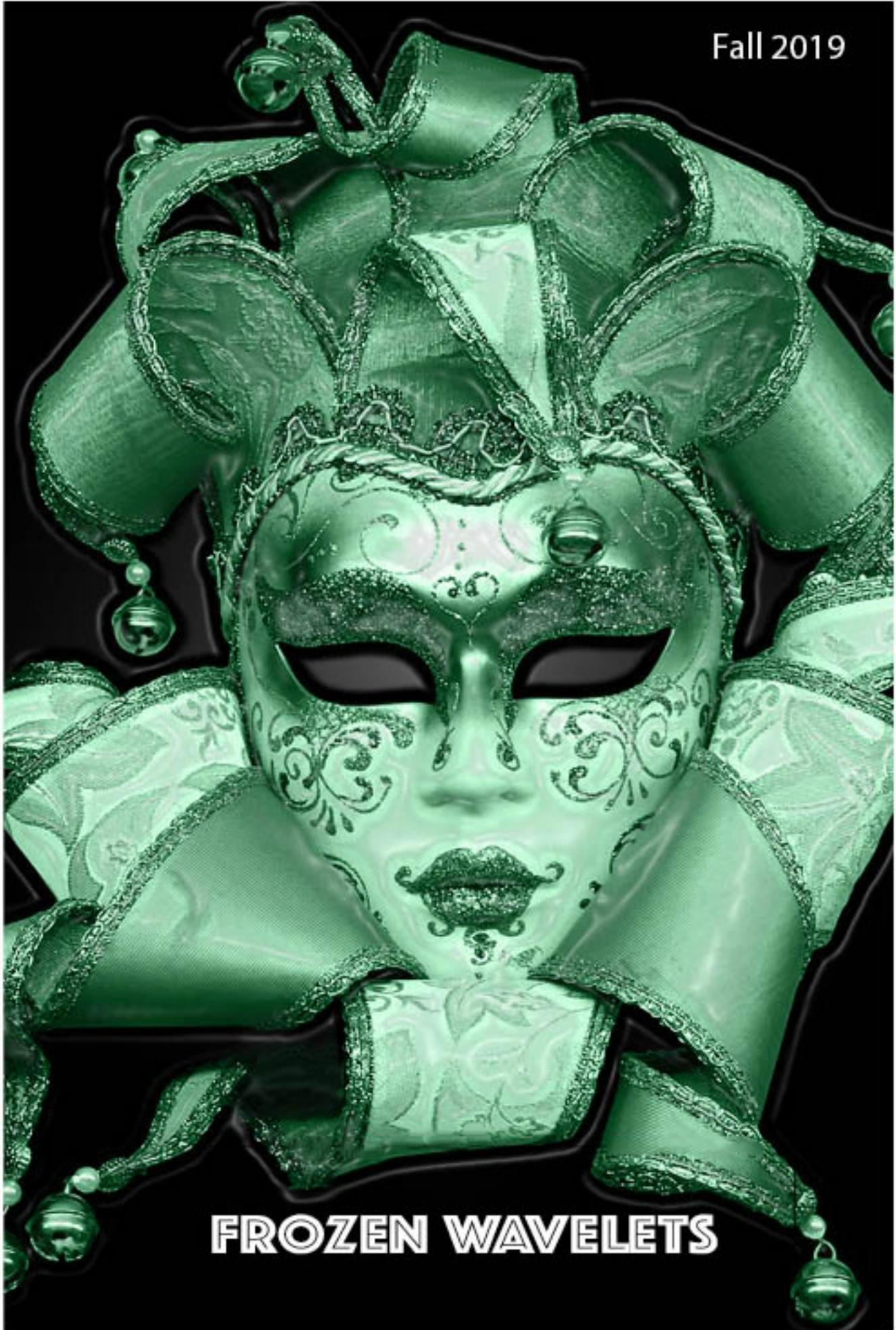


Fall 2019



FROZEN WAVELETS

Frozen Wavelets

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w: frozenwavelets.com
e: frozenwavelets@gmail.com
f: facebook.com/frozenwavelets.com
t: @frozenwavelets

Editor
Steph P Bianchini
e: spb@frozenwavelets.com

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Stewart C Baker, Marc Criley, Colleen Anderson,

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EDITORIAL

Frozen Wavelets began -as an idea more than a project- the day that great publication known as The Grievous Angel decided to close. It was a sad moment. I loved it (and I had the honour to be published by Charles Christian once). I also felt it was leaving a gap; after all, The Grievous Angel was the only pro-paying flash fiction market that also accepted poetry and haiga.

