



The Windhover

The Windhover

29.2

The Windhover

29.2

Fall 2025

Editor-in-Chief

Toby F. Coley

Associate Poetry Editor

Marci Rae Johnson

Associate Prose Editor

Nathaniel Lee Hansen

Graphic Editor

Randy Yandell

Art Editor

David Hill

Cover: *Under the Pines*

by Emmi Hasselbach

Copyright © 2025

University of Mary Hardin-Baylor Press

Dr. Randy O'Rear, President & CEO

Belton, Texas

Statement from cover artist, Emmi Hasselbach:

UNDER THE PINES IS a multicolor lithograph exploring memory through the lens of East Texas. A man and his dog, printed in halftone, sit beneath the shadow of a pine tree—echoing the look of old photographs. The image reflects how memories blur and fade, yet still root us to place and feeling.

The Windhover is published twice a year, in February and August.

Subscriptions are \$22 (two issues).

The most recent issue is \$12.

Back issues are \$6.

For full submission guidelines, subscription and purchasing information, and samples of back issues, please visit *The Windhover* homepage:

<http://www.umhb.edu/windhover>

The Windhover is a proud member of CLMP
(Community of Literary Magazines and Presses)

CONTENTS

Note: Titles in italics signal prose works. Titles without italics signal poetry.

Sally Thomas

On Ash Wednesday.....	1
Arkansas.....	2

Sherry Poff

Unearthing.....	3
-----------------	---

Kiernan O'Connor

<i>The Wake Table</i>	4
-----------------------------	---

Marjorie Maddox

Midlife Conversion at the Museum.....	12
---------------------------------------	----

Ryan Keating

Exodus 7:22-23.....	13
---------------------	----

Bill Stadick

<i>Less Talkie, More Walkie: Merwin, Bonhoeffer and a Ragtag Huddle of Un-named Pilgrims in the Age of Personal Branding</i>	14
--	----

D.S. Martin

Like the Sky	18
--------------------	----

Megan Porath

Ever After.....	19
-----------------	----

Chris Anderson

The Light Two Atoms Make.....	20
-------------------------------	----

Elizabeth Han

<i>Birds of Paradise</i>	21
--------------------------------	----

Ann Neelon	
Clerestory	31
Russell Rowland	
After the Festival of Epiphany	32
Claire Adderholt	
Kingfisher Dark	33
Jackson Hern	
<i>Ex Malo Bonum</i>	34
Peter Norman	
The Fall	43
Daye Phillippo	
Making Jam	44
Dietrich Balsbaugh	
Kestrel Revisited.....	45
Katie Boord	
All Soul's Day, Kansas City	47
Colleen Harris	
Primum Non Nocere (First, Do No Harm).....	49
Kimberly Beck	
The Eagle	51
Emily Wall	
One-Line Sermon	52
Trisha Gates Brown	
Your Death	53

Andrea Potos

The Hour Your Plane Crashed..... 55

Kelly Sawin

Meditation Harvesting Radish Seeds..... 56

Christine H. Boldt

Never..... 57

Lindsay Lauren

Healing in the Steam..... 61

Recipe for Liberation Stew 63

Judith Sornberger

These Days..... 65

Contributors 67

SALLY THOMAS

On Ash Wednesday

This afternoon's grown long with hunger. Now
The sun lies down across the yellow grass.
Mass bells ring out. The people go
In winter coats and quietness
Beneath the darkening sky into the smell

Of molten candle wax. Sunday's incense
Already is a memory of time
Before: another circumstance
Of being. Here again, the flame
Is shivering on the altar, and the bell

Lets go its hollow clangor. What remains
Are unaccustomed emptiness and ash—
On foreheads, fingers, swirled down drains
At bedtime, not too blessed to wash
Away. One day, though, there will come a knell

That speaks the final word: You too are dust.
Today you simply kneel and let the thought
Mark you again. Again you must
Remember it. You must be taught
Your brevity, if you would break its spell.

KIERNAN O'CONNOR

The Wake Table

ONE MORNING IN LATE spring, Bucky was busy doing not much of anything when his mother hung up the telephone and came over to him.

