

Poets East: An Anthology of Long Island Poets

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An Anthology of Long Island Poets

edited by

Gregory Vincent St. Thomasino

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Thanks to Robert Savino, Suffolk County Poet Laureate (2015-2017), for answering my call and for his guidance and for his friendship.

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The Native Americans called Long Island “Paumanok,” which means “land of tribute.” For poets everywhere, but for Long Island poets especially, the significance of “tribute,” of “land of tribute,” is nowise more advanced and expressed than in the sensibilities of native son Walt Whitman. For Whitman, “land of tribute” is Nature’s tribute to herself, Nature celebrating Nature:

Paumanok

Sea-beauty! stretch’d and basking!
One side thy inland ocean laving, broad
 with copious commerce, steamers, sails,
And one the Atlantic’s wind caressing, fierce or gentle –
 mighty hulls dark-gliding in the distance.
Isle of sweet brooks of drinking-water –
 healthy air and soil!
Isle of the salty shore and breeze and brine!

From Montauk Point

I stand as on some mighty eagle’s beak,
Eastward the sea absorbing, viewing,
 (nothing but sea and sky,)
The tossing waves, the foam, the ships in the distance,
The wild unrest, the snowy, curling caps –
 that inbound urge and urge of waves,
Seeking the shores forever.

This small anthology is dedicated to the *spirit-of-tribute* that is the spirit of Long Island poet Walt Whitman.

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Barbara Southard, "Path down to the beach at Miller Place," 2016.

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Erin Corrigan

Asking for Answers to the Unknown

For I do not know the remains of thy soul,
Come diety, what dost my resolution seem'st be?
Dear'st Pegasus, will thou shine light upon thee ...
Before my sands of time, turn to black rocks of coal?
Maybe there be a hidden document, or scroll?
If this be the case, I would be utmost willing to plea —
For maybe I've lost direction while immersed in this intrepid sea.
This body of mine, could be yours to use, to thole
The willingness of a man — equivalent to that of a *Sedum Purpureum*
Vast in his nature, with ability to tolerate change in seasons
Disposed in offering equivalent 1 million Dirham
Can his oblation, spirit and body — offer no reason?
All that he can propose, is a deducible theorem.
And wait to hear of an answer from his hierarchy, come what may of a
man's treasons ...

A phrase that pays ...

A phrase
mocking the shape of two, dampened fingertips
creating which, may, or may not
pinch, mound; and then — at last

turn the julienned remnants of
what was once mighty, boundless and
un-implausibly beautiful.
so, prodigious and yet

more than two hacks, one loud CHOP
a thump — a lop —
then, finally
a thud unlike any other.
a thud that echoes this —
ambiguous clangor.
Or, better yet —
an equivocal resound.

Immersed in her English studies at Stony Brook University, Erin is an aspiring writer and editor. Her one and only published article of poetry appeared in Suffolk Community College, Grant Campus', literary forum *Cassandra*, 2012. Out of character, and overwhelmingly nerve-racking, she leaped far beyond her comfort zone and submitted the only thing she had ever *truly written* with her whole, present being. Since then, she has continued to practice the art of writing in every facet possible. Hoping that one day, her words will be brushed upon the pages of printed publications for the eyes of strangers to willingly read, internalize and, hopefully, *relish* in her works.

Anthony DiMatteo

The Breach (Fire Island National Wilderness)

We speak of a breach but
flat mountain would be
a better name. The gulls
reach land's end and cry out

at the horizontal summit
where bay and ocean merge,
defy robots of map makers,
and dare us to contemplate

how a continent begins
and ends, any patch of sand
a lesson in near infinity,
old inlet, now new inlet,

open wound in love with stars.
How little proud Long Island,
how fragile the whole earth
in the great sweep of the waves.

I wander out to where a last
tree has a few green leaves,
and a dune of sand is left
to shelter gray birds and a fox

who walks round my tent at night,
the clover leaf of his steps
among the bare prints of mine.

Just a few feet further east

and this little place of rest
would have been scooped away
and lost to the hurricane
that came with waves (as we did).

Is not this line in the sand
a true case of shock and awe?
All living things are linked
in ways greater than we think.

It's no breach but an opening
to the sky inside the sea.
I hear it in the song of birds
and the toss and turn of dreams.

Can you see where it's been cut
into the palms of our hands?

Anthony DiMatteo's recent collection *In Defense of Puppets* was praised by the Washington Independent Review of Books as meeting "the high bar we set for poetry." He lives in Patchogue with his wife Kathleen O'Sullivan and their son Michael. He is a professor of English at NYIT, Old Westbury, NY.

Peter V. Dugan

The Gray Pilgrim

Operating on instinct rather than intellect, I pull
up to the gas pump in need of coffee as
much as my car needs fuel.

A casualty of a late night and an early morning,
I linger in the misty twilight of dreams
and reality, as I saunter toward the entrance
of the twenty-four hour convenience store.

Parked on the side, I notice an old biker readying
his motorcycle for the day's travel.

I recognize him immediately.

A hometown boy, born and bred on Long Island,
matured in Brooklyn and now he sleeps
in New Jersey.

He is a sojourner who has crisscrossed the country
countless times chronicling and cataloging
the people, places and things he's encountered
from:

New York to San Francisco,
Daytona to Sturgis,
Chicago to New Orleans,
Boston to Los Angeles,
the big cities, the small towns and all the villages,
hamlets and whistle-stops found in-between.

To some he is an eccentric renegade filled
with purposeless wanderlust.

As for myself and others he is a maverick, a rebel,

a hero who celebrates his freedom.
He is all American and he is ageless.

Spry for his years, rough hewn with a lean wiry frame,
his face taut like rough weathered leather beneath
a long gray beard, creased with the lines of many
miles and many years.

He's dressed in a tan deerskin duster with fringes
and faded blue jeans.

On his head he wears a stars and stripes bandanna
to keep his bushy, silver white hair in place.

His bike is an expression of himself.