It was April 2018.

More than one year later, we're trying to fill that gap, even though we're aware the benchmark is very high, and it's going to take time. We had the first submission period in July, and we've been blessed with amazing contributions, some of which we have already started to publish on the blog.

This is issue #1, but it should actually read #0; it's a prototype and experiment together, and it does not even include all things we intended it to have -namely, author spotlight and non-fiction. This is a sort of skeleton version -only the essential, flash fiction and poetry.

But it is a start, and you have to start somewhere, otherwise you cannot grow.

In this first issue, you'll find sixteen awesome authors of speculative flash fiction and short poetry. You'll find horror, SF, fantasy -and some pieces so unique that giving them a label would confine them in something they're not (or not only). Many of the poems are haiku -a short-short form of poetry of uncanny beauty and peculiar aesthetics.

All of them are wavelets, frozen in space and time, splinters of reality and made of the substance of dreams. I hope you'll enjoy them as much as we do.

Steph P. Bianchini,
Editor

Acknowledgements

There are many people that helped make this come true. I especially want to thank our second readers (essential for voting on the shortlisted work) and the graphic design consultant, Barbara Vacca. Luna Press Publishing's owner, FT Barbini, was invaluable to help me navigate the complexities of InDesign and the editorial process in general. Finally, special thanks to one of our contributors to issue # 1, Stewart C. Baker, for his donation to the magazine.

She Sleeps



She lays curled atop a pile of glittering diamonds, caught between the roaring surf and a five-hundred-foot cliff that forms a semicircle around her.

Her massive body heaves in slow, rhythmic waves, her sleep echoing the ocean. She wakes, unfurling her length, stretching her serpentine tail and mighty neck. Righting herself, she shakes her torso and stretches her clipped, leathery wings. She thirsts. There is no fresh water in this cage.

She reaches her long neck to the breakers and drinks the salty liquid of her barricade. Her deceptively strong muscles work the fluid in gulps down her throat until she wants no more, licking the crust of saline from the edges of her mouth. The brine leaves her unsatisfied.

She hungers.

Captured here, she cannot hunt her own food. Slowly, unwillingly, she turns her attention to the immense fence that encages her. Above her, a tiny figure hangs suspended against the cliff. Two chains hang from the unreachable top—the unknown edge—ending in the tight, thick manacles that the creature dangles from by the wrists.

It is one of them: one of the kinds of her captors. Its head droops to its chest. It is well out of her reach, the thing, almost at the top. It has been suspended there, still, so long.

Her stomach rumbles painfully, and her taste buds salivate. She shifts uneasily, waiting. Finally, the thing falls, breaking apart where the shackles held it up. Instinctively, she lurches forward to catch the thing in her mouth before it hits the sand.

As it falls, she lets forth a blast of fire from her nostrils, flash cooking the thing before it lands in her open jaws. Above, the hands are left in their fetters, sticking out the top like tiny white specs.

She holds the warm, limp thing between her beak-like lips for a moment, battling hunger, disgust, and regret. She knows her eventual decision, so she does not bother to dirty her meal by setting it on the beach in the meantime.

She tosses it in the air, catching it with her teeth in a better position.

With a few quick jerks of her head, it's gone. She's sated. With the grace of a leopard, she circles to adjust herself atop her bed of jewels. She lies down, craning her neck to place her chin on her shoulder.

She closes her lids, as if to sleep, but a small tear seeps from the corner of her eye. The drop has so much salt—so many minerals from the ocean water—that it hardens before it rolls off her face, crystallizing into a sparkling diamond before it hits the pile of its kin.

She rolls her eyes upward in time to see the chains attached to the cuffs with the hands being dragged over the edge of the cliff. She sighs, a puff of smoke, and three more gems fall onto the mound before she sleeps.

ANNIE NEUGEBAUER

The Sea Bride



*Seal skin
licking blood
across her human hide
leaving red footprints to be washed
by tides.*

*Creeping
shyly into a fisher's hut,
leaving blood on the sheets—
not from her skin—
then gone.*

Protection



First came the birds, then the man. No one could see them but me, for a full minute or two, every night before I fell asleep.

The pale man never did anything but grin from a few feet away, promising unimaginable horrors from behind the wall of wings. The birds, black as his hair, blurred as they circled him in an endless orb. The sounds of wings flapping and beaks snapping haunted my every hour.

I tried sleeping at a friend's, in hotels, outside in broad daylight. Nothing helped. I spent thousands of dollars looking for a cure. Finally I found Maria.

