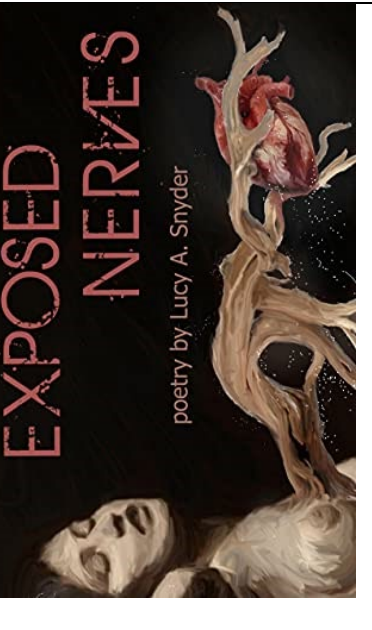
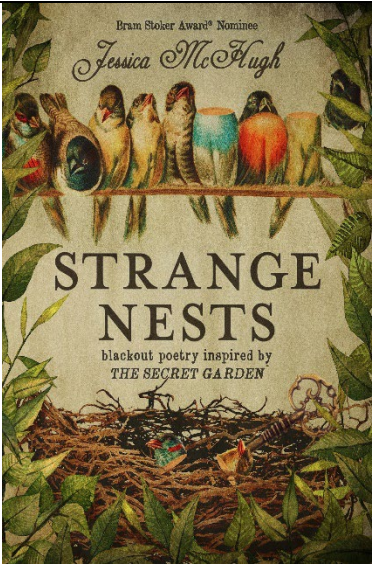


**2021 Bram  
Stoker  
Nominees for  
Superior  
Achievement in  
Poetry**

*By David E. Cowen  
assisted by Alyssa Vorobey*



The Finalists for the 2021 Bram Stoker Award for Superior Achievement in Poetry have been announced. The HWA has recognized the importance of dark speculative poetry since the inception of the Bram Stoker Awards. Each of the authors and/or their publishers were gracious enough to share their favorite pieces from their books:

**Lansdale, Joe R. - *Apache Witch and Other Poetic Observations* (Independent Legions Publishing)**

**A P A C H E   W I T C H**

In the wild country where the West wind blows,  
the demon of the desert comes and goes.  
Dark like a shadow, a mouth full of blood,  
there's nothing out there but it and the dead.  
Lives in a cave near a dark red butte,  
hides there by magic, in an old cavalry boot.  
Released by a spell from an Apache witch,  
it twists and it turns and howls like a bitch.  
Lizards and coyotes, buzzards and men,  
it kills and kills, again and again.  
But kill it must, and each night it comes,  
until a cowpoke arrives with a lamp and a gun.  
The lamp is lit with oil from a dog,  
and around the cowpoke's neck,  
on a string of braided gut  
is a dried up frog and a hickory nut.  
The rifle is packed with bullets of silver and lead,  
little charms buried deep in the ammo heads.  
An Apache woman, the witch's daughter, the cowpoke's  
wife,  
made it to save her husband's life.

So Apache magic meets head on.  
The demon whirls with a desert song.  
The cowboy fires his gun and throws his lamp.  
The demon roars and the night turns damp.  
Out of a cloud against a moonlit sky,  
comes a rain of black lumps like a cobbler pie.  
It blows and it whirls and it twists and it turns,  
and when it hits the demon it smokes and it burns.  
The cowpoke's magic makes the demon cry.  
It even melts the damn thing's eyes.  
The rain on the cowpoke is heavy and wet,  
but for the demon it's the worst thing yet.  
The demon becomes a twirl of smoke.  
and the cowpoke laughs like it's all a joke.  
On his way home he yells and he cries,  
for the demon was made of his poor child's sighs.  
The baby's breath stolen by a cat  
that was black as the pit and little pig fat.  
The Apache witch sucked the baby's soul,  
because his daughter made the child in a soldier's bed  
roll.  
So stealing a boot  
and casting a spell,  
the witch had wrecked vengeance  
so very well.

Wearing moon silver  
like armor and mail,  
the former soldier,  
rode home to his wife.  
They dried their tears and climbed in bed,  
the stars at their window,  
the wind at their door,  
the howl of the coyote like the call of the dead.  
They came together in a tearful wail,  
loved one another with all their might,  
tried to make a child that very night,  
did what they could to set themselves right.  
Back on the desert,  
next day in the sun,  
the Apache witch man  
was dead and done.  
Found at the mouth of a cave near an army boot,  
the witch man was burned and wadded,  
with a hole in his chest,  
the demon of the desert had left its nest.

## **I S A W D E A T H I N T O W N T H E O T H E R D A Y**

I saw death in town the other day,  
dressed up just like me.

I studied him real close.  
A shadow of my former self  
looked right back at me.  
I do not think he's come just yet,  
but he wanted me to know,  
there will come a time,  
not so far away,  
when I will have to go.  
He fretted over my thinning hair,  
and ran my fingers through its strands  
dragging them along,  
like metal tines  
through slender strips of sand.  
When I walked away,  
so did he,  
leaving the store glass dark,  
without image of either him,  
or me  
to look each other back  
and see  
the dead man that was to be.

