



Scout Faller
Marina Vladova
Bex Hainsworth
Devon Portielje
Jessica Sherburn
Sophia Tonnessen
Corinna Board
Tim Moder
Kat Rooney
Garrett C. Owen
Timi Sanni

lean and loafe.
a journal of new ecopoetry
issue one

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editor's letter

“If after I read a poem the world looks like that poem for 24 hours or so I'm sure it's a good one—and the same goes for paintings.”

elizabeth bishop

As I write this letter, I can hardly see my screen. Blinking into the Oxford sun, the surface has been nearly bleached out of existence. Sense tells me that this will only be the first of countless blank screens I will be confronted with over my six years here, working on a thesis on mid-century American poets. The empty white page is a beginning that every writer and poet must contend with. It is often regarded with dread. When I was selecting poems for this collection, I was searching for words that approached this fear with hunger and ambition, sensing the immense opportunity held in capturing our environment on the page. What I found was even better than that: new poetry that responded to the natural world with sophistication and spirit.

What surprised me further was the richness of imagery. Sure, there were recurring themes, such as water, dirt, birds— but the poems that lingered were the ones that responded to the tradition of ecopoetry by subverting, sometimes even destroying, those tropes that are no longer vital.

Lean and Loafe began in the spring of 2022 as a new poetry journal prioritising humanist writing and ecopoetics. Inspired by modernist and mid-century poetry, we sought work synthesising consciousness with spatial poetics, with our first reading period opening on 1st July. As the founding editor, I never expected such depth and variety from a genre I considered relatively niche. After two months and almost seventy submissions, I landed on eleven poems that exemplify some of the best contemporary ecopoetry. To reference Elizabeth Bishop, I thought about these poems for 24 hours. In fact, I've remembered them ever since. I hope they move you, too.

alice florence orr

Untitled. Tom Orr



design assistant
Colin Orr

assistant editor
Matthew Seaton

editor in chief
Alice Florence Orr

di agri cultura

Scout Faller

the poem about connection
drowns slightly
in its own impossibility

already, it has been
accomplished whitman
asserted he is grass & dirt beneath
o'hara asked if life was full of love
as the earth, of bodies

my body imprints on
the fist that presses into
it; my thigh absorbs
the energy and the shape
as well

breakage would be
thrilling, but
a real confrontation
is impossible

i let myself
be mediated by
various applications
like leeches dropping
google map pins
into my body

when i move, the curious
intellectual netting
moves with me
as a series of keyboard
shortcuts, the orchard
squatting endlessly
down the line

there is no grid
just a pressure point
behind each plastic eye
pain sprouts
like a seedling

it lays itself thick
across the landscape
becoming deciduous

my will twists into itself
like a barb on a wire fence
yearning will be intermittent
and endless

the hose works with
gravity, only
look how the water slips out
so easily, an afterthought

north carolina, 2016

Scout Faller

i'm deeply disturbed by the way you treat dogs
in particular that one with a human name
and

‘

split from the root up with my yeast infection
thumb the purple dye off plants and spread it all across our eyelids

‘

the yeast infection is trying to communicate something about imperial desires

‘

staring at each other's jammy lids as we built flower beds
the birds are crying in their tinny voices and drinking sour water

they will drown themselves on rain

‘

the fungi fan into the dark structures of their morphology
they commune, they glow green in the night.

they suit the humidity that decays you as you stand alive
they were here before the mailbox and the dinner-bell

‘

blue butterflies drink water out of my sandals

my cunt and my sandals are inextricable from the surrounding wilderness

i delight in small things, and later, murder them

my yeast infection asks me have you rested

the merit of barriers that sift inside and outside, hysterical and landscape, are tested –we
shudder our bladder to the garden. the wasps, all in our eyelids. we pick bugs out of our
teeth and bury them in the chopped salad. there were holes in our very skin, this whole
time. our mind is out there, with rows of unweeded carrots. the vessel of this body, shot
through with meaning. a fourth cup of coffee, and behind it, the mountains. the wasps
get angriest at high noon.

