

# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Winooski

They called this river Onion.  
Settlers approach through the  
Buddha the many layers  
Elucidations of flowing waters  
peeled away before we are nothing.

But is there something intrinsic  
to this rooted in universal  
understanding? Or did this  
River grant its people breadth of life  
through the mystery of umami?

Did they grow thick beside its banks  
the flavorful bulbs reaching  
spreading in anticipation  
of feeding hungry gatherers,  
galvanizing some indigenous stew?

What honor this wild onion!  
What honor to a river!

There is honor in this place.

—*Buffy Aakaash, Plainfield*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Turnover Week

While sorting through this week's  
recycle bin, I made a discovery.

It's "turnover week,"  
the time when I give in to the fact  
that there's not another drop to be had.

Emptied down to the bottom, as much as possible,  
is Lubriderm Unscented Body Lotion.  
It lies next to Hellmann's Light Mayonnaise.

An empty Trader Joe's Lemon-Pepper grinder  
rolls around next to the  
Teddy's Super Crunch Natural Peanut Butter  
and its tasty companion,  
Bonne Maman Intense Apricot Preserves.

Scope Mint Mouthwash and  
Planet Dishwasher Liquid  
top off the pile.

This week's recycle bin roommates,  
next week's shopping list.

—*Susan Bauchner, Warren*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Hands

We were driving home from Worcester  
my mom's hands on the wheel at 10 and 2  
those hands that I must have known  
as well as my own once  
those hands that now seem distant  
objects of careful attention  
the skin shallow yet taut like  
delicate parchment patterned by  
repeated folding and unfolding of  
decades of living, the daily  
rituals of all the small movements  
that fill a life like the fallen  
leaves we had just tread through  
on the path that caresses  
the mountain river, cold and tumbling  
rushing away to the end,  
which is really a beginning of some other  
thing, a larger river, a lake,  
an estuary, spreading out like ancient fingers  
on familiar hands.

—Jeremy Beaudry, Montpelier

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Am I Birding Correctly?

Are we looking to see everything,  
Are we looking to see what we came for?

Are we looking to find it,  
Are we looking to watch it?

Do I want a small glimpse of everything possible  
Do I want one long look of the thing I love?

Have I done it well if I haven't seen it all?  
Have I done well if I heard everything and saw nothing?

Sometimes I know everything I see  
Sometimes I hear only what I know

What if I see it  
hear it  
and still don't know it?

Have I done it well?

—Shannon B, Waterbury Center

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Java Jargon

Is it the steam rising from the mug that brushes my lips?  
Is it the grip on the handle applying pressure to my fingertips?  
Is it the recharge that boosts my productivity?  
Is it the repetition associated with predictable propensity?  
Is it the mildly bitter flavonoids that dance upon my tongue?  
Is it the satisfactory warmth that embraces me like a hug?  
All these perks and more are why I sip my joe  
For there are few pleasures in life more delectable than espresso

—Sarah Rejoice Brown, Essex Junction

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Sand Dreams of an Hourglass Figure, but in the Morning Thinks About Mortality

A corset, of course, horse hair & cross.  
A defining form, like a sonnet.  
O, she could pour herself into it.  
Like love. Hooks & laces.  
Stays. But—would she *like* ribs,  
sinews, limits? Would she be *herself*  
in a boned garment? When  
Death, as skeleton, carries an hourglass,  
is he dreaming of the Maiden's waist?  
Corset, Old French, "little body."  
Latin, *corpus*, body. Greek *cormos*,  
trunk of a tree, torso.  
Corset. A sonnet truncated.

—Sue D. Burton, Burlington

previously published in Bennington Review, Issue 9, 2021

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Teeth

I sat down to write about your mouth, but you wouldn't stop moving it—I tried to get a good, hard look, like the drawings I make of all those faces in motion which I sketch in secret on trains, buses, and planes—old men asleep with mouths agape, drooling on their cable knit turtlenecks, men whose traps snap shut as they leave their dreams behind, to find me staring, my pen cross-hatching the details of their most intimate sleeps, The dogs whose profiles beg to be rendered in my notebook, but they won't settle down—trotting in tight circles in their nests of blankets. Your mouth is in motion. At least with words I can pin down its essence— I can write about how you lick the tip of your pen to draw out the ink when it sticks, and how your lips curl inwards when you concentrate, and those teeth—sculpted throughout adolescence by a set of wires and one proud orthodontist, and the space above your teeth where, when you smile—that smile, almost rectangular at its widest—your gums, pale pink as a smooth, clean slice of guava. And your lips—

