

# Firefly Magazine

XIII

*A Journal of Luminous Writing*

**FIREFLY**



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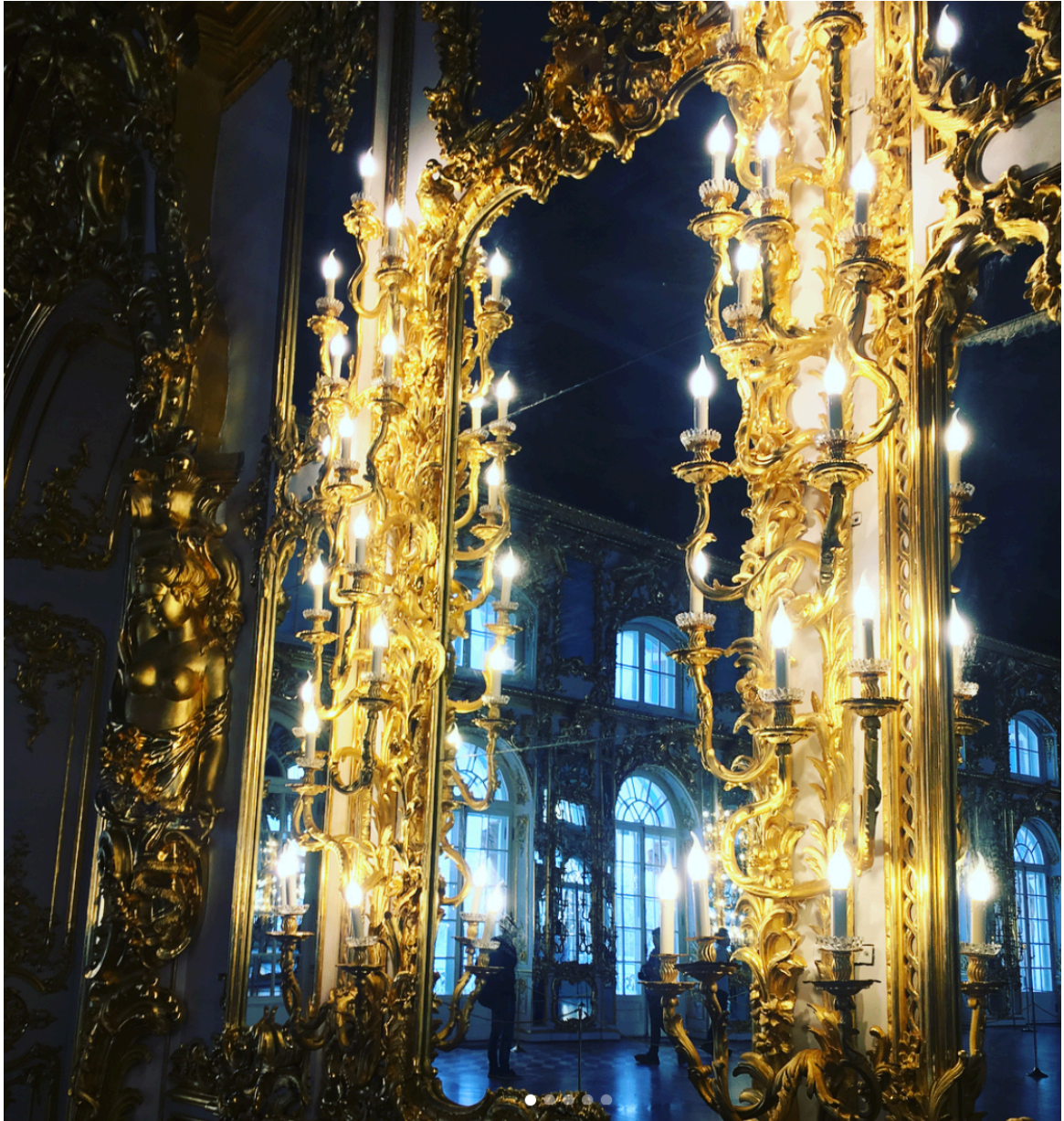
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## In the Gloaming

Christy Alexander Hallberg

In the sultry summer twilight of my Southern youth, the ‘twixt and ‘tween of cartwheels and curling irons, the Bee Gees and Budweiser, I wait. Eyes closed, my body nestled in the cool grass of my neighbor’s yard, the smell of gardenias and grilled pork ribs in the air. The Miller girls crouch beside me, slip their fingers underneath my body.

*Stiff as a board, light as a feather.*

They chant the words, their voices hammy, like a sideshow fortune-teller at the county fair. We believe in magic, but only a little. Less than we did the year before, more than we will the year to come. We believe in communion with the dead. Not the dead rotting in the ground—the dead of legends and myths, sylphs that come to us in our dreams at night, like Casper the Friendly Ghost, and offer mirth and mischief and mystery.

We don’t know the torment of the dead, the Heathcliff-and-Cathy angst of lingering and longing, their souls bleak and barren as the Yorkshire moors.

We think we can fly, drifting through fall and winter and spring then back again to summer, like sprites with pigtails and skinned knees.

