



SUMMER READING

A WCC DOUBLE ANTHOLOGY EDITED BY TOM ZIMMERMAN

CROSSING BORDERS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This double anthology, *Summer Reading / Crossing Borders*, is a production of the Bailey Library, the English/College Readiness Department, the WCC Poetry Club, and the Writing Center at Washtenaw Community College, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA.

It features work written by WCC students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends that was posted on the WCC Poetry Club website, June-September 2021.

“Crossing Borders,” a Zoom open-mic event celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month, which took place on September 29, was a collaboration among the Bailey Library, the English/College Readiness Department, the WCC Poetry Club, and the Writing Center.

Special thanks to WCC faculty and staff members Maryam Barrie, Amy Higgins, Molly Ledermann, and Katie Williams.

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SUMMER READING / CROSSING BORDERS

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SUMMER READING



Love Letter

Dear Tea,

Are you Spiced Chai or Mint? Or maybe Earl Grey?

It's so nice to meet up with you again this morning. We've met so many times before.

Getting ready for your visit is a routine of simplicity and order. Pouring the water into the kettle, jacking the burner up to high, then tossing in a twist of lemon.

I get so impatient. I must wait for you—ten minutes or more. I ease into my reverie: last night's dreams, what I read yesterday, or imagining the writing class I'll take today.

You're hot--boiling over, energetic, like you've got no place else to go but in circles.

Finally! I hear your whistle and I know you're ready for me. I drop in the tea bags to consummate our time together.

I pour your steamy brew into my cup. Oh, you're selfish—too hot. A shy sip, just a taste, a test to see if we're compatible.

Your flavor is rich, your nectar filled with the warmth of love. You are satisfying to me, calming and relaxing.

I know we will rendezvous again tomorrow.

I'll be there for you.

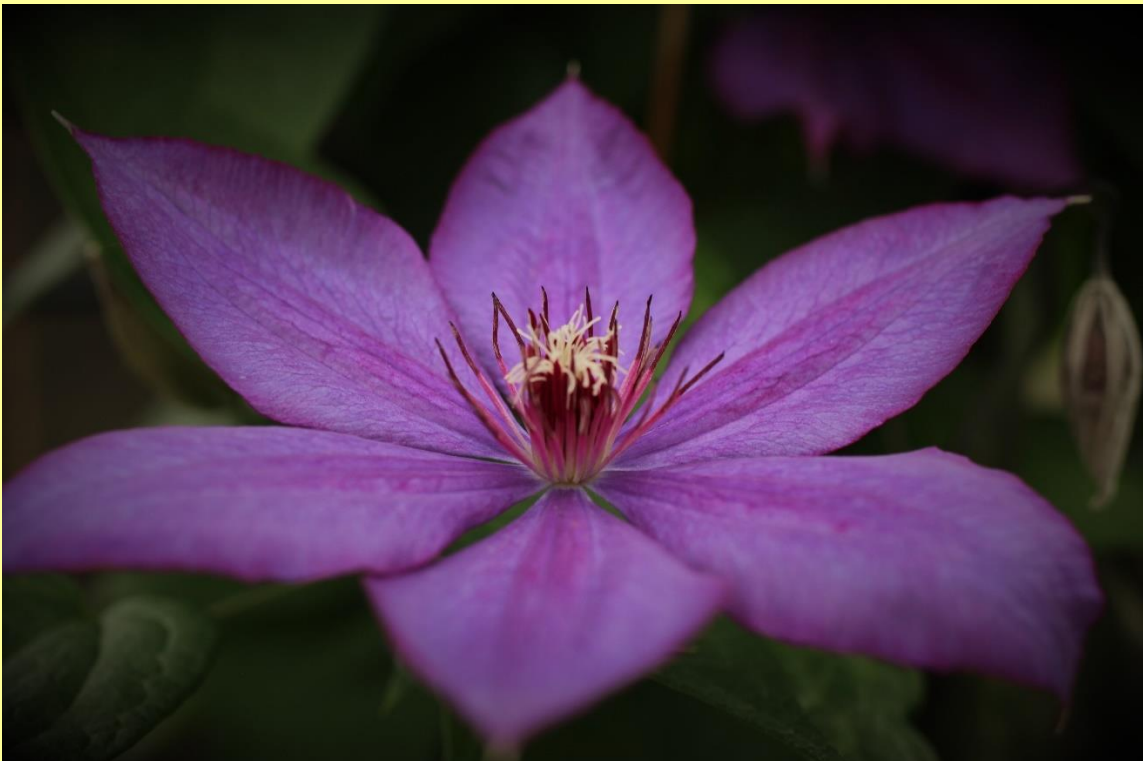
Diana



Tempest in a teacup

JAMIE FULCHER

Two Photographs



An Ubi Sunt

Where are Deloris's dreams?
Where the Recess of ruinous play?
Where are the times of the treehouse,
And the Legend in the faded wood?
Far away those fields of furrowed grain,
Long past those stars in night of winter solstice.

Where the purple robes
And the flagons of Mad Dog?
How far the drafts of Dewars
The haze of fresh green smoke?
Wafted away the heavens sward,
And brought low the wind worn willow.

Days and days these heady years
Of virile impetuousness,
Clinging to frayed jeans cuffs,
Grasping with hooked greedy nails,
Weakened with memory and too many
Stars.

