

# Drabblez

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# Drabblez Magazine

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# Masthead

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(Founder, Editor-in-Chief)

She received her B.A. Degree in Creative Writing Major from the University of California, Riverside. She spends most of her time writing fiction and poetry. She is currently pursuing her M.A. Degree in English. She hopes to one day become a Professor and write books in the process. She is the Founder and Editor-in-Chief of *The Mystic Blue Review*, *Cadaverous Magazine* and *Drabblez Magazine*. Her work has appeared in numerous online and print literary magazines, including: *Pomona Valley Review*, *Better than Starbucks Magazine*, *Adelaide Literary Magazine*, *Halcyon Days*, *Oddball Magazine*, *Grotesque Magazine*, *The Quail Bell Magazine*, *Blood Moon Rising Magazine*, *Scarlet Leaf Review*, amongst others.

# Table of Contents

6	Forbidden Love by RLM Cooper
7	Life Lesson #4 by Paul Beckman
8	Bowline Vengeance by Michael Carter
9	Other World by JD DeHart
10	Out of the Fog by Mary Ellen Gambutti
11	The Ledge by Kyle Hemmings
12	Revolution by Tim Goldstone
13	She's Beautiful by Tim Goldstone
14	Murder by Tim Goldstone
15	by Daniel Alvarado
16	Bedtime by Robin Wright
17	Y2K by Taylor Riley
18	When Muddied Waters Clear by Karen DeBonis
19	Outbreak of Vampirism at Maidenek by Dana Jerman
20	The Old Unconquerable by Eric S. Fomley
21	Hot Truck by Kyle Hemmings
22	Angels on the Wall by G. Allen Wilbanks
23	Broken Ankle by Emily Fluckiger
24	Closure by Emily Fluckiger
25	Death by the Bus Station by Emily Fluckiger
26	Oranges in October by Dianne Moritz
27	The Last Good-bye by Dianne Moritz
28	Ripe with Life and Death by Renee Firer
29	Guitar Man by Kyle Hemmings
30	Regrets at a Funeral by Neel Trivedi

31	In the Flesh by Tianna Grosch
32	Underneath by Pamela Wharton
33	Skin by Pamela Wharton
34	Lucky by Pamela Wharton
35	Biographies

# FORBIDDEN LOVE

*by RLM Cooper*

Alice sank back into the sofa and clicked the remote. The announcer's voice crooned:

Stay tuned for another episode of Forbidden Love.

She sighed and looked across the room where Daniel lay fast asleep in his crib. He had cost her an inheritance and put her—and him—into near poverty and yet she was filled with happiness. His tiny, dark hands were curled beside his wooly head and his long, black lashes were still as he slept. She smiled. What would he be, she wondered. He looked so like his father: war hero, beautiful black man. Her forbidden love.

# **LIFE LESSON #4**

*by Paul Beckman*

My six-year old daughter caught me pulling the wings off of butterflies. She cried and told me I was mean and horrible. “No. No.” I told her. “Remember when you were learning to ride your bicycle and I took the training wheels off and you wobbled down the driveway and even fell and skinned your knee a couple of times,” and she said, “Yes. How could I forget. My knees still skinned.” So, I told her that I was just taking the butterfly training wheels off so they’ll grow up to be stronger flyers.

“Mommy says you’re a bullshitter.”

# BOWLINE VENGEANCE

*by Michael Carter*

“Rabbit pops out of the hole, goes around a tree, under a root blocking the hole, around another tree, back down the hole.” Neil muttered the mnemonic while cinching the last bowline knot. The scaly appendages of the hostile intruder were now tied to the ticking bomb.

He stepped back. The creature repeated in fragmented speech: “Rabbit . . . out hole, around . . . tree, under . . . root, . . . down hole.”

Neil attempted to move to safety, but something restrained him. He saw tentacles retract to the creature. His face turned pale when he noticed a rope tied around his leg, as the final seconds ticked away.