Dusty but not dirty from the road, the engine, a big
V-Twin, sits mounted on a mono-shock soft
tail frame with a fat bob gas tank and teardrop
fenders, painted electric blue and highlighted
with red and white pin stripes.

A cool rigid look, fine-tuned by a low-slung saddle seat
with a passenger pad and an old worn rucksack
tied to the small sissy bar.

The pull back handle bars and a wide glide front end that
rolls on chromed spoke wheels gives the impression
of constant motion.

It has retro-classic style for a long easy ride, standing still;
it beckons for the open road.

It is a machine to epitomize the power and prestige
of the American Dream.

He mounts the bike, starts it up and roars toward
the open road.

A resounding thunder shatters the silence
of the new morning.

The fringes of his jacket give the appearance

of wings, an eagle gliding on the wind.

Walt Whitman rides a Harley Davidson.

Peter V. Dugan, Nassau County Poet Laureate (2017-), has authored six collections of poetry including *The Prowess of Immodest Emptiness: New and Selected Poems* (Chatter House Press, 2016). His poetry has been published in numerous magazines and anthologies both online and in print. Mr. Dugan hosts a reading series at the Oceanside Library, Oceanside, Long Island.

Daniel Giancola

The Drunken Marksmen

John Lion Gardiner:

A pack of rum-laced deserter hounds
was rooting unleashed through town
to collar companions who had broken rank,
severing their tether to crown's grace.
Every home in such a place where men abandon
King was thought to clasp the fugitive's embrace,
like widows done with mourning free to flirt.
Before the rowdies spied doe tallow's tawny flame
dancing an arm's length from my mother's face,
they fired on my uncle's door, demanding entry.
Cousins Ben and Jeremiah were loaded in the oven
like loaves among oak logs to leaven.
That house was night, that door secure;
across the road the sots glimpsed candlelight,
bounded over tamping powder down muskets
and took aim at the honey in our window:
from three yards a shot popped—a ball raced
through the night to hunt the light,
piercing glass with a birdcall or the sound
ice skins make when shattered in the trough.
Thank God for drunken marksmen; that ball found
and rode the sleeve of mother's gown,
took lodging in the hearth where Cato,
our servant, worried a spark in the ash.
They entered to conduct their search.
I recall the rabble in the hall, their stink,

and the grace with which my mother
toured the house, suffering the lewd pry
of rum-glazed gazes, her soiled privacy.

That next day the soldiers were ashamed.
Mother accepted their apologies
but would not discuss that night again.
We were innocent, they admitted wrong;
I proclaimed a moral victory,
sped across the road to spill the news
to Ben and Jeremiah, and learned
they spent the night cooped in the oven,
cramped, too frightened to voice pain.
They were released at dawn when the danger sobered.
Their mother bathed but could not wash that somber
mein that stained their faces, and they, too,
would never speak of their experience.

Later, I too stole into that oven.
There was the ash of that night's fire,
cold and fine as silk to touch.
There was the grease of that night's meal,
white lumps of fat like wax congealed.
I imagined I had stole into the bole
of a lightning-charred oak where a chord
of silence thrummed like far-off surf.
Before long my neck and back began to hurt;
fear was a damp that leached through my skin
and all my bones awoke to the history of fire.
The oven shrank, its air turned foul, grew dense;
hot, I grew uncomfortable and tense
but then began to form a sense
for why my relatives so closely guarded their distress:
like pinecones that require heat to loose their seed,
the ghostly shoot of deathfear cracks the brittle

case of innocence when fired by the flame of chance,
annealing memory like glaze. O unhappy
day I learned death is the odor of doused coals.

Another *Yawn* Spring Poem

Across the yard's air space cardinals
like aerial ferries develop this year's flight
patterns. Flounder eyes migrate.

Cephalopods stir in Shinnecock silt.
Everything's fuzzy as a new-born's blanket
with pollen sea-sickness green. We live

between beginning & end on infinity's loop
lonely & woe-stricken. Itinerant thoughts
genuine as a Chinatown Rolex amount

to litter. A blue-jay slides by
Dorito in beak. Spring's first gnat hatch
teems. Dangling like grapes, wisteria blooms

foreshadow fall. A bald-faced hornet builds
her grey paper yurt on my soffit. Beneath
fog, sod again & again comes into color.

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Dan Giancola teaches English at Suffolk County Community College. He is the author of seven poetry collections including *Powder & Echo: Poems About Long Island's Role in the American Revolutionary War* (Canio's Editions, 1991), from which our poem, "The Drunken Marksmen," is taken, and, most recently, *Here's the Thing* (Street Press, 2016).

Justin Goodman

Leaving the Station At Ronkonkoma

How miraculous these bird stones are,
stretching wingward on the hip roof!
These are creatures of dimension, if stiff,
As they were indistinct before *rubedo*.

Old Winne-quaheagh sold the land for a Nicoll
(Only leaving bloodroot and hands of dye).
Excavations found his flightless rock
Waiting, though not for light,
For when it was removed it did not fly.

They look westward patiently,
Maybe waiting for 400 years ago, maybe
Stranded, watching my train brute on
With the hope of time betrayed by immortality.

//

Winne-quaheagh turned Connetquot into gold and found eternal life
in sacred dirt.

//

From the horizon the lustrous *citrinitas*
punctures the silvers of cloud which
no stone, no man, no light may ride through twice.

All I know is the tracks bring me back to
Winne-quaheagh carving air from earth,
Mirroring his end and the sun
As it drags the moon beneath the plain of vision.

It's impossible to not admire a future
Where we disintegrate into trains that finally
Outrun the peregrine falcon's predatory fall.
I was there.

//

In sunlight, blood on stone is gold. In moonlight, blood on stone
is silver.

//

Brooklyn is gentrified, my friends say;
My *albedo* generation breathing in turpentine.
Would you rather the stone's history, or
Breadth-less speculation?

