

CONTEMPORARY  
VERSE II

THE BIRTHDAY ISSUE



IV

H.R. Link	Dust rides the air 49
Lauro Palomba	Giving Voice 50
Melany Franklin	Cards 51
Erin Jamieson	21st Birthday in Inpatient 52
Kelsey Andrews	Sixth Birthday 53
Kimberley Orton	Si x 54
Bobbie Saunders	Year of the Rat 55
Irina Moga	Samsara 56
Kegan McFadden	Ain't Nuthin' 57
Katherine Alexandra Harvey	A Meditation on Leaving New York Behind 58

V

Jordan Williamson	The Gift 60
Chris Johnson	a ripple on a still surface, or poem for feeling damp 61
Anna Mark	Selam's Murmur 62
Norah Bowman	Buckets 63
Jake Williams	While an Acorn Floated 64
Guy Elston	For a Good Time 65
Angela Kirby	Birthday 66
Joe Bishop	Housman 67
Taro Williams	Ressurrection; (gazing at the creature) 68
Luke Sawczak	The moon 70

VI

Hollie Adams	After We Marry and Head West 72
Jenna Butler	the legacy dam 74
Medrie Purdham	This Counterfeit Year 76
Sarah Wishloff	Pickle Jar Love Poem 78
Carmen Wall	Last Father's Day 80
Jade Y. Liu	Logical Reasoning 82

Contributors 84

LUKE SAWCZAK

*The moon*

The moon is almost full, I think.  
It watches out of place in this full world  
between a streetlamp and a jet  
as if it knew not where to stand.  
It sinks to earth with laughter on its face.  
This is insanity that frightens us. We laugh  
while saying to ourselves this is the end.  
The moon creeps closer like a mountain  
or a love whose days are numbered.  
Even what takes place slowly will take place.  
The spirit that draws the moon down  
only pauses, never slumbers.

It's hard to believe you had thousands of nights  
as a child you no longer remember.  
Life isn't long, but eternal, which means always  
and never at the same time. If you can't imagine  
what the world was like before your birth,  
it is because the world's a ghost and you are not.  
The moon had a beginning; it was made  
after the edges of the world were set.  
That's why it must someday disappear.

It must be beautiful to be a temporary thing,  
as beautiful as it is to last and never fade.  
Everything would taste of its disappearance.  
Every spring you would say to yourself,  
"The last time I might see this green,"  
and every fall would overwhelm with sorrow  
heaven never gets to feel. You would hold  
to every moment with your child, your parents.  
You would go places and do things  
you have meant to do for years.  
You would above all not be here,  
where the road forks, and you pace  
the final stretch for years on end.

*Literary Journal*, *Talking River Review*, *Westward Quarterly*, *Contemporary Verse 2*, and others. *Illusions* is her collection of poems.

Luke Sawczak is a teacher and writer in Toronto. His writing has appeared in more than 25 publications, including *Sojourners*, *Acta Victoriana*, *Queen's Quarterly*, *New Contrast*, and *Ekstasis*. In his spare time he composes for the piano.

Maya Schwartz is a writer from Winnipeg, MB. She holds a Master's in English from Simon Fraser University, where she studied contemporary Canadian poetry and the relationship between place and identity. She lives on Treaty 1 Territory.

Rosalind Shoopmann lives in San Diego, California, where she finished her master's degree and currently works at a gas station. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *The Disappointed Housewife*, *Boats Against the Current*, *Bullshit Lit*, and elsewhere.

Kristy Snedden is a trauma psychotherapist and poet. Her poetry appears or is forthcoming in various print and electronic journals and anthologies. Her work has been nominated for Best of the Net and a Pushcart Prize. She writes poetry to connect with others so that we might heal in community. In her free time, she loves hiking in the Appalachian Mountains near her home in Georgia and hanging out listening to her husband and their dogs tell tall tales.

Maya Somogyi (she/her) is from the Sunshine Coast, BC. Her work can be found in *The Itzml/ Review* and *The Literary Review of Canada* and forthcoming in *PRISM international* and *EVENT*. She has a BA in English honours and writing from the University of Victoria.

Hillary Langford Taylor is a writer based in Montreal and Toronto. She is the author of the poetry collection, *Dendron* forthcoming with Cactus Press in 2025. Her work can be found in *Yolk Literary* and *The California Quarterly*.

Carmen Wall (she/her) writes and lives on Treaty Six Territory (Edmonton) with her partner and young daughter. Her poetry has appeared in *Understorey Magazine*, *Prairie Fire*, *CV2*, and *Capital City Press Anthology*. She has been shortlisted for the *Vallum Award for Poetry* and the *Foster Poetry Prize*.

Jake Williams was born in deepest rural Dorset when Marvin Gaye asked what's going on, in a cottage with Owls in the attic and a serious damp problem. He was Feral Kid from *Mad Max 2* if he'd been a character in a Thomas Hardy novel.

Taro Williams (he/they) is a multidisciplinary artist and writer raised in the east-end of Tkaronto/Toronto. His work explores themes of gentrification, queerness, and urban living. He is of Nikkei heritage (fourth gen Japanese Canadian) and has attended Rosedale Heights School of the Arts and Concordia University. William's work has previously been published in *School Schmool* (2022, 2023), *Ex-Puritian* (2024), *Auvert Magazine* (2024), and *100 Stories: Echoes of Empathy with the Asian Arts and Cultural Trust* (2024). Williams is currently split between both Tkaronto/Toronto and Tiohtià:ke/Montreal, two cities he calls home.

Jordan Williamson is a writer and poet from London, Ontario. Their work has appeared in *The Itzml/ Review*, *Ballast*, *Tilted House* and *Funicular Magazine*. They contributed to the anthology