## **S O U L O N T H E W A L L**

Soul on the wall  
Like shadows that crawl

Don't open the window  
It's sure to fall  
Soul on the wall  
Like mice in the wall  
Spiral down darkly  
Lonely and bleak  
Like blood on the sheets  
Like flies in the meat  
A dying bird call  
Bats on the ceiling  
Snakes in the sink  
Bottles with skulls  
Not fit to drink  
Rock in the water  
Parting the stream  
Soul on the wall  
Shadows that fall  
Hungry rabid mice  
at the edges of  
damp skull walls.

## **O u t T h e r e i n t h e D e s e r t**

Out there in the desert,  
lost,

you think you see,  
far on the horizon,  
a dark hut.  
It hangs there,  
on a ridge,  
like a black cancer  
seated on sand-yellow flesh.  
And beside it,  
a pool of water,  
blue and clear,  
and clean looking,  
but as you near,  
you see,  
clearly now,  
there is no water,  
but instead a mirage.  
The hut,  
that's real,  
until you startle it,  
and it breaks apart,  
takes flight  
on many vulture wings,  
rises high in the sky,  
leaving the remains  
of a large horse,

mostly bones,  
and a withered head,  
without eyes,  
to lie there,  
hot and bleached,  
like you'll soon be,  
beneath the yellow sun,  
without complaint,  
on burning sands,  
a smorgasbord  
for ugly birds.

## **ALONE AMONG THE TOOTHY BLOOMS**

It's all right how things are now.  
I feel no more alone than before it all.  
More cautious perhaps,  
but no more alone.  
I handle myself well,  
and some nights I mean that literally.  
But what's a girl to do  
at the end of the world,  
when carnivorous flowers  
bloom from skulls,  
and vines move like the deep-sea tentacles of



squids and octopi  
I hear voices sometimes,  
in the distance,  
but I dare not call out to them, for the blooms can  
imitate a human voice,  
and it must be them.  
For who in their right mind  
wanders down the street in the middle of the night crying  
out—  
Good day. Good day. Have a nice day.  
Though sometimes it fits when they mock words of an  
earlier  
time when currency mattered.  
Give me your money, asshole, and now.  
Ah, there they go along the street, moonlight wet gold on  
their blooms,  
showing teeth inside of petals.  
A dog barks.  
Then whimpers.  
Someone small screams.  
I step back into the shadows.

## McHugh, Jessica - *Strange Nests* (Apokrupha)

"I am Colin"

to grow up. They don't know I know that, so it is a sort of secret. But I like this kind better."

"If you won't make them take you to the garden," pleaded Mary, "perhaps—I feel almost sure I can find out how to get in sometime. And then—if the doctor wants you to go out in your chair, and if you can always do what you want to do, perhaps—perhaps we might find some boy who would push you, and we could go alone and it would always be a secret garden."

"I should—like—that," he said very slowly, his eyes looking dreamy. "I should like that. I should not mind fresh air in a secret garden."

Mary began to recover her breath and feel safer, because the idea of keeping the secret seemed to please him. She felt almost sure that if she kept on talking and could make him see the garden in his mind as she had seen it, he would like it so much that he could not bear to think that everybody might tramp into it when they chose.

"I'll tell you what I *think* it would be like, if you could go into it," she said. "It has been shut up so long things have grown into a tangle perhaps."

He lay quite still and listened while she went on talking about the roses which *might* have clambered from tree to tree and hung down—about the many birds which *might* have built their nests there because it was so safe. And then she told him about the robin and Ben Weatherstaff, and there was so much to tell about the robin and it was so easy and safe to talk about it that she ceased to feel afraid. The robin pleased him so much that he smiled until he looked almost beautiful, and at first Mary had thought that he was even plainer than herself, with his big eyes and heavy locks of hair.