# OTHER WORLD

*by JD DeHart*

Maybe there is another world I had not yet seen. It could be the case, after all. Omniscience is hardly within my view. I would write in a scratch-drawn letter, please know I intended the best. I would lovingly replace each blossom on which I trampled. Behind my eyes, just outside my vision, it is very likely there is another world, populated by people I do not know. Or perhaps there are simply new facets of people I have already met – pieces taken for granted that I never realized, a world folded on top of our world, in pasty tortilla-style.

# OUT OF THE FOG

*by Mary Ellen Gambutti*

Formed in dark like a nebula, I drifted unknowing; nurtured vague notions of kin. Finally, at forty, I began to search for my birth mother. In 1990, before internet and DNA testing, I hired a genealogist, and a Catholic Charities insider willing to break South Carolina adoption law--my original birth certificate, still under seal. Within months, I knew her name. She always wondered what became of me, she said. Her instability and neglected health apparent, she died a year after our reunion. Our bond tenuous, nonetheless, freedom found in the knowing.



## **THE LEDGE**

*by Kyle Hemmings*

# REVOLUTION

*by Tim Goldstone*

In my childhood I spent many cozy evenings by the fire watching my grandmother using a red-hot poker to scorch off the fingerprints of the hollow-faced strangers who arrived at our door, cold wet and hungry, haunted, hunted. Afterwards grandmother would apply a balm she made from the herbs she grew. It was my job to feed the strangers until they were able to use their fingers again and then when they could, they would leave, always in the middle of a moonless night. Sometimes we would hear the crack of rifle-shots. Sometimes we wouldn't.

# SHE'S BEAUTIFUL

*by Tim Goldstone*

“Oh Daddy,” his little daughter screamed delightedly, “Look at all the little Tinkerbells,  
they’re dancing all over you!”

He smiled and looked down to see the little red dots, several exactly over the very center  
of his heart, and others positioned accurately over his vital organs.

“Look Daddy, there’s one right between your eyes now! She’s beautiful.”

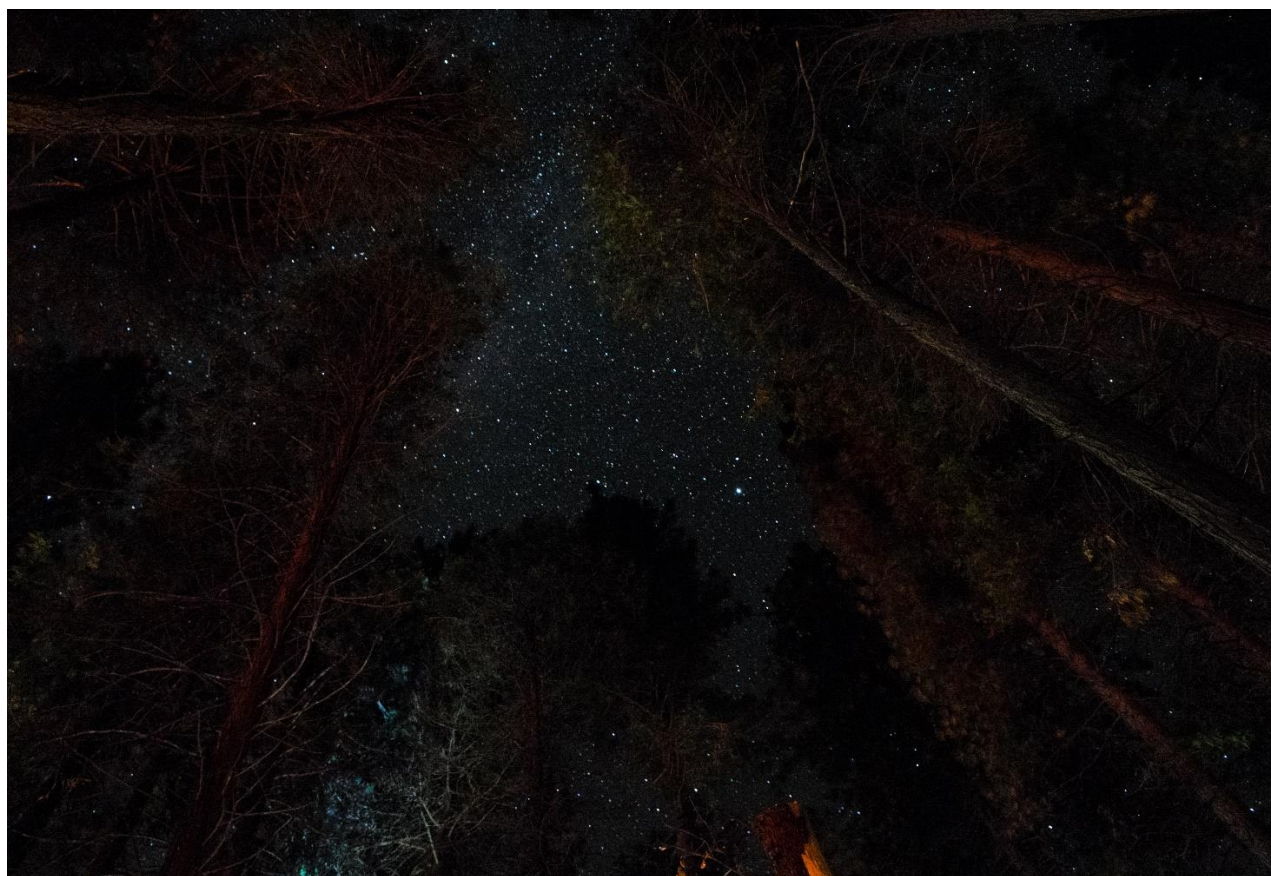
They were the last words he ever heard.