—*Frances Cannon, Burlington*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Growing Up in a Vermont Town

I find myself driving by the house I grew up in,  
the green house on the hill  
with pine tree cut out shutters.  
The neighborhood looks the same  
and the white picket fence is still standing,  
the one my mother and Mrs. Noonan use to chat  
over with curlers in their hair.  
In the summertime, we would ride our bikes  
to the Mom and Pop's corner store,  
gorging on red hot jaw breakers,  
candied dots on white paper rolls  
and grape straws that turned our tongues purple.  
The backyard with the giant oak tree  
is now pruned and sickly,  
just a shadow of its once graceful self.  
It was my reading nook,  
where I escaped into worlds  
of rescued princesses, true love  
and the constant teasing from my four sisters.  
Many years have passed since I was a child there  
but as I go to leave,  
I think I can see my mother in her flowered apron,  
waving good-bye.

—Debra P. Chadwick, Burlington

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## A Moment of Endearment

As I walk through the woods,  
a fern starts waving vigorously at me  
attracting my attention—not ostentatiously,  
just dancing in the wind for the  
sheer joy of it all.

No other plants are moving.  
I can hardly feel a breeze.  
But the fern, as if by some magical spell  
has coerced the wind to caress her every frond  
and tickle her dusty little fingers.

I watch her mesmerized, swaying like a hula dancer,  
assuming she will tucker out, slow down, become still.  
But no, she just keeps rocking out  
to a tune unheard by the rest of us  
in the peaceful, quiet forest.

Though her roots firmly hinge her  
to the dark sweet earth,  
her agile spirit lifts her high as she curves  
and sways and shakes her ferny little head  
saying, “Come dance with me, you silly girl!”

—Susan Chickering, East Montpelier

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## thoughts upon waking to a new year

I am not my thoughts—  
though they knot and loop in my brain

as if they had shape.  
As if they had form.

The weight of me is

mineral water air

No more than the trees  
or the stars

No less than  
the rivers that move and meander  
as constantly as my thoughts do.

We are not scented as richly as the loamy earth  
not as melodic as the wind  
not as brightly veined  
as a summer coleus in a sunlit window.

We are cabbage.  
We are bullfrog.  
We are root and stump.

sustenance,  
steward, and  
resting place.

—*Mary L Collins, Lake Elmore*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Act of Commission

Another turn of the year.  
Another dread-iversary.  
Again my futile offerings  
count causes you found dear.

By intention  
not neglect,  
I forgo the customary decree  
*In memory of . . .*

~

Dreamscape Poet,  
you walked among us  
along Eternal trails.

Mortal tributes fall flat  
while my every breath  
implores your name.

—Linda Corelia, Montpelier

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Humble Goddess

She came to me in the spring,  
Like one of those optical illusions  
Where you are asked to find the woman's face  
In the picture of tree branches.

I was standing on the edge of the woodline path,  
Gazing down the densely forested lane, a deer path, my Shinrin Yoku spot.  
A massive boulder to my left,  
Moved there by this land's steward a century ago.

An assembly of four rocks sitting on top.  
The bottom two were bonded together like a yogi in basic seated pose,  
One shin crossing the other.  
The others lay there waiting to be placed like the last two pieces in a puzzle.

I gently placed her torso atop of her hips,  
Long spine, heart open.  
Her head would sit in one spot only, without tumbling off,  
Sending her gaze downward to her lap.

She came to life, to live in the forest  
With her serene, humble expression.  
Greeting me each day as I pause  
For my morning forest bath.

Throughout the summer a sun beam would reach through the canopy of branches  
to touch her face, warming her soul in this shady spot.  
Now the autumn has arrived, draping the boulder in a skirt of fallen leaves  
knitted together by Mother Nature.

Rest this winter, Humble Goddess, Namaste.

—Terri Crowther, Washington

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Food for Worms

I love this tangle in the forest when the snow melts.  
The jumble of snapped limbs—jagged broken rocks  
some rotted out, giant muddy roots exposed  
ripped from the earth during ravaging winds  
“Thou are dust and food for worms!”  
Shakespeare got it.

