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We created *Prospectus* to discover new poets. The term comes from Latin, meaning to look ahead or foresee. We seek the work of promising but previously unpublished poets which we will try to present with taste and dignity to an enlightened audience.

We will publish *Prospectus* quarterly. If you are a reader of poetry hoping to be among the first to discover a new voice, we encourage you to subscribe. Only through sales and subscriptions can we help new poets to be heard. Subscription rate: four issues for \$10.00, with checks made payable to Hamby Stern Publishing LLC at P.O. Box 39124, Washington, DC 20016-9124.

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CARY KAMARAT

Terra Catalana

Land of the Catalans

By the sea,
there flows another sea
an inland stretch of clay and loam
that seems to pitch and roll and rise
to a piedmont's rushing mountain shore.

Fruitful now, as at the first Creation,
she basks in an earth perfume,
gracious for her bounty,
intoxicated,
as if with a lover's musk.
Her home is strewn with ancient stones
that dare to nestle,
stricken, broken, bobbing
in the earthen waves, needing
to live on, wanting
the return.
She sings their tale,
in an earthbound sailor's chantey:

Song of the troubadours once lost
among the smoking battlegrounds
Song of paramours betrayed
offered up to the Black Madonna

Here, the cult of Mary softens the reaper's scythe.
Here, the keeper's legs, the tiller's soul,
well anchored in the clay,
suffer the swells of time and meaning,
lest politicians and demigods
carry the tide of history
away.

BEN NARDOLILLI

Father Torre

Give him sainthood if you want,
I would leave him at blessed
And that would be it.

The conversion began with his birth,
No need to be born again,
It was a show for the parishioners.

For I knew him in his youth,
When he wore a little cassock,
And how his heart was flaming

Like a glossy votive candle,
Hoping for a pair of fingers to come
And tease for a little burn.

He ended up drinking on a stomach
That was full, and always
Drove us home, that was martyrdom?

He replaced our pills with placebos,
And washed it down
With beer thinner than water.

I know that in the bedroom
He went under the covers,
Turned to a monk and slept,

His hands were curious
And he was satisfied with a shoulder,
One squeeze lasted him a year.

When I saw him prostrate
On the cold floor at the bishop's foot,
Like a pawn captured on his square,

His hands were not searching
For a place to rest,
They were happy without pockets.

Father Torre pray for all of us sinners,
Who burn their catechisms
And know the shortcuts to breaking them.

EDMUND JONES

Goofer! Littlest niece. Four-toother.
Bounce walker. Sister-bane (and sweet promise).
Eater of basil. Always queen,
You own every room you enter,
Albeit, as now, with the working end
Of a plastic screwdriver in your mouth,
Making of us all: your subjects.
O, climber of human bodies!
I sit, tender giant, on kitchen tile.
You! run! here! Bang into my
Thighschestneckandhead and tumbled
Am I into deep, deep, deep pockets
Of love. I will use even the excuse
Of baby drool, snot drip, to touch
Your perfect-in-its-promise state
Or—who cares about perfection—you've got
The happiest grin a human has ever worn
And I must have this first waltz with you
Around the kitchen, onto the porch,
Into the summer breeze and out, out, out
Onto the banner of blue sky that waves.
With you in my arms, I'm, a patriotic fool:
I've already signed on for the duration.

JACQUELINE SEEWALD

The Trophy Case

They were arguing again.

Father and son, creator and creation.

in front of the trophy case

Sunshine pirouettes from golden-haired boy

to tarnished statuettes,

figures that symbolize the boy's athletic skill,

figures that preside in the mahogany sanctuary

as in an altered shrine.

False idols Jehovah justly forbid.

Cast in malleable metal and pernicious plastic,

these cold creations are what the father worships.

Awe-struck in adoration,

the mere mortal never need know more

than those hollow hearts hide.

