

**Peeking Cat Poetry Magazine  
Issue 5 - April 2015**

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## Editor's Note

Thank you for buying or downloading the fifth issue of Peeking Cat Poetry Magazine!

Many thanks to the writers who submitted their work for the magazine – there are works from 20 writers in this issue, with a couple of pieces of flash fiction mixed in with some excellent poetry. Thank you all for sharing your words with us.

If you would like to submit to the magazine, please go to [peekingcatpoetrymagazine.blogspot.co.uk](http://peekingcatpoetrymagazine.blogspot.co.uk) for all the details. All previous issues of the magazine are available on Lulu.com. We appreciate your support!

*Sam*

Samantha Rose  
Peeking Cat Poetry Editor

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## **Tinnitus**

*By Fredric Koepfel*

Under the back step,  
a cricket twists  
a single dry stuck nail.  
He is joined at twilight  
by his scrawny brethren  
from every meadow  
and farm, tuning their  
scratchy legs to the pitch  
of prairie fire. The field  
sways under the weight  
of their hunger. They  
gnaw at the ragged edge  
of sleep.

## **Crashing with Buddy Holly**

*By Fiona Sinclair*

A wintry walk shod in boots with bald tyre's tread,  
Buddy Holly on Walkman you did not see  
the ice snickering with slap stick intentions,  
pavement's punch awaking the disorder like a sleeping curse.

Your symptom's alien language clumsily translated to GP as  
Can't walk, pins and needles, numbness,  
after glockenspiel play on elbows and knees...  
doctor's diagnosis: Well you've been through a lot lately.

In the library your trembling fingers slid down columns  
in medical dictionaries stopping ominous as a Ouija board  
at MS ME MND, your heart amplified to a stethoscope roar as  
you scanned symptoms which on paper seemed a perfect match.

Wheedling your GP for a third opinion with another consultant  
who after a 10 minute examination, I can find nothing wrong with you.  
Why can't I walk properly? Answered with a shrug.  
Nevertheless relief unclenching you like a first gin and tonic.

Months on the symptoms slowly subdued leaving you  
lacking the muscle now to queue for the Next sale  
but managing to command a classroom perched on a table;  
unaware that the fifth column affliction still sabotaged your body...

## **Breathing in the Light**

*By A.J. Huffman*

Brilliant orange and gold flares, flame  
limbs waving in the wind.

They wait for first kiss  
of rain that will send their latest skin  
falling,

    floating  
    along the river,  
brittle memories  
to blanket the stones.

## **From simple to complex**

*By Pijush Kanti Deb*

A change in leaping and swinging  
from the botanical branches  
to the handles of buses and trains  
changes the living equation-  
from simple to complex  
where a singing stream  
sinks into a roaring river voluntarily  
compelling the pet-less cage  
to be refilled with the wild predators  
tempting the holy hymn,  
"Live and let live"  
to change into the devilish delirium,  
"Hunt or be hunted"  
bewitching everything for a change,  
below the running feet  
the soft earthen track  
wears a rough blanket of granite sheet  
and above the raising heads  
the oriental sky still makes the golden sun  
but with the declining carat of gold.

## **Out From Under**

*By Allison Grayhurst*

Simple beginnings,  
a tear finally released -  
a gleam, gentle as a dying flame.  
Breaking slowly the crust of  
dull months, the muddied fury  
of being carried by the tide  
and never holding the promised chalice.  
A shape, a shade never seen  
rising like the shadow of a waking giant over  
my rooftop, down the eavestroughs  
into my empty bowl.  
Moonlight is slow. A body stretches  
and pulses with new song.  
Rosebuds are stirring from winter's slumber.  
By and by the days  
are moving forward -  
a drop falling through.

## **Gravitational Collapse**

*By Jessica Wortley*

This is a story of grief.  
Memory turns like seasons.

Fingers glide across strings.  
You do not hear.  
The music of your mind  
calls out too loud.

