

Contributor Notes

Brett Boyko is a M.Div student at Emmanuel College in Toronto, Canada. He is also a co-founder of Dark Smile Games and spends his time writing urban fantasy roleplaying-games, doing abstract painting, and looking after his pet Guinea Pigs, Pebbles and S'Mores.

Cathleen Bota is a librarian, multimedia poet, and performance artist in Orlando, FL.

Anna Cates lives in Ohio with her two beautiful kitties and teaches English and education online to the graduate level. Her first full length collection of poems, “The Meaning of Life,” is available at Cyberwit.net and Amazon:

<http://www.cyberwit.net/authors/anna-cates> You may also find poems by Anna Cates in the “Living Haiku Anthology”:

<http://livinghaikuanthology.com/poet-portfolios/290-c-poets/anna-cates/2715-anna-cates-2.html>

Gillian Chisom is currently pursuing a PhD in History at the University of California, Berkeley. A lifelong fantasy reader, she has wrested with the genre’s flaws and possibilities and become committed to writing stories with queer people, and especially queer girls, at their centers. When she’s not reading seventeenth-century witch trials or writing about lesbians dealing with supernatural mayhem, she likes to watch TV and make her own clothes (sometimes at the same time).

Kavita Das worked in the social change sector for fifteen years on issues ranging from homelessness to public health disparities to most recently, racial justice and she now focuses on writing about culture, race, social change, feminism, and their intersections. She’s a contributor to NBC News Asian America, The Rumpus, and the Aerogram and her work has been published in The Atlantic, Apogee Journal, Guernica, xoJane, The Margins, Quartz, Colorlines, The Sun, and elsewhere. She’s also at work on a biography about Grammy-winning Hindustani singer, Lakshmi Shankar, who helped bring Indian music to the West, to be published by Harper Collins India. Kavita lives in her hometown of NYC and in the twitterverse: @kavitamix

Courtney Druz is a previous contributor to *SPECS*, and her poems have also appeared in *The Adirondack Review*, *The Ilanot Review*, *The Inflectionist Review*, *Prick of the Spindle*, and elsewhere. She has worked in architecture and graphic design, and is the author of several books of poetry including *The Ritual Word*, *The Light and the Light*, and her forthcoming volume, *The Hannah Senesh Set*, from which these poems are drawn. She lives in Israel. www.courtneydruz.com

Jack Fields has been a dilettante unicornographer ever since viewing Legend and The Last Unicorn as a child. He recommends Odell Sheperd's The Lore of the Unicorn to all aspiring pursuers of the great horned mystery.

Shamala Gallagher's poems and essays have appeared in *Black Warrior Review*, *The Missouri Review*, *Verses Daily*, *VOLT*, *Copper Nickel*, *Waxwing*, *The Offing*, and elsewhere, and she is the author of a poetry chapbook, *I Learned the Language of Barbs and Sparks No One Spoke* (dancing girl press, 2015). She holds an MFA from the Michener Center for Writers and has received fellowships from Kundiman and the New York State Summer Writers Institute. She lives in Athens, Georgia, where she is a PhD candidate in English and Creative Writing at the University of Georgia.

Robert F. Gross is a lone wolf and drifter. A queer and a melancholic. A director, playwright, performer, and poet. (He was a professor, but got over that.) He's recently had pieces appear in *NonBinary Review*, *After the Pause*, *Birds Piled Loosely*, and *Thirteen Mynah Birds*. Favorite writers include: Richard Foreman, James Purdy, S. I. Witkiewicz, Calderon de la Barca, Heinrich von Kleist, Edward Lear, and William Blake. He's always on the lookout for new adventures, projects and collaborators. You can reach him at centaurobert@gmail.com.

Minal Hajratwala (www.minalhajratwala.com) is author of the award-winning epic *Leaving India: My Family's Journey from Five Villages to Five Continents* (2009), which was called "incomparable" by Alice Walker and "searingly honest" by the Washington Post, and editor of *Out! Stories from the New Queer India* (2013). Her latest book is *Bountiful Instructions for Enlightenment*, published by The (Great) Indian Poetry Collective, a collective of which she is a co-founder. She graduated from Stanford University, was a fellow at Columbia University, and was a 2011 Fulbright-Nehru Senior Scholar. Her essay "A Brief Guide to Gender in India" was named one of the 10 best pieces of writing on the web for 2015 by the Golden Giraffes.

