

UNSTRUNG

A magazine of,
for and about
poetry



Summer 2026

The Poets



Doty

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Fenton
Sederstrom

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Unstrung • Summer 2026

Roxanne Doty

The Woman with the Bulldog

comes to Saturday homeless outreach
a muscular dog at her side
big square face, its powerful jaw
could rip you apart.
Her purple parka is unzipped
flaps open, flimsy sports bra
faded flannel pants hang
from her hips. Bits of brown
hair poke from a wool cap
skin leathery from sun and age.
The dog looks up at her
as they move through the large room
stocked with the stuff of life
a softness in its vicious-looking face
as it watches her select what she needs
a shirt, socks, some toiletries
puts them in a white plastic bag
dog leash wrapped around her wrist.
She moves with an air of confidence
what she wears incidental to who she is.
Her thunder still rumbles, despite it all
the ordinances, the ballot propositions
the locked doors, the sweeps, removals
evictions, displacements, losses of
IDs, blankets, bibles, tents, sleeping bags
tools, cell phones, guitars, scooters, medicine.
This woman's dignity is still intact.
Despite the law(s) that try to crush her.

3

Roxanne Doty

4



Roxanne Doty lives in Tempe, Arizona. Her latest collection of poetry, “What Surrounds You,” has just been published by Kelsay Books. Her debut novel, “Out Stealing Water,” was published by Regal House Publishing, Aug. 30, 2022. Her first poetry chapbook was published by Kelsay Books in the spring of 2024. She has published stories and poems in Third Wednesday, Quibble Lit, Superstition Review, Espacio Fronterizo, Ocotillo Review, Forge, I70 Review, Soundings Review, The Blue Guitar, Four Chambers Literary Magazine, Lascaux Review, Lunaris Review, Journal of Microliterature, NewVerseNews, International Times, Saranac Review, Gateway Review and Reunion-The Dallas Review. Her short story “Turbulence” (Ocotillo Review) was nominated for the 2019 Pushcart prize for short fiction.

Roxanne Doty

The Streets

(An ode to Van Buren Street, Phoenix AZ)

Stories seep into them like run-off
settle in concrete and asphalt
cracks, that never die

even after renovators, investors
bulldozers and demolitions

even after glass high-rises
and hip venues, upscale restaurants
and luxury hotels

even when cordoned off
choked by yellow police tape

even when covered with tents
and makeshift dwellings

even when blinded
by golden horizons
glittering in distances

Continued on page 6

even after interstates cut
through their hearts
carve them up
until they seem forgotten
pieces of the past

the stories still pulse
beneath the latest shimmer
new stories piling onto old
infusing lifeblood into the marrow
of the streets who will always
love you for your moments
of vulnerability
and undying testimony

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Roxanne Doty

The Mule Deer of Granite Mountain

watch us with calm alertness
from a tree-lined cove
as we gaze at them
over a short stretch of desert
three large ones, two smaller
partially camouflaged
by foliage.

They know all about us
how we stalk beautiful things
to hang on our walls
leave behind carnage.

7

The January morning is cold
the sun strong
it shines on their winter coats
their white tails
they look away.

We move on.

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David Chorlton

Yard Spirits

A quickened rustling in the leaves
portends the swift
and nervous shift by which
a lizard chases time. Flick of his tail,
no comment, the ground blinks.
The kind of afternoon the mind sets out without

much purpose, just takes off
and joins those orioles, young as May when June begins,
whose world becomes one backyard
wider. The lizard has slept through disorder
in the human world around him,

8

has his channels under bushes, desert trails,
clinging by the stars on his feet
to the vertical walls
where lies cannot hold. He bears
the scales of justice on his back,
is quick in every movement
and measures through his tongue

the state of his surroundings, scent of a potential mate
or the predatory rhetoric of power.
Springtime, taxes due, insects
in the air and rainshowers
few and far between, although a legend
birthed not far from here

