

# *Lingerpost*

A literary journal

Issue 1

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*From the Editor:*

First of all, thank you for supporting this literary endeavor. Introductions can be awkward—we're asked to make connections quickly in artificial settings, but at least here we can take our time, fall in love and obsession.

Like a new poem I have many ideas and hopes for this journal, especially this first issue. Yet, I also want to promote a free haven for inspiring, surprising poetry, for new poets we've yet to meet or just met, and for established poets with whom we've always wanted to create a connection. To give back to those who've believed in us and published us.

David Foster Wallace said: "We all suffer alone in the real world; true empathy's impossible. But if a piece of fiction can allow us imaginatively to identify with a character's pain, we might then also more easily conceive of others identifying with our own. This is nourishing, redemptive; we become less alone inside. It might just be that simple."

I want to believe it is that simple. So here are a few hidden, beautiful and mysterious signposts, lingerposts, some hearts in jars to enjoy Hannibal Lector style.

As for the future, we've decided to read year around, and we've decided to open this journal to fiction, nonfiction, reviews and more, so bring us your hearts, lungs, guts and bone fragments and join the cannery. We'd love to read your work. We'd love to consume it.

Special thanks and love to our many wonderful contributors.

Enjoy,

Kara Dorris  
Editor-in-Chief

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**All artwork created by Brett Thompson**

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**SHEILA BLACK**

*Fifty*

You may come to a place where your  
life thins out, almost unrecognizable, this  
yard of cracked ice, and the muffled sounds  
of the doves in the bush; they will fly  
out at you like darkness, a chilling  
inside, the layers that seal you from what  
you know. You pick up the nuts from the  
ground and turn them in your hands. At  
a remove you call them lovely, little cradles  
sealed around the withered meat. And yet  
the waters still flood, a seasonal occurrence.  
And today in the ankle-deep, strange  
birds alight as if apparating from the air,  
the long travelers—the swallows, the  
finches, the golden warblers.

*Bringing You Back*

The story must end somewhere. On the corner of Rue D'Orsel and Barbes. The comptoir of gray marble. At the machine with the pin-balls gliding the long red tunnels. The story must end with a period. Full stop. *Fin* embossed on pulped wood. With the tree in our airshaft—which should not have grown so high and desperate—those twig clusters too much like hands. The story must end in the safe deposit of memory—a scent of lemon oil and the doors sliding. A scent of verti-vert and the pollarded limes along the boulevards. And though I don't believe in talisman, prediction of future, even simple physics suggests there is no true end to this--I will breathe you in and again until the ratchet of my lungs pulls. Salt sweat and salt shell. Hold your earth in my fingers—wet mulch of any spring, any place you might mark.

*Icon*

(for George Ypsilanti)

Your roommate we never saw,  
instead holing ourselves in your bedroom, a gray  
newsprint light of airshafts,

the icon of Jerome on the far wall,  
gilded ebony weight, stories of  
your grandmother injecting herself daily

with insulin, the vein in her  
worn thigh, still strong beneath her  
support-hose, nylons held up

with safety pins, your tenderness for  
her arrangements, the luxury of  
blood on a finger, pool darkening:

scarlet, ebony, scarlet. White nights  
beside you, the ache of a love  
that was not sexual but more

brotherly, or so you said, finger tracing  
the line of my throat, the hollow  
of the voice box, swooping goblet

of the clavicle. On the phone, the junkie  
whisper, "Are you okay?" so much  
freight in three simple words.

The polaroids you took of me, facing  
the mirror beside your closet, a  
peering-in you recognized. *Tell me*

*only your name / my name.* So often I  
was your grandmother again, fleeing  
from Izmir, the exodus from Turkey—

a hundred years, a buried massacre,  
the ships of Pireaus, a smell of dun oysters,  
sea-weed and barnacle, clinging.

