

CSPS
Poetry Letter
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Edited by Maja
Trochimczyk

Poetry Letter

California State Poetry Society



In Appreciation of Margaret Saine, Previous Poetry Letter Editor



After 18 years of service to CSPS as *California Quarterly* Editor, Secretary/Historian and *Poetry Letter* Editor, Margaret Saine decided to step down and focus on her own poetry. As her replacement as *Poetry Letter* Editor and CSPS President, I am especially grateful that she introduced me to the CSPS. Margaret's contributions to our Society are immeasurable. To me, she is the embodiment of extensive, expert knowledge of all the arts (poetry, literature, painting, sculpture, and architecture), as well as languages, and history. I admire her deep, unyielding love of poetry in as many languages as can be brought together for the cause of peace and coexistence without violence, without wars – to seek beauty, inspiration and appreciation of the world as is, in all its darkness and light, in all its riches. She writes and publishes poetry in English, her native German, as well as French, Italian and Spanish. She translates an international

group of poets, giving them a space to share their insights. As a photographer, she depicts the world in motion – blurry, misty, ambiguous, yet enticing with mysterious patterns. Her erudite, thoughtful and passionate poems reflect her keen attention to detail, ability to see the large picture, find wisdom in nature and art. I am glad my Moonrise Press published Margaret's two poetry books, *Lit Angels* (2016) and *Garden of the Earth: According to Nature* (2018). I am profoundly grateful for all the gifts Margaret brought to my life – richness of vivid language, sharp focus on quality of words expressing a thought or impression clearly and succinctly.

John F. Harrell, CSPS Past President and Editor, current Treasurer and Webmaster, writes: "My years with Margaret spanned three decades or so, from Board meetings and poetry readings at Jerry Palley's place in Irvine all the way through to our last drive up to your place in Sunland for a Board meeting. I never have to guess at what she thinks. I like the fact that she can be brutally honest, but that the quality of the art and the writing is always her first concern. During the eight years I was responsible for publishing the *CQ*, she came up to Yorba Linda from her home in Orange as often as she could--she was frequently not just out of town, but out of the country—to help assemble the quarterly packages for mailing. She volunteered to help because she thought doing the work alone would be 'depressing' for me. I enjoyed sharing the time with her, as our conversations often ranged over a wide landscape of interests. I didn't discuss rocket science with her, but almost everything else—and even when we had to agree to disagree. She is a longtime and lovely friend, truly a *Grand Dame* of poesy and art." **Alice Pero**, CSPS Monthly Contest Chair writes: "I know Margaret as a wonderful poet, facile in several languages. Her translations have always come as fresh breezes through a rather stagnant world and we want to stop to listen to her poems. I feel as though she has taken the time to savor the love of words, while others rush through, unhearing and unseeing. Sorry to see her talents go from CSPS, just as I am getting more involved with the society."

Ute Margaret Saine was born in Germany. After a Yale Ph.D. in French and Spanish, she taught languages, literature, and culture in California and Arizona, while writing and translating poetry in five languages. Since 1991, she has been a board member of the CSPS and a *CQ* editor since 1994. She also edited the CSPS *Poetry Letter* and served formerly as the CSPS Annual Contest Chair. Her poems have appeared in many journals here and abroad. She has published four books of poetry in English – *Bodyscapes*, *Words of Art*, *Lit Angels* and *Gardens of the Earth* – as well as six haiku chapbooks in five languages. Three books of poems and a Postwar childhood memoir appeared in Germany – *Das Flüchtige bleibt* (*The Ephemeral Remains*), *Das Weite suchen* (*A Yen to Travel*), *Atem der Stille* (*The Breath of Silence*), and *Das ungeschickte Kind* (*Awkward Child*). *Searching for Bridges* is a bilingual English-Arabic collection edited by poet and critic Nizar Sartawi.

CSPS Presents its Monthly Poetry Contest Winners for 2020

The year 2020 was eventful for California State Poetry Society, perhaps because “change” was in the air. After suffering the loss of long-time Monthly Contest Chair, Keith Van Vliet, who died in 2019. We started the year with Richard Modiano, Vice President for Communications serving as Monthly Contests Chair and Judge. In November 2019, Alice Pero was approved as the new Monthly Contests Chair and Judge and she adjudicated the contests for the rest of the year 2019 and all of 2020. The winning poems were posted in installment on our new blog, CaliforniaStatePoetrySociety.com and are now gathered all together.

