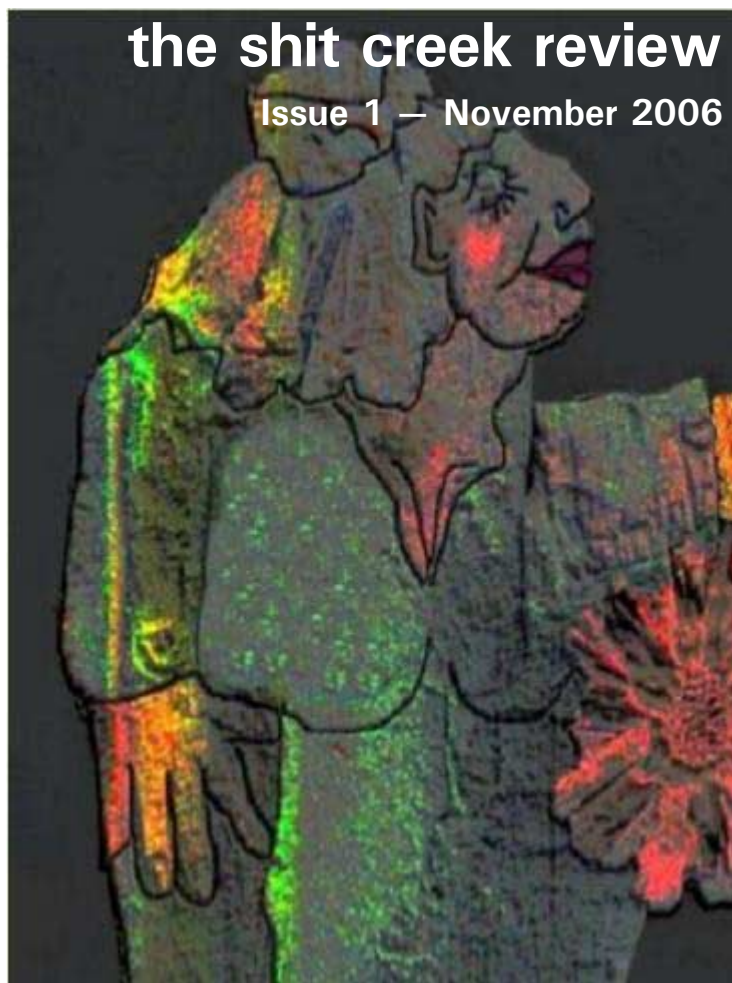


the shit creek review

Issue 1 — November 2006



The Goddess of Shit Creek: © Patricia Wallace Jones

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Paul Stevens — General Editor
Nigel Holt — Poetry Editor
Don Zirilli — Web design and coding
Patricia Wallace Jones — Artist-In-Residence
C. Albert — Contributing Artist
Peter Bloxsom — Desktop publishing and PDF conversion

This Letter-size publication will also fit for printing on A4 paper.

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Shit Creek, Wyoming: Paul Stevens

Editorial

Issue One: Inaugural Issue

We had a name. We had poets. We had an idea of publishing some of the best contemporary poetry around. What we didn't have was a rationale.

With a name like "The Shit Creek Review" several things came to mind: the idea that we as poets are often up the proverbial creek as far as publication is concerned, because there are those whose tastes just don't match with ours; there is the notion that poetry often takes itself far too seriously, and with a name like this one, we thought it would act as a *memento mori*: to remind us not to be overly hubristic about what we do. In the end, we just didn't want to take ourselves too seriously: we left the seriousness for the poetry. For, as someone somewhere probably once said: "A zine is only as good as the poets in it."

As the poetry poured in it became clear that there is a lot of edgy, difficult — even dangerous writing that perhaps more self-conscious zines wouldn't touch with someone else's bargepole — especially in form. The name seemed to attract it. Here was the rationale. Like the Muse, it came round the house wearing a pair of heavy-duty size tens and did some GBH of the aesthetic. The idea was in search of the magazine with editors sufficiently sociopathic/courageous/delirious (delete as appropriate) to pull it off.

In our initial edition we hope that we've proved that talented people can have an edge that other places might not seem ready to accept. We think we have.

