn in manzanita heaven,
Up where clouds will briefly linger
Tonight as the storm moves through.

We'll have made our retreat by then
But these trees—
Lithe arms stretched like ballerinas
Toward the Universe—
Are fearless.

Some forest Spirit of long ago
Has blessed them with her broad brush,
Her bottomless bucket of rustic-red,
Slathering the branches
With a thick coat
That oozed like lava
From twig to trunk,
Enfolding them in a crimson carapace,
Burnished and luminescent now
As the trees catch
The sun's first rays.

Patricia Haddock

One Haiku

the sea on the air
gulls screeching—
qigong practice

K Anand Gall

Scattering the Ash

In a tallgrass ravine
Wabaunsee shale beneath our feet
under a lone catalpa tree
surrounded by cedars
we stamp down grass
stack the wood
stake the torches

We ring the fire
with riverbed stone
carry them one by one
on the names of our dead

We are thirteen
one to light the fire
two to bring the logs
one to coax the drum
two to sing the songs
one to pour the water
all to offer prayers

The winter calls from the ridge
and we sing back beloved
names ride echoes
through the ravine
chased by metallic clang

one to sound a makeshift gong
aluminum tire rim

I reach into crematorium bag
sharp shards of bone
grey grit of flesh
your ashes in my hand
I shake memories like dice
they rustle in my fist

crumble in my palm

What are the odds
that I am holding a hand
that stole into mine
a brisk November Saturday?
Is this sternum once
pressed against mine?

so many fires
I have held you near
now a bed of coals
flickering breath
banking wood and flame

I open my fist
what remains is more
than a constellation of ash
you sparkle and stick to my skin

I let go
ash to ash
twirl and spin
love a strand of DNA
curling in smoke
to the stars above

Patty McLean

Purple Snow

If I could, by stirring ashes,
will smoke to rise, make logs whole
who would sit next to me watching
flames revert to pine? Would I revive
a certain winter my camera caught the snow
dressed in purple light?

Would we carry our skates over our shoulders?
Who kneels by the pond? Who tests the ice?
Who is the first to glide, turn and
race back? Who lifts the barbed
wire for me to slip under?

Every winter the dead grass
tall as wheat along the fence line,
the geese gone south, nights drop
a canopy of stars, little pricks
of sky ice, every breath a plume of fog.

Are these small gifts of memory
almost true or whispers and wind?
Fragments made whole
like dreams told on waking
like burned wood, like ashes stirred.

The way time melts pond ice
leaves me stranded with a trick
of tainted film and scattered air.

Contributor Bios

Jack B. Bedell is Professor of English and Coordinator of Creative Writing at Southeastern Louisiana University where he also edits Louisiana Literature and directs the Louisiana Literature Press. Jack's work has appeared in The Shore, Stone Circle, Psaltery & Lyre, trampset, Some Words and other journals. His work has also been selected for inclusion in Best Microfiction and Best Spiritual Literature. His latest collection is Fight Nights (Blue Horse Press, 2025). He served as Louisiana Poet Laureate 2017-2019.

Tamara-Lee Brereton-Karabetsos (Tamaraleewrites) is a versatile Australian-Greek creative writer and mental health advocate living in Greece. Her acclaimed short stories, poetry, and essays bridge science and human vulnerability. An Editorial Choice selection for Instant Noodles, IHRAM, and Rock Salt Journal, she has also appeared in Borderless Journal. Find her updates on Substack and Instagram @tamaraleewrites.

Matt Clark is a lawyer who lives in Vicksburg, Mississippi with his wife, two sons, one dog, and two cats.

Jenny Coates lives in New York City with her 13 year dog Demeter. When not practicing tax and corporate law, she writes poetry and sings with two exciting choirs in NYC. Her work has been selected for yearly pairings of poems with local artists and display on storefronts, and included in anthologies and collections including Meanderings and People Time published by Diversion Press, Just a Little More Time and Grief Dialogues, the Book, published by the Grief Dialogues Project, Cascade: the Washington Poets Association Journal, Vol. II, the Patterson Literary Review, and Amethyst and Paper & Spine, two online poetry magazines, among others.

Brian Cronwall is a retired English professor from Kaua`i Community College in Hawai`i. His poetry has been awarded an Oscar Wilde Poetry Prize, been nominated for a Pushcart Prize, and appeared in numerous journals and anthologies internationally, including Bamboo Ridge, Hawai`i Pacific Review, Poetry Ireland Review, Ekphrastic Review, Carolina Quarterly, Tears in the Fence, Upstairs at Duroc, Chiron Review, California Quarterly, Awakenings Review, and others.