The movie's on repeat  
behind your eyes.  
The false remembering,  
that whispers perfect pasts.

I cannot sing you truth.  
Today is not absolved.  
Is frosted glass.  
A staccato tune.

Memory turns like seasons.  
This is a story of grief.

## **A Child Laughed**

*By Rich McDonald*

There was no snow to cover the hundred hues  
of cold-burned tans and browns,  
coloring my soul-trodden day.

The grey sky, a blanket of clouds with no edges  
hid the blue, preventing any golden penetration.

Yet,

on a rain blackened branch  
alit an intense red herald  
singing: "Pretty, Pretty, Pretty"

Not a self promoting boast  
But a command to see beauty  
in my pervasively bleak December-scape.

## **Pareidolia**

*The imagined perception of a pattern or meaning where it does not actually exist.*

*By Tige Ashton DeCoster*

The wrinkles in your overcoat, are they eels,  
or covens of witches, conspiring with the servitude  
to steal your teeth when you sleep?  
Is the fold of your dress saying touch me.  
Does my face distress you?  
The women, cats, and crows, are probably innocent  
as they reveal things to you,  
but your lover is lying and trembling  
at your feet saying,  
this is not real,  
if you leave again  
there will never, ever be another chance  
like this one. Do you remember the trial?  
Do you remember what I did for you?  
And there isn't time! You are an important woman.  
Do your shoes match your stole?  
And he says that  
They should reflect the taste  
of your stature and grace,  
but it confused her,  
and people, in line to the corner near the butcher shop,  
stretch like a snake, before the image of the virgin  
on a headstone. The clergy, cash in hand,  
crane their necks to see.  
It will be a good day for the church.

## **Towards Alaska**

*By Ian C Smith*

He keeps hammering on about a shack,  
his hideaway in these Canadian backwoods.  
Language-poor, he badly wants us there  
instead of where he had agreed to drop us.  
I sense her concern, that sudden shadow  
darkening the time we thought we had left.  
She could try to save us by texting  
but her phone waits to be invented,  
like her boys waiting to be born,  
who will reach the age of ten, then more  
in what will seem to her a rush of years,  
and what good would a phone do anyway?

Only stuntmen hurl themselves from cars  
and what about packs, money, passports,  
future smartphones, boys growing into men,  
so few other vehicles, just conifers?

His ten-year-old accompanies him  
up front, a boy with an old look,  
a knowing expression, I think, wondering  
what his role could be in a foul crime.  
Stuffed in the back, we crane forward  
repeating reason and goodwill politely,  
grateful for our ride, as usual,  
but his clumsy insistence jangles harmony.

I picture graves in a valley carpeted with snow.  
Wind lifts the snow into a veil, or shroud,  
seen and heard only by crows and coyotes.  
Familiar movie and book scenes travel  
these lonely miles of road with us.

## **Cry Not My Love**

*By James G. Piatt*

Cry not my love,  
Warmth arrives on summer's wings:  
It will bring rhymes to overcome  
Your sorrow, wash away sad  
Tears from your abandoned being,  
Rouse in your heart a rapid joy:

Cry not my love,  
Amid a rose covered arbor,  
In my loving embrace your  
Happiness will ascend in a  
Radiance of hopeful fervor,  
Obliterating the day of its gloomy  
Rhyme, producing profuse aromas

Cry not my love,  
I will fracture the curse of the unlit night,  
Encircle your soul with a luminous halo,  
Bring into your heart a blissful gladness;  
And into your soul, I will build a renaissance,  
And a sweet song.

## **Feline Feelings**

*By Jennifer Wilson*

I don't mean to annoy,  
or get 'in your face',  
but you're always just sat,  
right there, in my place.

It's not that I'm awkward,  
or fussy, or rude.  
But you're really just here  
to bring me my food.

I might let you pet me,  
a bit – to be nice.  
Or even surprise you  
with sparrows or mice.

But don't get too settled;  
I might change my mind.  
That is, after all,  
the perk of cat-kind.