January 2020.

1. Jane Stuart - "Our Winter Garden"
2. Jane Stuart - "Early on a Winter Morning"
3. David Anderson - "The Apple Spy"

February 2020.

1. Pamela Shea - "Rosebuds and Lovers"
2. Jane Stuart - "Dancing Into Love Again"

March 2020. Dorothy Skiles - "The Coyote's Howl"

April 2020. No Winners

May 2020. Marlene Hitt - "Enlightenment"

June 2020. Joyce Futa - "Kumquat Marmalade"

July 2020. Jackie Chou - "Cerulean"

August 2020. Joan Gerstein - "Self-Portrait as Clark Gable One Liner"

September 2020. Louise Moises - "Empty Chairs"

October 2020. No Winners

November 2020. Charlene Langfur - "Meandering"

December 2020. Ambika Talwar - "Losses into Treasures"

[January 2020: "Our Winter Garden" by Jane Stuart](#)

Our Winter Garden

Our winter garden greens under dark snow
that fell upon the terrace in our sleep--
the moon's shadows glisten and glow,
the wind makes footprints that are deep
beside the garden wall that is so tall
it almost reaches the winter sky--
and now, the lightest morning snowflakes fall
from greyest clouds stuck to the sky.
Snow falls where flowers bloomed and young trees grew
up, up, to blossom on a summer day.
The garden was a green place where birds flew
in flocks to find their nests; time blew away
these months then winter raindrops fell with snow
over dark earth under the full moon's glow.

[March 2020: Dorothy Skiles's "The Coyote's Howl"](#)

The Coyote's Howl

January's draught
portent of a scorching
summer to come...

The San Gabriel Mountains
and Verdugo Woodland's
are but a tinder box-
terrain covered with
chaparral, a dry dense
stubborn thicket -
fuel for wildfires.

[February 2020: Pamela Shea's "Rosebuds and Lovers"](#)

Rosebuds and Lovers

The bud of a rose,
Layer on layer of petals,
Held tightly, perfectly,
Unfolding when the time has come,
Bursts open and a flower is born,
Releasing sweet perfume.

The heart of a lover,
Layer on layer of emotions,
Trembling, hidden, waiting,
When touched by the beloved,
Bursts open and a poem is born;
Sweet music fills the air.

[May 2020: Marlene Hitt's "Enlightenment"](#)

Enlightenment

A dust devil blew in
from my childhood.
Dead leaves whirled up
from summer's hot soil
while a jay feather flew birdless
swirling into midsummer sky
up to the puffs of white cloud
as on the day when I was ten,
when I ran into the vortex
trying to find a secret
in the center of the whirlwind

On summer nights beneath
the full moon's light, coyote's
coat the color of nickel.
Her features gaunt, gait less
confident, yet her sense
of smell remains keen.

From dusk to dawn
she traverses the ridges,
the low-lying hillsides
hunting rodents and rabbits.
She often treks into
neighborhoods, climbing
fences as swift as a thief.
The coyote is not too proud
to forage for plums,
berries or pears.

This fall as the Santa Ana
winds rage, I'll listen
for the coyote's howl,
wondering if she'll
make it through
the threat of famine,
the peril of wildfires,
sure, to come!

only to rush away
with sand in my eye.
Why does that thrill return
as the wind whirls in?
And why, now, do I run away?



"San Gabriels and Sycamores" by Karen Winters, 18x23,
oil on linen, karenwinters.com

June 2020: Joyce Futa – "Kumquat Marmalade"

Kumquat Marmalade

My sister and I slice a huge mound of kumquats for
marmalade, a tedious, time-consuming task; each tiny
fruit has seeds we must tease out with the tip of a knife.
One could go nuts doing this alone, but we pass the time
chatting about friends, sons, the awful daily news.
Twelve jars of orange jellies with little bright haloes of
rind will be our reward.

