

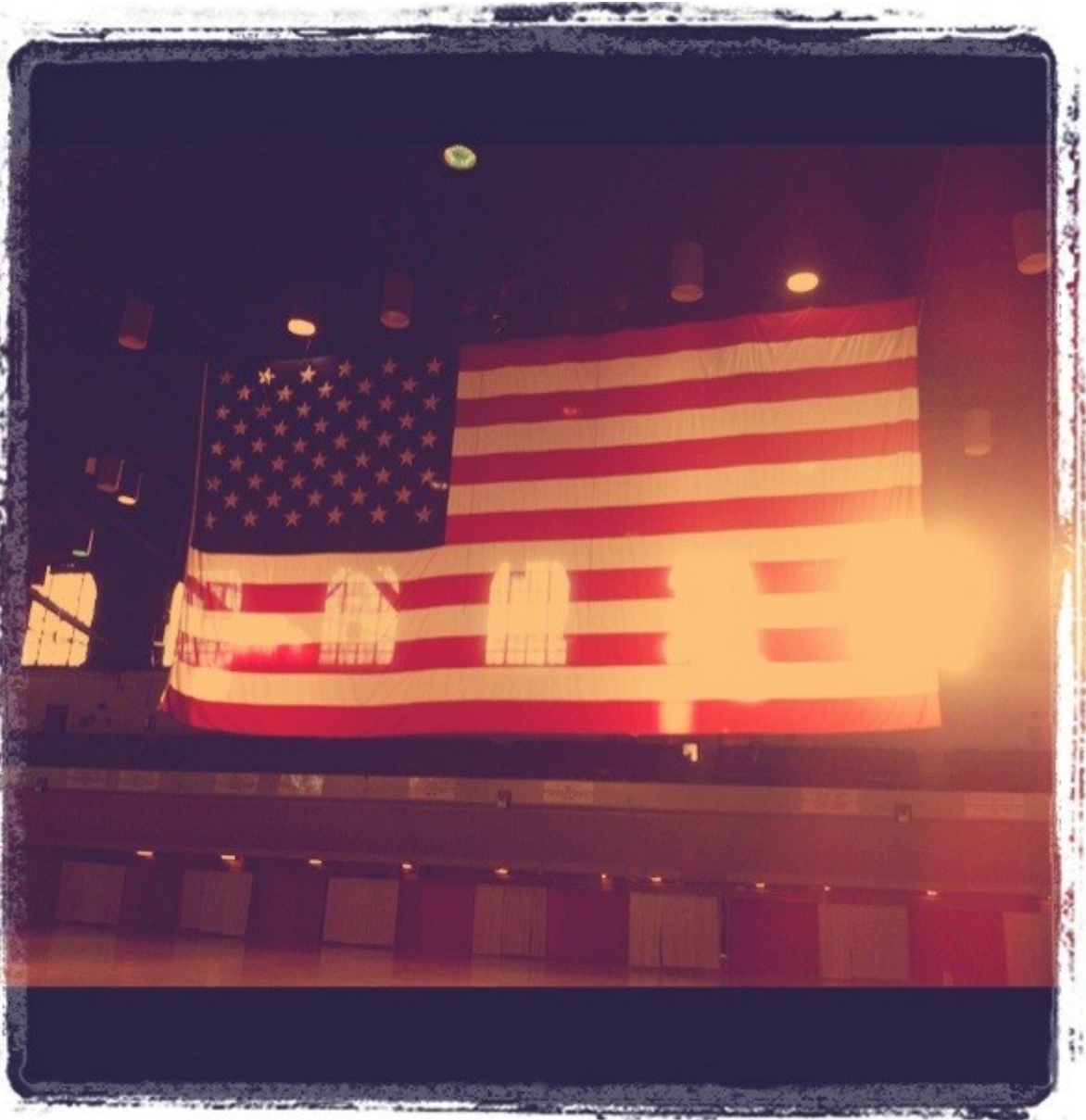
# THE NEXXUSS, Volume 12



“people getting words to people that don't get words”

**Cover Photograph By:**

**Elizabeth Soroka**



**"words are not so important as to be vaulted away, nor are they worthless enough to throw away, so we give them away"**

**-DP-**

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## UFO

Earth became ugly on the last day,  
the first day of unemployment. Laid off,  
but not laying off 40% clear stuff  
or feel good fast food fish tacos with friends  
who organize my *next move* like employment  
is chess or wrestling a moon-sized maniac.

Checks in a black leather book saying Thank You  
so waitresses don't have to. Mine's paid and  
all I hear in generosity is how I hate myself  
for petty theft, smiling at strangers,  
strangers smiling, I remembered it all,  
sober empathy.

