

# Wisconsin people & ideas

The magazine of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters

## New Domesticity

A series by  
photographer Lois Bielefeld

Cosmic Encounters • Northwoods Radio • New Fiction





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## Editor's Note

All of the ash trees in my neighborhood are coming down.

Dead upper branches and bark flaking from trunks painted with bright red dots indicate that the few left standing are infested by the emerald ash borer. City workers in small crews cut down the trees and gather lifeless limbs. More often than not they leave the uncut logs on the curbside, free for the taking.

Every time I see one of these log piles, I slow down our station wagon and look out the window. "I'm going to throw some in the back," I'll say,

only to be met with protestations—*We'll be late!* or *What if there are spiders?*—from my wife and kids. Sometimes I slow down just enough to note the location of the pile so I can return later to rescue these abandoned logs, which make excellent firewood.

My wife recently said that, while she's glad it's firewood I'm hoarding and not toilet paper, we probably have enough—especially considering that we only use our fireplace a dozen times a year. Of course, she is right.

When I was a kid, the oil-burning furnace in our old farmhouse threw off a feeble, acrid-smelling heat that barely put a dent in a

Wisconsin winter. The real source of heat in our home was the Franklin stove in the family room, which ran warm and constant from fall to spring. That stove really was the heart of our house, and every morning I would go out to the woodshed to gather enough firewood to keep it beating until bedtime.

I didn't make the connection between my obsession with firewood and my need for comfort until I read *Frederick*, by Leo Lionni, to my five-year-old son before bed one night. While the other mice are busy gathering food for the winter, Frederick lounges about, gathering the sun's rays and the colors of the meadow for the difficult days that lie ahead. When the food is all gone, and the mice don't feel much like talking, Frederick shares his supplies: poems and stories that provide comfort and contentment.

I would gladly share with you, dear reader, what firewood I have stored. But perhaps it is better that, like Frederick, I share supplies to warm you from the inside out: the stories, poems, essays, paintings, and photographs that make up this special online edition of *Wisconsin People & Ideas*. I hope that you find comfort and contentment in these pages.



*Jason A. Smith*  
Jason A. Smith, Editor

**On the cover:** Lois Bielefeld, *Sylvia and Lucy*, 2019. Frame size, 26 x 36 inches. From the series *New Domesticity*.



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Comfort Wasikhongo, *Portrait of Booker T. Washington* (detail), 2020. Oil on canvas, 36 x 48 inches.

*Wisconsin People & Ideas* (ISSN 1558-9633) is the quarterly magazine of the nonprofit Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters. Wisconsin Academy members receive an annual subscription to this magazine.

Since 1954, the Wisconsin Academy has published a magazine for people who are curious about our world and proud of Wisconsin ideas. *Wisconsin People & Ideas* features thoughtful stories about our people and culture, original creative writing and artwork, and informative articles about Wisconsin innovation. The magazine also hosts annual fiction and poetry contests that provide opportunity and encouragement for Wisconsin writers.

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*arts editor*

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## From the Director



Over the past few months our lives have taken a dramatic turn as vague concerns about the novel coronavirus shifted to the realization that we were facing a full-blown global pandemic. Our daily lives and routines have been greatly altered and the economy has been thrown into turmoil. Uncertainty seems like the only thing of which we can be certain.

A crisis can bring out the best in people, but sometimes it brings out the worst—especially when divisiveness is the primary characteristic of our national dialogue. Still I remain heartened by the great majority of Americans who have been guided, as Lincoln once appealed, by their “better angels.” We daily see this expression of solidarity in the neighbors and strangers who cooperate with federal guidance to stay home and keep physical distance in public places. We also see it in the countless acts of quiet heroism by the essential workers in emergency health care, grocery stores and food banks, public transportation systems, mail delivery, garbage pickup, and countless other systems and structures that are working to keep us connected and safe.

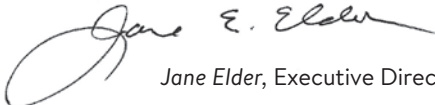
All this tells me that on the other side of this tunnel there is light. It can be a brighter light, however, if we consider that the lessons we are learning from this crisis are not new. The coronavirus just brings into sharper relief the desperate need for our country to build better science literacy, address systemic disparities, and cultivate our hope and humanity.

Perhaps by now, millions understand and appreciate why scientists use modeling to predict the rate of infection and what

“flattening the curve” means. Or maybe people now understand more about how new vaccines are created and tested, and why it is important to take time to get them right so that they don’t do more harm than good. Science is an amazing tool in our public decision-making process. Going forward, we must work to ensure that science is better understood by the public and more widely used to inform policy decisions that affect us all.

Making sense of scientific information is critical to navigating this crisis. Yet we know there are disparities in science literacy among Americans. These disparities, like many others, are often linked to a lack of educational opportunities. This crisis has made educational and other systemic disparities much more obvious, and we see the horrible results in the higher rates of infection among people of color, lower-income workers, the homeless, and those with chronic health conditions. For many of us, “normal” wasn’t working before this crisis. What can we learn to fix these and other systemic disparities that threaten our common resilience?

Our resilience is fed by hope. In the online performances of choirs and poetry readings to the children’s rainbow drawings in household windows and drive-through galleries popping up across the country, we find connection and inspiration. These deeply human responses to this emergency feed our yearning for beauty and meaning—and fuel our compassion for each other. The arts brighten our dark days and affirm that, whatever emerges in a post-pandemic era, we will always have our better angels to help light the way to the new future we will shape together.



Jane Elder, Executive Director



## News for Members

**As we navigate these unprecedented times, our greatest hope is that you and your loved ones are staying healthy and safe.**

### WP&I CONTEST READING SERIES

Do you want to hear from some of the best contemporary writers in Wisconsin? In April, we launched a live video series that connects members across the state to the authors and poets who appear in the magazine—the best writers in Wisconsin today. If you like locally sourced fiction and poetry, you will want to tune in every Thursday at 10:00 am via Facebook Live for our new *Wisconsin People & Ideas* Contest Reading series. Be sure to follow [facebook.com/WisconsinAcademy](https://www.facebook.com/WisconsinAcademy) to receive reading notifications.

### 2020 FELLOWS AWARDS

#### Ceremony & Reception Postponed

Although we were not able to celebrate our new class of Academy Fellows as scheduled in April, we are working on plans to reschedule the event for a later date. We will send notification of the new date or you can check for updates at [wisconsinacademy.org/Fellows](https://www.wisconsinacademy.org/Fellows).

### U.S. POET LAUREATE JOY HARJO

Mark your calendars! We are still planning to host U.S. Poet Laureate Joy Harjo for an evening of poetry on October 20. We will continue to adjust the event schedule as necessary, but we hope that we will be able to come together to celebrate poetry and culture at Overture Center for the Arts in Madison. Learn more at [wisconsinacademy.org/JoytoWI](https://www.wisconsinacademy.org/JoytoWI).

### CONNECT WITH YOUR ACADEMY

In our efforts to continue to share ideas that move the world forward, we need you to take part in the conversation. Please follow and like us on Facebook and Twitter, and make sure you are signed up for our e-mail lists. If you have any questions about your membership or how to stay connected, please e-mail us at [members@wisconsinacademy.org](mailto:members@wisconsinacademy.org).

## Letters

I've been reading the special anniversary issue of *Wisconsin People & Ideas* and the recap of the Academy's initiatives on water, rural life, and climate change were superbly done. Good summaries, hopeful, and with some reasoned conclusions about outputs and accomplishments. Truly the Academy is positioned for this unique work, and it has engaged Wisconsinites of all stripes in making it happen. *Congratulations* doesn't seem like a big enough word!

Stephen Born, Madison

A big, big congratulations to Jody Clowes and Martha Glowacki on the new *Collections & Connections* exhibition at the James Watrous Gallery! It is a real tour de force and a great survey of the Academy's past 150 years. Thank you for this cornucopia.

Lewis Koch, Madison

Hats off to the Academy staff for a great Gala150 event at the Wisconsin Historical Society. I was President of the Academy when we celebrated its 125th anniversary, and the event was nowhere close to this fine program. A very enjoyable evening.

Bob Sorensen, Madison  
Academy Board President, 1994–1995

I love learning about all the weird quirks of Wisconsin's history (I am a descendant of the "Mrs. Salter Killed Here" historical-marker namesake). So, when I stumbled across the Wisconsin Academy's *Weirdconsin!* event at Working Draft Beer Company, I quickly recruited some friends to sign up with me. I'd never been to an Academy event, but now I'm hooked! The storytelling was fun and helped me discover some spots in Wisconsin I didn't know about. I'm definitely hoping to score a fun souvenir from your next trivia-and-storytelling event.

Stacey Lansing, Madison

**We want to hear from you.** Please send feedback and comments about *Wisconsin People & Ideas* and other Academy programs to: [editor@wisconsinacademy.org](mailto:editor@wisconsinacademy.org). Thank you!

## FELLOWS IN THE NEWS



R. Alta Charo

University of Wisconsin–Madison bioethicist **R. Alta Charo (2005)** has been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Formed in 1780 to honor exceptional individuals and engage them in advancing the public good, the American Academy annually elects 250 members. An expert on law and policy related to research ethics, stem cell research, and new medical technology, Charo has served as an adviser and expert to the federal government and multiple presidential administrations on ethical concerns in cutting-edge research. She recently co-chaired a National Academy of Sciences panel to develop recommendations around human gene editing.

The Wisconsin State Historical Society declared April 19, 2020, as Jerry Apps Day in recognition of the award-winning author and historian **Jerry Apps (2012)**. Best known for books and documentaries that explore the richness of rural Wisconsin life, Apps was born and raised on a farm in Wild Rose. He has served the people of Wisconsin as a county agent for UW Extension, professor in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at UW–Madison, and director of the Wisconsin Academy Board. The author of more than forty nonfiction and fiction books, Apps celebrated the fifty-year anniversary of his first book, *The Land Still Lives*, with a re-issue of the original edition this year.

Conservation biologist **Stanley A. Temple (2014)** has been elected to the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame for a lifetime of teaching about, and advocating for, endangered species. During his 32 years on the faculty of the Department of Wildlife Ecology at UW–Madison, Temple helped to reshape the field of wildlife ecology and management. He has taught over 10,000 undergraduates and advised and mentored 75 graduate students, sharing his passion for protecting endangered species. In retirement, Temple has helped guide many important conservation and science organizations, including The Nature Conservancy, International Crane Foundation, and Aldo Leopold Foundation.

Academy Fellows are recognized for outstanding leadership and achievement across disciplines. Learn more at [wisconsinacademy.org/fellows](https://wisconsinacademy.org/fellows).

## VISUAL ARTS AWARDS

Every other year the Museum of Wisconsin Art works in collaboration with the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters and all three chapters of Wisconsin Visual Artists to honor those who have added a wealth of artistic value to the state through the Wisconsin Visual Art Lifetime Achievement Awards.

The WVALAAs started in 2004 as a means of acknowledging an artist's success over the course of his or her life. In 2019, however, award organizers decided to drop the "lifetime" designation from the title as a way to shine a spotlight on working artists, advocates, and educators—many of whom are in the early stages of their careers.

"Being an artist is such a difficult thing," says Museum of Wisconsin Art executive director Laurie Winters. "I felt that we should be encouraging artists from the outset, rather than acknowledge them during the end of their career."

The review process for the bi-annual **Wisconsin Visual Arts Achievement Awards** now considers artists, advocates, and educators who are in various stages of their career, offering seven categories to recognize the many different contributions of the recipients. The 2020 award winners, who were recognized in a February 29 ceremony at the Museum of Wisconsin Art, include Anne Kingsbury (Legacy), Patricia Frederick (K–12 Educator), Kim Cosier (University Educator), the Racine Art Museum (Exhibition), Polly Morris (Community Arts Advocate), Shane McAdams (Arts Writing), and Ariana Vaeth (Emerging Artist).

Individuals, groups, and organizations are all eligible for these awards, and Winters notes that the main criteria for a successful nominee is a demonstrable improvement to Wisconsin culture through achievement, character, and dedication to the visual arts community. Nominations for the 2022 Wisconsin Visual Arts Achievement Awards are now open and can be submitted online at [wvaaw.com/nominate](https://wvaaw.com/nominate).



Winners of the 2020 Wisconsin Visual Arts Achievement Awards





A recent Krazines art jam



## SMALL-SCALE MAGAZINES

A Kenosha/Racine-area creative arts group called Krazines is using its small-scale “zine” to showcase the abundance of creativity in southeastern Wisconsin. Made at home or published online, zines are noncommercial publications devoted to specialized and often unconventional subject matter. Published monthly, Krazines’ *Moss Piglet* fits the zine profile perfectly, featuring a diverse collection of painting, drawing, sculpture, and collage, as well as poetry and short prose from local contributors.