We start to talk about movies. Suddenly we are caught in
the familiar senior struggle to remember someone's
name, this time an actress we have loved in many roles.
We catalog facts we know about her – she played an
artist in that movie with whatshisname ... and X's sister
in a film set in San Francisco – was she nominated for
that? Finally, my sister says she gives up and rinses her
hands to google. When she returns with the name, we
slap our numbskulls.

slippery seeds of memory
we leave drama behind
and enter the age of comedy

July 2020: Jackie Chou – "Cerulean"

Cerulean

My mother clad me in pink,
and later in my teens, lavender.
But the blue was always there,
underneath the pastel colors.
It was in my genes,
blue with its melancholia
and myriad synonyms,
azure and cerulean.
My mood is a spectrum
of different shades of blue,
including royal and navy.
The sky and the sea are blue,
with every variation in between,
turquoise and indigo.
Blue is behind my strawberry-colored smile.

CaliforniaStatePoetrySociety.com – our blog
CaliforniaStatePoetrySociety.org – our website
P.O. Box 4288, Sunland CA 91041 –our address

[August 2020: Joan Gerstein – “Self-Portrait as Clark Gable One-Liner”](#)

Self-Portrait as Clark Gable One-Liner

I'm large ears, not a rouge elephant
in the room. I'm no monkey,
giraffe, donkey. I'm fame, drama
money, talent, often remote, dark.
I'm a good-looking ladies' man.
I'm a decades-long romantic,
rugged legend, a dream-boat.
I'm not meatloaf, filet of flounder,
fish gravy. I'm an early inning
grounder, grinning leading male.
I'm army air force, not a feathered
fledging dragon. I'm beguiling
to a fault, make traffic halt.
I'm flair like the Golden Gate.
Friendlier than a diva, louder
than a lady. I'm a brash laugh.
I'm five fingers, a foot, a fathom.
I'm a photo album minus a mother.
I'm oft married, alpha male, father
that denied infant daughter
for the reason that frankly,
my dear, I don't give a damn.

[November 2020: Charlene Langfur – “Meandering”](#)

Meandering

Today all of what's around is seeds and scraps and petals
picked up along the way, ideas about love opening up again
bigger than the giant fan palms, where the mountain
edges touch the sky near where I live,
the fat white clouds hanging over it in the blue sky
where the full moon rises at night and the sun
lights up what we know of where we are
and seeds are everywhere on the sand and scrub grass
when the cold settles into the desert at night.
Today I know the love stays inside me now
and carries forward in time, the same as any
abundance no matter how little or rare,
my dog leaping in the wild grass, unflappable,
my friend smiling after her cancer treatments,
her bald head bobbing in the sun. I think today
getting older is only the other side of something else,
everything redeemed as always, dreams unobscured,
and the flowers, you can see for yourself, petals
absolutely luminous

[September 2020: Louise Moises – “Empty Chairs”](#)

Empty Chairs

I search for him in all the chairs,
but every day, he isn't there:
the yellow dining chair bereft
of shoulders broad, his chest, his neck,
the wooden stool where once he sat
perched upon the kitchen matt;
he was there to prep a dish:
peel a vegetable, bone a fish,
and on the deck the slatted chair
its arms all stiff with vacant air;
no more a conversation shared;
I can not hear the voice that cared.
The garden bench beside the wall,
where once he read in spring and fall,
the cat now sleeps upon his place,
I can not see his smiling face,
the office chair that does not roll
that creaked the floor and took its toll
of difficult financial times,
checks to write and poems to rhyme,
the recliner sits in upright space
no feet to rest, no back to brace.
The bedroom chair without his clothes ...
My mind in logic surely knows,
he'll not return to take a seat,
but my heart with longing prays to meet,
the man that sat in all those chairs
could he once more find comfort there.

[December 2020:
Ambika Talwar – “Losses into Treasures”](#)

Losses Into Treasures

My father - dear glorious one.
How do you fare so far away? I am
readying for another visit to
a distant home. I miss you as mad
earth who contains all our stories.

Your absence so palpable – even trees
bend to gaze in my eyes; in these presences
I gather riches of your wise brown eyes
I wrote of wild moons ago.

Some riches are borne of loss – all losses
become treasures – not yours not now
maybe tomorrow. I cannot shed pain
of my lostness of you

continued on the next page

[December – Ambika Talwar, continued](#)

Wild orange blue bird-like flower courses
through my domain – walls wither.

