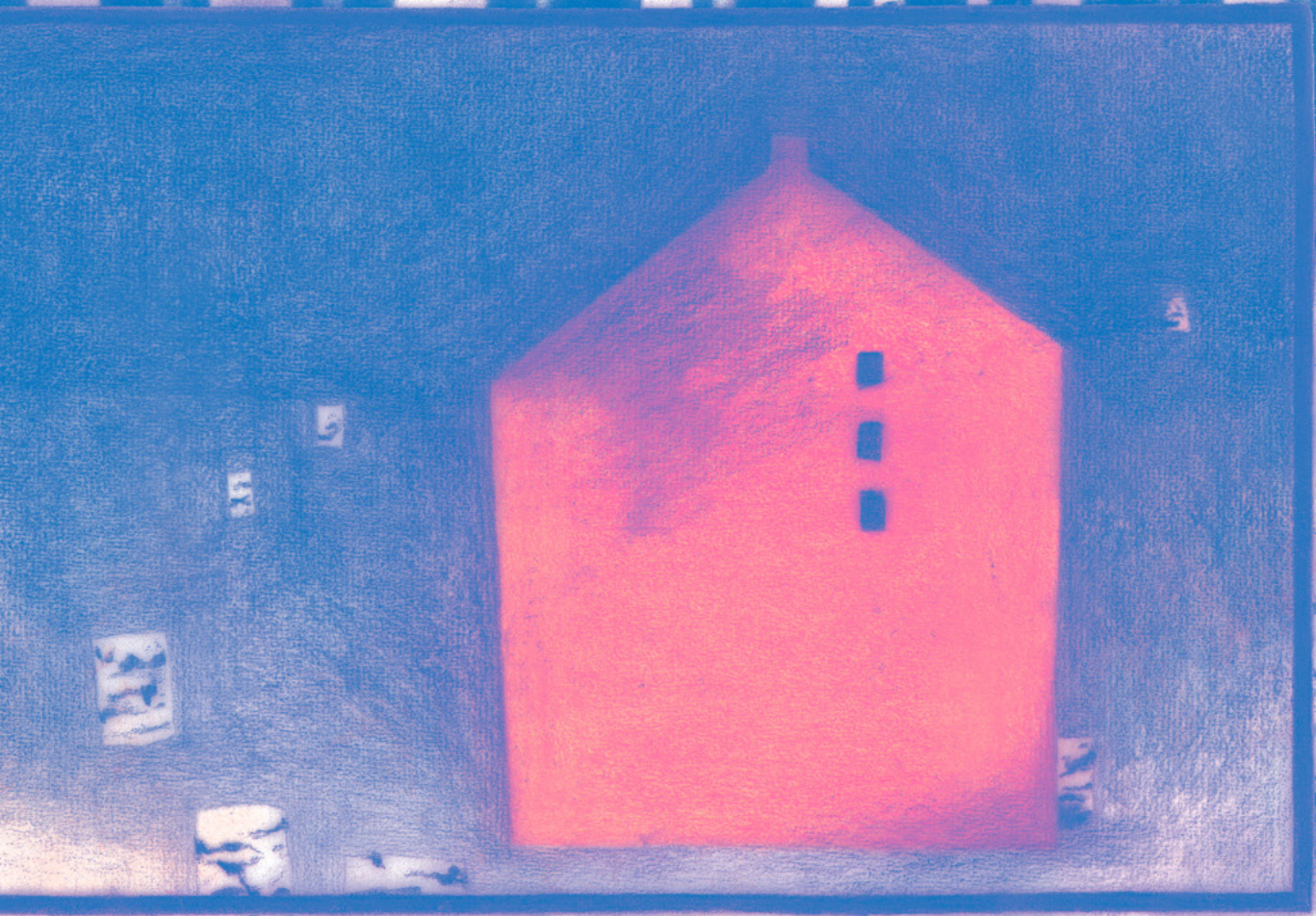


an eco-urban poetry journal
sprout



SHADE

ISSUE 3

an eco-urban poetry journal
sprout 

Issue Three:
SHADE

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Table of Contents

Editorial <i>Kirby Manià and Dimitra Xidou</i>	4
Put down your work, put off dinner <i>Jean Janicke</i>	10
Degrees of Light <i>Adrienne Stevenson</i>	11
standard bearer <i>Sue Woodward</i>	12
Two Neighborhoods – 1960s Pittsburgh <i>Heather Wishik</i>	13
Burn <i>Mary Elizabeth Birnbaum</i>	14
The South Bronx Sea <i>Gregory Haber</i>	15
The Sunset Clause <i>Sible Ntuli</i>	16
Heading Home <i>Erica Bartholomae</i>	17
In the Shade of Some Newly Planted Thing <i>Anna Rowntree</i>	19
Tell me, what are you most afraid of? <i>Deborah Leipziger</i>	21
Three Acts in November Rain Play <i>Tricia Knoll</i>	22
Shade <i>Mary Salome</i>	23
Meditations	
The Sacrifice Zones of a Broiling Planet <i>Edith and Jolly de Guzman</i>	26
Ultraviole(n)t: On Adrienne Stevenson’s “Degrees of Light” and Mary Elizabeth Birnbaum’s “Burn” <i>Stéphane Verlet-Bottéro</i>	27
A Meditation on Issue 3 <i>Paul Currie</i>	29
Contributor Biographies	31



SHADE: Editorial

For SPROUT's third issue, the editors were inspired by The Nature of Cities' (TNOC) recent art exhibition, Shade, and invited contributors to draw on the exhibition's virtual installation as a conceptual springboard to contemplate the theme of shade through a poetic lens. We asked poets to reflect on the role shade plays in the built environment, particularly focusing on shade equity—i.e., how shade can make more inclusive spaces in the city, or, conversely, how the lack thereof can create inhospitable, hostile spaces. We were interested in soliciting work that considered shade from ecological, architectural, and environmental justice points of view.

In our first completely open call, we encouraged contributors to visit the virtual exhibit of TNOC's Shade and wander through the installation of featured artists' umbrellas (manifesting different interpretations of shade). Curated by community-based arts organisation, Arroyo Arts, the exhibition welcomed emerging and established artists to use repurposed umbrellas as their canvas to explore the themes of shade, heat, nature, and climate change. One of the prompts provided to guide visual artists for the Shade exhibit—which we, too, found helpful—read as follows:

In a warming world, shade equity is an issue that disproportionately affects low-income and working-class communities, people of color, and communities in developing nations who are more likely to work outdoors, rely on public transportation, and live in denser neighborhoods with a lack of trees and shade. As the climate changes and heat waves become longer, more intense, and more frequent, what was once thought primarily as an aesthetic amenity is increasingly recognized as a way of protecting the public health and well-being of marginalized communities. Urban heat causes more deaths than all other weather-related causes combined in an average year, and yet providing shade can be simple and effective and can be done in many creative ways including tree planting, bus stop sheds, and awnings, to name a few.