"Get your shoes on," she said. "Brian Doyle has a wake table."

Doyle's Antiques in Westville Village was one of many places of interest his mother took him on her frequent excursions around New Haven: the paint store on Whalley Avenue, Doris' resale shop, even Birthright where his mother volunteered while he had free reign of a vacant gymnasium.

He sat on the stairs and watched her tie his laces. "What's a wake table?"

"A table for waking people. You'll see."

"What's waking people?"

"When you die, they lay you out on a table, and everyone comes to pay their last respects and pray for the repose of your soul. The night before your funeral."

"Why is it called a wake if you're dead?"

"It means to keep watch—to be wakeful—until you've buried the dead person's body, and the priest has commended their soul to God. Now come along. I've a couple other errands to run. Here," she said, handing him a nickel. "You can treat yourself to a Coke at the paint store."

Although he was five and a half, he hadn't begun school yet, because he was the youngest and, his mother explained, she was not ready to lose her companion. This arrangement suited Bucky, because when the rest of his eight brothers and sisters were home, he stood no chance of competing with them for his mother's attention.

Out in front of their house, he climbed into the back of their VW bus and plopped on the floor, keeping his hands clear of the side door, which had a habit of sliding shut of its own accord, once at the precise moment his hand had taken hold of the door frame.

"Buckle up," his mother said, and they laughed at this private joke. There were no seatbelts, because there were no seats in the back, although at one point there had been an old blanket. Riding in the back felt like being inside an enormous tin can that a giant was smacking over and over on the ground. Stopping brought relief for a few seconds until the smell of exhaust slithered up through cracks in the floorboard. Bucky's brother Peter referred to the bus with pride as a "rusty deathtrap," and the description heightened the sense of adventure.

Once when he and Philip sat in the parked bus in front of the house, to stare

out the windshield and pretend they were driving a tank in Vietnam, the bus began to roll toward a huge oak at the top of the drive. He and Philip ejected themselves and left the bus to spar with the tree by itself. Then there was the occasion when the hunk of faded blue and dingy white metal cast Philip into traffic as it sputtered up a steep ascent on Campbell Avenue. Bucky gazed in wonder at his brother's bony butt bouncing up and down in the right lane, and called out, "Mom! Philip fell out the back."

From the floor behind the passenger seat, he could stare up at his mother. He wondered if the wake table would fit in the back and if he'd have to crawl beneath it. He rubbed the outline of the nickel in his pocket. "We're not going to Sage, are we?" His mother also volunteered at a nursing home called Sage, and it was the only place he objected to visiting. It had a smell that frightened him.

But she didn't hear him. She was pulling into traffic, which meant rocking in her seat for leverage to move the stick that arose out of the floor into gear, and whipping her head around to look for oncoming traffic. She kept up a steady chatter as they drove to Doyle's, a mix of encouragement, as in, "Come on now, second. I know you're there," and advocacy, as in, "Let's go, buster. Move it." This to a fellow motorist too light on the gas, though the boy wasn't sure. She shouted, "Hold on!" before accelerating into an incline, a courtesy she developed after the Campbell Avenue incident.

Mr. Doyle, a towering, implacable man, who was, the boy gathered, inexplicably both Irish and Jewish, greeted his mother and led her toward the back to see the wake table. Bucky followed them with his ears but lingered behind. There'd be time enough to see this wake table. His pleasure was in letting his eyes wander about the cavernous space. Although most of Mr. Doyle's wares consisted of furniture and household goods, there were plenty of intriguing discoveries for a boy—old radios, painted store signs, framed maps. A gold cigarette case with engraved monogram caught his eye, then a gleaming sword hung on the wall. The store was a dim and dusty collection of props for his imagination.

When he'd had his fill of gazing, he found his mother and Mr. Doyle admiring a long, rectangular table fashioned from sturdy pinewood. His mother brushed her fingertips along the surface, as if divining its story from the bumps and ridges formed by the grain and knots.

"My goodness, I can't get over it. A wake table."

"This would certainly do the job," Mr. Doyle said.

"From County Clare."

