Bear Review is an online literary journal of poems and micro prose out of Kansas City, Missouri. Published twice a year, in fall and spring, Bear Review is made possible by its readers’ help and support. The editors, Brian Clifton, Marcus Myers, Andrew Reeves, and Ruth Williams, would like to express their gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the journal.

We read submissions year-round at www.bearreview.submittable.com. Send up to five poems or one to two short prose pieces (maximum: 500 words). We will consider a long poem, as well as a sequence of interconnected short sections of a short story, as long as it promises to keep the fire stoked. We are open to simultaneous submissions but ask the writer to notify us immediately about an acceptance elsewhere.

Cover art, “Dead Bird, Maine 2009” by Alex Nelson.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WENDY CHIN-TANNER</td>
<td><strong>How It Is Written</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Willow</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARCUS PALMQUVIST</td>
<td><strong>Balance</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMMA WINSOR WOOD</td>
<td><strong>The Nut</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALI POWER</td>
<td><strong>Mistranslation XXI</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Or Any Given Sunday</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Mistranslation CCCLXII</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Or Nothing Lasts</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEVEN KARL</td>
<td><strong>Untitled Blue #4</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LATON CARTER</td>
<td><strong>Pinhole</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERIC WEEKS</td>
<td><strong>Black, Brown, and Beige</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JENNY MOLBERG</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELF PORTRAIT AS PENEOPE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JULIA BOUWSMA</th>
<th>13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MIDDEN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FULL FLOAT MOON</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WILLEM VAN AELST</th>
<th>15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STILL LIFE WITH DEAD BIRDS &amp; GAME BAG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CERIDWEN HALL</th>
<th>16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUGUST</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRIAN D. MORRISON</th>
<th>17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ON TETHER, THE NORTH STAR DOES MOVE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LISA AMPLEMAN</th>
<th>18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XI. HOLE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NADINE ROVNER</th>
<th>19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNTITLED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>J. BAILEY HUTCHINSON</th>
<th>20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHERRY BLOSSOM IMPACT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLP</th>
<th>21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHAT WE SAY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEN SWIMM</td>
<td>SUMMER PASTORAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MACIEK JASIJK</td>
<td>FROM SECRET LIVES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FROM SECRET LIVES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMY STRAUSS FRIEDMAN</td>
<td>INSURANCE SALESMEN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUSTIN PHILLIP REED</td>
<td>OF THE QUESTION OF THE SELF AND HOW IT NEVER QUITE GETS ANSWERED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VANESSA GABB</td>
<td>BASIC NEEDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CONTRIBUTORS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wendy Chin-Tanner

How It Is Written

the cuckoo
in the nest
has got a

big mouth a
beehive like
a buzz in

the body
of the things
left unsaid

say it this
is how it
is written
Wendy Chin-Tanner

Willow

Willow Street
had only
one willow

at the bad
end of the
block I lived

at number
One Willow
Street where the

BQE’s
sea sound shook
the house that’s

no longer
the house is
only a

house the gate
a gate I
tell myself

the city
is only
a city
Balance

Marcus Palmqvist
“It’s hard to love someone people think is not worth loving anymore,” the woman says to her friend at the café.

Later, they talk about dogs, how she likes to guess who the owner is when she sees one waiting outside. She guesses, guesses wrong.

I get up and go, and they go on talking.

The sun is shining but not hot, not too hot.

This is rare. Something is usually always too something for me.

This is because I am very sensitive, which is another way of saying perpetually unsatisfied.

It is difficult to find the right balance, any balance.

Good writing is not balanced but life is, good life, that is.

My life is good because it is increasingly balanced, or my life is good when it is balanced: both are true.

My balance has always been bad—that’s why I couldn’t ride a bike till I was 12, that’s why I was always falling off horses.

I am easily shaken, shaken off.

“His poems were just random collections of facts about himself. They were bizarre,” my adjunct friend says.

The sand in my pockets falls out of my pockets.

He is reading some of my poems now, I am guessing he doesn’t like them.
I am learning about comma splices and misplaced modifiers so I can teach my students how to avoid them.

I myself learned how to write correctly without learning any terms I can remember.

This means I’m lying to them, my students (that’s an appositive), when I say it is “critical” they learn these terms themselves.

I met a college student who speaks two languages and doesn’t know what a subject is, a high school student who thinks a noun is an adjective.

They were just given language and told to use it.