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claims for the hummingbird the power
to petition gods in time
of drought. Two by three the doves arrive
to vote in favor
of a no-news zone where truth
is a thing with feathers. And hope

can push one of the bars aside to pass
between them down
with sparkling fur, just melting
along a sunlight beam
as it slants from the hour hand to earth.
A coyote doesn't have

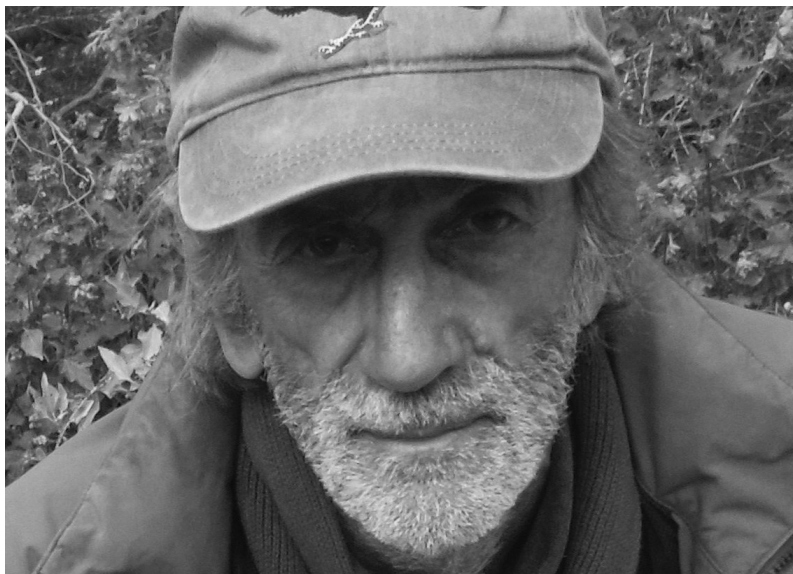
a where to. Has a nose for all
directions. Can smell two fifteen and not care
what time it is on the sun. Which,
so goes the story, is where the hummingbird

can fly to, journeying at night
between this life and the spirit world
to seek good news for the ailing planet
before coming back to afternoons
in flower while the desert mountain shifts at dusk

to make space for whatever flies
in darkness until morning welcomes
another drop
of ancient dragon to the yard.

© 2026

David Chorlton



David Chorlton learns what he can from the desert and wildlife. He paints when ideas are in season and occasionally combines visuals with language as in his “Desert of Earthly Delights,” which came to life in 2025.

David Chorlton

Chiaroscuro

Mountain stepping forward, stepping back; some days
it's so relaxed
the sky doesn't know it's there.
Arroyos digging deeper into memory
and memory climbs back
to straddle a peak. The low trail
only speaks when spoken to,
stone down, stone up, simple steps with the familiar
view of desert's inner life.
Sunlight climbing granite, nowhere to go
from the ridgeline. Rocks alive, forms
that won't stop forming,
every day a new alignment
aspiring to rough edges and imbalance
worthy of the truth.

11

Remembering really
doesn't count for much here, there's nothing
to explain and no line of descent
to tell a mountain where it comes from. Enough
to see the days begin, listen
when the light sighs
on its way into night and that
old silence returns, the one
that was here
before thoughts had words to define them.

Continued on page 12

Same shape, same creases, crevices and
rustling just
beneath the skin, but now all
shadow and the calls
with which nighttime predators ask the stars
for directions.

© 2026

David Chorlton

House Viewing

Desert heights strung across the window
shining summer not a cloud
alive today. The realtor explains
that is where lost moments go
and she opens the back door
to let the future in.
It's shadowy indoors, blinds down,

air cool, it feels like the inside of the soul
while out there are spaces waiting
to be imagined into life. She has the days
already planned from breakfast with a view
to supper's dark, dark, darkness
and the walls for company but
she cannot stop herself

from saying what better walls could ever be
than these with such blank
faces they tell
whatever you want to hear.
It's quiet; the traffic waves
when passing by, and there's a dream book
with instructions for the best night's sleep:
open the windows to let starlight
inside, leave the radio tuned to Mexico