Paul Stevens

Nigel Holt

November 2006

*The awesome moment of the inception of The Shit Creek Review may be contemplated **here at the Gazebo Poetry Forum** (as long as the link lasts). Best viewed while listening to Richard Strauss' Also Sprach Zarathustra.*

*Here is the original with endorsements the **Shit Creek Review page** .*



Hare Creek Sunset: Patricia Wallace Jones



Wolf Moon ©Patricia Wallace Jones

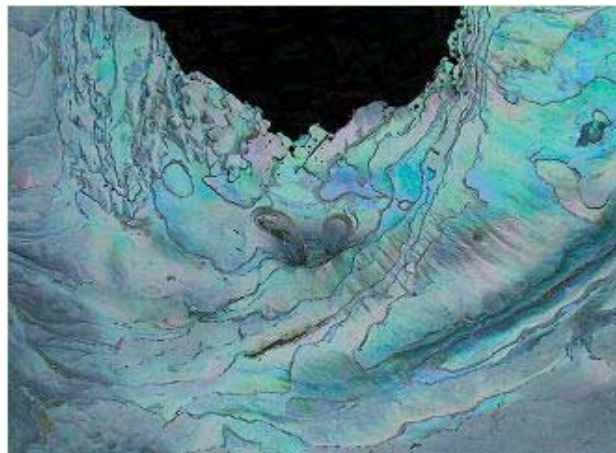


Sunset Mango in a Slump Mould: Patricia Wallace Jones

Mark Allinson

Elemental

The sea in the night calls my bones and tells
of the debt they owe to its elements:
of calcium soaked from its crush of shells;
of sodium distilled in filaments
of swaying kelp, churning nutrients
from oxygen, hydrogen and carbon
atoms that bond and crack in the solvents
of time and life; recycling silicon
in shifts of sand, and the nitrogen
falling with the sulphur of tropic skies;
it tells of the blood-debt owed to iron
and of phosphorus sparked in fish-cold eyes.
Your bones are mine, calls the sea in the black
depths of the night, and I *will* have them back.



Abalone Wave: Patricia Wallace

Sheets to the Wind

Last night I heard the wind make love
in mooned and wavy sheets of tin

and choose the long-nailed one, above
the rest, to rend his silken skin.

And as her rust-red nails were raised
to rake and ripple raptured pain

her rising-falling curves he praised
and raised and lowered her again.

His stroke on silvered skin, moon-lit,
induced a hum; she whispered more;

then hard and fast his frantic fit
of love made her his love adore.

Prised ajar she opened wide
receiving him like billowed sails,

flapped and arched in his potent tide
she screeched and tore her rasping nails.

Upon his breath she rose and fell
faster, faster now she wailed

enthralled in free ecstatic hell
so loose upon the beam impaled.

And when the wind had come and gone
and flung the sheets of his desire

I'd lost my will for sleeping on
my own, my heart, my sheets of fire.

Julie Carter

Cobalt

Blue is white. A pinch of cobalt turns
the weave of yellow fiberglass to snow.
Like veins in pallid wrists, no one discerns
the brittle gleam of blue too far below
the shiny surface. Skin is almost glass:
too blue or pretty and the surface cracks
with ice or brittle chemistry. We're past
the days of arsenic or lead; our tracks
lead off to melanoma from the sun
that makes us brown. And still the gasps of blue
depleted veins scream out for oxygen,
and still the pretty fibers break in two
so glass can pierce the skin and welcome red,
that in its turn can turn us blue and dead.



On Thin Ice: Patricia Wallace Jones

Julie Carter

Sprung

The yarrow died. He said the yarrow died
last year when I was too strung out on grief
to pace the yard. I couldn't bear the fat
cartwheeling clouds, the soil like fudge, the shit
of too damned many birds. In winter, death
is like an earthquake. It's not if but when.
But June's no time to die, too many flies
will gather friends and dot like berry seeds
along your face. This spring, he touched my wrist,
told me the yarrow died when you were dying,
told me its skeleton in brittle grey
was still footing the yard. I pulled it out.

Corey Cook

Resuscitation Annie

I happened on her
in a dream, lying

on the floor, all rubber
and collapsible chest,

just a torso, neck, and head,
her eyes shut, lips parted.

