

**tinfoildresses**

**Winter 2021**



## Poetry

**C. M. Brooks**

## How to eat your shadow

Inner landscapes are inscrutable  
when we lose ourselves  
and hunger for what we cannot have.  
But our suffering is not eternal.

Approach spiritual banquets with humility.

Burn incense, chant softly,  
breathe deeply, reflect often.

After the grief, after the weeping,  
wait for the dawn.  
Walk to the shore of the great River.  
Submit yourself to what you can't control.

Kneel on one knee and then the other.  
Be patient, allow the pain to subside.

Palms together, lean forward  
touch your head to the earth.  
Close your eyes.  
Feel the teeming mystery  
which pulses beneath you.

Plant yourself, seed-like, you will not die.  
Like a sapling, these unmetabolized shadows  
will become food for new life.

Surrender your old wounds. Taste the earth.  
Make a final meal of your sorrow.

Understand with surety what until now  
you knew only in separation  
Light *always* holds darkness within itself  
a womb of secret knowledge,  
a kin reflection open to those who seek.

Allow it to gently cradle you  
in your gestation. Trust its presence.

Light and darkness are inseparable  
marinated in the alchemical vessel of the heart.

## **Blue land**

there is a blue land at the end, I think.

a moonlit path across the shimmering  
water, spirit caught up in its radiance.

I am swept up in this silent wonder,  
this enveloping sanctuary of light.

**Marc Steven Mannheimer**

## remorse

what is remorse?  
it is broad and beige  
a wooden ship  
to cross the sea of suffering?  
it is red, blind, and blazing  
a fire to warm the world?

a thing you cannot see  
will come  
after the sun closes shop  
to find you

you fear it will be a dagger  
it will not

hurtful words, your own  
return  
handed back to you  
to taste, to choke on

in all holy wisdom  
you improve on them  
astound even the miracle of karma  
the laws of abundance  
a thousand-fold  
your response, a grace  
a kindness

this is how time  
is able to move on  
how the bird of hope  
returns to the perch  
of the heart



## **and I drew a poem**

and i drew  
a poem,  
its arms extended  
like a child  
sees a gull  
and wants to fly  
who says he does not  
fly?  
his little imagination  
as big as the ocean  
of space and the stars  
that drown in it

**Kathy Ireland Smith**

## FROM THE BOOKS OF KNOWLEDGE

The men who capture lightning  
The basket complete  
The basket without the lid  
The lid of the basket  
The men who fasten two things together with nothing

Why must a baby learn to walk?  
Why does a dog go round and round before it lies down?  
can we break ourselves of bad habits?  
Why do we see in a mirror, things not in front of it?  
What is the use of having two eyes?

The great stone face that has looked upon the world for ages  
The stories of other days that are read on the rocks  
Rags and tatters of greatness clung to fragments of a picture  
The pitiful destruction of our noble minds

The way in which a drop of blood flows through your veins  
Red cells grouping together as they die  
Red cells floating

How elevators go up and down  
The elevator that is worked by the passenger  
The pillars of our body and the wonder that works inside  
The great discovery of the action of the heart  
The bursting seed cases of the thorn-apple  
The flying squirrels and their wonderful parachutes  
The seed that flies through the air like a butterfly

A stag looking into the water  
Can a frog live inside a stone?  
Do animals talk to one another?  
Do animals ever stop growing?

## **I AM A TELEPHONE CALLING A LIGHTBULB**

I am a telephone calling a lightbulb.  
I am not the light, I call the light.  
I see the light for I am illuminated.  
I have nipples and a mouth that rings.

A door knows knocks.  
The door knows knocks by virtue of being a door.  
The window shakes because of interstitial mistakes.  
The window is a witness to the interstitial.  
The window is a witness to the needed caulk of consciousness.

If I am always ecstatic, am I a reliable window?  
If I am always ecstatic, I am a ringing telephone.  
A telephone's function is to ring, but not to ring ceaselessly.  
A telephone must wait at times.

The susurrations of things are their blessed interstitial meanings.  
The shaking of things lets things breathe.  
Things that breathe hold life outside our assumed conception.  
A telephone, for example, has a soul.  
Mechanical metaphors for an interlocking reality.  
So reality can carry itself when we leave  
to witness into existence groves of trees.