Our issue's treatment of shade reveals poems that chart the course of light and dark (in other words, the movement of shade), through the course of the day. They play with the idea of how shade shifts and maps itself over urban (and some less urban) spaces. The issue begins with Jean Janicke's poem inviting us to take action, asking us to put down what we're doing and "Hurry" in order to not miss the sun lining up through the tree canopy in a transient moment where light communicates through the morse code of shade. Movement and the turning of the earth as light and



dark alternate is then carried through to Adrienne Stevenson's poem, "Degrees of Light", which sustains the ambivalence of both time standing still, with the sun at its noon-day height, and then its corresponding advancement into the shaded violet of night.

The heat of the day with its absence of shade appeared to interest a number of contributors and this is picked up further in Sue Woodward's "standard bearer (dawn at eselfontein)". The poem follows man and dog, walking from one farm to the next in the morning sun, as the shade spins around the axis of the man's vertical form. He is a flagpole, casting a giant shadow over his dog, which (ignoring for a moment the immediate relief it must provide to his dog) haunts the page with anthropocentric significance: what shadow do we, as humans, cast over the natural world through our activities? Like the blistering sun the farmer faces, Heather Wishik's diptych faces the topic of shade equity head on. In "Two Neighborhoods – 1960s Pittsburgh", Wishik presents two urban portraits: one with shaded affluence juxtaposed against that of the workers' treeless sidewalks that "burned children's bare feet". Mary Elizabeth Birnbaum's "Burn" seems to present a timely message on this front (with its description of "seeded flame rooted rage")—especially when forest fires and their attendant smoke and haze currently enshroud the northeastern seaboard of North America. Assuming a more transhistorical point of view, Gregory Haber's "The South Bronx Sea" contemplates the impact of settler colonial urban planning with the Bronx's lack of shade as a result of deforestation and industry: both "habitat and haven", which had previously been "gifted" by "soft pine and hard hornbeam", are now "sun-beat hardscapes" of "extirpated shade". Not all is lost though, as "rebellious rebirth" of the forests start to "plumb concrete cracks", seeing shade finally start to return to the city. Is this a way in which to begin remediating both nature and city of the harm engendered by mercantilist imperialism? What does this mean for its people?