R. O. TITUS

Dirty Bill's

Gasoline in those times wasn't more than 30 cents a gallon so "pleasure riding," as it was then called wasn't an economic pinch. On summer Sundays we'd sometimes go for an "Up County," ride. My father liked to drive and was proud of his easy familiarity with the roads of Bucks County.

It grew dark as we finished our Up County Ride and my father would stop at Dirty Bill's, within sight of the Delaware River and the Yardley Bridge. My childhood sense of the forbidden was piqued. "Dirty" was a household pejorative in our family.

Dirty Bill cooked on an enclosed porch of salvaged storm door inserts. Inside a 40-gallon drum with ventilation holes was fueled with charcoal. On top was a screen of half-inch squares filled with hot dogs, served in charred coats and, undisputably, the best I've ever eaten. There were bowls of chopped onions, mustard, and piccalilli. There was a large, red, unplugged metal cooler with ice blocks that chilled the sodas. My beverage of choice was usually Frank's Black Cherry Wishniak, with Nehi Orange as a fall-back.

Outside, Christmas lights, strung from the building to a large oak tree, overhung some picnic tables. The ground beneath them was hard-packed dirt, and diners at the tables were continually distracted by bugs attracted by the lights – it wasn't an inviting a place to sit and eat and we'd always take our dogs and drinks to the car, a 1937 Dodge sedan. We ate inside with the windows down. Outside the open windows there was a thick stew of sounds. Insects droned and chirped, frogs piped their calls. Their noises floated on the thick, humid air breathed from the river.

After we left Dirty Bill's, we'd drive home south along the Delaware River. I heard the click of my father's Zippo as he lit a Camel. The seat upholstery was a brownish-gold nap I imagined to be a walrus hide. It was stiffened against my face as I lay on it. The trick was to find the grain and to move my head across as I settled in.

The motion of the car was reassuring and hypnotic. Reclined on the seat, the motion of the car rolled my full belly, and it seemed as though I needed nothing else in the world. It was hard to imagine that life wouldn't be like this forever.

MARJORIE SADIN

Jaylen

Jaylen dozes in class.
His little brother kicks him in bed
so he can't sleep at night.

I am his tutor. He hugs me.
I say, "not allowed." Reluctantly.

He is like a man.
Taller than I am
and only 10.

Jaylen is at the 3rd grade level,
ADD and socially mixed up.
Whatever he reads doesn't matter
Now he reads sentences instead of
sounding out letters.

And now he is teaching his younger brother
how to read letters.
And he is a man to his brother.

CHERYL SOMMESE

What the Lining Says

Maybe ten years ago I could have done it,
the news has always been grim,
and strewn bodies are not novel
they present themselves in every age
like anger festering in trenches.
Casualties
of man's harsher side.

But ten years ago I was newer
and time was stockpiled
without a shelf life.
Traveling from one hour to the next—
within the confines of my stupor
oblivious
to the surrounding world.

It almost seemed as if the photos were put there
to confuse comfort,
mock contentment,
they couldn't be too real
not when life was pleasing.
Perhaps they were printed
to intercept boredom?

Ten years can mean so much, though,
the difference between inexperience and maturity,
indifference and caring,
life and death.

Ten years can mean
blindness
or sight
or salvation.

Maybe ten years ago I could have lined the bird's cage
with carnage,
allowing the droppings to conceal
what was invisible to me anyway;
but today I just couldn't do it.

DEBORAH PRESPARE

The Order of Things

They stumbled out of the bar, one after the other, the sound of their laughter like the chilling barks of hyenas. She shivered. Upset at herself for parking so far away, she gripped her keys and walked faster, hoping they wouldn't see her and sense her as easy prey.

When she reached her car, she let herself breathe. She even laughed to herself. She was overreacting. They were just guys having fun. But her breath stopped short when she saw that they had spotted her, that the leader, the tall, broad-shouldered one the less solidly built clamored around, was sneering at her and licking his lips. She dropped her keys.