R.G. Evans is the author of Overtipping the Ferryman, The Holy Both, and Imagine Sisyphus Happy. His latest albums of original songs, Haunted, is available on most streaming platforms. FB: RG Evans IG: rgevansmusic

Arvilla Fee lives in Dayton, Ohio with her husband, children, and two dogs. She teaches for Clark State College, is the lead poetry editor for *October Hill Magazine*, and has been published in over 130 magazines. Her four poetry books,*The Human Side*, *This is Life*, *Mosaic: A Million Little Pieces*, and *The Stars Above Us* are available on Amazon. Arvilla's life advice: Never travel without snacks. Website: https://soulpoetry7.com/

K Anand Gall (they/them) lives in the Appalachian Piedmont Forests ecoregion of Georgia. K's writing appeared recently in Feral, matchbook, Gargoyle, Gutter, and The Linden Review. They are a 2026 Best of the Net nominee and 2023 Academy of American Poets Poetry Prize winner. Find them @kanandgall or at kanandgall.com.

Fred Gerhard is a poet and writer who has a book, *Drifting to Hello* (Khotso), and a chapbook *Lilacs Still Bloom in Ashburnham* (Local Gems) out. His work can be found in *Black Moon Magazine, BlazeVOX, Blueline Magazine, Heavy Feather Review* and others. He writes from a small town in rural New England in the company of his partner, their ducks, and a tortoise named Twyla. Check out his virtual reading room at FredGerhard.com .

Martin Goldie has been widely published in the UK and abroad. His poem ‘First Ascent’ was placed in the Mountaineering Scotland Mountain Writing Competition in 2021. ‘Awful Confusion’ was shortlisted for the Janet Coats Memorial prize in 2023. ’Moss Dresit Black Hooses’ was Highly Commended in James McCash Scots Language Poetry Competition in 2024. He has 3 collections of poetry. His latest Collection 'The Clydefisher' was published in 2026.

Ken Hada writes from the Crosstimbers section of rural Oklahoma. His latest collection is Nexus (Turning Plow Press, 2026). More information is available at kenhada.org

Patricia Haddock is a California-based writer. My haiku and senryu have appeared in international journals, including Echidna Tracks #17, Wales Summer 2026, and Leaf. More of my poems and other publications can be found on my website: www.phaddock.com

Cindy Bousquet Harris is a poet, the editor of Spirit Fire Review, and a licensed marriage and family therapist. Her poetry can be found in Clamor, California Quarterly, MacQueen’s Quinterly, Unlost Journal, and in several anthologies. Her full-length collection of poems, Rain Shadow, is forthcoming from Kelsay Books. Cindy lives in Southern California with her husband and family—and loves to take pictures of clouds. Her website: rainpoet.com

Sharon Hoffmann is a 76-year-old writer based in Atlantic Beach, Florida. Publications include The Hooghly Review, New York Quarterly, Beloit Poetry Journal, Alice Walker: Critical Perspectives (Harvard University Press), Sho Poetry Journal, and others. Awards include fellowships from Atlantic Center for the Arts and Florida’s Division of Cultural Affairs, three Pushcart nominations, and a nomination for Best Spiritual Literature.

Roberta Beach Jacobson was born in Worcester, MA. She has lived in OH, IL, IA, and Europe (Germany and Greece). Through her blended family, she is the mother of two, grandmother of four.

Christine Jackson is retired from her day job, professor of literature and creative writing at a South Florida university. She continues to clock in on a life-long night shift writing poetry. Her work appears in an array of online journals, including *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Verse-Virtual*, *South Florida Poetry Journal*, *New Verse News,* and *Anti Heroin Chic.*

Erna Kelly, lives in a small Wisconsin city centered on the confluence of two rivers. Hiker, cross-country-skier, and in earlier years a backpacker, she has poems appearing in various journals including *The Aurorean, Bramble, Ariel Anthology, Red Cedar Review, Portage Magazine*. In 2020 she was the co-editor of the *Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets Calendar*.

Elizabeth Kerlikowske is the author of four full-length books and eleven chapbooks. Her poems appear in many journals, most recently New Verse News, The MacGuffin, New World Writing, and Cloudbank. She was awarded the Kalamazoo Community Medal for the Arts in 2017. She teaches Ekphrastic Writing at the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts and volunteers at an alternative high school.

Allan Lake, originally from Canada, has lived in Saskatchewan, Cape Breton Island, Ibiza, Tasmania, Sicily and Melbourne. His latest chapbook of poems, "My Photos of Sicily", was published by Ginninderra Press, forthcoming (2026) major collection is being published by Walleah Press. Such journals as The Hong Kong Review, StylusLit, Tokyo Poetry Journal, The Fieldstone, New Philosopher and The Aus. Fabians Review have published him.