This question seems to be taken up by the next two poems: Sihle Ntule's "The Sunset Clause" and Erica Bartholomae's "Heading Home"—both South African poets contemplating shade from a geopolitical perspective. These poems function dialogically, initiating conversation around the shade cast by the old dispensation of apartheid; both wondering whether the dawning of a new age is possible when the legacy of inequity runs so deep. Ntule's poem throws shade, figuratively, by raising the spectre of South Africa's fraught negotiated settlement in its transition to multiparty democracy (the "sunset clause" presenting a temporary power-sharing arrangement to end the political deadlock), whilst Bartholomae's poem reflects how—through the conceit of shade inequity—very little has substantively changed in the country. The editors mulled over the choice of wording in the final lines of the poem: "Wondering

how far she had to walk and if *this* country will ever / change" [our emphasis]. We found the use of the demonstrative pronoun ("this") over the possible possessive determiner ("our") interesting, and wondered what this could mean for the collective responsibility needed to overcome environmental racism. We invite our readers to allow themselves to be drawn into the world of this poem, and to sit with this discomfort.

In Anna Rowntree's, "In the Shade of Some Newly Planted Thing", a considered reflection on newness runs through the poem—"I didn't think to bring a blanket; / I am new to this too"; "little walk to the park, the sort of thing new mothers do"—and with it, a sharp focus emerges on its opposite; the opposite here points to what is missing, what is absent, and it extends beyond the line, "But there are no trees here, / No ancestral oak with an inheritance of shade". In the place of time, age, and growth (all of them absent in the missing inheritance of shade), the new offers up an "invented kind of place / Contrived for the likes of you and me". By contrast, Deborah Leipziger's "Tell me, what are you most afraid of?", growth (growing older: "Let me count my rings") and age (the active process of aging we are all involved in: "At last count, I am two hundred years old") are central to the offering of shade as both "protection" and "cover". In "Three Acts in November Rain Play", by Tricia Knoll, we experience the ordinary-ness of a day, through the eyes of someone who has "nowhere safe to go, no one expecting me". Safety and shade seem somehow linked here, and yet, ambiguity remains—nothing is ever made clear, leaving the reader slightly unsettled. By contrast, the issue ends with a short poem, by Mary Salome, that offers us insight into the "quiet offering of shade". It was a purposeful choice to close with this poem, reflecting how through optimism, collective action, and a renewed sense of responsibility and love (for community, habitat, ourselves and each other) we hope to work towards greener and more inclusive urban spaces despite the adversities we face in a world increasingly ravaged by the effects of environmental racism and climate change.

It is our aim with SPROUT to use poetry, and the space that poetry holds, to advance discussions about our cities' futures. Being a creative project of The Nature of Cities, from its inception, SPROUT is intended to be a space of convergence—a space where disciplines meet and where transdisciplinary conversations about the eco-urban through poetry take place. We view the medium of poetry, its form(s) and function(s), as providing a unique vantage point from which to initiate and allow these kinds of conversations to materialize and unfold. In the Meditations segment of each issue of the journal, we invite city practitioners (i.e., architects, academics, ecologists, civil servants, scientists, other artists) to consider and reflect on the works in the

current issue, translating the volume into the register of their own meaning-making of the city. In this issue, we offer you the opportunity to engage with meditations on shade, framed by the work contained within the issue. Edith and Jolly de Guzman (curators of TNOC's Shade exhibition), reflect on how amenities like shade are "defining a new era of climate injustice", while Stéphane Verlet-Bottéro, considers how poetry and the "poetic act opens interstices, margins, twilight zones", as a means to come to terms with the current state of the world. Finally, Paul Currie reflects on the "balancing act" of his work, describing it as being "on a tightrope between joy and despair". We are delighted that his meditation echoes the hopeful note we aimed to strike and end on; and, with that in mind, we leave the final words of this editorial to him: "joy is a more powerful motivator for myself and so, every day in these vignettes of life I am seeking, yes, the gaps, but also the nuggets of possibility".

Executive Editors
Kirby Manià and Dimitra Xidou



Put down your work, put off dinner

Jean Janicke

Hurry! You have to time it just right
to see the sun tunnel through a slot in the tree canopy,
as though the same spirit that once lined up stones and temples
bent the boughs to mark this moment in May.
Lift your face to the bright white beam.
Forget that next to you
a butterfly bush brushes a burnt orange Mini
and the parking lot lights have blinked on.
A plane murmurs overhead,
a siren rushes away,
and a bird mimics a car alarm,
sweet sweet, aha aha aha.