"Birds. Heralds of dark things." She shuddered and offered a cup of crushed gemstones and herbs. "This will hurt but they will be banished."

The concoction burned like pop rocks and settled behind my sternum, sharp as glass.

That night I drifted off, waiting for the beating of wings, for beaks too close for comfort. Nothing. For the first time for as long as I could remember, peace filled the gray drowsiness between waking and sleep.

A breeze pricked my cheeks and I opened my eyes.

The pale man leaned over my bed, birds nowhere in sight. His hands floated through empty space, closing the gap between us. Before I could scream, fingers like white snakes wrapped around my neck.

Alien Evening



*Moonlight has banished an ocean of stars,
pouring molten bronze across the ocean
where limpid waves stroke a pebbled shore.
A harsh breeze crashes across our equipment
as if breaking on a reef
distant creatures call evenings end,
sharp disembodied sentinels of the night.
We lock ourselves in and wait.*

KIM WHYSALL-HAMMOND

At the Frayed Edges of the Night



A coup, the vizier's father said, is months of decisions suspended in mid-air. The arrow before it strikes its mark. The mirrorface of still water before it is shattered by a stone. In that silver wink of quiet, you wait. You pray. Pray that the timing was right, pray for the sun to rise.

The vizier didn't have months of decisions. He had a night.

A night that is now paling at the edges, worn thin by his fate: an inauspicious birth horoscope, charting dark planets and a sinner's heart, bruised and bloodied and given wholly to the young king's wife.

Now that king is dead. Guilt is not a question as wife and vizier face one another before a room full of war-hungry amirs.

Succession is.

And that is the one decision left to make.

The vizier kneels. The amirs' attention sweeps to him, the rush of high tide, as he draws a dagger. Lays it across his palm, head bowed. Rubies well in a thin line, spelling an oath of fealty to a woman.

Now he waits.

And this is his prayer: that this coup, his gamble, his queen, might staunch his kingdom's wounds. Stem the poison rotting its core. Renew, remake, redeem.

His kingdom. Him.

Behind him, knees bend to the flagstones. Steel sings as daggers are drawn, and one voice, and another, and another, murmur oaths of loyalty, layering over one another in rich tapestry.

“Dervish.”

His name, her voice. He lifts his face to her tousled raven hair, to the future reflected in her sea-silver eyes.

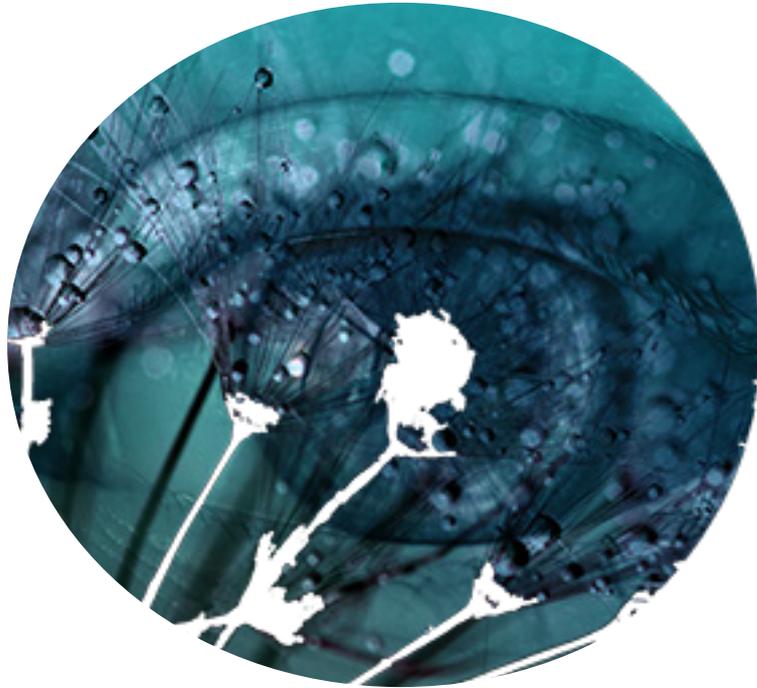
“Rise,” his queen commands.

He does.

And, at the frayed edges of the night, so does the sun.