And although his daughter was unharmed - the armed police weren’t monsters, they  
were the last words she ever spoke.

# MURDER

*by Tim Goldstone*

I couldn't help but ponder the nature of their relationship as my nephew plunged into the booming surf in his wife's blood-stained wedding-dress, stumbling as her Jack Russell's clung frantically from the dangling torn sleeves: his scream – "Is there still no end? Even here?" lost on the howling salt wind as yet again she emerged from under the waves – this time in furs, strings of pearls, rouged, forgiving: pity had always been her particular means of revenge.



*by Daniel Alvarado*



# BEDTIME

by Robin Wright

Granddaughter and I stretch out on the quilt Aunt Betty made. Swatches of green, brown, red, and blue, our guardians for the night. She tells me of her book buddy, first-grader Elena, how the little girl huddles close when Alisha reads to her. She tells me who talks in class when they shouldn't and who deserves to be student of the week. When she's done talking, she snuggles under the quilt. I read from *Harry Potter* until her eyelids fall into slumber then tuck the quilt around her, so color guardians will come to life and follow in her dreams.



# Y2K

*by Taylor Riley*

The sun was rising over the flesh colored sky, dotted with purple clouds. I saw the colors come through the window, covered in navy, dusty cloth. Party-goers were passed out on couches from their various wine coolers, marijuana and other R-rated substances.

It was 7 a.m. on January 1, 2000: Y2K. I was ten years old.

I climbed over the bodies on the floor of the house who was owned by someone unknown to me. I got to the beige front door on the left of the living room and looked back at the debaucheries I was leaving behind. As I walked out the front door and onto the porch, I felt the chill of the winter winds.

I walked down the sidewalk, lonely and barefoot, looking up at the sky.

The weeks before the millennium, I was so sure that my life would end before I was even a teenager. The mean girls at church said that the rapture would happen last night. I had so much to accomplish before I died! Would I even go to heaven?

The world didn't end.

"Are you ready to go home?" My dad asked behind me, pulling on his coat.

# WHEN MUDDIED WATERS CLEAR

by Karen DeBonis

His fifth day at Rent Central was his last, after he dropped a couch in the mud.

My son.

Fired from Grocery World when he forgot to show up. Let go from Mighty Mattress because he confused “extra firm” with “memory core” with “inner spring.” Quit selling insurance (he hadn’t sold any). Census taker. Phone book deliverer. Temp office worker. None lasted.

