

Barry Blumenfeld

Tim J. Brennan

Richard Broderick

Chansonette Buck

John Burroughs

Sharon Chmielarz

Gavin Corey

Mike Finley

Karen Foster

Dennis Green

Mike Hazard

Kevin M. Hibshman

Danny Klecko

Susan Koefod

Jeanne Lutz

Ethna McKiernan

Tim Nolan

Kevin O'Rourke

San Pearlman

Rebecca Paradis

Jeannie Piekos

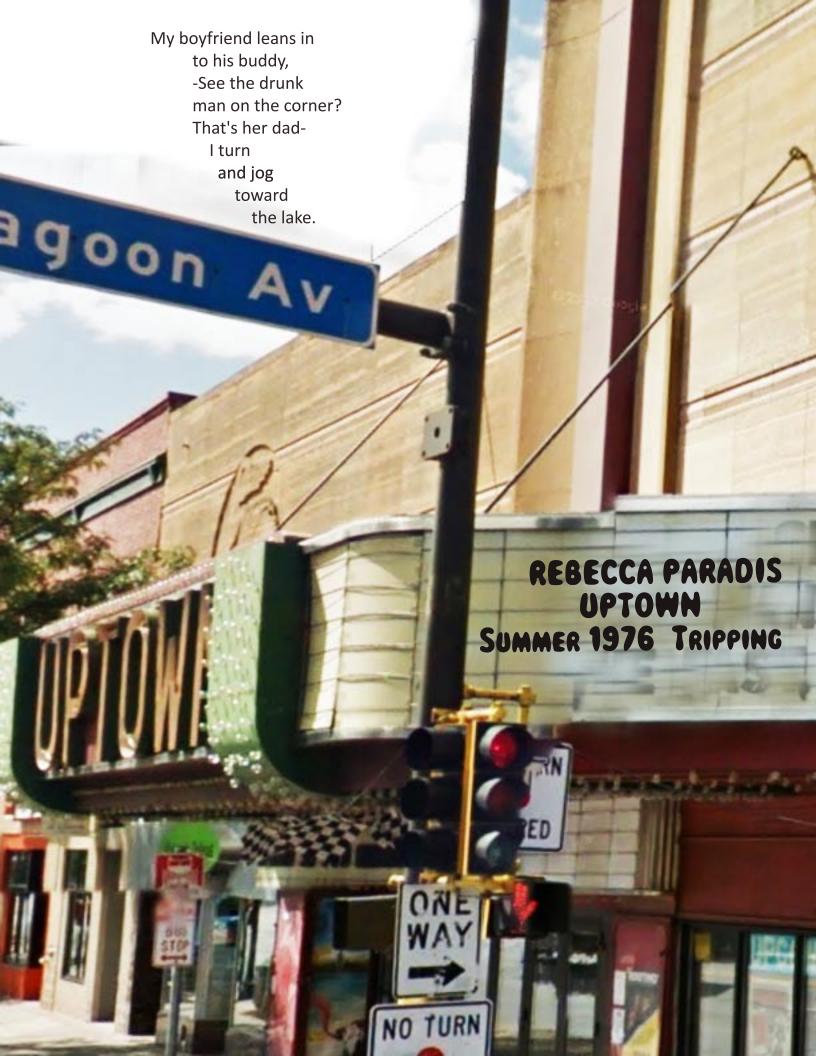
LIEF 4

Spring 2014



Mike Finley

Danny Klecko, "Eds"





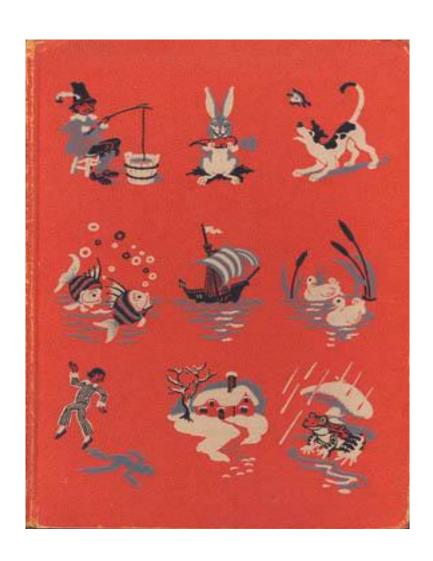
Ladybird, ladybird, fly away home, Your house is on fire, Your children shall burn!