The sun dashes morse code through the leaves
and disappears.



Degrees of Light

Adrienne Stevenson

that moment when the earth rotates
into or out of night's blanket
defies understanding of colour
we can't see the ultraviolet
but notice when its close cousin
violet shades to dark
or lightens to dawn

that moment when time seems to stop
under a chafing, excoriating sun
that creeps up on the toiling masses
exposed in their daily labours
now noon lingers in deadly heat
all colours dim in deathly light
no shade available

standard bearer (dawn at eselfontein*)

Sue Woodward

early morning midsummer
the sun is an open furnace
the man and his dog are walking east
perhaps to the next farm
the dog trots in the shade of the man's bulk
moving to the front when the track curves
and the sun warms his master's back
the dog is the proud standard bearer
ears pricked tongue catching the breeze
until the road turns back on itself
and the shade is at the rear
hot light blinds their eyes
the man tugs at the brim of his hat
the standard droops
the bearer drops behind
trotting invisibly . . .
the man casts a giant shadow

*Donkey fountain

Two Neighborhoods – 1960s Pittsburgh

Heather Wishik

Shady Avenue

Between Wilkins and Fifth Avenues
lined with sycamores,
paved with Belgian cobbles,
racketed by squealing trolleys

The homes dark brick, substantial,
three stories plus a basement
set back behind landscaped front yards
separated by hedges from the sidewalk.

In the '60s, giant locusts and elms dotted the yards,
shaded the children splashing in plastic wading pools
when humidity and heat generated crankiness.

The Hill District

On the steep streets of the Hill District
apartments with small vertical windows steamed,
the sidewalks, treeless, burned children's bare feet.
No shade other than that cast by the buildings.

The women crossed the street to the shady side
as they trudged to the trolley stop on their way to
clean houses on Shady Avenue. Some carried
umbrellas to open against the sun, not rain.
Others patted their necks dry with colorful
handkerchiefs once they squeezed into a seat,
open windows offering a merciful breeze.

At work they would wet the kerchief
and wipe their brows, necks, elbow creases,
before the first task of the day — making the beds.

Burn

Mary Elizabeth Birnbaum

I had lost	constellations
in our cage of cars	the haze saying
they were only sparks	in a humid mouth
the city buzzed a story	all they needed
was fluorescence	in a glass window
the screen's clean	precision intervenes
to compel the eyes	real to machine vision
I can't touch learn	the forest its leaf flutter yet
feeds from green tunnels or	in some hidden season
has seeded flame rooted rage	and now breathes
only particulate ghosts	over the globe

The South Bronx Sea

Gregory Haber

A blacktop butte plays isthmus in Robert
Moses's parting of the South Bronx Sea
that sculpts new shoreline with the delicacy
of a drum and, like all erosion, without consent

from the rock at which it laps with apathy.
This novel geology funnels, filters. Exiles
of the asphalt flood retain berms of sun-
beat hardscapes, six-story islands stripped

of the soft pine and hard hornbeam that gifted
habitat and haven to the extirpated shade.
(Not the first; the Wappinger of Aquehung
shared village with bison and beaver before

the land and all it unified fell victim to colonial
industry). Yet forests grow, suppressed by exhaust
and exhaustion, just now emerging
after eighty years of rebellious rebirth.

Fueled by leaves feasting on surplus sun,
roots plumb concrete cracks seeking artesian wells
but find new soil worn from old communities
that succumbed to the sculptor's indifferent chisel.

The Sunset Clause

Sible Ntuli

from the lowvelds west of the Lubombo mountains

between rivers of ePhongolo & Mkuze
beneath the harsh sun of a truth picked by hands
while onlookers looked on from the shade

in the after tears of black skin

long after blood had left the river Ncome*
an ongoing debate raging on
concerning ways of the soil & belonging

after a first non-response of the cotton mouthed

there was reason enough for suspicion
that some among us
had been in collusion at sundown

since night had fallen in the middle of our asking

& the ones asking
were only met by their own echoes
were only gathered by a thin thread of hope

then held tightly in a tender embrace
of a long-drawn-out silence

*Also known as 'Blood River'

Heading Home

Erica Bartholomae

She looked right at me saw me staring,
wiped the sweat from her
brow and looked away from my
shame. She put everything down
to readjust her crying child, tied
the fraying wax print fabric, that
bound her baby to her back, tight
against her breast. Hauling the
large bucket up above her
shoulders she balanced that
sloshing water on her head
without spilling a single drop.
Bending from the knees she
picked up two bulging plastic
carrier bags and walked, in
broken sandals, down the road —
straight into the glaring African
sun. The sound of her singing her
baby to sleep, stayed in the shade
with me where I stood, next to
our rental car looking at my
suitcase on wheels, the airline's
tiny water bottle, my floral
Birkenstocks, my husband
fastening our son into the safety
seat. I sat in the back looking out
the window, searching for her.
Wondering how far she had to
walk and if this country will ever
change.