Moss and lichen spread their brilliant greens,  
soft celadons everywhere I look.  
Lacy mugworts climb trees, tiny forests soften rocks  
They have defied subzero—thrived under ice.  
I think of your last days: your skin  
translucent, head twisted on the pillow,  
eyes permanently shut.  
The chuckle released from limp lips.

Mom, look through my eyes now  
as they fasten on marcescent leaves  
still clinging to that beech tree.  
And to its right, look there! the shiny golden birch.  
its nascent buds emerging from strong limbs,  
trunk well grown, elegant  
as if winter had never happened.

—Linda Fialkoff, Fayston

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

u up?

only in the throes of nightfall did i call your name  
something between the 3 am text and handwritten love letters  
we were always something between

existing as one // existing in a vacuum

a pocket dimension you showed me  
a new place to call home  
home  
with you  
us

the words felt foreign  
a definition i couldn't quite place

but when the words fell from your lips they sounded beautiful  
like you made them up just for me  
like i could believe them

—*Kayla Juettner, Rutland*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Called by Many Names

What is the name of the one who likes their roots to stay dry and who  
bends hungrily towards the hot, southern light?

What is the name of the one who only appears in the darkness of night  
when the air is heavy with moisture?

What is the name of the one who travels hundreds of miles pushing  
eastward the ashes of disintegrated dreams?

If I call you by name, am I any closer to love?

If I call you by name, am I any closer to salvation?

If I call you by name, am I any closer to the lost part of my own soul?

The name of all things is whispered between blades of grass.

The name of all things pounds upon the clay-laden earth and rushes forth  
seeking no destination but farther down.

The name of all things is hidden in our forgetting and revealed in our  
remembering.

A living god—named and nameless—is here and now

In all things

waiting.

—Joan Javier-Duval, Montpelier

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## For Faith/#11

In the sanctuary in Chimayo/I cried for faith  
on the beach, in Ogunquit, I cried for knowing

At the market in Vienna, it was cold & beauty  
the way it hurt to breathe/ways it hurt not to

Under a holly tree in California/family  
sobs that turned from anger to sadness

Montpelier/in a backyard dropped to my knees  
damp grass leaving stain the color of sweet relish

On a glass-bottom boat in Florida/a sunburn  
and a fatigue every child seems to live through

Yesterday/Loop Beach/to witness the missing  
to know it well to try and call it something else

Margarita Island/dancing the taste of cigars  
drinking rum and knowing it's all too much

The deaths of loved ones/some too young  
others old but for the way we say goodbye

For the ways we learn to be in the world  
to call them habits/know the way/release

How we wait/worry the other shoe to drop  
we want this, need this to take our next step

In that sanctuary in Chimayo, I cried for faith  
still these tears/carrying the saltwater of me

—Patty Joslyn, Montpelier

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Moving Day

The relics of the past lie all around:  
my children's books and toys, old photographs  
of summer holidays, a homemade seismograph  
that registered the tremors in this house:  
the treasures left by life's receding tide.  
What should I save? The worn bird guide  
that led one child into a world of vast,  
unnested possibilities? The last,  
wistful letter from a friend, lamenting  
that her dreams were pummeled by experience?  
I should have paid attention, but each moment  
seemed a preface. And now they've all been spent,  
packed into cardboard boxes in a room  
that will be empty, but for dust, too soon.

—*Phil Keller, Montpelier*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Hidden For So Long

*Where hateful death put on his ugliest mask...*

—Shakespeare, Henry IV, Part 2: Act 1, Scene 1

We'd lived for so long behind masks,  
then once again we saw faces.  
Most had been glad to hide,  
for even the ugliest mask,  
was better than gasping for breath,  
and awaiting death.  
For many seasons we hid,  
then one morning sun came out,  
and those who'd survived the virus  
could once again see faces.

—George Longenecker, *Middlesex*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Salt

You ask for salt and before  
wondering what it's for,  
I see an image  
of crystals

falling

like

stars

from the sky. It doesn't matter where they land  
or how long the journey takes.

In this moment, I desire to shower  
the dark, this unknown day with  
small reflections of light.

Supper's soup and  
bread are not to  
be taken  
for  
granted.

My hand  
pours  
into  
yours,

all

that

you

want.

—Jesse LoVasco, East Montpelier and Detroit, Mich.