In the groceries of Pittsburgh, the diners  
under the bridges, flavors diluted,  
and the astonishing distillation of

sorrow, a taste that flooded the back of  
our throats, each time we shot up.  
White nights and fans and sussurus

of traffic—cargo human and otherwise,  
an epic of multiple displacements,  
the lovers who lived in the mirror

or around the next corner. Your roommate  
treading lightly in from his night-  
waiter job to surprise me one night

in the bathroom tub, cream  
princess dress pulled down over my shoulders,  
a mottle of bruises, his brief

pity so thoroughly mingled with disgust;  
the melon slant of light snapping away  
as he shut the door and the dull

thud of music from your room—  
Lou Reed singing about his high  
school football coach, the

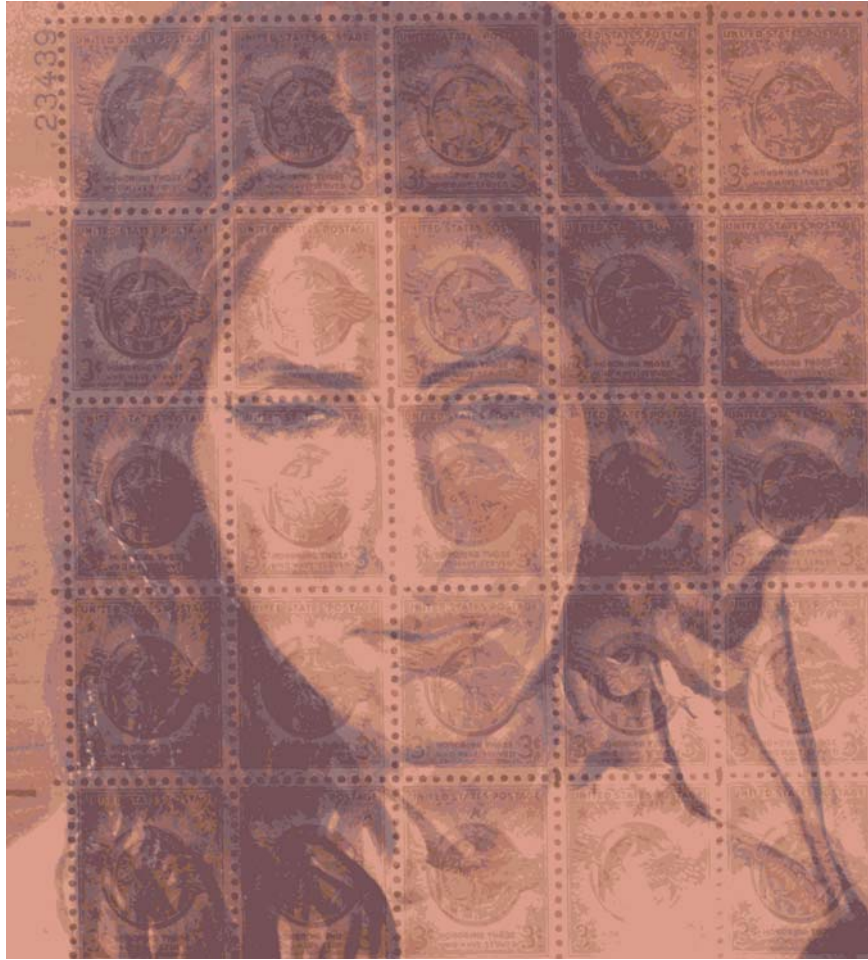
battering of bodies as if there was  
something to break through or into,  
you, putting your fingers to

my wrist, a delicacy that undid me.



**BRETT THOMPSON**

*All of the Compartments*



**MARY STONE**

*Light Rail*

We don't need to breathe question marks  
into the phone, to allow each other to hear  
air on the other side; I know it's windier here.

Wind brushes the phone with Kansas-cupped palms.  
On your side, trains push coal to your front door,  
where your hand grazes boxcars.

You wonder how trains handle city to city,  
if trees offer applause to graffiti painted on the side,  
who else reaches out to touch steel movement.

Coolness in your hands reminds you of how greased engines  
stutter in the dark, wake to night-dews,  
oiling over tarnished guide-rails, the smell of rust  
sweet honeysuckle.

Trains have to cross me  
to get to you. I bring pillowcases of soybeans  
to sprinkle over changing grassed maps,  
help fill suitcases with my own hands, with words  
I stop saying when nights frost.