Instead of choosing from submitted works (as many traditional magazines do), Krazines co-founder and director John Bloner says *Moss Piglet* draws contributors from regular art jams held in spaces like the Lemon Street Gallery in Kenosha, Black-Eyed Press in Racine, and the Racine Creative Center. Art jams are essentially open-to-the-public art workshops where participants can let their creativity show and contribute to the quality of the publication. The theme of each issue, ranging anywhere from “Women of Influence” to works inspired by iconic artists like Tim Burton and Dr. Seuss, is decided by art jam participants. Every participant receives a free copy of the zine after publication, and subscriptions and an online gallery are available to the public on the Krazines website.

Bloner says that Krazines (a portmanteau of Kenosha, Racine, and zines) began in early 2016 as an arts collective that incorporated local works onto playing cards, CDs, and coloring books. As the collective gathered more interest and participation, Racine poet laureate Jessie Lynn McMains suggested they start a zine. By March 2016 Bloner and his friends had published their first issue of *Moss Piglet*.

Bloner often compares the zine to the tardigrade, the nearly indestructible micro-animal after which it was named, noting how “the moss piglet is known not only for its tiny size, but its resilience.” The same could be said for Krazines, a resilient art collective that started small and grew to inspire and empower Racine/Kenosha-area artists to share their work with the world—and each other.



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BRANDON A. MCCALL AS SIMBA. ©DISNEY. PHOTO BY DEEN VAN MEER





# DARK MATTERS

BY JUSTIN KERN

**E**ight times a year the Racine Astronomical Society invites the public to view the skies through two intricate telescopes housed at the Modine-Benstead Observatory. Tucked amid rolling cornfields and tidy McMansions in rural Yorkville, the twin silos of the whitewashed observatory look like the tops of grain silos. Each holds a powerful telescope. Established nearly sixty years ago through the largesse of local manufacturers and publishers, the observatory today reveals to hundreds of annual visitors the secrets of the heavens.

The main building of the Modine-Benstead Observatory houses a 16-inch telescope, observation deck, library, and meeting room.

Justin Kern



Every year Racine Astronomical Society president Brian Jensen (left) and observatory director Mark Schmidt (right) welcome over a thousand visitors to the Modine-Benstead Observatory.

On a warm August night when the observatory is open to the public, one of the visitors is an exuberant man in his 60s with a head bandage. He walks through the small doorway, awash in red light, ahead of a middle-aged man and his overall-clad father who mentions how he first came here as a Boy Scout. These are people who grew up with mnemonics of the planets, lived through Pluto's demotion, saw televised disasters in space. Yet for most it is their first visit to an observatory. Perhaps they think they already know what the planets and stars will look like close up. After all, the sky is there all day and all night.

"Many of the visitors that come out on a public night have never looked through a telescope," says Brian Jensen, president of the Racine Astronomical Society. The fifty-member, volunteer-run society has brought together hobbyists since 1956 to explore and document the nighttime skies. "We enjoy sharing our passion with others," says Jensen. "It is always fun seeing the excitement of a visitor looking at Saturn for the first time."

Through the eyepiece of the custom-built, sixteen-inch Newtonian-Cassegrain reflecting telescope, Saturn appears neon white, so close that one can make out its shadow on the bold, blade-like ring. It's right there, huge and not at all cartoonish. *It is right there*, the most outrageous body in immediate space, making small the ticking of today's clock, grounding concerns over work or friends or sports. At the same time, it's not close: the wind creates an oily sheen in the frame, says a volunteer from the society, as if to remind us this planet is a humbling 746 million miles away.

Consider for a moment that distance.

Taking time for deep reflection on deepest space, time away from demanding phones and clocks and cars and our own chattering minds, seems a luxury. Yet it is important, a reminder that

everyone is searching, wild and stupid with no sure path, under the same massive unknown.

This search can come in many forms. While some gather in the fields outside of Racine to peer at the planets through powerful telescopes, others gather in Manitowoc to celebrate a piece of 1960s-era space junk. Visitors to the Rahr-West Art Museum gaze in wonder at a replica of the original piece of Sputnik IV that crash landed in downtown Manitowoc on September 5, 1962. Placed under a Plexiglas case and wedged between an exhibit of Star Trek memorabilia and a series of tastefully framed oil paintings, this charred hunk of metal is one of the museum's most popular exhibits.

After the pioneering Soviet satellite broke up in the atmosphere, a piece of it fell to Earth and embedded itself into 8th Street. The piece, still warm from the friction of re-entry into the atmosphere, was discovered by two beat cops who promptly sent the object to the Smithsonian Museum (which later, somewhat mockingly, returned it to the Soviet Union).

Although the Soviets never officially confirmed that a part of Sputnik actually made the still-preserved hole in 8th street (there's a brass ring around it today), Manitowoc laid claim to the famous satellite nonetheless. Every year, residents gather together with alien lovers from galaxies near and far to celebrate Sputnikfest, which puts a cosmic twist on the Wisconsin block party. The event also raises funds for the Rahr-West, a modern art gallery housed in a historic Victorian mansion that counts in its collection works by Warhol, Picasso, and O'Keeffe (as well as Roddenberry).

Called a "wacky, tacky event" by organizers, Sputnikfest is a celebration with high levels of both camp and vamp. Established by community leaders in 2007, Sputnikfest promises "fun for the whole family" and features regional bands, space-themed exhibits and speakers, alien costume contests (for humans as well as pets), and a kid's area with a stage, bounce house, and other entertainment.

Stars of all kinds could be found at Sputnikfest 2019, including YouTube celebrity Charlie "Manitowoc Minute" Berens, who sat on one of the event's costume contest panels. At the start of the Ms. Space Debris Pageant—all human life forms were welcome to compete—many of those assembled in the main tent cheered on "Karen from Kiel," a favorite from an earlier pageant. Karen wore creepy contact lenses and a spaceship of a skirt with windows showing Barbie dolls being experimented on by little green beings.

But of the six contestants, a glorious weirdo from Green Bay with the Earth name of Nadine Druar eventually won over the crowd. Druar made a character from the sci-fi show *Stargate* all her own through a bold quasi-baking performance during the talent segment. She paused only once during its fury to ask the emcee, "Can humans eat spray paint?" Asked why she should win, Druar deadpanned that "it would be an honor to hold this position on your planet."

In a pageant where one contestant handled snakes and another made observers sign a contract, Druar was apparently the alien that Sputnikfest needed. Berens and the other judges, including the mayor, named her Ms. Space Debris 2019 and placed a crown atop another crown she was already wearing. Druar was then hustled out of the tent to make way for the alien pet show, which was coming up next.





Scenes from Sputnikfest 2019. All photos by Justin Kern.



Outside the Sputnikfest main tent, Duar, still in character, said the outcome was exciting before revealing that most human of all responses to her victory: “I’m going to Disneyland.” How she was going to achieve this with the prizes she won—fifty dollars, a flight lesson, and free haircuts for a year at Rose Colored Glasses Salon and Spa—is perhaps the biggest mystery to come out of Sputnikfest 2019.

While the cover bands in the beer tent might have missed the mark—neither “Space Truckin’” nor that Carpenters tune about contact with “interplanetary craft” were on the set lists—the crowd did their part to celebrate the occasion with homemade Sputnik-themed hairpieces and astronaut-costumed dogs. And because Sputnikfest is a fundraiser for this tiny miracle of an art museum, there is rarely debate on whether or not to buy another beer, alien-themed tchotchke, or hot dog served in a dyed-green bun.

Every year on the third Saturday of July, a hundred or so people gather at Benson’s Holiday Hide-A-Way to swap alien stories and bask in the judgment-free environs of UFO Daze. Nestled in the hills of the Kettle Moraine along the northern shore of Long Lake near Campbellsport, the Hide-A-Way is a typical lakeside bar. There’s bait available for the fishermen whose trucks and trailers crowd a parking lot that slopes into the green waters of the lake.

For more than three decades, owner Bill Benson has opened the doors of his bar and grill to believers and the curious alike. Silver-haired and clad in a Hawaiian shirt, Benson reigns from behind the bar with a sweet demeanor that steers interaction toward laughter—whether at or with him. His loose, good nature can be found in every aspect of UFO Daze, from the themed beer can koozies and the t-shirt design (updated yearly) to “the alien in the jar” behind the bar to the vodka-and-Gatorade concoction called “alien juice” that flows freely all day. This event is the culmination of a year-round alien theme at the bar, which holds more space creature bric-a-brac on its walls than could be won at a county fair.

While the UFO stuff seems gimmicky, Benson is a true believer. He freely shares his own paranormal experiences, such as the time warp he experienced outside Plymouth during work as a milk hauler or the way he escaped a probable nighttime alien abduction. The Hide-A-Way is connected to his home and adjacent to a campground, both of which have been in his family for years. Benson says that over the years he heard more and more tales about the strange things happening around Long Lake and nearby Dundee Mountain: crop circles in the cattails, mysterious flashing lights over the lake, a “Bigfoot or wolf-man or dog-man,” a “big, orange ball” chased by fighter jets only to disappear.

For the people who come to UFO Daze, “this isn’t just a party,” says Benson. “It’s a sharing of experiences. And I think that’s



Bill Benson serves up alien juice and good times from behind the bar at the Hide-A-Way.



Wisconsin. Wisconsin people love to share experiences and their way of life.”

On the ground at the 31st annual UFO Daze, it certainly was a party. Benson mugged at regulars and newbies as they lined his classic small-town bar in rings of two and three deep. But, amid the festivities, there was a genuine openness to listening to what people had seen, whether spectacular or unexplainable.

“This is going to sound crazy,” said Tessa Huber, “but I saw [a UFO] in traffic on I-94 by Miller Parkway. I was in traffic, and a bright, greenish light appeared in the sky. I’m always the one who is like, ‘Is it a plane, is it a helicopter?’ But it didn’t really look like that. Then it disappeared behind the clouds.”

Amanda Stellberg said she had a UFO story that was “too long to share” and instead offered to tell “a couple of ghost stories.” Stellberg drove up from Milwaukee with Jacob Bach, who recognized one of the authors of a guide to haunted Wisconsin at the party and thanked him for providing him and his high school friends with “hundreds of memories.”

A man from Kenosha in a t-shirt featuring “1776” written in an aggressive font declined to give his name but expressed relief to find a place to talk about aliens and cryptids (animals claimed but not proven to exist) outside of the “expensive” paranormal and sci-fi conferences. He said it felt good to be here even if UFO Daze was probably infiltrated by CIA operatives.

As ominous clouds dropped rain and even hail, revelers talked, drank, and munched on bar food from a “special” UFO Daze menu featuring burgers, pizza, and fried cheese curds. The din at times drowned out the expert and witness presentations at the far end of the Hide-A-Way. Against a backdrop of beer signs and framed Second Amendment slogans, Dr. Raymond Keller leaped ahead in his PowerPoint presentation to get to the good stuff: scientific theories on the common misidentification of aliens as angels and incontrovertible proof of life on Venus. Another man passed out business cards for a “Coast to Coast A.M. discussion group” hyper-specifically targeted at Portage County, Wisconsin, and northern Ohio. Next up, Daniel Eis from Two Rivers described his eerie discoveries while in the military decades ago. On aliens, Eis summarized to the nodded approval of the few listening, “I, of course, know they’re real and they’ve been around ever since. They’re still around.”

While these UFO Daze presenters might seem a little kooky, the science might just be on their side. The European Space Agency estimates there are about one billion stars in the Milky Way, with roughly 10% of them having a sun-like size and shape. There are very likely millions of Earth-sized worlds orbiting these stars in their respective “Goldilocks zones,” areas of orbit in which planets are neither too hot nor too cold and support the formation of liquid water (every known life form requires liquid water). Between 300 to 375 of these Goldilocks planets are relatively close to Earth, within fifty or so light years, according to a six-year study by PLANET (Probing Lensing Anomalies NETwork) published in the British science journal *Nature*.

Even if you dismiss the fairly compelling videos of lights hovering over Dundee Mountain there are the recent documented UFO sightings from steely Naval flight pilots to consider. Add to this Harvard professor Avi Loeb’s observation that a comet passing near Earth in summer 2019 may have been an “alien probe,” and the argument becomes more plausible: Perhaps our closest alien neighbors are (planetarily speaking) right next door, give or take a few light years.

