



**herland** VOICE

VOLUME 34 No 1 FEB 2016

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THE POETRY ISSUE

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Time Passes

Seasons Change

But the winds of Change still linger.  
Though Fear and Doubt are there still.  
There is tiny glimmer of hope  
That gives the gift eternal-Love.

~Mary Blair~

### Broken Window Panes

Broken glass all around,  
The shattered shards of love gone wrong,  
A solid stake,  
I lean against you,  
Sweeping away the dirty fragments,  
Enjoying the moist morning dew,  
Being kissed by only you.

A new pane sets in the window,  
Reflecting only the brightest rays,  
A solid stake,  
I lean against you,  
Shimmering with delight,  
The lovely refractions,  
Pulled together by an unknown gravitation.

The light now breaks into a prism,  
Colors scatter in the room below,  
A solid stake,  
I lean against you,  
Pulling you close,  
Alone no more.

~Margy D.~

### You are the Dream

A decade lay between us  
like a chasm  
through which our separate lives  
ran on...and yet  
those valleys lacked the lushness  
of contentment:  
Our hearts adjust, but  
souls do not forget.

In the fabric of our lives we  
found the shining  
threads we wove when love  
was bright and new  
and gathered up those strands and  
tugged them gently  
to close the gap that swallowed  
me and you.

You are the dream I didn't  
dare to whisper;  
You are the hope I'd long  
since laid aside.  
I'd given up my dreams and  
hushed my questions ...  
And, in that emptiness, your  
love replied.

~JudithR~

## Storm Night

The cadence of rain  
on our corrugated roof  
syncopates the song  
of the sea, the flutter and moan  
of waves beyond the wind  
and wet notes twisted  
through steel-mouthed  
screens. In psychedelic bursts  
the lightening gives me  
flickered visions of your deep eyes,  
the dark opening of your mouth.  
Behind the storm's curtain  
we touch,  
and thunder  
is our bed.

You ask me "Are you afraid?"  
I answer "Yes.  
I fear the time of wind chimes  
and your skin, your tongue,  
your fingertips, the liquid heat  
of pure free flowing lust.  
I fear the threat of love  
and its betrayal and the stitches  
of your presence rain has sewn  
onto my soul. I fear  
the dream and the reality  
and most of all  
I fear the future."  
and you say,  
"Why?"

*~JudithR~*

## Little Sister

*For Elaine, Betsy, Kathy....others.*

The cancer eats away at your body,  
Long days, pain, it's all you know,  
No more bike rides,  
Easy times on the front porch,  
Or short trips around town.

Can this be the girl that loved to play softball,  
Grew tomatoes,  
Chased the puppy through the yard.

Now your body shuts down,  
Breathing is labored,  
Consciousness slips away.

All is quiet,  
The birds stop singing,  
The air is still and heavy,  
Surely the earth stops spinning.

Angels bend over you,  
Bear up your soul,  
And lead you to a kinder place,  
Of peace and love.

*~Margy D.~*



## COUNTRY SERENADE

The evening is coming to a shadowy end,  
The sun is winking goodnight as it travels  
Through the clouds, on its way to light  
another's Day.

The sounds of night are turning up  
For the evening. One sound at a time.  
I sit on the porch watching the sun's colors  
Touch the sky. I watch as the beauty of the  
sun's  
Caress colors the clouds with pink and gold.  
I feel a gentle touch of a breeze as it  
whispers by  
My face.

How comforting this quiet country evening  
feels as  
Peace settles over me. Silently I watch the  
Night claim the land, turning light to velvety  
Black.

Now the music begins, nature's symphony,  
Night birds sing their name. Whippoorwill  
whippoorwill.  
Frogs join in with many voices. Low croaks  
and  
High squeaks. A pleasure to hear.  
The stars come out shy at first, one at a  
time,  
Then out pop the rest filling the sky.