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Continued on page 14

and place a bookmark between
memories and plans. A room
for every mood: Tom Waits, Tartini,
Jacques Brel in the entry hall, Flemish
masses for the screened porch view
of mountains who alone
recall the world's first harmony. Books

parked in the garage,
mostly unread and the oldest kept
for the feel of their covers and letterpress texts
hand set when paper was thin
and intelligence never artificial. No clock
in the kitchen,

time only set by the sun. A closet
to keep old letters in, the ones
afraid they'd ever be recycled
into someone else's life. Front
and back doors open after dusk to let
coyotes through; give them space
to run from then to now,

here comes one with last night's moon
in shreds between his teeth.

© 2026

Varina J. Martindale

Pest's Solemn Promise

I shall be the severe clear blue of the sky
Blazing down without a spot of shade
When You Want Rain,
And preventing any chance of rainbows.

I shall be the one round hailstone
Following an unexpected roll of thunder,
That falls
From an otherwise empty sky,
Like a stray bit of buckshot,
And bruises your skull.

15

I shall be the single, sharp pebble in your shoe
That eludes
Finding until your evening walk
Becomes a less than leisurely limp.

I shall be the tiny burr that clings
To exactly that part of your back
You can never easily reach.

I shall be the lone, overlooked prickle on your rose
Waiting to stab your favorite
Forefinger's unsuspecting pad—
Your favorite being whichever one is stabbed.

Varina J. Martindale



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Varina is a sporadic poet and writer of sensual, American historical fiction with strong romantic elements, but before that she held various jobs, including a one-day footwear assistant to GI Joe and the coach who led her Barbies to a pair of coveted aluminum medals in the 1980 Winter Olympics. Her celebrity encounters include the night spoken-word artist Ken Nordine helped her with eighth-grade algebra homework via her NPR station and a few years later when ex-President Carter guided her through a resort hotel to her mother. A graduate with a master's in history from UofA and a member of Valley of the Sun Romance Writers, she escapes the heat of desert summers as she has since 1981—when Braille replaced crayons—by staying indoors and making up stories. She enjoys talking with friends over food, crocheting, neighborhood walks with her brother, and reading. She savors any rain or cats that come her way.

Varina J. Martindale

Weather Warning

Try not to tease
A rising breeze;
It can lash its tail
And whip up a gale.

© 2026

Varina J. Martindale

She Sings a Silver Hummingbird

She sings a silver hummingbird that flits
Upward among the trees, and not one leaf
She scrapes, although the space between is just
A feather's fiber's width, which rulers miss.
She darts up like a needle, like a ray
Of sunlight glinting off a silver pin,
And like a needle stitching, turns again
To fall between the leaflets. Beating wings
Of quickness blur like quivering vocal cords.

© 2026

Paula Ashley

How Many Times Can a Heart Break

I.

desert heat, desiccation, desolation
the heartbeat absent

mockingbirds
squawk their scolding cry

thrasher, towhees, finches, sparrows, doves
scratch the dirt and chatter

a hummingbird hovers
darts into the solar fountain

19

I look out the kitchen window —
all I see is silence

our faithful trio, the three musketeers
Marmalade the elder
Scruffy born under the bougainvillea
Blackie timid, weak, lonely for love

all gone

the yellow bell drops its leaves
the bougainvillea weeps

Continued on page 20

no water to cool the ground
no oasis deep under the rosemary berm
no refuge from the heat

tears swell
behind my eyes

a lump swells
in my heart

heartbeats echo from the past

I let them all down
I let them all down
I let them all down

II.

The hill too steep. The steps too far for me to descend
without you.
I startle awake in tears.

A note on the kitchen counter. *Marmalade is back.*
The cats all ate again. I see them through the kitchen window —
Scruffy asleep, alone. Blackie snuggling with Marmalade. Washing her ears.

Continued on page 21

This month, the month of broken hearts.
How many times can a heart break
before it cannot mend?