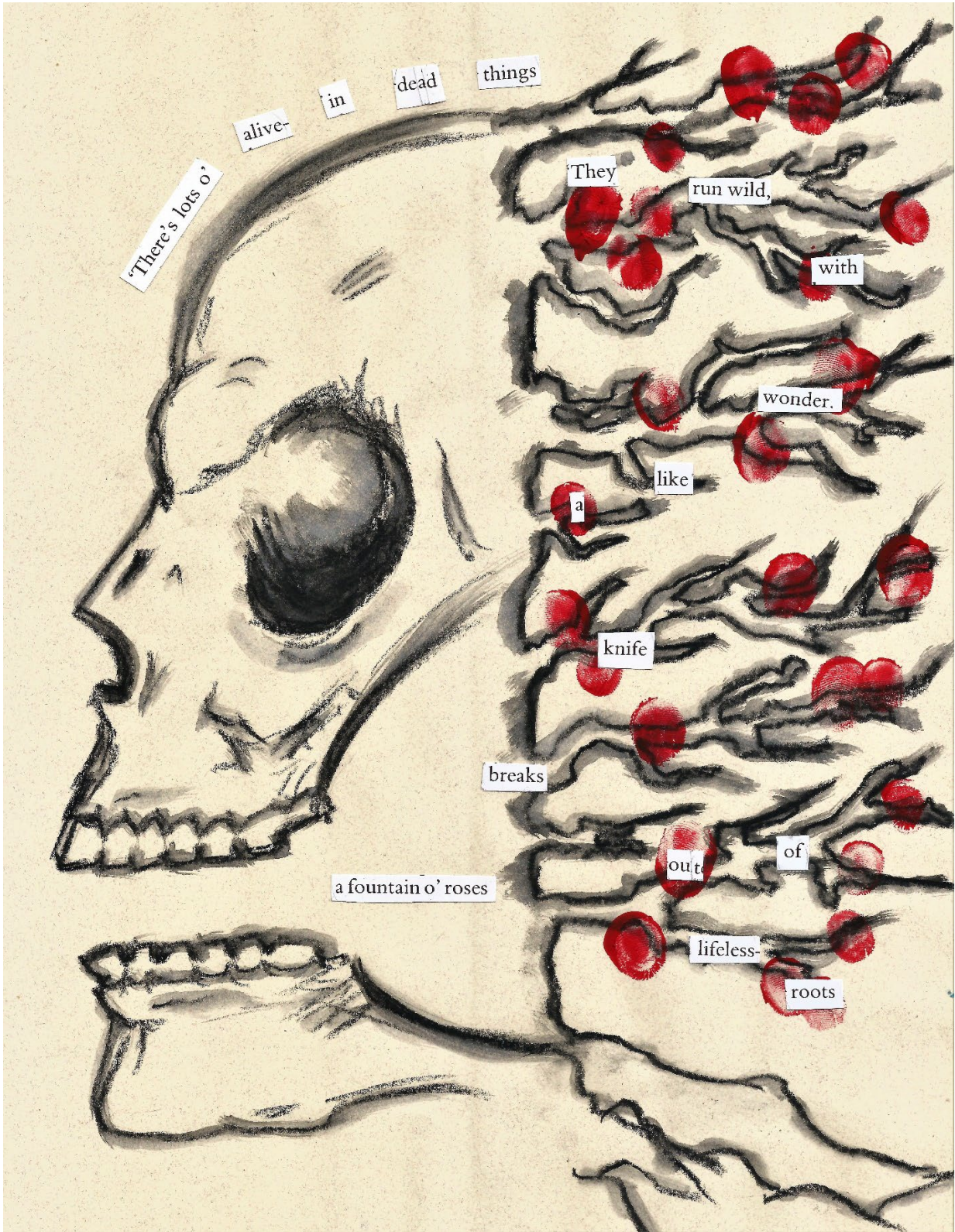
"I did not know birds could be like that," he said. "But if you stay in a room you never see things. What a lot of things you know! I feel as if you had been inside that garden."

She did not know what to say, so she did not say anything. He evidently did not expect an answer and the next moment he gave her a surprise.

"I am going to let you look at something," he said. "Do you see that rose-coloured silk curtain hanging on the wall over the mantelpiece?"

Mary had not noticed it before, but she looked up and saw it. It was a curtain of soft silk hanging over what seemed to be some picture.

"Yes," she answered.



'There's lots o'

alive- in dead things

'They run wild,

with

wonder.

like

a

knife

breaks

out

of

a fountain o' roses

lifeless-

roots



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"Where do you play?" he asked next.

"Everywhere," gasped Mary. "Martha's mother sent me a skipping-rope. I skip and run—and I look about to see if things are beginning to stick up out of the earth. I don't do any harm."

"Don't look so frightened," he said in a worried voice. "You could not do any harm, a child like you! You may do what you like."

Mary put her hand up to her throat because she was afraid he might see the excited lump which she felt jump into it. She came a step nearer to him.

"May I?" she said tremulously.

Her anxious little face seemed to worry him more than ever.

"Don't look so frightened," he exclaimed. "Of course you may. I am your guardian, though I am a poor one for any child. I cannot give you time or attention. I am too ill and wretched and distracted, but I wish you to be happy and comfortable. I don't know anything about children, but Mrs Medlock is to see that you have all you need. I sent for you today because Mrs Sowerby said I ought to see you. Her daughter had talked about you. She thought you needed fresh air and freedom and running about."

"She knows all about children," Mary said again in spite of herself.

"She ought to," said Mr Craven. "I thought her rather bold to stop me on the moor but she said Mrs Craven had been kind to her." It seemed hard for him to speak his dead wife's name. "She is a respectable woman. Now I have seen you I think she said sensible things. Play out of doors as much as you like. It's a big place, and you may go where you like and amuse yourself as you like. Is there anything you want?" As if a sudden thought had struck him. "Do you want toys, books, dolls?"

"Might I," quavered Mary, "might I have a bit of earth?"

In her eagerness she did not realize how queer the words would sound and that they were not the ones she had meant to say. Mr Craven looked quite startled.