obsessed with our ritual, but the birds remain dead. we tossed them in the compost for the field mice to jump through.

i do not think of fire, song, or sacred containment. i think of cracked neck, taut skin, belch, red, rank, and wet feather

poem to the m-dash

Scout Faller

have you ever seen a
yellow jacket
clean its antennas?

washing its hands of all
this sweet nectar business
wiggling its ass or groin
stinging with a keen pleasure
dies, if it flies too far from home

(i wish i could kiss a wasp)

thinking of you like
the little snouts of flies
when they lay thick on my
calves, breathing there

you are one small thing,
a footnote
and i am obsessed

(i'd say your name only
it sticks, slightly
like crystallized honey
sunk to the bottom of the jar)

late summer tuscarawas county

Marina Vladova

In the still green hills of Tuscarawas County
A yellow woolly-bear, confined to extraordinary feats,
Sidestepped a single stem of clover.
While raptors, talons drawn, soared overhead,
I focused on the hairy climate prophet down below
Wondering why so much depended on
The blemishes and surfaces of things.
Black bands like book ends marked its body
Signifying harsher weather drawing near
And since direction evidenced the source and
Rush of fickle winds, I wondered
If the fuzzy one was backing up
Or—surging forward in a heap.
Along the riverbank, held steady like an auger,
A leggy swingset, poised for hibernation, creaked
Resisting keener winds and knaves less
Genial than I was able to perceive.

the fall

Marina Vladova

“At nightfall, at the outskirts of the village, two children are threatened by a nightingale.”

Max Ernst

With our arms outstretched and unmeasured
As if taking in the width of the earth or all creation
Two whirls wound their bodies into frenetic ebullience—
Two small sweaty particles of homespun
Freedom, speed, and victorious submission
Heads back, toes barely touching the cut
Lawn between two hardy plum trees
Fixed firmly below the open window
Through which then a voice scolded
Stop with the spinning and so they did
And they lowered their chins and arms in shame.



Solitary swan, Menai Strait. Morning-meadow Jones

walnut street

Bex Hainsworth

is lined with oak trees.

No sharp crack of fossilized
brain tissue, all ridges, like the inside
of a rodent's skull, beneath my feet
as I walk to the bus stop at dawn.

Instead, cupless acorns bursting, splitting,
as furniture becomes firewood.

There is a mushroom. It seems to be
growing out of a paving stone,
pressing its bare feet against the cold slab,
far from soil, leaning wearily against a wall.

It is a pound of grimy flesh, an amputated limb.

Passed over, like a beggar in a doorway,
head bowed beneath his grey-brown cap.

Displaced, rootless, lonely, in a land
with a strange name that doesn't match,
from forests and fields to this urban plot.

I pause, and mourn for this mushroom:
a headstone for all the disinherited of the earth.

sun leads me on

Devon Portielje

Well, I'm going
where the sun leads me on
Where I'm bound to
ginger tea and sickly dawns.
Where I always disappear
but I'm never really gone
I'm going to where
the sun leads me on.

I am loathe to lose anything,
So I have chose to refuse many things.

Yes I'm leaving till
the sun brings me home
Till I'm no longer lost,
just free to roam
And in this light
may I never be alone.
I'll be going till
the sun brings me home.

Yes, I'm leaving to where
the sun calls my name
Where the skies shed their weight
and cease to rain.
I have gone
but forever I remain,
To be changing while
the sun stays the same
I'll be changing but
the sun stays the same.

crossing paths with a moose on isle royale

Jessica Sherburn

First: you notice the rolling whites of eyes, a glint of amber irises between branches. Then: the startling pink of velvet nostrils, steam from a huffed exhale, a bramble twisted in matted fur. Retreat with timid backward steps. Breathe, eyes closed. Try to remember calm.