Bastille Day tomorrow. The day of the birth of my first son —
gone these thirty-four years. My heart swollen with joy
broke the day I watched his heartline falter and fail. It broke again
as father, then mother, lost the pulse of life
and surrendered into silence.

Today. The sprinklers are repaired. Our feral friends are back.
The sacred heartbeats of the past
still beat in the present.

Paula Ashley



Elena Thornton, Blue Guitar Festival, 2022

Paula Ashley is a retired software engineer. She lives in Glendale, Arizona, with her husband and three feral cats who sleep under the bougainvillea in their backyard. Paula received her MFA from Queens University of Charlotte. She has poems published in the anthologies Poetry and Prose for the Phoenix Art Museum by Four Chambers Press and Weatherings by Future Cycle Press. Two chapters of her manuscript, Closing My Father's House, are published in The Blue Guitar Magazine and Beyond Boundaries: Tales of Transcendence. ashleypc908@gmail.com

Paula Ashley

My Father's Last Words

The clouds write and write
and lose their message
to the breeze.

I drop my apron in a chair
rush out to hear
my father's voice laughing.

I must go
make the old journey
pocketbook in hand

23

along the hidden path
between stately homes
to the old art deco library.

Down the cylindrical stairwell
hands brushing the books
still in their stacks.

Was I sixteen
the last time I descended
to seek a book that stops time?

Continued on page 24

Was it last week he was at home
his head bald from chemo
his laugh rasping?

And now the clouds write
his story across the sky —
what he wanted me to know

he left in his desk drawer
what he wrote in his journal
he never wanted me to know.

© 2026

Paula Ashley

My Mother's Cookies

I remember mountains of fresh-baked cookies on large platters,
the punch bowl, the special plates for holding small cups and cookies
to balance on our laps when guests arrived.

I remember sitting at a card table set up in the hall
playing chess with the son of one of the guests
to keep him out of the cookies or was it
to keep me out?

I remember Mother's Christmas table with chocolate crinkles,
thumb-print cookies, spritz sprinkled with red and green sugar crystals
along with her pralines and divinity.

25

I remember the warm butter horns Mother brought to my house
when it became my turn to set out the turkey, dressing,
and cranberry sauce on my Christmas table.

I remember the year she said she could not bake them anymore.
I said that's sad we won't have them anymore. She baked them anyway.
My son drove to their house to bring them over to mine.

I remember joining the other daughters at the Home where Mother lived
for the Christmas dinner. Oh yes, we did have southern pecan pie,
though it was not as tasty as the ones she baked. I never made her pie.

Continued on page 26

The time came when I no longer set a Christmas table,
no longer baked Mother's spritz and chocolate crinkles, but I still set up
a Christmas tree with her ornaments
and my memories.

© 2026

Duann Black

Trees in the Breeze

Wind tickles quaking oval golden aspen leaves.
They quiver like solo cymbals marching in time.
A choreographed swath with precision joins in.
Leaves play, swishing in time to the wind's gentle call.

Poplar limbs sway, keeping time with the gentle breeze.
Triangular leaves tremble and shimmer
as wind heightens, leaves are tossed topsy and turvy.
Rhythms of limbs coincide with the breeze.

A nearby pine resists the wind.
with pinecones anchored to each limb.
Its fingers reaching toward the earth
like raindrops falling to the ground.

27

Spruce trees tall and serene
standing erect, stately, and straight,
calm the wind, protecting the trees,
as wind's soft voice flows gently through the glade.

A whisper so gentle, quiet, and calm.

© 2026

Duann Black



Duann Black is an author, poet, imaginationist, and well-traveled veteran with stories to tell. Duann always has a story to share and believes no good story is too short or too long. She collaborated with her husband, Alan Black, on 20 books, including “A Planet with No Name” and the award-winning “Metal Boxes.” She recently published “Stories to Tell Book One,” a book of short stories she and Alan wrote. It kicks off a new series of short fiction and poetry. Recently, she collaborated with three authors, Kat Emmons, Charles L.M. Plumb, and Michele Venné, on the short story anthology, “Four Adventurous Seasons.” Her published works are available on Amazon and are listed on Alan Black’s Amazon Author Page.