I feel the crow's gaze. West goes on forever since
The Algonquin Sachem meted out his legacy
In the arrival of Nicoll, the sale of Connetquot,

And Winne-quaheagh's obliteration.
Bird stone archaeologists couldn't even muster
A Wikipedia page not indebted to the estate sale.
Poor, wordless, substance in numbers.

//

The clouds return to white, as the sun removes its definition from them.

//

A train poem lasts as long as the train track.
Here, numbness. Close my eyes. *Nigredo*,
For if I see it not, feel it not, it is not.

"Young one," Winne-quaheagh might have said,
"The salmon cannot foresee the falcon."
Carving his heart of earth, the boy understood
Once the blackwood ship floated in on the white seafoam.

How beautiful is night's chiseling!
This is the economics of insomnia. But

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When you close your eyes and open them
To dawn's rosy fingers,
Do you think it holds last night in it's palms?

Justin Goodman earned his B.A. in Literature from SUNY Purchase. He is currently the Assistant Fiction Editor at *Boston Accent Lit* and Assistant Reviews Editor at *Newfound*. His writing has appeared in *Cleaver Magazine*, *TwoCities Review* and *Prairie Schooner*, among others. Justin Goodman is online at JustinDGoodman.com.

George Guida

To an Eighty-Foot Oak

If life were only nature you'd still be
in it as much as the boy who romps
on your stumpy grave, arms jammed
in the hollow that was your heart.
I paid a week's wage to disappear
you, limb by limb shear you to the trunk,
by whines like distressed squirrels'
chirps held longer than their weeks.
Not lost on you either, the irony
of a mild winter interrupted
fills me like the fenced-in space
I pass days deciding how to mark.
Your sins were shade and allergens
and cleft leaves imperial as wind.
If only I could have imagined you
bare or never having lived at all.

The Tiny Snowman

for my son

One must have a nose of carrot
to have been more fondly mocked
than the small boy in the snow—how
he shoulders lug chunks half his size
to ambush foes in plain sight, how
he eagerly removes his gloves
to pack a snowball, his fingers
turning purple in post-storm sun.

He shares the secrets not so much
of the buried world, but of the shroud,
not so much of metamorphosis,
but of lore. With dead twigs poking up
everywhere, he snaps live ones for the arms,
then pads to the house, to gather praise,
grape eyes, nut buttons, scarf, the nothing,
and to puddle the waiting floor.

George Guida teaches writing and literature at New York City College of Technology and co-edits *2 Bridges Review*. He is the author of seven books including four collections of poetry. His poetry, fiction and essays appear in many journals and anthologies. An earlier version of “To an Eighty-Foot Oak” appears on PoetsUSA.com, 2012.

Gladys Henderson

Walking to Jayne's Hill

Along the road beds,
blowing in their new June hats,
the wild flowers of this island,
lined up to greet me at spring's
opened door.

They capture my wounds
in their deep luscious pockets,
those sweet nets of healing balm—
buttercups,
forget-me-nots,
honeysuckle, all with bees in groom,
kissing the crowns of each.

The heart's sorrow dissolves with the salve
of their beauty,
their nods as if to say,
*Yes, begin again,
begin again!*

Two Women Fishing Orient Point Beach

Across that precious blue, boats drifted for flounder.
Come late summer, schools of tommy cod skimmed
the clear sandy bottom for the sheen of snapper, the silver
flash of sand eels.

I cast the line from the long black rod into the inlet.
It is the one that belonged to my father, the one he wound
with red and yellow thread, ferrules cast with silk.
I remember my hands clasping the bobbin while it spun
in slow and calculated circles, wrapping the metal
with its bright windings.

Air drifted with the fragrance of cedar fires rising
from the beach, near us the sounds of lovers laughing
and playing. A gull, seeing our fishing bucket and box of bait,
called several times announcing some intent, perhaps
to distract us that he might swoop down and relish his desire.

It was the day the two men came to talk to us,
back from their fishing charter without a single keeper.
Sometime before sunset, retrieving our fishing lines
to go home, our lures passed though a school of tommy cod,
hooking each one without effort. Those men, perfect strangers,
began to bait our hooks. Fish were splashing in the bucket.
We laughed together. The cool September air rewarded our breaths
with ghosts of mist rising in the twilight; the beach turned rose
in the lens cast by the last light.

We drove home that evening, down back roads onto Sound Avenue,
two hours in ritual silence; as if we had come to the Ganges
filled with its promises, unclothed ourselves, and for the first time,
saw our sameness.

Lone Fisherman

Sunrise bright as blood this morning,
at the curtained window, leaves tremble;
a cold rain falls. I hear it first on the roof,
an insistent tapping like the impatient fingers
of an angry wife who believes she has waited
far too long to be indulged.

Above, an osprey screeches into the arctic air,
sweeps the gray as though looking for a keyhole
to open the gateway that breaches today's sun.
Plumes of indigo smoke rise from chimneys,
sway over trees whose leaves soon will fall.

Late September, swamp maples announce
the season with their bright-red turnings, flames
that taunt the green of summer. A brash fisherman
crusades across the lake in an orange boat; the speed
of his craft lifts the bow, as if the nose of a mythical
fish has risen out of water to sniff the autumn air.

The skiff turns into the wind's path; a curl of white
trails behind its stern. Slowly the hum of the engine
is lost; only a small orange dot on the horizon remains.
In a while, a short while, we will all disappear.

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Suffolk County Poet Laureate (2017-) Gladys Henderson has won first prize in seven Long Island poetry competitions. Nationally she was a finalist for the Paumanok Poetry Prize 2006, and has won recognition in the Writer's Digest Poetry Competitions 2008, 2009, 2012. She was named Walt Whitman Birthplace Poet of the Year in 2010. *Oberon* selected her as the featured poet for their 2015 anthology. Active in the poetry community, she leads the Live Poets Society workshops in Islip, helped to establish the Poets Circle in Port Washington and was their mentor for six years. She runs a poetry reading venue at Barnes & Noble, Lake Grove, and at the Smithtown Library. Finishing Line Press published her first chapbook, *Eclipse of Heaven*, in 2008.