AMY HIGGINS

Dilettante's Haul



Visiting Aleppo

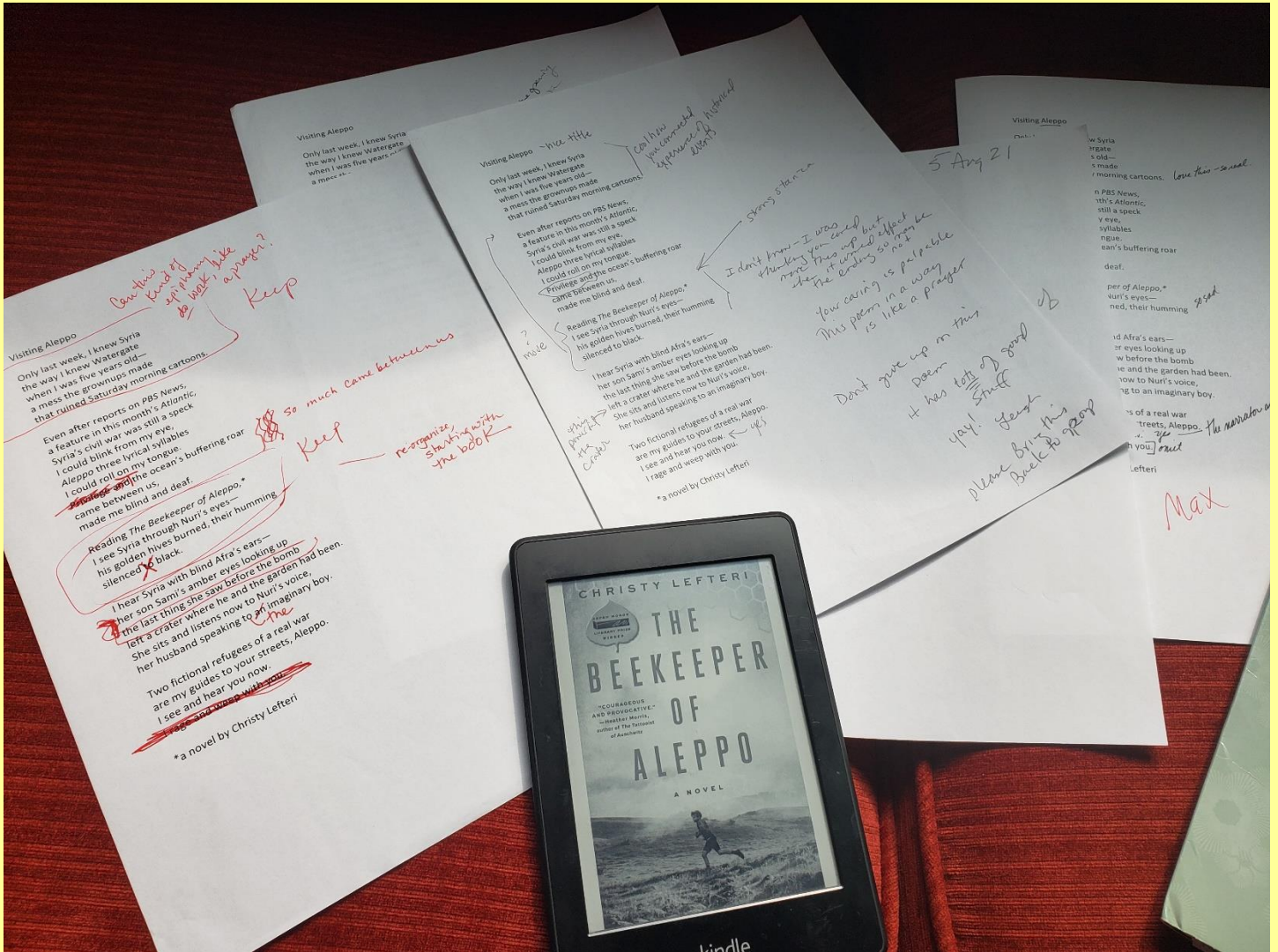
Only last week, I knew Syria
the way I knew Watergate
when I was five years old—
a mess the grownups made
that ruined Saturday morning cartoons.

Reading *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*,
I see Syria through Nuri's eyes—
his golden hives burned,
their humming silenced black.

Reading, I hear Syria with blind Afra's ears—
the last thing she saw
her son Sami's amber eyes looking up
before the bomb left a crater
where he, the garden, Afra's heart had been.
She sees nothing now, but hears Nuri's voice
speaking to the imaginary boy.

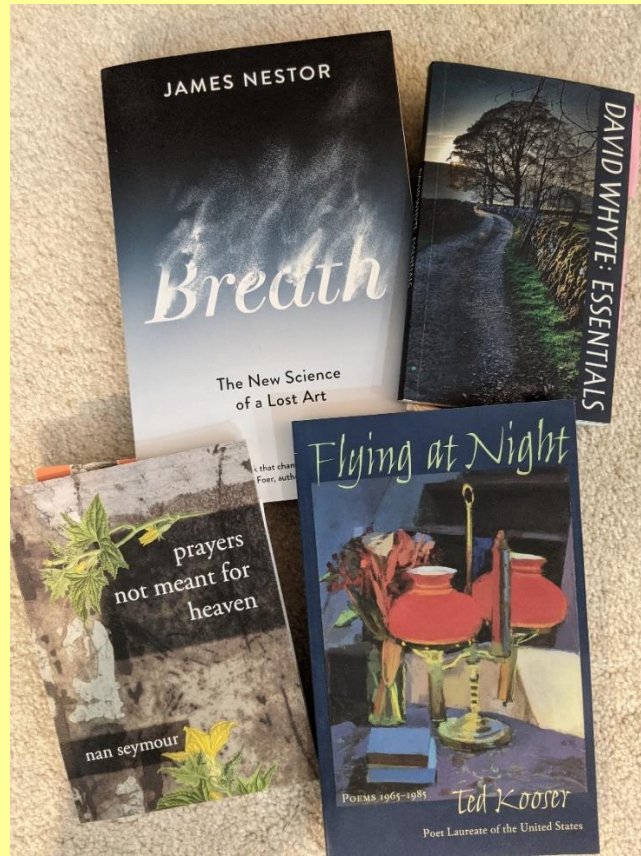
Two fictional refugees of a real war
are my guides to your streets, Aleppo.
I see and hear you now.

Workshop Notes



DIANE M. LABODA

Two Photographs



Summer Reading

They say the summer is a life itself,
when all in blossom and no fears left.
When you awake with the sunlight,
But still stay up too long at night.

They say the summer is a life itself.
When all the creatures are compelled.
When all we need
is just a fascinating read.

What would it be?
A fiction, prose, or novel?
A poem, play, or song?
Believe me nothing can go wrong.

When laying in the cold fresh grass,
The book will steal your grasp.
The summer is a little life.
The book will be its guide.

Reading of the Warm Summer

Reading of the warm summer. It's cloudy and dimmer, birds chipping.
When blows gushy from dusk till dawn of dark skies arising above.

All of a sudden the clouds open up bright and calm peace and cool.
Day by day the universe explodes high and low flowing like stars.
It begins to light up clearly with a beautiful rainbow colors mixer.

All of sudden the heat begins to intensify drastically,
Blistering hot like burning lava of diameter overbearing,
Too hot for our shielding bodies so hot we dip in the cool

Ocean, chilling our bodies of refreshing chilling cool feeling.
Summer reading knowing the feelings of passion destiny.
Warmth of summer flies like the golden eagle of power

Gliding up through the summer warm burning heat,
Blistering touching heat smoking heat igniting
The steam ground of burning lava warm summer.