She needed me to breathe
for her. I fell to my knees,

tilted her head back, pinched
her nose, and exhaled

into her mouth. I then started
the compressions. I did this over

and over, breathing and pumping,
pumping and breathing,

but I couldn't resuscitate
the girl with no limbs,

the girl with the eyelids for eyes.
She kept taking from me

and I kept giving.
I should have known better.

She had no lungs, no heart
to jump start. I finally gave up

and rested my sweaty cheek
on her chest only to be woke

by someone's breath
on the back of my neck.

Jerry G. Erwin

The Nature of Condiments

Antoinette

a wonderful little blonde and greatly
beleaguered parent of too many children,
with a history of poverty, ill health, and
spousal abuse, all leading her to the
edge of doom . . .

was in love with me
for undetermined reasons not to her advantage
and when we were in bed, in the throes of
some very good passion, with all of her
pain and anger showing me what love was
really about . . .

she would put mustard on my cock, and . . .
said she did it just because she liked the
taste of mustard

however

I suspect it had something to do with killing
the undetermined but desirous taste of me.

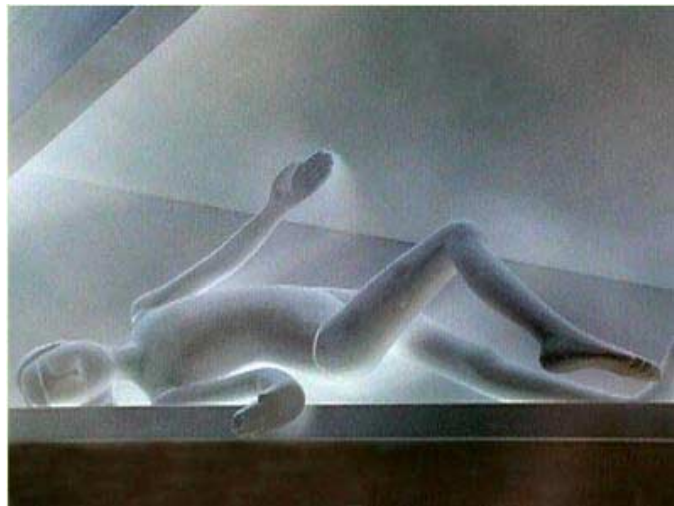


Untitled: Patricia Wallace Jones

Anna Evans

The Philosophy of Insomnia

The best place for not sleeping is a bed:
your muscles rest, without the side-effects
of dreams which scatter ashes in your head-
like masturbation as compared to sex.
A night not sleeping is some hours won back,
to sink the basket of the weighted scale
against the leisure time that you spent, slack
and thoughtless by the TV. Without fail
not sleeping makes philosophers of swine;
the faintest embers glimmer in the dark.
While the night sweat's damp horror pricks your spine
you hunt our history's hearth for meaning's spark.
Until at four, burnt out by disconnects,
you seek the act that numbs you, much like sex.



Wakeful Suspension: Patricia Wallace Jones

Anna Evans

Sonnenizio On A Line from Millay or, A Lack of Willpower

Love is not all; it is not meat or drink.
Although, because I don't much care for meat
perhaps I should say love's not fish or drink -
salmon or sea bass, that's what I really love.
Anyway, like drink, sometimes I can't stop
and love you too much. That's why, I suppose,
when we meet we try not to kiss each other.
After all, I'm married: there's no future in love
between us, so, we mustn't get drunk together -
we might be tempted to let our bodies meet.
Still, we can have lunch. Something meaty for you
and I'll take fish. We'll go easy on the drink,
pretend love's not on the menu. Fuck it, look -
come over tonight for drinks. Maybe I'll cook...



Sea Woman with Salmon (detail): Patricia Wallace Jones

Angela France

A Taste of Ginger

Gretel liked older women:
she weakened for grey hair, lines
around piercing eyes and the decayed
confidence to grasp where they hunger.

She'd found some reason
in therapy; in reconciling
sibling rivalry with her inner
child; but liver spots, or a bent
knuckle still captivated her notice
with a thrill she could not name.

Gretel watched her brother
deny the dark, and the time lost:
watched him grow diamond
hard and caged by their past.
She swore that she'd stay open
to her future.