“Walking to Jayne’s Hill” first appeared in *Paumanok Interwoven* (2013). “Two Women Fishing Orient Point Beach” is from the chapbook *Eclipse of Heaven* (Finishing Line Press, 2008). “Lone Fisherman” first appeared in *Oberon* (2015).

Joan Higuchi

In the Mist

From Robert Moses Causeway—
a spider web of steel across the bay
we viewed through mist
the rafts of bay men
reaching to each shore.

Stretching their rakes like fingers
they scratched the belly
of the Great South Bay
then lifting them
with bronzed and brawny arms
they'd use a culling box to meet
the standard size.

As if in cue they made their way
towards docks, where fleets of vans
absorbed their brimming bags
and doled out cash for catch.

There Peg-leg, Paul Glove
and Eddie th' Mooch shared tales
of waterside events and drank free beer
then lined their pencil boats up
next to Black Boat Paul.

Where once the working fleet
were moored, day tripping boats
named Captain This or That
never sailed the seas

or plowed the waves to harvest whales
but using Snakehill Channel
as their waterway, when out for fluke.

There Pro-lines, Mako's
and swift Aqua Sports have muscled out
the Sharpies and their type

now only one or two endure
while Garvey's also slowly disappear
leaving behind only
the recollection of men toiling in the mist.

The Someday Road *

A taste of summer, Cezanne still life dressed
braids wagging saucy greetings to the sky
you conjure phantoms of our berry days
spent toiling under sultry sun
for promise of a pie

upon the Moses dream of carriage trail
to causeway span across the railroads track.
Their strumming summoned us to tally freight
that shuffled past us through the cut
then bring our pail loads back.

along the hot tar road through once was woods
(now lined with cottage clones on every street)
where heedless children romp and never know
that ghosts of huckleberries grow
just underneath their feet.

* *The Robert Moses Causeway*

Joan Higuchi, author of a chapbook of nature poems *A World of Small Things Singing* (Finishing Line Press) with an impending book related to her work in the field of mental health is a multiple prize winner, widely published both locally and nationally. Since the beginning of this year she has appeared in *Avocet*, *Crosswinds*, *The Lyric* (where she served as judge for the annual competition) and *The Weekly Avocet*. She has work forthcoming in the Nassau County Poet Laureate Society Review and *Snowy Egret*. "In the Mist" was previously published in the Ronkonkoma Newsletter and PPA Review. "The Someday Road" was a Writer's Digest HM winner and was published by *The Long Island Quarterly*.

Vicki Iorio

O, Long Island

O, Long Island
(who am I kidding),
O, Long Guyland

Native born —
parents, Roslyn & Lawrence
my lullaby is the Long Island
sound of honking geese & motorists
on the LIE

I lie down on your beaches
Zach's Bay my playground
Jone's Beach my summer camp
Awakenings under the Boardwalk
Long Beach a place to meet bad boys

Poets read at Walt Whitman's birthplace
cross Route 110, shop at
the Walt Whitman Mall

O, mighty fish, Long Island
Brooklyn your head
Queens, your meaty thorax
I live in your belly & summer
on your tails

I train to Manhattan
become lost in the multitudes
play at being a city girl

But I always long for your ocean smells
your attitude & your wineries
your pizza parlors & manicure salons
I always gaze eastward in search of you.

Vicki Iorio is the author of the poetry collection *Poems from the Dirty Couch* (Local Gems Press, 2013) and the chapbook *Send me a Letter* (dancinggirlpress). Her work has appeared in the Great Weather for Media anthologies *hell strung and Crooked* and *I Let Go of the Stars*, and in *The Brownstone Poets Anthology*, *The Painted Bride Quarterly*, *The Fem Lit Magazine*, *Poetry Bay*, *Home Planet News* and *The New York Times*.

Nancy Keating

The Killdeer

Too sandy to farm, the field of the Hempstead Plains
had to be good for something:

pasture, airfields, Levittown. Tell it to the killdeer.
Politicians blocked off 19 acres

to be preserved as nothing, a sop to
the natural world. The path's unbeaten.

Looking for the rest of my flock, I see
a brand-new bird, in my book, a killdeer.

Somehow I know it's a she,
elegant with her tiers of black and white

on head and neck. I stand, she stands.
We look. Then she stalks away from me,

tawny tail fanned out, distracting the interloper
with her imaginary wound.

It's spring and she has something worth protecting,
eggs among stones, instinct kicking in.

A graduate of Bucknell University and the University of Minnesota, Nancy Keating is pursuing an MFA at Stony Brook University. She is the author of a volume of poems, *Always Looking Back*, and two chapbooks.

Mindy Kronenberg

Summer Prophecy

in memory of poet Sue Kain

In the magical, heavy heat
of July at your cottage
on Long Island Sound,
we sat in the salted, scented air,
redolent of sea roses and brine.
There were bees mumbling
at our good meal, and birds scolded
“Too much wine!”
We waxed poetic, sought rocks
that shouldered epaulets of gulls,
touched boulders with the same respect
that one strokes an enormous pet.
Here we would thirst, imbibe,
celebrate the glacial
rise of cliffs that loomed
and curled on the northern
shore, the verdant slope of farms
and wineries quilting the Island’s sandy soil.
We had too many dreams, not enough time,
so many poems lost on the horizon,
words like the broken shells and stones
tossed and glittering just beneath the foam,
and swore we’d do it all again soon,
drank *aqua vitae* till we were like Tiresias—blind,
but filled with inner vision.

Think of the Island as a Fish

I tell a man from Iowa. I trace
the shape on the table between us,
my fingers brushing aside his beer
glass, my plate of fries. In this
North Shore tavern down by the water,
we are jammed in our seats, the crowd
growing noisy as our food grows cold.
The eyes of the waitress dart from our
table to the bar, but we came here to
talk, not to spend a week's wages
on the picturesque fare.

I am tracing the shape of Long Island,
from the baited mouth to the
upper and lower fins of the tail,
directing his attention to the potato
fields, the vineyards, the summer
enclaves of the privileged few.