Many of us can point to a handful of Wisconsin people and companies with major contributions to the human understanding of space. Milwaukee’s Jim Lovell orbited the moon in Apollo 8 and Racine’s Laurel Clark ran bioscience experiments on the Space Shuttle Columbia before it’s fatal re-entry. Milwaukee-based companies Rockwell Automation and Astronautics Corporation of America developed materials and processes that were foundational to space exploration. And, of course, our state universities have produced—and continue to produce—ideas and innovations that bring us ever closer to stars.

Brian Jensen, Nadine Druar, and Bill Benson may never rise to the level of our homegrown space heroes. But what they do and say tells us so much about our constant curiosity about what’s out there, our conceptions (right or wrong) about life on other planets, and our capacity to question where we fit in to it all. From behind the bar at the Hide-A-Way, with an inflatable green alien draped on his arm, Bill Benson perhaps said it best: “We get all these experiences and put them together to try to find out what life is *really* all about.”



**Justin Kern** is a nonprofit communications person and nonfiction writer who lives in Milwaukee with his wife and three cats. He is editor of *The Milwaukee Anthology* (Belt Publishing, 2019) and has written for *Utne Reader*, *Great Lakes Review*, and *Wanderlust Journal*, as well as for daily news outlets.

# A Different Drum

BY JUDE GENEREAUX

**A** mighty voice emanates from a small place in northwestern Wisconsin. Woodland Community Public Radio, better known as WOJB, is an independent FM radio station operated by the Lac Courte Oreilles tribe. Available online and with a range of about 80 miles on the FM dial at 88.9, WOJB is one of only sixty radio stations (out of 15,330 stations nationwide) licensed to tribes or tribal entities. Broadcasting from the town of Reserve, just ten minutes south of Hayward, WOJB provides listeners with an intriguing mix of Northwoods news, talk, and music—all with limited advertising.





This is the original logo for WOJB, Woodland Community Public Radio, which is owned and operated by the Lac Courte Oreilles tribe in northwestern Wisconsin.



Paul DeMain, editor and CEO of Indian  
Country Communications  
Eric Schubring, WOJB Public Affairs Director  
Corissa Corbine, WOJB General Manager

The station draws its news from National Public Radio-produced shows such as *Morning Edition* and *Democracy Now!* as well as native-produced shows like *National Native News* and *Morning Fire Ojibwemowin*. While its music programs feature indigenous music and drumming along with American folk, bluegrass, jazz, and rock music, WOJB is perhaps best known for folksy talk segments that reflect the character (and characters) of this part of Wisconsin.

The idea for the station came about in the late 1970s, when Lac Courte Oreilles tribal leaders were looking for ways to build a bridge to the wider community to help area residents better understand Lac Courte Oreilles life and culture. This was an era marked by conflict and distrust between the tribes and non-native residents of northwestern Wisconsin, mainly surrounding where and how much the tribes were allowed to hunt and fish. While federal law guaranteed the Lac Courte Oreilles spear fishing as well as other hunting and gathering rights within ceded territories, a few residents—whether through ignorance or malice—viewed these harvests as illegal and harmful to wild game and fish stocks. A few would shout obscenities and throw rocks and bottles, even shoot guns, at native fishing parties exercising their treaty rights.

Paul DeMain, a Lac Courte Oreilles journalist and Indian Affairs Policy Advisor under Wisconsin Governor Anthony S. Earl, was working as community director for the tribe at the time. He recalls how the idea of creating a radio station arose almost organically—not just as a way to reflect the tribe’s identity, but as a way to communicate shared values surrounding important native issues, including their commitment to sustainable and responsible hunting and fishing. DeMain recalls how the establishment of WOJB was just one of the ways the Lac Courte Oreilles sought to build trust and understanding with the non-native community in the region at the time. “Our efforts resulted not only in the founding of WOJB, but [also] a school on the reservation, a clinic, and, eventually, a college.”

DeMain and the other WOJB organizers sent a few Lac Courte Oreilles members to UW–Stevens Point to take broadcasting classes but quickly realized they would need an experienced producer to get the station off the ground. Organizers made an exception to their usual policy of hiring tribal members first when they brought on Dick Brooks in 1980. Brooks made the move from St. Paul, Minnesota, to Hayward, where he remained with WOJB for the next fifteen years as program and news director.

For many listeners, Schubring is the voice of WOJB, and he creates an ideal environment for engaging conversation, whether broadcasting from the studio or his favorite local haunt, Koobie’s Coffee Shop.



In April 1981, WOJB went live on air with a mission “to reflect the values of the Lac Courte Oreilles nation, respect for tribal sovereignty, and build a bridge to other cultures.” Progressive in both their mission and views, WOJB brought together volunteers from the tribe and the larger community to create original and interesting programming. News, diverse perspectives, interviews with community members, and segments on local art and artists filled the airwaves. Their goal then was the same as today: to show respect for all cultures and honor the diversity of northwestern Wisconsin.

As the station began to draw more listeners and volunteers in the mid-1980s, tribal elders encouraged Brooks to find a public affairs director who could also handle hosting the 5:30 am early morning show. Brooks found his perfect candidate in Eric Schubring, a journalist who began his on-air career as the host of WATW’s “The Mellen News Hour.” It was at WATW in Ashland that Schubring discovered his passion for radio. He took some broadcasting courses and eventually worked for radio stations such as WEKZ in Monroe and, later, WHSM in Hayward. At WHSM Schubring impressed then-station producer Dick Brooks with his talent and integrity.

After clearing it with DeMain and the tribal elders, Brooks invited his old friend and colleague to join the WOJB family. Looking back over the past 35 years, DeMain says they made the right choice in hiring Schubring. “He has political sensibility, and he brings diversity—no matter if he is Native American or not—and a following that



Schubring often holds interviews at Koobie’s Coffee Shop.

is good for the tribe. He is dedicated to the principles that indigenous culture reflects—and he knows radio.”

For many listeners, Schubring is the voice of WOJB, and he creates an ideal environment for engaging conversation, whether broadcasting from the studio or his favorite local haunt, Koobie’s Coffee Shop. Listeners are free to call in to talk through political, environmental, and cultural issues with Schubring and local personalities such as Lac Courte Oreilles Tribal Council member Jason Schlender, Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission executive director Mic Isham, and former Lac Courte Oreilles Tribal Chairman and LCO College president Dr. Russell Swagger, as well as national figures like Ed Garvey and Matt Rothschild.

According to DeMain, one key to Schubring’s success as a host is his ability to “give the opposition the mic,” even when the topics are controversial, which is a core philosophy shared by station and tribe alike. “This is about more than just WOJB or Native American identity,” says DeMain, pointing out that there are Native Americans as well as non-natives active both on staff and working as volunteers.

General manager Carissa Corbine, an Ojibwe member of both the Lac Courte Oreilles and the Bad River Reservation, has been with WOJB for three years. Initially employed with the station as membership director, Corbine says she had “fallen in love with the station and community radio.” When the position of general manager opened, she pounced on the opportunity. “I saw a lot of potential for the station,” says Corbine, “but the decade-long struggle to secure funding for a new transmitter and upgraded equipment was challenging.”

Indeed, as with many public radio stations, funding is a challenge for WOJB. The station is maintained and supported by individual pledges from the listening public and through federal grants. But it also receives some funding from the tribe. It took all of these funding sources pulling together to build a powerful new transmitter, which began operation in the fall of 2019. Schubring says that the old transmitter was operating at as little as a couple of hundred watts. But the new transmitter has restored the station’s power to the FCC-authorized 100,000 watts, increasing the radius of its FM range from around 15 miles to over 80.

The extended range of the station draws in new listeners from as far away as Ashland and Manitowish Waters, which “stabilizes our future and enables us to be more self-sufficient,” says Corbine. “We’re now able to reach our audience in ways that in the past were limited, if not all too often disabled.”

While the range of the station has more than quadrupled, its actual paid staff is just four people: station manager Corbine, station

engineer Mark Lundeen, program director Jeff Jones, and public affairs director Schubring. The everyday function of the station also relies on over twenty volunteers, managed by Corbine, who take on a variety of roles that are essential to the delivery of top-notch radio. Corbine works closely with the WOJB Board of Directors and Community Advisory Board to ensure the success of the station, and she meets regularly with the Lac Courte Oreilles Elder Council to plan and develop ideas for news stories and interviews. The Council often suggests subjects for Schubring’s Koobie’s interviews that spotlight the wealth of talent found in the area as well as opportunities available through reservation programs and activities, especially in health and education.

For many listeners in this sparsely populated part of the state, WOJB keeps them informed, engaged, and connected to the community. But this tiny station with a mighty voice also provides listeners with a sense of pride in their place on Earth. “It’s made a huge difference in the life of the community,” says Brooks. “These are real people on the radio—members from all of the community, Indians and non-Indians. This is who we are.”



**Jude Genereaux** is an award-winning poet whose work has appeared in such publications as *Hummingbird* and *After Hours*, as well as the *The Milwaukee Anthology* (Belt Publishing, 2019) and a number of newspapers. Genereaux has published three chapbooks of essays and poems, and she writes a column for the *Rice Lake Chronotype*.





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Comfort Wasikhongo, *Jim Jones at the Statue of Liberty*, 2012. Oil on canvas, 60 by 72 inches.

# LOIS BIELEFELD & COMFORT WASIKHONGO

BY JODY CLOWES

**W**e're absolutely on board with social distancing during the coronavirus pandemic. Even so, having to cancel our spring 2020 exhibitions is a major disappointment. The following pages feature work from the artists whose solo shows would have opened this April: Milwaukee photographer Lois Bielefeld and Madison painter Comfort Wasikhongo.

Bielefeld's *New Domesticity* series of photographs explores the changing dynamic of family life. Wasikhongo's large-scale portraits of black men pose important questions about identity and racial justice. Both these artists approach their subjects with refreshing directness, inviting viewers to drop their guard and simply look. While issues of gender, class, and race are critical to their work, these issues are raised quietly, resting lightly yet implacably on the surface.





Comfort Wasikhongo, *Portrait of E. Franklin Frazier*, 2020. Oil on canvas, 48 by 48 inches.

Lois Bielefeld describes her photographs as “situational portraits,” driven by her interest in how individual lives are shaped by family, environment, culture, peers, genetics, and memory. She has always been fascinated by people’s habits and personal spaces—and what they reveal. Bielefeld works with her subjects to compose their images, using theatrical lighting and staged poses to create the finished picture. In earlier photographic series like *The Bedroom*, *On Faith*, *Neighborhood*, and *Weeknight Dinners* (previously featured in this magazine) she’s focused her lens on intimate, often domestic, scenes that include people from a broad range of ethnic and racial backgrounds, gender identities, and income levels.

For the *New Domesticity* series featured here, Bielefeld says she wanted to “explore what domesticity looks like today—long after feminism responded to the idealized, role-driven society of the 50s and 60s (think June Cleaver).” She created portraits and audio interviews of nearly sixty families as a way to understand what home and “making a home” really means in contemporary America.

For several years Comfort Wasikhongo has been painting dramatic and audaciously large portraits of bodybuilders. Most of his subjects are black men, setting the bodybuilders’ decision to project physical power against our culture’s ugly stereotypes of strong black men: the brutish slave, the dangerous thug, the virile seducer. Recently, Wasikhongo has turned his attention to portraits of black intellectual leaders like Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, and E. Franklin Frazier.

“As I painted these intellectual leaders and read their words, I found qualities of conviction and self-assurance that I also found in the bodybuilders I have been painting for years,” says Wasikhongo. “As I worked to capture their likeness and personality, I kept thinking about how focused, determined, and well-spoken these men had to be to define the terms of their own philosophies and to work with others toward their goals of racial uplift and social justice.”

***Lois Bielefeld and Comfort Wasikhongo’s solo exhibitions at James Watrous Gallery have been rescheduled for spring 2022.***





Comfort Wasikhongo, *Rocking, Rolling Ronnie Coleman*, 2015. Oil on canvas, 65 by 91 inches.



Lois Bielefeld, *Naya, Darrell, and Annie*, 2018. Photograph on paper, frame-size 26 x 36 inches. From the series *New Domesticity*.





Lois Bielefeld, *Susie, Forrest, Asa, and Laura*, 2018. Photograph on paper, frame-size 26 x 36 inches. From the series *New Domesticity*.



Lois Bielefeld, *Sharath, Nirmal, Suhas, and Sahitya*, 2018. Photograph on paper, frame-size 26 x 36 inches. From the series *New Domesticity*.





Lois Bielefeld, *John and Joe*, 2019. Photograph on paper, frame-size 26 x 36 inches. From the series *New Domesticity*.



Lois Bielefeld, *Rachel, Beau, Bennett, and Adam*, 2019. Photograph on paper, frame-size 26 x 36 inches. From the series *New Domesticity*.