I guess a mechanic given tools without being told how to use them might eventually figure it out, but she would probably end up using a hammer to crack open a nut. It works, but it smashes the nut.
Mistranslation XXI

or Any Given Sunday

after “Sonnet XXI” by Francesco Petrarca

Herb & foliage
My Venture Capitalist
Like a virgin
Continues to consume in the light

But bless the locus
With virtual gold &
A graceful dick pic
Allora—

This rosy matrix is also a dirigible
Where juices taste better
Because of the air pressure

I will drive you away
Into the old-fashioned sunset
Where no one can text you
Mistranslation CCCLXII

or Nothing Lasts

*after “CCCLXII” by Francesco Petrarca*

I wasn’t personalizing
I was squandering my chances
Inside a gold-plated astrodome
Conducting a Q&A

Between costume changes
I applied cool gel to tremors
While texting invitations
To What’s Temporary

I posed with a man for a pragmatic
Portrait, alternating poses
With and without a bucolic backdrop

“It’s out of your control,” he said
Then slowly stepped away
From the pixelated mountains
Laton Carter

Pinhole

The highway is on the ceiling,
and the clock tower

stretches down
to prick the carpet floor.

The world on its head — camera obscura.

A child holds a mirror like a miner’s pan, looks
down into it, and walks through the house — step

over the light fixtures, don’t trip
at the doorjambs.

Insight means to not see with the eyes.

But the pilot, the effortful brain
maps each discovery

as light.
The upside-down city advances into the dark room.
Black, Brown, and Biege
Eric Weeks
Self Portrait as Penelope

I wake to someone standing at the edge
of the bed. It isn't you.

You are breathing
like a tide beside me. No—
you have been gone these ten years
and I wake to no breath.

When finally the sun
soaks the room in gold, only
my own breath— distant as a wave
from a hundred fathoms down.

How am I this small?
How have I stayed
with you this long
a tiny blue velella
gripping your ship’s stern
through foreign water.

Last night
in the gunroom of my mind
the hall was full

of my twenty geese
heaped as dead leaves
all their necks broken.
And you my husband had broken them.

See what feathered ruin
swells around us? I loved
to feed the birds when I grew
tired of waiting for you.
How many times
a winged thing has saved me
from a knife. Here is the puzzle:

in the dream
you killed my pets because you loved me
and because they were only symbols—

Every time
you turned your head
you meant something else.

The gesture, lost on me.

In your disguise, as you watched
how long I would wait for you
I knew it was you the whole time. And yet
there is a gate through which
my strange dreams come.
Julia Bouwsma

Midden

Coiled umbilical of a dried daisy petal, toenail shell, pilfered spoon, three teeth left in a weasel's yellowed jawbone, rusty fishhook still lucky, scratch of granite you chiseled from the wishing rock, words white as bones never buried in earth—

for every sorrow that's been dug from you, here is a pile of rubble twice as high.
Full Bloat Moon

The worm moon will drink until she floats
if you let her. She’ll suck the dirt clots right out
of the dissipating snow and the runoff from the road,
guzzle sap from the bucket on her knees or take it
straight from the tree. Glutton-mouthed moon,
you’ve found her belly up in the ditch on one
of your night walks. A kernel of hominy, she swells
languidly, kicking her legs like the ticks you pluck
from the dog. Tonight she hangs high in the dark
as the doe goat kids, quietly fevering in the straw,
udder hard and white as the pail at your feet, then black
as a new moon. The hunger in the sky winks at you
unrelenting through the trees as you do the deed,
as you wash the blood from your palms. Each year
she wakes this way, and each year you feed her
ravenous. She never gets full, but then again
neither do you, anymore.
Still Life with Dead Birds & Game Bag
Willem Van Aelst
these unrelenting weeks; everything grown sweet and dull. A lethargy sets in. I am tired of being the reliable one, that reflective surface—what we see is what we expect, what we remember. It’s useless to claim anger, worse to act on it. The crickets drill without pause while the Internet suggests blockbusters, easy reading. All the recipes for ice cream involve the preliminary step of scalding milk. When someone who ought to know better asks the usual irrelevant—are you seeing anyone and what inspires you—I could argue a friendship is not a checklist. Instead I hedge and pivot, dream small animals are placed in my care. I kill them. It’s pure neglect, a humid front. But such errors accumulate over time. Plants wilt and lawns fade. We throw rocks in the pond, wait for the heat to break
On Tether, The North Star Does Move