Tim Jones-Yelvington is a Chicago-based writer, multimedia performance artist, and nightlife personality. He is the author of two collections of short fiction—“Evan’s House and the Other Boys Who Live There” (in “They Could No Longer Contain Themselves,” Rose Metal Press) and “This is a Dance Movie!” (forthcoming, Tiny Hardcore Press). His work has appeared in *Black Warrior Review*, *Puerto Del Sol*, *Harpur Palate*, and others. From 2010-12, he guest edited [PANK]’s annual queer issue.

Sarah Katharina Kayß (1985 in Koblenz/Germany) is an internationally published author and winner of the manuscript award of the Literaturwerk of the county of Rhineland-Palatinate and the German Writers Association (2013) for her poetry and essay collection “Ich mag die Welt, so wie sie ist” (I like the world the way it is) which was published in Munich by Allitera in 2014. She edits the bilingual literary magazine “The Transnational” and is currently a PhD student in the War Studies Department of King’s College London. Her poems, photographs and essays have been published in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, the UK, Italy, New Zealand, the USA and Canada. <http://www.sarahkatharinakayss.com>

Jenna Le was born in Minnesota. She has a B.A. in mathematics and an M.D., and she works as a physician in New York. She is the author of *Six Rivers* (NYQ Books, 2011) and *A History of the Cetacean American Diaspora* (forthcoming from Anchor & Plume Press, 2016). Her poetry, fiction, essays, criticism, and translations appear or are forthcoming in *AGNI Online*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, *The Best of the Raintown Review*, *The Los Angeles Review*, *Massachusetts Review*, *The Village Voice*, and elsewhere.

Lo Kwa Mei-en is the author of *Yearling* (Alice James Books, 2015), *The Bees Make Money in the Lion* (Cleveland State University Poetry Center, 2016), and two chapbooks. She lives and works in Cincinnati, Ohio, and can also be found at www.lokwameien.com.

Megan Milks is the author of *Kill Marguerite and Other Stories*, winner of the 2015 Devil’s Kitchen Reading Award in Fiction and a Lambda Literary Award finalist; as well as three chapbooks, including *The Feels*, forthcoming this spring from *Black Warrior Review*. Their fiction has been anthologized in three volumes of experimental writing as well as many journals, and her scholarship has been published in

Feminist Studies and *electronic book review*. Milks is the editor of *The &NOW Awards, Volume 3: The Best Innovative Writing, 2011-2013*; and co-editor of *Asexualities: Feminist and Queer Perspectives* (Routledge, 2014).

Rajiv Mohabir was the winner of the 2015 AWP Intro Journal Award, the 2015 Kundiman Prize for his second collection of poems, *The Comberd's Son* (Tupelo 2017), the 2014 Intro Prize in Poetry by Four Way Books for his first full-length collection *The Taxidermist's Cut* (2016), and a recipient of a PEN/Heim Translation Fund Grant. He received fellowships from The Home School, Voices of Our Nation's Artist foundation, Kundiman, and the American Institute of Indian Studies language program. His poetry and translations are internationally published can be found in Best American Poetry 2015, *Quarterly West*, *Guernica*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Drunken Boat*, *Anti-*, *Great River Review*, *PANK*, and *Aufgabe*.

Simon Perchik is an attorney whose poems have appeared in *Partisan Review*, *The Nation*, *Poetry*, *Osiris*, *The New Yorker*, and elsewhere. His most recent collection is *Almost Rain*, published by River Otter Press (2013). For more information, including free e-books, his essay titled "Magic, Illusion and Other Realities" please visit his website at www.simonperchik.com.

Dave Ring was a 2013 Lambda Literary Fellow in Genre Fiction and recently saw the publication of his short story, "Eye of the Beholder," in the anthology *Caped: An Anthology of Superhero Tales*.