# SPIRIT BOX

BY NIKKI KALLIO

**K**ristin searched for a sound in the still air of the guest room, holding up a hand for silence while Mark dropped the equipment on a rosy bedspread. Muted light filtered through warped glass, long shadows reaching over papered walls. Coming here at night would have been better. It was when the street noises dwindled, when quiet things felt empowered to become visible.

"Do you hear something?"

The voices were never voices, but more like the memory of sound—an echo off cavernous, sweating walls; a subaqueous whisper. It was more like a vibration. Maybe Kristin associated the not-voices with dampness because they felt damp, too heavy to rise from the place they once existed.

"Try the box," she said.

Mark switched it on, letting it cycle through radio frequencies.

*Tch tch tch tch tch tch tch...*

"Is anyone here today?" Kristin asked. "Can you say *hello* to us?"

They waited for the right radio frequency to be selected and used by an inhabiting spirit. The owners of the building—a historic inn—had called her, with the usual mix of skepticism and hopefulness in their questions. They'd purchased the inn several years ago knowing the stories associated with it: the anachronistically dressed apparitions, a light on or a door closed when it hadn't been, footsteps on the unoccupied third floor. They believed the stories would add character, attracting adventurous ghost-experience seekers and giving a chuckle to the non-believers. It was like that for a while. Then it became more concrete and undeniable. There was screaming in the witching hour, a window slammed *open*, and a cocktail glass—hurled by an invisible assailant—shattered on the bar, cutting a guest. For some guests there was an oppressive feeling of wanting to be anywhere but there. What had started as spooky fun had turned nightmarish; the inn owners had to refund too many visits and pack up for guests who simply threw on coats and said to send their things later.

"Can you say *hello*?"

*Tch tch tch tch telephone me tch tch tch tch...*

"What?" Mark said. "Was that a *hello*? *Hello me*?"

"No, it said, *telephone me*," Kristin said. "It's residual. An imprint."

"*Telephone*. When did we stop saying that, like a verb?"

"Did you ever say it?"

"Maybe my parents did. They had the kind with, you know, the dial."

"Rotary. I think the owners are wrong, then, it's not Marie. It's too recent."

Kristin had looked into the history of the Civil War-era building, which first belonged to Marie Marchand after her husband died—under mysterious circumstances, of course. There were the standard old stories about poison and a wicked heart, of servants chained in the basement. Marchand had lost her fortune to bad investments and the house went to the state, first becoming a school for girls and then an asylum and then a guesthouse again. It was broken up into apartments in the 1950s, going vacant two decades later, brooding over a dying neighborhood until the young couple with bad credit and misfortunate naivety bought the building.

"Give me the EMF," she said. Mark handed it to her.

*Help.*

That voice didn't register on the spirit box but rather inside Kristin's mind, part of whatever unexplained talent or gift or curse had led her here.

The green light flickered to yellow to orange and red.

"Whoa," Mark said.

The meter went back to green.

"There are a lot of them."

"How can you tell?"

*Tch tch tch tch tch tch tch...*

It was another thing that was hard to explain. Individual voices didn't always surface; it was more a sense of layers and crumbling, a residual pastry. Kristin sensed whoever belonged to this "telephone" voice wasn't causing the disturbances. The fathomless sadness and fear carried those words beyond linear time but did not carry physical force. She handed the EMF back to Mark and twisted a small flashlight on, aiming the beam in the corners of the room where the light couldn't reach. Beyond the liability concern, the innkeepers had been most unsettled by the screaming. They suspected it was Marie, the original owner, as one guest had seen an apparition in long skirts with a bustle.



*Tch tch tch tch tch tch tch...*

"What are we looking for?"

"Just looking," Kristin said. Once, in an abandoned asylum, she found scratches on the floor—not words but hashmarks, marking time. Sometimes decades-old stains marked the wood, the telltale heart of atrocity. She checked for places where rickety fixtures could fall and for clues left behind by forgotten lives. The beam spotlighted only sections of wallpaper and cobwebs. She set the flashlight illuminated on the windowsill and spoke to the room.

"Can you make this light go out?"

She glanced at the EMF reader in Mark's hand but already knew it would be quiet. Whatever she was waiting for was big enough that she would feel it first. She had known the feeling since her mother moved her to that house, her pubescent electricity mixing with the damp air of angry residue. Whether it was already in the house or she had brought it with her, she didn't know. But Kristin quickly learned to recognize the change in air, the stale heaviness, heat that wasn't exactly heat. Sometimes an overripe smell, like musty fruit rubbed into upholstery. Her innermost senses would urge her to leave that place. But she couldn't stop looking for the source of that feeling. The wandering souls, the ones seeking retribution or closure, they sought her out. However, they weren't the ones she was after.

The flashlight turned off.

"Whoa," Mark said.

"Okay, let's try again."

Mark set the EMF meter on a small table, reaching for the spirit box.

The otherworld was as complex as the physical one. Intellectually, Kristin understood the danger. But she instinctually felt it now, signals jolting through the tree-like structure of her nervous system. She checked the EMF reader again but knew it was waiting. Like anything born of the dark, it despised the light. The heavy air relented to cooler eddies of spirit, the others moving away. In this place, there was a hierarchy. Marie was here, certainly. She was only the beginning. The screamer was another, and the glass thrower, and the apparition. Kristin waited for the thing that held them there, the architect of pain.

The box pulsed, waiting to capture metallic voices through the filter of radio static.

*Please.*

"I heard it!"

"Shh."

The stale air grew dense, the pressure growing inside her chest felt like being held underwater. The air around her turned frigid. She held the spirit box into invisible space and asked for a name.

WEIRD things had started happening even before Kristin and her mother moved to the old part of the city. How many times had she felt the oppressive bubble followed by an imagined whisper? As a child she recalled her mother hastily packing their belongings in the space of an afternoon, moving them from their apartment across town because of something Kristin had, for years, remembered as a dream. She'd been sleeping in her mother's room that night, because of a storm or a nightmare, and woke to a scraping

sound. She lifted her head, seeing her mother was already awake, staring at her dresser. The third drawer was open. After a period of time that made Kristin believe her mother had fallen asleep, she finally stirred, moving toward the dresser in a way a person might move toward a wild animal. Her mother hastily pushed the drawer closed and turned her back on the dresser, smiling at Kristin in a reassuring way.

Then the drawer opened again.

## JUDGE'S NOTES



TOM MILLER

The specific, unexpected details of "Spirit Box" elevate it above a simple ghost story: the heavy, damp spirits, too waterlogged to move; the crackles of sound on the electromagnetic field detector; the memory of stealing the neighbor's newspaper each morning and then refolding and replacing it. The author is canny in [her] use of exposition, efficiently explaining the rules of this world while using the information to move the plot forward and further characterize the protagonist. It's a great example of how genre and lit-fic conventions can be blended to make something new—literary techno-Gothic, perhaps?

The sound that Kristin's mother made still haunted her dreams, an unambiguous acknowledgment of horror. She remembered being scooped up and thundered from the room and out into the cold night air, amber streetlights illuminating their new reality. It hadn't been the first time strange things happened in the house, but it was the most blatant, the crossover moment when they couldn't ignore or shrug off or explain away something odd. When lights had gone on or turned off without warning, her mother would mutter something about surges and wiring. If a door slammed, a draft or uneven hinges. When Kristin woke up one morning, inexplicably sprawled in the hallway and tangled in her blanket, it was sleepwalking. Now, everything had changed.

They left that night only to have whatever it was follow and resurface in the new house, and from then on it was a continuous sense of unease for them both, like the wallpaper had eyes. Kristin felt herself changing, grappling with a presence or an ability she didn't understand. But her mother had changed, too—smoking more, drinking, surrounded by a cloud of frenetic vibration, staying up late on the phone when Kristin thought she couldn't hear. *I think it was him*, she heard her mother say one night into the receiver, the spiral cord stretching around the corner under her closed bedroom door. *Don't you think it could be? I told you about that night. No. I was afraid, what was I going to say? No, she doesn't know.*

There were things on the news back then, serious men with wide lapels and moustaches gravely recounting tales of missing women, of unlocked windows and broken glass. There were pen-and-ink drawings of a dark-eyed man posted on telephone poles and in the window of a grocery store. Whenever they passed that grim face, her mother gripped Kristin's hand in a way that made the delicate bones and sinew under her skin grind together.

"Why are you afraid of that man?" Her mother denied it once too often, and finally Kristin demanded to know who he was.

"He's a bad person," her mother said. "That's all you need to know."

Oh, my God, did you hear that?" Over the years Kristin learned to sort her assistants into three buckets: the serious believers, the pot smokers, and the overexcited pleasers. They never stayed long, mostly because paranormal investigations didn't pay much but sometimes because something rattled them. They came to learn how to hunt ghosts for their own YouTube channels or for an oddball experience to add to their resumes; they never expected the feeling of ice-cold hands shoving them at the top of a dusty staircase or a demonic voice calling their names.

*Tch tch tch tch here tch tch tch tch...*

"It said *here!*"

Similarly, Kristin categorized the voices. One, residual haunting: an impression of energy, something that wasn't really a ghost, but like a groove worn in time, a skip in temporal vinyl. Two, sentient: the ghost of someone who hadn't expected to die, or had something left to resolve. Three, something else: a spirit gone wrong, a poltergeist, power galvanized by fear. She was hearing a two and she was waiting for a three.

*He's here.*

"Who's here?" Kristin asked.

A long pause, frequencies scratching a pulse.

*Killer.*

"What is his name?"

Static thumping.

*George.*

Kristin took a few seconds pause to control the bubble of emotion growing in her chest. "But he has another name, doesn't he?"

The scratching static. Mark's rising and falling chest.

The guest room door creaked, moving open.

"Are you here?"

Another voice, male and chilling.

*Leave.*



"I know what you did," Kristin said. Mark glanced in her direction. "We're not going anywhere."

*I know you.*

The detective would call her whenever they had run through every possibility on a missing person or had an antsy supervisor who wanted to clear out some cold cases. But the George Winters case continued to dog her, inextricably connected to her own conflicted feelings about what some called a gift.

The man on the TV, the one on the faded fliers, went by the name George Winters. The Hacksaw Killer, the newscasters called him, because that's how he decapitated his victims and because the name was instantly catchy. At this point, her mother operated on a hair trigger. She'd known him somehow; that much was clear to Kristin. She had processed what she'd heard her mother say on the phone and rendered the comments into a confession about her own origins. To think this killer could be her unknown father both terrified and thrilled Kristin, and for this she felt a crushing sense of guilt. It drove an unceasing curiosity, a desire to be the one to catch him, to stop him. In her mind, she made herself the hero, the abandoned offspring coming back to slay the monster, the only one who could.

She clipped out every story from the newspaper about Hacksaw, and when her mother caught on, she cancelled the paper. It didn't stop Kristin. She waited for her neighbors to drop their old papers in the trash or stole them off their lawns. If there were no stories about him on a particular day, she'd refold the paper and put it back under the shrub where she found it. She pasted each article in a notebook dedicated solely to Hacksaw.

Her obsession with the killer took seed not only because of her possible connection to him but even more, perhaps, because of the collective fear she felt surrounding her—from her mother, from the newscasters, from people in the neighborhood. It was the only time she thought other people understood how she felt every day. She began to believe it was his fault that she drew the inexplicable and unsettling activity, like maybe he'd passed along a part of his soul with his DNA. It was all the more reason to find a way to end his dominion of fear.

After years of hearing the angry voices of lost souls, few responses rattled her. The worst was in an old hotel, when it felt like something was pulling her essence through the floor, replacing her soul with ice, saying, *Now you're mine*. This, she guessed, might have been an elusive and rare number four, a thing that was never human. She'd felt the words in her head and the spirit box caught them, too. She felt herself wanting to surrender to whatever had taken hold. Her then-assistant, a graduate student in psychology, had pulled her by both arms out into the parking lot. It took Kristin a few days to lose the chill.

Now this.

*You follow me.*

"That's right," Kristin said, her heart thumping.

"What's happening?" Mark said.

"I know your name."

*Say it.*

"You say it!"

*Hahahahaha.*

She began to visit the crime scenes. Almost right away she felt a voice saying, *Help me*. That was the first time the heavy stale-air feeling and the cold bubbles of chill had given her more; it solidified her suspicion of a deeper connection to this man. She used her birthday money to buy a spirit box to confirm what she heard. It was rarely as detailed as the words in her mind but it helped her to trust that it hadn't been her imagination, and later, when she began to bring friends along, it proved to them that she wasn't crazy.

"Who killed you?" she would ask, and she would sometimes hear *George* and sometimes other names and often nothing.

Kristin got arrested at age thirteen for breaking into the last crime scene with a friend. She was made to wait on a plastic chair at the police station while her mother signed papers.