"The owner's family came from Clare. She had it made in '48 and shipped

over. You don't see many of these in the U.S., I can tell you that."

"Here, Thomas. What do you think, a genuine Irish wake table?"

His mother often got excited about things she found beautiful, like furniture and paintings and the plants she tended in her garden. He tried to look impressed, but he was imagining Mr. Doyle laid out dead, and mourners gathered around to keep wake. It didn't make sense. The table looked like something that belonged in your kitchen, and the image of the dead antique dealer in his kitchen unsettled him.

"I've been looking for one of these for years, Brian."

"Me, too." The boy spotted a slight crease in Mr. Doyle's eyes as he said this.

"It's a fair price. We'll just have to see." She inhaled sharply and shut her eyes. She had a strong, handsome face, and thick, curly hair she kept short. Her oversized glasses added a fashionable effect. She let her breath out and patted the table. "God's will be done."

He thought to ask his mother why she wanted an Irish wake table, but they were already jettisoning down Whalley Avenue to her paint store. The paint store carried a brisk trade with his mother. He took his nickel to the Coke machine. At home there was only ever powdered milk or frozen orange juice to drink. He swigged his bottle with gusto and soon put the matter of the Irish wake table from his mind.

A nice romp in the yard after lunch might've flushed out his sugar high, but there was one more stop to make. They pulled into Sage Home for the Elderly.

"Mom, no. Please."

"I'll be in and out. I promise."

She directed him to a waiting area and disappeared. Across the hallway from the waiting area was the dining hall. The boy's eyes froze in horror. The room appeared overflowing with shriveled, wrinkled faces jawing toothless gums and slobbering over unsightly, quivering masses of food. Their hair and clothes were unkempt. He heard moaning and crying, and bellowing, and saw some who slapped the table, their heads, the attendants. The rank pestilence burned his nostrils and broiled his stomach. How long he waited he could not say. It may have been a quarter hour, perhaps less, but the effect on his already jittery nerves made it feel like hours.

Back inside the bus, his mother glanced back at him and sighed. "Prayers, works, joys, and sufferings," she said, and gunned the engine for home, where a frazzled Bucky skipped his lunch and took a nap instead.

That evening after dinner, Bucky wandered into the living room, lured by the sound of his parents' voices. His father sat in his chair with the paper folded on his lap and a glass of Scotch on the table next to him. His mother stood in the doorway and spoke of someone named Judy Hayes in terms so familiar the boy got the impression he should know who she was. She was, it turned out, his mother's particular project that kept her returning to Sage.

"A hard case," she said. He gleaned bits and pieces from snippets of conversation to fill out the picture. Judy Hayes was extremely old and frail, wildly demented, abjectly poor, and more or less abandoned, having in all the world a half-wit son and a niece his mother called "sad and pathetic."

Judy Hayes was also filled with a fierce, indomitable, and wordless rage. Sage was not up for her fight. "They won't lift a finger for her," his mother said.

"Sounds like they'd lose it if they tried," his father said.

"Baloney. The poor soul hasn't had a bath in three months. Can you imagine?"

His father broke into a soft chuckle.

"It's very serious, Charles. You know what I'm going to do? I'm going to bring her here, give her a proper bath and dress her in something that isn't rags."

"Mary Alice—"

"Don't Mary Alice me." She waved her arms in disgust. "The whole lot of them," she said, to herself it seemed to the boy, and drifted off.

His father noticed him. "Don't Mary Alice me," he mouthed, and the boy chuckled just like his dad. But they both knew Mary Alice would have the last word.

Late the following afternoon, he and Philip were in their bedroom minding their business when his mother brought Judy Hayes home. He could hear the commotion in the rear bathroom, a narrow affair with doors on either end at the rear of the second floor. Judy Hayes was getting bathed, and Judy Hayes was not happy about it.

The racket piqued his curiosity. He crept down the hall to have a listen.

Amidst the sounds of an open faucet, sloshing water, and squeaking of wet flesh against wet tile, his mother's voice asserted itself, without fluster, or doubt, or pleading, or even fear. He would not have recognized his mother otherwise. "You're just fine, dear. No, no, don't fret."