The sounds of night surround me. The  
Dark settles in, the stars wink in the sky.  
I feel the day being lifted from me.  
Carried away by the breeze. All is softness.  
A faint glow shows behind the trees.  
The soft light of a full moon shines in the  
sky  
Showering the night with its light.  
A nightly presentation is this for me.  
A nightly wonder enjoyed. Only in the  
country can  
It be seen. Only in the country. Come, share  
With me.

~Tex~

## WHEN IT'S TOO MUCH

When it's too much, I take a  
Walk. I stroll down paths mowed in tall  
grass.  
Hands in pockets, shoulders slumped,  
Head down, I walk alone.

When it's too much I can't feel.  
The wind blows but, I can't feel it.  
I can't see the flowers or hear the birds  
singing.  
When it's too much it's all turned off.

I walk the paths mowed in tall grass  
Hand in pockets, the weight of life slowly  
Lifts. I walk the path my senses slowly  
Come alive. Red and purple flowers I see.  
Birds are singing. Well, I'll be.

I stop and listen smiling a little,  
Breathing the cool clean air. What's that?  
Oh, it's the wind, I didn't notice it touching  
My skin.

I walk the path mowed in  
Tall grass feeling, "Yes," feeling the day.

When it's too much, I take a walk.  
I stroll down mowed paths. The wind picks  
The worries up, one by one, blowing them  
away.  
The flowers and birds touch my soul,  
awaking  
The body to the beauty that surrounds me.  
The sunlight flutters through the trees,  
Pleased that I have come to myself again.  
I feel, I see, I hear, I smile again.  
The paths of nature have touched me. Once  
More drained the worry and pain away.  
I walk the paths mowed in tall grass  
I sigh, I smile.

~Tex~

## Trans-Formed

He was just a little four year old boy,  
Happy and playing,  
With his older sisters dolls,  
In a pink cardigan,  
With white daisies on the lapel.  
His mom thought it was cute,  
His Dad said we've got to do something about  
this,  
My son was formed a boy!  
So they signed him up for Little League,  
He tried hard to please his Dad,  
And wacked the softball hard,  
They said he was quite a boy!  
Years went by,  
Never feeling he could be himself,  
Always trying to be tough enough,  
He ran the ball in for a touchdown at  
Homecoming,  
And stood beside the Queen,  
They said he was quite a young man!  
So he joined the military,  
And served two terms,  
They said he was quite a man!  
He joined the local police department,  
And was brave when he needed to be,  
They said he was quite a man!  
He couldn't stand it any longer,  
Hard as he tried he never felt like a man,  
He longed to be a woman!  
Glad his father had passed on,  
He decided to make a change!  
He changed his name,  
His manner of dress,  
And started taking hormones.  
People made fun of him, taunted him,  
threatened him,  
He was give lousy work assignments, bad  
schedules, poor evaluations,  
Finally fired!

Nothing left to lose, He vowed to be who he  
truly was!  
SHE decided to share her experience with  
others,  
She had been scared, closeted, hated, scorned,  
shunned,  
She shared that she had come to love herself  
and knew God did too!  
She talked in front of hundreds and at the end,  
She could hear the murmurs,  
She felt the heat in her ears, fog in her head,  
not able to move, to think, to function,  
She told herself to hold on, hold on,  
She grabbed the lectern,  
Slowly her head cleared, and she heard the  
murmurs again!  
And she heard distinctly, uniquely, and for the  
first time,  
SHE's quite a woman, She's QUITE a woman,  
She's quite a WOMAN,  
And she smiled,  
Trans-Formed!

~Margy D.~



## UNBOUND

Now I have nothing  
but you to bind me  
to the rest of the world.  
My roots blow in the air  
dangling from a polka-dot past  
where random relationships  
stifled me.

