

The Utican

Volume 1

August 2024

Note From The Editor

Thanks to the people of Utica, Michigan, and its neighboring cities, for their encouragement and support.

Thank you for reading.

- Luigi Murri, August 2024

promised lands

Mark Morgan, Jr.

dancing grass
earthflesh ritual
stormkiss courtship

pineblood tears
clutch weather-loved skin—
sun-scorched needles fall

my blue mind withers
vibrant leafpsalms
crack underfoot

rotted ash trees
carry abandoned nests
in gnarled fingers

snowsong lacerates
a bruised sky
the naked elm shrugs

saplings crack
epitaphs
written in snow

UNBIDDEN

Kent Flowers

They come unbidden

To my stream

And drink their fill

But fill no need

I write some lines

To uncover my soul

They creep into my dreams

And fill up the hole

So I spoke the confusion of my mind freely, tying together seemingly random thoughts with the fabric of poetry and the strength of my resolve to be free of all the pain that had been building inside of me, real or imagined, for far too long. Pain that was buried in pseudo self-analysis or mood alteration which allowed me to distance myself from my own truth, instead of dealing with it as it came, in small pieces rather than holding it all in until it became so unbearable I was forced to seek a means of escape. Now, having given up all my unhealthy coping mechanisms I am left with nothing but the pain itself, pure and full, never having learned that it is far better to be intensely uncomfortable for a short period and then let go of it, then to deny that I was ever affected by the human drama that constantly played around me without ever touching.

As the tortured souls

Of poets rose

In search of sonnets

To compose

My stream runs full

With turbulence

And spills its banks

With thankfulness

Blue Navigation

Martine Compton

To get lost in a crowd is to walk through the world.

Inveterate pedestrian,

Cartesian cartographer,

pickpocket, voyeur

and venturesome child

All come to the same end.

This street corner

pocketed away;

They all stop by here.

Welcome, visitor, Stay

as long as pleases you.

River drift, seismic shift

the weight of all past wanderers

Spilling cracks outward of the world.

Brambleweed Maps

Draw them near

Draw them HERE.

Tall gray and twisting

the monuments of man

wend upward. At once are

Bones Buried Deep

by the hemisphere sunk

in Nighttime's dreaming.

Such spectacles of the daybound

(pulsing hum of busy traffic)

are best contemplated Here.

True North has its consequences:

The world will not align itself

with minds arranged of corners.

Encompassing elliptical the possible,
cauldron of glory
brimming with fear
Intolerant of Knowing,

Bows in its continuance
straight, straight
to the edge of the world...

Branta canadensis

A. J. Frantz

A flock of geese float above, following me
down seventy-five, southbound.
Their formation disappears
as the skyline sinks into the horizon
in my rearview mirror.

I'm flying south for the winter.

Colors change sooner southside of the state line.
Autumn always makes me think of you,
and each Yamasaki will remind
me of late nights together
under star-speckled skies.

I've flown south for the winter.

One day I'll follow the geese back home,
north, into your awaiting arms.

But winter is long and bitter,
there are many months until migration,
and I flew south for the winter.

Biographies

Mark Morgan is a Detroit native, teacher, and poet. His work is featured in Dipity Literary Magazine, Peninsula Poets by Poetry Society of Michigan, and the 2018-2023 editions of Sterling Script: A Local Author Collection by Walper Publishing. Mark also won Landmark Books' Fourth Annual Haiku Contest in 2018. When not teaching or writing, Mark may be found reading, playing chess, or listening to jazz.

Kent Flowers is retired and lives in Shelby Township. In addition to poetry, his creative focus is in writing novels and short stories.

Martine Compton is a Michigan native. Her writing has appeared in Caveat Lector, Damazine, and The Deaf Poets Society among other publications. The founding editor of print literary magazines OUTPATIENT Magazine of Detroit and INPATIENT Magazine (Chicago), she co-founded the woman-owned Patient Records Music of Detroit with Andrea Halloran (Chicago) and Maggie Cocco (New Zealand and Michigan).

Originally from the Detroit area, **A. J. Frantz** is a current student at Oberlin College, studying music, creative writing, and environmental studies.

Thank you for reading!

Look out for Volume 2 in February 2025!