Judy Hayes moaned in agony.

"Sheila, hand me that washcloth." His sister Sheila was in middle school

and worked babysitting jobs. She called Bucky *Brat* and never got yelled at. “Come on, now. I’m only going to dab you. Here, hold still.”

He heard plunging, then a faint shriek from Judy Hayes.

“You’re fine! Sheila, let the water out for a minute. Judy. Judy, look at me. Look at me. You’re fine. I need to clean your hair now. Oh, you’ll feel wonderful when you’re done. You’ll be so happy.”

Light poured out of the bathroom through the half-opened door and onto the carpet in the hall, carrying wisps of steam from the hot bath. The boy discovered he had inched up to the doorway, on the edge of the shadow and the light on the carpet.

“You take her arm there and we’ll turn her around.”

He pictured Sheila bathing Judy Hayes. She would not have needed much in the way of encouragement, Bucky thought, the way she loved acting grown up. A force he could not identify drew him out of the shadow. He turned his head and peeked through the door.

At that instant his mother and sister hoisted Judy Hayes by the arms, halfway out of the tub, and fully exposed her nakedness to the boy. He gasped at the shriveled and bony flesh, deflated remnants of breasts, and the glimpse of her private area. Most shocking was her face, her mouth agape and her eyes fixed into the space in front of his mother, frightened and teary.

He fled to his room and tried in vain to unsee what he had seen.

Sometime later he heard his mother on the phone. He knew it was his father, away on business, from the way his mother spoke. “Sleeping like a baby, thanks be to God...I gave her a nightgown and robe from Doris’...I threw those rags in the trash...Sheila helped me. She’s an angel...When she wakes up, I’ll take her back...They promised they’d disinfect her room.”

An hour or so elapsed. He and Philip followed the Yankee game on their clock radio. Ron Guidry—*Louisiana Lightning*—was on the mound. The boy put Judy Hayes from his mind, like he’d done with the Irish wake table. Soon, however, murmuring and shuffling in the house grew noticeable, so that the possibility that events had taken an unexpected turn dawned on him. He cracked the door to his room and peeked out. He spotted Sheila crossing the hall. “What’s happening?”

Without so much as a break in her stride, she said, “Judy Hayes died.”

* * *

Judy Hayes, wrapped in a bed sheet and covered with a quilt, lay on the floor of the VW bus. On either side of the quilt sat Bucky and Philip. These were his mother's instructions: "She can't weigh more than eighty-five pounds. You two stay put on top of that quilt, and she'll be fine. We're only driving to the funeral home." Then she added, "It's all downhill."

Their mother had awarded them the privilege by process of elimination. Sheila and Molly had already done so much. Andrew, she needed to ride up front with her. And that left the boys. Besides, they were small and nimble and, truth be told, almost too eager to take part.

His mother had apparently applied this same process of elimination to more conventional means of transporting Judy Hayes. "Oh, that's ridiculous," he'd heard her say earlier, while Judy was still on his parents' bed. "I'm not going to bother with all that silliness." The silliness, she explained to his father on the phone, was to either wait until morning for the funeral home to send someone, or hope the morgue could send someone, "maybe by midnight." Luckily, their neighbor Bill Dowd's law partner had married a Celentano of Celentano's Funeral Home, and his mother had received word to bring Judy down.

Later, he heard his mother on another call to the sad, pathetic niece. "There won't be any problem. St. Vincent de Paul will arrange everything. They'll send a doctor over to sign the death certificate...Oh goodness, dear. Nobody kidnapped your aunt...Well for crying out loud, if you had any sense, you'd be thanking me." She hung up. "God save us."

In the bus, she handed Andrew her rosary. "You lead."

He and Philip stared at the corpse and each other. Streetlights flashed over them in waves. The corpse shifted at every bump. Squeaky brakes sounded like ghoulish moaning. The boys could barely contain themselves.

His mother parked at the curb in front of the funeral home, and said, "You two stay here. We'll be right out with someone."

"Should I stay here?" Andrew said.