Yet watching him
made her shiver, as if memory
were a snap of ginger on her tongue.
She knew she could never stop
searching for the ravenous desire
that an older woman had
once shone at him.



Grey Lady in the Window: Patricia Wallace Jones

M.A. Griffiths

Throwaway lines

I'll lose some things I will not need:
that tag, these toys, this plaited lead.

I'll ditch some things I cannot use:
that dish, those cans, these rawhide chews.

I'll dump some things that make me weep:
those bones, this basket full of sleep—

and I'd bin this ache inside my chest
if I could bag it with the rest.

— *for Sine the Brown*



Heart in a Web: Patricia Wallace Jones

M.A. Griffiths

Holes in the News

They put me in a hole and left me
there. You know the hole I mean.
You scour it out each day until
your armpits leak and blood smears
plum across your nose. When I try
to sleep, they megaphone me, pelt
me with pellets of news. You know
the news I mean.

And I know the other holes
where bodies lie, wrapped or bare,
over-wept or dry. They rot away,
but are replaced. Their faces merge
to one, its mouth becomes black sun.
You know the face I mean. Once

forests filled the holes with roots,
grave leaves rained down. Now
trees are felled for news.
On your knees, you worry at it,
dunk your arms to the elbow in suds,
scrub. You know the brush I mean.

There's a new hole scraped for you.
Wipe your forehead with your wrist.
Rest. What was whole is lost.
You know the rest. I mean once
the forests filled. Faces felled
like trees. Like rain.

Earl Haig

How we End up Here II

Two roads diverged in a wood
so I went a little way down each of them
you know, just to see how much
divergence we were talking about.

To my surprise, they both divided again -
not that it was all that surprising
given that I was on one road to start with.
So really, one road diverged in a wood.

And why do I insist on calling it a wood
when to all intents and purposes
it's just a pathway, or several
pathways exponentially diverging?

So all I had to do was to cruise on
through the exponential sea of footprints
up being up and down being down and home
being where the heart is and the supper.



The Way to Go: Patricia Wallace Jones

Nigel Holt

Coprocabana

Before I kiss her lips, my love's excreta
stuns me with its sainted stink; her stool
possesses power of a love much sweeter
than the flower of her words; her steaming jewel

(disgorged apple of her ordured eyelet)
beguiles me with its chthonic newborn breath;
turns asphodel to petals of love's violet:
O the shudder when I breathe its life in death!

Her waste, her wormcast, fecula and guano
are lovelier than any beauty's flax;
her nightsoil, dirt, her faecal matter, are no
mere substitute for what my love still lacks;
her shit's far finer than a ripe Romano,
for no love eats like the coprophiliac's.

— from *The Perversion Sonnets*

Nigel Holt

Canaan Wedding

The gush of piss that passes through your gusset
outranks the juice of Pippin, Cox or Russet;
delights with scents of bouquets rare as roses,
lavender and vernal grass in posies.

Stored in jars its power slowly quickens,
yet without a weekly draught, my spirit sickens.
The primal reek that wafts along the breeze
is redolent of hours between your knees.

But best is fresh that flows across the floor:
no better cleaner yet than aching jaw
which presses lips to service for your pee,
your stained stiletto lording over me.

My eager tongue laps not for milk and honey
but something with the piquancy of tunny.

— from *The Perversion Sonnets*

Patricia Wallace Jones

Morning Letter

I knew I would miss you
when at dawn the heron flew low
and fast upcreek, up and over cypress
to his inland haunt.
My stream runs too swift
for his taste, out of its banks
after weeks of rain.

And it is raining still, building
and building to three-flag gale.
I watch from a distance —
heed all warnings —
but wonder too
what words you'd use
to describe the rogue waves,
hills and gullies of spring tide surf,
the silver in my wind-whipped hair.



She Loved the Wind: Patricia Wallace Jones

Rose Kelleher

Sea Monster

Cold doesn't sneak in like a parasite
and multiply, it's something you become:
a single-minded organism, numb
and numbskulled, chattering alingually.
What a wiggly two-headed trilobite
we made with all our arms and legs that night
in someone's foyer; dragged up from the sea,
bedraggled, at the end of our one rope.
Wrapped in a single coat, we shared a skin,
a bottle, a kiss, blue-lipped and Cambrian,
our tiny brain too primitive to cope
with any concept so Darwinian
as hope; just body heat and you and me.
Dumb animal, and near-extinct, but then
there are worse things to be.