Warm and Pleasant

Summer is fruitful and warm, steaming hot and blazing
as it shines along the shining mountains over the cool water.

Feeling the intensity of the burning sun
streaming down on our blistering bodies.

Lying on the soft green grass, holding a book in hand,
under the rays of the sun.

Enjoying the warm summer sun
filling our bodies with vitamin D nutrients.

Summer reading brings smiles to the faces of love:
all over the world, peace and harmony.

Humid summer warmth intensifies the sweet reading
beyond our truth of empowerment
through the years of beautiful summer love and warmth.

Apophysis on End Tables

I have three books cradled in the side pouch of my end table
That I am not reading, though every once in a while I open one
And set it on my lap admiring its pages, not taking in a word
But basking in the idea of reading, the memory of reading,
Walking along books in my mind like stones along a path.
Could this be the same mind that once read until dawn?
It couldn't be. The connections are frayed and different.

I have that writing project from late winter saved on my computer
That I am not writing, though every once in a while I open a document
And reread the words like they are from someone else, and they are,
Being a being who is forgetting and reshaping in every moment
How could you ever regret buying a book?
I make a point to buy a book by anyone I know
I write a glowing review
I send a congratulations email
I once confessed I hadn't read the book
I try, I try

I met a woman online
Like a dating site, but for friends,
And she said her "beau" wrote her many beautiful things
She had not read

What a wonder to know their beauty
I decided to never speak to her again
(Because how could you)

Collective Howl

Yesterday, Juneteenth was made a federal holiday.
It is the twelfth one. It commemorates the end of slavery.
The day after the announcement was made, a black man
in my hometown was pepper sprayed, tazed, and
hit after being taken to the ground. The local news called it
“Rough arrest by Taylor police caught on camera,”
I called it something else.

When I watched the video, I began to shake when
the person holding the camera screamed, when the man being taken
to the ground by four officers screamed,
and my face was red. I was enraged, and it wasn't enough.
I made a video about it on TikTok and it was taken
down for violating community guidelines. It was too graphic for the news, too.
They blurred the violence with an opaque sphere when they showed the video.
But the police chief stands by
his men. They will be investigated. The man is already being crucified
online. A friend, my junior prom date, says he deserved it for resisting.
He deserved it for exhibiting road rage and threatening a woman.
He deserved it for not allowing the police to arrest him on the spot.
I ask him one more question: how do their boots taste?
I recall video footage of serial killers and domestic terrorists
being led away in handcuffs, calmly. The police chief said he admired
the officers' patience with the man.

Tomorrow is the first Juneteenth as a federal holiday.
After slavery, the policing of black bodies morphed into what it is today.
This morning, I wanted to assemble in front of the police department
in a collective howl, but I could not organize those who would rather scroll past.
I do not know how to celebrate the end of something that persists.
I still do not know his name.

The Last Good Weekend of the Summer, Michigan, 2021

We tentatively remove our masks and meet
In dive bars,
The electric neons scattering a halo and wings behind me, in a mirror,
Which we both pronounce with one syllable, MEER
And we laugh as Seger howls on the jukebox.

Outside, my cousins are slathering themselves in motor oil.
Later, they'll go to the motor city while their father tracks their phones
And I drink their wine coolers.
The days go on like this.

Someday, I think, this may seem like paradise.
My aunt alludes to the fact that we're already living past-tense.
"Close your eyes and soak it in. This might be the last good weekend of the
summer." She says three weekends in a row.
But I understand the repetition.

She said one day no one was at the pool
And she experienced a rare hour alone, floating, soaking up a fleeting feeling,
when she realized
The birds weren't chirping. Were they too hot to sing? Did they know something
she didn't—couldn't—know?

The fact that there are bugs in the pool
Suddenly nauseates me.
A woodchuck runs by, my uncle's dog in chase.
"Last summer, did we even open the pool?" Someone wonders aloud.

ch!

Another headache

“I’m only seven sentences in!”

Pain surges through the lenses I have used to see the world for so long

Gone

Words on one page drifting to the other

Ok, they’re back

Dots

Polka dots

An opaque black

Everywhere

...

The words are back

The page is clear

I’ve already forgotten what I was reading

Time to start over

Again

Ou-

Bookworm Haiku

I've counted: thirteen
books stacked on the bedstand, one
of which I'm reading.

*

A sick friend's reading
Emerson: thinks he wants to
know the oversoul.

*

Bad muse bends my ear:
"Your best work's not your verse; your
best work is what pays."

*

Editor's email
to me: "Your poem is a
bit of an amble."

*

Two hundred thirteen
meditations—Basho's best—
one small paperback.

*

Refusing Heaven:
read it twice. Now God's lost his
big fat file on me.