"Goodness, no. I need you with me." She didn't elaborate, but Bucky suspected it was because Andrew, like Sheila, had a calming effect on her.

After his mother and Andrew left, he studied the pile in front of him. The thought occurred to him that now that Judy Hayes was dead, she didn't frighten him. He wondered what to make of that. Perhaps he'd discovered a source of bravery within himself. Then another thought popped into his head. "What if a cop knocked on the window right now."

Philip shook his head. "I'd run so fast they couldn't catch me."

Two men in dark suits stopped outside the van, deep in conversation.

"Duck," Philip said in a whisper.

They crouched low, close to Judy Hayes, and tried to make out what they were saying.

"What if they're gangsters?" Bucky said.

Philip didn't like the sound of that. "We'll hide under the quilt."

"No way. I'll kick them in the balls!"

They crouched even further at the thought and struggled to contain giggles brimming up from their chests. It was useless. The whole scene overwhelmed them with glee.

They were so enraptured that they failed to notice when the bus began to roll backwards. Only the scraping of a hubcap against the curb alerted them to their predicament. They bounced up in unison and assessed the situation. The bus was headed straight for a parked hearse.

"We're gonna die!" Philip grabbed him by the arm.

"I'm getting out of here," he said, already stepping over Judy Hayes. Like old pros he and Philip ejected themselves in the nick of time. The sound was horrendous, but the damage was superficial. The hearse proved a worthy adversary, repelling the bus off its bumper so that a gap of two feet or so stood between the two vehicles, the rear door of the bus ajar.

Judy Hayes' legs stuck out the back, as if trying to bridge the gap. In the streetlights, Bucky could make out her skin, swollen stiff and purplish. And clean.

For more than a week after they laid Judy Hayes to rest, Bucky's mother did not take him on any excursions. She spent all her time gardening until Philip would return from school, then she would leave by herself to go to adoration.

Then on Saturday morning over breakfast, his father shared the news that his company was buying him a new car. But, he explained, his sedan still had plenty of miles left in it, so he wondered if he should order a station wagon. "We could even get one with seats in the back," he said, winking at Bucky and Philip.

His mother was strangely silent. Even her face was silent. This was an odd response to such good news. Had his father said something wrong? Bucky held a spoonful of cereal in midair and waited for her to react.

"Oh, Charles," she said finally. Her voice seemed to breathe life back into her. She stood and walked past his father, patting him on the shoulder. "That's wonderful, Charles. Wonderful. Praise the Lord." Then with nary a word more

she gathered her keys and her purse and left. She didn't even clear her place.

An hour later she returned and announced she'd sold the VW bus to Brian Doyle for the Irish wake table and six hundred dollars cash. A pair of men built like brick ovens and speaking Polish followed her into the kitchen and took away the old table. When they were finished bringing the wake table inside and had driven off, the entire family stood in the kitchen and admired it.

His father and siblings drifted off, but his mother remained. She and Bucky stood behind her place at the end of the table. At the other end of the kitchen the windows above the sink let in the morning sun. They were open on their hinges like doors, and through the screens came the sound of birds calling to each other among the cluster of trees that descended the hill in their backyard. The trees were oak trees and pine trees and a sycamore tree that Bucky had only of late learned to climb.

In the warm light of the kitchen, the table seemed almost alive. He studied the knots and the grain running lengthwise and brushed his fingertips along the bumps and ridges as he had seen his mother do. Near the far end close to his father's place, the sunlight revealed a dark line curved in a crescent, as if marking the place to rest Judy Hayes' head. He imagined her laid on the table, a parade of mourners traipsing through the kitchen, his mother proclaiming, "Isn't it glorious?" Now that he was experienced with corpses, he could no longer object to the general idea. In fact, a part of him wished that it had indeed been so, and he said as much to his mother.

"What's that, dear?"

"I said, it would've been nice if we'd had this when Judy Hayes died. Then we could have had her wake here."

Bucky considered the sentiment an ordinary one, but for some reason his mother joined him at the other end of the table and sat in his father's chair, her face level with his. She took his chin in her hand. Her face wore a soft smile, and her eyes squinted behind her glasses. She nodded gently and sighed. "Oh, my dear child," she said, and then she gathered him onto her lap and wrapped him in her arms, kissing him on the head.