Kelsey D. Mahaffey is a Nashville poet who keeps half her heart in New Orleans. Her work can be seen in: Deep South Magazine, Pinch, Arkansas Review, SWING, Rat's Ass Review, Cumberland River Review, and Eunoia Review, among others. Her debut chapbook, No Fault of Water, was a semi-finalist for the New Women's Voices competition and is available now from Finishing Line Press. Find more at www.kelseydmahaffey.com.

Patricia J. McLean writes poetry, fiction and non-fiction. Her poetry and short stories have appeared in various publications including Locust Shells, Chaos Section, and Windfall. She has published three novels with co-author, Duane Poncy: Bartlett House, Ghosts of Saint Pierre, and Degrees of Freedom.She enjoys collaborating with visual artists and performing spoken word. You can find her at memory.dream.substack.organd poncy-mclean.net.

S. Kay Murphy is a poet, memoirist, avid hiker, and animal advocate who holds a master's degree in literature. She is the author of two memoirs and the *Dragon Singer* series for middle-grade readers. In the tradition of Wordsworth, she often composes poems while walking with her dog along woodland trails.

Victoria NicIomhair is a bilingual poet writing in English and Gaelic, based in the Highlands of Scotland. Inspired by her family and the landscape of her home, her poetry explores themes of memory, heritage, and place. Her work has been featured in various anthologies celebrating contemporary Scottish voices.

Mark G. Pennington has published three collections of poetry, one chapbook which finished runner-up in the Cerasus chapbook competition, and one novel. He has been nominated twice for the Pushcart Prize.

Tammy Rullo is a teacher, writer, poet, writing consultant, and a Western Pennsylvania Writing Project fellow currently living in Pittsburgh.

Laura K. Selenka is an emerging Wisconsin poet, having reconnected with poetry in her midlife. Recent pieces can be found in Trailer Park Quarterly and Hobo Camp Review. She volunteers with the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets, and enjoys participating in local poetry readings. Connect with her at Laura K. Selenka--Poet on Facebook.

Eric C. Smith is a professor and writer living in Denver, Colorado. He is a MFA student at the Sewanee School of Letters, concentrating in nonfiction.

Rachel Tennant is a landscape architect, poet and artist. Her work is an exploration of landscape and people –the tentative relationship of people to the land through ownership, use and displacement; the cultural heritage of landscape through language, place and

memories; and our perceptions of beauty, nature and wildness. She aims to distil a physical and emotional response to a location that captures and renders the 'spirit of a place'.

Marianne Tefft daylights as a Montessori teacher in Tkaronto (Toronto), Canada. Her poems and short stories have appeared online, in print and on air on six continents. Her work has been nominated for Best of the Net and the Pushcart Prize. Her third collection, Rainbow Country: Tropical Love Songs, is slated to appear in May 2027.

Patricia Watts grew up near the Mississippi River, loving its lure, fearing its floods. She teaches ESL and writes from Urbana, Illinois. You can find her work in Amethyst Review, Quartet Journal, and The Coop: A Poetry Cooperative

Caroline Wellman holds degrees in creative writing and American literature from the University of Arkansas. Her poetry chapbook Presences was published by Parallel Press in 2014. Recent poems have appeared in Hive Poetry Journal and the anthology Unhoused, with work forthcoming in table//Feast. She lives on the ancestral lands of the Sac and Fox near the Mississippi River in Illinois, and she currently works for the US Postal Service. You can read more at https://www.carolinewellman.com. You can also find me on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/carolinerwellman).

Richard Williams lives in Portsmouth in the UK. He has had around 150 poems appear in print and online publications over the years. A first collection, Landings, was published by Dempsey & Windle in 2018. He is currently co-editior of the poetry page in Portsmouth FC's match-day programme. Occaisonally blogs at https://richardwilliamspoetry.substack.com

featuring work from…

Jack Bedell
Matt Clark
Eric Smith
Tammy Rullo
Cindy Bousquet
Sharon Hoffman
Allan Lake
Martin Goldie
Roberta Beach Jacobson
Arvilla Fee
Fred Gerhard
Mark Pennington
R.G. Evans
Christine Jackson
Erma Kelly
Victoria NicIomhair
Brian Cronwall
Marianne Teft
Kelsey Mahaffey
Jenny Coates
Ken Hada
Tamara-Lee Brereton-Karabetsos
Patricia Watts
Laura Selenka
Caroline Wellman
Elizabeth Kerlikowske
Rachel Tennant
Richard Williams
S. Kay Murphy
Patricia Haddock
K Anand Gall
Patricia McLean