There are no excuses for not speaking
tongues of love. Moments of eternal stories
gather moss strung in my heart's eyes.
I must speak of them now. To you.

Tales from my little days – as teen years
pulled me tall. My injured hand,
shy smile, falling star – maker of tea.
I could never say them aloud; power of silence
of shutting had me captured with tales
of she's too much.

Find out now – how too much I am
I love too much to come close...
you with the grand trine in the skies
that mirrors mine – Stargazers have told me
But I could tear apart the sky looking
for you – to tell a story a day for 100 years.

Your palms bruised curved ridges
disappear into a lost horizon –
I search – my shadow walks behind me...
Your voice remembers.

First published in *The World Literature Blog*. January 18,
2020; <https://koshyav.blogspot.com/2020/01/seven-poems-by-ambika-talwar-startling.html>?



Alice Pero, the judge of the Monthly Poetry Contests, joined the CSPA Board as a Director at Large in May 2019 and was elected the 10th Poet Laureate of Sunland Tujunga in April 2020. She has published poetry in many magazines and anthologies, including *Nimrod*, *National Poetry Review*, *River Oak Review*, *Poet Lore*, *The Alembic*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *The Distillery*, *Fox Cry Review*, *The Griffin*, *G.W. Review*, and others. Her book of poetry, *Thawed Stars*, was praised by Kenneth Koch as having “clarity and surprises.” She also published a chapbook *Sunland Park Poems*, written as a dialogue with Elsa Frausto. Pero teaches poetry and is a member of California Poets in the Schools. She is also the founder of Moonday, a reading series that has been on-going in the Los Angeles area for upwards of sixteen years. Ms Pero has created dialogue poems with more than twenty poets. She also established the performing group, Windsong Players Chamber Ensemble and performs with them as a flutist.

Book Review by Mari Werner: *An Alphabet of Birds* by Toti O'Brien

Los Angeles: Moonrise Press, October 2020; <http://www.moonrisepress.com/alphabet-of-birds.html>
ISBN 978-1-945938-41-2, paperback, 184 pp, \$15.00; ISBN 978-1-945938-42-9, ebook in ePub, \$10.00

In mindfulness meditation, the object of the practice is to be fully present in the moment. In Toti O'Brien's prose collection, *An Alphabet of Birds*, the stories are told by a narrator who is keenly in the moment and acutely perceptive—so much so that the reading experience can become like a meditation. This is a prose collection but it's difficult to nail down whether they're stories, essays, or prose poems, fiction or creative non-fiction. And it isn't necessary. These are literary pieces told through a rare and distinctive voice that slips effortlessly from the real to the surreal, and from the outer to the inner world. The details that bring a story to life and bring a universe into the mind of the reader are poured so naturally into the pages that it's easy to forget one is reading.

The title of the piece, *Five Senses*, may be something of a representation of the character of the book—except that it turns out not to be limited to five. This particular piece is an intriguing exploration of the perceptions, influences, and decisions that shape or foreshadow the vectors of life from an early age. It begins with the inner story of a small child quenching her thirst for sense, experience, and understanding under the wise tutelage of her grandparents, or out on her own roaming orchards and wild ravines.

Her explorations and the expansion of her world come to life in full detail, but at the same time other senses are invoked in the reader, such as developing a love for the grandfather or feeling the apprehensive chill of another side of the child's life. "Back in town with her parents, in winter, she'll start school. When spring and the swallows will come she will return South, Grandma promises. Right. She begins waiting for spring without further ado."

The words are beautifully written without calling attention to themselves. They conjure another realm without particular regard for the confines of time and the standard definitions of how things work in the 'real' world. Most of the pieces are not linear, they ride conceptually in what flows like gliding down a river on a raft.