In the Shade of Some Newly Planted Thing

Anna Rowntree

In the shade of some newly planted thing
I lay us down.
The spring is too hot, again.
Too hot for the tender first-year leaves
On this newly planted thing. Shrub? Bush?
I do not know her name
But I see how her leaves curl in on themselves like a child hiding a hurt.

She is planted apart, alone
For our survival or service.
You are both so innocent!
My poor child and this – should we call her tree?

I lay us down, lay you down
On my unnecessary scarf
I didn't think to bring a blanket;
I am new to this too.
You wave your legs and arms
As though you want to dance in the pattern of shade and branch
And you blink at the flicker shift of dark and light.

The city has taken me by surprise
After the last weeks cocooned with you inside.
I am surprised by sudden summer and humming concrete.
A little walk to the park, the sort of thing new mothers do.

But there are no trees here,
No ancestral oak with an inheritance of shade.
It is a new, invented kind of place
Contrived for the likes of you and me
in flats like ours.

No matter, it is shade enough for you my love.
Though I am sorry to burden such baby growth
With the responsibility of you.
Her first joyful cries, disappointed, stifled
And yet
I lay you down at her feet.

Then I lay down next to you
And for a while we are companionable.

Tell me, what are you most afraid of?

Deborah Leipziger

Tell me, and I will give you shade.
Yes, I know of the many ways to die.
Heat Thirst Flood Heartbreak.
Why fear growing old?
Let me count my rings.
At last count, I am two hundred years old.
And I have died all the ways I can.
There are so many ways to live.
I have witnessed your life.
Remember, you grow rich in many currencies:
Light Giving Energy Kindness.
Protect me and I will provide cover
Connected as we are by need and nearness.
I will cover the frozen ground with my leaves
And weave my branches of color over your darkness.
Come rest with me.

Three Acts in November Rain Play

Tricia Knoll

A sprig of poplar leaves held on through fall's whipping storms. Five leaves curled into a skeletal hand, my switch, a blessing wand for the ash tree sure to succumb to ash borer. Flapping that wand – the old dog jumps to snatch it. We must be playing if we are flag waving. A little wilted.

*

One mirror framed in coiled serpents reflects the window with its translucent shade. Beyond a shadow play of poplar leaves in the garden wind. I have danced under that tree, or in truth, swayed in time to uncertainties. Rhythmic like autism rocking. I need outside, beyond this square room of stiff lines. I rake those leaves, crunch them like diary pages scribbled with lies. Herd them to a heap. The mirror is witness. Where I look for myself.

*

The man who grabs an oversized black umbrella as the rain begins has some place to go, someone to see who may notice the state of his hair: his conviction that perhaps enough will unfold for him that being wet is welcome. I have nowhere safe to go, no one expecting me, and even looking out at the road with traffic sloshing by, I am not seen. I go out under the poplar into the turned-to-drops of a mist that chills me, uneasy damp to freshen my hair in tangles. Later I pull it into a sleek bun and nothing will have changed except the shape of my head in that mirror. Boundaries of what I endure.

Shade

Mary Salome

Most of what shines in love
is easy to miss in full light.

Beneath the sun's bright pronouncement
the trees are quietly offering shade.



The Sacrifice Zones of a Broiling Planet

Edith and Jolly de Guzman

Erica Bartholomae’s “Heading Home” is a punch in the gut. It reveals the space where two worlds meet, where the opportunity lies for recognition and engagement—if the discomfort that accompanies revelations of one’s own privilege and its effects on the less privileged are allowed to simmer.

In a rapidly changing climate, amenities like shade that were traditionally considered to be aesthetic nice-to-haves are defining a new era of climate injustice. Like many climate impacts, extreme heat disproportionately affects those least responsible for causing climate change. That’s because lower-income communities of color—whether in the developing or developed world, in the Global South or Global North—are more likely to live in substandard housing, in neighborhoods that are less shaded and with more heat-retaining surfaces. Livelihoods are commonly earned doing physical labor that offers few protections from the elements. Transportation to and from home is likely to be by foot, bicycle, or public transport. Access to cooling strategies—shade, air conditioning, swimming pools—is often out of reach. Like the sun’s rays burning a hole as they pass through a magnifying glass, all of these risk factors are amplified under climate change.

