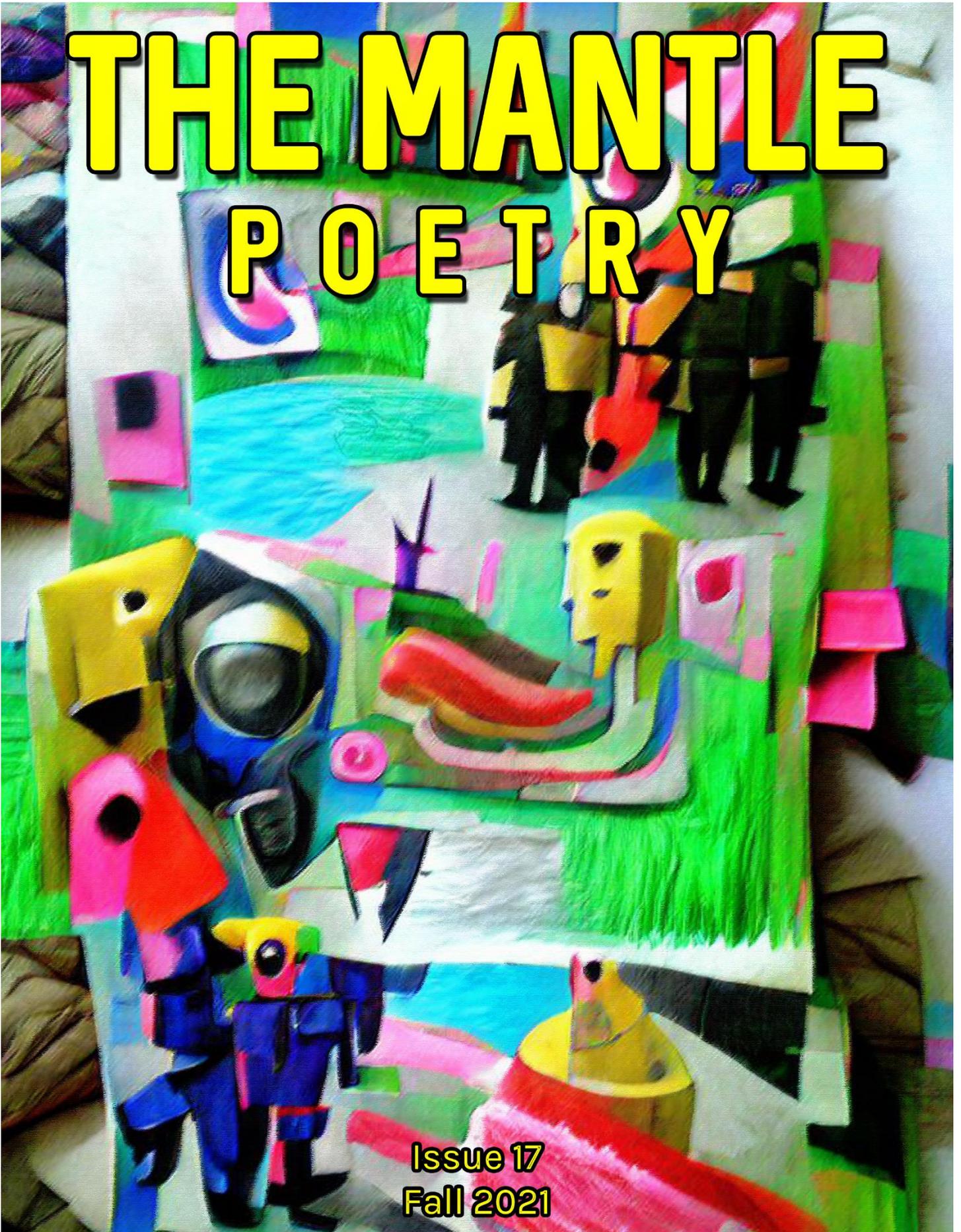


THE MANTLE POETRY



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Each poem belongs to its respective author

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Millicent Borges Accardi

Had Such Powers

We touch as if our limbs have fallen asleep.
Not even the genuflection of pins and needles
sparks a turn at the gesture between
us. Not the recognition of skin's dark promise
of touch. Not the silence either. I rush into
conversations telling myself that I cannot hear
myself speak. If we could only bridge the
dry arena of a marriage between us we might
try. The light is frozen over.

We dwindle and fall after soaring as high as
we dare into the moon, that gentle pet
of ours that listens and sorts out the playing
cards of our days onto the table, in neat rows,
almost like we were readying each other
for a game. This black queen matches under
the red king and the ace starts it off, sorted out
in straight rows of orderly necessity,
all on display before our eyes are put out.
The double-fisted Gemini ignores
the dangerous Taurus who rattles on in a verbal
march to a remote dark sky as she turns away.

Millicent Borges Accardi, a Portuguese-American writer, is the author of two poetry books, most recently *Only More So* (Salmon Poetry). Her awards include fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), Fulbright, CantoMundo, Creative Capacity, the California Arts Council, The Corporation of Yaddo, Fundação Luso-Americana, and Barbara Deming Foundation, "Money for Women." She lives in Topanga Canyon, CA.

David Capps

The Alchemists

The only way it could have ever worked
is if they had transmuted

inner and outer. Led to gold, rose to bee
living diving

thrush to bell. Sad alchemists whose eyes
were locked to

texts they studied, voices bound to snake
leather. If only each had held

the other's body, as if it were a volume
of incorruptible secrets

that withstood the fire, the frozen river,
the inner loss of hope.