The soccer ball aging in the field
misses the foot that put it
there. I have gone through so many
water bottles. I recall when I was four,
my father wrenching a car vent
open to get the twenty I slipped in
through the air conditioned breeze.
My bank, I called it, after watching him
stuff money into an envelope
for deposit. Just the other day, the world
opened a little more than usual
at daybreak, when my daughter, who’s one,
kicked my cheekbone because she was
awake and I was not. That moved me
More than gravity in the bed.
Like the sun does without me knowing
I’m moving. And maybe the stars
not struggling to quiet,
know the beauty I do. It must be
bright, this knowledge. Maybe
when they feel, if they do, the sun
heating their backs, they
save it up, that power, for something,
some big day when they can weigh more
to what made them. Even a planet
needs its resources to live. Maybe
when stars dream—everything dreams—
they get, finally, what they’ve been
saving up for all their lives.
XI. Hole
(from) Courtly Love
for Courtney Love

Girl, watch out what you wish for. Headless dolls like chicken corpses, empty cavity and floppy toy arms: these fiends caterwaul in corners, creepy mascots, stage debris,

beautiful garbage. Their abandoned heads have Os as mouths, their skulls as hollow as crack houses. Greedy desperate, never bled nor breathed, they really want you, second-class

performer. They really do. Garb yourself in frilly dresses, ape their vacant look. Well-versed in crafting and carving the self, you pose like fish bait dangling on a hook.

No matter what you tell yourself, doll heart, the missing parts make possible the art.
Untitled

Nadine Rovner
Cherry Blossom Impact

_for Haruno Sakura, Kunoichi of Konohagakure_

“You think it’s your duty to save him from the darkness. That’s the kind and gentle girl you are.”

I remember the first woman I hated—hair pink as a sucked melon, knuckles bread-dough clean under her chin. Her little knives. I hated her enough to wish her dead (by ice! or opened-throat! whatever so long as she’s gone from the story)—but fear is an easy-sleeved thing in a child. Hate a quick jacket. She was a child, too—one who lived with me in many bedrooms. A girl, growing, very much in love, early-spilling into the loose palm of a bra. Violent in the way of twelves. Listen: this is who I didn’t thank. A woman who made atomic the mace of her hands, who pulped a man and howled in the doing. A woman whose fist rubbed the bluff. A woman who bit the finger from her forehead, saying through a mouthful of bone: _shannaro._
What we say

I am a Lapp you say mottled bruised

Yes I know I say to you
I love the North and Northern snows and Northerners:
Men with black beards in rough wool make me hot.
I sing for Finland for the lost Nordic homes.

But you are not Norse you say to me
In fact you are a bit of a Greek.

Yes I say I agree I agree
But you are a Lapp.

And what does that mean? you ask

I say I cannot draw you a map.
It doesn’t work quite like that.

A Greek and a Lapp. But where will they live?

I say I know you can answer this.

Yes you admit
We live in the world.
Where Lapp is a term I’m not sure you should use.
We live inside us: twinned souls *I insist*
Serpents twined round the staff of Asclepius.

Twinned souls yes yes *you respond*
Who is Asclepius?

A surgeon a healer raised by a centaur.

Centaurs *you say* I can understand.
Cousins of a sort.
We Samis husband reindeer if Sami I am.
The world began in fire and ice.

There now:
You see?

We came from the armpits of two great giants.
The North is a place of darkness and cold.
The threat of the North is shaped like a woman or
*you say mottled bruised* Or a giant.

Oh that is more sad.
Perhaps you are not a Lapp after all.
After all when do we choose.
The healer was able to raise the dead.
Sometimes a scandal: he even got paid.

You are indeed a bit of a Greek.

Yes *I can reason* all choral tragedy.
Trips back and forth from the land of the dead.
But not for too long *I wax* I am in love.
I am trying very hard not to look back.
Orpheus sang his sweet songs so direly.

And who is Orpheus?

A tender young wretch wrecked.
Wrecked.

I am trying very hard not to look back.
It’s a long way from Finland I suppose

Longer you say
Longer from Lapland.

This all makes me sad.
I don’t think Greek is a good fit for me.

Then what will you be?

Whatever you are.

I am a Lapp you say to me
I have a zither made of fish bones.
The whole of nature delights when I play.
I don’t know why I hadn’t thought of it before.
Are you following?

O yes I agree
I try I say
Summer Pastoral

July and the flax blooms drop their petals daily,
covering the soil in a wilting blue.
The prop planes overhead
turn on and off their engine noises;
climbing toward something,
letting go.