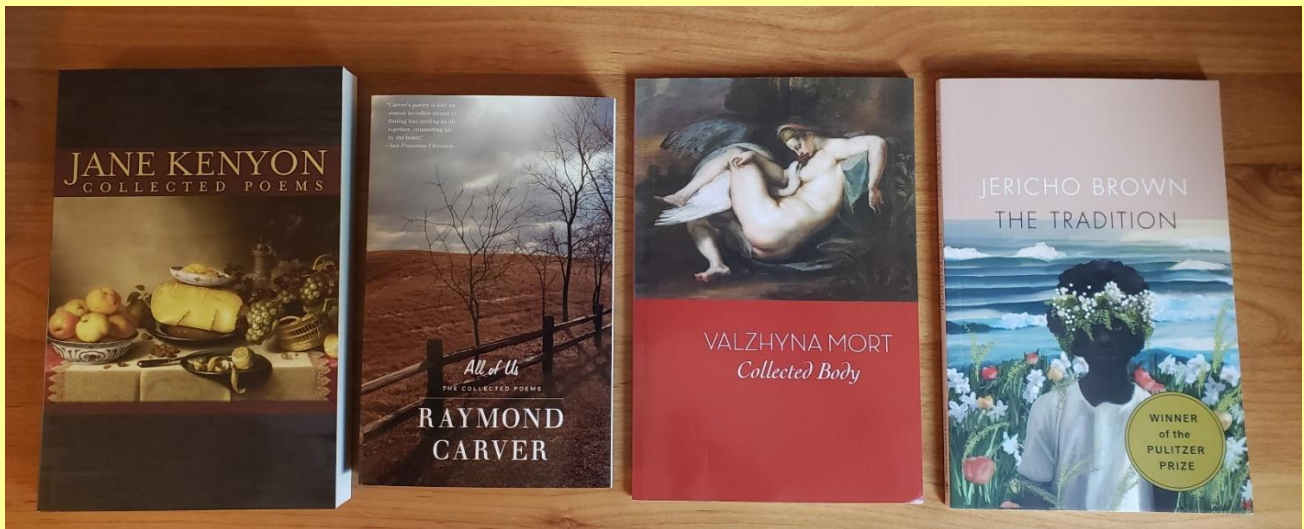
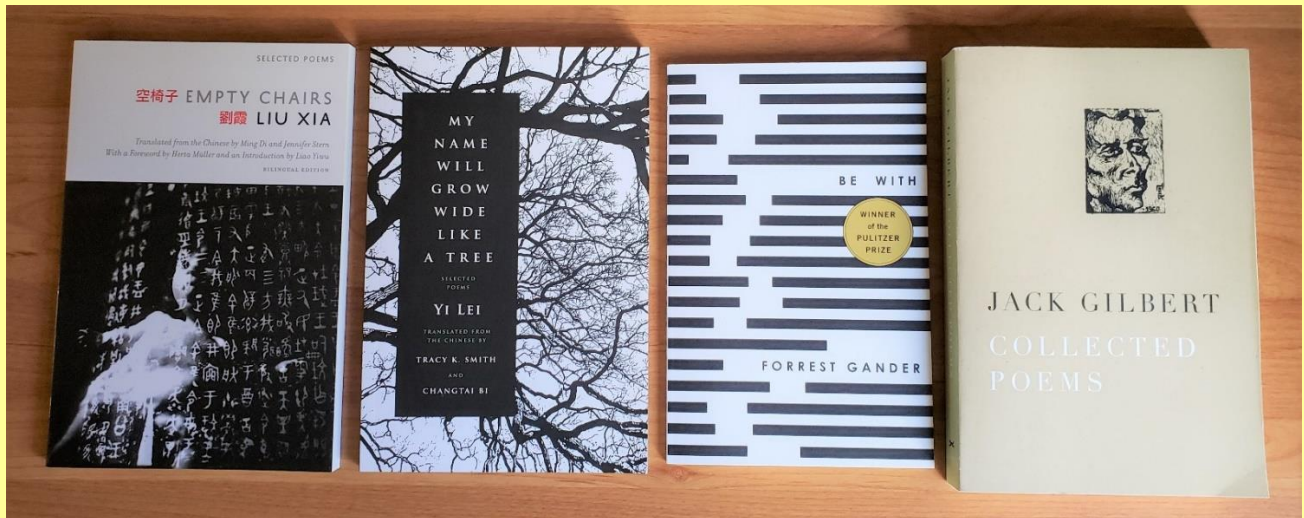
The Only Failure

The wind-tossed spruces: shaggy mastodons
still grazing. Raising ageless heads, they gaze
at me, zoo specimen, a poet. Days
and years drift by my office window, lawn's
choked out by ivy, clouds drag ragged hands
across the forehead of the daytime moon.
I'll cover all the bathroom mirrors soon:
the torso's hourglass, muscles' shifting sands.

Been passively resisting wisdom all my life,
though poems show the only failure is
the failure of imagination. Quiz
me in my guise as sage, or ask my wife:
no answers, only propositions; sketch
instead of portrait; thoughts just playing fetch.