## **DAYS OF UNTROUBLE**

Realizing my chimpanzee wants to scream  
is a relief from assigning words  
to my tantrums, monsters in the wild mind  
mercury in my pinball machine

When in grace, I think it's like this:  
I unroll my tongue  
I unzip my face down to my bowels  
I unfold myself onto the clean slate of a table  
a salty finger bowl of bled paint and jellied intestines  
laid open to the gentle cauterization  
of room temperature oxygen

Lips, eyelids, hand, chrysanthemum

You know, thoughts don't have to do anything  
feet are a stone cold path  
a meadow runs through the holy cycles  
of day, night, stars, gold, silver,  
dew catchers, buttercups and  
lightning bugs

**Antonio Vallone**

## **Ars Canalia**

adapted from *Low Bridge!: Folklore and the Erie Canal* by Lionel D. Wyld

Every poem is a canal 363 miles long, 40 feet wide, and 4 feet deep.

Every poem is dug out from imagination's dirt and rock  
where even poetry gods hadn't thought to put a poem before.

Every poem, its author believes, is one of America's greatest feats  
of poetry engineering, accomplished without the guidance  
of a single engineering school.

Every poem is dug out as if by shovels, picks, and sledge hammers,  
sweat, spit, skin, and blood,  
using wagons, horses, mules, immigrant workers,  
barrels of whiskey, and a little dynamite.

## **Burning Crosses**

Ten miles away from where my family lives now,  
in Brockway, a Pennsylvania town known

for its 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade and celebration  
the Klan, in my life time, burned crosses

on front lawns of Italian immigrants,  
trying to scare them into moving away.

Today, you'd witness those flames  
from the Sons of Italy club's windows.



## Ohio Girls

Ohio is a Winnebago word  
linguists believe  
means *beautiful river*.

But meaning, like poetry, is what gets lost  
in translation. Whoever wrote  
*river* meant *girl*.

Ohio girls sweep you away  
in their current.

Swim as you might,  
you're going down.

Follow each curve and bend.  
Lunge for their banks.  
But, brother, embrace your drowning.

Oh, Ohio girls,  
won't you  
come out tonight?

## **Pennsylvania Winter Woods**

Stopping by these woods,  
who couldn't think of Frost's  
"lovely, dark, and deep"

Untouched snow  
stretches up the hillside  
between spindly trees

In blue twilight, silence  
except for soft grunts and snorts  
deer breath

and in the car by dome light  
our human breath  
steaming the windows

**Russell Vidrick**

Yes of course here is a winter poem  
On a quiet morning  
we tossed stones from a bridge  
and the river learned our scent.

Time and the day  
Was easy as  
your words fell like snow  
and we bathed in honey air  
and drank  
the sleepy tea of winter

## **Photography**

**Steven B. Smith**



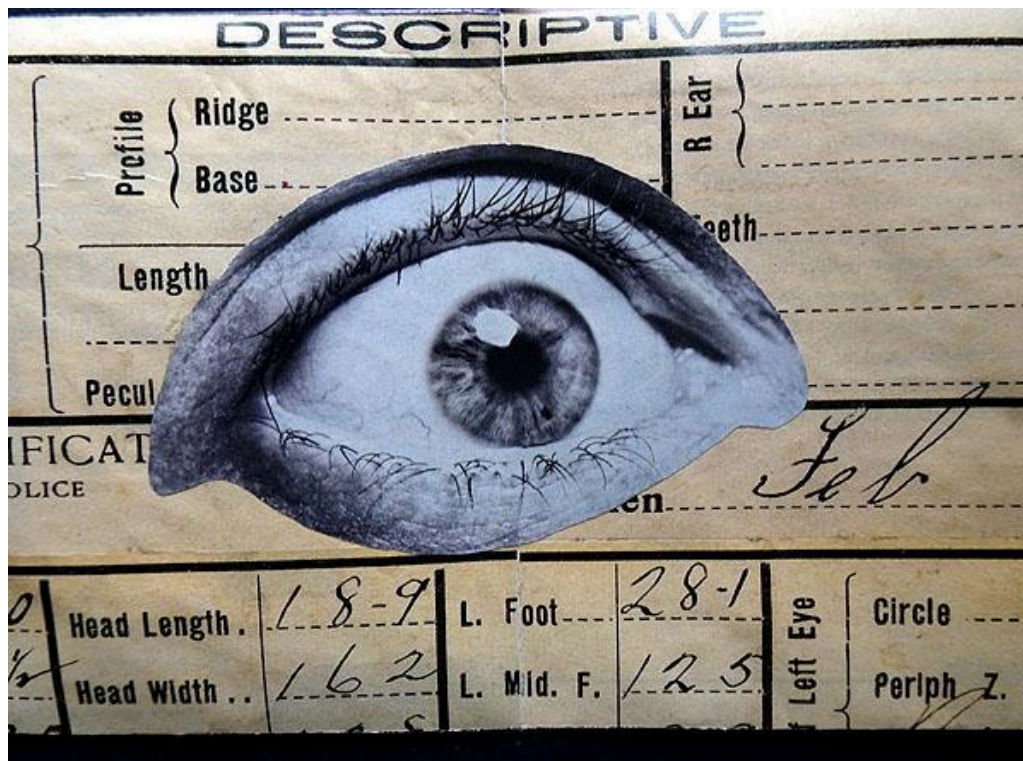
“whiteheart”