Over here, I stop calling and winds clip car hoods, drag me  
onto open porches. I have lost things, I usually say,  
to textures of windburn; they are coughed into  
spread fingers and black trash bags and drift  
towards landfills on cluttered barges.

**JOHN CHAVEZ**

*Eve of the Body's Invention*

**1**

Beyond the fly-specked meadow, the boy is a canvas  
of landfill-lit bottles. Limbs chemical-sweet  
& cankered. His hands, weeds  
littered with alder fruit.

He dreads the day of his mother's slowing breath,  
the disrepair & a deuce of tiffany lamps.

His eyes, a single-block color woodcut  
& hazel butterflies. The coming storm of light.

Once I bodied his wreckage,  
but today the mountains are dividing. Matte green  
glaze. Each notion of the world  
pullulating.

What to write today but  
your tattooed chest & breasts are pressed glass.  
I walk toward the window  
& the cold wind pulls through me.

What to think today but Baghdad  
upholstered red, the budding dark beautiful. The exterior,  
*effusing into autumn.*

What to feel today  
but all those bullets, all those holes, nothing  
but fear etched into flecks of desert sand.

What to do today but reread  
a filing cabinet of court papers revising my life,  
open the window for anxiety  
to drown.

When I finally write: Some dying  
mining town. No. Try again. The west mesa looks  
like a mastectomy in summer.

No, *try again*. How we frame  
the tongue's weeping, aestheticize the topography  
of our torsos.

Love: foreplay is so whelming  
& what wretched ecstasy to feel the light  
of love inside you? No, *try again*.

How we body La Mesa's rooster  
& donkeymelody. How we become a box of wheels,  
a parched leaf veined with air,  
a parade of linen.

That's better. Nothing but signification.  
Signification & our last spring forever expiring.

*What Comes to Me in the Form of Past\**

While waiting for the 7:00 a.m. train, I listened  
to swallows hovering in the updraft,  
the paper whirl of moments torn from diaries,

and wandered from rhapsody to Reverdy to Saginaw Bay,  
and the weather was perfect and cold, and I was packing  
cigarettes and checking the station clock,

where I'd hoped you'd find me, missing my train.  
A blur now, you dared me to show you what rapture meant,  
so I opened *Le chant des morts*, and lost myself

to the voice, the sun honeysuckled in the evening,  
the air's felicity in the wings' repair, the density  
and velocity of the swallow's flight over the railyard.

A living artifact, I kept your photograph in my pocket,  
curling in the warmth of my wool coat—a reminder  
of Paris, its broken fountains, cement benches,

your room's crisp white linens and rose windows,  
from where we watched torn leaves ease into mud.  
How absent is the weight of memories gathering,

the snow on the platform and glowing in the orange  
station lights? Years, the photograph threads my pocket  
to bear the memory—August and Paris waiting,

Saginaw, gone, now. September changed everything:  
the downpour of dawn in the withering city,  
the streets emptied, the black words thickened

in the white pages, the prolonged pause of a still life  
that seemingly never ended, or never might, did. Even so,  
I've left, and living here, I still don't know

where the saga, the circus, or both, will take me,

these flits of life caught on the gray of a thinning twig,  
the dross wired into the body. Surely, it's hell

to dream like this: carnevale, crescents of ice on the bay,  
the clock in the station, apparitions, lightless petals  
in the pegbox of night and so warm your body bending

into mine. And how much can the mind hold, anyway,  
if nothing but the moment I had this morning when I felt  
your absence just as keenly as I did your presence?