I love myself for the liquor store as  
a truck full of pity chauffeurs myself and my  
spiced rum bagged and chilled at my crotch  
at a stop light's lambent lit above, below  
I see something not belonging to man's planet:

On the property of a rock crushing quarry,  
built to cut through atmospheres,  
a phosphorescent orange orb on concrete blocks,  
like hillbillies had taken up residence after  
gunning the ship down by buckshot, BBQing the bodies.

No laws or locked doors  
keep me from space flight curiosity:  
Destiny as inevitable as asteroid dents,  
crop circle conspiracies, clouds, human nipples.  
Among stacks of sliced, stacked stones,  
I run to the top hatch: Up to Hell's sewage hole—

Every boy uses imagination to fly,  
in bad dreams they fall,  
same as every deadbeat getting away  
from friends now running in the quarry  
looking for me among rubble, planetary plundering,  
I jump into the metallic rabbit hole—

A circular bench wraps around the hull,  
Men's magazines, dust jackets but no book intestines,  
Bob Dylan albums, battery powered CD player. I sit,  
spine bent to see if I could sleep on an interstellar trip.  
A wheel's in the middle, to outturn comets?

Squinting goodbye to the sun, through the hatch,  
there will be more stars in new worlds—  
A head muzzles the afternoon's lucent light.  
"This isn't your home," says the shadow in the construction helmet.  
Yes, that's precisely my problem.

Commanding my spine straight,  
but bending my neck to fit the ship's curve.  
"We keep this for a homeless guy. This is his home,"  
Even the homeless have homes. "What is *this*?"  
"It's a man's home you're squatting in.

But more accurately, it's an oil platform escape pod."  
Built to bob, not to escape atmospheres.  
Never believe stranger's cover ups: The next day  
The pod was gone. Unemployment,  
the government wanted to keep me.

By: Tyler Malone

## The Castle Rock

Down in the  
valley  
beyond the  
caves  
between the  
mountains  
in midst of the  
trees

I am the  
thatched hut  
abandoned for  
long

I am the  
ragged cliff  
touching  
the sky  
suffocated  
by fauna  
gasping  
for breath

I am the  
large cave  
created  
by man  
enduring  
the sound  
bearing  
your load  
since then.

Raped, ravished  
and

Ravaged  
by yonder  
I yearn

for the days  
In the ages  
of dark  
where the time  
stood still  
and you all  
but disappear

By: Ramaa Sonti

**Moth Light**

*for Grace Paynter*

the lines  
on her face  
tell you  
laughter  
wasn't always  
a stranger here.

By: Will Crawford



## **Should The Heavens Become More Blue**

i tried to focus on the magician -  
to catch him in his fluid yet subtle sleight of hand,  
yet my eyes could not help but be drawn to his beautiful assistant  
lying there on the table with the sides folded down,  
mere moments away from the culmination of a performance  
that i would surely never forget.  
i found myself talking to her even though i must admit  
i am not sure she could hear me.  
i wondered what she was thinking?  
i wondered about her confidence in the magician?  
was she certain she wouldn't really be severed during one act?  
was she sure that the trap door would open in the next?  
and it occurred to me, despite the fact that it was the magician's name  
on all the signs and posters and books . . .  
that it was her - the beautiful assistant,  
that kept me coming back to the show night after night.  
i came to watch her survive the sliding blades  
and piercing swords;  
to watch her reappear from that empty box;  
to watch her laugh as rabbits were pulled from hats,  
and to smile knowingly as impossible things happened before my eyes.  
so as i found myself with her upon that table  
with my arms around her trying to share the peace so evident in her eyes,  
but struggling through my tears,  
i hoped beyond hope  
that i could find my way through the trap door with her,  
or step from that seemingly empty box by her side

as the magician took his bow to the applause of the crowd.  
i hoped . . .  
it happened so quickly that i'm not sure when she vanished.  
knowing only my place still on the table,  
and that when the magician opened the box,  
that she would not be emerging . . .  
even though i could see her there;  
knowing that my arms felt empty  
even as i wrapped them around myself.  
it was the audience who bowed that night  
as the magician stood above me on that table  
with tears now in his eyes and his hands extended towards me.  
i knew what he was asking  
as i wandered from the show,  
still wondering when she vanished,  
and still hoping . . .  
i wondered if i could find it within myself to become his new assistant  
even as i raised my eyes to the stars for a long moment,  
and found myself struggling to decide if my eyes should turn a darker shade,  
or if the heavens should become more blue?

By: Jeff Bussey

(written for LH after her Mother's death)



“Living Tree”

By: David Parham

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**Stars Beneath**

Stars are beneath  
the clouds  
in the sun and rain

**Untitled**

o, dear, O  
dear  
what shall we do  
in the horror

**Rain**

Rain falling  
from the sky  
really, the clouds

**Wow**

Wow  
wow  
wow  
how many candies  
are there?