When Klecko and I came up with the idea of LIEF about three years ago, we wanted something fun to do that would involve other people.

All I had going into the project as layout editor were two tools: a 10-year old version of Adobe Photoshop, which I had never quite mastered, and a copy of Adobe Acrobat that is almost as old.

I had some experience as a newspaper layout editor from the 1970s, and had done a bit of digital publishing of my own work. I always liked the idea of words alongside pictures. It is the basis of all photojournalism, but I felt it went very deep in me.

ChildcraftMike Finley



The title LIEF came to me as an interpolation of Life Magazine. I liked the idea of setting up a low-budget phantom counterpart to history's greatest magazine. And the word *lief*, I knew, had roots in classic literature, including Shakespeare.

From the first page I laid out, I just knew what I would do. Every page would be like a broadside – a picture, or a picture with a poem. I know that doesn't sound very specific, but I was firm on it. It had to be this way.

This week, working on our fourth issue, I realized this marriage of words and pictures was what I encountered as a child. I especially remembered a collection of books my mother bought in the 1940s for my sister Kathy. The series was called Childcraft, and the covers were burnt-orange and two-color at most, black and one other. They were a "great books" collection published by W. F. Quarrie & Company. Childcraft was a readaloud for small children, with quaint, unfunny pictures of fairies and genies and things. The editors didn't seem to get kids, the way today's books do. But they were better than a poke in the eye.

I remember especially an ink drawing of a ladybug rushing home to save her babies from a fire. Quite horrifying to a child.

I learned later that the rhyme references an agricultural technique of setting fire to farm vegetation to smoke the bugs out. But by then it was too late for this poor ladybird. You know she didn't get home in time.

I hadn't thought of those books since I was small. I'm not much for the worship of all things dealing with childhood. But a part of me reached back over the years to imagine those pages again, and to model the pages I am doing today after them – sort of. The inner child remembers. Words and pictures. My guess is, most writers could live without them. I'm not sure I can.





Bob's Rooster

Ethna McKiernan

The honey-gold rooster is back, feathers soft as yellow-cream across his breast, ruby comb like a crown swaying on his head as he pecks his way across the deck outside my door in search of last night's corn-cob.

The first mistake I made was when I fed him, the second when he spied my red toenails and tried to nip those glossy berries in the bud, sure he'd found another meal –

and me, a mere city girl who'd once burst into tears in Ireland when spotting 20 cows behind her breathing heavy on a country lane.

There lives the dearest freshness deep down things,"
Hopkins said, but what to do when you and nature collide and calamity ensues?



Nuclear missile silo scuba diving, Dive Valhalla, Texas

Things I Learn on Polish TV

Sharon Chmielarz

An electronic device straightens children's backs. It harnesses shoulders and blares when they slump. It seems no child has thrown the gadget out the window, but at the beep, sits up straight before piano or computer. You can take a tour of Cold War missile sites in Texas. A school district there bought one for a dollar. It's nice and bright twenty feet under; not one claustrophobic child's face flashes across the screen. One site, Valhalla, is filled with water. Imagine, on the Texas Plains, a heaven for scuba divers. On the Northern Plains a site sold for 40,000 dollars. Trick windows give an illusion of light, of being on earth, not under. The family room has a bar. Beer, karaoke, even a fake atrium. It's great for parties, impossible to be a noisy neighbor. A shaft of sunlight plummets from the faraway sky.