Instead: recall the summer you turned 17, the sharp echo of a doe rolling over your rusty Honda. Hot tang of blood and engine oil, the crescent moon blurred through crushed glass and tears. Thrashing moans from a roadside thicket. How the crickets never stopped their song.



subs so fast you'll freak

Sophia Tonnessen

Once upon a starry night my younger self saw
shopping strips and rain reflecting neon signs
both closed and closing. & was sure that being in love
meant love's pursuit. Why they live together in me now
I cannot say; the flecked noise of cars driving on damp asphalt
is the same somehow as the sound of I love you, but I can't.
How much of me remains among the weeds that relentless
grow between pavements; haven't I, in a quarter century,
made too much a mess (unholy) of desire?

Venture out in the strips of trees and bramble
living, fugitives, among the lawns, the ranch houses,
and the light: bats, shriek thin as October's frosts,
racoons yawning from their evening waking.
I am not here made for this gentle lightly world,
not only. Show me
the undulations, the tenacity and wolfish wiriness
of grey skies. So blooming becomes:
morning sex over the Ohio River & the curling calls
of geese so low they're as much bird as shadow; becomes
laughter brushing up against each other
like waves on friendly cliffs. Gunshots fade
into the background of our bones. Yes death desires us.
Yes, my Twitter presence is less than tangible.
Today I got a little freer, though, and untangled us from thorns.
Time to make the mess holy. Today
I wandered into the weeds of the vacant lot and took your hand.

a celebrity eats a live water spider on TV

Corinna Board

I/

The spider crouches under the glass,
unaware of what's about to happen.

A mess of crumpled legs;
it ties itself in knots & tries to hide
in the cage of its own body,
it becomes small,
so small.

II/

Google:

Do spiders feel fear?
Do spiders feel pain?
Do spiders feel?
Do spiders
Do
...

III/

[https://www.britannica.com/animal/water-spider:](https://www.britannica.com/animal/water-spider)

ponds slow-moving streams
fresh water

body slowly

collapses

mother

Corinna Board

When I see her running towards me,
I can't quite believe it:
first hare of the year and it's already June.

All through March, I scanned the fields,
saw nothing but birds and a herd of roe deer
bolting towards the nearby woods.

In the seconds before she notices me,
I hold my breath
resisting the urge to reach for my phone.

Her golden-brown body; sleek and muscular,
so vulnerable in the short grass.

Soon, she'll be gone;
her leverets are waiting somewhere in that meadow.

Later on, I sit in the garden
while the sun stains the sky red.
I can't stop thinking about the hare.

I wonder how it feels to leave your children?
The constant battle for survival, the never-knowing.

Searching for the warm nest of their bodies in the field,
and finding only silence.

stone chimney

Tim Moder

Walking through the Boreal spillway
looking for an old stone chimney, through
the Alder brush and bracken to both of our
chagrin I surprised a welcomed friend.

A least chipmunk- a bully, he gave me the eye.
Forced from his leisure he climbed the nearest
Popple where he began to mutter and murmur, tisk
and yawn, to preach, to scold, rebuke, and to berate.

With solemn antics and alert apprehensions
he stared and cursed, shook and chattered,
called me fresh, pushed my buttons, screamed,
yelled, pouted, repeated - geez.

With outrageous accusations, he stamped his four
soft feet, then started toward the Cedar swamp.
But he was most inspired and continued his invective
broadside from tree to humorless tree. All day. For me.

Back at the car the Brown Eyed Satyrs have been
relaxing on coyote dung for six hungry hours.
Invisible evangelizing choirs sing the world to health.
I don't want to close the door. Stone chimney.

piping plover

Tim Moder

In the enemy mountains lying face down like an
oversleeping owl I twist in my sleeping bag, fold
up my notebook, and smile. I'm thinking about

another afternoon a thousand miles from here
down a dry creek lined with black willow. My eyes
translate a topographic map filled with Oak galls

and mistletoe. Burl and witch's broom. I walk through
grey dunes around a Piping Plover nesting area upon
the great lake while I lay in a dream in West Virginia.

On the lean shore my footprints appear next to a sea
gull that juts from black creosote sand, a tiny crushed
icarus. As surely as false gods love praise I love living

in time. Outside my tent I imagine I hear the sound of
a tired bear, or a large boar, snuffling toward smells
smuggled in jars, sacks, and metal containers of trail food.