I ignore it all - this wasted moment,  
the mortgage on a concrete condo,  
a Cavalier in heat, my skin  
growing rippled and ridged  
like sand behind the ebb.  
My thoughts pursue me as I run  
from pulse to pulse, searching

for straps to hold me within reach  
of reality. Yet there is a freedom  
a lightness of soul a respite from pain  
in turning my mind to the past,  
when I wandered the earth in  
the time before I tried to return  
to my roots and found myself

out on a limb of the apple tree  
without a parachute.  
When the redgold  
rooster splits the dawn  
my body rebels. I cover my eyes  
and contemplate the delicious surrender  
of staying cocooned...but

my dog is hungry, the coffee is made  
and Dr. Oz is waiting.  
Sixty-plus and holding  
on with Clairol, Coumadin,  
Yoga twice a month while  
mouthing silent prayers  
to all the gods

of womanhood and ex-  
communicated saints that  
those images I read in you,  
dusty as moonrock, are fogged  
by failing vision, not the fading  
of my faith  
in Forever.

*~JudithR~*

## HANDS

*By Judith Rycroft*

A vivid memory creeps back to me in nightmares: the feeling of the stranger's hands on my neck—rough hands, calloused and so warm that they leave damp patches on my skin. The memory sucks at my gut, like that suspended moment just before vomiting. The fear didn't begin with that first touch, however; it came later, after I looked into his eyes...after those hard hot fingers touched me again.

While we were living in Bangkok, Colleen and I decided it would be fun to take a train journey to Penang, a distance of over 700 miles. We love train travel and weren't deterred by the fact that the train had been attacked by pirates several times. It was a grand trip, in a sleeper car preserved from the days of the Raj, with red velvet draperies and polished teak furniture. The bullet hole in the window of the dining car didn't bother us.

On our return journey we had six hours to wait at Hat Yai, near the Malaysian border. The bustling Thai town was described in the guide book as a black-market paradise and colourful rural centre—an interesting combination, so we set out to explore.

We had spent about fifteen minutes in the market, wandering among the stalls of bright fruit and vegetables, when Colleen murmured, "We're being followed."

I was more amused than annoyed. "It's probably a hawker," I said. "Stop looking back, or he'll think we're interested."

"No, it's not that; he's...he's sort of stalking us. There's something strange about him."

We left the alleys and nooks of the market and returned to the main shopping street. I wasn't really very concerned. It was high noon, and the sidewalks were peopled from curb to shop front. I hadn't even seen this 'strange' person, but losing a stalker in such a crowd should be simple.

Colleen stopped as if to check the street sign, then she grabbed my arm and hurried on. "He's still there, in a bright green and purple T-shirt," she said. "Hold on to your purse. We have to find a restaurant or coffee shop."

We were swept down the sidewalk by the current of impatient pedestrians. At the intersection, the light was red, and we were bumped and jostled as we tried to maintain our footing at the curb. I concentrated on clinging to my purse and not being pushed into the street.

The light turned yellow; the pressure against me increased. Then, from behind, fingers ran down each side of my neck. I felt a snap as my gold chain broke. The light turned green and the crowd surged past. I stood at the curb, stunned and immobile, one hand on my purse and the other at my throat.



Somewhere off to the right I heard Colleen shout, “Kamoy!” (“Thief!”) and turned in time to see her sprinting through the crowd. I ran after her.

The thief dived into the market, weaving through baskets of oranges, jumping tables of chilis and saffron, scattering fruit and spices with Colleen on his heels. I was several feet behind, trying to dodge the debris and apologise to the stall holders at the same time. They responded with looks of amazement and a few giggles as I brought up the rear. (Colleen pointed out later that instead of “*Katod ka–Kamoy!*” [“Excuse me–Thief!”], as I thought I had been shouting, I was actually bellowing “*Katod ka–Katoy!*” [“Excuse me–Transvestite!”])

By the time I caught up, two streets and a market alley later, Colleen and a policeman had double-arm-locks on a struggling but silent man of around twenty, dressed in loose khaki shorts and a dirty but bright green and purple T-shirt. Colleen was pummeling him with her one free hand, growling “Give - me - her - chain” through clenched teeth.