What I Know For Sure

Susan Koefod

Deer plural is deer

A wet glass will leave a ring on wood

It is darkest before the dawn

Low wind chills can kill you

A groundhog's shadow means nothing

An egg will hard boil in about fifteen minutes

Sheep plural is sheep

Damp cold is colder than dry cold

You can catch more flies with honey

Heat escapes through your head

The number thirteen is just a number

Milk tends to boil over the moment you turn away
Goose plural is geese
Water freezes at 32 degrees
An apple a day keeps the doctor away
Dressing in layers keeps you warmer
Loose lips don't sink ships
Constant stirring helps avoid lumpy gravy
Person plural is people and persons
Water seeks the lowest level
Count to ten if you feel angry
We all eventually die
Global warming is no myth
Always refrigerate unused portions

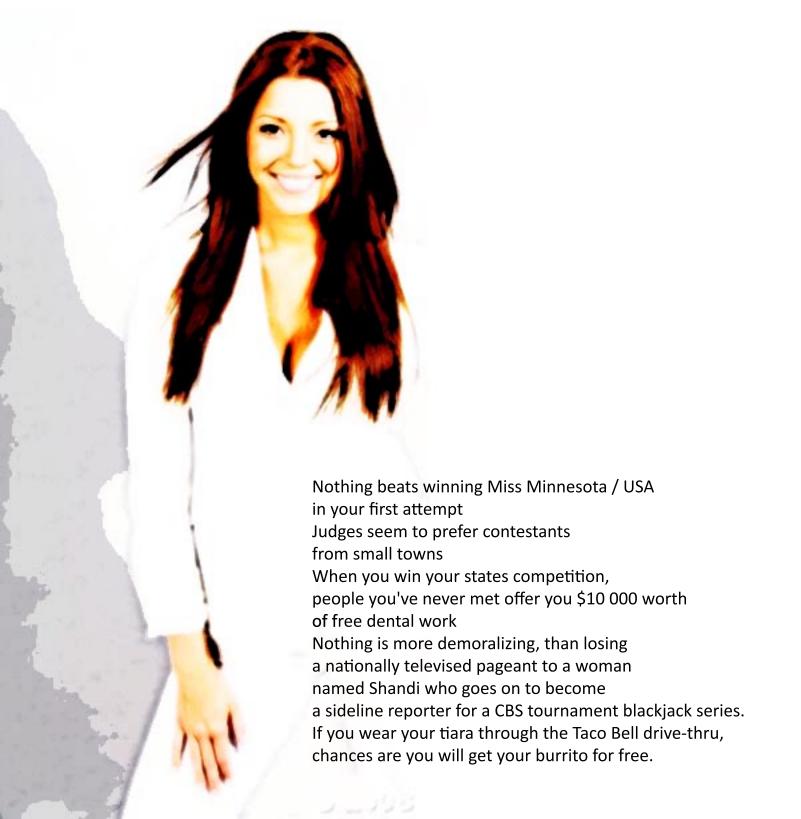
TURN A DEAF Dichos In And Out Of Love

Richard Broderick, Tr.

Jessica Dereschuk, Ms Minnesota / USA

Two poems by Danny Klecko

What you learn working a tradeshow booth next to a beauty queen





Mickey Carroll, birthname Michael Finocchiaro, shown left.



What you learn working a tradeshow booth next to a Munchkin

At 18 he appeared in shows with Mae West.

While under contract with MGM he went to school with Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney. It was Garland who actually invited him onto the Oz set.

He marched as a Munchkin soldier, and was a candy striped fiddler

that escorted Dorothy down the yellow brick road towards Emerald City.

After retiring, he worked charities to raise money for the St Louis Police Department.

This is where he met Cardinal slugger Mark McGwire. The two men became close friends.

When asked if he felt calling him a Munchkin was politically incorrect,

he responded "You are what you are, and I am a Munchkin."

Burning Desire Photo and poem by Mike Hazard



The rusty boat rests in the front yard of the late Walt Bresette (1947-99), just north of the Red Cliff Indian Reservation. He dreamed, dreams, we will fix it up and sail around Lake Superior to alert folks to the need to clean up the lake, "just like Pete Seeger and his sloop on the Hudson River."