Duann Black

I Remember

Yellow stars lay upon the blue field of glory.
Blood hides within red stripes.
Tears of loved ones fill white stripes.

I remember:

You
Your service
Your commitment

Today I serve
without expiration
'til I join you
with my final breath

29

Loyalty to an oath greater than us.

© 2026

Duann Black

For All Time to See

Inner joy pervades my soul.
My heart sings.

Thoughts of peace and comfort brighten my sight.

Two entwined form a bond unbroken.
Knowing I am family fills my longing.

You love me from the beginning, no greater love can ever be.

30 Eternity shall recall Thy heart's desire.
Children forever to be.

Written in the stars for all time to see.

© 2026

Duann Black

Thoughts We Remember

Strange are the times some days, when we wallow in our thoughts.
Adrift on a sea of memories dark, echoing sadness overwhelms our hearts.

Nibbles of tenderness bring inside joy to the fore.
Laughter escapes escapades built on a whim and a prayer.

Pain no longer felt, dribbles along, a threat forever in the background.
Faces we know, for good or bad, sad or glad, never age in the pages of our recall.

Hope's effects turn thoughts to peace-filled words holding the keys to life.
A word of peace tiptoes alongside each memory, thought, care, and concern.

31

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Richard Fenton Sederstrom

Whitherwould: A Guide to Drutherworld

Cornered

for Norman Dubie, and the cover of

Quotations of Bone

*He asked us to describe
the corner of the room.*

Sederstrom did. Yes.

Not Norman.

32

*Too gentle, too kind, Norman,
too gone now, is Norman,
and we are saddened.*

Sederstrom too:

* * *

Some eyes are expansive,
lead from the vertical line outward
to the poster of the bear
to the photo of a mountain waterfall,

to the window, off to . . .
nothing but the next corner.
When do we get to stop?

Continued on page 33

Some eyes delve, stare hard into
the medieval epistemology
of the simple geometry,
the vertical intersection
of two vertical planes.

But where do the planes begin
to intersect?

In what molecular realm
do they meet or merge,
tiny particles of anxiety blending,
deepening toward the sharp
infinity of corner?

33

The atoms of eyeshot
merge with atoms of the two walls,
atoms of intersection, intersexion?

too modest for the shattered
crystal invention,
and intervention of the inevitable
freeze when warm perception
meets with no horizon at all.

Only Norman's corner *can* cohere,
he said, not Norman once more—
again somewhence gaining distance,

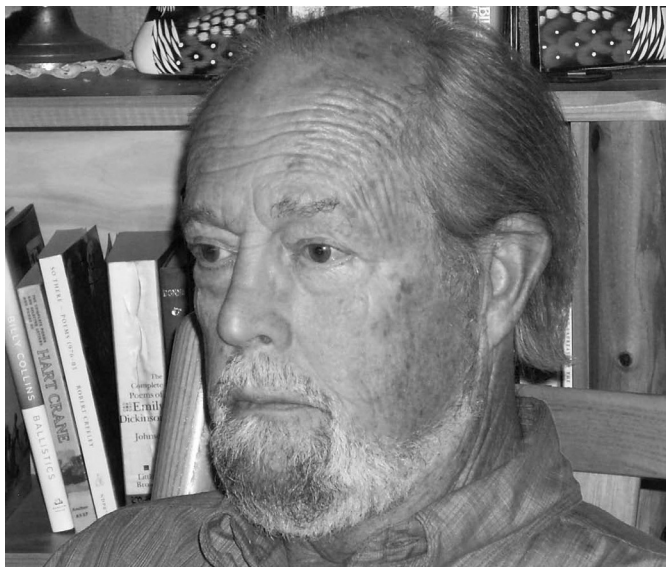
Continued on page 34

again and again by word and line
and difficult pages for difficult
lives and more difficult minds.

Live!
Be mindful! And
don't forget to eat something.