Bucky softened to his mother's affection, reclining his head on her shoulder and resting his hand around her arm. He could make no sense of her need for him; he only knew that it filled him with a quiet and mysterious joy.

D.S. MARTIN

Like the Sky

Like the sky
 when I'm out on the prairies
the surging ocean
 when I'm walking the beach
your ubiquitous presence is somehow
both easy & impossible to ignore

I draw close to your cliffedge descend
along the safest path to reach the shore
I keep my distance from the crashing waves
as my heels sink deep in soft sand
My sluggish progress lowers my gaze
toward the ground

Like the birdsound
 in leafy trees
the yeasty smell of bread
 from the kitchen
you share hints no one
could miss but me

KATIE BOORD

All Souls Day, Kansas City

In paradisum deducant te angeli...

A whole acre of fading graves, but
It's never quiet here. The cars hum past,
Every fifth one a white SUV. The blue jays laugh
Along with the kids at recess. My rosary
Is wood and paracord.

In tuo adventu suscipiant te martyres...

Parents gone in ripe old age, joined
Beside their baby daughter. They remember,
Even in forgotten death, her face.
They once stood here and felt her hands
Unfurled beneath the soil.

Et perducant te in civitatem sanctam Jerusalem...

The first hands to clear this land were
Outsiders, newcomers, strangers. From lands
Abroad like Germany and Kentucky, they came
Together with dreams painted gold
That they prepared to bury.

Chorus angelorum te suscipiat...

I know which stones are oldest. Limestone, carved
From rock beds down the road. Chiseled carefully
With steady hands. Moss and lichen do not know
Devotion from ancient seas. But I do.
What does that mean?

Et cum Lazaro quondam paupere...

Each one of you wanted something. I want
To see clearly. You have forgotten your old wants
But you remember the feeling of desire, of longing.
Is death the great uniter? Or is it something baser,

The constant need to want?

Aeternam habeas requiem...

A relief, to rest at last, from a life of survival,
Of living for myself alone. Rest now, sleep
In peace. Know that you are soil and dust and water
And you are good. I will fix the wilted lilies
And wait to follow you.

CONTRIBUTORS

CLAIRE ADDERHOLT is a missionary kid who grew up in Papua New Guinea and, after living in various places, now lives with her husband in Birmingham, Alabama. Her poems have been published or are forthcoming in *Amethyst Review*, *Linebreak*, *The Rabbit Room*, *Calla Press*, and elsewhere. She publishes one poem per week at her Substack *Lanterns in the Dark*.

CHRIS ANDERSON is an emeritus professor of English at Oregon State University and a Catholic deacon. His most recent book of poems, *Love Calls Us Here*, was published last summer by Wildhouse Publishing.

DIETRICH BALSBAUGH'S poems have appeared in *Ekstasis*, *Crosswinds Journal*, and *Veritas Journal*. He lives in South Bend, IN, where he enjoys birding, reading, and taking walks with his family.

KIMBERLY BECK is a poet from Washington State. She can often be found at a local therapy ranch, caring for a very special herd of Norwegian Fjord Horses. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Solid Food Press*, *Ekstasis Magazine*, *Clayjar Review*, and *The Amethyst Review*.

CHRISTINE BOLDT, a retired librarian, was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Nigeria in the 1960s, and lived in Italy during the 1970s. Her collection *Missing, One Muse* won the 2018 ASPS Morris Memorial Chapbook Competition. Her book, *For Every Tatter*, was published by Lamar University Literary Press, in 2021. Several of her poems have previously appeared in *The Windhover*.

KATIE BOORD is an emerging poet from Kansas. She works in a geology lab by day, and sings in an indie rock band by night. Her poems have been published in *Heart of Flesh Literary Journal* and *Poetry Super Highway*.