TOM ZIMMERMAN

Summer Reading



1. **Identify the independent and dependent variables.**

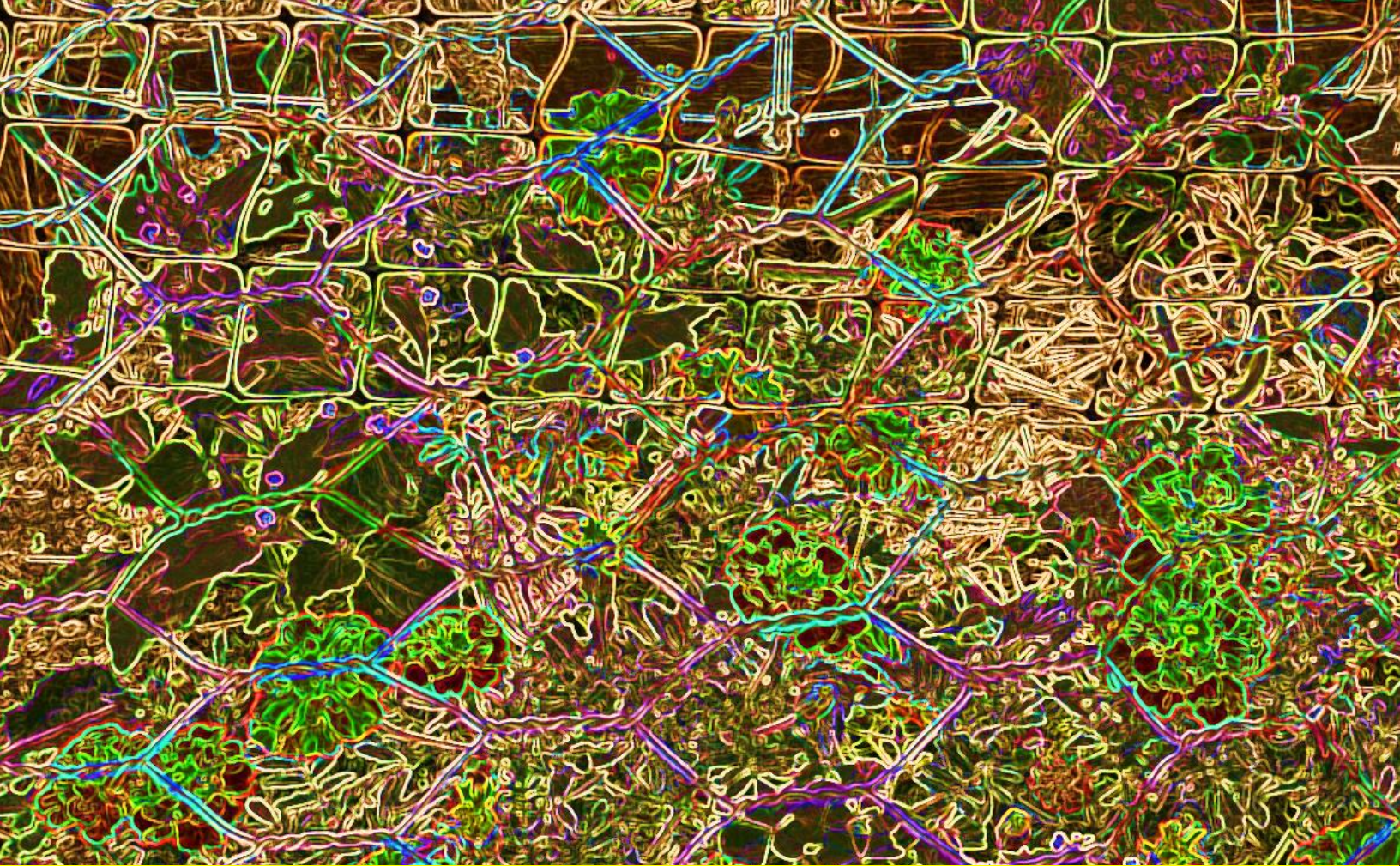
2. **Write the equation.**

3. **Graph the equation.**

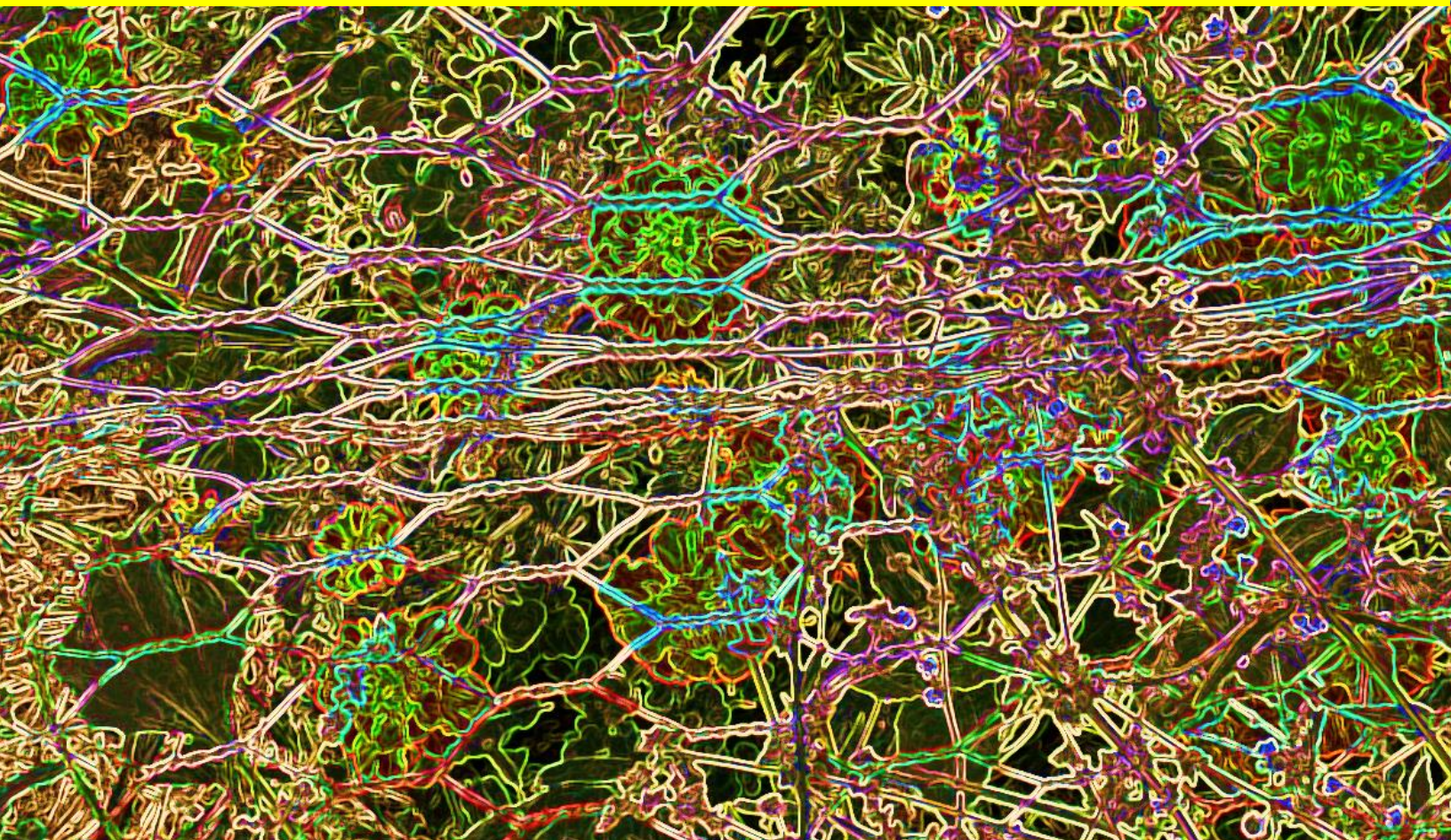
4. **Describe the relationship between the variables.**

5. **Interpret the slope.**

6. **Write a real-world situation that can be modeled by the equation.**



CROSSING BORDERS



The Engine of My Mother's Life

has failed, there will be no more
of her on this earth, except a
bloodline for a few generations.

Last week, in the ER, her CO2 blood
levels far too high, she was crying
in her sleep. Awake, she was confused.
We did not understand her.

She loved so many beasts--the cow
she rode once as a girl, its spine
jagged and bony at the crest. All horses,
each particular and blessed. Dogs
she enjoyed as companions and lost.
The cats she loved but left untended.

John Keats' last words were
I can feel the daises growing over me.
My husband sang his mother to her death.
Her last words were Let it all go!
In my mother's last days, her words
jumbled out, urgent and oblique,
as mysterious as she always was--
submerged, impenetrable, private.
In the ER, she asked maybe Jewish?
Distressed, she cried about all
the stacks of paper! Later,
she saw the blue over the green--
the blue full of stars, so pretty!

She fired an interrogative at my brother--
what was under the table? Such a pretty

pattern on top. When he couldn't answer, she asked for my husband- he'll know. Where is he? When I told her he was on his way, she rolled her eyes, repeated—where's Paul? I need Paul! She was calmer once he got there.

Smiling, she confided, a lot of men had these little pillows, with curl around them.