Sea Woman: Patricia Wallace Jones

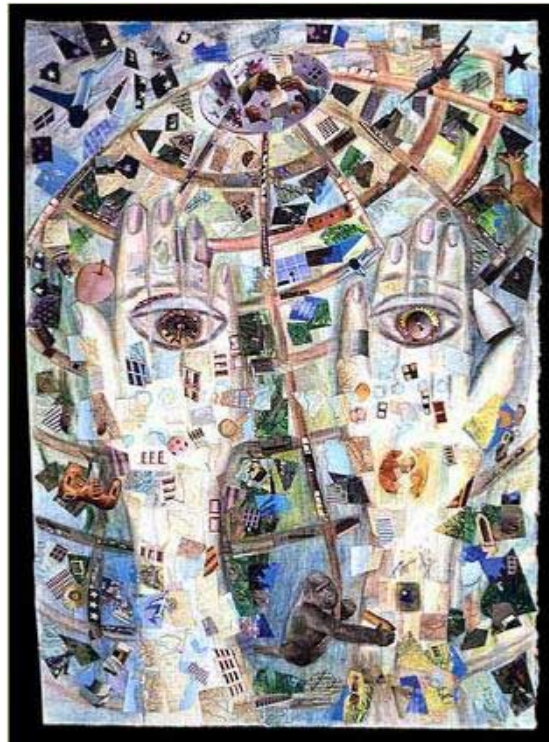
Janet Kenny

Rondeau to the Minister for Immigration

Many are speechless when they are betrayed.
 Amnesty International badge displayed
 on his lapel—a civilized disguise
 for the contempt that flickers in his eyes.
 Nobody leaves his office unafraid.

Blandly he bleats his mantra, tailor-made
 by bureaucratic minions who are paid
 to churn out empty legalistic lies.
 Many are speechless.

He is the arbiter, the ambushade,
 hacking the lost and homeless with his blade.
 Clinical blandness smirks as mercy dies.
 Icy politeness makes no compromise.
 Faultless homunculus, whose words are weighed.
 Many are speechless.



Eyes of Mercy: C. Albert

Quincy Lehr

Alternative Rock Song

Drunker with each snifter downed
 And older by the minute,
 You wonder where the trouble lies
 Despite your drowning in it.
 The stereo is up-to-date
 And blares out the Replacements,
 Taking you back to summer days
 You spent bombed out in basements.

This is the alternative,
 The hipster's rise to favor,
 The halcyon year of jubilee
 The Alpha and Omega.

The girl's stacked up with silicone,
 A batshit crazy boozier
 She'll ride you raw with expertise
 As long as you amuse her.
 The lounge is laced with ecstasy.
 She fumbles with your britches
 In lines and furrows other girls
 Had dug in blue-jean ditches.

This is the alternative,
 The advertising's target.
 An angry generation still
 Makes money for the market.

An earring and a sticker on
 The bumper of a Lexus
 Mark a demographic, an
 Expansion of the nexus.
 There's punk rock on the radio,
 On cell phones and commercials.
 There's punk rock in your hard-on though
 It's seeing some reversals.

This is the alternative
 To starched-up, stuck-up culture.
 It dominates the boardroom like
 An avant-gardist sculpture.

A dream home heartache? Not so fast!
 You never were quite viceless.
 The salary is 80K-
 The attitude is priceless.
 A plutocrat in rented rooms,
 An erstwhile hand at protest-
 Back on the wagon for a while
 So you can pass the drug test.

This is the alternative.
 The children raise their voices
 In choruses learned from TV sets
 Insinuating choices.