TRICIA GATES BROWN'S poetry has appeared in *Portland Review*, *Christian Century*, and *Friends Journal*, among other publications; and her novel *Wren* won a 2022 Independent Publishers Award Bronze Medal. By trade, she is an editor and co-writer, mainly working for the National Park Service. Her first poetry collection is forthcoming from Fernwood Press. She holds a PhD in theology from University of St. Andrews and writes a column at Patheos on "religion, doubt,

and why they matter.”

ELIZABETH HAN is a Newfoundland-raised, British Columbia-based writer and Christian family physician. Her short fiction has appeared in *Sine Theta* (nominated for a Pushcart Prize 2023), *The Windsor Review*, and *Ricepaper*. Connect with Elizabeth at elizabethhan.com and [@effyhan](https://twitter.com/effyhan).

COLLEEN S. HARRIS earned her MFA in Writing from Spalding University. A three-time Pushcart Prize nominee, her poetry collections include *The Light Becomes Us* (Main Street Rag, forthcoming 2025), *Babylon Songs* (First Bite Press, forthcoming 2026), *These Terrible Sacraments* (Bellowing Ark, 2010; Doubleback, 2019), *The Kentucky Vein* (Punkin House, 2011), *God in My Throat: The Lilith Poems* (Bellowing Ark, 2009), and chapbooks *That Reckless Sound* and *Some Assembly Required* (Pork Belly Press, 2014).

EMMI HASSELBACH is an interdisciplinary artist and printmaker whose work explores themes of architecture, memory, and materiality through traditional and experimental printmaking techniques, often merging analog processes with sculptural forms. She earned her BFA in Studio Art from University of Mary Hardin-Baylor and is currently working on her MFA in Printmaking at Stephen F. Austin State University.

JACKSON T. HERN is an Army officer and writer who lives and works in New Jersey.

RYAN KEATING is a pastor and writer on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus. His work can be found in publications such as *Ekstasis Magazine*, *Fare Forward*, *Roi Fainéant*, and *Funicular*. He is pursuing a PhD in Philosophy of Religion at the University of Cambridge. His chapbook, *A Dance In Medias Res*, is now available from Wipf and Stock.

LINDSAY LAUREN is a clinical psychology doctoral candidate and freelance writer whose poetry explores the intersection of science, emotion, and the human experience. She has contributed to both literary and scientific publications, with her creative writing appearing across a variety of platforms. When not writing or working with patients, she can be found running long distances, searching for the perfect metaphor, or adventuring with her dog, Butter.

MARJORIE MADDOX is Professor Emerita of English at Commonwealth University, Presence assistant editor, and WPSU-FM Poetry Moment host. She has published 17 collections of poetry—including *Transplant*, *Transport*, *Transubstantiation*; *Begin with a Question*; *In the Museum of My Daughter's Mind*; *Heart Speaks, Is Spoken For*; *Small Earthly Space*; *Seeing Things*; and *Hover Here* (forthcoming)—plus a story collection, 4 children's books, and the anthologies *Common Wealth: Contemporary Poets on Pennsylvania* and *Keystone Poetry* (co-editor with Jerry Wemple, PSU Press). www.marjoriemaddox.com

D.S. MARTIN is Poet-in-Residence at McMaster Divinity College, and Series Editor for the Poiema Poetry Series from Cascade Books. He has written six poetry collections including *Angelicus* (2021), *Ampersand* (2018), and *Conspiracy of Light: Poems Inspired by the Legacy of C.S. Lewis* (2013). His new poetry collection is *The Role of the Moon* (Iron Pen/Paraclete, 2025).

ANN NEELON is the author of *Easter Vigil*, which won the Anhinga Prize for Poetry and the Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Writers and Readers Award. She is Professor Emerita of English at Murray State University, where she has received the Regents Teaching Award, directed the BA and MFA programs in creative writing, and edited *New Madrid* journal.

PETER NORMAN has published four poetry collections, a novel, and most recently a children's book. His poems have appeared in numerous magazines and anthologies, including *Jailbreaks: 99 Canadian Sonnets* and three editions of *Best Canadian Poetry*. In 2021, he was longlisted for *Image Journal's* Mitchell Prize for Faith and Poetry.