Dr. James Rovira is Associate Professor of English at Tiffin University where he teaches British literature, literary theory, and creative writing: poetry. His publications include *Blake and Kierkegaard: Creation and Anxiety* (Continuum 2010) and a variety of reviews and articles for anthologies and peer-reviewed journals. He is currently at work on the edited anthologies *Rock and Romanticism and Interpretation: Theory: History*, and resides in the Greater Columbus area.

Leah Sandler is an interdisciplinary artist living between Orlando, Florida, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She graduated from Rollins College in Winter Park ('14) with a BA in studio art and is currently pursuing her MFA in studio art at University of the Arts in Philadelphia (expected graduation '18). Her work frequently takes

the form of language, exploring autobiography, poverty and the nostalgia for meaning lost between sign and signified in the retelling of experience. *Bird of Paradise* is an ongoing project of appropriated poetry constructed from language taken from Craigslist>Orlando>Free stuff. Through a process of salvaging and organizing language, *Bird of Paradise* gestures towards the creation of an archive of things discarded.

JD Scott is the author of *Night Errands* (Winner of the Peter Meinke Prize for Poetry—YellowJacket Press, 2012) and *FUNERALS & THRONES* (Birds of Lace Press, 2013). Recent and forthcoming publications include Best American Experimental Writing 2015, *Salt Hill*, *The Pinch*, *The Atlas Review*, *Apogee*, *LEVELER*, *Adult*, and *Powder Keg*. JD has also contributed to the Poetry Foundation’s blog, HARRIET, and is the design editor for Black Warrior Review.

Sharif Shakhshir is a Californian of Mexican and Palestinian descent. These are two troubled places that seem over the rainbow and far away for most Americans, and “imaginary” in the case of Palestine. Sharif is an academic who hates academia. He is a high artist who loves cartoons and fables. He also suffers from depression. And when all these elements come together with the secret ingredient of chemical X, there’s no surprise that he writes about unicorn diaspora and other instances of cute things being sad. The author writes fiction, poetry, screen and stage plays, and most recently video games. Sharif’s works appear in *Synesthesia*, *Unbroken*, and *The Anthology of Writing that Risks*.

Anya Silver has published two books of poetry with the Louisiana State University Press, *The Ninety-Third Name of God* (2010) and *I Watched You Disappear* (2014). Her third book, *From Nothing*, will be released by LSU in the fall of 2016. She has been published in numerous journals and anthologies, including the forthcoming Best American Poetry 2016. In 2015, she was named Georgia Author of the Year/Poetry. She is Professor of English at Mercer University and lives in Macon, GA with her husband and son. Her website is www.anyasilver.com.

Noel Sloboda’s poetry has appeared in *apt*, *Harpur Palate*, *PANK*, and *Weave*. He is the author of the poetry collections *Shell Games* (sunnyoutside, 2008) and *Our Rarer Monsters* (sunnyoutside, 2013) as well as

several chapbooks, most recently *Risk Management Studies* (Kattywompus Press, 2015). Sloboda has also published a book about Edith Wharton and Gertrude Stein. He teaches at Penn State York.

Kristen Stone is an essayist, poet, and educator living in Gainesville, Florida. She is the author of *Domestication Handbook* (Rogue Factorial, 2012) and *The Story of Ruth and Eliza / / self / help / work / book* (Birds of Lace, 2014). You can read her blog about books and affect at kristenstone.com.

Brigit Kelly Young is a native Michigander currently living with her wonderful husband and daughter in New York City. Her poetry and fiction have appeared in venues that include *Word Riot*, *The Common*, *Eclectica Magazine*, *Gargoyle Magazine* and *2 River View*, among others. She is the winner of the James Emanuel Poetry Award and was recently a runner-up in Folio Lit Journal's fiction contest. Her interviews and book reviews can be seen in *Bookslut*, *Mayday Magazine* and *Delphi Quarterly*. More information and links to her work can be found at her website, brigitkellyyoung.com.