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## A Smaller View

I want to see the world  
at 4-foot-tall again, press  
my heels into the living  
moss of our flower garden,

crouch like a robin over  
her lost blue eggs, rest  
my chin on a damp rock,  
my calves tickling the wild

violet leaves, and smell  
the leopard frogs popping up  
for air in the sunlit-streaked  
pond. I want to stare

into those black, glassy  
eyes, pretend he likes me,  
pretend he's a prince,  
pretend,

pretend,

pretend.

—Alicia Tebeau-Sherry, Colchester

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## I Weep

I weep for your loss,  
O sister of mine.  
Your mind can no longer  
connect words, thoughts and actions.  
I weep as we cannot properly say good-bye  
as your days are, in your mind, the same.  
Only I know  
how truly different they are.  
I wish you could tell me, in your old ways,  
how you feel and what frightens you now.  
I wish I could tell you  
how lost I am,  
how much I miss you  
even though you are still physically here.  
I want you to know  
all the things I never shared.  
I want to hear again all the advice  
I once ignored.  
I want to hear your laughter  
just one more time  
and see a sparkle in your eyes  
where now only blankness lives.  
I weep for my loss,  
O sister of mine.

—Susan M Martin, Barre

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Splitting the Family Tree

If I split open,  
will my parents emerge like redbirds  
who find home in the magnolias?  
Will my children leap like yearlings  
who disappear behind the pines?

Tell me, what will become  
of this body, grown from the same  
gapped teeth that my grandmother  
gave me, this mind raised by the same  
two languages that now grace our table?

I will ask the moonless sky,  
because darkness can hold  
every kind of light  
even when it seems like  
everything is letting go.

—*Lisa Masé, East Montpelier*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## At the trans-desperation center

Skinny speed walkers  
sharing their last cigarette.

He sports a backwards baseball cap,  
she's trailing him down the cracked sidewalk  
in her pajama bottoms but within sniffing distance.

To them, only one thing matters  
"Said he'd be here by now."

Some bright weight pulses from their chests.  
It might be defiance, pure purpose, or no regret.

What would it be like to have all my  
sweaty needs be sharpened to a spike?

I can't be sure  
but I know this:

They seem more alive than  
anyone else on the street, including me.

Then this January morning, a loose huddle  
of thirty turkeys in the neighbor's cornfield.

Off to the side a black vulture spreads  
its wings and backs into the sun.

—Kevin O'Keefe, Brattleboro

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Three Haiku

A piping plover  
pitched its whistle in the sand  
The flight is over

Firefly, winged light  
flits through oak and elm leaving  
signatures on the night

Two leaves on bare oak  
spared by the wintery winds  
of loneliness

—*Richard Fischer Olson, Middlesex*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Stone Tower

(Montpelier, Vt.)

I'm glad this tower  
has no purpose we can name  
except "observation."

The neighbors know it's not  
some aged European arrogance  
grown frail and mossy.

Stone borrowed from walls  
that shaped the pastures of this hill—  
cattle, not castle, the first use.

We climb the darkened, unlit throat.  
Stairs repeat the one steel note  
of their consistent meditation.

The Worcester range, Camel's Hump,  
the city of Montpelier, surround—  
silenced by the soft gaze of the moon.

A monument without insistence  
that seems to gently mock itself,  
but sits here as an invitation.

Once I saw a mother watch  
her daughter scale to the first window;  
fearful she would climb to open sky;

glimpsing with pride and terror  
the fearless woman she'd become—  
a perfect pile of rocks for her to try.

—Scudder H Parker, Middlesex

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## The Cave

Just outside the fence of the peaceful farmyard  
lurks Foxy Loxy

Pages flip  
in his psychology manual  
**undermine the faith of the masses in their leaders**  
**begin with the least intelligent**

Chicken Little hears the thunder  
he thinks . . .  
The voice of doom is in his ear

Cocky Locky leads the flock  
his disbelief  
is theirs

Disorientation  
Disbelief  
Discredited

Chicken Little  
leads the flock  
away  
from the safety of the peaceful farm

To the cave

Page ten  
**why get one when you can get them all?**

Seems he's right  
The sky did fall

—*Melissa Perley, Berlin*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Tickets in Hand

One could be wary of the math. Of the possible failure of it.  
The rides on the mid-way, the tilt-a-whirl, tea

cup the lunge and plunge. The cogs and gears the  
nuts and bolts of it all. Someone has to factor it.

Do the math. Put it together. The wheezing machines  
churning, lights blazing. Screams, laughter.