"Earth!" he repeated. "What do you mean?"

"To plant seeds in—to make things grow—to see them come alive," Mary faltered.

He gazed at her a moment and then passed his hand quickly over his eyes.

"Do you—care about gardens so much?" he said slowly.

"I didn't know about them in India," said Mary. "I was always ill and

**Simon, Marge and Turzillo, Mary**

***Victims* (Weasel Press)**

*Alexander's Babylon 331 B.C.*

We must be still, say nothing  
as his soldiers mark passage through our streets.  
A great man and a fool he is, when all comes down.  
Only a whisper in his ear and he believes our men  
be so obliged they've loosened boundaries.  
As gossip goes, our Conqueror's men  
assume our women whores,  
that even high-born ladies  
would spread their legs at a conquerors' whim,  
nor may our noble Mother protest.  
Filthy minded Greeks!  
Yet it is to be as prophesied.  
We are prepared.

But they say Alexander is a son of Zeus,  
And deigns to keep no harem.  
Why does his wife weep, then,  
the noble-born Statiera?  
Surely she and her sister wife are blessed  
with this paragon of husbandly faith.

True, she has rivals:  
Roxana, his third wife,  
smiles daggers at her.

Barren, Statiera envies the women of Babylon  
for even brutal courtship,  
rude copulation,  
from a King on his queen consort  
is better than this barren state.

A Babylonian woman speaks.  
"Give us this 'filthy Greek,'  
God or demi-god no less,  
for he, and also his lieutenants,  
are comely fellows, finer than our men.  
Call us whores:  
One of us will wed Alexander.  
One will bear his heir.  
She will be Queen regent."

Statiera chokes back words.  
Alexander wants nothing of her but name.  
And Roxana wants blood.

The whispers are

the conquerer hungers  
only for boys and delectable warriors:  
Hephaestion and slow-eyed Bagoas  
Thus he sires no child on Statiera.  
Three wives, yet no heir.

Statiera weeps, a virgin wife,  
no infant to suckle her breasts,  
no man to pierce her chastity.

The daughter of a king,  
pity her!  
Why should she not mourn?  
Roxana throws dagger smiles at her.  
Statiera enjoys no love in her life,  
no hope of a scion past her widow grave.

One by one, the beauties of conquered Babylon  
whether maid, wife, or crone,  
fling off fringed frocks,  
lie down in the path, on the carpet of roses,  
part their thighs,  
ooze cream for the Adonis who is Alexander.

The procession threads among them,



stepping carefully between offering nymphs.  
Alexander, unminding,  
nibbles a fig, clasps Hephaestion to his breast,  
throws Begoas a relishing smile,  
ignores the flesh banquet beneath him.

Statiera, chaste until death, only weeps.  
Marge Simon & Mary Turzillo

*He Dreams the Woman*

His father threatens to cut him off.  
Not the first time, won't be the last.  
The opiates are delivered by  
a mincing little man with oily hair.

*He dreams the woman, calls her Sugar,  
hair coiled in serpentine braids  
which she allows him to unwind  
in auburn strands upon the pillow.*

She serves him tea and powdered scones.  
Tired, mindless but for his pleasure,  
he pushes it aside, beds her in a sad room  
smelling of sex and stale perfume.

Later, they talk of Coleridge and Byron,  
of graves beneath the sea, moon-bathed lovers.  
He fancies there is a trace of sand on her lips,  
only a fingertip away, but she withdraws  
so he may not touch her face.

*There is no one else in the house.  
Paper birds torn from love letters  
flap to the floor from another time,  
stark on the long brown carpet.*

Her abortion went well, considering  
the unwashed tools, deep garnet stained.  
She stumbles out the door,  
lines the cobblestones with blood,  
home to the street of red lights.

Cold chains the winter night.  
It was a dream, he tells himself,  
closing the damask curtains.  
He reaches for comfort, strikes a match,  
only to discover the pipe is empty.

-Marge Simon

## *Shedding her Huipil*

My father said he would not fish the Motagua anymore. Three times he had brought up in his net a dead body, the last time with no face. He feared the spirits of these tortured men, and the guns of their torturers.

I return to the village and discover my father's own body. It is shot and mutilated. I am afraid to count my brothers' bodies. I wish to be blind when I see that they have stripped my mother.

Please, let this be just a nightmare.

I had walked out looking for turkeys to bring home and fatten. Returning, I saw deadly weather had blown through. It had rained lead. And everyone, everyone slain. I have no mother, no father, no brothers or sisters.

I peer into a shallow pot of water, but see no reflection. I strip off my pretty huipil and throw it into the Motagua. It will float down to the great water, and perhaps Mayans downstream will see it and take heed. Evil soldiers from Archivo say we are comunistas, and worse, we are less than monkeys. But these militia men, fingers of the White Hand, are themselves less than worms, less than gangrene, less than an earthquake or

the tongue of lava from a volcano. They have not been given souls by Q'uj'umatz. The Chaacs will drive hell down upon them. The Vision Serpent will take their eyes.