"What were you thinking?" her mother asked.

The words came out of Kristin in a rush of accusation, a defensive attack.

"No," her mother had said. Her expression held such a twist of disbelief that Kristin knew her mother wasn't lying, that George Winters was not her father. Her mother explained that she'd had an encounter but nothing more, allowing him to drive her home one night after a party. "You were three or four years old. I think—maybe because so many people had seen him that night, it stopped him from—from what could have happened."

Kristin learned, finally, that her father was one of two other men, neither of whom would have been good for her or her mother. But they certainly weren't Hacksaw.

Was she disappointed? It was more like confusion, the inexplicability of her life.

The voices quieted for a while, like they were giving her space.

I want to know where they are," Kristin said to the room.

Mark glanced at her. "Where what are?"

She had never stopped following George Winters. She was seventeen when a particularly vocal poltergeist led her to a shallow grave, and she finally found a sympathetic detective who had the time and resources to humor her. When his crews uncovered the mummified and headless corpse, he had asked her pointed questions, staring in that way people did when they were trying to file her into their own category. He sifted through "A" for accomplice and "I" for insane until he finally got to a letter he could live with.

The detective would call her whenever they had run through every possibility on a missing person or had an antsy supervisor who wanted to clear out some cold cases. But the George Winters case continued to dog her, inextricably connected to her own conflicted feelings about what some called a gift. Why had she been cursed with the voices of the dead in her mind, or the terrifying ability to see specters walk across their own graves? Why had she been dogged by other people's nightmares in addition to her own, which only grew worse with every passing year?

Growing up, her friends had noticed that she would pale when she passed by a cemetery or frown to concentrate on a voice that wasn't part of a crowd. One by one they fell away, distancing themselves from potential contagion. If she wasn't the blood and bone progeny of that freak of nature, how and why did she become this strange being, walking with one half of her mind in the living world and the other in a place that was no less real but terrifying to navigate? At least her imagined connection with Hacksaw offered some reasoning; without it, she had no explanation for why she was so different.

Kristin kept looking years after headless corpses stopped surfacing and the police assumed Hacksaw had died. She continued to investigate hauntings, tapping into the wake of psychic energy she felt whenever a body had not been put to rest properly. That's how she found the inn, years before the innkeeper called her, by accident or perhaps not, stopping her car outside and staring into the eyes of its broken windows. Foolishly, she had returned, ducking under the broken chain-link fence with a flashlight and a recorder.

That first time, when she had broken in, there had been overlapping residual voices. She knew the inn was filled with death, but she had left without any answers. Kristin sought out the last owners, searching records, looking for names. Twice she'd heard the first name, once on a midnight taping at a popular restaurant known to have been frequented by Hacksaw and once in a building that later revealed a headless body. She suspected the inn held more secrets. She suspected it had been quiet because George Winters was still in charge.

And now she was back.

"I know you're here," Kristin said. "This is where you died."

"Who? Who died?" Mark asked.

*Hacksaw.*



"That's the woman again," Kristin said. "Is he gone?"

*Go.*

"Us? Where should we go?"

*Basement.*

"Come on," Mark said. "What's in the basement?"

"Will we find bodies?"

They waited for innumerable scratching beats.

*Heads.*

"Shit," Mark said.

Sudden cold, like a refrigerator door kicked open.

*Bitch.*

"This is what we came for," Kristin said, watching the EMF in Mark's hand spin up. "I want to talk to you, George."

Hacksaw stayed silent through the frequency shift.

*Tch tch tch tch tch....*

What would they find if they started digging in the basement? The police knew of eight and suspected more, twice as many.

"You have a chance to show the world who you really are. Come on," Kristin said. "How many are there?"

A silent pulsing of radio air.

"Are you afraid?"

*Tch tch tch are you? tch tch tch tch....*

She recalled their pixelated faces stacked up in neat newspaper columns, how she sat at the kitchen table late at night, sleepless, and clipped carefully around the margins of their lost lives. If she could find them all, if she could put them all to rest, maybe she could offer not only closure to the families but also something like it to the young girl who stayed awake so many nights, trying not to see the death that lingered in the heavy space between flesh and the unknown.

"Yeah," Kristin said. "I have been for a long time."

The spirit box continued its staccato hiss, holding her in its mesmerizing, unchanging rhythm.



**Nikki Kallio** worked as a newspaper journalist on both coasts before coming home to Wisconsin, where she is now a freelance writer, editor, and writing instructor. Her creative work has appeared in *Minerva Rising*, *Midwestern Gothic*, and elsewhere, and her novella, *The Fledgling*, was shortlisted in the 2018 unsolicited novella contest hosted by Brain Mill Press. Kallio's short story "Geography Lesson" won first place in the 2015 *Wisconsin People & Ideas* Fiction Contest.

2019

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PLACE

# MIRROR BOX

BY MICHAEL HOPKINS

Dr. Merton gave Shelby Aronowitz bad news. The pain in her knee was osteosarcoma. They would have to amputate.

“Can’t they replace it?” Shelby’s mother said. “Just the knee?”

“No,” Dr. Merton said. “We have to remove bone too far above and below the joint.” He brought up an x-ray, and an image from Shelby’s MRI. On the large screen in the small room, he pointed at dark spots on the pictures. “See,” Dr. Merton said. “Maybe if we had caught it sooner ...” He cleared his throat. “You can be fitted with a prosthetic leg. The technology is evolving quickly. There is no reason you can’t have a full life.”

Shelby's mother wrapped her arms around Shelby's broad shoulders and started to cry. It was a weak embrace. Shelby wanted to slap her, tell her to straighten up, to go lift some fucking weights. Even here she pictured her mother still in bed, propped up with pillows, a box of Kleenex on her lap, whining on the phone to Aunt Arella about her pains.

Dr. Merton continued, "Ride a bike, dance, even run. You have a very strong physique."

Shelby pulled away from her mother and stretched out her leg. She leaned over it, rubbed it, dug her fingers into the flesh, methodically massaged from the calf to her upper thigh. Three times. Her leg felt warm, alive.

"I want to keep it," Shelby said. She looked at Dr. Merton's face. It reminded her of the fudge cheese her Aunt Arella gave her; Shelby chewed it and was frustrated that she couldn't taste the fudge or the cheese, so she spit it out. She tried to guess if Dr. Merton was about to smile, or frown. Why would he smile?

"Not recommended," Dr. Merton said. "It's localized now, but it could spread into your organs, your brain."

"No," Shelby said, "I—"

"You're seventeen." The doctor straightened. "Go with the surgery and there is no reason you don't live to be one-hundred. Without this surgery. ..."

The doctor pushed a button and the screen with her pictures went dark. "I don't want to scare you, but you would be dead by your twenty-first birthday. Maybe sooner."

"No," Shelby said. "I want to keep the leg."

"Shelby," her mother said. "For God's sake, listen to the doctor."

"No. You listen to me," Shelby said. "I want to keep my leg." She stood up. "After the surgery."

Dr. Merton squinted. "It has to come off," he insisted.

"After that," Shelby said, "After the surgery ... I want to keep it."

The doctor sighed, rubbed his eyes with both hands. He put two fingers down his collar, above his tie, and tugged.

"This is crazy talk," her mother said. "Why?"

Shelby shrugged. "I don't know. I just do."

"Impossible," her mother said. "Right, doctor? Tell her."

Dr. Merton looked at his watch and stood up. Just one hour left in the day and three more patients to see. "Alright," Dr. Merton said. He turned to Shelby's mother, tried to recall her first name, but could not. "Believe it or not Mrs. ... Well, there is a protocol for Shelby's request." He cleared his throat. "As a minor she needs your approval. Some papers to sign. Additional costs."

"Never," her mother said.

Shelby put her hand on her mother's shoulder. "Then I die when I'm twenty-one." Shelby looked up at the doctor. "Or sooner."

## JUDGE'S NOTES



TOM MILLER

As an ER doctor, I've seen the reactions many patients have when they receive bad news. I found Shelby's implacable, unexplainable desire to "keep her leg" and her mother's vehement opposition to the idea entirely plausible. The central image of that leg—living, dead, preserved, even as an heirloom to be passed down through generations—becomes an increasingly complicated representation of the hopes and fears of an entire family (as well as the medical team working to help them).

The phone rang and Shelby's mother answered it. "You should know something." She recognized the voice as Jacob, her dead husband's brother. "I talked to Shelby. She wants me to sue you."

"But I'm her mother."

"Tell me something I don't know," Jacob said. "It's about the leg."

"Of course it's about the leg." She wanted to spit. "I wish we were born with ... with fins. I hate this leg."

"She told me the disease has changed her," Jacob said. "No more writing; she wants to go into law."

"What about the leg?"

"Can't you imagine Shelby and my little Zeke, the family business living on? Benjamin and I had discussed this many times when he was alive. Of course we thought it would be our sons. Dreams of patriarchal fools; the times have changed. Shelby would be perfect. Your Benjamin, my brother, is smiling."



"You are not seriously considering this," she said.

"I am. *Aronowitz and Aronowitz*. I thought it would end when Benjamin passed, but now it could live beyond us. The Psalm that Benji loved so much: *One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts*. This disease is a gift from God himself."

"I mean *suing* me."

"Of course not," he said. "But she has a case. This is why I called you. I agreed to work with her. I explained that I did Mergers and Acquisitions, not personal suits. There is a lot of money to be made in divorce, estate squabbles, but. ... No, I will not be part of that. I will never set one man against another."

"What do you mean *work with her*?"

"I've researched it," Jacob said. "You need to know that there is no law against keeping the leg, or any body part, in our state. Some states: Louisiana, Georgia, Missouri, it is against the law. But even there, if you are part of certain religious groups that believe the body is physically resurrected, as when the Christ returns, you are allowed to keep these parts to be buried with you. I guess they are put back together."

"Jacob, do you hear yourself?"

"Even in states where there is no law against this—I have it right here—the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act makes it illegal to own or trade in Native American remains. It's unclear to me if this applies to Native American individuals and their own body parts. But that is not our problem here."

"I'm tiring of this conversation."

"I called to let you know a reporter was here," Jacob said. "From *The Sentinel*."

"About Shelby?"

"Not at first," Jacob said. "He wanted to interview me about the Brazilian acquisition of Madison Dynamics. Brazil is such a hotbed of innovation. It will bring jobs into the city. One of our biggest projects."

"The reporter?"

"He was a nice man," Jacob said. "Young, but nice. I couldn't answer most of his questions. For legal reasons. Then Shelby called, right when he was in my office. I was so happy about her intention to go into law that I told him what she told me." Jacob paused. "I thought the leg thing might have been a joke. Benjamin was always a practical joker. I never knew when to believe him. Maybe it rubbed off on her. The reporter is going to talk to Shelby. I guess her leg is news."

"My God, Jacob."

"I may have made an error in judgment," Jacob said. "But she's not legally my client yet. That's why I called you."

"My God."

"You've got Benjamin's ashes on the mantle in your living room. I don't see harm in letting Shelby hang her leg on the wall of her bedroom. What harm?"

Shelby's mother ended the call. She imagined her daughter's leg, mounted, hanging above the bed. She wondered if it would be visible from the street, at night, when the light was on and the shades were up.

Shelby was not interested in talking to the reporter. Neither was Dr. Merton. Nor was Shelby's mother, nor her Uncle Jacob. Especially Jacob, who felt he had done enough damage already. Despite having very little information, the reporter's article ran the following Sunday, in the community section of *The Sentinel*.

"I want you to sue *them*," Shelby's mother said.

"There's nothing slanderous or fallacious in the article," Jacob said. "We have no legal grounds."

"I'm afraid Shelby is taunted at school." Shelby never brought friends over for dinner, or to study, the way her mother's friends talked about their children. Shelby's mother knew that

Shelby was busy with lots of extracurricular activities, but worried that she might not have even one good friend to confide in.

"Jacob, she barely talks to me. At dinner she tells me a boy, a hunter, offered to mount her leg, like a deer head. I think she wants to torment me, to drive me mad."

"This is normal for a girl her age," Jacob said. "And all this stress."

"Now," Shelby's mother said, "we're getting calls from other reporters. And the TV wants her to come in and be interviewed. I'm losing my mind. I can tell from the way she looks at me that she enjoys it."

"I'm sorry, but—"

"You were going to sue me," Shelby's mother said. "Sue *them*."

"I was never going to sue you," Jacob said. "But listen to me." Jacob started to punctuate his phrases by jabbing a finger at his sister-in-law who was across the city. "She's threatened to go find another attorney if I don't. And I'll tell you, they will come from all over the country for this case. For free."

"What can I do about this?"

"Sign the consent form," Jacob said. "She needs the surgery. You're holding her back."