ISABEL CAÑAS

Bulgarian Grass *Българска трева*



*Dreams were elsewhere
but here, the green was full and soft,
an unspent possibility from another time.*

**Мечтите бяха другаде,
но тук зеленото бе пълно и меко,
неизчерпана възможност от други времена**

Shells



Helen walked along the beach when she felt something stab the arch of her foot. She looked down and saw drops of her blood stain the white sand. A shard of shell was lodged in her skin. She swallowed back tears as she pulled it from her foot. The shell was white with holes from the sea in its surface. Her blood dripped down the side and filled the crevices. Helen wiped the blood away, then gasped. The holes were gone, replaced with shell the colour of her flesh.

Her gasp became a yelp when she felt a burning against her palm. She grabbed the shell with her free hand and felt the skin from her hand rip with it. Helen screamed as she dropped to the beach in pain. She noticed the shell stayed glued to her other hand, with swirls the colour of her flesh spiralling into a pointed tower. Helen closed her eyes and felt the grains of sand press into her skin.

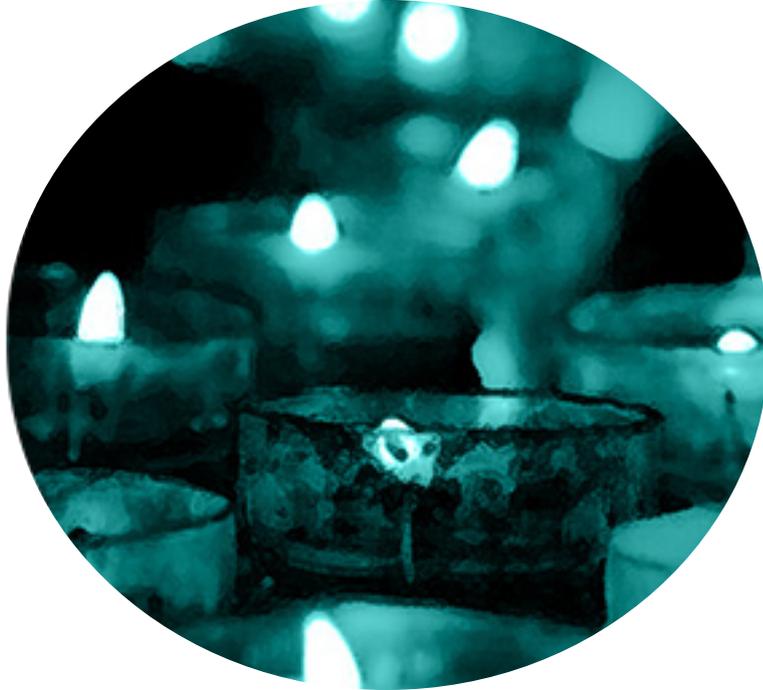
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“Look Mom, a shell!” Sarah ran and picked up a large, coral-coloured conch.

“Hold it to your ear,” her mother said. “You’ll hear the ocean.”

Sarah did as she was told and closed her eyes when she heard the waves. It almost sounded like a cry.

Moon Catcher



*I pounce to snare the moon
with my net woven of
spider webs and clover stems*

*the moon thrashes
as I scoop craters of dust
into my kettle*

*the moon breaks free, ascends
with a feral cry
its dust sugars my lips
my smile beams*

BETH CATO

Our Flesh Was Bred For This



Death is different for island folk.

It's an old saying, if not a truthful one. There are islands enough for carnivores. On Kodiak they stake you out for bears, on Komodo you're left for dragons. Not everywhere is barren of hunting teeth. In most places they've come back, feed them up so carefully as we do.

But there are some islands where they never were. Islands of birds and bats, and the only big carnivores are marine, their fish-bellies white around the coast, their easy length swum up along estuaries and into rivers. The great hinged jaw of leopard seals, the smooth sleek lines of blackfish.

Apex predators, all of them.

That our bodies float face down until sheared apart instead of lying with our faces to the sun, our bellies split open, well. Death is different for island folk, and people who spend their lives in scent and sight of sea make their plans accordingly.

It's such a careful, chancy thing. Such a wistful thing, the thought of afterlife and salt, for the sea can't take us all, and we have to fight for place.

There are people who don't desire it. Who think themselves more than meat and want a cemetery death, the way old generations went out, using up land cleared of trees and filling the soil with formaldehyde, the remnant chemicals of embalming, as if what we did with pesticides and microplastics wasn't enough.