KIERNAN O'CONNOR works in advancement for the University of St. Thomas-Houston and serves on the advisory committee of *Catholic Literary Arts*. He studied English at Columbia University and is currently pursuing his MFA in creative writing at UST. His work has appeared in *Dappled Things*, *Catholic Arts Today*, and elsewhere.

DAYE PHILLIPPO taught English at Purdue University. Her poems have been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and selected by ETS for inclusion in the AP English Exam. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Poetry*, *Valparaiso*

Poetry Review, *Presence*, *The Midwest Quarterly*, *LETTERS*, *One Art*, *2River View* and many others. She lives and writes in rural Indiana. *Thunderhead* (Slant, 2020) was her debut full-length collection. www.dayephillippo.com.

SHERRY POFF is a writer and teacher living in Ooltewah, Tennessee. Sherry holds an MA in Writing from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and is a member of the Chattanooga Writers' Guild. Her work has appeared in numerous online and print publications including *Salvation South*, *Anthology of Appalachian Writers*, *The Clayjar Review*, and *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel*.

MEGAN PORATH is a poet, songwriter, church singer, and social work researcher living in Detroit. Her writing is inspired by a tender attention to the inner and outer world, and a curiosity about the questions that close attention naturally poses. She works to keep her 190-year-old home standing, and her border collie entertained, whenever she isn't writing, working, or loving her friends and family.

ANDREA POTOS is the author of several collections of poems, most recently *Two Emilys*, (Kelsay Books), *Her Joy Becomes* (Fernwood Press), and *Marrow of Summer* (Kelsay Books). A new collection *Belonging Songs* is forthcoming from Fernwood Press in 2025. You can find her at andreapotos.com.

RUSSELL ROWLAND writes from New Hampshire. Recent work appears in *Red Eft Review*, *Wilderness House*, *Bookends Review*, and *The Comstock Review*. His latest poetry books, *Wooden Nutmegs* and *Magnificat*, are available from Encircle Publications. He is a trail maintainer for the Lakes Region (NH) Conservation Trust.

KELLY SAWIN is a poet living and mothering in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. She was a finalist in the 2024 National Poetry Series and her work has appeared in *River Teeth: Beautiful Things*, *Appalachian Review*, *Susurrus*, *Virginia Literary Review*, *Volume*, and elsewhere. She holds an MFA from Hollins University.

BILL STADICK has published poetry, fiction and creative nonfiction in *The Windhover*, *The Christian Century*, *Dappled Things*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *First Things* and *The Cresset*. His poetry chapbook, *Family Latin*, is available from

Finishing Line Press. Selections of his work have been anthologized in *In a Strange Land: Introducing Ten Kingdom Poets* (Poiema Poetry Series) and *Taking Root in the Heart* (Paraclete Press).

JUDITH SORNBERGER'S most recent full-length collection is *Sorority of Stillness: A Gallery of Women in Art* (Shanti Arts 2025). She is the author of four other full-length collections, six chapbooks, and a prose memoir *The Accidental Pilgrim: Finding God and His Mother in Tuscany* (Shanti Arts). A professor emerita of Mansfield University of Pennsylvania, she lives on the side of a mountain near the Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania. www.judithsornberger.net

SALLY THOMAS is the author of a poetry collection, *Motherland*, a novel, a book of short stories, and two poetry chapbooks, as well as the anthology, *Christian Poetry in America Since 1940*, recipient of the 2023 Christianity Today Book Award in Culture and the Arts. Her second full-length book of poems, *Among the Living*, is forthcoming from Able Muse Press. With Joseph Bottum, she writes the Substack newsletter *Poems Ancient and Modern*.

EMILY WALL is a poet and Professor of English at the University of Alaska. Her poems have been published in journals across the US including *Ploughshares*, *Alaska Quarterly Review*, and *Prairie Schooner*. She has six books of poetry: *Fig, Fist, Flame* are chapbooks published by Minerva Rising Press. *Liveaboard*, *Freshly Rooted* and *Breaking Into Air: Birth Poems* are full-length works. Emily lives and writes in Douglas, Alaska and she can be found online at www.emily-wall.com.