\* Co-authored with the poet Crystal Gibbins

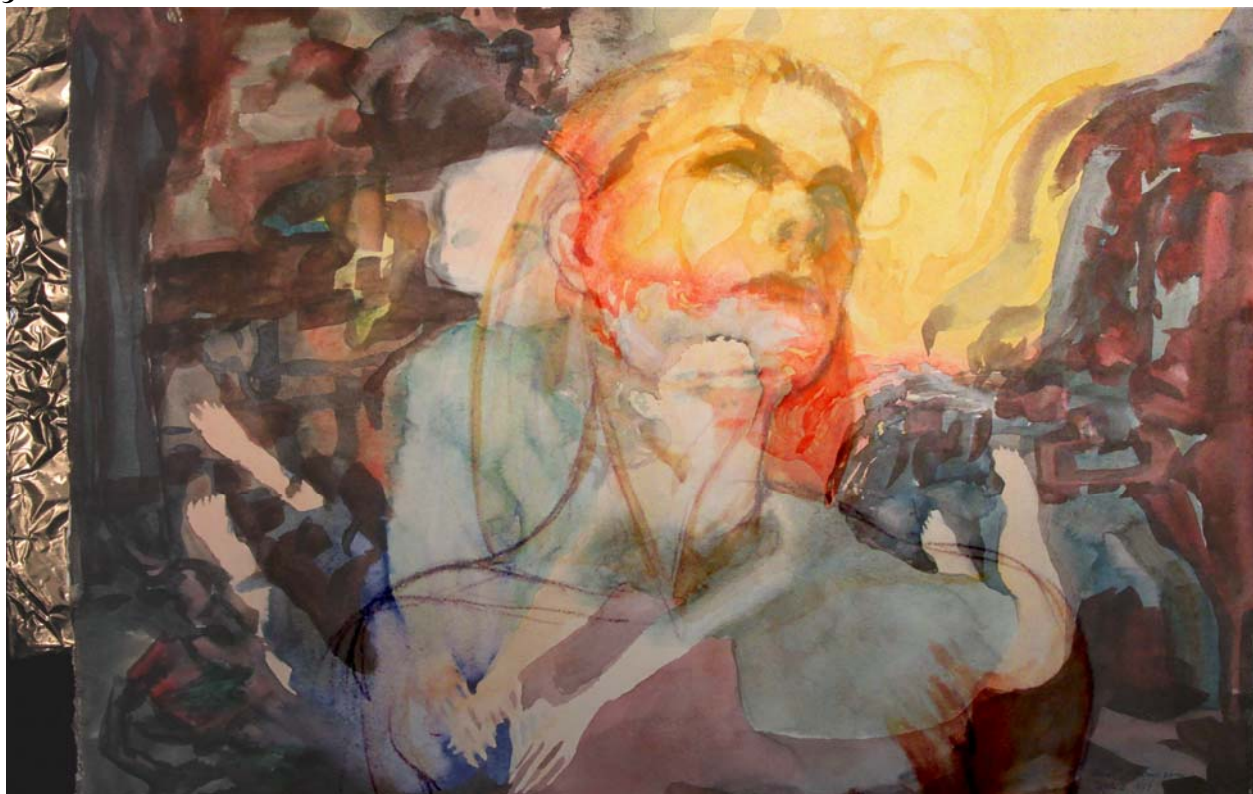
**AMY SCHREIBMAN WALTER**

33

The digits appear to be spooning.  
Their curves round, shapely,  
they lean gently into the other,  
settled into their fixed position.  
The straight lines of the past have disappeared,  
replaced by rather voluptuous creatures.  
All is rounded now.  
At 33, your globular body resembles its digits.  
Palindromia, it has been called.  
You are the same each way you turn.



**BRETT THOMPSON**  
*Just Around the Corner*



**BRETT THOMPSON**

*Rachel's Calm*



**SUSAN BRIANTE**

*excerpts from THROUGH*

The transformer hummed inside the branches of the tree.  
Fish in a net of veins, biting the net.  
Fire turns the branches to veins of flame.  
Birds trill in a series of notes like pulses through the wire.  
In light the white morning curtain smolders.

It is impossible to determine where tree begins  
and transformer ends.

I hear branches every time I pick up the phone  
the crackling of wind through its leaves each time a webpage opens.