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Richard Fenton Sederstrom



35

Richard Fenton Sederstrom's family moved to the Sonoran Desert of Arizona in 1954. They brought Richard along, for which he is still both appreciative and bewildered. The Sonoran Desert, for all of humanity's wounds and insults, remains a gift. Sederstrom's seventh book of poems, "Icarus Rising: Misadventures in Ascension," which occupies that desert from Tempe to Guaymas, appeared in 2020. "The Dun Box," which regards the "American Century" as a total of minus 21 days in 1945, was released in 2023. "Pewter," attempting to recover some of the chthonic tradition of Intelligent Artifice, is now out under the tender care of The Jackpine Writers' Bloc, the poet's longtime publisher.

Richard Fenton Sederstrom

Oh, it's about

my grandfather's Hamilton, from 1943,
his fiftieth birthday by the calendar
that will have the old watch, by which
the calendar will judder its memory
in a sweet bye and bye of "oh, about."

For the eighty-three years since he blew
out the candles, always weak of lung
power, for several desperate attempts,
our dependable Hamilton has refused
to acknowledge the fruitless existence

36 of any particular minute. By the minutest
rebellion it must be that, in refusing
to calculate specific minutes, then
with every minute that fails to occur,
eventually an hour passes that, lacking

the organization of clock-face minutes,
maybe some 43,713,244.8 minutes more
or less than more but more more than
less, wound back morningly by about
the same less than the more already

dismissed from mythic family history
as well as the less than who can know
of the quanta of physics. Include then
by way of the tiny secondhand time
also in miniature, never manipulated

Continued on page 37

being immune to stasis, a vague total
of roundabout 2,642,580,288 seconds
left in naught but unedited prosiness
as two billion six hundred and forty
two million five hundred and eighty

thousand two hundred and eighty-eight
unreadable seconds having risen by
somewhere between 240 and 300 or
more or less as may be expected. Oh,
but wait. "What do you need a watch

for now? You're writing a poem, a damn
silly one from where I rise from the Yuma
of our imaginations, plus Mr. Clemons.
Time slips. Imagination holds, now
and where. Keep at it. And remember:

37

Hold your mouth right. You can't hold
the pen right if you don't hold your mouth
right. Oh, but your grandmother's coming
over with sandwiches. Hold your mouth
around that for a while, then compose
yourself. Edit. Proofread. Give it to Mr.
Clemens to read, if you dare to dare to"

+ - 30,356.42 days
+ - 728,544.08 hours
+ - 43,713,244.8 minutes
+ - 2,642,580,288 - + ?????? - +

to

Richard Fenton Sederstrom

Whitherwould: A Guide to Drutherworld

[Some of the following lines are from RFS, *Pewter*, 2026]

Is it stubbornness? Is it stupidity? Is it
senility or is it merely craven rot, trampled
cucumbers left behind in the murk nearby
the emptied sty,

that I think of travel for my safety
and somehow for a wishfully-thought
benefit to . . . to . . . or that I decide
that heading for more hospitable
climes is the better part of parting?

A shot of the moribund tree dropping
dying leaves onto Estragon's duck-footed
boots and no curtain—as below:

*What will be Thebes, brainbirth of drama, of
Greece, where the worn stones, the amphicosmos
of theater with no body in it? No stage, No cast,
no gods, no poet. Nor eyes nor ears.*

Continued on page 39

Ἐξοδος Σοφία:

Enter the pasquinade End o' Days:

Which way I fly—I myself—

. . . We fall . . . am Hell.

Εσχατολογία

Fin: shadows fade on Gogo's lone boots duckfooted
in the dying light on stage:

Again and again:

There's no lack of void—

Speak to me;

become a void.

μετά ξεχάστε

39

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Richard Fenton Sederstrom

A Dotard and His Doppel Drop into a Bar in Barsalonga

Don't put me on the desk./I was afraid I was going to die
very soon,/on a paper spree. Any nice person will/die
very shortly. It doesn't really fit.