It’s life with a brain tumor.

*Will he ever support himself?*

“Yes,” he texted yesterday.

“Yes?”

“Yes, I got the job.”

The one with benefits and retirement.

I released the breath I had held for twenty years.

# OUTBREAK OF VAMPIRISM AT MAIDENEK

*by Dana Jerman*

The doctors were ravenous for testing. How could they harness this magnificent legacy  
before them? They were the first to go.

Hunger works so fast. The change happened almost immediately.

Eyes switched inexplicably wild. An unnatural craning forward and enlargement of the  
neck and head.

When you see the bulldozers and the loose piles. When the trains came in. That's my  
document. I have nothing but that work and all it has to show. The silent, standing man  
running the camera...

I too did not last very long.

-January, 1934.

# THE OLD UNCONQUERABLE

*by Eric S. Fomley*

The village cheered the dragonslayer as he ascended the mountain. His broadsword and heavy armor glinted silver in the sunlight, red cloak flowing in the breeze. He was unconquerable, undefeated, and it was said he'd slayed a hundred dragons.

The scaled beast waited above the mountaintop, eyes like emerald fire, teeth like jagged spears, and bat-like wings a whirlwind to the tall grass surrounding the village's champion.

The dragonslayer faced the dragon undaunted as the beast launched a fireball.

He raised his shield, but his aged reflexes were a half-second too slow.

The villagers watched in horror.

The dragonslayer burned.



## HOT TRUCK

*by Kyle Hemmings*

# ANGELS ON THE WALL

*by G. Allen Wilbanks*

I see angels.

They perch on the walls and stare down at me in my hospital bed. They watch over me with concern and love in their dark eyes. I don't know why. Perhaps my time is drawing near, and they are preparing to take me away from this world of doctors and nurses and medicines that make me feel sick.

The nurse comes in with a syringe. The angels do not like her. When she gives me my shot they hide from her and I will not see them again for hours. But they will return.

They always do.

END

# BROKEN ANKLE

*by Emily Fluckiger*

Like a bloody cherub, they pulled you from my body. That first time I saw blood on you wasn't your own. On a gray day when the sky makes trees black my face turned white watching you climb too high and fall from the branch. Your pupil enveloped me in blackness as it grew. Concussed but adventurous you still climbed. As years passed your trees turned into mountains and my fears became true. Let this be the last time we stare at X-rays trying to understand what is white and where the black and blue mean only a broken ankle.

# CLOSURE

*by Emily Fluckiger*

Weeks passed since we buried the lost baby in a blue shoebox. Our backyard now had a tiny grave in it and I felt hopeless. After volunteering in the NICU, the nurses called me “The Baby Whisperer”. They praised me for the hours I spent helping in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. My favorite was the drug babies. They suffered withdrawals from their tiny addicted bodies and I could be there to comfort them. They needed me the most. But I needed them more. They laid on top of my empty stomach. They filled me with purpose. And finally, closure.



# DEATH BY THE BUS STATION

*by Emily Fluckiger*

Nobody knew how the neon lights still lit up every night. Abandoned over twenty years ago, the town now only saw brave trespassers. When the chemical plant exploded hundreds lost their lives. Others escaped with burns on their skin and green coughs. A pregnant resident later gave birth to a child with no eyes and three ears. I wished to be that child. Then I'd never have seen those awful lights. Upon their arrest, all trespassers admitted the same story. I had to see for myself. There they were, lit at midnight, the neon lights blinded me from outside in.

# ORANGES IN OCTOBER

*by Dianne Moritz*

That October day we walked to Greenwood Park. We scouted the outhouse for nasty graffiti.

“I know what f-u-c-k means!” I bragged. (Judy tattled and her mom banished us from their place for one week.)

But, that day we rode the slide, waxed-paper under our butts, and flew...down, down, little Super-girls!

Heading home, I spied a dollar on Mrs. Wilson's lawn, but insisted we give it back.