But no. I am a helpless girl, not even old enough to bear a child. Can I hide in the mountains forever, with my noble Mayan profile, my native K'iche' taught by my dead mother?

I have no reflection. I glide hands over my body, and know I too am dead. I will follow the Motagua down to the soldiers's camp. Oh, White Jaguar, I pray you will come in your righteous time.

Mary A. Turzillo

*The Color Purple*

“I collect artists,” she says.

She wants three of me. One for the bedroom, one to tease and one to be nice to her vacuous friends. A crowd of flies haunts the drawing room. Brown spots on peaches. A room of scorched music and uncommon speech.

She admits she chose me for my smile and my purple tie. “A rich woman always bends toward a creative man,” she says. I grip the champagne flute too tightly. “Poor you,” she says, ministering to my wound with tweezers and a handkerchief of tears.

The skin around her eyes like cracks in Wedgewood china. So many lifts and still she’s down. She thinks that someday I’ll paint her in the nude, careful to erase the years. It kills me how she loves to show me off. Another cocktail afternoon swatting flies. She loves that part too. “Sarcasm is your style,” she says.

She insists that we do it her way. Champagne and candles. A rosebud curtained bed. All is orchestrated except me. A thing in her life that doesn’t quite work, doesn’t fit. But tonight, I have obtained a vial of Aconite. Just a few drops in her glass ...

Our last toast together is indeed memorable, watching her gasp for air while turning a most exquisite shade of purple.

-Marge Simon

## *A Flower*

Consider this lump a flower,  
like orchid, begonia, nasturtium,  
or perhaps like a rare succulent,  
Crassula rupestris, baby's necklace,  
or Sansevieria, mother-in-law's tongue,  
you planted with a cigarette or a paintbrush  
a decade ago.

Consider that you watered it  
with your blood, with the milk of your glands  
consider its unfurling beauty  
as it eats the soil of your flesh.

It is one of a kind,  
though the specialist calls it  
some -oma, like the word in some language  
for grandma.

But you are its grandma and mother, too,  
and it has made itself  
yours  
only yours  
though its enemies try to poison it out.

It will grow, it will flower,  
it will spread rhizomes  
and you are its garden.

In the end, you must give your life  
to this flower  
to this beautiful flower and its young.

But it will die with you  
as you are its only soil  
and you both will lie  
under dark loam  
or burn and resurrect  
in the smoke  
of the only afterlife  
the lovely rare flower  
will ever know.

-Mary A. Turzillo

**Sng, Christina; Yuriko Smith, Angela; Murray, Lee;  
and Flynn, Geneve**

***Tortured Willows: Bent. Bowed. Unbroken.***

**(Yuriko Publishing)**

*"at the bar"*

he grins

Asian girls

you know what they say

what do they say?

nice slits

I grin, too

later, I oblige him

with my boning knife

- Lee Murray



*A SPECK OF DUST IN THE SEA*

This rickety Chinese junk,  
Plankton in the great sea,  
And I, a speck of dust

Squirreled on a jittery bunk,  
Sailing across the Silk Road  
From Canton to Po Lo Chung

Amid choppy, angry waters  
To the place they call  
“The island at the end”

For a new life,  
One  
Better than the old.

The lightning god  
Watches us with a single eye  
And when he blinks,

He sends a blinding flash  
Before thundering,

“Where are you going?”

“To a better life,”  
This dust mote replies,  
While the rest

On the junk  
Play dead, cowering,  
Discarded wives on a bed.

“Do you deserve to?”  
His voice resonates.  
It makes the boat shake.

His words burn—  
Like chili rubbed in my eyes  
When I made a mistake.

I no longer see  
My mother’s enraged face.  
It ebbs and fades. I extinguish it.

I walk to the bow

And shout to the sky,  
“I do deserve this!”

The storm subsides  
And the lightning god  
Appears as a rainbow.

Too late. All I see is red.  
I will take his power.  
I will inherit it.

I raise my arms  
And send the sea  
To douse out the sun.

The rickety old junk  
Almost overturns.  
I stand my ground.

And when I am done,  
I turn my palms down,  
Calming the tides,

Flattening the waves.  
My power is innate.  
My fears dissipate.

It is in all of us.  
We are star stuff,  
Just like the gods.

I am a speck of dust  
Commanding the sea  
And I will bring the storm

Wherever I go.

- Christina Sng

## GUEST OF HONOUR

### The Girl

she refuses his eye  
even though she's the guest of honour  
she feels the gaze of all  
the diners. They wait  
the aromas make her suddenly wish she was home  
strong, reminiscent of her kitchen  
swirling around her  
she stays silent  
this is a pantomime  
she closes her eyes and pretends  
she is not simply something to be consumed.

### The Host

"Ni how mah? He tries to make her feel welcome  
it was difficult to get her here  
his friends, they came a long way  
eager for an exotic experience  
"Note the ginger, the garlic, the shallots  
soya sauce, chilli."  
marinating is the most important step  
"Chopsticks, everyone! We must be authentic!"  
he picks up his knife. "White meat or dark?"  
they will never eat anything like this again. He knows  
he takes his time to savour every slice.