I slipped from sitting on her walker, at her bedside, to thinking of her things becoming mine once she was gone. I didn't like it, the moving forward to what would come after sitting hospice.

She wanted ESPN to play the US Open men's finals, but until 1 pm, they were talking football. She was unhappy.

Her struggle for breath made her skin around the collarbone feel dry and tight, her upper back tight and sore. She asked What is the opposite of oxygen? She was flooding, lungs filling with fluid, her left leg weeping. Congestive heart failure, late stage. I was stage left, waiting.

I have so much patience and love for her now, though for decades I didn't. I loved and hated her body. Hospice managed her struggles with morphine and Ativan. I am not managing my elevated cortisol stress levels--I smell wrong to myself, my own body wound tight as a steel spring. I am better when I have a task,

but what her death requires of me is
that I just breathe through our vigil,
remember feeding her ice chips.

The night before, we sat with her,
Beatles playing on her cellphone as muted
tennis played on TV. Her terrible exhaustion.
Her quaking, quivering chest bubbled
and percolated. She said she was comfortable.

She slept through the night,
until 6 am when she had a dose of morphine.
Then, with a rattle she gently sailed out
of the morning. I awoke to the call telling
me she was dead, drove to see her cooling
body, which lay alone in the room where
her family had flooded her at last with love.

The skin of her face was slack--
her nose prominent, her mouth open in death.
The open beak of a baby bird,
waiting for food to drop right into the gullet.
Or was her mouth open for a last sacrament,
the kiss goodbye, a blessing to clean away
the failures and mistakes,
leaving only a silence as clear as a rose,
a welcoming into the next garden.

Crossing Borders

I feel like I'm board

Or

Is it because I am a board?

Stiff and hard always staying the same

When will the day come when I cross over to the other side of the board?

I've been making an effort to continue to stay afloat like a board in the middle of
the sea

What is my destination?

Wait a minute...

Where is my location?

Feelings of frustration....

Hope is here in the form of air my breath I take my soul inflates

Is this a dream while I'm still a sleep?

Or

Am I still awake while I'm a sleep?

Hold on....

I think I remember this from before in my last dream

Or

Was that from the day before

Confusion is an absolute value in this equation full of a variety of characters &
variables

This is a life of a board

Staying afloat hoping one day to make a way towards a better boat

I've been in this dream for some time now

Way before I knew I was in a dream

What is it I ask?

This state of mind that forgets to remember and remembers to forget

The board is me

My board is myself

I think....

This board is a little soggy from the storm the other day

The mildew maybe from the ocean where it still floats till this day

Now we will move forward

A present moment giving each day

As the days pass by many boards float by

On this ocean of endless motion

I wonder if there will be a day where I'll make it overboard

Overboard?

Board over?

I have yet to figure out my destination

Where is my location?

I'm lost waiting to be found

Or

Am I found?

While I look around sometimes my perception seems present and content with my
current situation

Well, what is my current situation

I thought I explained in vivid detail earlier

Didn't I?

think about it

I'm thinking about it...

As my voyage continues to unfold

New experiences arise to a flux of thoughts congested at times and events make
my day

These thoughts ahh here goes the thought

I brought up a touching subject from a mirror thought

The reflection of a contributing factor to a person's failure

Or

Success

You be the judge

These currents are ever changing

Taking me from that side to this side

Which side is which?

I'm getting hungry just thinking about it

Am I really hungry?

Or

Is it just a thought?

My understanding is that my actual board stays afloat without me even thinking about it

Kind of like breath when I'm asleep I don't even think about it

Unless there is a moment when I'm drowning then I wake up gasping for air

The breath is a precious gift

The present moment is the same

A gift given to me

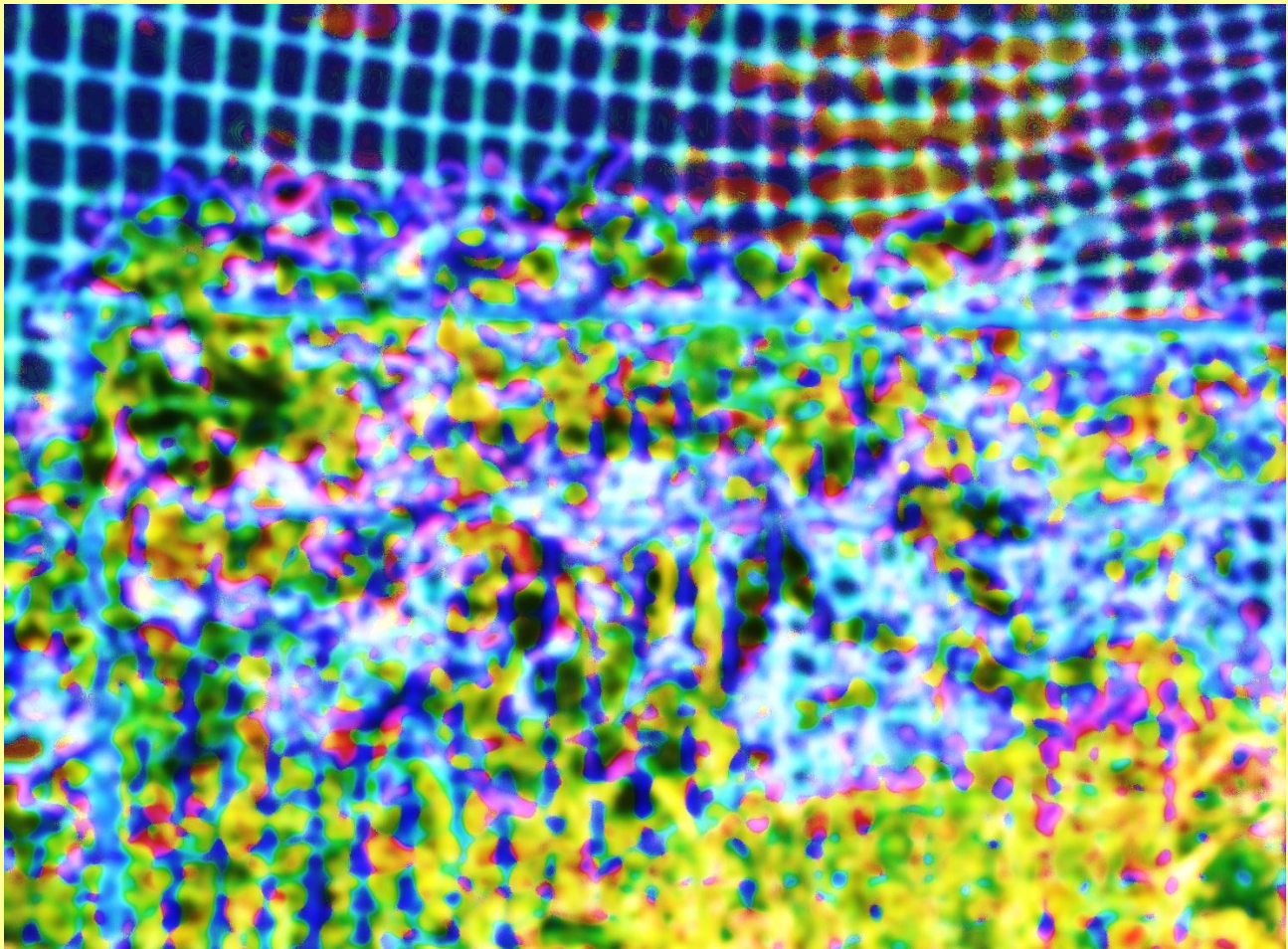
As I live for a living and as I breathe to live my life as a dream