“You darlings!” she gushed, bringing down a bowl of Sunkist oranges.

“Dumb shit! We coulda bought 20 candy bars!!” you shouted. “Last one home's a monkey's uncle!”

# THE LAST GOOD-BYE

*by Dianne Moritz*

You fly to San Francisco to see him before his Marine unit ships out to Vietnam.

You drive down Highway 1 to see the sights.

Later, he wants to see a topless show. "I'll be your girlie show," you promise.

You buy some Gallo, find a room, head upstairs.

Soon words shoot out like bullets: gooks, jungles, body bags.

You throw yourself into his trained-killer arms. "Don't," you whisper.

Good-byes are cool. The airport walkway pulls you away as you watch his back retreat into the crowd.

Once home, you write a "Dear John" letter you wish you'd never sent.

# RIPE WITH LIFE AND DEATH

*by Renee Firer*

August in Israel is a hot, brooding month. The Dead Sea's sulfuric scent lingers, and birds gorge on dragon fruit. Bananas ripen. Opuntias burst. Dissolute mosquitos fly vacuously. Then

they stun themselves against human skin and die, squashed in the sand.

By early September, the heat wave breaks and there are three months of humidity and

wind with sudden spells of rain.

The Southern Border remains a sand cloud. Persimmons take root and bloom in the north. Sheseks snake up garden fences. Tomatoes burst through laterite fields.

Bombs ply in the distance.

Bodies appear in the streets, potholes on highways.



## GUITAR MAN

*by Kyle Hemmings*

# REGRETS AT A FUNERAL

*by Neel Trivedi*

Memories of Belle flooded Daniel's mind as he stood next to her coffin.

Their self-written wedding vows.

The way she blew in his ear in bed.

The way her silky hair seemed to dictate the direction of the breeze instead of the other way around.

He shut his eyes.

Did I kill her too soon? He thought.

# IN THE FLESH

*by* Tianna Grosch

She clung to the ship's underbelly like an octopus with suctioning tentacles. Traveled for leagues, borrowing air from sea creatures. She became one with the ocean, rose on waves to overtake the ship, towering above with her scaled body. She was a dragon, breathing smoke and sea brine. She flung herself across the sea, destroying all in sight and ripping their ship to pieces.

“Impossible,” the crew said at the sight of her, mouths gaping.  
There were only tales told over candlelight of her - it was a myth, nothing more. And yet. Here before them.

Calypso in the flesh.

# UNDERNEATH

*by Pamela Wharton*

Growing up on the shore, I had no fear of the sea. Morning or twilight, warm or chilly, in sun or when droplets of rain made circles on the surface, I'd race right in. I'd dive deep, down to where everything became silent, and the waves overhead were like rolling clouds. Until the day I saw it.

Down twenty feet in the gloom—still, upturned hands and a pale, placid woman's face. I thought she must be dead, but she opened her eyes upward to me. Her red, glowing eyes.

I didn't get in the water much after that.



# SKIN

*by Pamela Wharton*

The agent cycled through the avatars outside the VR gateway. She frowned. "None of these are really what I want. Do you have a short, kinda tubby guy? Balding?"

"We can certainly customize one," he said.

"How long will it take? I need to get in there ASAP. The trail's already going cold on this psycho."

"Oh, an hour or so. It's not a request we get often."

"Being pretty is useless. Everyone will treat you the same. You learn nothing about them."

# LUCKY

*by Pamela Wharton*

She drops down among the litter of old take-out food and dirty clothes, crouching where the sofa used to be before someone stole it (or she sold it? That day was fuzzy). She glances at the window and notes that it is early evening—not that it matters, but it's good to keep track.

She's hungry, but that won't matter soon enough. No food in the fridge anyway.

She raises the syringe, but fumbles it, shaking from withdrawal. Catching it, she mutters "lucky" before injecting.

# Biographies

## DANIEL ALVARDO

Daniel Alvarado is a writer, photographer and cyclist from Los Angeles, California. His fiction has appeared on Jerry Jazz Musician. He is currently working on his first novel.