"It's an abomination," she said.

Shelby sat on the edge of her bed and straightened out both legs. She thought the right one, the cancer leg, was a little shorter than the left. Her knee hurt. She tried to understand why she wanted to keep the severed limb. She'd felt a small voice in her, a call to keep it.

Her phone rang.

"Hello," Shelby said.

"Am I speaking with Shelby Aronowitz?" The caller had one of those smooth, low-toned voices, a late-night radio voice, that sent a wave of comfort over Shelby.

"Yes," Shelby said. "Who is this?" She settled back and shut her eyes. Her shoulders dropped, a puppet with the strings cut.

"My name is Glen Smith," the caller said. "I work for—actually, I own—Casselton Skulls. We're a company that specializes in the preservation and sale of bones: mostly skulls, animal skulls, and some full skeletons, mostly animal skeletons."

Shelby sprang alert. "Is this a joke?" She tried to place the voice. "Who is this? How did you get my number?"

"Please, Miss Aronowitz, this is not a crank call. I'm guessing you've had quite a few. We are one of two companies in the states that deal with human bones. Well, there are others that work for the medical industry, and we do that, too. But we also handle private needs of your type."

Shelby thought he sounded like the men from the funeral parlor, who'd met with her mother after her father died. There was sincerity and solemnity in his tone. Shelby knew this must be part of the job, special training in bereavement. But she wanted to believe that he was genuine, that he understood and cared.

"When you say my needs, what do you mean. Exactly?"

"We can receive your leg from the surgeon. We would discuss the preparation with him in advance. Many times the surgeons butcher limbs as a matter of convenience, cut them into pieces. But we would ensure separation from the body is ... done with respect. If you wish, we can have one of our people present at the procedure."

"What ... then?" Shelby realized she hadn't thought through the transition of dead flesh to bone. She remembered a childhood friend who snapped a pencil eraser off in his ear and needed surgery to have it removed. He kept the eraser in a plastic pill bottle and brought it to school. The neighbor across the street had the head of his first buck mounted, a seven pointer. But it still had its eyes and skin. She's always assumed the eyes were glass and the fur was real.

"Am I going too fast for you?" Glen Smith said. He paused, let out a slow breath. "I know this is a lot to take in."

"You've done this before?"

"Yes. We don't deal with soft tissue: breasts, ovaries, intestinal lengths, or such foreign matter as gallstones and tumors. Just bones: hips, knees, feet, hands, even once a ... well... we've never had the privilege of a full limb. You'd be our first."

"How much does this cost?" Shelby remembered Dr. Merton mentioning additional charges.

"It might seem insensitive to charge you. Not charging you would set a ... precedent. Everyone would expect the same. We *are* prepared to give you a thirty percent discount. Our fee of \$3,000 would be reduced to \$2,100. And, should you want one, we would provide an observer at the procedure for no charge."

"Why so much money?" Shelby wanted to know. "My friend had a deer head mounted, eyes and fur added, for just \$400."

"Here's our process: after removal and transportation, we deflesh the limb with Dermestid beetles, a very common practice in this industry. Then, of course, we sterilize and whiten the bones," Glen Smith paused.

"What do you do with the beetles? When they're done."

"Good question. After skeletonization is complete, we keep half the beetles and associated larvae; we release the other half back into nature."

"Could I choose where the beetles are released?" Shelby said.

"We've never had that request," Glen Smith said. "I'm sure we could work it out."

"I like this," Shelby said.

Glen Smith continued to explain. "Next, we wire the bones together to ensure long-term stability of the body element. And there are quite a few bones: four in the knee, fourteen in the ankle, and thirty-eight in the foot. Labor intensive stuff. I'm assuming you want the leg intact, versus a box of bones, which we could do at a greatly reduced rate."

"I want the leg in one piece," Shelby said.

"Very good, Miss Aronowitz. We would suggest that."

"I need to talk to my mother about the money."

"We've handled that for you," Glenn Smith said. "Have you heard of the Mutter Museum, in Philadelphia?"

"Doesn't ring a bell," Shelby said.

"They have a large and varied collection of human artifacts. About three thousand. Wet and dry." Shelby wondered how they distinguished between wet and dry. Was it how it arrived, or how it was displayed?

"Even," Glen Smith continued, "parts of Einstein's brain and John Wilkes Booth's spine." He waited for a reaction from Shelby: a *Wow*, or *That's crazy*, but nothing came. "They have offered to pick up the cost if you agree to will them your leg, to be delivered after you die."

"Why would they want to do that?" Shelby said. "I'm not famous."

"Why do you want to keep your leg?"

"I'm not sure," Shelby said.

"The answer is part of the same mystery," Glenn Smith said. "It's a feeling, a calling, a notion that some things, some actions are significant."

"I've felt that," Shelby said.

Should she will her leg to a museum? Might not one of her own children want it? A relic, an heirloom, to be passed down generation to generation—a part of her that would live on. She laughed at the mental picture of a family gathering, on a holiday perhaps, looking at the leg, retelling the story of this eccentric relative.

Shelby's mother finished her dinner quickly and started to wash the dishes. For almost forty minutes neither she nor Shelby had spoken a word. Shelby broke the unspoken truce. "Mom. No charge. Casselton Skulls does this full time."

The plate smashed on the kitchen floor. Pieces went everywhere. It wasn't from the good china in the front room cabinet, the tableware used for holidays and guests; this was an everyday plate. They broke now and then, usually a forgivable accident. But Shelby's mother had thrown this one: a ferocious, overhand gesture.



"What the hell, Mom!" Shelby was not as much upset as surprised: to see the red in her mother's cheeks, her sharp athletic movements. Shelby suppressed her smile.

"I'm tired," her mother said. "Fuck all these reporters. Fuck your uncle, my friends, the school. Who is this guy who's going to mount your leg? You—Are—Dying. You need surgery. First your father and now I'm supposed to lose you? For this fucking leg? Fuck your leg. Fuck everybody. Fuck you." She pitched a glass at the floor.

Shelby shielded her eyes from the ricocheting shards. She had a moment of doubt. Should she will her leg to a museum? Might not one of her own children want it? A relic, an heirloom, to be passed down generation to generation—a part of her that would live on. She laughed at the mental picture of a family gathering, on a holiday perhaps, looking at the leg, retelling the story of this eccentric relative. Perhaps it would be shared, passed from household to household, an annual lottery to see whose mantle it would grace for the year. If relatives awakened in the middle of the night, their house burning, not a moment to lose: *wake up, get out—leave the cat, leave the pictures—grab that leg.*

Another glass shattered. Shelby grinned.

Shelby's mother feared her daughter's composure. This was more than the stubborn disagreement of an adolescent coping with loss. She decided to call Arella for help.

**I** told you," Arella said, "you should have forced Shelby to go to counseling when Benjamin passed."

"You're probably right," Shelby's mother said. "I see that now."

She regretted making the call to Arella, her sister-in-law. Three years older than Jacob, Arella looked ten years younger: taut facial skin, athletic, erect posture, and a throat full of advice about everything. What Shelby's mother hated about Arella was what she now needed—Arella was always right.

"I have a guy," Arella said. She had a guy for everything: doctors for physical ailments, counselors for mental issues, Reiki practitioners for emotional problems, a shaman for bad spirits, the tree guy, the roof guy, the garden guy, the sex advisor ("Women need to learn to be selfish in bed," he would say).

"Can he help with ..."

Shelby's mother tried to find the word. How would she characterize her daughter's problem? *Grieving? Repressed emotional issues from childhood? Neurosis? Psychosis?* She was a smart girl, good grades, no drugs, never talked much about boys, had a good relationship with her father, cried at the funeral.

"I'm not sure what to ask help for," Shelby's mother said.

"She wants to keep her severed leg," Arella said. "That should be enough to clue in a professional." Arella cleared her throat and announced, "Dr. Otto Lubitsch. Yale. Twenty-five years of experience. Helped the Wexlers' son with his eating disorder. Strange one called pica. He used to mix in paint with his milk, made omelets with pencil shavings. Lubitsch is perfect for Shelby."

"Paint?"

"Yeah. He even mixed the colors to complement the food," Arella said. "Have you ever asked Shelby why she wants to keep the leg?"

"A thousand times," Shelby's mother said. "I've begged her to explain it to me. All I get as an answer is her middle finger."

"Little *kelba*," Arella said. "Let me give you Lubitsch's number."

Shelby was anxious to talk about her mother. About how she had to do everything for her mother the first year after her father's death: cleaning, cooking, making sure her mother took her meds. About how her mother never let her use the car—even hiding the keys.

**Y**ou see a counselor,” Shelby’s mother said. “You see a counselor, and if he gives me the okay, then I’ll sign.”

“All right,” Shelby said. “I *would* like to talk to a counselor.” She stared at her mother defiantly, her agreement a threat.

“Don’t give me that look,” her mother said. “I haven’t done a thing.”

“Really?” Shelby said. “We’ll see what the counselor says about that.”

**D**r. Lubitsch’s office was large. Dark. Slatted, wooden shades covered the windows. Floor-to-ceiling bookshelves lined the walls, pressed tight with sets of old hardbacks. Shelby looked at the books as she walked to the brown leather chair Dr. Lubitsch motioned her to sit in, and she could not recognize a single title. Shelby thought all the lights in the room needed brighter bulbs. How could he read in here? She sank into the chair. It was comfortable, enveloping her. She wanted to nap.

“Nice to meet you Shelby,” Dr. Lubitsch said. He sat on a straight-backed chair across from Shelby.

Shelby nodded in the doctor’s direction.

“Are you comfortable?” Dr. Lubitsch said. “How does your knee feel?”

“It hurts,” Shelby said. “Like a bad sprain that won’t get better.”

“Yes,” Dr. Lubitsch said. “And I understand it won’t.”

Shelby winced.

“Still holding out hope?” Dr. Lubitsch said. “For a miracle?”

Shelby shrugged.

“That’s normal,” Dr. Lubitsch said. “I’ve seen many patients who hope for miracles, but I’ve never seen one that can’t be explained.” He shifted in his chair. “There *are* solutions though, based on science. The mind can work wonders. It can be tuned to work better.”

Shelby laughed. “So what do *you* think my problem is?”

Shelby was anxious to talk about her mother. About how she had to do everything for her mother the first year after her father’s death: cleaning, cooking, making sure her mother took her meds. About how her mother never let her use the car—even hiding the keys. Always left wondering if her mother would be there to pick her up after school activities or if she would have to hitchhike home. And how her mother was unable to make eye contact, never listening to how she felt, what she was going through. How her mother never paid any attention to her—until now.

“I never said you had a problem,” Dr. Lubitsch was a small man, perfectly proportioned, but very small. “We’re here to talk.”

Shelby rolled her eyes: she knew the deck had to be stacked against her with this guy. She tipped back her head and looked at the top of the bookshelves lining the walls. She hadn’t noticed this before. A smile erupted on her face. Skulls everywhere. Some big: one looked like a massive pig; another, the top of a horse’s head. Many had horns—straight and curved, deer, goats, rams—and there were some small ones, mainly birds, raccoons.

Dr. Lubitsch turned in his chair, looked up and around the room. “Is this morbid to you?” he said. “Does it bother you?”

“No,” Shelby said. “I like them.”

“Some don’t,” he said. “I usually meet clients in a different room. I thought you would appreciate them.”

“I do,” Shelby said. “When did you start collecting them?”

“The first was the pig over there, and then I found the horse skull in the trash. I trash pick around the university when the students move out. You can find lots of interesting stuff. It wasn’t really a collection, but people—friends, clients—started giving me skulls. The coyote

Shelby’s leg hurt. Her body was hot. She was told to expect flu-like symptoms from the treatment. She had watched the long, thick needles inserted into her knee inject the brown goo they’d grown from her fluids and marrow.

is from Colorado, a woman suffering from a borderline personality disorder. The ram is from Nevada, a young man with bipolar tendencies. The large bird was from an elderly couple I treated for hoarding; their collection is vast compared to mine. The deer was from a friend, a hunter; he also gives me venison every year."

He scanned the collection, paused here and there. "Each has a story."

"Hmm," Shelby said.

"I like to hold them," he said. "Some forms of meditation, used to stop thought, direct practitioners to imagine their flesh dropping away until they are just a skeleton. Then they imagine removing their head, just a skull now, from their body, and inserting it, upside down and reversed, under their ribcage." He rubbed his stomach. "I've heard it's quite effective."

"I can't imagine," Shelby said.

"Do you know what phantom limb pain is?"

Shelby nodded. "I've read about it."

"Sometimes patients go out of their minds with the pain, believing that their lost limb is spasming." He held out his hand and made a fist. "Clenching up."

"Is there medication?"