John Ashbery, "Parallel Movement of the Hands [I]"
Parallel Movement of the Hands. 2021

* * *

Might he be speaking of, and to, the poem, or the hand?
If the poem or the hand has answered, apart or *a due*,
can I be let in on any retribution? All four would seem to
deserve it. Only *for the company*, of course.

RFS, nowhere in particular

40
So.

First,

D: I seem to have left the piece of paper onto which
I had written the note in the direction
of the title of the poem you mentioned.

Then I remembered
that the note I wrote on the piece of paper was no longer
grinding along in the interstices
of my antiquated rememberator. Initials?

I did think of E.E. Cummings and McSorley's Bar,
but no; wrong initials, wrong poet, wrong poem.
Then I reminded myself of Frank O'Hara's brisk little celebration,
"Poem (I live above a dyke bar and I'm happy)."

Continued on page 41

I do recommend it.
But “New York Poets” are singularly too informal
for intializing names or acknowledging academics.

(If you happen to remember the title, let me know.)

D: I am delighted that Miss A.I. Fidditch was most distressed
at the flow of the first two sentences above.
Both were underlined in her yellow-orange teacher pencil—
in their unworthy entirety.

But she gave up, the Fidditch did,
so flustered that she forgot
even to give me chalk erasers to clean after the bell.
Or even notice the bell.

41

The girls in class seemed to think
they had been singled out to share the boy’s apparent punishment.

Steve Johanson shot a spit-wad
through a straw he’d kept behind an ear,
but he missed me and hit Sandy Johnson on her left cheek.

She yelped and told Miss F.,
who came to her senses and dismissed class.
All of us, to my relief.
If we walk fast and cut through the park,
we should get home in time for Sergeant Preston.

Continued on page 42

A discovery:

D: Testing my laser-decateracted eye-sight,
I looked into my Compact OED with the new glasses.
I find that I can read the tiny print
of the entries without the magnifying glass
that came with the two volumes back in about 1973.

That's a first in a lot of decades.
Distance is equally sharp.

Distance isn't always sharp. Well,
horizon can be sharp,
especially when you look at distant mountains
on a clear day, especially in Montana. Visit
the Little Big Horn for Yellow Hair's 150th anniversary
of learning to listen.

When, if, or I should hope, when
you reach that sort of horizon the end, uh
the end, the end should be
quick, "mercifully" we hear tell but how do they know?
Those who know always seem to speak out of
what they can't know. (They thank God)

D: Now back to *Perry Mason*
who just recited a quotation from John Donne:
"I am a little world made cunningly
Of elements, [and an Angelike spright,
But black sinne hath betraid to endless night
My worlds both parts, and (oh) both parts must die.]"**

Angels and sprights, at least in combination
would seem to be critters best avoided, much as most
of what be knowed.

Language like Donne's don't happen on the idiot box much no more.
(The Fidditch didn't even make a move toward that sentence.
Either she missed it, or she's occupied
trying to find the laudanum we know
she keeps in her desk drawer.)

D: . . . #

#D: I, or one of us, might have thought of,
and might have suggested, that employing one letter
for each individual mentioned in the title could have resulted
in confusion. Neither of us did crawl to the chance,
since neither knows the difference between "D"s,
nor to we care to argue, or decide which might argue with which.

43

Could be the final decision
in what we all used to call a democracy, alas.

D: No; alack. Or

Or if we traded titles, would anything survive? At all?

D: Well . . . *Well? Shall we go?*

D: *Yes, let's go.*

*They do not go.****

**Lines in brackets not spoken.

***Yes, you've waited for these lines.

Richard Fenton Sederstrom

The Mind Against Reason

The composition cannot be followed.
The music flowing into silence will *be*
both in music and in silence, allured

into only the music and the silence
and only by the fortunate fallacy of
external interference, crude deduction:

axiomatics. But *The Third Brain* may lead to an
excluded fourth—a pinto pony in a meadow,
a fresh poem by Sappho. A Greeny Flower or
Mozart's *dissonance*. Ashbery's. Mine & . . .

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For life isn't laws. Therefore the artist
cannot be abiding, by which accident
of grace each work can refuse to obey.