- Geneve Flynn

## *Inujini*

Death grew fat that day...  
more than 200,000

killed in the battle

the final campaign  
of World War II, on Easter.  
Caught between Japan

and America  
no choices for the Luchuans---  
country and culture

both taken away.  
Battle of Okinawa:  
for eight-two days

iron rain fell on  
one hundred forty thousand  
dying for nothing

dying a dog's death  
for a nation not their own...  
no one won that war

but Luchuans lost most

only to have their country  
traded, like glass beads.

Memories live on  
printed in the genetics---  
memories return.

- Angela Yuriko Smith
- 

**Snyder, Lucy A. - *Exposed Nerves***  
**(Raw Dog Screaming Press)**

## **Silences**

The newborn won't cry  
not even after the surgery  
to remove its rotting twin.  
Unmade parents lying awake,  
3am, exhausted in the dark.  
The father's quiet dressing,  
slipping out into the cold grey  
dawn, destination unknown,  
too dazed to make a hard turn.  
The soft November snowfall  
blanketing the overturned car.

Fifteen frantic texts unseen,  
muted in a red-soaked coat.

## **turnt**

*let's get turnt, says the heartbreaking boy  
i wanna get crazy, lose my mind tonight  
smile, girl, shake what ya mama gave ya*

the stereo rattles his Kia's tinted windows  
hungry, you shake your head, say it's late  
but he grabs your wrist: *just one drink?*

his Marlboro's burnt down to the filter  
he's sweating smoke and his whiskey  
smells so sweet. you take a long draw

he says *whoa girl you got a hollow leg*  
and your heart is pounding skin itching  
ancient genes singing pupils constricting

he says *hey that cost me twenty, ease up!*  
but you know drink's not your demon tonight  
it's the only solution to snuff your appetite



but your cheap date's pulled the bottle away  
you're still so famished you can't even think  
and before you can say *Stop* you're turning

pulse hammering inside the secluded car  
skin splitting over hairy muscle, scarlet claws  
and he's screaming, wailing like he's burning

your mind's an ancient void of rage, need,  
and this boy you hoped to please is meat.  
booming bass muffles the crack of bone

conscience returns; you see what you've done  
stare at sticky hands, know you have to move  
again. avoid boys, endure your life alone.

it's dark outside; the night's your mother  
shielding you, soothing your shame  
so you quietly walk yourself home.

## **The Wrong Daughter**

Those two redheaded cousins down  
in the holler maybe shared a daddy  
or maybe nothing but the same bad taste

in dirty boots and boys with boosted cars.

Strangers argue but can't tell 'em apart.  
Sometimes their own mamas mistake  
Patsy for Addie at a squinting distance,  
calling the wrong daughter to dinner.

But she ain't hungry; her mind is racing  
burning neural blacktop day and night  
nightmares spilling like sludgy motor oil  
across the leather of her cracking soul.

The drive-in behind her eyes replays  
the same grindhouse flick over and over.  
Did relentless twitches put her in danger  
or did hairy escapes give her the shakes?

Chicken and eggs are a scorchy mess  
in her stepdaddy's red-hot iron skillet  
and the slender man growls *Goddammit*  
*I'll give you something to cry about.*

## Recreation

We would be two larks winging  
our way through the Master's  
best, you said. I'd be your Grace  
Kelly, your Audrey. Your eager eye  
documenting our recreation, old-style  
eight-millimeter, hand-cranked.

I don't remember Grant getting naked  
as he fled the marauding sky, flat  
fields, drab motels, but a true auteur  
is no script-slave. Spellbound, I shed  
my retro dress, hit the marks you ordered,  
amateur heart fluttering in its dark cage.

But you've stopped wearing your tie,  
your ring. You've switched to digital  
video, the cost of the darkroom too dear.  
The trunk of your old green Ford is filled:  
coils of rope and plastic sheets. The shower  
scene is tomorrow, you smile. I'm silent,  
skull-rehearsing my own altered script  
as I lie beside you in the feather bed.

## **It's Fine**

Our host asked  
the room about  
the worst pain  
we'd ever  
experienced.

And the men  
merrily recounted  
terrible toothaches  
tales of bad tattoos  
on skin over bone  
and kidney stones  
all purely awful  
but somehow delightful  
after time's anesthesia.

Someone looked at me  
and I gave a clipped  
three syllable reply:  
miscarriage.

There's no brave moral  
in my old, frail story.

Three days in darkness  
wishing for Percocet  
praying for death  
feeling every single cell  
of a future I wanted badly  
bleeding mercilessly away.

The men pretended  
I hadn't said a word.  
A raconteur took over  
grinning about his kid  
head-butting his nuts.

Laughter charged in  
like brave St. Michael.  
The dragon of my grief  
coiled silent inside me  
but I smiled and drank  
fronting proper cheer  
and it was fine  
it was just  
fucking  
fine.