Laughing louder, more excitedly, they approached her. She grabbed her keys off the pavement, and with shaking hands, she tried to unlock her door. They surrounded her. With their eyes on their leader, the more timid of them threw

crude words at her with their quick, unsure tongues. Leering at her, the leader pushed them back and leaned against her door.

Someone turned the corner then. A man pretending he didn't see them. The man's well-groomed terrier, however, didn't hide his awareness of the beasts circling her. The domesticated animal, as if sensing the unnatural intrusion of wild obscenity in the suburban order of things, barked lambasting rounds of warning that sent the drunken pack on its way, laughing now as if its ferocious intent was just for play.

ALLIE NOLAN

I Won't Invade Your Life

I won't invade your life
Just like an apple invades the space of a still-life,
By becoming its center-piece
And creating the imaginary taste
For the on-looker....

I won't invade your life,
Like a final cord invades the life of the melody,
Sounding simultaneously
Like an alarm and a snob,
Loudly and clearly,
And shocking the listener....

I won't invade your life....
Just like a sudden thought invades the mind
of a thinker--
By dominating all other thoughts
And being pervasive
Like a cry of a hurting child...
I won't invade your life.
Even though I want to – terribly.

LINDA OATMAN HIGH

The Wand Salesman

Taking account of the armadillo population
in the hellhole valley of south Texas,
wishing for a beach, a real beach,
the wand salesman decided to purchase an armadillo
and take it home to Manhattan.

He wished for magic, and so he sold wands:

Golden dandelion-colored wands
that could be waved over the everyday,
creating mystical visions
for those who believed.

He turned an armadillo into a pet.

He turned a drought-ridden dry yard with no peaches
into a beach.

He could not, though, turn McAllen Texas into anything
other than what it was,

and so he packed his armadillo
into his big black wand salesman bag,
and went home to Manhattan.

CHARLES CARY

My Struggles

My struggles are great, my struggles are many.

I'm just a man with sin all in me.

I find it amazing no matter how hard I try.

Trying to be right, I just struggle inside.

Pluck the speck out my brother's eye while mine are
open so wide

It gives me reason for pause, while I contemplate
inside.

Balancing life sometimes I feel spurned,

Like playing a game I might lose my turn.

Relationships, loyalty both seem to defeat me.

It's something I want, but alone can't complete me.

Offspring, siblings experiencing the whole nine,

My struggles aren't evasive they know I'll be on time.

I must try regardless through struggles and defeat.

I've heard success comes through failures so I'll land
on my feet.

VERONICA TAYLOR

The Deadly Vices

Lou Ann Redding was a simple woman with only two vices, noisiness and routine. And every morning she watched her neighbors, sometimes for years, or until circumstances took them away from her.

The neighbors, on either side of her, had filed for bankruptcy, only to disappear in the night. Mr. Smith's house, across the street from hers, became vacant after he was caught "borrowing" money on the job. And the contractor, who had three more houses to build in the development, couldn't complete his job until his divorce was final.

To ensure that she did not miss the happenings of the neighborhood, she did the second vice, routine, exactly the same time every day. She woke up, stood at the bedroom window, observed the neighbors. Then she ate, sold on eBay, shopped, used the restroom, went to the window. And only death, she knew would stop her from spying on any of her neighbors. So one night, a few weeks later, when Lou Ann heard a door slam at the house across the street from

her, she immediately stood at her bedroom window to see what was happening.

She learned nothing that night, as the new neighbor was secretive, so she waited for morning. She waved at him from the mailbox, kitchen window, grocery store, and still he ignored her. So she watched every night, for weeks, from her lookout windows. Obviously he's a crook, she muttered.

One day her inquisitiveness drove her across the street to peek in his window. She drew back in fright when she saw hundreds of pictures of herself, on his walls, observing him. She turned to go when something smacked the back of her head, killing her. Her body, clothes, vices, and car disappeared. No one questioned this because the neighbors had never liked her anyway.