"No. Acupuncture, massage, the mirror box," he said. "Have you heard of that?"

Shelby shook her head.

"Let's say you've lost your right arm. Imagine you are sitting to the side of a big mirror, and you insert your stump into a box behind the mirror. You are then instructed to look at the reflection of your other arm and imagine it's the one that's missing." He held both his arms out. "When you stretch your good arm, wiggle your fingers, you look at the reflection and imagine it's your other arm, the missing one. It works wonders." He placed his arms on his legs. "As I said, it tunes the mind."

"Do you think I'll need that?" Shelby said. "Do they have them for legs?"

"I've never seen one for legs, but I expect we could have one built." He looked at her feet, turned his head sideways, designing the device in his head. "If we need to."

"Why does it work?"

"Some mystics think that, when we dream, *that* is the real world. When we are awake, that is the dream. The mind can do wondrous things. Horrible, yes. But also wondrous."

Shelby pointed up. "Is that a cat?"

"Yes," Dr. Lubitsch said looking up. "My Smokey. Had him thirteen years, then ... well, cancer got him."

"I'm sorry," Shelby said.

"Sometimes I hold his skull. I feel his presence. I wonder if the seat of the soul isn't in the skull." He smiled. "Once a friend wanted to give me a human skull, but my wife said, *No, too creepy*." He looked at her leg. "I've never held a human bone. I imagine if it's your own, once part of your body now separated, something as substantial as a leg, the possible experiences are ... amazing."

She pointed again. "What is that one? Where did you get it?"

Dr. Lubitsch looked up at the large, damaged skull. "A long story." He leaned in. "It's fragments of an Allosaurus."

"How old is that?"

"About 150 million years old."

"Immortal," Shelby said. "In a way."

Dr. Lubitsch raised his eyebrows, and nodded.



Shelby watched her mother sign the papers, slap down the pen, and slide them over to Dr. Merton. “We need to schedule the surgery,” Dr. Merton said. “But.” He shook his head. “All this publicity put you on the map. I’m grateful you didn’t give interviews. Nothing is private anymore.” He looked past them to something on his office wall. “I’m OK with head shaving parties and such events as a form of support, although the ones who embrace their cancer have a higher chance of recurrence. The ones who hate it have a better survival rate.” He looked back at them. “Things are complicated enough without the press.”

“We agree on that,” Shelby’s mother said.

“I’ve been contacted by the Walton Cancer Institute in Chicago. They read about Shelby and wanted to know if she would be willing to let them examine her. See if you are a candidate for a new procedure.”

“A cure?” Shelby said.

“No. Not a cure,” Dr. Merton said. “But a less invasive treatment for osteosarcoma. Taking bone marrow, blood, growing stem cells, altering DNA using a process called a CRISPR, re-injecting the modified cells, and. . . Well, like I said it’s complicated. It’s in a class of treatments called *oncolytic virus therapy*. Shows enough success to be credible.”

“What do you think, Doctor?” Shelby’s mother reached out and put her hand on the paper she’d just signed. “Will it save the leg?”

“I hesitate to comment,” Dr. Merton said. “This cancer is a slow spreading growth for now, but that could change. With the rise of genetic research we *are* in a golden age of treatment development. It’s hard to keep up. I would recommend getting an assessment.”

Shelby’s mother turned. Looked Shelby in the eyes. “What do you think?”

“Sure,” Shelby said. She looked at Dr. Merton for reassurance. One side of his mouth was turned up, the other down.

“If successful, you’ll still need a new knee,” he said.

“I’d want to keep the old pieces,” Shelby said.

“Of course,” Dr. Merton said.

Shelby sat on her bed drinking water. Ten to twelve glasses a day, ordered by the doctors to flush toxins from her system. Her right leg was in a tight, soft cast, and she was unable to bend it. Turning on the light, getting a book from her desk, rolling over to grab her phone off the nightstand—simple everyday tasks were painful and at times impossible. Not the least of which was sitting on the toilet, after getting *into* the bathroom.

Shelby’s leg hurt. Her body was hot. She was told to expect flu-like symptoms from the treatment. She had watched the long, thick needles inserted into her knee inject the brown goo they’d grown from her fluids and marrow. She was not allowed to take painkillers; the new doctors told her it had to do with prostaglandins, blood flow, and white blood cells. It would be two weeks before she would know if the procedure had taken. Even after that they wouldn’t know for sure until they opened her up and did rapid biopsies on the parts around her knee.

She was told to mentally prepare herself for the operation. She’d be knocked out, and when she woke she would either have a new knee or no leg at all. Shelby thought Dr. Merton was direct, but these younger doctors had no time for a soft step. She became nervous about everything. It was hitting her, the changes to her life.

Almost two weeks she sat in her room, immobile, waited on by her mother. Summer break had started, a bad coincidence of timing. Google this, Google that, eat, watch a Netflix movie, eat, check Facebook, check Instagram, binge a TV series, eat, check Facebook, sleep, wake up, check Facebook.

Her Uncle Jacob and Aunt Arella came by several times a week to visit and drop off food. Dr. Lubitsch offered a weekly home session. It was the first time Shelby realized she didn't have real friends. Before the cancer her life was full of activity: she built sets for the school play, read after school to the children of single parents, coordinated fundraisers for the new gym, played tennis. But none of her school friends came by to visit.

All day, she prodded and probed around her knee. Her fingers built and updated a map. The pain moved, grew. She knew the cancer must have been spreading. It had to be. She wondered if she might die.

Did you expect to have more visitors?" Dr. Lubitsch said.

"I did," Shelby said. They were sitting on two leather chairs in her father's old study. She was glad to be out of her bedroom, finally allowed to move around. Her mother came in and gave them each a glass of coconut-flavored sparkling water. Her mother left and pulled the door shut until the latch clicked.

"Were you always so active at school?"

"After my father died." Shelby adjusted her leg and scanned the room. Shelby's mother left the office untouched, as it was when her father was alive. A dirty coffee mug sat on his desk, adjacent to a yellow legal pad with a cartridge ink pen lying on top. The blinds were down. It was dark. Quiet. "I did a lot more with my father than I knew. Fishing. Hiking. Talking. Once, we drove clear around the lake, one hundred miles, on a Sunday afternoon, just to do it."

"You could be ... compensating, over-functioning. A lot of activity with no meaningful connections. A behavior not uncommon when filling a void. Never a minute to stop and take a breath. Like an insect, a water strider, zigzagging on the top of life's pond, afraid to stop for fear of sinking. Our technology, all the screens we carry, makes it easy."

Shelby wanted to check her phone. Reached into her pocket, felt guilty, and just touched it.

"Your mother?" Dr. Lubitsch leaned back.

"I'm mean to her. I don't know why." Her mother's life reminded her of Dr. Merton's face, not quite happy or unhappy, stuck in some purgatory, waiting for some better place.

"Not uncommon for teenagers," Dr. Lubitsch said. "Especially if the opposite sex parent with whom you had a good relationship is now gone." Dr. Lubitsch waited to see if this registered with Shelby. "Very common in divorce."

Shelby swirled her drink. Carbon dioxide bubbles rose to the surface and fizzed. It was a comforting sound for Shelby.

Her mother and father met in college, in the city. Married young. Shelby was born one year later. Her earliest memory was sledding with her father when she was five. He and her Uncle Jacob, both new law school graduates, were starting up their business. That night her mother was sick; she was frequently sick: the flu, a bad cold, rundown, or "feeling blue".

Despite her mother's admonitions, her father bundled Shelby up to take her on an adventure. They drove through a blizzard to a golf course and hiked to the 9th hole. Looking down, Shelby thought it was the biggest mountain in the world. Her father would position the red, plastic toboggan with him in the back and Shelby in the front, secured in his legs. He would launch them with a few strong pushes. The world rushed by, snow stinging her face. She screamed in delight. At the bottom they would turn and tumble off the toboggan, laughing. For a moment before they got up, her father would squeeze her in his big arms, kiss the top of her head. He told her to shut her eyes and listen, listen to the sound of the falling snow. She did. She heard it stretch in all directions. Endless. Ceaseless. Perfect. Shelby opened her eyes, looked at her father and said, "Again!"

"Shelby?" Dr. Lubitsch said.

She looked up from her glass. Scanned the room. Hunted for something. She saw the urn. "Once, when we were hiking," Shelby said, "my father told me he wanted to be buried in a forest, a biodegradable coffin that would let his body decompose into the ground. So he could live on as part of the trees."

"I have heard of that," Dr. Lubitsch said. "Honorable."

"Since then I always imagined walking through the woods, alone, or with my own children someday. Feeling his presence."

"Where is he?"

Shelby bit her thumbnail and pointed with her head. "Right up there. Cremated." She talked around her thumb. "My mother had it done."

"Did she know about your father's wishes?"

Shelby shrugged.

The operating room was nothing like she'd imagined: small, a low ceiling, non-distinct colors, less equipment than she expected. Each member of the team was busy with a task. Glen Smith from Casselton Skulls stood in the corner. A nurse inspected neatly lined up instruments. One doctor watched a digital loop of Shelby's latest MRI, another positioned a camera over her leg, and another nurse swabbed her knee with something cold.

Dr. Merton stood over Shelby. He was there to assist and observe. Covered in a mask, she could not see his face below his eyes. One of his eyes was bloodshot. "We're going to give you something to help you relax," he said. She watched the nurse put a needle into the IV port hanging from her arm.

Shelby felt weighted down, but struggled to keep her eyes open, afraid they might start to cut before she was asleep.



**Michael Hopkins** lives on a small farm in Neenah, Wisconsin, with his wife and their dog, cats, and chickens. His book and music criticism have appeared in *Philadelphia Weekly* and *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, and his short fiction has appeared in *Millwork*, *Pleiades*, and *365tomorrows*. His short story "Static" won first place in the 2018 *Wisconsin People & Ideas Fiction Contest*.



# 2019 Poetry Contest

## Honorable Mention Poems

### Still Life

Dainty cakes and cardamom buns baked on parchment,  
percolated coffee in our thinnest cups, a hand-painted pitcher

of cream, and reflecting a south Chicago sun,  
a crystal pyramid of sugar cubes with silver-plated tongs.

*Be sure you take that one*, my mother would say in Swedish,  
on our way to the guests, and I knew the bun she meant:

the least lovely. I loved her no less, her gold-plaited hair  
and cerulean blue eyes, like a hand-painted doll, made

not for play, but to please. Strange, how things stay with you.  
Here I am, fifty-two, in a traditional *konditori*

and might as well be ten, inhaling cardamom, cinnamon  
and catching my breath at a glinting plate of sugar cubes,

an elegant pitcher of cream. "Halloa!" greets a Swedish  
young man, startling me out of my past. I smile

back and point to the loveliest bun I see, pour strong  
self-serve coffee into an Ikea cup and sit down at a table

with a real cloth—as if the dolls grew up and left the house—  
and want for nothing but my mother, sitting with me.

*Ingrid Andersson*

### An Accident Is Always Happening

I've thought about it a great deal,  
about what's the equivalent of the motorcycle  
as an image in songwriting, or poetry.

Where's the line between a desire for speed  
and hurtling off into the trees?

I want to ask the young folksinger  
what's the meaning of the photograph  
on that record jacket of him  
wearing a Triumph t-shirt.

I figure there's a philosophy in it,  
that it's got to mean something  
more than liner note posing.

It's the two-wheeled death-defying  
northern white boy blues.

I want to ask him about Highway 61,  
revisit those two lanes of blacktop  
that will take you all the way  
from Hibbing to the real source,  
to Memphis, Clarksdale, Tunica,  
& Airline straight to New Orleans.

The motorcycle's a metaphor  
in the ballad of an old man  
even if we don't know what it means,  
spinning like some old vinyl dreams  
of flying down the blue back roads  
into a chorus of waiting trees.

*Christopher Chambers*

## Gaia's Song

I rummaged around in words all day,  
changing this one, discarding that one,  
snipping, pruning, and adding, a gardener  
working in a field of meaning flowers.

Now, at this hour before dawn,  
sitting in silence while first light smudges horizons,  
I wonder where all the words:  
written, recorded, spoken, chosen, discarded, go.  
Intelligence is not what distinguishes us  
from an orangutan with its long, kind face:

Books stamp from printing presses.  
Armies march with words  
squeezed and polished into diamond thoughts.  
Lovers touch each other's faces  
and speak of what is in the other's spirit  
as they forget they are caught in time  
and will spin from where they are into a lifetime's days.  
Speakers breathe deep and reach  
into throats, minds, and emotions to spew words  
as arms wave and bodies lean forward  
in an intensity of eyes that demand,

look at me, look at me, and listen.

All over earth words are made and remade and remade.