*Stiff as a board, light as a feather.*

I’m waiting. For the moment heaven and earth collide and I see past, present, and future, proof my world will never change—my mother, crooning “You Are My Sunshine” while I fall sleep, baking cinnamon rolls on Sunday mornings, hanging Shawn Cassidy posters on my yellow bedroom walls, reciting stories of handsome princes and fairy godmothers and magic pumpkins that never rot and turn to mush.

We cannot fathom anything different from here and now, the pungent earth between our bare toes, balmy breeze lilting in our ears—the smells and songs of home.

I hear my mother's voice, tangled in the wind. At first I think she *is* the wind. I open my eyes and see her at the end of the block, a shade in Bermuda shorts and white Keds and the scarf I gave her for Christmas wrapped around her pin-curled hair. I'm not supposed to be out at night. *But it isn't night yet*, I think. The Mercer girls run inside—their own mother beckons through the screen door. Fried chicken and sweet tea await.

I watch my mother trudging toward me, stiff as a board, light as a feather. I hold her gait in my mind's eye, sear it into memory with my childhood, that summer, that moment, in the gloaming, before the streetlights blink on.

# The Artists

**Brian Jerrold Koester** is a Pushcart Prize nominee and a Best of the Net Anthology nominee. His work has appeared in *Agni*, *Streetlight Magazine*, *Cold Creek Review*, and elsewhere.

**Gary Beck** spent most of his life as a theater director. His published work includes 14 chapbooks, 14 poetry collections, 4 novels and 2 short story collections. He lives in NYC.

**Shan Cawley** is a poet based out of Morgantown, West Virginia studying English and political science at West Virginia University. When she isn't writing, Shan can be found advocating for *It's On Us* (a sexual assault campaign) and reading funny tweets. You can follow Shan on Twitter & Instagram @shancawleywvu.

**Megan Denese Meador** spins words into wars in Jacksonville, Florida, where she lives in imperfect harmony with her partner and 4-year-old son. Diagnosed with bipolar disorder in her teens, Megan's main mission as a writer is to inspire others feeling stigmatized by mental illness.

**Janet McCann** is an old Texas poet who taught at Texas A&M for more than 45 years. Most recent book: *THE CRONE AT THE CASINO*, Lamar UP, 2014.

**Emily Shearer:** ex-ex-pat, published poet, linguaphile; baker of the chocolate, member of *The Resistance*, mother of the children, teacher of the yoga, Editor of the *Poetry* and Developer of the Books ([Minerva Rising Press](#)).

**AJ Wolff** is a Midwest poet/wanderer/human. Her work is published and forthcoming in *Rust + Moth*, *Yes Poetry*, *The Mantle*, *Parentheses*, and other beautiful journals.

**Jack Sullivan** is a poet, playwright, and filmmaker based in Brooklyn. Some of his poems can be found in *In Parentheses*, *Ilya's Honey*, and *Yes Poetry*. Currently he is studying to receive his M.F.A in Screenwriting from Brooklyn College. Attachments area

**Courtney LeBlanc** is the author of the chapbooks *All in the Family* (Bottlecap Press) and *The Violence Within* (Flutter Press). She loves nail polish, wine, and tattoos. Follow her on twitter: @wordperv

**Julia Ortiz** attends Smith College in Massachusetts, studies History and writes frequently, practicing photography in her spare time.

**John L. Stanizzi** is the author of six full-length collections – *Ecstasy Among Ghosts*, *Sleepwalking*, *Dance Against the Wall*, *After the Bell*, *Hallelujah Time!*, and *High Tide – Ebb Tide*. His new book, “*Chants*,” will be published in 2018 by Cervena Barva Press. His poems have appeared in *Prairie Schooner*, *American Life in Poetry*, *Gnarled Oak*, *The New York Quarterly*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Passages North*, *The Cortland Review*, and many others. His poems have also been translated into Italian and have appeared widely in Italy. John has read at many venues all over New England. He teaches literature at Manchester Community College in Manchester, CT and he lives with his wife, Carol, in Coventry.

**Liz Falkingham Temple** is based in East Yorkshire. Her work has appeared in *MoonPark Review*, *Ellipsis Zine* and *DNA Magazine*, and was shortlisted for the 2017 Bath Flash Fiction Award.

**Tomas Marcantonio** is a fiction and travel writer from Brighton. He is currently based in Busan, South Korea, where he teaches English and writes whenever he can escape the classroom.

**Christy Alexander Hallberg** is a Teaching Associate Professor of English at East Carolina University. She serves as an assistant editor for *North Carolina Literary Review*. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in such journals as *Main Street Rag*, *North Carolina Literary Review*, *Fiction Southeast*, *Emerge Literary Journal*, *Eclectica*, *Solidago*, and *Concho River Review*. She is currently working on a novel.

**Rosanna Hildyard** is an editor, writer and translator based in London. Her satirical rewrite of a classic drama, *Ubu Trump*, was published by Eyewear in 2017.

**Paola Scherzer** also known as *schattenmitternacht* on various social media platforms such as Instagram and Tumblr, is a young artist attending an art school in Austria. Besides painting with acrylics and watercolors, they also enjoy doing simple but delicate ink drawings.

**Jim Zola** is a poet and photographer living in North Carolina.