CELIA LISSET ALVAREZ

Hunger

At the red light, behind
a truckful of men—
versions of denim,
baseball caps pulled down low on the brow,
hunched, muscular shoulders—
I think
what wretchedness, this work,
picking crops for cents on the basket,
dull gray mornings by the fruitstand
waiting to get hired.
Just one day without a job
can mean hunger.

Last Saturday at the swap meet
I gawked at carts and carts of cantaloupes.
Their dimpled, light brown skins
felt like asphalt to my fingers. A woman
in a thick black braid and pocket apron
chose two for me while I watched
a skinny boy chatting up a girl
in tight pink shorts.
Que vas a hacer esta noche?

These men—I count seven—
what fractured selves do they go home to?
I realize I have been staring.
They surprise me, suddenly alive,
grabbing their crotches,
yelling obscenities at me
they think I can't understand.

EDNA SMALL

Choices

Will I come with you?

Your hands, weeding the garden,
have loosened the clotted ground.

....

Are you coming soon?

There are plants to be watered
and the cat waits to be fed.

RONNIE GREENSPAN

Rich Man's Wife

My 80 year old neighbor
says I look like a rich man's wife
in my thrift store clothes that feign high fashion
I have captured the illusion of
looking expensive through
accoutrements and desire
my wide-eyed smile
never encapsulating the
poverty of sincerity
that reveals a fake

EDNA SMALL

Shower Rooms

We women of a certain age straggle from the pool,
shed suits, rinse off chlorine. I gaze at the array
of breasts, small and firm, round and full, drooping.
None so thin, so pendulous, as were my mother's.

And those others, in the steam room
at Brighton Beach. I waited eagerly to board
the train, to reach, at last, a place to brave
the waves, to bury my brother in the sand.

But first I was tethered to my aunts,
there in the hidden room, where old women,
cleansing their pores, told secrets in strange tongues.
Warm mist clouded their wrinkled flesh. I shrank.

It was 1939. So much I did not know.
I did not know to witness.
I did not know to welcome.
I did not understand the language of survival.

SANDRA SIMMONS

I'm Here

I'm here to be your source
From which you call on to survive

I'm here to be the catalyst
From which your spirit thrives

I'm here to be your strong arm
In the times you'll need to lean
When your load is not a solo burden
And it takes two to make a team

I'm here to be that raging fire
To spread a searing cleansing flame
Across all doubt and indecision
When a trusting friend you must name

I'm here to capture you in your presence
Plant with you seeds of dreams yet sown
I see you and I as Destiny
Flesh of thy flesh and bone of thy bone.

I'm here to be your help and comfort
In this earthly realm of wants and needs
To divine for you His essence
As the well from your manhood feeds

When that void aches you unmercifully
Or the cold of loneliness creeps near
Reflect on things we've shared, and remember me
As the one who loves you most, I'm here.

KEN KESSEL

Considering the Blueberries

for Ed, on his father's death

The cottage now feels empty

But the fields are full

And ripe

Somehow, even though

You couldn't come

This one last time

We carry

What dust remains

To disperse

Pick the season's best

Maybe bake a pie

Leave one unsavored slice

Reminisce

Consider

The land

Remembers you

You are the blueberries

The bushes

The hills

The carefully-crafted wood

Preserves your hand

The rest

Is up to us

SCHOLEM EDEL

The Gravestone

10/27/11

To you whom I have loved, I love you still
Thank you for loving me.

Should you do wrong – the bolt of
Lightening that will bite your ass –
Will come from me.

What things are wrong you ask –
I will tell you – before you act –
To wrong another.

Thank you for visiting me.
I know you have been here.
These stones left on my memorial stone –
Are giving me a headache.

Please visit again. I look forward to seeing you.

J.D. SMITH

Claim to Fame

This page, that falling leaf
on which my name appears,
that petal cast into the void—
not there, a little lower, to your left,
among the open pine cones,
the empty snake skins
and detached cicada wings.

FEATURED WRITERS

CELIA LISSET ALVAREZ

CHARLES CARY

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RONNIE GREENSPAN

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EDMUND JONES

CARY KAMARAT

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