We kept killing even after we died, our bodies a reminder of the apocalypse we'd brought. There's no waste like that now, not even for all the dead who want to go back. Apex predators die the same as other beasts. They can feed the same as others, too. A chancy thing, a careful thing. We want to see them back, those populations we broke down. Death and climate, death and habitat loss, death and poison all around, and by the end the only species relied upon to swarm was us. Well, there were insects. Bacteria, too, all the small creatures. The herbivores hung on the longest, but when we think of challenge, of the ones that stalk through imagination and make mirrors of our acts it's the carnivores we think of, the fearful symmetry of our other selves. They were so very hard to feed. But there were so many of us, and so few of them. A simple equation, an obvious solution. Something had to be done with us. And cemeteries were wasted land that was better off reclaimed, crematoria were air pollution and wasted fuel. People donate their bodies all the time, or used to. Those bodies went to science once, spread out and skinned by medical students, left fallow in a field for monitored decomposition. It was being eaten by worms then, by blowflies and all the other insects and for cause. Better the body goes to feeding something with a bit more brilliance to it, a bit more beauty. But it takes so much care. As much meat as we are, as much mechanism of flesh, there's so many of us. It's one thing to support the food web, another to unbalance it entirely. No-one wants to feed themselves to rats, to encourage a population explosion as destructive as our own. We've only begun to clear the land of what we brought. But death is different for island folk, and when we let the dead slide into waters off Stewart Island, naked and empty of poison, fed to fish the size of funeral boats, we give them time to recover. Not just the fish, the but seals they would have eaten if our flesh wasn't offered up as ransom. The seal colonies are recovering now as well. For a little while at least their predators have easier food, if not so fat. In other places there are antelopes again, herds of them building up because our pride has given way to another, because our bodies atone in death for what our brains have done. The vultures, the eagles, all the loveliness we pushed to extinction now bury their beaks in our entrails and it is good. We weaned ourselves from ecosystem once, or said we did. But death is different for island folk, and we do not go into it entire, or alone.

OCTAVIA CADE

Sparse Wavelets

her tangled hair
a circlet made of gold
and the sun

STEWART C BAKER

feathers flutter down
mournful shrieks signal endings
griffins become myth

COLLEEN ANDERSON

retros enabled
outer planet base jumping
Verona Rupe calls

MARC CRILEY

The stars fall like rain
blanket the ground with their glow
burnt up but not gone

DAWN VOGEL

appealing to my senses,
are you real, or is
it the wine
i drank
on the eve of your departure?

ANATOLY BELILOVSKY

mining asteroids:
human plunder exceeds
sense of wonder

PAT TOMPKINS

About the Contributors

Colleen Anderson edits and writes fiction and poetry. Her work has appeared in over 250 publications such as HWA Poetry Showcase and Starline. Her fiction collection, *A Body of Work* was recently published by Black Shuck Books, UK. She is also working on a poetry collection and alternate world novel. Find her at www.colleenanderson.wordpress.com

Stewart C Baker is an academic librarian, speculative fiction writer and poet, web editor for The Heron's Nest and the editor-in-chief of sub-Q Magazine. His poetry has appeared in *Modern Haiku*, *Acorn*, and a number of other magazines. Stewart was born in England, has lived in South Carolina, Japan, and California (in that order), and currently resides in Oregon with his family—although if anyone asks, he'll usually say he's from the Internet. You can find him online at <https://infomancy.net> or on <https://twitter.com/stewartcbaker>

Anatoly Belilovsky was born in a city that went through six or seven owners in the last century, all of whom used it to do a lot more than drive to church on Sundays; he is old enough to remember tanks rolling through it on their way to Czechoslovakia in 1968. He has neither cats nor dogs, but was admitted into SFWA in spite of this deficiency, having published original and translated stories in *NATURE*, *F&SF*, *Daily SF*, *Kasma*, *UFO*, *Stupefying Stories*, *Cast of Wonders*, and other markets. He blogs about writing at loldoc.net.

Octavia Cade is a New Zealand writer. She's written close to 50 stories, which have appeared in *Clarkesworld*, *Shimmer*, *Strange Horizons*, and *Asimov's*, amongst others. She attended Clarion West 2016 and will be the 2020 writer in residence at Massey University in New Zealand. Her Twitter handle is @OJCade, and her website is at <https://ojcade.com/>

Isabel Cañas spends her days writing fantasy and working on her PhD in late medieval Turkish and Persian literature. A 2018 graduate of Clarion West, she divides her time between Chicago and London. To learn more about what Isabel is up to, including recent and forthcoming publications, see www.isabelcanas.com. She is represented by Kari Sutherland of Bradford Literary Agency.