I do not tell anyone what I have seen or what I have
done, or dreamed. I keep these readings to myself,
as others save the faces of the people they have been

Read issue two,
out now.



sudden exit

Kat Rooney

There is a turkey poult in the gravel path,
lying on its back, thrashing.

Playing? No, not playing. Not here,
right in the eye of the sun—

one shiny black bead in its eggshell skull
staring up at a portion of sky,

the other mangled or maybe missing,
though I can't tell which.

Its mother clucks quietly, out of sight,
somewhere in the cool brush.

A modest strip of bark will have to do
as a makeshift stretcher,

but in transport the poult's limp neck—
broken, I now realize—lolls over the edge.

This is too much. And all along, the sun
beating the earth senseless.

In a grassy patch of shade the poult gives
one last kick, then goes soft.

Ants creep over its belly. I sweep them off.
But its eye, its eye still shining

as I watch (that is all I can do) for a final signal,
for some small rush of light.

powder river country

Garrett C. Owen

Ground is upturned,
virgin soil broken
a shaft six feet long,
six feet deep.

Our dark brother wrapped
in white. His shape shown
by cords tied around his limbs,
his trunk, his head.

Pa is a stone and Ma
is the prairie wind and we
are buffalo grass and
bent wildflowers.

The soil is returned
and it claims brother Ben.
Oregon beyond the horizon,
the wagon train.

the ordinary affair of being human

Timi Sanni

I have come to love this looking
from afar—this awe in the eyes
of the kiwi gazing up at the falcon
flying through the cotton blue sky.

Tell me about pride and I will tell you
of the humility of the wingless.
The more I saw my heroes, the more
ordinary they became—flesh as soft,

bone as brittle, blood even redder
than the crimson of marrows.
On earth, there is nothing more
extraordinary than just being human.

All that lies on the horizon of this
is vanity. The arrow that breaks
a kiwi's skin will break the falcon's.
And I have seen giant birds bleed.

It's ugly. I prefer the beauty of their
lush feathers, the tempest of their winds.
So, let no bird get so drunk on the high
winds, that it stares at the arrow point

of death. I promise you: No kiwi
will jump off a cliff, in haste, even
for the miracle of wings. It's beautiful,
this dance. So let the music go on

a little longer. The kiwis will keep
making their small noises. Their little
feet will mark the ground for time.

the origin of sweetness

Timi Sanni

In the wild, beneath a bowing palm tree,
red-chested monkeys gather
around a pile of bananas, yellow-ripe as longing,
yabbering and yabbering, bare bottoms
deep in the mud as they munch fruit
after fruit. I watch from my house of leaves.
They could leave a void in the place
of the mountain, and still cry hunger.
Or they could eat enough to realize
that even a giant dream would not fill
the appetite for life, that the treetops lay bare
deep in the woods, their branches aching
in their wait for the mischief of limbs.

When I failed a test at school,
I crammed my mouth full of suya
to simulate the experience of joy.
But when I swallowed, everything,
even salt tasted bitter in my mouth.
How long was it before I traced the origin
of sweetness to its one eternal source?
All my life, I've held an emptiness
inside of me, and tried to fill it with food,
money, lust, power. It wasn't until I arrived

at hunger, like a bird flying empty
into the morning sky, that I knew
how faith kept the belly light but full.
I watch as, one by one, the monkeys
began to leave, to heed the voice that called
in the silence of the trees. I watch
as one sat there stubbornly, sole god
of the yellow dream, eating what the others
forsook, in wisdom, for meaning.