By: Jackson Grey Baker – seven years old

## Hollow Heart

hollow heart  
walks  
slowly thru  
maze of pain  
    n not knowin  
wishes had  
sumthin  
    to fill it  
wishes had  
dreams to ride  
passion to excite  
& as the hollow  
heart fades  
to pale  
& evening sky  
shuffles sun  
away  
leaving lovers  
in the dark  
    reachin  
for sumthin  
tangilble  
    or at least  
a promise  
the hollow  
heart  
shudders in  
solitude  
rejects the sympathy  
offered  
& continues  
its walk  
this hollow  
heart  
alone

By: Mike Taylor

## **The Farewell**

between the leaves of the mulberry  
and my dried up ink  
the words lay frozen and numb  
like grandma in her coffin  
on that wicked autumn morning

By: Temjen Anichar

### Tipping Point

Looking for my Lady Bee, up a tree  
or down in a hole. It's hard to say  
and stay Unter den Linden or in the mud.  
Sludge sucks; vagrants hang under the purple blooming

trees & here comes the thundering bells  
rounding everything off. Here come the dark skies  
& the rain, an endless silver  
train going by. It is safe under the birches  
& the bridges. But as for my Lady

Bee, where is she bumbling? Did she run off with a gospel  
organist? Is she hiding beneath somebody's  
cruel bedsheets? Did she lose her weary way  
back this way? I have found lately there are angels  
in thinking there are no angels. There are fairy tales

trapped in marble. The gutters  
are thirsty; roses  
belch; women amass far too much  
crap. Imaginary  
or otherwise. It puts things over.

By: Mp Powers



“To Rest In The Comfort Of Knowing I Know Nothing”

By: Ann Tea

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## **Ha-Ha**

I get uncomfortable  
when I smile at car crashes  
or see a kitten laying  
motionless  
and remark how tired it looks  
knowing the bi-racial couple next to me  
can't hear what I'm thinking  
about her insecurity and his  
desperation to be seen with her  
and how I deny my heritage when  
too many Jews in the room  
want me to talk about my Grandfather  
a man I never knew, much like  
his Son who breathed Catholicism  
into me each Sunday while joking on the way home  
about how many points you got if you ran over  
the little black ones  
and I laughed, never knowing that one day  
jokes would not be funny and  
I would be  
uncomfortable

By: David Parham

## My Church Has No Walls

I

I've never found God in a church  
But I think I've found Him sitting at the bottom  
of a nice cup of tea.

I've never seen God in a temple  
But I think I may have spied Him on a tree branch  
while the goldfinches ate thistle from the feeder.  
I've never felt peace while meditating  
For my mind is too busy trying to be peaceful  
But I've felt peace while watching raindrops

slide down my window.  
I've never talked to God while praying  
But when I move a turtle away from a busy road  
Or squeeze through a door  
so as not to disturb the day's work of a spider  
Maybe He understands me.  
Am I somehow less to God  
Because my religion has no name  
And my church has no walls?

When I hear the barred owl call at dusk  
I think I know God's voice.  
When I witness the green striped caterpillar  
emerge into the swallowtail butterfly  
I start to believe in the rebirth of the spirit.  
When I listen to my child breath as she sleeps  
And feel the warm body of my love near me at night  
I know I am blessed.  
When I hear the gentle snores of the dogs  
And the chirps of the crickets  
And the coffee as it drips into the pot  
and waits, hot, for me in the morning  
I believe.

By: Sheri L. Tardio

## **LICKING WINTER**

could berry juice  
coax your hard mouth  
to fall in love?

could sweet saffron light  
relax your harsh nature?

could windsong cut  
between the thick vines  
of your wild sanctuary?

listen to the rustle

it's as if all the things  
moist and sacred  
are flowering in stone

By: Dianne Borsenik

## It's Thursday

woke up this morning and it was pouring rain, welcoming spring I slept in late late. I had dreams that although I was married with a boy and my age,

I was naked in High School, but in dream I really didn't care.

My older brother hit me in the head with a golf club, while I was six, according to my mother, broke open my skull, according to the golf club.

Now I blame him for everything. like the instability.