## **New Chapter, New Verse**

*By Scott Thomas Outlar*

The screech owl  
perches silently  
eyeing its prey from a position of stealth  
Spreads its wings like an angel of death  
Makes its graceful move  
Dive bombs without mercy  
Engulfs the snake, swallowing it whole  
Flies back to the garden  
Lands in the Tree of Life  
Nests for the night near the ripe fruit  
Laughs off all temptation  
Mocks sin during its glorious dreams  
Wakes to soar again

## **Only Memory**

*By Thomas Pescatore*

We go

off

to oceans

wander

like lost

ancient

vagabond

pink soft

hearts in sand

sad heavy

dangling

plot threads

left unfinished

no pens

no veins

no hands

struggling

left undone.

## **Another Darn Cat Poem**

*By David Blackey*

A cat remembers Egyptian  
nights when pharaoh stroked him.  
A cat will sit on your chest  
and breathe the air from your face,  
A cat's place is the tall grass  
where only his tail moves,  
and he will nicely bring you the carcass.  
A cat would sooner die than pee in public.  
Your cat defines home,  
but may tear you if  
you get close without permission.  
An actor could learn from a cat.  
Cats see you as marginal: they're not dogs.  
A cat is invisible except when he chooses otherwise.  
Cats claw your furniture for fun.  
A cat is poetry and prose.  
Only a cat makes you wonder about his feelings.  
The cat manipulates you.  
Cats never look like their mistresses.  
A cat loves the night when it can swim  
like a fish in the ocean  
without conventions and guilt.  
When hungry a cat whines and nags  
too entitled, too mistrustful.  
A cat never apologizes.  
You can apologize to a cat,  
who couldn't care less.  
There is the essential catness,  
wild, uncaring, sensual  
not needing entertainment  
though happy to swat  
the fake mouse you buy.  
Step on a cat , and  
hear a horror film screech.  
Your cat loves you and hates you.

## **Stepping out**

*By Francesca Baker*

gates open ahead  
breathing blue skies seeming vast  
lemonade light sparkles

rush of energy  
coursing through every cell  
opportunity

but grey clouds loom there  
clattering and rumbling sounds  
violence in the night

she steps out to - what?  
nothing to carry her here  
tumult and fury

wings of glass breaking  
trying to fly in the storm  
hope fractured and lost

## **Dear Liam**

*By Ramesh Dohan*

Nights, you took me on a private tour  
of the crowded room of your slumber  
I could hardly keep up  
As you darted along crumpled sheets  
whispering their names  
Then forgetting all about me  
pulling the light chord  
And leaving me in the dark  
to grope for you  
among the hill of pillows  
what soul as white snow  
compiled this endless list of misdeeds  
You read to me each night  
I like it best when you hardly utter word  
When we lie side by side  
after our passion spent  
Once again, grateful that day is breaking

## **Deconstruction**

*By steven harris*

Too many buildings jammed too close together. They could not breathe. Only slender shafts of sometime slightly sunshine touched skin of glass, skin of steel, skin of concrete, bones of broken culture ground into haphazard shapes.

So they walked. Not all of them at first. The tallest building took the first step. No hesitation. Imagine legs beneath a building, legs that came from nowhere, legs lifting up and walking, carrying the building out into the country and the sun.

Or don't imagine it at all. Seventeen million hits on YouTube for just the official council feed. No way to know how many hits of camera footage, mobile phones and tablet images taken to prove human existence. More millions. Who wouldn't want to see a building spontaneously grow legs and leave the city?

Well, plenty of people don't want to watch it now. Or if they do glance as another towering structure decides to show the same fuck you response to high density architecture in cluttered spaces, they only half see it. So many buildings followed the first that nobody can count them all. Most can still be located in isolated, rural spots. Some walked straight into the sea. Presumably they have settled down on the ocean floor away from cars and commerce and steaming wifi streams that, for all we know, may torment a building's newly evident consciousness.