He was a chubby Chippewa with a sacred fire in his belly. One night on the phone, while hearing how he came to have the serious duty of keeping Black Hawk's war club, my house began to smell like burning rubber. I finally had to go look around. The moment I hung up, the acrid odor of burnt rubber disappeared like smoke. The fire was in the telephone. Ogichida Anishinaabe, Walt Bresette, a.k.a. Makoonse, Toivo Karhu and Bubba, elfin leader of ALF, Anishinaabeg Liberation Front, buddies with the Jolly Lama and Weynabuddha, who signed his letters, "X", like a treaty, who used Black Hawk's war club to count coup in a war for the sacred fire for the seventh generation, cried on the phone, "I'm not burning out, I'm firing up." He was a chubby Chippewa with a sacred fire in his belly.



You Are Now Leaving Pioneer Valley

Gavin Corey

If you drifted down the Mass Pike long enough

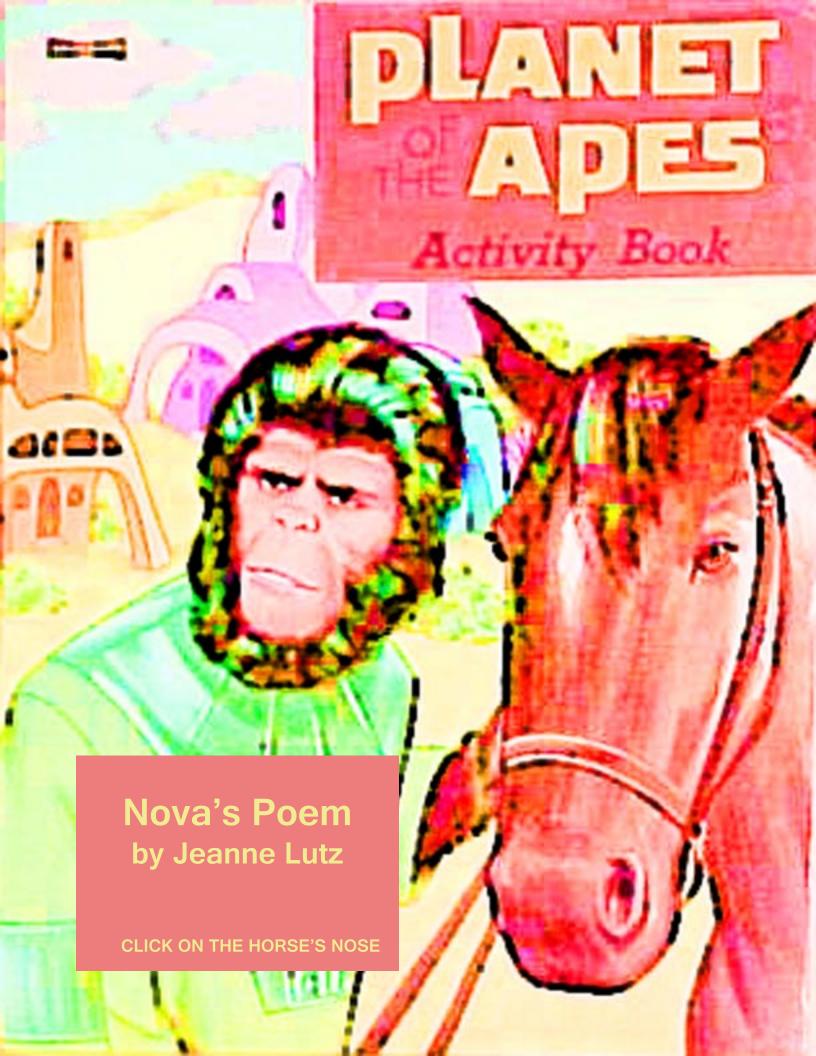
And coasted off an exit, you would see a sign

"Granite for sail."

Last time I went there,
They changed it.







Two Poems by Tim J. Brennan

After I Die

No need to bury me; just lay me down in weeds, face up so I can look at the moon as I try to remember what the hell I did to get to such a place so far from home.