In his powerful *Sierra* magazine essay “[Racism is Killing the Planet](#),” Hop Hopkins puts it plainly:

You can’t have climate change without sacrifice zones, and you can’t have sacrifice zones without disposable people, and you can’t have disposable people without racism.

Shadeless and treeless neighborhoods are what the sacrifice zones of a broiling planet look like. Once we acknowledge this reality and feel the tug of the searing words of Bartholomae and Hopkins, what are we going to do about it?

Ultraviole(n)t: On Adrienne Stevenson’s “Degrees of Light” and Mary Elizabeth Birnbaum’s “Burn”

Stéphane Verlet-Bottéro

In her poem, Adrienne Stevenson depicts a shadowless future. As the proportion of certain atmospheric gases increases infinitesimally, the friend Sun becomes foe. Light of life becomes light of death. Earth becomes Mars. “All colours dim in deathly light”. The Sun was to Georges Bataille the ultimate metaphor of total consumption.

The ending of the world means the disappearance of shelters. The ozone layer. The rainforests. The commons. This is why, according to Mary Elizabeth Birnbaum, all that is left is turning to “particulate ghosts” (divided, individualized, exhausted by the orgiastic solar drive). To survive, one will need to become transparent.

However, worlds have ended before. As trophies of its cosmocides, the West took captive the statues which the peoples of Earth used to dance with. Supposedly, the dark oubliettes of imperial museums are meant to keep the ghost-objects safe from ultraviolet damage by exposure to sunlight. Supposedly, they can’t be returned.

Recently, several friends and relatives of mine joined a gathering of water protesters at Sainte-Soline in France to oppose an agro-industrial water reservoir project. Unsurprisingly, the protesters were brutally repressed by State police. Many were sprayed with a new kind of synthetic DNA material that can be tracked (and considered as legal evidence) up to several weeks later, using a specific ultraviolet lighting technology. Biopower is subjecting starlight to mark and discipline nature protectors.

Water, art objects, sun. It seems that the latest phase of global capital’s violent capture of essential life forces is mediated by ultraviolet light. How do we reclaim the Sun?

I remember that during my teenage years, in the early 2000s, UV light was the slightly surreal color of dancefloors. Back then, the utopian twilight of raving and dancing prophesized a brighter future.

The current reactionary attack on life is also a war on language. To invisibilize communities’ struggle to preserve the lived experience of their interdependent relation with their environment, governments answer with neoliberal constructs: “climate adaptation”, “offsetting”, etc. Poetry might well be the last possible refuge. Poetry is not a transaction. It remains a space of imagination and dreaming, as much as resistance. Can

we still gather and dance in its recess? As David Byrne sung in the opening bars of *Remain in light*, “All I want is to breathe, Won’t you breathe with me? Find a little space, so we can move in-between”. As time, history, and even language seem to stop, the poetic act opens interstices, margins, twilight zones. Fragile intervals to breathe and move. Narrow in-betweens to keep sharing what we share.

Meditation on Issue 3

Paul Currie

In my work, we are participating in a balancing act—on a tightrope between joy and despair. When working in African cities, we see a lot of difficult challenges that feel intractable, but we also see a spirit of creativity, adaptability, and innovation which often defies the burden of these challenges. Both joy and despair can give important energy to fuel the work that we're doing, to fuel creative expression, and to drive us to seek, and push for, change.

In many of these poems, I felt a deep or subconscious despair for elements of our society that we are missing, some as direct as the insufficient shade of a tree in a park and some as intangible as being able to look at someone and ask why are we different? Why are our lives different? Why are our experiences different? And why is this the case?!

These situational reflections, under the banner of SHADE, offer fabulous vignettes into what these writers see as missing from society, what they yearn for deeply, and what little sparks or seeds of possibility they are noticing. These vignettes of intangible loss may also be the basis for connectivity, comfort, and joy that we can nurture while walking this balancing act—between despair that society is not what we expect it to be, what we have worked hard for it to be, or what we hope it will be; and joy at the energy, resources, sharing, solidarity and power that people are able to manifest to attempt and realize some change.

I personally find that joy is a more powerful motivator for myself and so, every day in these vignettes of life I am seeking, yes, the gaps, but also the nuggets of possibility, and I find that in these reflections those nuggets become plain.