## PAUL BECKMAN

Paul Beckman's new collection of flash "Kiss Kiss" is out from Truth Serum Press. Some of his stories have appeared in the following magazines and others: Spelk, Necessary Fiction, Playboy, Jellyfish Review, Brilliant Flash Fiction, and Connotation Press. He has a story coming out in the 2018 edition of Norton Best of New Micro.

## MICHAEL CARTER

Michael Carter is a short fiction and creative nonfiction writer who grew up reading an odd combination of sci-fi and Louis L'Amour westerns. He's also a ghostwriter in the legal profession, fly fisherman, and Space Camp alum. He's online at [www.michaelcarter.ink](http://www.michaelcarter.ink) and @mcmichaelcarter.

## RLM COOPER

RLM Cooper writes poetry and fiction and has been widely published by both online and print publishers. Visit her blog for links to her other work at [rlmcooper.wordpress.com](http://rlmcooper.wordpress.com)

## KAREN DEBONIS

Karen began writing a memoir twenty years ago after her 11-year-old son was diagnosed with a brain tumor. Then she put the writing aside, as living in the present with a brain injured child left no time or energy to write about the past. Now that her son is well, Karen intends to finish what she started. She also writes essays on personal growth, self-acceptance, and life lessons, all of them themes in her memoir. You can find her writing at [www.karendebonis.com](http://www.karendebonis.com)

## **JD DEHART**

JD DeHart has been writing for some time now. He also writes nonfiction and fiction when the need arises. DeHart reviews books at [readingandlitresources.blogspot.com](http://readingandlitresources.blogspot.com), where he also features author interviews.

## **MARY ELLEN**

Mary Ellen's stories appear or are forthcoming in Gravel Magazine, Wildflower Muse, The Remembered Arts Journal, The Vignette Review, Modern Creative Life, A Thousand and One Stories, Halcyon Days, NatureWriting, PostCard Shorts, Memoir Magazine, Haibun Today, Carpe Arte, Borrowed Solace, Winter Street Writers, Amethyst Review, mac(ro)mic, SoftCartel, Drabble, FewerThan500, and BellaMused. Her chapbook is, *Stroke Story, My Journey There and Back*. She and her husband live in Sarasota, Florida, with their rescued senior Chihuahua, Max. Find her here: [ibisandhibiscusmelwrites.blogspot.com](http://ibisandhibiscusmelwrites.blogspot.com)

## **RENEE FIRER**

Renee received her MFA from Arcadia University and is an editor at *Rhythm & Bones* magazine. When she's not working on her novel, she's spoiling her puppies, losing her pens, and planning her next worldly adventure. Her work has previously appeared in *Teen Ink* and *Loco Mag*. Follow her on twitter @ReneeFirer.

## **ERIC S. FOMLEY**

Eric S. Fomley is the editor of *Martian Magazine* and the *Drabbledark* and *Timeshift* anthologies. His work has appeared in various venues and he can be found on [ericfomley.com](http://ericfomley.com) and on Twitter @PrinceGrimdark.

## **TIM GOLDSTONE**

Tim Goldstone lives deep in rural Wales. Travelled and worked throughout the UK, Western and Eastern Europe, and North Africa. His material has appeared in print, online, and anthologies, including *The New Welsh Review*, *Stand*, *Crannóg*, *Red Poets*, *Cambrensis*, *Zero Flash*, *Ad Hoc Fiction*, *Gloom Cupboard*, *Anti-Heroine Chic*, *Ellipsis*, *Cadaverous*, *Ghost City Review*, *Altered States*, *The Speculative Book*, and forthcoming in *The Cabinet of Heed*, *Veil: Journal of Darker Musings*, *Trade*, *Idle Ink*, *Déraciné*, *Flash Fiction Magazine*. Prose sequence read on stage at *The Hay Festival*. Recipient of *Welsh Arts Council* scholarship. Other material broadcast on TV, radio. Twitter: @muddygold

## **TIANNA GROSCH**

Tianna Grosch has been writing her whole life and dabbles in drabbles such as in the anthology *Drabbledark* and in *Spelk Fiction*; creative nonfiction in *Anti-Heroine Chic Mag* & others; fiction in *Ellipsis Zine* & many others; and poetry in *Mystic Blue Review* & upcoming in others such as *Picaroon Poetry*. Check it out at [CreativeTianna.com](http://CreativeTianna.com) or her Twitter [@tiannag92](https://twitter.com/tiannag92).