## **Author's Bios:**

**Joe R. Lansdale** is the author of fifty novels and four hundred shorter works, including stories, essays, reviews, film and TV scripts, introductions and magazine articles, as well as a book of poetry.

His work has been made into films, **BUBBA HOTEPE**, **COLD IN JULY**, as well as the acclaimed TV show, **HAP AND LEONARD**. He has also had works adapted to **MASTERS OF HORROR ON SHOWTIME**, **NETFLIX'S LOVE, DEATH AND ROBOTS**, **SHUDDER'S CREEPSHOW**. He has written scripts for **BATMAN THE ANIMATED SERIES**, and **SUPERMAN THE ANIMATED SERIES**. He scripted a special **Jonah Hex** animated short, as well as the animated **Batman** film, **SON OF BATMAN**. He has also written scripts for **John Irvin**, **John Wells**, and **Ridley Scott**, as well as for the Sundance TV show based on his work, **HAP AND LEONARD**. His novel, **THE THICKET**, is set to film in the near future, and will star **Peter Dinklage**. Many of his works have been optioned for film multiple times, and many continue to be under option at the moment. He has received numerous recognitions for his work. Among them **THE EDGAR**, for his crime novel **THE BOTTOMS**, **THE SPUR**, for his historical western

PARADISE SKY, as well as ten BRAM STOKERS for his horror works. He has also received THE GRANDMASTER AWARD and the LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD from THE HORROR WRITERS ASSOCIATION. He has been recognized for his contributions to comics with the INKPOT LIFE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD, and has received the BRITISH FANTASY AWARD, and has had two NEW YORK TIMES NOTABLE BOOKS. He has been honored with the Italian GRINZANE CAVOUR PRIZE, the SUGAR PULP PRIZE FOR FICTION, and the RAYMOND CHANDLER LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD. THE EDGE OF DARK WATER was listed by BOOKLIST as an EDITOR'S CHOICE, and THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION Chose THE THICKET, for ADULT BOOKS FOR YOUNG ADULTS. LIBRARY JOURNAL voted THE THICKET, as one of the BEST HISTORICAL NOVELS OF THE YEAR. He has also received an AMERICAN MYSTERY AWARD, THE HORROR CRITICS AWARD, and the SHOT IN THE DARK INTERNATIONAL CRIME WRITER'S AWARD. He was recognized for his contributions to the legacy of Edgar Rice Burroughs with THE GOLDEN LION AWARD. He is a member of THE TEXAS

INSTITUTE OF LITERATURE and has been inducted into the TEXAS LITERARY HALL OF FAME and is WRITER IN RESIDENCE at STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY.

His work has also been nominated multiple times for THE WORLD FANTASY AWARD, and numerous Bram Stoker Awards, the MCCAVITY AWARD, as well as THE DASHIELL HAMMETT AWARD, and others. He has been inducted into the INTERNATIONAL MARTIAL ARTS HALL OF FAME, as well as the UNITED STATES. MARTIAL ARTS HALL OF FAME and is the founder of the Shen Chuan martial arts system. His books and stories have been translated into a number of languages. He lives in Nacogdoches, Texas with his wife, Karen.

**Lucy A. Snyder** is the author of the poetry collections Exposed Nerves and Chimeric Machines. Nearly 100 of her poems have appeared in publications such as Weirdbook, Vastarien, and Nightmare Magazine. She is a multiple Bram Stoker award winner in several categories. She lives in Columbus, Ohio. Learn more about her at [www.lucysnyder.com](http://www.lucysnyder.com) or follow her on Twitter at @LucyASnyder.



**Lee Murray** is a multi-award-winning author-editor from Aotearoa-New Zealand (Sir Julius Vogel, Australian Shadows) and a double Bram Stoker Award® winner. Her work includes military thrillers, the Taine McKenna Adventures, supernatural crime-noir series *The Path of Ra* (with Dan Rabarts), and short fiction collection, *Grotesque: Monster Stories*. A Shirley Jackson Award winner, she is proud to have edited eighteen volumes of speculative fiction, among them *Black Cranes: Tales of Unquiet Women* and *Midnight Echo* #15. Other works include non-fiction (*Mark My Words: Read the Submission Guidelines and Other Self-editing Tips* with Angela Yuriko Smith) and several books for children. She is co-founder of Young NZ Writers and of the Wright-Murray Residency for Speculative Fiction Writers, HWA Mentor of the Year for 2019, NZSA Honorary Literary Fellow, and Grimshaw Sargeson Fellow for 2021. *Tortured Willows* is her first poetry collection. Read more at <https://www.leemurray.info/>

**Geneve Flynn** is an award-winning speculative fiction editor and author. She has two psychology degrees and only uses them for nefarious purposes. She co-edited