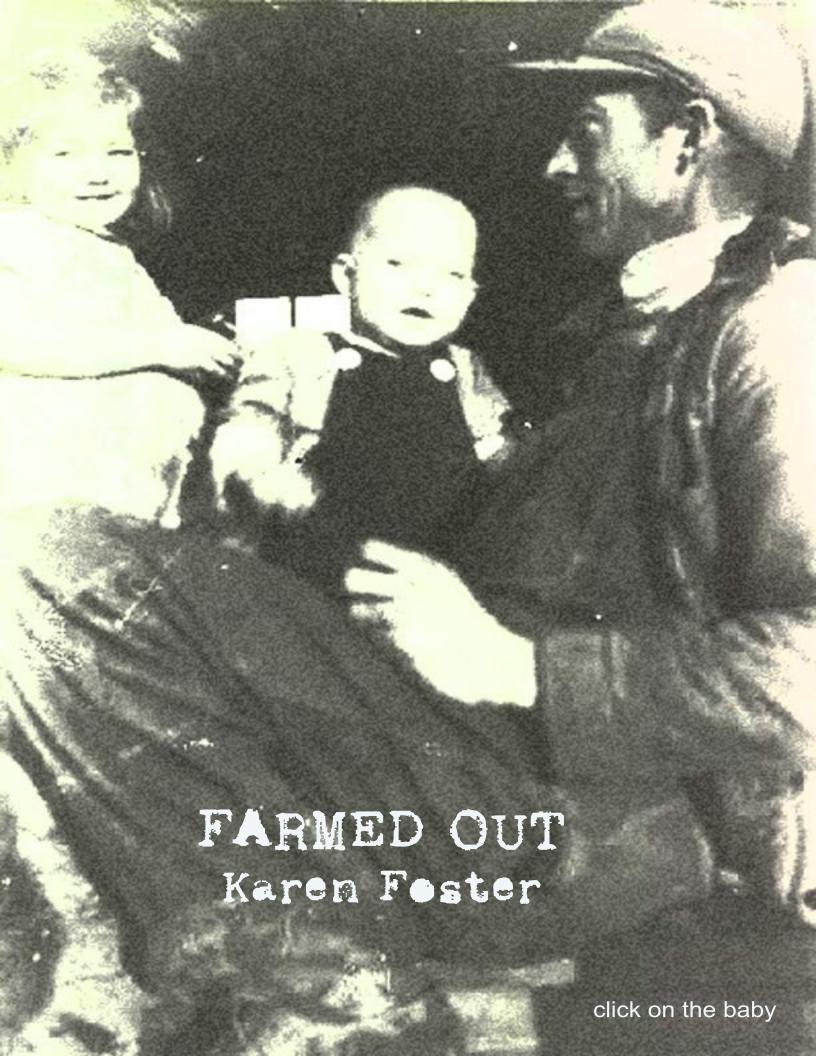


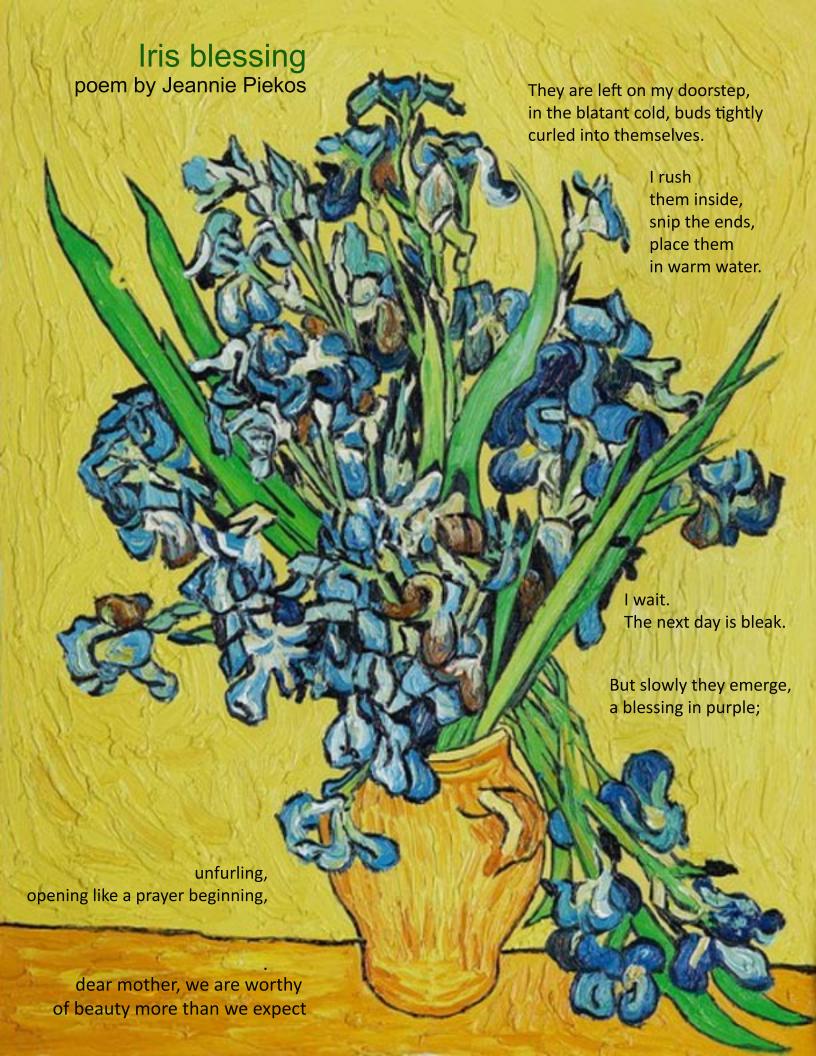
My 1984

The soft looking waitress slid a piece of French silk pie across the acrylic table at 3:30 am, filled your coffee mug like you were a recovering alcoholic.

It was 1984 and she wore that erotic orange serving outfit when she asked you to hold your cup still up over the pie; hell, holding your breath wasn't nothing like holding a real woman, but when you came back the next evening after the Lit. final only to be told Julia had quit, you wished there were ways to watch which way she had left your life for good.







Two Poems by Tim Nolan

Roasted Chicken

I'm writing this on the cutting board after one hour of the Amish chicken roasting in the oven.

How can I say this other than directly?—
He is beautiful—brown and still cooking here

On the cutting board—he's so beautiful—all fat in the breast—his legs sticking out—I salted him

All over—upside and down—in the dark cavity of him—the salt draws in the moisture of him.

Praise to his little absent brain—his beak—his pecking intentions for the bit of grain—I'm sorry

But hungry—writing here in red ink—the splotched grease of him—smeared here with my words—





Gettysburg

Remember how we got out of the car at 1:30 a.m. in the foggy heat and passed along the sidewalks through the seminary campus and out to the field? That field where Pickett made his charge. And do you remember how it was a time of ghosts everywhere rising with the hot dew? And you were a little boy and I was much younger than I am now—leaner and we walked a ways into the field the crickets and hoppers jumping up before our feet and we didn't talk at all all the way across the field and when we went far enough a certain distance I said something and you agreed and so we turned back.