From up on the hill above, one wouldn't know if that  
was fun you were hearing or something horrible.

Children getting heaved into the air then dropped,  
flung sidewise-upside down. Strapped tight

to the ride, the doors of their bodies wide open,  
lights passing through them—the elasticity

of children. Terrified, pinned against the night sky.  
Tickets in hand. Ready to go at it again.

—Carol Potter, Tunbridge

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## **Aging Tree in Sunlight**

*for Woodbury Mountain Wilderness Preserve*

Upper branches  
of old maple grab  
toward dawn  
glistening upon  
autumn's bark.

It is a dream to know  
this maple will stretch  
for all seasons' suns till  
it ages, withers, weakens,  
just as I am doing.

It and me, we will die  
in the place of our roots  
the way we are meant to,  
bodies decomposing back  
into soils of our home.

—Sean Prentiss, Woodbury

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Life

Wake up, do not hibernate  
nor keep on slumbering  
lift those eyelids from dull awareness  
enjoy your heartbeats  
life is now, life is here, there, everywhere.

A sachet of wonderment  
a museum of memories  
life is a tragedy, a mystery, a comedy  
a vitality play with you as the main star.

Life is spring when windows open  
letting in the blue of the sky  
scenting the wind as weeds bow to flowers  
one treasured moment after another.

Life, staying childlike, playing, jumping into puddles  
walking in the rain, turning frowns into smiles  
having no regrets, seeing magic  
dreaming of tomorrow's adventures.

Life, a precious jewel, to admire, appreciate,  
share, enjoy. So,  
love, love, LOVE LIFE

—*vera resnik, Warren*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

weak

Do I want to be admired?  
The stronger I become, the worst come my way  
How about you take my load  
Then I can take my break

Tell me, what's fair for me?

I want to be weak  
I want to be coddled  
I wanted your help

The wind is ugly  
making the trees speak  
it hurts right here  
In this emptiness  
That holds my legs

When your eyes found my wound  
there was that silence  
Hidden in the wild noises  
Made by those trees

Is it that hard for you to find me some justice?  
Is it that hard for you to bring me one breath?

—*Jessica Rocio Robles, Barre*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Creation Myth

When my daughter was old enough  
for words, I asked, Where were you  
before you were born?  
My other life, she said,  
in the purple world.

A remembering of slipping  
from there to here when our blood  
starts its honeyed flow  
when our lungs begin to grow  
when we must forgive ourselves.

How the start of us begins  
after the nothing of no  
fingernails with faint moons,  
no mole on a cheek,  
no cheek to touch.

This morning I see the winter sky  
against the snow-lined branches,  
the mountain-edged silhouette  
and there: Venus, its welcome  
glint in a wash of purple.

—Sarah Dickenson Snyder, *White River Junction*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

eat beer

A cycle that churns the news as it burns  
let's give a cheer for today!  
The latest trend sets the world on end  
it's the peak of modernity

It all fits in a meme on a bezel screen  
every misstep of the way  
As figures show the status quo  
is anything but clarity

With wires into ears collaborate fears  
state nothing but what they say  
They mend, then mold and never grow old  
or suffer from sharp memory

Each day is a rut, one long director's cut  
a folly placed on display  
Who has the brain that can resist this rain  
of ceaseless insanity

Step into the light, stand at a height  
live as what comes at what may  
Today is a yoke, tomorrow's a joke  
speaking empirically

—Jimmy Tee, Milton

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Snowflakes dance a wild flamenco

Snowflakes dance a wild flamenco,  
blustered by the raging blizzard,  
hither and thither, all around—  
winds howl shrieking through window cracks,  
cold seeps into and through our bones  
and we shiver under blankets,  
freezing, and in trepidation  
of the unearthly destruction  
of climate change, sure to follow  
and wash away this world of ours.

—Geza Tatrallyay, *Barnard*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## A conventional person

Thinks this world  
As a mixed bag of good and bad  
7 times down 8 times up kind of thing  
Always having some hope  
But at the third door I give up  
Every expectation  
Samsara is indeed horrible  
Because behind every dream  
There is a disappointment  
Dreams are just frozen aspect  
Of disappointment and suffering

—*Nitya Bri, Barre*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

a poem for the bravest dog that ever was.

savage heart!  
where do you go?

across the fields  
over and fro

i cannot follow  
one last run

to feel the wind  
the kiss of sun

savage heart!  
fiercest howl

doe-like legs  
furrowed brow

savage heart!  
you hurry on

farther  
faster

gone gone gone.