The policeman spun his prisoner around, slammed him face down across the hood of a parked car and handcuffed him. The broken end of my gold chain hung from his clenched right hand, but he dropped it when the policeman whacked the thief’s knuckles with a truncheon.

Picking my chain up and putting it in his pocket, the officer commandeered a “*song taew*” bus (a mini pickup with a bench down each side of the bed) to take us to the station. He and the prisoner sat on one side, Colleen and I on the other, in a space so small that our knees touched in the middle. While the policeman leaned over the side of the truck and shouted at vehicles and pedestrians who got in our way, the thief squirmed on the bench, edging his manacled hand into his right pocket, saying nothing, never taking his dull black eyes off my face, reaching deeper and deeper into his pocket.

The *song taew* careened into the station yard and the policeman jumped down. Getting out, I had to step over the prisoner’s legs. His eyes were fixed on me and he was slowly withdrawing his hand from his pocket.

“You–out,” the policeman shouted into the bus. He reached in, grabbed the handcuffs, and pulled. The man was jerked off the bench and dragged along the floor and over the tailgate. As he was hauled to his feet, a small axe dropped out of his right trouser leg. It lay on the concrete, red handled, head gleaming, edge well-honed.

There was great excitement as we entered the station. The officers on duty crowded around the sullen T-shirted figure, all talking and laughing and punching at him with fists and clubs. I couldn’t sort out the rapid Thai, but “*Meo*” (cat) and “*Farang puying*” (foreign lady) kept leaping out of the oscillating jumble of tones. We were gestured into a small office and the prisoner was shoved in after us, stumbling and dropping to his knees at our feet. Those onyx eyes again fixed on my face, and I felt extremely uncomfortable.



“Uh, Sir...Khun Officer, “I said to the policeman who had my necklace in his pocket. “We have a train to catch, so why don’t you just give me my chain and we can leave and you can put this man in jail...or whatever you want to do with him.”

“Ah no, Madam. I am sorry, but this man is very bad man and he do bad thing and you are, uh, you witness.” He reached into a drawer and brought out a fistful of forms. “We have paper for you name and you telling story.”

The duty officer came in with a thick file and proudly flipped it open to show me the picture of that same expressionless face I’d sat across from on our wild ride and was now facing in this small room. “You look Madam—this man, same same.” His pudgy finger poked at each line of Thai writing as he translated. “He name, Somphong Changtrakul, year 21; Chinese man, many scar, arm, leg; on street he call ‘Meo,’ mean ‘Cat!’”

I could see the scars--parallel bars of raised tissue, some of it scarcely healed, caused by mainlining drugs through knife cuts. His record showed arrests for robbery, rape, drug dealing and murder, with no convictions. “Why isn’t this man in jail?” I asked.

In shaky Tenglish (a mixture of Thai and English) the peace officers conveyed that Cat was a member of “The Hand,” a prominent Chinese tong. Uh oh. I had lived in Asia long enough to know that no one wanted to risk the wrath of the Tong. The police were thrilled to put together a solid case against this criminal, thinking that Colleen and I, as foreigners, didn’t know about the Thai underworld and its revenge policies.

We spent the next five hours with the silent, dead-eyed thief. The police wanted The Cat to confess; they struck and goaded him with a sharp stick until the blood ran from the welts and punctures. He said nothing but sat, cross-legged, his pupilless eyes fixed on my face. Colleen and I felt sick, disgusted, scared. We wanted only to get out of there, but the police were meticulously preparing their case.

A photographer arrived, and we were herded into the station yard, where the sullen Cat was pushed and prodded until he was appropriately posed—behind me with his hands around my neck. I could feel the pulse in his fingers drumming on my skin.

Not satisfied with that photographic evidence, we were steered into a jeep and driven to the scene of the crime, where the Cat and I took positions at the curb—his hands resting on my shoulders, fingers encircling my throat. We stood, wax figures locked in a ludicrously macabre vignette, surrounded by a wall of impassive faces and curious eyes while the photographer worked. The sweat trickled from his palm and ran down my back.