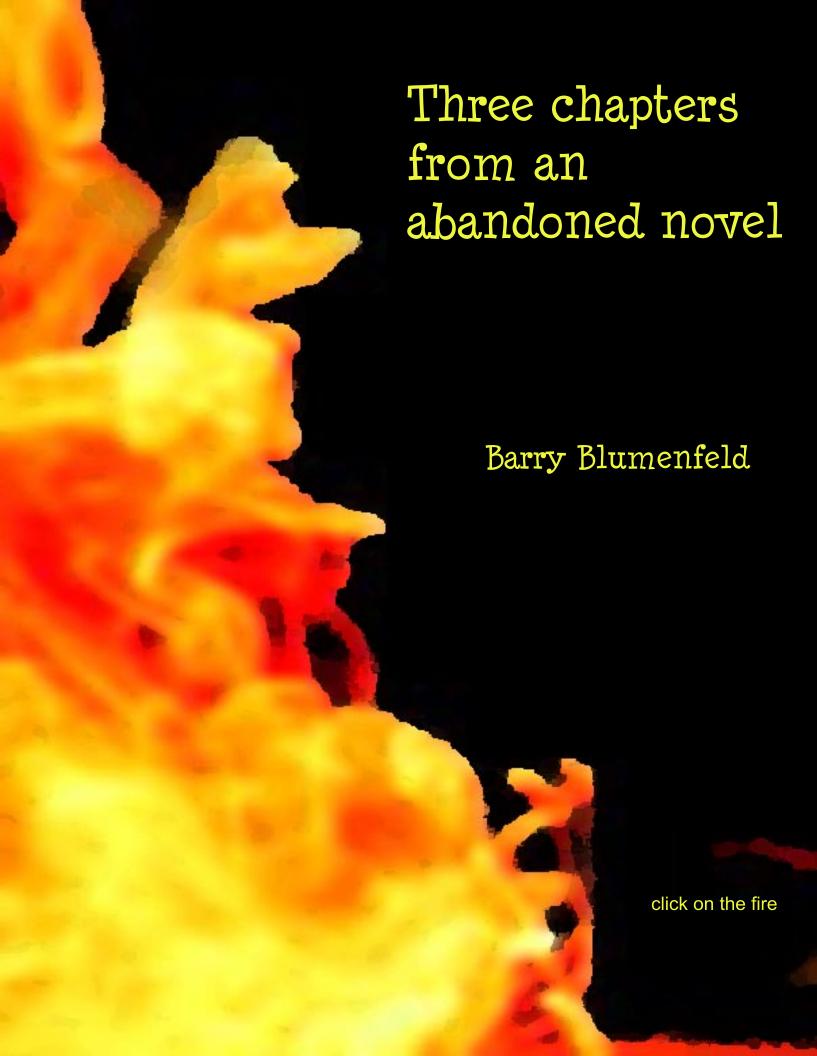




Milk Stout

John Burroughs

your tight calves
your loose thighs
and the way you fondle
your short gold lager
make me wanna
introduce myself
and serve you
a tall left hand





Congratulations, Kevin!

A poet's harp, made of the breastbone of his muse, sings the Unnamable

by Kevin O'Rourke, Winner, First Place (\$1,000.00 prize): 2nd annual WOMR/WFMR Outermost Poetry Contest Kevin was the 2012 recipient of our KPV Kerouac Award. Marge Piercy was judge of the competition.



Sixteen years old, too young to utter G-d's name, midway across the bridge to the Underworld, Jack held John Berryman's jacket when he jumped and broke his body on the rocks below.



When Sylvia in her London flat put her head in the oven,
Jack placed towels to keep gas from seeping
beneath the door of the children's room
where they were sleeping



Jack heard the saddest poet who ever sang of love spin the chamber and pull the trigger.

Seagulls cried Brautigan Brautigan and circled above oceans of watermelon sugar.



Jack recited last rites for Anne Sexton, and absolved her of bipolar-driven sins when she closed the garage door and started up her car within.



Jack breathed New York City smog
as Dylan Thomas inhaled his pneumonia.
Jack drank Glenlivet in the fog,
as Welshman's wet brain swelled within his cranium.



Jack raised Kerouac's last empty to the light as he drowned in esophageal blood.

Saw the beat poet's ghost trapped, so Jack shattered the glass and released Kerouac's Dharma to the road.



Jack sat beside Woody Guthrie's bed in Creedmoor asylum, and gently squeezed his hand. He exhaled his last breath . . . poet's mind and body becoming this land.



Jack stood at the crossroads at midnight learning blues poems from Robert Johnson.

When the devil showed up, shook hands all around, then Old Nick and Robert went on down.



Jack sang Sundance songs as he mopped up brains of Iron Range communist and friend Al Nurmi, salvaged his manuscripts of poems and tall tales from the public-assistance high-rise.



In the alley behind the Memphis blood bank
Jack's old mentor chants The Idea of Ancestry and recites toasts.
When he drank, he crapped his pants and stank.
Jack still tells lies to Etheridge Knight's ghost.



Formative Years

Kevin M. Hibshman

My mom called me today to tell me that my third-grade reading teacher had passed away, age 73.

I flashed back to a vague memory of her.

I admired her because she was a true rebel in a town that frowned on any hint of nonconformity.

I already knew I was destined for a life of breaking rules and bending codes and she was living proof one could attempt to do just that and still carve some kind of niche in a hateful, oppressive atmosphere.

She wore huge fake finger nails painted in lurid colors and sported short, spiky hair tinged purplish-red years before anyone thought up punk rock.