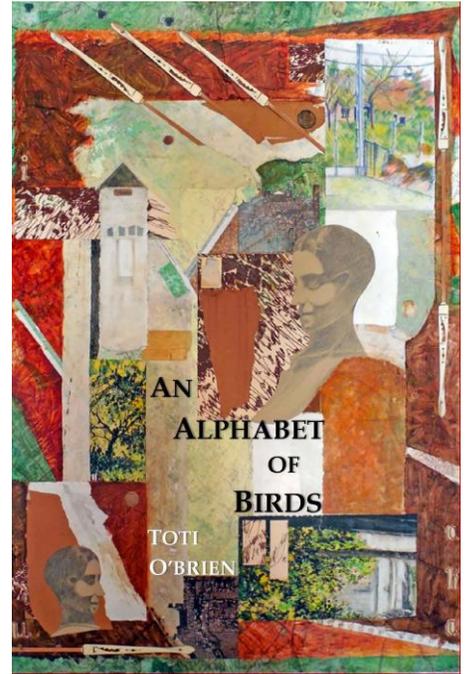
O'Brien paints both the outer and the inner landscape in vivid detail. In *Sunset Walk*, the reason for the deep grieving taking place in the inner world of the walker is never revealed, but the grief is interwoven as the outer world plays in full color texture and motion. "And I long for every house, for every life I haven't lived, feeling both its sweet promise and its irreparable loss."

Parts of the book are humorous in a wry matter-of-fact way devoid of any self-conscious effort to make you laugh. For example, the squirrel contemplating an orange in *Creation*: "Judging by the gravity of its frown it must be debating large matters, either the original sin (the type of fruit makes no difference, all round juicy things work, temptation-wise) or else global issues such as climate change, inequality, resource shortage..." Or in *Darwin* where the reader enters a place in which everyone knows a bird doesn't fly. "It can't for a crucial reason, a deal-breaker. Such a feat would take lots of oxygen, and birds talk too much. In fact, they never stop. That is why fish fly, dear, fish only. Because they shut up." One may be left wondering if other assumptions about the structures of reality have evaporated too.

The pieces, even the humorous ones, are philosophical, but never by way of bringing messages tied up in packages. The narrating voice is deeply inquisitive and observant, not just of physical perceptions and the inner emotional realm, but also of the world at large, the universe, the perennial questions related to being a human on Earth. It raises questions, opens doors, explores ideas—such as this from the first-person piece, *September*, as the narrator listens to Beethoven's Choral Fantasy: "Quite a simple message. *Sursum corda*, be brave, never give up. Isn't it what Beethoven always intends? He did. The man is long dead. But his notes are resounding against my bones, striking my membranes. They vibrate through my throat, echo within my ears. The composer is dead, but he's not...I know it is common sense. Still, how common is that? What outlives the body, where, why?"

Though this work visits many different emotions and situations, overall, it provides a collection of clear windows into colors, tastes, textures and music of life that are there to be experienced—if you're paying attention. This is gifted writing that deserves a broad readership and critical attention.

Mari Werner
Claremont, CA



Book Review by Joe DeCenzo: *Letters under Rock* by Rinne and Thach

Letters under Rock: Performance Poetry by Cindy Rinne and Bory Thach. ISBN 978-1-334529-0-8, paperback, 86x pages. \$16.95+S&H. Elyssar Press, 2019. <https://elyssarpress.com/books/letters-under-rock/>

Letters Under Rock: A Spiritual Emergence Through the Arousal of the Heart

Within the pages of the earth toned cover lives a work to calm an anxious mind and awaken a slumbering spirit. Cindy Rinne and Bory Thach have done more than compose a book of ethereal poetry. They are the parents of a performance art experience conceived from the realms of both eastern and western philosophies and faceted with tradition and lore from an array of cultures. It gestated for a number of months as the artists corresponded in letters which allowed their characters of the orphaned Wanderer and Nomad to channel through them, using them for the vessel as their charismata evolved.

Rather than leap at the reader like a bolting deer, the cover draws you in with its matte finish and placid hues of tan, clary sage and flecks of coral. Coiled koi fish, often seen as a symbol of harmony, perseverance and enduring love swim peacefully above the title. And the screened image of stacked rocks does more than imply the obvious balance we all seek in life. To the yoga master, it's a meditation practice of quieting the mind while finding patience and intensifying focus. To the Buddhist, it could be a form of worship or request for good luck. While to the hiker/traveler, rock cairns mark rugged trails to aid those seeking a way down from the mountain or out of the forest or most usually a way home.

