

Editor's Note —

After this issue's efforts to lighten our post-election collective mood, let's go dark again. The subject for the summer issue is **Race in these United States**; how do you feel about Susan Sontag's famous line "...The white race is the cancer of human history"? Please send work about race to Karnit@LMI.net or to Kayla Sussell, 420-45th Street, Oakland, CA 94609. Poems can be as long as 60 lines and prose can run up to 950 words. The deadline is **June 15, 2017**.

Readers interested in seeing the winner of the vulgar verse contest from the Politics issue, please turn to page 3.

— Kayla Sussell

Sin

It is Ramadan in Akçakoca
which means we can't get
into a bank for the next ten days.

From our room we can hear
the Black Sea which isn't black
at all. Karen says *Must be named
for the bobbing abayas*.
I laugh, but say *That's terrible*.

We are so proud of ourselves,
how we respect customs.
At the Vatican we covered our shoulders
that sweltering day in the basilica.

Here, we cover our hair with the same scarves.
At the beach we don't sunbathe, we wait
to drop our towels at the waterline and sprint,
leaping over waves till we're neck deep.

Our bikinis are too small.
The husbands wear identical red Speedos
and smoke cigars under
bright matching umbrellas.

The wives are drowning in burqas
as they teach the children to swim.
We think we are not condescending
to feel sorry for them.

When we race to wrap our beach towels
their eyes burn our backs hotter
than the sun on our heads, long after
Ramadan is over and the buses
have carried us away.

— Debra McQueen

I wore this dress today for you, mom

breezy floral, dancing with color
soft, silky, flows as I walk.
Easter Sunday and you always liked

to get dressed, go for brunch, "maybe
there's a good movie playing somewhere?"
Wrong religion, we were not church-goers,

but New Yorkers who understood the value
of a parade down 5th Avenue, bonnets
in lavender, powder blues, pinks, hues

of spring, the hope it would bring.
We had no religion but we did have
noodle kugel, grandparents, dads

who could fix fans, reach the china
on the top shelf, carve the turkey.
That time has passed. You were the last

to go, mom, and I still feel bad I never
got dressed up for you like you wanted me to.
I had things, things to do. But today in L.A.

hot the way you liked it -- those little birds
you loved to see flitting from tree to tree --
just saw one, a twig in its mouth, preparing

a bed for its baby -- might still be an egg,
I wish you were here. I've got a closet filled
with dresses I need to show you.

— Kim Dower

From the book, *Last Train to the Missing Planet*
published by Red Hen Press, 2016.



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Workshop Schedule

CRAZY CHILD WRITING WORKSHOPS

Set your creative inner self free to write with abandon.

(fee: \$80 or any donation)

Saturdays 10am - 5pm

April 15, Oakland	May 13, Oakland
June 3, Benicia	July 1, Kentfield

MIDDLETOWN CRAZY CHILD WORKSHOP

(fee: \$50 or any donation)

Sundays: April 16 and May 14 10am to 5 pm

To register: email Lisa Kaplan at MiddletownArtCenter@gmail.com

10-WEEK WORKSHOP

(fee: \$400 per session)

poetry prose plays nonfiction

Wednesdays 6:30 to 9:30 pm Temescal District, Oakland
Current session ends May 3 — New session starts May 10

Fridays 10am to 1pm Temescal District, Oakland
Current session ends April 7 — New session starts April 14

EXPLORING YOUR CREATIVE WRITING POTENTIAL

(fee: \$595 for a 10-week U.C. Berkeley Extension class)

Held at the American Baptist Seminary of the West, Room 103

Tuesdays 6:30 to 9:30pm June 6 to August 15

To register: (510) 642-4111 or extension.berkeley.edu/search/

Class #: **ENGLISH X438-18**

2-BUSY 2-WRITE

drop-in writing time

(fee: \$20 or any donation, like healthy cookies)

Alternate Tuesdays from April 11 on, 7 to 9 pm Temescal District, Oakland

MARIN POETRY GROUP

(fee: \$400 for 10 weeks)

Meets Thursdays starting May 4 7 to 9 pm in Kentfield

Limited to five vetted poets — submit to clive@matsonpoet.com

THE NOVEL'S ARC

(fee: \$500 for five sessions)

Four novelists read each other's novels and examine how each works as a whole. Two-hour session devoted to each novel. Sessions will be arranged when four authors declare their readiness. Dates, time, and location to be determined.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
matsonpoet.com or phone (510) 508-5149**

POETRY SALOON (drunk on poetry!)