Back at the station, I signed a long statement in Thai. I had no idea what it said, and I did not care. The gaze fixed on me was slowly unclouding and shooting dark sparks of hate.

Finally, finally I was given my gold chain and we were allowed to go.

We left Hat Yai on the next train out, although it wasn’t going where we had planned to go. I hope the police got their conviction. They said they would inform me, but I never heard...the name and address which I’d entered on police records weren’t mine.

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## HERLAND SUPPER CLUBS

### FEB SUPPER CLUB

Saturday, Feb 13, 5:30 pm



**Golden Palace Chinese Buffet**

[click for menu](#)

1500 S Meridian

### MARCH SUPPER CLUB

Saturday, March 12, 5:30 pm



**Monterey Jack's Cafe & Cantina**

[click for menu](#)

801 S Air Depot, Midwest City

## HERLAND BOOKSTORE OPEN

2312 NW 39th Street

1-5 pm on Jan 23, Feb 13, Feb 27,  
Mar 12, Mar 26, Apr 9, Apr 23

## HERLAND HEALTH INITIATIVES

Saturday, Feb 13, 3:00 pm

**The Whole30 Program**



Saturday, Feb 27, 1-5 pm

**Game Day**



Saturday, March 12, 3:00 pm

**Photography Demonstration**



Saturday, April 9, 3:00 pm

**To Be Announced**



APRIL SUPPER CLUB

Saturday, April 9, 5:30 pm

**Gopuram**  
Taste of India

**Gopuram Taste of India**

[click for menu](#)

4559 NW 23rd St

PFLAG Monthly Meetings



[click for more info](#)

February 9 & March 8, 6:30 pm

612 NW 29th St

**SISU**  
YOUTH



*Supporting youth in  
crisis as they pave  
their road ahead.*

**Together. We are Sisu.**

*You're invited to attend an  
Open House*

at **The Dorm**

*a project of* **Sisu Youth**

**Saturday, January 30<sup>th</sup>**  
from 2:00 to 4:00 P.M.

3131 N. Pennsylvania Avenue  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Inside Church of the Open Arms

405.459.SISU [www.sisuyouth.org](http://www.sisuyouth.org)





SISU needs you as a Youth Support Specialist (YSS)! YSS's are our overnight mentors who ensure that the young people staying at The Dorm are safe, engaged and are receiving the highest level of support available.

YSS shifts will be offered at two different times: 7:00 pm to 1:30 am or 1:00 am to 8:30 am. A commitment to even just two shifts per month will help sustain this program that offers youth an alternative to the streets.

On Saturday, January 23rd from 12:00 to 5:00 pm, please join us for the Youth Support Specialist Training. The training is FREE and encouraged for anyone interested in becoming involved with Sisu Youth.

To register for the training, please visit the volunteer page of our website at [www.sisuyouth.org/volunteer](http://www.sisuyouth.org/volunteer)

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All members of the LGBTQ  
community can #PointTo college!  
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# LGBTQ Women in Rural Spaces

## The Project:

Amanda Stewart, a Sociology PhD Candidate at the University of Illinois at Chicago is looking for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, and/or queer identified women who are currently living in rural areas of the United States to participate in individual, in-depth interviews. This research aims to complicate how we understand and make sense of the experiences of queer women in rural settings. This research will challenge assumptions that are often made about rural living and will explore how rural queer women construct their identities and explore their sexuality within these spaces.

## To Participate:

To participate, you must be between the ages of 25 and 65 and be currently living in the rural United States. (Rural defined as having a population less than 50,000 and more than 1 hour from a major city (major city defined as having a population of 200,000 or more). This project involves in-depth interviews lasting approximately 1-3 hours that are completely confidential. Interviews will take place at a site of your choosing. All interviews will be tape recorded and transcribed. You will not receive any compensation for your participation.

If you would like more information about participating or would like to volunteer, email Amanda Stewart at [astewart@uic.edu](mailto:astewart@uic.edu). Thank you for your interest in this project!