—*Jenny Rossi, Winooski*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## A Short Poem on Aging

I turn eighty this year!  
Surely, this isn't happening.  
And yet, an old lady appears  
In my bathroom mirror each morning.  
She resembles my grandmother.  
Her name was Effie.  
I never knew her, only saw photos.

It's early morning,  
I'm here at the mirror again.  
I smile "Okay Effie, let's do eighty!"

—Sandra Maccarrone, Montpelier

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Lunacy

media meets the moon  
in the sallow shade of a pun  
twilight hums its tune  
as reasoning is spun  
voices cede it's cheese  
that must feed everyone  
the echo's in the mirror  
where all is come undone

—Bruce Jefferson Rose, Monkton

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Color Theory

I wake up early enough  
to see the cardinal in the maple.  
He doesn't stick around for long.  
Cut a slice of berry pie at 7:57 am  
because I need more color,  
need to fill myself with it.

January, so full  
of its whites and browns.  
I would do anything for hot pink.  
I wear short sleeves  
just to see the blue of my veins.

Sometimes on a clear day  
I snowshoe into the woods  
and lie down under a towering pine.  
That green against blue.  
I can forget everything  
on the ground below:  
the desperate white snow,  
the brown stippled bark,  
my black mood.

—*Shari Altman, Hartland*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Over a cup of coffee

I love the sounds you make to yourself when reading the local paper,  
A little hum, or a phrase in a conversation with the print,

So unselfconsciously theatrical, yet also understated in your gentle way,  
Authentic and vibrant in your curiosity;

I see this trait in our children, the way they live in the story of the World,  
And I delight in the legacy you have given them.

When the histories of our lives are fully written, and the depth of these  
simple moments lose themselves, like colors in a dream,  
I know this is something I will painfully miss . . .

And in my longing, I will conjure up the sly sound of a newspaper page  
folding over, and a honey'd murmur from your lips,

And you will be with me, and my heart will be full.

—Eyal Amiel, Barre



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## April's Fool

With a red winged brush  
spring paints. Golden blooms  
star yesterday's snow.  
Muddy canvases green.  
With birdsong hope and  
bud-swell promises  
all you need to know  
you might never learn.  
Always April comes.  
Even to fools who  
do not recognize  
what they always need.

—*D. Slayton Avery*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## **grief**

grief as a recursive algorithm  
one instance recalls another time  
which brings to mind a certain scent  
a signature turn of phrase  
whisper in the still air  
a hollowing out  
that overcomes  
a dull knife  
twisted  
ache

—*Bettie Barnes, South Burlington*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Vespers

Under the great white  
morning glory tent  
Brahms' Requiem raises  
its choral cry for comfort

a hundred longing voices  
waken floodlights  
while outside  
August darkness gathers

as the last notes ring  
cricket song fills  
on every side  
lush meadows  
and unknown flowers cense the air  
under moon's gold promise.

—*Beverly Breen, Thetford Center*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Advice

“Don’t let It get you down.”  
Flail like a sudden swimmer—  
Kick off your shoes, try not to drown.

“Give It a day!”  
Can’t I keep just a half—a beat?  
Which part of my day do I trade away?

Not evening, when I slowly wash my face.  
If I give It that time,  
What comes in Its place?

Nothing!  
So keep your days tight in your fist,  
And if It gets you down—real down—  
Resist, resist, resist.

—Sarah Birgé, Middlesex

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Such Sweet Sorrow

As I drove off—I watched you shrink  
in the rear-view mirror  
and my heart, wrenched by this parting,  
twisted in place, strained  
to hold a view of you.

Several blocks later,  
looking through my tears  
into the mirror again,  
I couldn't believe what I saw:  
you driving in pursuit,  
waving, blowing kisses.

Breaking loose, my heart leapt out  
to turn left with you  
while I drove straight ahead,  
sobbing.

Now when I look back, I expect to see  
you and my heart riding side by side  
to your separate destiny  
while my heart pounds  
a rhythmic farewell into my hollows.