*Mozarts tredje hjärna** will invent a fairness
in its lyric reaction toward reason. Hear
Dissonance Quartet. The audience leaves.

You sit still. Then you ...
Write right back, yes?

**Mozart's Third Brain*, Gören Sonnevi.

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Editor's Note

Poets are known to be obsessive, returning again and again to a particular image or symbol or theme, working things out in their conscious mind but just as often working things out in their subconscious mind.

When I drive home late at night from work and see the moon rising just above the horizon, it could be a shiny penny. When it's higher, it's a shiny dime. When it's just beginning, it's a baby's fingernail. When the moon is full and its features are easier to see, drifting clouds provide a veil, thinly covering what could be a human face.

The moon obviously has been written about often and is borderline cliché as an image. But obsessive images such as these still resonate for me, so the challenge for me as a poet is to look at and present these images in a fresh and authentic way. Perhaps that's why poets obsess, waiting for that new, startling image to come to life.

You will see recurring images in this issue's poems as well. I know that all of these poems, whether obsessive or not, will inspire you as much as they do me.

Rebecca "Becca" Dyer
Co-editor

Editorial Staff

Editor: *Rebecca Dyer*

Editor: *Richard H. Dyer Jr.*

Publisher: *Elena Thornton*

Artwork for front and back covers: *Marjory Boyer*

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The Annual Blue Guitar Festival of the Arts!

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A Call to Poets

For Summer 2027

Unstrung, a magazine of, for and about poetry, will seek poetry submissions for its Summer 2027 Issue from June 1 through July 4, 2027. Poets must submit original work (no AI-generated work) and must have a tie to Arizona. Simultaneous submissions will be accepted, but the poet must notify the magazine as soon as possible if the work is accepted elsewhere. It is free to submit, and multiple poems may be submitted. Please include your name and the best way to contact you on your e-mail submission. Please include in the e-mail subject line: Attn. Unstrung — Poetry submission, and send to Rebecca Dyer at rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org.

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For more information, e-mail Rebecca at rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org or visit www.theblueguitarmagazine.org.

Unstrung, a magazine of, for and about poetry, is a nonprofit project of The Blue Guitar magazine and the nonprofit The Arizona Consortium for the Arts. The Arizona Consortium for the Arts is a startup, nonprofit group dedicated to supporting and fostering artists and the arts in Arizona, including the literary, visual and performing arts. For more information about Unstrung magazine, The Blue Guitar magazine and The Arizona Consortium for the Arts, visit our websites:

www.theblueguitarmagazine.org

and www.artizona.org

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A Call to Writers for the Fall 2026 Blue Guitar

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The Blue Guitar, The Blue Guitar Jr. and Unstrung are nonprofit projects of the nonprofit start-up The Arizona Consortium for the Arts. The Arizona Consortium for the Arts is dedicated to supporting and fostering artists and the arts in Arizona, including the literary, visual and performing arts. For more information, visit our websites: www.theblueguitarmagazine.org and www.artizona.org.

Meet the staff of Unstrung magazine



Elena Thornton, publisher: Founder of The Arizona Consortium for the Arts, Elena is an educator, artist and poet and lives in Phoenix. Reach her at info@artizona.org.

Rebecca Dyer, editor: A Tucson native, Rebecca is a poet, journalist and teacher residing in Mesa with her husband, Richard, her co-editor for Unstrung, The Blue Guitar and The Blue Guitar Jr. Reach her at rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org.



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Richard H. Dyer Jr., editor: Richard (married to Rebecca, above) is a managing editor of monthly newspapers with websites in the East Valley, a photographer and a welded-steel sculptor.

Marjory Boyer, cover design artist for Unstrung, The Blue Guitar and The Blue Guitar Jr.: Marjory, of Scottsdale, is an award-winning artist, muralist and an acrylic painting instructor. Her biography and contact information are available at mboyerart.com.



UNSTRUNG

A magazine for and about
poetry



Unstrung will
return in
Summer 2027