As I read, reread, read aloud, and delve deeper into the phrases and ideas that the writers are wielding, what emerges for me are varied nuggets: which relate LOVE as both opportunity and a burden, STAMINA and PERSEVERANCE as elements that we can use to drive change, CONNECTION and EMPATHY in contexts of inequality as a potential lever to reclaim some semblance of equity or solidarity, SURETY of the earth's turning as a form of upsetting inevitability or comforting predictability, unknown new technologies as EXCITEMENT and

TRAP, unseen GIFTS that nature provides with limited recognition—now noticed, chasing everyday SPIRITUAL MOMENTS with each other and the cosmos, and the sense that our INTERACTIONS make the world.

I feel that our role as observers, commentators, and enjoyers of the world is drawing more and more attention to the phenomena of our environments and our society, and is creating the space for both gentle or radical interventions. With a normative focus on rather rigid earth-, economic- or social-science to explain or 'fix' our global predicaments, these stories of despair and joy are vital to add meaning and emotion into the mix, as evidence and impetus for action.

Contributor Biographies

Erica Bartholomae

As a rehabilitating people pleaser, prone to big feelings and at times excessive daydreaming, Erica turned to poetry to help her cope, change habits, reflect, reframe and perhaps reinvent her life. Erica has been writing poetry for three years now but has only recently understood the importance of a poem reaching a reader. She loves slow roasted parsnips, those colour separation dots printed on the selvedge of patterned fabric, the smell of lemon verbena and a child's curious questions.

Mary Elizabeth Birnbaum

Mary Elizabeth Birnbaum was born, raised, and educated in New York City. Mary's translation of the Haitian poet Felix Morisseau-Leroy has been published in *The Massachusetts Review*, the anthology *Into English* (Graywolf Press), and in *And There Will Be Singing; An Anthology of International Writing by The Massachusetts Review*, 2019. Her work has appeared in *Lake Effect*, *J Journal*, *Spoon River Poetry Review*, *Soundings East*, *Barrow Street*, and other literary journals. In 2022 Mary received two nominations for a Pushcart Prize.

Stéphane Verlet-Bottéro

Stéphane Verlet-Bottéro (b. 1987) works at the intersection of social practice, installation, education, writing, gardening, and cooking. He is interested in the entanglements of community, materiality, body, and place. Based on site-specific research and durational interventions, his practice seeks to open spaces to unlearn and unsettle ways of inhabiting the world.

Paul Currie

Paul is fascinated by the multi-layered relationships that give each city its unique flavour. With his Sustainable Development MPhil and current doctoral research, Paul uses urban metabolism, resource nexus and political ecology as lenses for shaping sustainable, inclusive cities. As Associate Director of the Urban Systems Unit, at ICLEI Africa, he supports local governments to apply systems perspectives to food, water, energy and nature, and facilitates the development of policies and plans appropriate to contexts of change and uncertainty. He also curates the RISE Africa platform which seeks to bring together creative expression, research and policy to shape joyful movements of change for African urban development.

Edith de Guzman

Edith de Guzman is a researcher-practitioner, educator, consultant, artist, and avid backpacker working with diverse audiences on climate change solutions in urban areas. Edith co-founded and directs the Los Angeles Urban Cooling Collaborative, a multi-disciplinary partnership of academics and practitioners working to reduce public health impacts of extreme heat.

Jolly de Guzman

Jolly de Guzman is a visual artist living and working in Los Angeles, California. His work is inspired by the relationships between humans and the environment, the passage of time, the role of memory, and movement through space. Jolly works with various mediums – printmaking, photography, collage, drawing, sculpture, and found objects. He is the co-founder of the virtual art gallery and travel blog dearantler.com. He studied art at Santa Monica College and California State University Northridge, and can be found on a hiking trail or in a record store whenever he's not creating new work.

Gregory Haber

Gregory Haber is a Hudson Valley, New York native living, working, and writing in The Bronx. He is the Deputy Director of Bronx Forestry for the New York City Parks Department, and has received degrees from the Yale School of the Environment and Cornell University. He is passionate about preserving green space in the urban and exurban environments, especially for traditionally underserved communities.

Hanna Harms

Hanna Harms is an illustrator and comic book author. She graduated from the Münster School of Design with one semester at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem. She is currently studying illustration in the masters program at the HAW in Hamburg. Her debut "Milch ohne Honig" was awarded with the Ginco Award in the category "Best Non Fiction Comic" in 2020.

Jean Janicke

Jean Janicke enjoys the shade of oaks and cherry trees in Washington, DC. Her work has appeared in *FERAL: A Journal of Poetry and Art*, *Green Ink Poetry*, and *MockingHeart Review*.