*Black Cranes: Tales of Unquiet Women* with celebrated New Zealand author and editor Lee Murray. The anthology won the 2020 Bram Stoker Award® and the 2020 Shirley Jackson Award for best anthology. It has also been shortlisted for the British Fantasy Award, Aurealis Award, and Australian Shadows Award. *Black Cranes* is listed on Tor Nightfire's Works of Feminist Horror and Locus magazine's 2020 Recommended Reading List. Geneve was assistant editor for *Relics, Wrecks, and Ruins*, a speculative fiction anthology which features authors such as Neil Gaiman, Ken Liu, Robert Silverberg, James (SA) Corey, Lee Murray, Mark Lawrence, Mary Robinette Kowal, and Angela Slatter. The anthology is the legacy of Australian fantasy author Aiki Flinthart, and is in support of the Flinthart Writing Residency with the Queensland Writers Centre. Geneve's short stories have been published in various markets, including Flame Tree Publishing, Things in the Well, and PseudoPod. Her latest short story, "They Call Me Mother," will appear in *Classic Monsters Unleashed* with some of the biggest names in horror, including Joe Lansdale, Jonathan Maberry, and Ramsey Campbell. Geneve loves tales that unsettle, all things writerly, and

B-grade action movies. If that sounds like you, check out her website at [www.geneveflynn.com.au](http://www.geneveflynn.com.au)

**Christina Sng** is the two-time Bram Stoker Award®-winning author of *A Collection of Dreamscapes* and *A Collection of Nightmares*. Her poetry, fiction, essays, and art appear in numerous venues worldwide and have garnered many accolades, including the Jane Reichhold International Prize, nominations for the Rhysling Awards, the Dwarf Stars, the Pushcart Prize, as well as honorable mentions in the *Year's Best Fantasy and Horror*, and the Best Horror of the Year. Christina's essay "Final Girl: A Life in Horror" was a finalist in the 2020 Bram Stoker Awards® for Superior Achievement in Short Non-Fiction and her first novelette "Fury" was anthologized in the multiple award-winning *Black Cranes: Tales of Unquiet Women*. She was born and raised in Singapore where she now lives with her children and a menagerie of curious pets. Visit <https://christinasng.com/> to learn more.

**Angela Yuriko Smith** is a third-generation Uchinanchu-American and an award-winning poet, author, and

publisher with over 20 years of experience in newspaper journalism. She began with newspapers as a photographer, reporter, and editorial assistant, but in 2011 she started writing speculative fiction and as of 2021, she has fiction and poetry published in over 60 books, magazines and ebooks. Highlights of her career include a Bram Stoker Awards® finalist, Elgin nominations for two chapbooks, and in 2019 she won the Science Fiction and Fantasy Poetry Association's Dwarf Star for her poem "Dark Matters," a haiku. Her poem "Waiting to Exhale" (HWA Poetry Showcase Vol. VII, edited by Stephanie Wytovich) is a 2021 Rhysling nomination and she was nominated for a 2020 Pushcart Prize. She was also selected as the Horror Writer Association's Mentor of the Year for 2020. Angela currently lives in Independence, Missouri with her husband and fellow author and publisher Ryan Aussie Smith, their six-pack of rescue dogs, three rescue Madagascar hissing cockroaches, and 10 chickens. To find out more, visit [angelayurikosmith.com](http://angelayurikosmith.com).

**Marge Simon** lives in Ocala, Florida, with her husband, poet/writer Bruce Boston and the ghosts of two cats. She

has three Bram Stoker Awards, Rhysling Awards for Best Long and Best Short Fiction, the Elgin, Dwarf Stars and Strange Horizons Readers' Award. She received HWA's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2021. Marge's poems and stories have appeared in Crannog, Bracken, Asimov's, Silver Blade, Journal of Condensed Creative Art, New Myths, Daily Science Fiction. Her stories also appear in anthologies such as Tales of the Lake 5, Chiral Mad 4, You, Human and The Beauty of Death, to name a few. She attends the ICFA annually as a guest poet/writer and is a founding member of the Speculative Literary Foundation.

**Mary Turzillo's** "Mars Is No Place for Children" won a 1999 Nebula, and her Lovers & Killers won the 2013 Elgin Award. Sweet Poison, with Marge Simon, was a Stoker finalist and Elgin winner. Satan's Sweethearts, also with Simon, came in second in the Elgins and was a Stoker finalist. Mary has been a British SF Association, Pushcart, Stoker, Dwarf Stars, and Rhysling finalist. In addition to Mars Girls (Apex, 2017) and Bonsai Babies (Omnium Gatherum, 2016), she looks forward to publication of Cosmic Cats & Fantastic Furballs with WordFire Press in 2022. She fenced foil for the US at

Veteran World Championships in Germany, 2016 and is among the top US épée fencers in her class. She lives in Ohio, with scientist-poet-fencer Geoffrey Landis

**Jessica McHugh** is a novelist, poet, and internationally-produced playwright running amok in the fields of horror, sci-fi, young adult, and wherever else her peculiar mind leads. She's had twenty-five books published in thirteen years, including her bizarro romp, "The Green Kangaroos," her YA series, "The Darla Decker Diaries," and her Bram Stoker Award-Nominated blackout poetry collection, "A Complex Accident of Life." For more info about publications and blackout poetry commissions, please visit [McHughniverse.com](http://McHughniverse.com).