Mary Meriam

Basic Me

Bed is a popular lesbian theme.
 House is a lung on the verge of a scream.
 Owl in the tree is a thought from the past.
 Lake is a love that evaporates fast.
 Soup on the stove is the day to be home.
 Dark as the night is the time for *shalom*.
 Rose is the source of my quick and my calm.
 Bread is the fortune crisscrossing my palm.
 Gay is crossdressing on West Village piers.
 Age is a measure of all my lost years.
 Queer is a feeling, a flash of wild fish.
 Cat is outside with a paw on my wish.
 Sleep as a comfort is close to a kiss.
 Jan is the gentle critiquer of this.



My Other Half: Patricia Wallace Jones

Nic Sebastian

April

I woke from my nap and heard the goldfish
whistling. I got up and pressed my face
to the glass: Goldfish,
I said. Please stop.
It unpuckered its tiny orange lips
but didn't stop whistling.

I went outside and a warm blanket
of bees fell upon me.
That's it, I said,
but the thrumming crept
into my ears like dormice
and you threw a bucket of sun
over me and I became so bright
I closed my eyes.

.../cont'd

David Thornbrugh

Have a Heart

I have never seen my heart and never will,
I accept the dented arrowhead that Valentines promote,
I believe in the clenched fist of Jesus baring his rib cage,
I take at face value the heart-shaped rocks
jumping off beaches into my hand demanding
a ride home. All that weight just makes my heart
pound louder next door, a sexy neighbor
I dream of having. Have a heart
on a silver tray the width of a single life.



Be Still My Stone Heart: Patricia Wallace Jones

Gail White

Why I Failed to Attend my High School Reunion

Because it would have gone like this: Hello,
hello, hello. (You never liked me, did you?
Where was this friendship 15 years ago?)
You're looking wonderful. I wouldn't kid you

About it — you look great. (You hefty cat.)
And Jeffrey — are you married? Oh, you are!
Three kids? However did you manage that?
(For God's sake, someone point me to the bar.)

Me? I've just spent the summer in Tibet
Learning some basics from a Buddhist nun.
It's an experience I won't forget.
(As if you cared). More crab dip, anyone?

(And here's the Great Class Bore. You're still the same.)
Forgive me, I can't quite recall your name.



Blue Head: Patricia Wallace Jones

Contributors

to *The Shit Creek Review* Issue 1

Poets

Mark Allinson: was born in 1947 and raised in Melbourne, Australia. At first Mark believed that he wanted to be an airline pilot, and he completed a private flying licence at 17. Before long, however, he realized that flying was merely a metaphor of his desire to rise above the pettiness of daily life, in order to see the big picture. Eventually this desire for vertical transcendence led to a Ph.D in English literature, and he taught for a while at Monash University, in Melbourne. Mark is now entirely grounded, and living and writing on the NSW coast, south of Sydney.

Julie Carter: lives in Ohio with her husband and their strange array of cats. Her work has appeared in *The Adroitly Placed Word*, *Autumn Sky*, *Snakeskin*, *OCHO*, and in her recent book: *pseudophakia*. She is one of the readers for the popular internet radio program: *The Goodnight Show*, by miPORadio.

Corey Cook: Corey's work has appeared, or will appear, in *Baby Clam Press*, *Children, Churches and Daddies*, *Down in the Dirt*, *Eskimo Pie*, *JAW Magazine* and *Nerve Cowboy*. He works at a not for profit and is one of the editors of *The Orange Room Review*. Corey lives in Contoocook, NH with his wife.

Jerry G. Erwin: born in Nurgev, Latvia, was raised in western Kentucky, excelling in gymnastics and advanced solar physics, receiving a fellowship at Grossgow University in New York, where he graduated with honors in both Bio-Reverse Genetics and Ancient Aramaic Literature. Mr. Erwin has had numerous articles and fiction published in both literary and academic magazines, and is currently editing his 15 volume historic, psychoanalytical novel *Predatory Effects of the Bicameral Mind* (with drawings).

Anna Evans: Anna Evans is a British citizen but permanent resident of NJ, where she is raising two daughters. She has had over 100 poems published in journals including *Verse Libre Quarterly*, *The Absinthe Literary Review*, *Literary Mama*, *Measure* and *The Evansville Review*. She has been twice nominated for a Pushcart Prize, was a finalist in the 2005 Howard Nemerov sonnet award, and is editor of the formal poetry e-zine *The Barefoot Muse*. She is currently enrolled in the Bennington College MFA Program. Her first chapbook *Swimming* was published in March 2006 from Powerscore Press.