“Arise”



“shoeline”



“descriptive”



**Heather Ann Shepard**











## Contributors

**Christina M. Brooks (c.m. brooks)** is a poet from SE Michigan. Nature lover, thinker, buddhist.

**Marc Mannheimer** reaches for poems he is not yet able to articulate. His latest collection, *The Overwhelmed*, is a poetry and prose memoir of one year with depression.

**Heather Ann Shepard** is founder and editor of *tinfoildresses magazine* and a professor at Lorain County Community College. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing and an MA in English from National University. Her most recent collections: *My Magickal Book of Flowers and Other Things* and *Owls and Angels: New and Collected Poems and Stories* were released earlier this year and are available at Amazon.com and at BarnesandNoble.com.

**Kathy Ireland Smith**, a.k.a. Lady, is a poet, publisher, artist and surreal photographer from northeast Ohio. She and her husband Smith spent 31 months traveling ten countries on three continents from 2006-9, and you can follow their ongoing adventures at WalkingthinIce.com. Kathy is the founder and editor of The City Poetry ([www.thecitypoetry.com](http://www.thecitypoetry.com)), a cutting-edge art and poetry zine based in Cleveland.

**Steven B. Smith aka Smith**—Born in the Bitterroot Mountains, raised on Paradise Prairie, Smith is a fractal finding ambiance adjuster on the run from reality wandering the Earth having adventures with his beloved Lady. He published 21 issues of the art/poetry journal "Artcrimes" from 1986-2006, and has been an underground presence in Cleveland's art poetry scene since moving into a downtown warehouse in 1981. His first one-person show was at Spaces in 1984. He & wife Lady spent 2006-9 living in ten countries on three continents recharging their word wells. He blogs at [walkingthinice.com](http://walkingthinice.com); has art, poetry and friends on [agentofchaos.com](http://agentofchaos.com); and 110 free songs/recitations/experiments/abominations on [reverbNation.com/mutantSmith](http://reverbNation.com/mutantSmith).

**Antonio Vallone** is an associate professor of English at Penn State DuBois. He is founding publisher of MAMMOTH books, poetry editor of *Pennsylvania English*, a co-founding editor of The *Watershed Journal* Literary Group--which provides publishing journal and book publishing opportunities for Pennsylvania writers and runs Watershed

Books, a writer's space and used bookstore. He is also a board member of *The Watershed Journal* and the Pennsylvania College English Association. His collections include *The Blackbird's Applause*, *Grass Saxophones*, *Golden Carp*, and *Chinese Bats*. Forthcoming are *American Zen* and *Blackberry Alleys: Collected Poems and Prose*.

**Russell Vidrick** lives in Cleveland Ohio. He has been reading and writing in Cleveland for more than 30 years.

**Cover art** by Heather Ann Shepard

**tinfoildresses** is available in digital format online at [tinfoildresses.com](http://tinfoildresses.com) and can be found in print at local independent bookstores and through Amazon.com.

**Founder and Editor in Chief** --Heather Ann Shepard