I wake up when I'm sleeping or am I asleep while I'm awake?

What is it?

I ask

This state of mind that forgets to remember and remembers to forget



What the Dove Knows

A lumbering woman appears
before the dew dries

cleans, refills my bath,
soaks her dry sneakers every time

then sings her call note:
Fucketyfuckitgoddamn!

Less and less a threat,
now she's predictable.

She scatters seeds in the shadow
of the dark yew bush

where I wait for her hiss
and lunge—GetlostGusgohome!

Cat slinks off,
I coo the all-clear.

Wren settles on a twig,
sets to burbling.

Robin claims the bath,
splatters every which way.

I whir to ground,
break my fast among allies.

Alicia Through the Loophole

Alicia woke up early. There was no sun.
Her mother had already fixed an egg
for her and her brother's breakfast
and toasted bread over the stove burner
before she left for her job.

Alicia put on her school dress and woke her brother,
washed his face and put on his clean tee shirt.
They shared their food in silence. The gnawing
in her heart would not go away until she was sure
her mother was back home safe with them this evening.

Mornings were the time of day she dreaded most—
the time when things happened on her street,
the time when parents disappeared,
taken into ICE loopholes by men in white cars,
taken without a goodbye.

So many things happen in the shadows
of the morning. So many children's lives change.
So many hearts broken.
Who will pick up the pieces?

Crossing Borders

I cross the cornea of my eye to see you,
to draw you into myself and take you apart,
pixel by pixel, to give you definition
and form.

I cross the pleura of the lung to reach
your scent, your humanness, your musk,
to draw you in with the breath of the forest,
give you swagger.

I cross the atrium of the heart to caress
your lifeline in each beat, cross the barrier
of amorous love perhaps, the blood kin-hood
of sisters exhaling.

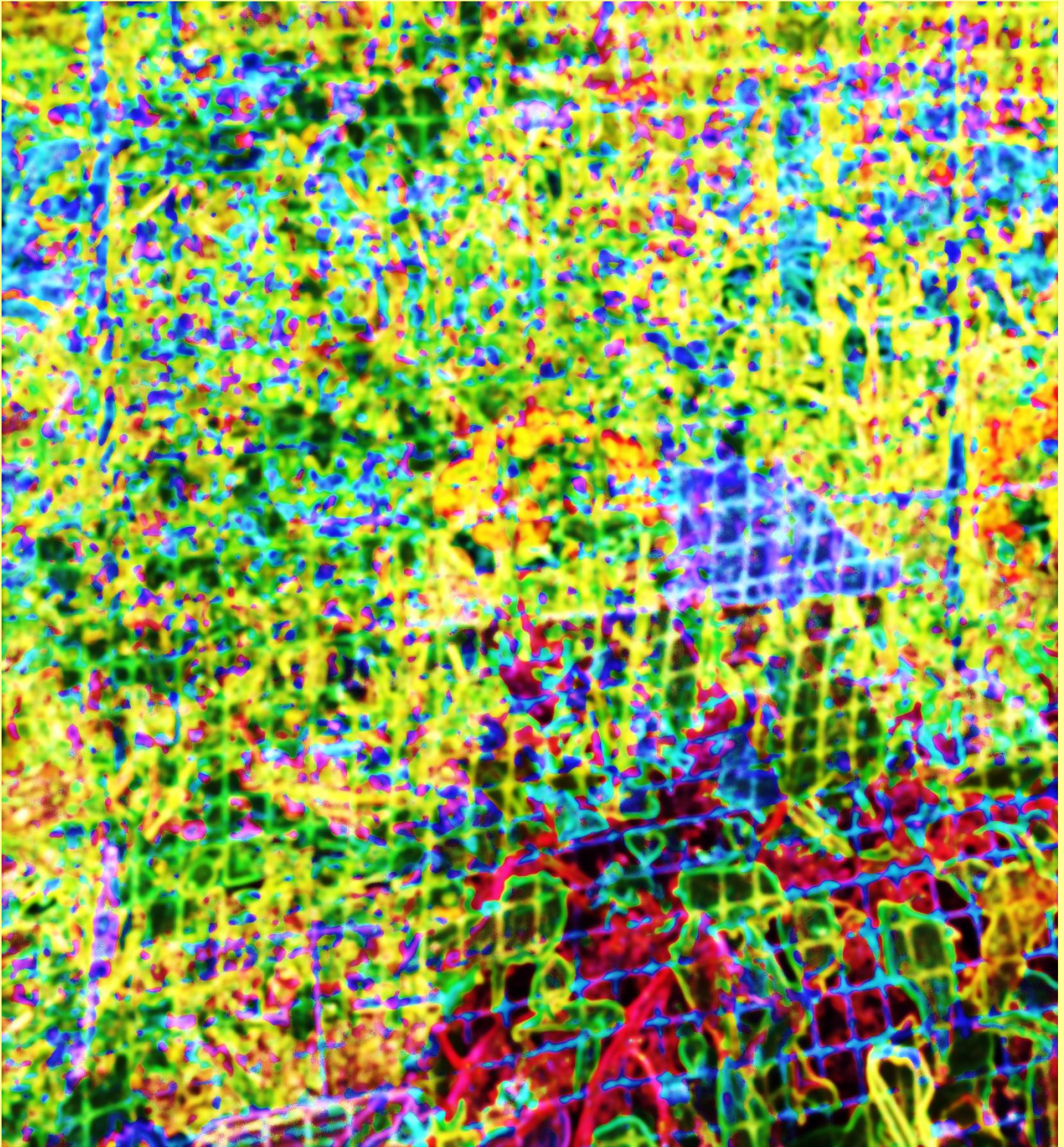
I cross the fortress of my skin to feel
the soft tautness of your stronghold,
to finger each nerve into starlight, each pore
into a river of intent.