He is frowning through this tour,
a man who knew only a sea of corn,
whose only vision of canals
were slices of dirt roads
that cut through golden fields.

He seems surprised at the pockets
of poverty, the censuring of books
in certain school libraries.

This was not what he expected
at all. The university, the ferry,
(which brought him here with
his New England friends and
would soon bring him back)
these were familiar.

Before he leaves, we have dipped
in the Atlantic at Montauk,
witnessed the catch of a Great White.
The tail of this fish thrashes,
splits in his imagination
like a flash of light.

Mindy Kronenberg's poetry, essays, and reviews have appeared widely in the U.S. and abroad. She teaches writing and literature at SUNY Empire State College, offers workshops for BOCES and Poets & Writers, and is the editor of *Oberon* Poetry magazine. She serves on the board of Inspiration Plus, an initiative supporting education through the arts and science, and publishes *Book/Mark Quarterly Review*. "Think of the Island as a Fish" appeared in *In Autumn: An Anthology of Long Island Poetry, 1994*.

Tammy Nuzzo-Morgan

The Poem

I wish I could write the poem that tells the world how the feel
of your calloused hand sends pulses of life into mine.

How the very hair on your arm moves me to sigh,
and how when you smile you tilt your face a bit downward.

The words won't come, and my pen won't move.

I am at a loss to convey what happens to my belly when I hear
your voice; reminiscence of lying back on a swing in full glide.

How I wish I could construct the lines that show the greens
and yellows of our tree-fort love.

But I am Keller, seeking the sight of words.

Tammy Nuzzo-Morgan is the first woman to be appointed Suffolk County Poet Laureate (2009-2011). She is the founder and president of The North Sea Poetry Scene, Inc., publisher of The North Sea Poetry Scene Press and the editor of Long Island Sounds Anthology. She has been honored with a Long Island Writers Group Community Service Award and the MOBIOUS Editor-In-Chief Choice Award. She is the founder and now director of an archival/arts center for Long Island poetry, located in Patchogue, New York, that serves as a literary research center and gathering place for poets.

Tom Oleszczuk

Early Fall

Ahead, in the shadows near the road,
A young deer looked at me
As I chugged along on that cool morning.
No fear, just caution in her eyes
As she flashed to the other side
And into the woods there.
I know it was a she –
Her small baby darted after her
Both disappearing as suddenly
As each had appeared.
The road was quiet, the deer peaceful,
Mother and child, making their way
To another meal.
No roaring predator
Casting headlights into their eyes.
Just a walker
going in town,
Pleased to see them
Alive and well.

Fertile Hailstorm

Ever louder, more insistent.
From the kitchen came a tapping, tapping,
I thought it was one of our cats,
getting in trouble again,
maybe caught in the utility closet,
behind some steep boxes.
Yet once there, I found no cats,
and the rat-tatting continued,
almost a hard rain.
Through the screen door,
I heard the sound but saw no cats.
No squirrels or turkeys either.
Instead, the magic of the woods –
acorns from the trees that arch over the house,
hitting the wooden deck,
as if an angry squirrel sat on a large pile of acorns,
and furiously launched them down,
to preempt two-legged creatures
from encroaching on his turf.
Nearly a blanket now, hard round brown seeds
very much part of the forest's life,
despite the presence of a ranch house,
despite human life within, sitting on chair and sofa
watching the Nature Channel.

Poets East: An Anthology of Long Island Poets

A former college professor and university administrator, Tom Oleszczuk has published in poetry journals and online in New York, California, and elsewhere. He has had work in edited collections (including the Bards Annual and the Performance Poets Association Literary Review). His current project is a book of poems about the East End, entitled *Blue on Blue*. He has hosted readings in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Sag Harbor, and edited broadsheets and anthologies. Tom now lives in Noyac, NY, with his wife Heidi and their three cats.

Alphonse Ripandelli

Twilight

Hues of green turn dark
almost purple
backlit by a horizon
of light blue and rose color.
Stare into the foreground now,
till blurred.
Be still and open your gaze,
wider
and bewilder
at the yellow glints
near and beyond the depth of vision.
Listen,
and suddenly apparent
is the cicadas' call
the soft bubbling of water
followed by the highway's hum,
all in peculiar succession.
Feel,
that slight breeze
as it softly rustles
loose locks of hair.
It is July
and you are in the moment.
Savor it.

Poets East: An Anthology of Long Island Poets

Alphonse Ripandelli was raised in Kings Park. Although he has been writing poetry for several years, his publication in the 2016 Bards Annual has allowed him to share his work for the first time. It has also exposed him to the local poetry scene and the many talented and passionate writers.

Rita B. Rose

Recollections of a Long Island School Master

I

I have lingered upon its unspoiled rocky coast
From North Shore, Orient Point to the Brooklyn Bride
Along South Shore beaches as white as virgin burlap
From Montauk to the Coney Island light
I gaze upon this peninsula, this natural haven, which attracts
This is the Long of Island, I so love

II

I have listened to the Atlantic Ocean thunder; have heard Long Island
Sound as she slumbered
Watched seagulls gliding upon the Great South Bay, spied Piper Plovers
dancing with Cotton Tailed Deer
And deep below Great Whites nap in their nurseries, Flounders hide
between cracks
Indian Switch, Seaside Golden Rods and Bluestems—leaves of grass—
tickle underfoot as they cavalcade along my path
This is the Long of Island, I so love

III

I have traveled by carriage as winter boasts its trees of Holly
And on horseback in the spring when Lilacs bloom
In summer I have rested under Oaks, admired Silk trees with their
display of pink powdered puffs
And in the fall red Maples do weep as they heed their call
This is the Long of Island, I so love

IV

Endless Blue Flag Irises poised along my garden path
Patient spiders with spinnerets weaving silky webs
And Warblers clutching boughs of Pine sing a wonderful refrain
Whenever I return to my beloved West Hills home—
Then in the evening sky Seven Sisters dip to my delight
I sit upon my rocking chair, holding quill to write
About my birthplace and memories of mother
In this Long of Island, I so love

Rita B. Rose is a multimedia artist who has gained recognition amongst poetry groups in New York and abroad. She has performed her works for colleges, organizations and social programs. She is a published author and poet and presently compiling her current poetry into a collection.