Second Fridays at 472 44th Street, Oakland
Potluck at 6pm, readings start at 7:30pm

*Bring poems or prose by you or others to share,
or come just to enjoy.*

April 14 ~ May 12 ~ June 9 ~ July 14

Hosted by Kayla Sussell

THE SCRIBBLER PREVIOUS-ISSUE FINANCIAL REPORT

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~ * ~

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

Workshop participants receive the Scribbler for two years and as long as the recipient shows interest. To get on the mailing list, send an email with your name and mailing address to: clive@matsonpoet.com
Subscriptions may also be purchased for \$5.00 per year. Checks may be made out to Clive Matson and mailed to THE SCRIBBLER, 472 44th St., Oakland, CA 94609

SUBMISSIONS

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The CRAZY CHILD Scribbler

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Forget for a Moment

that the wind last night blew a pine branch
across the back of your car and the mailman
gave up his job in front of your house, throwing the mail,

boxes of mail, and the key to his truck up into the wet
wind,
and walked down the hill, shedding his uniform, shoes,
socks
all but his shorts with red ants on them before cornering
out of sight –

well, maybe you'll want to remember that.
When the fire crackles low in the grate
and good friends are gathered like clothespins in a basket,

maybe you'll want to tell them
about the red ants. The disbelief in their eyes,
the envy that they missed such a pageant –

– C. B. Follett

Tanka #279

The straightest of straight arrows.
"Don't you care
anything about me?"
"Dan, I care more about my clothes
than I care about you."

– Dan Gellepes

Vulgar Verse Contest Winner

Troika

There once was a New Yorker called Donald
Who paid good money to get fondled.
 He grew tired of this
 And opted for piss
To be delivered by three Russian models.

– Sandra Fonville

My Father's Siblings Speak

They wanted him buried in red,
bold hue for magnetic charm,
sharp shirt of party politics, proud allegiance
to the people who pledged no rescue
from a stark and perishable hope.

Crimson, they cried, a pigment to flood
his face, carry the stout bloom
of memories erased by gaunt lines,
moments unbowed to the brute
of cancerous disease.

But I stood firm, chose
a crisp white shirt, black suit,
a tie that commended no praise.

For the father I knew had trudged
a past stripped of joy, stung
by sorrow, with regret
a stone in his soles.

And dying should be an honest work,
and leaving a naked goodbye –
no bright star remembrance
or shelter of sun on my skin,
just a blur of broken color
with lonely the prettiest shade.

– Naila Francis

Closure

Today I clean out the closet.
Close the final chapter in my "Book of Boobs,"
end the saga "Breasts, Interrupted."
The last remaining brassiere in my chest of drawers,
still in perfect shape, is headed to Goodwill.
May the lovely cups find a good home,
a new B-size pair to have and to hold.

– Edna Shochat

~ ❄ ~

Red Shoes

My mother sits in the living room,
wearing her red shoes.
"Call 911," she says.
"I'm too weak to move.
And be sure to bring my red purse
to the hospital. It matches my red shoes."

"Is your mom okay?"
the neighbors ask. "We saw
the ambulance take her away.
She smiled at us, waved
like she was off for a cruise.
She looked so cute in her red shoes."

In intensive care she asks,
"What did they do with my red shoes?"
Lucy, look in that cabinet
and under the bed.
They were in a bag with my clothes.
I don't want to lose my red shoes."

Mom, I'd like to take you for a walk
in your red shoes. We could stroll
down Piedmont Avenue,
but you have something better to do.
You're already dancing
beyond the moon, in your red shoes.

— Lucille Lang Day

From *Wild One: Poems* (2000).
First published in *The Hudson Review*.

Shoes

when you're young
a pair of
female
high-heeled shoes
just sitting
alone
in the closet
can fire your
bones;
when you're old
it's just
a pair of shoes
without
anybody
in them
and
just as
well.

— Charles Bukowski

Pajamas

I took one pair not thinking
they would fit, but they did.
Cotton, green with thin, white and purple stripes,
pull-string bottoms,
they still carry your smell of Nina Ricci.
I wear them on hard days
when missing you hits me
like hard weather,
and on easier days too when
I think I can be strong again.
I am especially careful
and hand wash them so as not
to wear them out because
what will I do then?

— yvonne leach

Delight in Disorder

A sweet disorder in the dresse
Kindles in cloathes a wantonnesse:
A Lawne about the shoulders thrown
Into a fine distraction:
An erring Lace, which here and there
Enthralls the Crimson Stomacher:
A Cuffe neglectfull, and thereby
Ribbands to flow confusedly:
A winning wave (deserving Note)
In the tempestuous petticoat:
A careless shooe-string, in whose tye
I see a wilde civility:
Doe more bewitch me, then when Art
Is too precise in every part.