Guns everywhere this summer. This morning
we rose to a couple rounds
from one neighbor
or another and we heard later on the radio
you can bring an open carry
to the RNC

but cannot have a tennis ball.
The garlic is hung and drying,
early
from a spring of record heat.
At the post office,
there’s a girl dressed all
in lavender sitting under the counter who
asks her mom,
“Can I watch a movie
under here? I don’t think it’s dangerous.”
The man in front
of me is shipping his
rifle to Oregon and the postal worker asks
about it being liquid, fragile, perishable,
or hazardous
as if it were lithium batteries or perfume.
Zucchini pour out their juices
when we cut their stems.
from Secret Lives

Maciek Jasik
from Secret Lives

Maciek Jasik
Insurance Salesmen

I question protection
and those who offer it.

Its throbbing, paternal sing-song
composed to protect the protector’s ego.

Every day needs a damsel in distress
for a man to find a reason to go on.

Rapunzel forsaken
if short haired.

My dog bit me yesterday
while going after another dog.

My hand got in the way
caught like a baseball.

Punctured the peach
and unleashed the juice

like so many before him.
Of the Question of the Self and How It Never Quite Gets Answered

My continual kitsune doesn’t approach but merely appears

as if here, human-footed on the crushed leaves, a decision to let fall the veil occurred to it like a dewy accumulation.

Having just dreamt my hips into the hands of others’ husbands

Having held neither the albas nor the acts in my mouth

Having always been a sucker for earning my head’s heaviness

I wake to the motion of wind between my shins and the woods, remaindering the nuance night demanded of its shadows, thickening in distinctions.

I can’t recall from the dreams anything the men said and this is proof of the dreaming. Into their necks their faces nod away from precision: Lamps, in the axils of dying limbs.

The venom-green beacons reveal me wived by their wiles.
Vanessa Gabb

Basic Needs

There will be work
By late fall
Raining in
Habana Viejo
It's so hard
To not think of you
Privacy is complicated
The famous hotel
By the sea
Where did you come from
Where did you come from
Sometimes the verbs
Aren't important
Thank you
For this organization
The conspicuous absence
Of logos
These mountains I believe
Will absolve me
When I remember
To look up
Money doesn't always
Mean what I think
It does
It sounds lovely
Such red
Red berries
I could live
In your country
I could never
In your country
We can't always
Be so kind
The real question is not
Will we hurt
But what do I do
With this happiness
Contributors

Lisa Ampleman is the author of a book of poetry, *Full Cry* (NFSPS Press, 2013), and a chapbook, *I’ve Been Collecting This to Tell You* (Kent State UP, 2012). Her poems have appeared in journals such as *Poetry, Image, Kenyon Review Online, 32 Poems, Poetry Daily,* and *Verse Daily.* She lives in Cincinnati, where she is the managing editor of *The Cincinnati Review.* Julia Bouwsma is the author of *MIDDEN* (Fordham University Press, forthcoming 2018) and *Work by Bloodlight* (Cider Press Review, 2017). Her appears in *Bellingham Review, Grist Online, Muzzle, Salamander, RHINO, River Styx,* and other journals. She lives and works on an off-the-grid farm in the mountains of western Maine where she serves as Book Review Editor for *Connotation Press: An Online Artifact* and as Library Director for Webster Library in Kingfield, Maine. Laton Carter’s poems recently appear or are forthcoming in: *The Brooklyn Review, concis, The Citron Review, Sonora Review,* and *The Inflectionist Review.* Wendy Chin-Tanner is the author of the poetry collection "Turn" (Sibling Rivalry Press, 2014), which was a finalist for the Oregon Book Awards, a founding editor at Kin Poetry Journal, and poetry editor at The Nervous Breakdown. A former academic specializing in race, identity, and culture, she continues to write and educate on these topics. Some of her essays and poems can be found at xoJane, Alternet, The Huffington Post, Apogee, RHINO Poetry, Denver Quarterly, Vinyl Poetry, The Collagist, and The Mays Anthology of Oxford and Cambridge. Wendy was born and raised in NYC and educated at Cambridge University, UK. She is the mother of two daughters and the proud daughter of immigrants. Amy Strauss Friedman is the author of the poetry collection *The Eggshell Skull Rule,* forthcoming from Kelsay Books, and the chapbook *Gathered Bones are Known to Wander* (Red Bird Chapbooks, 2016). A two time Best of the Net nominee, her poems have appeared in *The Rumpus, Pittsburgh Poetry Review, Escape Into Life, Red Paint Hill, decomP magazine,* and elsewhere. She was born and raised in Chicago where she taught English at Harper College and at Northwestern’s Center for Talent Development. She recently moved to
Denver, Colorado where she teaches English at Columbia College. Her work can be found at amystraussfriedman.com. Vanessa Jimenez Gabb is the author of *Images for Radical Politics*, which was the Editor's Choice in the 2015 Rescue Press Black Box Poetry Contest, and the chapbooks *midnight blue* and *Weekend Poems*. She is from and lives in Brooklyn, NY. Ceridwen Hall is pursuing a PhD in creative writing at the University of Utah and reads poetry for *Quarterly West*. Her work appears or is forthcoming in *The Moth, Hotel Amerika, Rattle, Tar River Poetry*, and elsewhere. J. Bailey Hutchinson is a poet from Memphis, Tennessee. She is currently pursuing her MFA at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, where she works on *The Arkansas International* literary magazine, co-coordinates the Open Mouth Reading Series, and makes lots of pickles. Hutchinson has work featured or forthcoming in *BIG LUCKS, Front Porch, Beecher's, Hobart*, and *LIT* magazine.