David Capps is a philosophy professor at Western Connecticut State University. He is the author of three chapbooks: *Poems from the First Voyage* (The Nasiona Press, 2019), *A Non-Grecian Non-Urn* (Yavanika Press, 2019), and *Colossi* (Kelsay Books, 2020). He lives in New Haven, CT.

Elusive Feeling

And I sink in the summer as the wind takes hold
of this sun-shaped box inside
my rib cage.

The green foliage is green with pain,
and I'm somewhere else.

Gods of light recline
in my eyes, but still
I can't find you
in the dark.

On through the endless night
the candle flickers -
a feeling descends
from the sky.

This dying—

I already forgot.

Salvatore Difalco

Chrysanthemums

Flowers are in bloom, in mass profusion, vertiginously rioting, filling in all the empty spaces, all the emptiness. I relate them to you in more ways than I can reckon. I walk, walk tall and warm-breathing, almost atavistic and heavily perspiring. Truth is, the flowers fatigue me—their colors, their perfume, much too much too much. I'm spinning; I'm faint; short of breath. My fingers go numb. Revivify me, sun. Make me want for water gently, on my knees, on the ground. Meanwhile your smart flowers flourish, but your petals blunt my spirit. I agree the day is a gold dust gift, not to be dismissed. But let me sin by not accepting it.

Salvatore Difalco lives in Toronto, Canada. He is the author of five books, including *The Mountie At Niagara Falls* (Anvil Press), an illustrated collection of microfiction.

Jiu Cai—A Wish for Longevity and Wealth

I bought a dozen jiu cai roots online,
planted them in a big flower pot.

In northern China,
you can find it at any vegetable stand.

Stir fry with bean sprouts,
or eggs, or shredded pork.

In mid-April,
they were still green housed
to survive the ice cold nights
of western Colorado.

We can finally have dumplings
for the next Chinese New Year,
stuffed with jiu cai.

We'll cut all the strips of leaves,
leave the roots only.

One month later,
they'll grow as tall as before.

Kuo Zhang is a faculty member at the University of Vermont. She has a bilingual book of poetry in Chinese and English, *Broadleaves* (Shenyang Press). Her poems have appeared in numerous literary magazines, including *Coffin Bell Journal*, *Lily Poetry Review*, *Mom Egg Review*, *Bone Bouquet*, *K'in*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Rigorous*, *Adanna Literary Journal*, and *MUTHA Magazine*.

Bryan D. Price

Everything

little by little we walk misled by the camera's eye offering no animal explanation and embittered by the experience of becoming two it is late April and you are still sleeping awake to the sound of miniature narrations murmured very intimate personal history behave like a stranger May will be better grayer like the moon or the skin of a whale carcass washed up on the beach the end is near a dot on the horizon running inward and inward out of inertia until all talk ceases—go visit the paddock the boats the baths the windmills little by little everything back in its shroud

Bryan D. Price's prose poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *DMQ Review*, *Pithead Chapel*, *The Summerset Review*, and elsewhere. He lives in San Diego with his wife, a dog, and a cat named for Pina Bausch.

We Are Nowhere & It's Now

after Conor Oberst

My strands of hair are little antennas.
I can tune into the signals,

let the channel flow through me; I stir
my reflection in the bubbles

that pool together in the periphery
of my coffee mug—there is so much

to listen for. Nowhere are we
absent in living: this forever,

then some. We can fit infinity
within an inch, then some. Rope taps

the flag pole—resonant—
to a tempo set in dust. A howl

picks up, pushes these torn-out pages
to the floor. The hinges creak;

doors moan as they open themselves.
Foliage sounds of light rain,

the beating wings of a hummingbird
standing still. This is nothing

new; these are not my words. A coyote
leaves her tracks where the mesas

spread open. Twilight slips into
an arroyo. It's out there. I promise.

What it is? I couldn't tell. Not because
of secrecy but of breadth. I call out

a name, but the only reception is my voice
rolling back along the canyon walls.

Justin Groppuso-Cook's poetry is forthcoming in *The Tiger Moth Review*, *Haunted Waters Press*, and *Luna Luna Magazine*. He received a Pushcart Prize nomination for his work in *Duende*. In 2022, he will be a resident at Carve Magazine's Writing Workshops Paris. More information can be found on his website, www.sunnimani.com.

Submission Guidelines

The Mantle Poetry welcomes poetry submissions from you, no matter who you are or where you live.

Send your odd, poignant, beautiful poems. Send poems you're proud of, whether raw, refined, or jagged.

Submissions are read year-round. Issue cut-off dates are as follows:

January 15 for the Winter issue.

April 15 for the Spring issue.

July 15 for the Summer issue.

October 15 for the Autumn issue.

Send up to 3 previously unpublished poems of any style or length in one .doc/.docx/.pdf/.rtf/.odt file to **themantle.poetry@gmail.com** with "submission" somewhere in the subject line.

Include your name and an optional cover letter in the email. A 50-75 word third-person bio will be requested in the event we accept your work.

You may submit again after receiving a response. If your work is selected for publication, wait for the following issue to pass before submitting again.

Simultaneous submissions are encouraged. If any of your poems get accepted elsewhere before you get a response from us, send a reply to the original submission email noting which poem(s) you need to withdraw (no worries, and congrats!).

Feel free to query if you haven't received a response after 60 days.

We ask for First Serial Rights. After a poem is published here, the contributor retains all rights. If the poem is published anywhere else after, we kindly ask that you credit *The Mantle* as first publisher. We are a non-paying journal, for the time being.

Thank you so much for reading! *The Mantle Poetry* is grateful for your support.