Robert Savino

Ghost Land

Eden, long forgotten,
the Poet's Paumanok
evolves as Paradise,

reshaped by the activity
of angry elements and
continental collision.

Glacier chunks penetrate
the terrain, melting to Lakes
Ronkonkoma and Success.

Thirteen tribes of Indians
become the Adam and Eve,
carving out from their dreams

a medicine wheel
of nations, ceremonial,
to this Turtle Island,

until the Dutch take claim
to the land they call Lange Eylandt
. . . and the Fish transforms,

to and through the legacy
of Robert Moses,
progress to Paradise lost.

Threads of memories
swallowed in tasteless
mouthfuls, by the sea.

The Fish swims in and out
of a skull's eye sockets,
the sky above, moving water.

After the Rain

His hand sensually stroking
a patch of snow-filled dry oat grass,
the passionate American poet began,
“Starting from fish-shaped Paumanok . . .”

So many, like myself, born near the blue mouth,
groped around its neck in our father's footprints
led by ambitious politicians and men of the cloth,
while Holden Caulfield passed the laws in church.

Then I began to search, floundering.
Each stride a gypsy journey
in and out of the fork-fins, steering
with hope to discover promising fields.

Once hooked and digested in its belly,
I am an island, yet so many ignore the brine
hand of fury abrading this fish-shaped bottom,
as entrails flush out to sea.

Solidarity

It's the fall of this century's crisis,
little surprise bulldozers and backhoes
stand in puddles between idle I-beams,
cold ripples not yet frozen.

Remedies are experimental, ineffective,
as unpredictable as cold war
in dark places and pants pockets,
constricting the axis of global stability.

And we welcome winter, to come and go,
to bring a new spring of hope
where sharks have little share
in the blue world ocean of a wide-open mouth.

Where one lifeboat fills wing to wing,
creates the colorband of one flag.
When all who are willing can row.
When all who are rowing will rhyme.

Robert Savino, Suffolk County Poet Laureate 2015-2017, is a native Long Island poet. He is a Board Member at both the Walt Whitman Birthplace and the Long Island Poetry & Arts Archival Center. Robert is the winner of the 2008 Oberon Poetry Prize.

Barbara Southard

Morning Train

The train starts its engine for the first morning run to Manhattan
stirring me from an ephemeral dream,
throaty wail of its warning whistle, pulsating low rumble
traveling through the blue-black of four in the morning.

I am oppressed by longing on this day that brings a clouded sky
transforming the nearby marsh into a silver necklace
framed by morning mist, ducks and swans its jewels.

So much now behind, the sorrowful sound of the train whistle
marking out my days,
a vast repository of memory entangling each hour,
vision blurred like a late Monet.

Take each instant as it comes—
a momentary froth in smoke rings,
living body of time moving backward into the future
with every tick of the inner clock
crackling neuronal net overseeing the great open sun
the word bird, its image doodled on a piece of scrap paper by a child

a feather floating down to the ground—beak bite fight claw—
the push of an oar moving through water
leaving small ripples behind
the soft breath of a baby grazing my face like moth wings

the presence of things
where years to moments shrink

my body's vessel keeping me afloat after all these years.
This alone is a miracle.

One night I walked in the garden where bees were sleeping
on the spiky centers of star-shaped blooms.
I nudged one with my finger, watched it move
like a slumbering child disturbed by a kiss.
All this life in the deep of night.

The walk up the hill is harder now
my footing tricked by dew-soaked stones under my feet.
Hidden rocks and roots lead the way
presenting hard choices
horizon transmuting into billows of mist and cloud
then changing back when blue breaks through.
Soon the woods will be ablaze
with fallen leaves riddled with wear
their time of use over, air raw with frost's first breaths.

Barbara Southard is a writer and visual artist. She serves on the board of the Long Island Poetry Collective and teaches poetry to students at the Walt Whitman Birthplace Historic Site. "Morning Train" first appeared in *The Long Island Quarterly 25th Anniversary Edition*.

Tom Stock

Says Walt, 1859

I greet you stranger
Do you loaf along as I do?
Do you know your whereabouts?
Scrub trees surround us
It is easy to lose your way.
Do you thirst as much as I?
Why not follow me. I invite you
I know these parts well
We are blessed with this Isle of sweet brooks
Creeks that run clean, cold
And flow swiftly free down to the bay
Come, let's walk together
In conversation and good will
To wet our tongues
At Sampawams Creek
Not far from here
Where we can rest and slake our thirst

May I tell you a story
To bide our time as we walk?

My mother told me that when she was a young girl
An Indian squaw knocked on her cottage door
Asking if we needed any chairs caned.
Mother invited her in, greatly admiring
The young girls beauty
Her shiny black hair, her skin, her composure, and grace
The girl carried a basket of rushes

Mother said that no chairs needed repair
Mother wanted her to stay a while
She offered her milk and bread with jam
Mother was transfixed with her, enjoying her company
Though she spoke not a word
After a long time, the girl quietly rose to leave
With a nod of her head and brief eye contact
She left, never to be seen again
Mother waited and hoped for her return
She spoke of this occasion for many years.

Montauket Walker

Descendent of Chief Wyandanch
Stephen Pharaoh Talkhouse, last of the Montauk Sachems
Often took fifty mile round-trip walks
To carry and deliver letters for .25 cents
From Montauk Village to East Hampton and back

A tall man who used a long walking stick
A whaler, Civil War Soldier, chair caner
Buried on Montauk Mountain
The only native with a memorial marker

In the most familiar photograph
He sat in a chair, long black hair, long face
Holding his long walking stick

A remnant of his small cottage in the woods.
Is a stone foundation on the Paumanok Path
A historic marker near the pit
Marks where he stored his food supply

Tom Stock is a naturalist and writer of essays and poetry. His books include *The Nissequogue: A Journey* and *Hidden Agenda: A Poetry Journey in the Pine Barrens*.