Steven Karl is the author of *Sister* (Noemi Press, 2016) and *Dork Swagger* (Coconut Books, 2013). Recent work has appeared in, or is forthcoming from *Elderly, Marsh Hawk Review*, and *Dream Pop Press*. He is an editor for the online journal, *Sink Review* and lives in Tokyo, Japan with his wife and daughter. Rachel Mindell is the author of a chapbook released last year by Dancing Girl Press. Individual poems have appeared (or will soon) in *Pool, DIAGRAM, Bombay Gin, BOAAT, Interim, Forklift, Ohio, The Journal*, and elsewhere. She works for Submittable. Jenny Molberg’s debut collection of poetry, *Marvels of the Invisible*, won the 2014 Berkshire Prize (Tupelo Press, 2017). Her work has recently appeared or is forthcoming in *Ploughshares, The Missouri Review, Copper Nickel, Redivider, Poetry International, Best New Poets*, and other publications. She teaches at the University of Central Missouri and is Co-editor of *Pleiades*. Brian D. Morrison completed his MFA at the University of Alabama, where he was an assistant editor at *Black Warrior Review*. His poetry has appeared at *West Branch, The Bitter Oleander, Verse Daily, Copper Nickel, Cave Wall*, and other journals. He is a former administrator and event coordinator of Slash Pine Press. Currently, he works as an Assistant Professor of English at Ball State University. Ali Power is a poet and psychotherapist. She is the author of the book-length poem *A Poem for Record*.
Keepers (Argos Books, 2016) and the co-editor of the volume *New York School Painters & Poets* (Rizzoli, 2014). Power’s poems have appeared in the *Brooklyn Rail, jubilat, LIT, PEN, Stonecutter*, and elsewhere. She curates SOLO, a reading series at Wendy's Subway in Bushwick, Brooklyn. **Justin Phillip Reed** was born and raised in South Carolina. His work has appeared in *Best American Essays, Boston Review, Callaloo, The Kenyon Review, Obsidian*, and elsewhere. Coffee House Press will release his first full-length poetry collection, *Indecency*, in Spring 2018. Justin lives in St. Louis. **slp** is a poet, songwriter, musician, and educator living in Colorado, who can be found vaguely under-promoting her first studio album *widow’s daughter* or hermetically with her Smith-Corona typewriter and her melancholia. Her manuscripts have been finalists multiple times for the Ahsahta Sawtooth Prize, as well as the Ahsahta, Slope, and Gazing Grains Chapbook Prizes. You may find more of her work in the Taggart tribute at *Jacket2, Better: Literature & Culture, Denver Quarterly*, and in miniature from Gazing Grains. She lived with a dog named Fred. Originally from New York City, **Ben Swimm** is an MFA candidate at Oregon State University, where he is the poetry editor for their literary magazine, *45th parallel*. His work has recently appeared in *Alaska Quarterly Review, Cirque*, and *Hamilton Stone Review*. He co-owns a vegetable and flower farm in Palmer, AK. **Emma Winsor Wood** has received fellowships from the Iowa Writers’ Workshop, the Napa Valley Writers’ Conference, and the Squaw Valley Community of Writers. Recent poems have appeared in *DIAGRAM, The Journal, The Colorado Review, The Seattle Review, and BOAAT*, among others. She teaches undergraduate writing and edits *Stone Soup*, the literary and art magazine for kids, in Santa Cruz, CA.