Her chunky jewelry and the peace sign posters in her classroom made her an icon.

The best project we did under her tutelage was making a collective book of haikus which we tie-dyed psychedelic covers for.

I still have mine.











Pink Cadillac

D. E. Green

She was scurrying through the downpour toward the pink Cadillac-the best romances always have lots of rain, for atmosphere, a writer once told me. So I knew, before the turning of a page, that the book would satisfy me, that the water running up and back in windshield streams would lead to love, that the pink-finned antique car spelled sex, the kind you don't get everyday. That's the kind of world I want to live in, not the one where I have to worry about putting potatoes on the table and tucking the kids in every night. What about desire? What about romance? What about songbirds? Why aren't we living in that book? Why isn't every living page crammed with rain and lust and a pink Cadillac?

Mrs. McGillicuddy in Rome

by Mike Finley

My sister Kathy, when she was thirteen, put on plays in our old brick garage, in the apple orchard in Ohio where our family rented a house.

Kathy was a
"bluebaby," a
cyanotic, born
with a leaky heart
valve, a condition
that would be
surgically treatable
a couple years
after she was
born. Cyanotic
meant her skin
was a kind of red
violet in color. She
was not ugly; in

it was Brian's idea to put on a play.

We set up lawn furniture ion the concrete apron by the garage door. A bedsheet draped

from the garage door was the curtain.
Perhaps fifteen neighbors, who knew about Kathy's condition, showed up for the play, held on a sunny spring afternoon in 1959.

fact she was a pretty girl, cheerful despite her weak heart, enthusiastic despite the death sentence nature had handed her.

Kathy had a friend at the same end of Park
Avenue as us, named Brian Stashick, a good
looking boy with a nice sense of humor. He
and Kathy played together like girlfriends, and

The play was called *Mrs. McGillicuddy In Rome*, about a lady from Hartford who acts highhandedly on a trip to Europe. Brian played the purser on the transatlantic crossing. The playlet was really just a series of exasperating moments, in which Mrs.

McGillicuddy snippily explained what she was

entitled to as an American tourist, while Brian gulped and attempted to comply with her demands, to great comic effect. There were numerous moments of confusion, slow burns and telling asides to the audience.

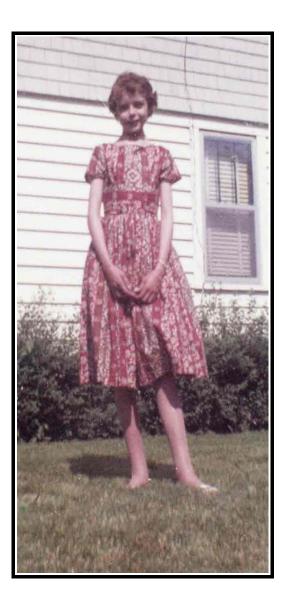
The two young actors were both very good, having learned their lines and determined to be troopers. People whistled and clapped enthusiastically from their folding chairs.

I remember this because I have a photograph somewhere from the play — I wish I could locate it today. In the picture, Kathy, frail but pretty, is standing with her hands on her hips, badgering Brian in her high-breaking voice about where to set the luggage. Brian, wearing blue jeans and a striped T-shirt, gives as well as he gets.

It is a favorite picture. It reminds me that, though Kathy knew she had already outlived her life expectancy, she was determined to have fun and leave a mark. She did so until May 5, 1961, the day she died, age fifteen. She remains, after all these years, the inspiration of my life.

Brian would go on to be a high school thespian, do a tour of duty in Vietnam, and find work in commercials and soap operas. I have tried to contact him but been unable to.

I wish I could tell him thank you, for being such a fine friend to Kathy, for making her happy, for being the only man she would know in her life.



Hidden Falls



Mike Finley



i want you to love me

as neruda loved mathilde:
in metaphor — soil, wood, and sound
and the sea's subtle changes —
in a foreign tongue, like wood,
sounds of wood in the words,
meterless, beyond language
defiant. boisterous.

brave.

translatable.

for the big one, who got away
Chansonette Buck, 12/10/03