Human casualties? That's what you care about? That's your priority? A new form of sentient life just declared its existence and people are all that matter? Nobody got hurt. The one thing in common with the buildings, though they be diverse structures housing diverse activities, diverse corporations or charities

or educational facilities or offices where other buildings are commissioned and designed, the one thing they all had in common was they were empty when they walked. Middle of the night. Closed for maintenance which hadn't begun. Freshly constructed but not yet occupied. Empty.

Don't know about you but I want to nod my head meaningfully and say "ah". Then I want to take the 'a' and the 'h' and slide them into the word 'empty' but not next to one another. Slide them in to transform 'empty' into 'empathy'. As shown by the buildings, I believe. Feel free to believe something entirely different. Or to be frightened. I'm not frightened. I'm not enlightened either. Just enthralled. Buildings can walk. Buildings are capable of making a judgement regarding their environment and of acting upon their assessment of the situation. Do they speak? Will we listen?

Dangling questions met by broken sentences and frequent silence, a topographical map of which might resemble a cityscape which shows evidence of missing buildings.

**Yo Mister Lo's home's cluttered like his head.**

*By Gerard Sarnat*

Unstuffed chairs -- nail-polished limbs sawed off, bound to ceiling tapestries  
like

hanging

participles...

punch/ shred canopies,

deal poker chips top of card tables set up on the Ming bed's Dasmask spread.

No matter when or where, catnap mustache whistles trigger spatula wars

between past

and present kitchen agita stench.

Bats that can see the wind  
and perceive other worlds  
take orders to unlock  
hound choke chains,  
unbolster the damselfly's urn  
from banyan cradles  
so snails might demolish  
the pining panopticon's  
black ice night,  
inhabit his melancholy,  
salt it away.

If breath mints venture out to Comic-Con during the day, sociopaths  
divebomb the recent widower's gray thatch to patch blue jays' famished nests.

Montblanc fountain pens  
pinball though mosquito netting  
global warming now mandates for LA Februaries,  
drip a trick question on parchment sealed in a pinot noir  
castaway: *Whether the weather through New Years is the loneliest?*

Lightning-in-a-bottle, after his squirrely mind uncaps  
recessed lighting's Christmas Eve camcorder memoirs of dishpan quibbles  
from their foxhole;  
Lo wipes down  
a vintage Winchester, presses its engraved barrel against one temple.

## **How We Must Leave**

*By Alannah Taylor*

A dirty-eyed stranger is trying to put a price on you.  
With lips and fangs, you decimate his hopes and his fears  
In a twofold fashion.

Somebody is kissing somebody.  
You are not afraid.

She wants to know how you and your lover divide human nature between  
yourselves,  
And so you explain that you are both whole.

There are lines of private tension creasing around his eyes. He thinks that  
somebody like you cannot actually do this. You can see that he's sort of  
laughing inside.  
You apply a rolling pin hard against the creases.

They are edging the conversation closer to asking you about your genitals.  
You race ahead of them, point down crudely and whisper, 'stripy'.

He reaches a hand out for you.  
You give him a tissue and skip away.

He is uneasy because you do not clasp your bones together in a tight knot  
under his gaze.  
You smile, and continue to breathe.

She says you must choose between career and family now.  
You say, 'The heart is a misshapen pump. I love with my brain'.  
You say, 'Don't you dare touch my freedom'.

He tries to touch your body.  
You strip naked, do a backflip through and ring of fire, and declare that your  
body will never be under joint ownership.

She has dark circles, circling dark secrets, circulating as cloaked rumours: he  
has sunk to this.  
You will not respect the awkwardness,

You slip a covert phone number under the table, and give a grave smile.

Slowly, as we amass in our multitudes, we will start to walk away from here.