But what do they mean?  
What happens to a blue whale's song sung in ocean depths?  
Where does buzzing and wing-fluttering  
of worker bees go after they have danced  
a map to a field of spring wildflowers?

Do all words and sounds on earth,  
monkey clattering, elephant trumpeting, earthworms sliding, whisper of monarch wings  
in Mexico fluttering tree branches into motion, purple finch song, haunting wind-  
moan echoing through a sandstone canyon, falling rock rumbling in isolated  
wilderness,  
meld into a symphony pulsating planets, suns, and galaxies?

Is Gaia poet to eternity?  
The singer whose songs sing meanings more profound and beautiful  
than our words?

## Origami Spirits

We fold our souls like  
paper boxes. Hidden, till  
rain-soaked, they unfurl.

*Elizabeth Odders-White*

*Tom Davis*

## Ghandi Spinning, India, 1946

*A Photograph by Margaret Bourke-White*

Even if we did not know this man  
wouldn't we admire his ease in sitting  
at a simple charkha, completely  
focused on the thread it spins?

Even if we did not know that this wheel  
is the symbol of what he offered his followers,  
wouldn't we see self-respect in his posture  
and devotion to the basic task at hand?

Even if we did not know how long the artist  
waited for this chance or how hard it was  
to capture the crisp contrasts of the brown body  
clad in white in a room backlit with sun

wouldn't we admire the stark beauty of these forms,  
the smooth brow, the wire glasses, the way each thread  
stands out against both light and shadow?  
Wouldn't we see a man at peace with himself?

*Estella Lauter*

## The Agility of Chopsticks

By age three everything's in place.  
There's a closet for storing language  
with all the nouns and verbs on hooks and hangers  
knowing their places, who comes first  
and who must stay back, how to make plurals,  
with an 's' we romancers and English speakers  
assume, but in some languages plurals are  
intuited. By age three, my daughter knew all this  
in a dialect of Cantonese, which she spoke  
flawlessly in her little girl voice.

By age three there's a shelf for utensils—  
forks or chopsticks or spoons.  
We know how to use the proper one by age three.  
Except my daughter hadn't graduated from spoons.  
There were so many replicas of her, too many  
to teach around a family table the agility  
of chopsticks.

By age three there's a whole drawer of memories  
all tangled together like brightly colored  
silk scarves tossed recklessly atop each other  
hard to sort out, my daughter trying to reach  
into the drawer that seems to have no sides or  
bottom once she puts her hand in, trying to  
capture a scarf, whole cloth, something of her  
time before she met us, before age three.

*Karen Loeb*



## Unqualified

The car needed more  
 than a poet could give.  
 Things like  
 metarotors and liquid love  
 a good dose of  
 traction diction  
 and heavy metal.  
 The poet channeled  
 his words and imagery  
 and slathered them  
 in an oily rhyme  
 and installed them  
 in the dyspeptic vehicle  
 but they just sat there  
 inertly with great defiance  
 and no visible  
 effect except to make  
 the author feel better  
 about himself.  
 The car felt the same, though.  
 The poet sequestered  
 the assistance of his friends  
 who mopped up verses  
 from puddles of their  
 rejection and leftover  
 rusting stanzas  
 and sprayed them at  
 car of incorrigibility  
 to fruitless avail  
 so the poet divorced  
 himself from the  
 unfaithful machine,  
 annulled their vows  
 and started dating  
 a cheap port wine.

*James Landwehr*

## No Attic in the Attic

A new husband unloads knickknacks.

His wife calls from above: *Help me, sweetie!*  
*This attic's a labyrinth! I can't find my way round at all!*

So he leaves his boxes, climbs two stairwells  
 then finally reaches—the cellar.

Dizzy as an astronaut, ill-ease with reality's glitch  
 he yells a high-pitched, *Coming!*

Galloping the first and second floors  
 he punches the last steps to—yet again, the cellar!

He frantically loops for hours. Then days.  
 Fetches docs, scientists. None have an answer.

Years elapse. Her voice no longer casts  
 yet faithful husband clammers upward.

And this poor man will ascend the steps until his stomping rots away.  
 For there's no attic in the attic, just a hollow haunt of love.

*Nathan J. Reid*

## Enough

The most touching song was the one  
 about the man who had nothing  
 more to offer than sunlit afternoons,  
 laundry hung to dry, breath in bamboo.  
 I'd sing it to myself. Silently.  
 While doing backflips and stretching to fit  
 other metaphors that made me fascinating.  
 Little time remains to watch dust fall  
 through a sunbeam or wonder what in you  
 could be as big as infinity or compose  
 letters to dead heroes or simply be  
 when the point is to attract, obtain, retain.  
 I read philosophies and say nothing.  
 I dream in images no one will ever draw.  
 I am wordless to describe green mango  
 on my tongue and the slant of my  
 dying grandmother's handwriting.  
 Silent singing. Little time.  
 The most touching of all will be  
 when it is finally  
 enough.

*Judith C. Shaffer*

## Ailments

Cardiac arrest  
 is the pop quiz you didn't study for  
 denying the possibility you'd be tested.  
 Now you don't know the answers for  
 the pain in your chest, shortness of breath,  
 and you're hoping on the final exam  
 you have a chance at a passing grade.

Emphysema  
 is endless wind sprints  
 on a high school football field.  
 It is always August and the coach  
 relentless as the sun  
 keeps pushing you and you keep going  
 even though both of you know  
 you will never make varsity.

Alzheimer's  
 is a long walk back to your junior high school  
 where you find your locker  
 with the dented vent below the number 7.  
 The combination spins easily in your hand  
 but the memory of this morning's breakfast  
 is in another locker with a lock that never  
 stops on the correct numbers.

*Lynn Patrick Smith*



## Add This to the List of Things That You Are

by Chris Fink

University of Wisconsin Press, 224 pages, \$26.95

Reviewed by Kim Suhr

"Who's native and who's been introduced?" asks a character in Chris Fink's story, "The Bush Robin Sings." The question in many ways fits tidily into the other stories within his new collection, *Add This to the List of Things That You Are*. Though the stories all link to Wisconsin, directly or tangentially, the strongest connection between them is their exploration of male belonging and alienation—*especially* when their male subjects find themselves in the places that raised them.

"Whistle or Lose It," the opening story in the collection, features Timothy, returned home for his sister's wedding in rural Blue River, Wisconsin. He's an outsider from the moment he shows up late to the pig roast. What follows could be considered toxic masculinity on steroids. Timothy fits in neither with the men tending the Roast-a-Shoat nor the women fussing over "the fixin's." As the beer flows, the old nipple-twisting, "say uncle," bullying-big-brother games begin and escalate with bloody consequences. "Difference," Fink writes, "is like a scab that must be worried until it bleeds." And bleed it does.

The author continues his exploration of alienation and masculine culture in "Cubness." Cleverly (and courageously) using the first-person plural point of view, Fink puts the reader smack-dab in the heart of a small-town group of friends in the big city for a Cubs game. *We* take cash out of the bank and "in Chicago we appear to spend it freely because we don't want to look like cheap hicks to the people of Chicago. [...] Each twenty peeled from our roles and blown in the windy city of Chicago hurts us, though we don't make it known." These guys pass the day pretending to be big-spender Cubs fans, just a little younger and more urbane than they actually are. In truth, they fool no one—least of all themselves.

Lest we think the male psyche only concerns itself with meat, beer, and sports, Fink introduces us to Graves, a frustrated writer and professor who, "aside from e-mail and copious marginalia on student papers, [...] hasn't written a thing in three years." Much to his chagrin, and that of his literary agent, Graves' novella isn't receiving any interest from publishers. "It would be nice, the agent had said, if his book were larger. Every artist must question the size of his gift." Instead of finding e-mails from interested publishers, all

Graves receives are ads for male *enhancements*. An amusing coincidence or message from the universe? Either way, it's hard to miss the humor here.

Other stories take the reader to Spain, Russia, California, and beyond. In the "Geritol Valley" of Arizona, the main character named Coyote, is trying to earn his own "green card" through unusual—and brutal—means.

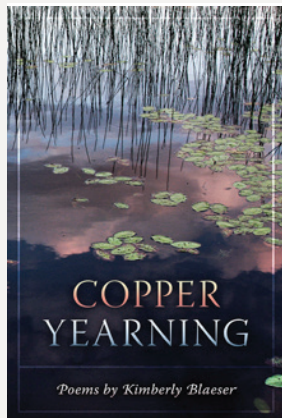
In the final story of the collection, we revisit Timothy, who has settled in Milwaukee in an effort to shed his rural roots. Instead of finally finding his place in the world, however, Timothy faces different challenges to his identity. Rather than rising above his origins, he leans on the old code that raised him. You can take the boy out of Blue River, but, ... well, you know.

One of the great joys of this collection (and there are many) is the sense that each reading is more expansive and layered than the last. This not only reflects Fink's chops as a short story writer but also his trust in his readers as co-creators of meaning. Undoubtedly, his career as a professor of creative writing and editor of the *Beloit Fiction Journal* contribute to his smart, thought-provoking writing. His environmental journalism background also shines through in stories with a strong sense of place. This is a collection you'll want to savor, story by thought-provoking story.



**Kim Suhr** lives and writes in southeastern Wisconsin. Her work has appeared in *Midwest Review*, *Rosebud*, *Stonecoast Review*, and elsewhere. She holds an MFA from the Solstice Program at Pine Manor College, where she was the 2013 Dennis Lehane Fellow for Fiction. Suhr is the director of Red Oak Writing and a board member of the Wisconsin Writers Association.





# Copper Yearning

by Kimberly Blaeser

Holy Cow! Press, 143 pages, \$18.00

Reviewed by Karla Huston

In *Copper Yearning*, her first book since the 2007 publication of *Apprenticed to Justice* (Salt Publishing), Kimberly Blaeser draws heavily from the poet's toolbox—assonance, consonance, rhythm, color, and music—to make her poems sing across pages filled with light and clear, reflective water.

The collection is divided into thematic sections with poems of respect, as well as praise and concern, for the earth and its creatures. These poems are personal—poems of becoming in the spaces the narrator finds herself, poems of hope and resistance—as well as universal. Often Blaeser reimagines the history of Native peoples or corrects misconceptions about Native culture.

What I find so compelling about this collection is Blaeser's ability to weave cultures together using “code-shifting” between American English and the Ojibwe language, part of her ancestral heritage. In the poem, “*Bawaajige*” (which translates into “s/he has dreams”), you can feel the tug of identity, pulling the poet this way and that:

Whispers through my tributaries—  
crane voices and stale pow-wow jokes,  
Native tragedy and the “great white road.”  
I won't cliché you, betray you  
with the spent hopes of language.

Another integral theme is that of the Other; how a woman *becomes* in the midst of two contrasting cultures. In “A Litany of Other,” the narrator addresses her doppelgänger:

My doppelgänger self,  
she knows the slight weight  
of a folded twenty,  
knows how to smooth Andrew Jackson  
bend and turn him, origami the Indian-war president  
to a tucked and folded three-cornered retired flag neatness.  
Then, holding him, a triangle of envy green, centered in her palm,  
knows the precise pitch of lip  
necessary to win each bar-stool happy-hour wager.

The stewardship of language seems the most significant theme in this book, and Blaeser grapples with big questions: Should all Americans speak the same language? How does culture define who we are, how we speak?

In the poem, “Speaking, Like Old Desire,” the narrator says:

*Inwe. Mikwendan.*  
*Gezikwendam.*  
Remember. Or barely. A dialect.  
Can a nation re-speak itself  
like a ghost dance singers conjuring the buffalo?  
Who holds the ends of the broken  
telegraph lines crackling between  
a signal this moment a word.

By shifting between her native language and English vernacular, Blaeser adds power to her lines. She hints at the underlying motif of language itself. What do we lose when we don't have the words? What does our culture lose when our language is gone? And, even more importantly, how do we use language as a way of becoming?

The wonder of *Copper Yearning* is Blaeser's sense of storytelling and her sumptuous use of words. Readers will revel in her descriptions and feel the drumbeat of her rhythms. There is reverence and respect in her poems, places where readers—as in the opening poem—can be immersed in their own becoming: “Our bodies a libretto, / saturated, an aquifer—we speak words / from ancient water.”



**Karla Huston** is a former Wisconsin Poet Laureate (2017–2018) and the author of eight chapbooks of poems, the latest of which is *Grief Bone*, (Five Oaks Press, 2017). Her collection *A Theory of Lipstick* won a 2013 Outstanding Achievement Award from the Wisconsin Library Association and her poems have garnered three Jade Rings from the Wisconsin Writers Association.



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From the documentary "Tribal Histories: Red Cliff"



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