— Robert Herrick, 1591 - 1674

~ ❄ ~

Should Have Been a Boy

She should have been a left-handed cowboy
But her mother wouldn't hear of it
Although she let the girl cross-dress
without slapping the offending boots, hat
holsters and gun every time
they reached out for approval

Now it's dreams where she has a penis
and cowboy boots that keep the boy alive
He breathes even under the six feet of dirt
shoveled by conformity

She feels him stir as she slips feet into boots
Toes no longer pointed into stirrups
where slant of high heel secured them
Where they'd ride the range, corrals
and cow trails far from patted-down
town roads and city pavement

Here they look up into mini-skirt
sarong or business suit
They fly to foreign countries and attend
formal dinner dances
Yet still squeeze black jeans into a yearning
Not for the rhinestone studded
confetti colored cowboy boot stampede
in Nashville, Melrose Place or Fifth Avenue
But for the Montana boy in her

The boy keeps her grounded in bloodlines
that seep through country soil
Pulls her back to where cowboy boots
hold up spurs and stop saddle chafing
Where they pound dirt into dust
mud into muck and snow into slush
Powerful enough to be declared
a lethal weapon in a Montana court of law
But the boy isn't concerned
He'll always be underage

— Ellaraine Lockie

Previously published in *Main Street Rag*

~ ❁ ~

Blue Silk and Lace

Earnings from a summer spent
file-clerking bought the floor-length
blue silk gown, negligee with trim
of ivory lace and matching
high-heeled mules. She trembled
with excitement as she paid the clerk.

After its debut on the wedding night,
that ensemble came to dwell
in the make-shift closet of their
student apartment – vintage
flowered drapes stretched across
one wall of the tiny bedroom.

Through grad-school her wardrobe
was mostly Beatnik black. She became
disdainful of glamour. Life revolved
around his physics problems,
her papers on influences of Whitman,
poetry of Baudelaire.

It was years later, when closets
had sliding doors with mirrors
and she had become middle-aged,
that she came upon the blue silk
hanging with out-of-season clothes.
It had traveled with her coast to coast.

Indulging a moment of nostalgia,
she stripped to her skin
and slipped on the gown, the negligee,
tucked toes into the mules
and admired herself from all angles
in the expanse of mirrors.

Silk against bare skin, an all-but-forgotten
pleasure. She liked what she saw.
Something she had almost schooled
out of herself reemerged – the courage
sensuality bestows, power that comes
with feeling beautiful.

— Linda Whittenberg

~ ❁ ~

New Shoes

What fine new shoes.
How elegant and light and unscuffed;
such craftsmanship.
What have you done with your old ones?

Those intrepid explorers
protected you from all miles
of scorch and gravel,
puddles and filth.
That comfort of slipping into
your own footprints
You believed they made you more
successful, creative,
sturdy than you felt.
For most occasions, perfect.

But now you have these.
They were so clean and so right
when you imagined wearing them.
They were what you needed
for the man you are becoming,
and the circumstances
in which you expect
to find yourself.
You are sure they will soften with time.

Or perhaps it is you
who will wake one morning to find
you walk differently now
and those tender places are gone.

— Heather Duffy

As I Travel to Key West

I'm wearing clothes that are
too big, too loose:
turquoise stretch jeans
sliding down my hips,
a huge-shouldered jacket
painted with fish.
Even my watch with its
bold glass beads, face
a flamenco dancer.
Even my golden ring
so wide
it catches light through
the airplane window,
almost reflects how I'm
far past fifty,
a mother leaving her
children at home,
a woman comfortable
flying south in winter,
a little big,
a little loose.

— Katharyn Howd Machan

"You are what you wear"

--Style Authority Curtis Ormand

Pants To Die For

a charmed pair:
texture so smooth
fit so perfect
you wear them till they shred

crotch worn thin
any time now it may disintegrate
holes in the butt and legs
an embarrassment
to be seen in by your friends

yet your un-chic days
remain interwoven with
this fabric you love to stroke
this cut that holds you snug

despite the tattered pockets
and ragged hems
a joy to stand or sit in

the pants you're prepared to die in
when your time comes

— R. Yurman

Stripper Style

I want a purse just like
the glittery pink box
strippers put the bills in.

A wig of thick long black hair,
tattoos like travel stickers,
peeking over boot-top.

Vanilla musk, kohl liner,
glitter shadow, vulva-red lipstick,
ankle bracelet, toe ring.