Where once I saw wood I see a candle snuffed, a cold wire.  
Now every chair is the hiss of water thrown over a campfire.

the tree, like the Zen master sometimes, finds itself in the midst  
of a spontaneous and mysterious awakening

a quickening, a turning within,  
from the Italian *volta* to *voltage*

the tree can feel the transformer buzzing  
before the mind names the feeling

each tree holds its own bird, engine of mocking  
bird the honeysuckle vine which surrounds the tree

what surround the transformer? a culture  
bird, will structure kill both transformer and tree?

the correspondent called it pancaking (cf. Haiti)  
but the question remains: into what will we stand up?

**AUSTIN TREMBLAY**

*Alimony*

I will often stare at my fingers  
through a glass, because they are big  
that way, and wonder how it is  
I manage to fuck the simplest thing up.

I will sometimes call my mother  
and, while listening to her cuss so softly  
it could be prayer, remember her picking  
stray cotton from the shoulders of roads.

She could pick every seed out  
without disturbing the cloud.

Though I tried often, I could never  
remove the seeds before dismantling

the fluff, the dirty-white nest. But then,  
I have never been picked clean either.

*Piano Replies Please*

I talked to the jukebox all night. Where  
are you from? Who do you listen to? All  
the essentials. It's not the first time

neon has attracted me. I don't think  
the jukebox likes me like I like it.  
I'm often clumsy with instruments.

I once, for instance, dropped a guitar  
while dancing, and I doubt I'll be forgiven  
for the safe sex lecture I gave the saxophone.

I can't speak to the piano. I've tried.  
All that space, the pedals, one hand  
doesn't know what the other's saying.

Last night, I complained to the jukebox  
about this problem. I was tired. I tried  
to be sweet. I said *play me one of those sad songs*

*everybody's always talking about. One*  
that makes me feel like I've asked if I can sit  
down and the piano replies *please*.



**BRETT THOMPSON**

*Stunt*





**ADAM CRITTENDEN**

*Echoes of "The Dead"*

She didn't mean that he wasn't sweet or romantic— Just not Michael. He lay in white sheets crying; with her back to him, curled, she lay unmoving. He tried not to be jealous of a dead man as snow paralyzed the Dublin night, but he only remembered his wife's words: "I think he died for me."

"He gives us Dublin as it presumably is. He does not descend to farce... He gives us things as they are, not only for Dublin, but for every city. ...these stories could be retold of any town."<sup>1</sup>

She asks me if I saw that movie, *The Notebook*. "I just have to accept the fact that I will never have that," she says. The that is Noah— a character. My ear aches from the cool metal phone. I'm not listening, just hearing words and crying while I trace the ice-chapped window's blurry edge with my fingertips.

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<sup>1</sup> Ezra Pound regarding James Joyce

**TANAYA WINDER**

*Softly: How to Evaporate*

water into memory? It begins with  
curtains annoyed by their own lace –

white against white,  
the snow outside,  
and you. In the kitchen

washing dishes,  
we don't want to talk  
about morning or day, the weeks

to come, the cruelty,  
the plainness of it –

waking, suffering, and sleep  
scathe across your back like misspent dishes,

so simple we forget  
meals eaten, the ones  
broken over

time. A temporary bowl of hands  
submerges carefully; like this –  
water slips through the crevices

the same fleetingness  
of a hummingbird in winter, slow and awkward,  
unable to bear its own weight.

## NATALIE DAY

### *Open House*

I thought this was a welcome  
mat. I thought this was a lake  
no one else had found before.  
The water, I thought, might  
be a potion. But there are fish  
here with neon barb  
pinched inside their cheeks  
and there are poles  
impaled on the soft bottom  
like fenceposts- a boundary  
of steel. So it seems nobody  
can slap down their flag  
and wait, anymore. The  
anthem is dead in our lungs.

I thought this was a  
destination, but the tattler's  
signs are strewn across the sand  
like flowers. So they beat me  
to it, again. I thought we were

finally there, a place that seemed  
a little bit magic, and a little bit safe

*Migratory or On the Road Again*

The safest way in  
is asleep in the bottom  
of a boat, from a country

like a small town, wrapped  
tight in wool.

The hot-black night

snared in the river's  
throat, a crocus bloomed  
in my mouth. So I am

capable of knowing  
what I am, creature,

threat, spitting into the  
moon's open eye.  
I am honey-wild patient.