The introductions by the authors are meaningful in that they afford a glint of insight to the process that produced the work. We are invited to engage our palates for we will taste the flavors of many lands. We're shown images of the Wanderer and Nomad to enhance visual recognition. We're also shown a photo of the 12' x 2' tapestry sewn by Cindy Rinne which features prominently in the physical presentation of the work. It's a blend of patterns, colors and textures harmoniously combined to create a collage of their feelings perhaps mementos gathered from their travels. Let the journey begin.

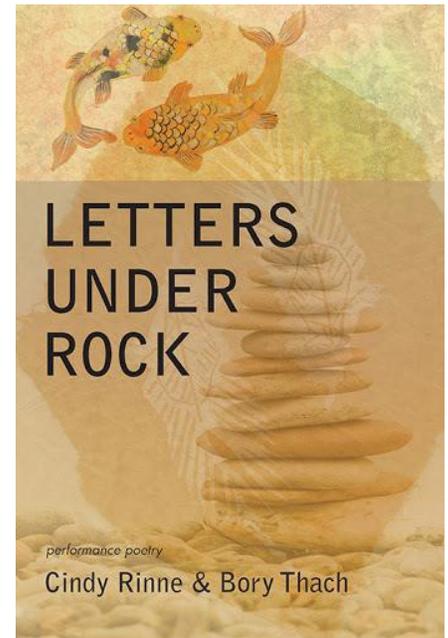
The poetry resides in a series of letters written to each other. The anguish of their separation steadily grows through their endless nights of longing. We get the sense many of the letters were composed late into the night when daylight steals stars from the sky, signs of life begin to stir and another day of searching for their love's desire begins. It is clear the lovers are one spirit, of one mindset tragically separated by untold miles able only to touch each other dimensionally on a cosmic plane free from physical obstacles. Allusions to the precepts of Taoism, Buddhism, Hinduism and ancient mythology are woven through the pages like silver threads in an heirloom quilt.

The correspondence of the Wanderer and Nomad takes us back to the era when thoughts and feelings were imbued on the material page. When somehow the expression flowed down the arm, past the wrist, through the hands and fingers then impregnated the parchment through the pen. The intent of the sender was tangible with its energy transferred to the receiver once in their grasp. Days of anticipation and feelings of expectancy are palpable as the Nomad and Wanderer await a beneficent courier to deliver the envelope often showing signs of wear from its miles of travel. The stamps and postmarks of different lands, territories and boundaries the message had to cross before its arrival are depicted in the patchwork garments the characters wear and exquisitely evident in the imagery written, "Maple leaves fall in the windblown spring of autumn. Birth and annihilation lead me to your footsteps." pg.49

The book is divided in sections, each depicting a different phase in the developmental growth of their awareness of each other, their ancestral roots and their dependence on nature. In their respective worlds everything is sentient. The birds that surround them; the insects that pervade; the rocks, trees, stars and moon all breathe their existence. Tenderness and affection are the fundamental essence of their writing. Despite the seclusion and loneliness separation brings, they orbit around the gravitational power of their dreams, "With the cosmos falling apart, you alone make it beautiful... For your face has become a psalm of memory, never to be forgotten." pg. 35 Each section is sealed with a wax stamp of the author's emblem, one a heron, the other a dragon to insure privacy and hand of origin.

The Wanderer who is constantly seeking and the Nomad who never settles long in one place convey their sorrows ironically in their depictions of the wonders of nature. Yes, a feeling of melancholy permeates, but they are so connected spiritually there is an underscoring of hope and promise of deliverance as they suffer their isolation, endure their demise and are revived through their souls' transmigration.

To comprehend this story beyond the printed text, this author encourages you to take a companion of similar perception and read your copy outdoors by firelight during a meteor shower far away from urban distractions that would interrupt the true sounds of Prithvi Mata. For silence isn't the absence of sound but the acquisition of peace. Take turns reading the passages out loud to each other and to the rocks and leaves. Then listen for their comments. *Letters Under Rock* reminds us that dreams are eternally ours, but the earth and its trappings are only ours to borrow.



Joe DeCenzo, Tujunga, CA

Adrienne Lawson-Pope Reviews *Blue and the Blues*, Edited by Carole Boyce

Blue & The Blues



ANTHOLOGY
BY PISCES PUBLISHING

Blue and the Blues, Anthology by Pisces Publishing, ed. Carole Boyce (San Diego, 2021), xii + 56 pp. paperback, color cover, illustrations. \$12. Limited ed. 100 copies.