M. J. Tenerelli

Home

I have been walking a long time
The early fog has burned off and
A dead cat bakes on the meridian.
Last night the horizon glowed.
When I got closer
I saw a trailer
Set on fire
Simply for the spectacle
Of light and heat.
Yesterday a man was menacing a woman
With a broken bottle.
Her eyes were purple like sunsets.
I chased a boy for a while
Down the yellow divider
But then he disappeared like smoke.
There have been delays.
Once there were sirens and bull horns
And I crouched roadside in the tall weeds
For days.

Finally, the house.
After so many seasons
The alyssum around the mailbox
Have paled from pink to white
Inside, the mantle is a riot of lilacs.
The old coverlet on the couch
Has been carefully reworked.
Seed pearls and satin

Catch the morning light.
I rest my head on the fruitwood table,
Close my eyes.
I can hear my mother
In the backyard
Singing.

Bees

After she beat us up,
She posed us
In our best clothes,
In front of her prized hutch—pictures for the relatives.
Then she went outside
To garden.
A bee flew up her shift
And stung her.
I briefly appreciated
The importance of bees.

M.J. Tenerelli was born and raised on Long Island's North Shore, lived for a time in New York City, and then returned to East Northport to raise her children. Her work has appeared in journals both online and in print, most recently with Honorable Mention in *Oberon* and in the *Feminist Wire*. She is the co-editor of the poetry anthology, *Grabbing the Apple*, and hosts a monthly poetry reading for the Northport Arts Council.

JR Turek

Paumanok

you spread your finned fingers
118 miles east from New York Harbor to Montauk Point,
stretch 23 miles north-south from Long Island Sound
to the southern Atlantic coast,
1,401 square miles of luscious you

Paumanok

you embrace more than 7.5 million devotees
between limbs of the Pine Barrens
from the peak of Jayne's Hill to the kettle depths
of Lake Ronkonkoma, across emerald lawns
of Gold Coast mansions, past strip stores and busy malls,

along Poospatuck and Shinnecock Reservations
through native-named towns of Nissequogue
Massapequa, Canarsie, Patchogue, Amagansett, Asharoken,
Commack, Copiague, Rockaway, Manhasset, Sagaponack

your vineyards ripe with vintage abundance
arboretums and planting fields vibrant with blossoms
your tears of sorrow and happiness quenching us

enchancing us with your legends and mysteries
alerting us to your federally-endangered Sandplain Gerardia
your Roseate Tern, Bird's Foot Violet, Piping Plover

teach us to love you, honor you, abide by your unspoken rules
educate us Stony Brook, SUNY, NYIT, Adelphi, Hofstra, LIU,

Dowling, Molloy, Nassau Community, Suffolk Community

museums, galleries, parks, preserves, aquariums, zoos
— with your brains and talent show beauty, it's no wonder you
are the most populated island of any US state or territory

Paumanok, home
to our Islanders, Mets, Ducks, The Big Duck,
The Hamptons wealthy with elegance
Jones Beach, the amphitheatre, the needle, the boardwalk

clamming, crabbing, floating
on your bosom of water
crossing your estuaries, your rivers, your flowing birth waters
commuting your byways, your highways, routes to your heart

ferries at Port Jefferson, Orient Point, Shelter Island
Fire Island Lighthouse
9 bridges and 13 tunnels funneling your lovers
across your historic land

Paumanok
you move us, yearn for our return
with major airstrips at LaGuardia, JFK, MacArthur
railroads, subways, buses, recreational trails, drive ways

north-south BQE, Van Wyck, Clearview, Cross Island,
Meadowbrook, Wantagh, SOB, Robert Moses Causeway,
Sagtikos, Sunken Meadow, William Floyd

east-west Belt/Southern State, Grand Central/Northern State,
LIE, Northern Blvd, Jericho Tpke, Hempstead Tpke,
Montauk Hwy, Sunrise

to sunset, you give of yourself ask nothing in return —

mold us to deserve your generosity
help us to preserve your integrity

Paumanok

we worship you, the ground we walk on, plant in, grow on
arms entwined in fins, protect us from harming you, help us
conserve you, secure you, love us as we adore you
beloved Paumanok,
our Paumanok.

“Paumanok” was published as the dedication poem in
Paumanok: Interwoven (Island Sound Press, 2013)

J R (Judy) Turek, Bards Laureate 2013-2015, is for 20 years the moderator of the Farmingdale Creative Writing Group. She is the recipient of two Pushcart nominations and the author of the full-length poetry collections *A is for Almost Anything*, *Imagistics* and *They Come and They Go*.

George Wallace

The Light of the Brouhaha, the Beacon of Unmeasured Hope

“With their country rolled up in their sails”

— Nikos Gatsos, *Amorgos*

this poem for my grandfather who
jumped ship in new york harbor in
1893 a seafaring man his country
rolled up in his loose sleeves — a
scale-flecked warrior with fish fins
& tobacco flakes stuck in his hair
huge moustache he combed that
thing it was a pony — his beloved
halo of mediterranean sea-mist
followed him to a mining camp
in montana & he returned to the
streets of old new york — wise
with western lies & propaganda —
satchel stuffed with folding money
photographs & a bundle of unwashed
laundry twenty grandchildren clung
to his wide neck — my grandfather
a pair of enormous ears in the dark —
in the parlor of dusk or down in the
conspiratorial cellar he would let
you swing from them i could hear
him panting in the boiler room or
late at night up in the attic with
my father hard at work on some
implausible project — working out

the numbers calculating distances
scheming into the late hours eyes
like polished steel of a jewelers saw —
the light of the brouhaha the beacon
of unmeasured hope my grandfather
a lantern swinging by the woodpile
the shovel in the snow bank — & his
hands! the tender way he used them
at dinner he handled a fork knife &
napkin like a sailor handles canvas —
drank all evening his breath sweet as
peppermint his lungs steady as a police
whistle — even hung out to dry by the
boys downtown lost his stake his shirt
ripped right off his back — his dream a
shoal of endless fishes off the shallow
coastline — america a bank that could
not fail an apple tree that would never
quit promising — round juicy as a fruit
& shaded from the sun — stuck to a nail
bit off like a splintered crucifix wrecked
returned to the shank end of a continent
away with reality! a rotten kilo of nicotine
in his vest pocket & rank with disappointed
wives — singing optimist cute as a trolley car
& stubborn as a goat — rudderless ecstatic
foolish old ship of my youth — singing like
the grand random crickets of the afternoon