Tricia Knoll

Tricia Knoll is a Vermont poet who lives in the woods. Her work appears widely in journals and anthologies – and seven collections. *One Bent Twig* (FutureCycle Press, 2023) contains poems that highlight trees she has planted, loved, or worried about due to climate change. Her book *How I Learned To Be White* received the 2018 In Human Relations Indie Book Award for Motivational Poetry. Knoll is a Contributing Editor to *Verse Virtual*. Website: triciaknoll.com

Deborah Leipziger

Deborah Leipziger is an author, poet, and advisor on sustainability. Born in Brazil, Ms. Leipziger is the author of several books on sustainability and human rights. Her poems have been published in eight countries, in such magazines and journals as *Pangyrus*, *Salamander*, *Lily Poetry Review*, and *Revista Cardenal*. She is the co-founder of *Soul-Lit*, an on-line poetry magazine. Her new collection of poems, *Story & Bone*, was published in early 2023 by *Lily Poetry Review Books*. Her chapbook, *Flower Map*, was published by Finishing Line Press. Her work appears in numerous anthologies, including *Tree Lines: 21st Century American Poems*.

Sihle Ntuli

Sihle Ntuli is a poet from Durban, South Africa and is a recipient of the 2023 Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Studies Writing Fellowship for his poetry. His work has been featured in leading journals such as *Frontier Poetry*, *SAND Journal* and *Mizna*, amongst others. He is the author of the poetry chapbooks *Rumblin* (uHlanga 2020) and *The Nation* (River Glass Books, 2023).

Anna Rowntree

Born in the UK, I have lived in Germany for 13 years. I studied writing and literature both in the UK and Berlin and was present in the spoken word poetry scene of both countries. Academically and autobiographically I have written about addiction and the affects of material agents on our bodies and sense of self. My work was published in *Psychopharmacology in British Literature and Culture 1780–1900* by Palgrave in 2020. However, in recent years, following the death of my brother, I have not been able to write. This poem written after the birth of my son in June 2022 is the first creative piece. I work as a yoga teacher in Berlin where I enjoy using language to guide people into deeper self-awareness. I also live in the wilds of North Brandenburg where me and my husband are creating a social and sustainable living project based on permaculture principles.

Mary Salome

Mary Salome (she/her) is a queer Arab- and Irish-American writer and media activist who lives in San Francisco. Her prose and poetry have been published in *Food for our Grandmothers: Writings by Arab-American and Arab-Canadian Feminists*, *Tiny Seed Journal*, *Solstice: A Winter Anthology Vol. 2*, and *Archive of the Odd*. Her short story “Okami in the Bayview” has been nominated for a WSFA Small Press Award. Find her on Spoutible or Twitter @marysalome

Adrienne Stevenson

Adrienne Stevenson lives in Ottawa, Canada. A retired forensic scientist, she writes poetry and prose. Her work has appeared in over fifty print and online journals and anthologies in Canada, USA, UK, Europe, India, Australia. When not writing, Adrienne tends a large garden, reads voraciously, and procrastinates playing several musical instruments.

Heather Wishik

Heather Wishik is a writer and visual artist living in Vermont. Many of her poems begin with the Vermont landscape. Her poems have been anthologized in *New Lesbian Writing* (Margaret Cruikshank, Ed. 1984); *Gay and Lesbian Poetry in Our Time* (Joan Larkin and Carl Morse, Eds., 1988); *Telling Our Stories Through Word and Image* (Dartmouth Health Center, 2022); and *PoemCity 2023* (Kellogg Hubbard Library, Montpelier, VT). She has also had poems published in various literary magazines and journals. Wishik is currently writing a memoir in poems about her early childhood. In addition to writing, she has also focused in the last few years on creating mono-prints, mostly abstracted landscapes, and collages about women’s lives and roles. She will have her first one-woman art show in May, 2023, at the Kellogg Hubbard Library in Montpelier, VT. The same month Wishik will be in residence at the Fine Arts Work Center’s print studio in Provincetown, MA for two weeks. She has also been selected for a two-week writing and art residency at Welcome Hill Studios, Chesterfield, NH, during November-December.

Sue Woodward

Sue Woodward lives in Cape Town, South Africa. She has been published variously in print and online and in 2021 her debut collection *between the apple and the bite* was published by Modjaji, and shortlisted for the prestigious Ingrid Jonker prize. She won the McGregor Poetry Prize in 2018 and in the same year was joint winner of the Patricia Schonstein Poetry in McGregor Award. In 2022 Sue was awarded the inaugural Candy Rhode Award, given in memory of the much-loved McGregor Festival poet, Cornelia Rhode. Sue can be found @suetothetrees on Instagram.

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