Illegal. The air is filthy,  
stifled and  
no porch to welcome it.

Stranded, I cannot pass  
through an image  
or bad weather.

*Advice from a Nomad*

Twice now  
he warned me  
about the consequences

of reading each name as  
its own map, dousing the candle  
that beckons the lost home,  
spending all my patience  
on wax matches

and twice now  
I mistook him  
for a liar.

**BRETT THOMPSON**

*Peopled Water*



**ELIZABETH BRASHER**

*The Ordinary*

She must have fallen from the tree in the night.

I stood over the hunched mess of feathers, watching for her wings to shudder with breath.

An eight-year-old girl was starved to death. She weighed fifteen pounds when her mother brought her into the ER.

I searched for injury, abnormality, for the elongated limp neck.

An infant should weigh about fifteen pounds around the age of six months.

She looked as though she were asleep, nested in the green grass overgrowth.

I thought of an Emily Dickinson poem.

*She lay as if at play.*

The news anchor noted that while the mother had previously been investigated for abuse and neglect, she had not been charged.

I watched for several days while it rained outside, hoping

she would be gone in the morning.

I couldn't touch the cold of her body, the hollow only half-solid, so I put on gloves and wrapped her in a plastic bag from Target.

I threw her into the dumpster while you were playing inside.

Do I still have a pulse of feeling? I hesitate to touch my neck.

*Dear Father,*

You were not my mother's first  
lover. You were not her first choice  
of men. She loved a boy  
whose mother was in Mexico.  
She loved him across the hard  
red seats of his pickup truck, as he pronounced every  
letter in her name. She wouldn't let you  
call her that name,  
so you called her Tisha, except  
when I was little, I thought it was  
Tissue, like bath tissue, so my imaginary  
husband called me Toilet Paper.



**CARMEN GIMENEZ SMITH**

*Mother, Mother*

my mother called snow white *blanca nieves*.  
white snows. white girl, I thought. rain tick marks

the window. *tick*, it says. *here is your time passing. tick tick.*  
*you grow old*, it tells my mother. late for graveyard shift.

she tells of the mother. not a true one she offers  
like a poor substitute. sweet 'n' lo packet of mothers.

she tells of apples that tempt because of the knot  
of longing in blanca's stomach. this story is about hungry.

she tells the part about blanca's collapse but the tick  
mark is too urgent. to the denny's she must go. *more later*

*or make the rest*, she says. *I think you know what happens.*  
yes. fading. a glass death. a kiss. the legacy mirror.

*How Owl Girl decided to emigrate and the consequence of her first attempt*

the scabbard dragging behind her,  
the occasional release from the old her.

goodbye fear and hiding and pages.  
it was living inside the pages.

her time is adrift and she's livid and imperceptible.  
ignored until she becomes imperceptible.

an occasional boyfriend leaves behind the imprint  
that gives away a cognition of paternal imprint.

face to face, she's a sack of bones. she had perspective.  
on the theme of emergence and for this perspective,

she would pay dearly. having lived out of sense  
to come back to earth, adopt some common sense.

the dénouement device is a fix to slake her thirst.  
it was an adrenalin cannon shot out right out of it.

*The Soft Landing*

Harmony is one treasure she found.  
Once she thought no one heard  
her body break open like an egg,  
her body hatching fantasy yet, so  
changed, she glimmered like fool's  
gold and everyone's seeing it. All  
of her sleep's mutterings are clouds  
that straddle her shoulder frame,  
her beneficent skull. If held in too long,  
secrets ring familiar in a family's quiet.  
it's made right and impossible. the ghost  
returns to us: blessed course to the district  
of pillow, the borough of thorn.  
So afraid of owing you, I only tell you.