George Wallace, first Poet Laureate of Suffolk County (2003-2005) and Writer in Residence at the Walt Whitman Birthplace Association (2011-2017), sheds some light on our sense of the word “Paumanok”:

“This is a fundamental misunderstanding of the word *tribute*, I’m afraid. The natives of Long Island were dominated by stronger tribes on the mainland, Narragansett and the Pequot, who regularly exacted ‘tribute,’ or protection money, from the LI natives. 19th century whites, including Whitman, popularized the name Paumanok anyway, probably without understanding the demeaning character of it. A far more honorific native name for LI would be Sewanaka, or land of seashells, as the manufacture of native money from shells was a principal industry of local natives, and gave them a measure of regional economic power.”

Poets East: An Anthology of Long Island Poets

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E·ratio Editions

#22. *Anisette* by Ezra Mark. Prose poetry. “The breeze carries the scent of sea-water. The rattling of the shingle, and silence as the waves withdraw.”

#21. *Successions of Words Are So* by Larry Laurence. Prose poetry. “. . . after the movers’ balancing act / of stairs & baby grand to the sunroom / where later she’ll play for her sated lover . . . ”

#20. *The Aha Moment* by Márton Koppány. Visual poetry. “These works are minimalist by design, but should we paraphrase the thought channeled therein, the effect would be encyclopedic, ranging through philosophy, psychology, politics, and the human emotions.”

#19. *Sanzona Girls* by David Chikhladze. Haiku and haikai 2004 – 2014. “. . . the spring / to tame / to beat about the source . . . ”

#18. *44 Resurrections* by Eileen R. Tabios. Poetry. “I forgot truth is disembodied. / I forgot the spine bent willingly for a stranger’s whip.”

#17. *The Monumental Potential of Donkeys* by David Berridge. Poetry. “. . . would you / bleed / vowels / indignantly // operatically . . . ”

#16. *Hungarian LangArt* by Márton Koppány. Visual poetry. “These works are minimalist by design, but should we paraphrase the thought channeled therein, the effect would be encyclopedic, ranging through philosophy, psychology, politics, and the human emotions.”

#15. *light in a black scar* by Jake Berry. Poetry. “Leave them lie / and they will rise / into an impotent cloud / and piss / the backward flood . . . ”

#14. *blossoms from nothing* by Travis Cebula. Poetry. “. . . morning is a time / of hard lines / petals and soil. / feathers and sky.”

#13. *An Extended Environment with Metrical and/or Dimensional Properties* by Anne Gorrick. Poetry. “. . . an innovative contemporary torsion / a lacquering adventure / constructed of extraordinarily beautiful notes / mixed from a futuristic painting . . . ”

#12. *Beginning to End and other alphabet poems* by Alan Halsey. Poems and poetic sequences. With art by Alan Halsey. “Poussin’s Passion, or The Poison Trees of Arcadia: The Fate of the Counterfactual.”

#11. *Paul de Man and the Cornell Demaniacs* by Jack Foley. Essay, recollection. “I studied with de Man in the early 1960s at Cornell University. The de Man of that time was different from the de Man you are aware of. . . . Despite his interest in Heidegger, the central issue for the de Man of this period was ‘inwardness’ — what he called, citing Rousseau, ‘conscience de soi,’ self consciousness.”

#10. *The Galloping Man and five other poems* by Gregory Vincent St. Thomasino. “. . . how does / a body know, here is a hand, and here, is a sentence / or, / what’s riding on hearts . . . ”

#9. *Prosaic Suburban Commercial* by Keith Higginbotham. Two poetic sequences. “. . . bathe deep in / the barely-there / disassembled gallery / of the everyday . . . ”

Poets East: An Anthology of Long Island Poets

#8. *Polylogue* by Carey Scott Wilkerson. Poems. “. . . with rules and constitutive games, / with paints and gramarye / with some modicum / of my reckless trust . . . ”

#7. *Bashō's Phonebook*. 30 translations by Travis Macdonald. The great Japanese haiku poet Matsuo Bashō goes digital. Conceptual poetry. With translator's notes.

#6. *Correspondance (a sketchbook)* by Joseph F. Keppler. Digital art. With an introduction by Joseph F. Keppler.

#5. *Six Comets Are Coming* by Gregory Vincent St. Thomasino. Volume I of the collected works including *Go* and *Go Mirrored*, with revised introductions, corrected text and restored original font.

#4. *The Logoclasody Manifesto*. Gregory Vincent St. Thomasino on logoclasody, logoclastics, eidetics and pannarrativity. Addenda include the *Crash Course in Logoclastics*, *Concrete to Eidetic* (on visual poetry) and *On Mathematical Poetry*.

#3. *Waves* by Márton Koppány. Visual poetry. “These works are minimalist by design, but should we paraphrase the thought channeled therein, the effect would be encyclopedic, ranging through philosophy, psychology, politics, and the human emotions.”

#2. *Mending My Black Sweater and other poems* by Mary Ann Sullivan. Poems of making conscious, of acceptance and of self-remembering, and of personal responsibility.

#1. Gregory Vincent St. Thomasino joins John M. Bennett *In the Bennett Tree*. Collaborative poems, images, an introduction and a full-length critical essay pay homage to American poet John M. Bennett.

taxis de pasa logos