## Persistence

By Robert Wexelblatt

My daughter keeps trying to read what we still calls books on her digital tablet but can't. She's confessed this failure to me three times, which means she feels some duty to master the newfangled thing, maybe an obligation to the person who gave it to her for Christmas two years ago. It's also possible that she's struggling to remain *au courant* because she's stumbled onto that dusty plateau where the anxiety of middle age has gotten a grip on her. I understand that; I used to define middle age as  $N + 5$ , where  $N$  = however old I was. So at forty she perseveres, doing her best to believe that, next time, the promises of portability, convenience, cost, searchability, and lit-up screens will be fulfilled.

The desert night falls cold. The huge dry sky is a riot of stars and the moon looks like a defunct sun, turned corpselike silver instead of vital gold. Abraham enters the tent reluctantly, sighing with compunction. How long has it been since her menopause? Decades. She will submit—she always does—but horribly, smirking, with that little scoffing laugh of hers, and, no doubt, some crack about the guaranteed son and yet another nasty remark about the strutting handmaiden. The physics of the business, the lack of passion and sheer absurdity of it, all these wrinkles and sagging, the noises—this must be yet another test, or perhaps a punishment for daring to speak up for humanity and bargain over that wicked city. But no, surely this is a test, the most cruelly intimate of them all, the last.

## About the Authors

**Francesca Baker** is a scribbler, wanderer and ponderer. Prefers pencils to pens. Read more at [www.andsoshethinks.co.uk](http://www.andsoshethinks.co.uk)

**David Blackey** is an American cat lover and a retired civil rights lawyer, whose work has been published in the US.

**Tige Ashton DeCoster** is a music teacher living in Seattle, Washington. He attends the University of Washington, and is receiving his degree in cultural anthropology and creative writing.

**Ramesh Dohan** is a poet and short fiction writer hailing from the city of Toronto, Canada. Ramesh has been previously published in the Ascent Aspirations, Boston poetry Review, The flask review, The Boston Literary Review, South Ocean Review, Sentinel Review, The Coffee Journal and The Camel Saloon

**Allison Grayhurst** is a member of the League of Canadian Poets. She has over 425 poems published in international journals and anthologies. She has eleven published books of poetry and five collections, as well as six chapbooks and one e-chapbook. She lives in Toronto with her family. She also sculpts, working with clay; [www.allisongrayhurst.com](http://www.allisongrayhurst.com)

**steven harris** is adverse to putting his name in capitals because names aren't that important. also, lower case is sexy. steven writes all sorts of stuff including fiction, poetry, songs, opinion pieces and shopping lists. He does not write on lavatory doors any more. his debut novel, From The Top, has been successfully crowdfunded via kickstarter and will be available in june or july of 2015. he lives in devon with an imaginary cat called kafka.

**A.J. Huffman** has published eleven solo chapbooks and one joint chapbook through various small presses. Her new full-length poetry collection, Another Blood Jet, is now available from Eldritch Press. She has another full-length poetry collection scheduled for release in Summer 2015, titled, A Few Bullets Short of Home, from mgv2>publishing. She is a Pushcart Prize nominee, and her poetry, fiction, and haiku have appeared in hundreds of national and international journals, including Labletter, The James Dickey Review, Bone Orchard, EgoPHobia, Kritya, and Offerta Speciale, in which her work appeared

in both English and Italian translation. She is also the founding editor of Kind of a Hurricane Press. [www.kindofahurricanepress.com](http://www.kindofahurricanepress.com)

**Fredric Koeppel** has published poems in a variety of print and online journals, including North Stone Review, Iowa Review, Many Mountains Moving and Vox Poetica. He lives in Memphis, Tennessee, and writes the wine review blog [biggerthanyourhead.net](http://biggerthanyourhead.net).

**Pijush Kanti Deb** is a new Indian poet with more than 210 published or accepted poems and haiku in more than 59 national and international magazines and journals [print and online] like Down in the Dirt, Tajmahal Review, Pennine Ink, Hollow Publishing, Creativica Magazine, Muse India, Teeth Dream Magazine, Hermes Poetry Journal, Madusa's Kitchen, Grey Borders and so on. At present he is working as an Associate Professor in Economics.