By: Jhon Baker

## Opium Den Barbecue

We sip  
Loperamide  
From diamond encrusted  
stemware while  
The New York Dolls  
play live from  
our washing machine,

people we don't know  
hand us cryptic  
messages and  
we fall asleep  
before the  
brisket is served,

when we wake up,  
someone has eaten  
all the potato salad

By: Melanie Browne

**Baptism:**

atrocities drag themselves across my ears  
bleeding from the talking box  
programmed with agendas  
codes of illegitimacies  
written against nature

summer is creeping in slow  
the caress before the blaze  
gives me time to inhale each wave of transition  
inciting my innate deviance  
to unnatural compliance  
level by level  
the first sweat  
of a yet clean body

I've shaken the darkness from my head  
it's pieces are piled 30 years deep  
in a barrel  
where my grief was laid months ago  
I will burn them both  
when the moon is positioned  
to receive the ash

my father still speaks to me  
through the insects he always told me to care for  
through the woodland he taught me to listen to  
through the breeze he said i should touch with my lungs  
through the perpetual baptisms he knew each moment to be

and this moment  
finds my form  
beyond biological existence

i am alive and i am well



“Throne”

By: Peter Schwartz

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## Art And Artist

I've had three girlfriends  
who have met me purely  
through my poetry.

it usually starts out the same:  
enamored.

then it usually flickers off:  
accustomed.

then it turns to hurt and tears:

"Lindsey, why won't you come down?"

"uh, wait, hold on,  
my friend is here,  
come back  
in a few hours."

there is something about a woman  
that makes her want to put  
art and artist together.

anybody knows  
this is not true.  
art and artist are  
separate.

I am not a poem.  
I am a man.

just like your  
garbage man

or that pile of shit  
you married  
15 years ago.



**Nice Guy**

knew a man  
    who thought  
he was  
    a martyr

kissed him,  
    put TNT  
in his mouth  
    then  
walked away

boom like that

By: Lynne Hayes

## My Last Night In Hollywood

She throws my bags out the door,  
down the stairs  
screams so the neighbors will hear.  
They come out  
to see what the commotion is.  
I hide my eyes  
and haul ass down the stairs  
shoulders tense  
in anticipation  
of something hitting  
the back of my head.

Still I don't blame her-  
just pick up my clothes  
and walk down Fountain.  
If I had a soul left  
it would be a dandelion's  
last dance  
before the mower blade.  
The wolves silently  
howling in doorways  
can pick up on this.  
I can feel their eyes  
tracing my every move,  
luckily, my demons  
watch my back.

I stop in front of  
Bukowski's old home on DeLongpre  
sit on the curb  
stare at my shoes  
listen to the ghosts shuffle their feet  
and think of his legend  
and how  
when it was him  
who was  
getting thrown out by a woman  
it was a much more enjoyable read.

By: Jason Hardung

## **Nine Full Moon**

The rest of my life  
be filled with hope  
of wanting you  
Nine full moon,  
has passed  
I `stretch` my passion,  
of having you  
Nine full moon;  
the eye witness  
of my painfulness.  
secret of us,  
belongs to the stars  
when love is not said  
in words  
O radiant sky  
let me paint  
my whispering words  
through vivid imagination

Tonight,  
the moon is full still  
Sitting alone,  
behind the window,  
thinking of you--  
the naked thoughts  
of our chemistry  
thrill my mind

Pretzel made already  
to welcome you,  
pure feeling of mine;  
my honesty of hoping you--  
reflection of my loyalty.

By: Desdemonia Casio



“Artificial Respiration”

## If I Were Teaching Creative Writing

now, if you were teaching creative writing, he asked, what would you tell them?

I'd tell them to have an unhappy love affair, hemorrhoids, bad teeth and to drink cheap wine, to keep switching the head of their bed from wall to wall and then I'd tell them to have another unhappy love affair and never to use a silk typewriter ribbon, avoid family picnics or being photographed in a rose garden; read Hemingway only once, skip Faulkner ignore Gogol stare at photos of Gertrude Stein and read Sherwood Anderson in bed while eating Ritz crackers, realize that people who keep talking about sexual liberation are more frightened than you are. listen to E. Power Biggs work the organ on your radio while you're rolling Bull Durham in the dark in a strange town with one day left on the rent after having given up friends, relatives and jobs. never consider yourself superior and / or fair and never try to be. have another unhappy love affair. watch a fly on a summer curtain. never try to succeed. don't shoot pool. be righteously angry when you find your car has a flat tire. take vitamins but don't lift weights or jog. then after all this reverse the procedure. have a good love affair. and the thing you might learn is that nobody knows anything— not the State, nor the mice the garden hose or the North Star. and if you ever catch me teaching a creative writing class and you read this back to me I'll give you a straight A right up the pickle barrel.



**From the contributors to the recipients, I thank you for helping to make this a reality.**

**For anyone interested in learning more about, or to submit for future volumes of "take-it-to-the-street" please feel free to contact us @ [www.takeittothestreetpoetry.com](http://www.takeittothestreetpoetry.com)**

**Lynne Hayes: Editor/Word Hustler**

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