What a Concept! Blue would be more than pleased about this tribute to her essence. This unique anthology brings poets together to glorify the color blue, to write about the emotion of feeling blue and to pay tribute to the genre of blues music. Hues, moods and music; this collection is as varied as poetry can be with a broad spectrum of interpretations, both literal and figurative on each section. The book demonstrates the range and complexity of the creative mind. The author of *More Than A Color* makes clear to the reader that the actual pigment is viewed as a safety net; a source of comfort and strength, available as needed. In *Blue*, she says “there’s a shade for every person” and lists some blue colors and emphasizes in the final lines: “I live blue. I speak blue. It’s a language you know. I love blue.”

Other poets speak of blue literally. In *The Edge*, Georgia Washington writes: “Place emphasis on this gallant shore, where the blue tide rolls in and the waves roar...a place where sand and water meet.” Eileen Carole is also literal in *Ruby’s Blue* when she says: “I am made to feel small in the middle of God’s great big, blue ocean.”

Indigo Woman, the longest poem in the book, (four pages) by James Evert Jones speaks of a woman: ‘Baby...you make my world indigo. I need to know what you got to make me so blue it’s black, like cool ocean black, like sixties R&B black’ ...and later blue becomes a verb! “till we get our blue on, till we blue our world away, till we blue ourselves out, till I blue your mind.” The intensity and the color repetition tell you this man is in love! Blues enthusiast, J. Todd Hawkins is historical in his telling of Jelly Roll Morton in *Jelly’s Travels...* “He would call them joys because they were the farthest thing from the blues he could think of. They were the contra blues, the anti blues, the un blues.” We also get factual information about a famous blues song standard, *Down Home Blues* in the Sharon Smith-Knight poem tribute to songwriters DC and Selby Miner: “From dusk to dawn they sing the joy and sadness of our cultural core.”

If you want to know sadness to its depth, then walk in Loretta Diane Walker’s shoes in *Variation On Cancer Blues*. This book is magnificent in its scope in just 56 pages, but there is poetic sustenance on every page. A section of Haikus on the three facets of blue was an interesting footnote to the longer poems. Even in those three short lines; meaning was conveyed. Loretta Diane Walker poignantly stated: “BB King’s voice died/His blues are ghosts on vinyl/Lucille keeps singing”—You can just picture the sunset when Mellonease Wharton writes: “Arizona skies/Rust orange tinted with blue hues/I stand in wonder” —Eileen Carole uses capitalization for visual emphasis when she says: “Blue as deep as sea/Fathoms beyond one can guess/Imagine BLUE blue” Each poet was given space for a short bio to credit their other writing undertakings.

Three pieces of artwork defining and complimenting each section were an added bonus to the writings and not often seen in chapbooks. A painting of BB King (UK artist, Alan Hancock) was a natural divider for the music section as he, accompanied by his guitar Lucille has always been known as universally acknowledged King of the Blues. Likewise, there are few images sadder than the woman in Annie Lee’s *Blue Monday*. Sitting on the edge of the bed with head hung low; the body language says this woman is dreading the start of the work week in no uncertain terms. Lastly, a photo of a blue piano on the patio of the Los Angeles Sims Library of Poetry was a perfect selection to rejoice in the color blue, since it also shows a quote by Voltaire, “Poetry is the music of the soul, and, above all, of great and feeling souls.” The art is in synch with the poetry and the combination is a magic chapbook! As a finishing touch, the editor included a strip of small photos on the back cover heralding blue items, from Henri Matisse’s famous *Blue Nude*, to the Blue Yusef Lateef jazz album cover; among others. The front cover has a reduced original 18x24 photo collage of 50 plus blue objects by Carole Boyce.

Readers that do not have this ‘blue’ book should give it a read and delve into what it is all about. They might find themselves with a new allegiance or at least a different outlook on color. There is a reason people have a favorite color. If you tap into yours, you may see how its expressed in your life. Poets out there may be encouraged to ‘anthologize’ their own special color and share it with poetry fans everywhere. In conclusion, *Blue & The Blues* has set the standard.

Adrienne Lawson-Pope