**Rich McDonald** is a retired children's librarian who has more time now to capture a moment in time or a stab of emotion in words. He enjoys sharing his writings with friends, one of whom urged his submitting this poem for publication.

**Scott Thomas Outlar** spends the hours flowing and fluxing with the tide of the Tao River while laughing at life's existential nature. More of his work can be found at [17numa.wordpress.com](http://17numa.wordpress.com).

**Tom Pescatore** grew up outside Philadelphia dreaming of the endless road ahead, carrying the idea of the fabled West in his heart. He maintains a poetry blog: [amagicalmistake.blogspot.com](http://amagicalmistake.blogspot.com). His work has been published in literary magazines both nationally and internationally but he'd rather have them carved on the Walt Whitman bridge or on the sidewalks of Philadelphia's old Skid Row.

**Dr. Piatt** is the author of two poetry books, "The Silent Pond" (2012) and "Ancient Rhythms" (2014); his third poetry book will be released in 2015. He has had over 600 poems published. His poem, "I Am" was nominated for a 2014 Pushcart award, his poem, "The Night Frog" was nominated for best of web 2013, his poem, "In The Meadow," was selected as 1 of the 100 best poems of 2014, and his poem, "Teach Me" was selected for the 2014 poem of the year award at Long Story Short. His books are available on Amazon, and Barnes and Noble.

Gerry and his wife of 45 years live in the room above a daughter's family's garage. Grandkids wander in and out all the time. It's great!

**Gerard Sarnat** MD received his education at Harvard and Stanford. He established and staffed clinics for the disenfranchised, has been a CEO of healthcare organizations, and was a Stanford professor. Gerry is the author of three critically acclaimed collections: *HOMELESS CHRONICLES from Abraham to Burning Man* (2010), *Disputes* (2012), and *17s* (2014) in which each poem, stanza or line has 17 syllables. For *Huffington Post* reviews, reading dates including Stanford, publications and more, visit GerardSarnat.com. His books are available at select bookstores and on Amazon. Gerard has been featured this year as *Songs of Eretz Poetry Review's* Poet of the Week with one of his poems appearing daily. Dr. Sarnat is the second poet ever to be so honored.

**Fiona Sinclair's** first full collections was published by Lapwing Press, Belfast this May. She is the editor of the on-line magazine *Message in a Bottle*.

**Ian C Smith's** work has appeared in *Australian Poetry Journal*, *New Contrast*, *Poetry Salzburg Review*, *Quarterly Literary Review Singapore*, *Rabbit Journal*, *The Weekend Australian*, & *Westerly*. His seventh book is *wonder sadness madness joy*, Ginninderra (Port Adelaide). He lives in the Gippsland Lakes area of Victoria, Australia.

**Alannah Taylor** is a student from London.

**Robert Wexelblatt** is professor of humanities at Boston University's College of General Studies. He has published the story collections *Life in the Temperate Zone* and *The Decline of Our Neighborhood*; a book of essays, *Professors at Play*; two short novels, *Losses* and *The Derangement of Jules Torquemal*, and essays, stories, and poems in a variety of journals. His novel *Zublinka Among Women* won the Indie Book Awards first-place prize for fiction. His most recent book is *The Artist Wears Rough Clothing*. Another, *Heiberg's Twitch*, is forthcoming.

**Jennifer Wilson** is a marine biologist living in Whitley Bay, currently editing the draft of her first novel. In 2014, she won a place on the Sagra Delle Words writing retreat, and took the opportunity to explore her poetry more. She also won the Story Tyne Short Story competition. Jennifer can be found on Twitter at @inkjunkie1984, and blogs at inkjunkie1984.wordpress.com.

**Jessica Wortley** is a writer and teacher currently working towards her MA in Creative Writing at Newcastle University. You can read more of her work on her blog [dancingbeepoetry.wordpress.com](http://dancingbeepoetry.wordpress.com).