## **KYLE HEMMINGS**

Kyle Hemmings has visual art work in *Sonic Boom*, *Tower Journal*, *Failed Haiku*, *Sunlight Press*, and elsewhere. He loves street photography, Impressionism, and obscure garage bands of the 60s.

## **DANA JERMAN**

Dana Jerman is the author of the poetry collection *PISCES EYE* and is a regular contributor to the online literary forum [LiterateApe.com](http://LiterateApe.com).

She works at *Uncharted Books* in Chicago, and is married to author Don Hall.

More of her writing can be found at the monthly updated blog [Blastfortune.com](http://Blastfortune.com).

## **DIANNE MORITZ**

Dianne Moritz is a children's picture book writer with two published books from Kane Miller, *HUSH*, *LITTLE BEACHCOMBER* and *1, 2, 3 BY THE SEA*, which was a "best book of 2014" on the Bank Street College list. Adult poems have appeared in *Long Island Quarterly*, *Live Poets Society*, *Pudding Press*, *Earth's Daughter*, and others. She is a frequent contributor to *The Haiku Foundation*, online. Her website is [diannemoritz.wordpress.com](http://diannemoritz.wordpress.com)

## **TAYLOR RILEY**

Taylor Riley is a writer and journalist living in Louisville, Kentucky. She is currently a news producer and features writer at the *Louisville Courier Journal* and will receive my MFA from *Spalding University* in May 2019. She is an award-winning journalist and photographer whose work has been published by *Refinery 29*, *USA TODAY*, *Associated Press*, *Eckleburg*, *The Santa Fe Literary Review*, *Riggwelter Press*, as well as other national publications. She also does essay readings at local and regional libraries, bookstores and universities.

## **NEEL TRIVEDI**

Neel Trivedi works in the advertising business in Dallas, TX and is also a freelance journalist. He writes poetry & fiction.

## **P.C. WHARTON**

P.C. Wharton is a D.C.-based author specializing in dark fantasy and heartfelt smut. P.C. has two books currently available on Amazon, *Smoke & Mirror* and *Open*, with the third in the series coming soon. If you enjoy frequent, uneven attempts at literature and humor on Twitter, follow @PCWharton

## **G. ALLEN WILLBANKS**

G. Allen Wilbanks is a retired police officer living in Northern California. For twenty-five years he wrote collision and crime reports during the day to pay the bills, and he wrote short fiction during his off-time to stay sane. He recently retired from real life to devote his full attention to fantasy. He has published two short story collections, and released his first novel, *When Darkness Comes*, in November 2017. For more information on his writing, visit [gallenwilbanks.com](http://gallenwilbanks.com), or check out his weekly blog at [deepdarkthoughts.com](http://deepdarkthoughts.com).

## **EMILY WILLIAMS**

Emily is a writer and an English major with a focus in American Literature. She plays video games with her husband and toddlers when not creating stories.

## **ROBIN WRIGHT**

Robin Wright lives in Southern Indiana. Her work has appeared in or is forthcoming in *Bindweed*, *Muddy River Poetry Review*, *Nature Writing*, *Indiana Voice Journal*, *Peacock Journal*, *Rat's Ass Review*, and others. Two of her poems were published in the University of Southern Indiana's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary anthology, *Time Present, Time Past*. She has also co-written two novels with Maryanne Burkhard under the name B. W. Wrighthard, *Ghost Orchid* and *A Needle and a Haystack*.