## Contributor Biographies:

Sheila Black is the author of *House of Bone* (CW Press, 2007) and *Love/Iraq* (CW Press, 2009), and two chapbooks, *How to be a Maquiladora* (Main Street Rag., 2007), and *Continental Drift* with painter Michele Marcoux (Patriothall Gallery, Edinburgh, UK, 2010). Her poems have appeared in *Conte*, *Diode*, *Blackbird*, *Willow Springs*, *Puerto del Sol*, and *Poet Lore*, among others. She lives in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Elizabeth Brasher is completing her MFA in creative writing at NMSU where she teaches composition and is an associate editor for *Puerto del Sol*. She is also an assistant editor for *Bone Bouquet* and writes for *Feminist Review*. She holds an MA in literature and lives in Las Cruces with her husband and daughter.

Susan Briante is the author of *Pioneers in the Study of Motion* (Ahsahta Press, 2007). Her poetry, essays and translations have appeared in *Ploughshares*, *Court Green*, *Mandorla* and *Redivider*. She is an assistant professor of aesthetic studies at the University of Texas at Dallas.

John Chávez, a PhD candidate in poetry at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, holds an MFA from New Mexico State University. He is the author of the chapbook *Heterotopia*, published by Noemi Press, and co-author of the chapbook *I,NE: Iterations of the Junco*, published by Small Fires Press. His poems have appeared in *Conduit*, *Portland Review*, *Puerto del Sol*, *The Laurel Review*, *Diode*, *Copper Nickel*, and the *Notre Dame Review* among others.

Adam Crittenden is currently working on an M.F.A at New Mexico State University and editing for *Puerto Del Sol* and *Apostrophe Books*. His work can be found at *Burner Magazine*, *The Dead Mule School of Southern Literature*, and *Symie: A Journal of Sport and Literature*. Lastly, he enjoys eating avocados.

Natalie Day is originally from Canada. She now resides in the desert.

Crystal S. Gibbins holds an MFA from Minnesota State University-Moorhead. Currently, she is pursuing her PhD in English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where she also serves on the editorial staff for *Prairie Schooner*. Her work has appeared or will appear in *The Meadowland Review*, *Canary*, *dislocate*, and *Free Verse*.

Carmen Giménez Smith is an assistant professor of creative writing at New Mexico State University, and publisher for Noemi Press as well as editor-in-chief of *Puerto del Sol*. Her work has most recently appeared in *jubilat*, *Ploughshares*, *Colorado Review* and *A Public Space and New American Writing*. Her collection of poetry, *Odalisque in Pieces*, was published by the University of Arizona Press in 2009. A memoir called *Bring Down the Little Birds* was published by University of Arizona Press in 2010.

Amy Schreibman Walter was born in Florida in 1976. She now lives in London, where, among other pursuits, she studies at the Faber and Faber Poetry Academy. She has had poems published in several online and in-print literary magazines and is working on her first pamphlet.

Mary Stone received her BA in English Literature from Missouri Western State University. She is a current MFA student at the University of Kansas. Her work has appeared, or is forthcoming in *Amoskeag*, *Pennsylvania Literary Review*, *Touchstone*, and *FutureCycle Poetry*, among others. She lives in Lawrence, Kansas.

Brett Thompson is currently hiding in Rifle, Colorado. He is hoping to emerge a new person in a new and better world painting the new surroundings which will help snowball positive change. In the mean time - literally - mean time -he wonders how prices got so high within 3.5 yrs. of grad school confinement, and why have interest rates dropped but student loan interest rates cannot be refinanced for lower rates??? On a positive note, this transformation involves drawing and writing with a little painting on the side. People still supply him with all the drama, irony, lust, logic, and divine inspiration to continue art making.

Austin Tremblay was born and raised in North Carolina. He is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Houston. Before graduate school, he worked as an actor and playwright. Austin's writing has been featured in *Smartish Pace*, *Gulf Coast*, *cream city*

*review*, *Bateau*, and other journals. When not writing, he enjoys baseball and the guitar.

Tanaya Winder was a finalist in the 2009 Joy Harjo Poetry Competition and a winner of the A Room Of Her Own Foundation's Spring 2010 Orlando Prize in poetry. Her work appears in *Cutthroat* magazine, *Yellow Medicine Review*, *Adobe Walls*, and *Barrier Islands Review*. She co-edited a collection of interviews forthcoming from Wesleyan University Press in fall 2011. She currently lives and works in Boulder, CO.