A garter belt with lace panties,
(not a thong or g-string—
my intergluteal cleft says no thanks.)

Alligator clips to hold up
black fishnets. A sapphire
in my navel describing circles.

I bought a pair of lucite heels,
just to lie on my back in them,
wave translucent feet in the air.

— Jan Steckel

Her Burial Gown

. . . was an out-of-season garment. The bruised color of storm clouds ready to drench an orchard, but warm as she had instructed:

*I haven't worn a dress in years;
a pant-suit doesn't set the proper tone.
Just bury me in a nice warm robe.*

Only ninety, she was not yet ill.
I jokingly brought out my quilted silk.
That firm shake of her head,

*Not pink. And with a higher neck.
Warm. Like robes we wore
back home in winter.*

Then she went and died in April
when flannel robes had given way
to poplin.

We found one on an end-of-season
sales rack. (She would have liked
our getting such a bargain.)

The garment's indigo dignity
softened by a springtime scarf looked
lovely with the whiteness of her hair.

Winter comes and I push fists deep
into the pockets of my own warm robe,
pause to imagine of her there somewhere

cozy in her final winter gown.

—Yvonne Postelle

Silk Stockings

At four, we learned to make dresses for our dolls
out of the tops of our mother's thigh-high stockings,

the silk soft and whispery. I remember
the short dresses she wore in the old pictures,

the vivid green, the once trendy polyester.
My sister and I cut off the upper ends of stockings

that shimmered, learned how to thread the needle
through the delicate silk, stitched it so it didn't pull,

gathered it around the chest of the five-inch dolls
an aunt had brought us. We made more outfits,

a cloak with a train, a veil, and learned to treasure scraps
of fabric like our mother who wove a new carpet

out of old clothes she had cut carefully
into a strand then knotted together into blocks of color.

— Lucia Cherciu

~ * ~

The Blue Cape

The woman believes in magic and miracles and that what she loses will be given back. When she cleans out her closet she finds her blue cape, missing for years. She wraps herself in its dark wool, feels her shoulders shift fragile as a bird's wings. So many memories in the fabric with its frayed collar, torn lining. She empties the dark pockets of coins and Kleenex. There's a story behind the missing button.

When the woman steps outside, the cape slips from her shoulders and flies off down the street. It flaps for hours in the wind, then hangs itself on a hook at an all night pancake house, yearns for someone to take it home and send it to the cleaners. No more living at the bottom of a closet under heavy shoes. For three days the cape holds on, only to have a janitor stuff it into a rag bag. On top of the heap the cloak waits for a window to be opened, then lifts itself up and out.

The woman wakes one morning with the lint of dream sticking to her night clothes. She sees her old cape hanging on the door and knows she gets a second chance. From her bed she lifts her hand in the air, waves hello to her new life.

— Lara Gularte

NEWS FLASH

In Sept. 2017, Clive Matson, Brenda Frazer (Bonnie Bremser), Eila Kokkinen and Jerry Poynton will present at the Paris conference of the European Beat Studies Network, and discuss their friendship with Herbert Huncke, the inspiration of the Beat Generation. Clive will also premier his new long poem, *HELLO PARADISE. PARADISE GOOD-BYE*. To see updates and the list of fund-raising events over the next months, see matsonpoet.com or Clive's Facebook pages: CliveMatson **and also** MatsonPoet.

THE SCRIBBLER may also be found online (with a touch of color) at matsonpoet.com. If you wish to stop receiving the print version, please notify us at clive@matsonpoet.com.

HIGHWAY 395

August 5-13 at Pine Cliff Resort
June Lake, Lee Vining, California
Fee \$700

(\$50 discount to the first three people who register)

For information **and to register**, check out Clive's "Excursions" webpage under the Instruction tab at <http://matsonpoet.com>.

Don't miss the **NEWS FLASH** on page 7.
For the June 4 fund raiser, call Clive.

THE SCRIBBLER

Total expenses: **\$508.50**
Total income from donors: \$561 (*thank you*)

PLEASE DONATE
to keep the publication going.

Writing Costa Rica

TWO SESSIONS IN FEB. 2018

Register by October 1, 2017

Cost: \$1,400 per session
\$100 discount for taking both sessions
(*single occupancy: \$1800*)

(*The 2017 sessions lasted a total of 15 days. Stay tuned to Clive's website for details to come.*)

Clive Matson, Facilitator

To register: (510) 508-5149 or
clive@matsonpoet.com

More information at: matsonpoet.com/Costa-Rica
and www.NosaraRetreat.com

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