I cross the imagined mask in the mirror
to find the reflected magic of your smile mixed
with mine in a cacophony of sighs, a hyperbole
of lies, a flood of echoes.

I cross the neuro-net of thought to find
your language, your feverish zest for life,
your pantone painting of horizons we've never
approached, but want to.

I cross the mist of the soul, buried deep inside
to make ethereal connections so smooth one

becomes the other, becomes one nebula praising
life and love, solitude, and meditative peace.



Whispering is the Same as Whistling at the Girls

The scent of cotton candy
is an echo in a church—
how it feels going down the throat,
cloud-like and silky.

Ritual and tradition are the
county fair as a child—
all like raspberries
distilled to their essence.

Thin tendrils of sound
reach through stained glass windows,
and suddenly you see that
the fair is no different at all.

Large ladies in spandex
make pink cotton candy,
pouring syrup into bowls
same as baptism fonts.

Priests in white satin are
angels in disguise,
holding white paper cones
ready to accept the sugar.

The clang of metal cars
mixes with Gregorian chants, and
dim candlelight is
a lot like neon.

Cans shot off a ledge
are water dripping from a marble fountain,

and whispering is the same as
whistling at the girls.



JAS OBRECHT

Jacob

Whenever i ride a night train
i think of Jacob who twelve tribes made

who in his silent shapeless aftermath
saw his twelve sons half-frozen
 half-starved
moved across a nation's front

behind screaming locomotives
 under the swastika moon

Migratory Gods

They've walked as half, down furrows in the south
of Iowa, up snowdrifts in the north,
Dakota, Massachusetts, Michigan,
at red tide in the Gulf, in Everglades,
through flood plains near the Rio Grande, the mouth
of the Missouri swelling, spewing forth
its silty kisses: Can they fish again?

And they have rolled their boulder, chained in Hades,
straight up and down a mountain, milk-filled breast
of the Eternal Feminine. They've dreamed
in fourteen pieces, cured in sand and sea,
crossed Styx to find themselves. They wander, dressed
in feathers, scales, or fur—their flesh star-seamed
where part of them's escaped, is dancing, free.

Rio Grande: A Fragment

The Rio Grande's a dirty string between
McAllen and Reynosa. So I thought,
the times I made the crossing south in '82.
Saw dogs on spits in merchants' windows,
roasting and rotating. (Goats, I realized
later.) Drank Tecate in the streets,
gave money to the first few begging children,
bought my girlfriend ornaments, a cotton
dress of burgundy: embroidered birds
and blossoms on the bodice. Spoke a little
Spanish there, but couldn't conjugate
my verbs as quickly as self-consciousness
could tolerate. One trip I took was with
a friend from high school days, his fiancée,
and parents too. We drank a lot at lunch,
dad argued with the waiter, then the manager,
about the cost of margarita pitchers:
lost, and paid in full, of course. Up north
was weirder. I taught school, leased a bungalow,
no heat or air, papaya tree in front
and lime trees in the back. Two turkeys roosted
under my Ford Galaxie 500,
windshield spider-cracked. My alcoholic
landlord in a trailer right next door.
He drank a case a day of Texas Pride.
The case is what he sat on in the shade,
no shirt, would lift his rump when he was empty.
Someday I'll tell you about his wife.



CONTRIBUTORS

Maryam Barrie's bio: Married mother, lives in woods, writes.

Joshua C Evans writes, "This poem is about a person who is confused about life's purpose and doesn't know if existence is real or just a mirage. However, they come to a conclusion about life and its precious gift. Air/breath/force/life....and finally the board is their tool to cross over to the otherside. 🎵 😊 🎵"

Diana Fead is a writer/cartoonist/entrepreneur. She writes, "In my retirement I've enjoyed classes at WCC in creative writing, theater improvisation and Photoshop. On Saturdays you'll find me at the Dexter Farmer's Market selling jewelry, portraits and greeting cards for dogs."

Jamie Fulcher

Amy Higgins has taught composition, literature and creative writing at WCC for twenty years, but the birds in her backyard have only recently accepted her into their circle. A small loveliness.

Diane M. Laboda is a former teacher-librarian and retired WCC executive assistant. She enjoys exploring life's mysteries and sharing with others in her writing and artwork. She's published poetry, short stories, articles, and photos in literary journals and anthologies both online and in print. She has published two chapbooks, *Facing the Mirror* and *This Poet's Journey*, and is working on her first book-length collection of poetry on grief and care giving.

Julie Mariouw writes, "I teach online writing workshops through Wellspring Writing Workshops. I focus on helping writers connect with their subconscious minds so that they can locate and develop their authentic voices. I am fascinated by the healing power of creative writing and the role of the physical body in writing."

Anastasiia Noguier is a nontraditional student and an immigrant who discovered creative writing as a way to enjoy life and spread ideas. Anastasiia's main interests are social and environmental injustice and technology.

Jas Obrecht teaches creative writing. His recent books include *Early Blues* [University of Minnesota Press], *Talking Guitar* [UNC Press], and *Stone Free: Jimi Hendrix in London* [UNC Press].

Ayowole Oladeji is a WCC student who has been active in many WCC endeavors, including WCC Poetry Club.

KD Williams is a writer in multiple genres from Southeast Michigan. They teach English and Humanities classes at local colleges and received their undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan where they won an Undergraduate Hopwood Short Fiction Award. They earned an MFA from Stony Brook Southampton where they received the Stony Brook Short Fiction Award and were published in *The Southampton Review*. Currently, they reside in Taylor, Michigan, with their partner.

Priya Wunjo writes, “I wrote this poem on my experience reading while having convergence insufficiency this summer.”

Tom Zimmerman teaches English and directs the Writing Center at WCC. He also serves as editor of *The Huron River Review* and *The Big Windows Review* as well as faculty advisor of the WCC Poetry Club.