Nebula-nominated Beth Cato is the author of the *Clockwork Dagger* duology and the *Blood of Earth* trilogy from Harper Voyager. She's a Hanford, California native transplanted to the Arizona desert, where she lives with her husband, son, and requisite cats. Follow her at BethCato.com and on Twitter at @BethCato.

Marc Criley avidly read fantasy and science fiction for over forty-five years, then one day thought, "Hey, maybe I could do this!" So he sat down at his computer, wrote a story, collected rejections, wrote more stories, collected more rejections, until... Voilà! Proving you're never too old to start writing. Marc maintains a blog at kickin-the-darkness.com where one can find a bibliography of his published stories and haiku. He is very noisy on Twitter as @That_MarcC, foisting all manner of art, archaeology, politics, computers, space, Alabama, and Tammy the Dog and cat pics onto an unsuspecting Twitterverse.

Deborah L. Davitt was raised in Nevada, but currently lives in Houston, Texas with her husband and son. Her poetry has received Rhysling, Dwarf Star, and Pushcart nominations; her short fiction has appeared in InterGalactic Medicine Show, Compelling Science Fiction, and Pseudopod. For more about her work, including her Edda-Earth novels and her poetry collection, *The Gates of Never*, please see www.edda-earth.com. For more about her work, please see www.edda-earth.com.

KC Grifant writes internationally published horror, fantasy, science fiction and weird western stories. Her fiction stories have found homes in collectible card games, podcasts, anthologies (including the Stoker-nominated *Fright Mare: Women Write Horror*) and magazines, such as *Andromeda Spaceways Magazine*, *Unnerving Magazine* and the *Lovecraft eZine*. For more information, visit www.SciFiWri.com or amazon.com/author/kcgrifant

Annie Neugebauer is a two-time Bram Stoker Award-nominated author with work appearing and forthcoming in more than a hundred publications, including magazines such as *Cemetery Dance*, *Apex*, and *Black Static*, and anthologies such as *Year's Best Hardcore Horror Volumes 3 and 4* and #1 Amazon bestsellers *Killing It Softly* and *Fire*. She's a columnist for *Writer Unboxed* and *LitReactor*. You can visit her at www.AnnieNeugebauer.com.

Margarita Serafimova was a finalist in eight international poetry contests. She has three collections in Bulgarian, and work in *Agenda Poetry*, *London Grip*, *Waxwing*, *Trafika Europe*, *A-Minor*, *Poetry South*, *Nixes Mate*, *Journal*, *Orbis*, *Minor Literatures*, *Writing Disorder*, *Chronogram*, *Noble/ Gas*, *Origins*, *glitterMOB*, *Landfill*, *Obra/Artifact*, *Leveler*, *Memoir Mixtapes*, etc. Visit: https://www.facebook.com/MargaritaISerafimova/?ref=aymt_homepage_pane

Sonora Taylor is the author of five books, including *Without Condition* and *Little Paranoias: Stories*. Her work has appeared in *The Sirens Call*, *Mercurial Stories*, *Tales to Terrify*, the *Ladies of Horror Fiction* podcast, and Camden Park Press' *Quoth the Raven*. She lives in Arlington, Virginia, USA, with her husband. Visit her online at sonorawrites.com.

Pat Tompkins is an editor. Her short poems have appeared in *Grievous Angel*, *Dwarf Stars*, *Space & Time*, and other publications.

Dawn Vogel's academic background is in history, so it's not surprising that much of her fiction is set in earlier times. She is a member of Broad Universe, SFWA, and Codex Writers. The final book in her steampunk trilogy, *Brass and Glass*, will be out in late 2019. She lives in Seattle with her husband, author Jeremy Zimmerman, and their herd of cats. Visit her at <http://historythatneverwas.com> or follow her on Twitter @historyneverwas

Kim Whysall-Hammond is a scientist and an expert in obsolete telecommunications arcana, who used to write poetry and hide it away. She now shares poetry on her blog (<https://thechees-essellerswife.wordpress.com>) and has been published by *Ink*, *Sweat and Tears*, *Three Drops from a Cauldron*, *Amaryllis*, *Crannóg* and *Star*Line*. She believes, against all evidence, that she is a good dancer.

Deborah Wong graduated from the University of London with Bachelors of Laws. Her works have been published on numerous online journals and paperback magazines, including *Crack the Spine*, *Rat's Ass Review*, *The Stray Branch*, *Streetcake Magazine*, *Thought Catalog*, *Liquid Imagination*, *Strange Horizons*, and forthcoming in *Seagery Zine*. Currently, she works as a finance executive. Twitter: @PetiteDeborah. Instagram: @deborahbie