

POETRY NORTHWEST

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2024 JAMES WELCH PRIZE WINNERS

Kara Briggs
Kateri Menominee

POETRY

Rob Arnold
Emma Bolden
Kai Carlson-Wee
Leila Chatti
Erica Dawson
John Freeman
Janice N. Harrington
Anna Maria Hong
Hyejung Kook
Elizabeth Metzger
Tyler Mills
Nomi Stone
Lynne Thompson
Robert Wood Lynn
& more

FEATURES

CROSSINGS Lena Khalaf Tuffaha
translates Zakaria Mohammed

IN-PROGRESS Erik(a) Jonah's
School for Runaways
William Archila's *Cipitio*
Alexandra Riskey Schroeder's
Solutions

PRESENTING Daisy Rosenstock

ESSAY Lauren K. Watel *on*
Prose Poems

HOW TO Rob Schlegel

I CALL IT JOY Molly Williams

ART

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith



POETRY NORTHWEST

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AVANI TANDON VIEIRA

Siolim

Before this bird disappears
into the darkness of the trees
it must skim the surface of the water
so close
it could almost touch its reflection.
The river must turn slowly
past a bend in the shore
and towards the sea.
The women in backwater homes
must draw from it
wake to it
bring their children to see how it glimmers.
A man on a bicycle must ring his bell
announcing bread or fruit.
I must turn my head upriver
to ask you to buy some
to see you walking along a low brick wall.
You must peer into the depths of the water
wonder at its direction
at the ethics of skipping stones.
I must think how much of this
I will remember
how much will fade.
How long the bird will live
once it has disappeared
into the trees.

■

translation

at the cusp of evening
two women prepare a home
for visitors.
crescents of onion fall
from knife edge
a murmured exchange
arabic for *like this?*
a little more
the garlic is over there.
wiping dishes by the sink
I accept that what is distant
need not be lost.
there is breadth enough
in this life
for bridges.
things may pass through the hands
of others
but I will receive what I need to know.

■

ROB ARNOLD

Close

It was a close call.
That's what you say sometimes
when you have failed—
yet again—to die.
When, for example, you nodded off
and drove the rented Mustang
into a highway guardrail outside Scranton.
Or the time you slid five stories
down a mud-slick ravine
until a tree root snagged your foot.
Or when you cut a corner too fast
and wedged your bicycle
between two box trucks,
a thin blue column of daylight
shimmering before you
like a life you had yet to live,
the closing gap a kind
of clock counting down.
You could see the great
black tires turning at eye-level,
and you could feel the compression,
gentle at first, of your pinned
shoulders, your ribcage,
lungs squeezed of air
as you and your bicycle
were dragged along
the narrowing line
between this world
and the singularity
that awaits us all.
It almost doesn't matter
what happened next, that you
were somehow expelled
out the other side,
intact and unharmed,
and that it did not feel
like a rebirth or revelation.
But when you ask later
to be held close, this is what
you are asking for:
to be held the way
that death might hold you,
warm and fluid, like blood pooling
around the chambers of the heart,
then be released once more
into the cold clear brightness of air.

■

LINDSAY ROCKWELL

Speaking of Loneliness

I sliced strawberries with a razor
this morning. Poured them into
a yellow bowl. The sun
was doing its rising thing.
The weight of it. Too round.
Too unspectacular to bear.
And the seam of me—
so delicate, a horizon unmet.
Still, I prepare for magic—
listen to music that beats
like hooves galloping
the brink. Beloved, I'm empty
as a box of air. A great cavity
the cold titillates. I wobble.
My shoes too falling apart
to wear. And it hurts to walk
through wood. Pine needles
prick. Leaves hustle
and whisper trying
to spark my box's air.

■