Untitled. Matthew Seaton

contributors

scout faller

Scout (they/them) has poetry in *best buds! collective*, *pompom press*, and *day job journal* and a poem forthcoming in *voidspace zine*. They live and write in the low fog over San Francisco with their partner and an irascible cat. You can find them on twitter @_husandlesbian, on instagram at @_theminem__.

marina vladova

Born in Odesa, Ukraine, Marina finds herself thinking and writing about gooseberries, resettlement, and migratory loss. She's grateful to be able to integrate poetry & storytelling into clinical settings through her work in Ohio as a narrative medicine facilitator. Marina has written for *Big*, *Surface*, and *Interview Magazine* and has poems in *Sage Cigarettes Magazine* and *Neologism Poetry Journal*.

bex hainsworth

Bex Hainsworth is a poet and teacher based in Leicester, UK. She won the Collection HQ Prize as part of the East Riding Festival of Words and her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Heavy Feather Review*, *Atrium*, *Okay Donkey*, *bath magg*, and *trampset*. Her debut pamphlet of ecopoetry will be published by Black Cat Poetry Press in 2023. Find her on Twitter @PoetBex.

devon portielje

Devon Portielje is primarily a musician and songwriter originally from Ottawa, Canada. He holds a Diploma in Music Industry Arts at Fanshawe College. Since 2010 he has written, recorded and toured with indie-folk-rock group Half Moon Run. When not on tour or travelling, Devon calls Montréal home. 'Sun Leads Me On' first appeared as a track on Half Moon Run's record of the same name.

jessica sherburn

Jessica Sherburn is a teacher, writer, and clumsy hiker. She lives in Chicago with her two cats, Ollie and Davie.

sophia tonnessen

Sophia is the author of the collection *Ecologia*, released last year by Unbound Edition Press, and a winner of the 2021 Sappho Prize for women poets

corinna board

Corinna Board teaches English as an additional language in Oxford. She grew up on her grandparents' farm in the Cotswolds and is particularly inspired by nature. Her work is published or forthcoming in *the6ress*, *Black Cat Poetry Press*, *Green Ink Poetry*, *Anthropocene*, *Spelt* and elsewhere. Find her on Instagram @parole_de_reveuse and on Twitter @CorinnaBoard.

tim moder

Tim Moder is a poet living in northern Wisconsin. He is a member of Lake Superior Writers and The Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. His poems have appeared in *The Sinking City Review*, *The Coachella Review*, *Paddler Press*, and others. You can find him via timmoder.com

kat rooney

Kat Rooney is a writer based in upstate New York. She graduated from Vassar College in 2019 with an English major and history minor. Her nonfiction has appeared in *Podcast Review*, a *Los Angeles Review of Books* channel, where she edits and writes reviews. She loves the Hudson Valley, and particularly this one little stream there with a footbridge where she often goes to write, or to sit and do nothing.

garrett c. owen

Garrett C. Owen is in the process of abandoning Kansas City. His micro-fiction has appeared in *The 100 Word Project* and the book *Dear Motel* by Mike van Clevon, and his travel writing can be found on his blog, *Fair Weather Friend*. Owen is a student through the UCLA Extension Writing Program and prefers surfing and red wine to siege warfare.

timi sannii

Timi Sanni writes from Lagos, Nigeria. He was the winner of the 2021 Anita McAndrews Award Poetry Contest. His works have appeared or are forthcoming in *Black Warrior Review*, *New Delta Review*, *Palette Poetry*, *Frontier Poetry*, *Lolwe*, and elsewhere. Find him on twitter @timisanni

morning-meadow jones

Morning-meadow Jones (she, her) is a mother, migrant, and multi-medium creative, practicing various arts from her home in Wales, UK. Her photo art is featured or forthcoming in *TERSE.*, *Duck Duck Mongoose Magazine*, *Overtly Lit*, *Writers Resist*, and *Verum Literary Press*.

l.m. cole

Cole is a poet and artist residing on the US East Coast. Her work has been featured or is upcoming with *Roi Faineant*, *Corporeal*, *JAKE*, *Olney Magazine* and others. She can be found on Twitter @_scoops__.

matthew seaton

Matthew pours tea for the editor.

the editor



Alice is a writer and academic whose work has been featured in publications including *Extra Teeth*, *Scottish Review*, *Erato*, and *The Dillydown Review*. She is the recipient of The Sloan Prize (2021). Alice is a DPhil candidate at the University of Oxford and an assistant editor for *Podcast Review*.