Angela France: lives in Gloucestershire, England and is enjoying middle age. She writes as an antidote to a demanding job, working with challenging young people. She runs a regular local live poetry event and finds literature in all its forms essential for survival.

She has had work published in *Acumen*, *Iota*, *Voice and verse*, *The Frogmore Papers* and has work forthcoming in *Rain Dog* and *Obsessed with Pipework*.

M.A. Griffiths: was born and grew up in London, but now lives in Dorset (Hardy's Wessex). She enjoys writing both free and formal verse, and participating in online poetry boards. Her work has appeared in *Snakeskin*, *Crescent Moon Journal*, *The Eleventh Muse*, *Mind Mutations*, and *Mindfire Renewed*, amongst others.

Earl Haig: Earl's prior publications are limited to *Dog Breeder Weekly* (2) and frequent light-hearted efforts in the *Poodle Newsletter*. There are unconfirmed rumours about Earl and the name of Peter Richards' plume. Pass it on.

Nigel Holt: Teacher and poet who barely ekes enough from his labours to want to have to spend it on pointless international postage charges to conventional magazines which have smaller viewing figures than the snail racing on Sunday evening at the Marmoset and Tabernacle tavern in Much Wedlock. Credits include *Snakeskin*, *Worm*, *Melic Review*, *Envoi*, *Orbis* and *Artemis Magazine*.

Patricia Wallace Jones: is a life-long artist and retired disability advocate. Art has always kept her sane and she loves having more time (not to mention inspiration) for it since retiring from the Midwest to the northern California coast. She hopes to connect with the viewer in ways that are magical, elicit a smile, a memory or a sigh. She is full of good intentions about submitting her work, but in fact, rarely does. Her art is in private collections and her poems and/or art have appeared in *Avatar Review*, *PDQ*, *MindFire*, *Confused Muse*, *Tilt* and in various regional art shows and galleries. When time allows she tries to post work daily on: <http://imagineii.typepad.com/imagineii/>

Rose Kelleher: lives in Maryland. Her poems have appeared in a handful of little magazines.

Janet Kenny: has metamorphosed from painter to classical singer to anti-nuclear activist, researcher, writer, illustrator and poet. Started in New Zealand and zigzagged across the globe to finally settle in Australia. She has published fairly widely as a poet.

Quincy Lehr: was born in Oklahoma and currently lives in Dublin, Ireland.

Mary Meriam: Mary's first book of poems, *The Countess of Flatbroke* (Modern Metrics, 2006), features an afterword by Lillian Faderman and a cover design by R. Nemo Hill. Visit <http://home.earthlink.net/~marymeriam/vita.html>

Nic Sebastian: hails from Virginia and is the proud mother of two boys. She began studying reading and writing poetry in her spare time two years ago and this is her first publication. More from Nic at <http://verylikeawhale.livejournal.com>.

David Thornbrugh: currently writes from South Korea, where he teaches English in a National University. He writes to push back the darkness a little bit at a time, in the same flighty manner as lightning bugs. He has been published in numerous small press journals, and once wrote the questions for a geography textbook. He prefers multiple choice questions to True/False.

Gail White: Gail has been hanging around the Formalist movement from the beginning, and “Thank God I lived long enough to see it!” she says. For kind words about her, see www.mezzocammin.com (under “criticism”). Otherwise, she lives on Bayou Teche with her cats, Pushkin (black) and Daisy (spotted), and husband Arthur (bald).

Artists

C. Albert

C. Albert is a collage artist and poet who lives in Seattle, Washington and exhibits in Seattle as well as nationally. Her intimate collages combine fragments from magazines with words and varied mixed media. Blogsite: www.runawaymoon.blogspot.com ..

Patricia Wallace Jones

Patricia Wallace Jones created the images on the Home Page of *The Shit Creek Review* (*The Colours of Cornwall* ©) and the front page of Issue One (*Contralto* ©), and generously supplied much of the artwork and encouragement, as well as advising on the overall look of the *Review*. More of her work can be seen at <http://imagineii.typepad.com/imagineii/>.



The Steps to Shit Creek: Patricia Wallace Jones