—Margaret Blanchard, Montpelier

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Before the storm

The greenhouse is grey.  
Dusty treaded tracks lead up to booted feet, still now, as dark eyes squint, and scan  
the horizon.  
Grey.  
The shingled house. The thick, clouded sky. The trees, birch, and bark.  
Wash bins, charcoal.  
Bags of grain, water buckets, tools in the shed—all varying grades of silver and iron.  
Smoke billows from a chimney.  
A new year's turn into deep winter.  
The ashen cloud of grief of a loved one's passing.  
Tears wiped away time and again with a crumpled handkerchief, chalky from  
overuse.  
The striped cat who came in from the cold and never left the window sill. She,  
raccoon-like; heathered shades of granite and cinder, light to dark from tip of tail  
to wet nose. Scanning for mice in the shadowed corners. Watching the squirrels  
dart this way and that. Pining over the chickadees, the dark-eyed juncos, and the  
tufted titmouse as they feed on peppery seeds strewn on the snow.  
Eyes that I thought were hazel once—livid, in this cold.  
Soot scooped from the black stove is tossed now. Ashes strewn over the white-flaked  
ground. Snow's clean turns dirty, dingey, dusty. Waiting for fresh reprieve.  
Patient for the next storm. One like today's sky warns.  
Across the landscape, ice, like polished stone. Crystal chunks and delicate drips over  
oystered driveways.  
Skates hang hardened and still, leadened. Ready.  
A wool mittened hand reaches into a pocket, searching, as a mind wonders if words  
are capable of capturing beauty.  
With luck, just the tool. In the cold and the grey, graphite pushes against paper.

—Abigail O. Bower, Montpelier

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## How Can It Be?

How can it be?  
that my soul sinks into  
the hollows of this place  
as if it has always habited here . . .

How can it be?  
that I so easily add layers of living  
to accommodate the suddenly  
shifting seasons  
after a lifetime of flat city dwelling . . .

How can it be?  
that my feet find purchase  
on pebbly, worn shores  
where wild birds and bears  
come to breed and feed . . .

How can it be?  
that words born in this space  
spring and sprout with wild abandon  
years after I thought writer's muse had gone . . .

How can it be?  
that after years of moving through too many spaces  
carrying the concrete weight  
of yearning for a different life  
that I find myself here, in the place I was always meant to be . . .

How can it be?

—Jo Bower, *East Montpelier*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Pandemic Over

Unusually pandemic times are looking scary.  
To me, the pandemic is past its prime and needs to move on.  
The pandemic is soaring into past, today.  
I found it in my mind to be at peace.  
The pandemic is over in my mind.  
I have accepted the place we are at in the pandemic.  
Now is the time to live.

—*Scott Brodie, Barre*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Evanescence

Plants set on windowsills, asking so little.  
A balance is all.  
Balance, which must be sustained.  
Tipping ends it.  
Tip one way—softening leaves, liquified stems.  
Another—yellow  
from the borders to the core, crisp petals,  
fallen like husks  
below a spider's web. Green & bloom flare  
at the point of  
balance, all of existence there,  
distilled.

How tough it is, a dancer *en pointe* who seems  
to float above the floor, seems to defy  
the law that everything else obeys.  
Briefly, thrillingly, the illusion of  
weightlessness shimmers,  
sap-filled. How easy to  
believe that it is  
permanent.

—Jenn Brown, Montpelier

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Interludes

1. Golden birch bark curls  
set in the crook  
of a gnarled, unknown tree  
snow catch singing

2. I often step. Well  
in sight of the winter wind  
and wait for it to find me.  
Warmth may bring a softer day  
but not brighter

3. The way snow piles on life in all its forms:  
trunk, chickadee, me,  
and then  
fluttering free at a break  
it falls

—Mark Brown, *East Calais*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## I've Been Dreaming About Wildfires Again

I've been dreaming about wildfires again,  
smoke and flame licking up root and branch.  
The feeling of burnt memories against a hazy red sky.  
Can you taste it in the air? Can you listen to her words?  
Trailing down from mountain to stream, trickling down  
through river and valley. The forests sing it, the fields hum it,  
the waters giggle it, the ocean whispers it.  
We are all one family. We are all one people. She speaks to our blood,  
our bodies. Can we be a little more gentle?  
Touching earth and brook with tender hand. Respecting the land we live on,  
the world we live within. Breaking our own perceptions of real or fake and learning  
to tread a little more gently in love of our home.

—Lynnea Brunner, Richmond

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Haiku Musings 2022

someone  
our unending act  
of creation

control  
so freeing to embrace  
how little we have

the brook  
always teaching us  
to sing

human beings  
we know less and less  
as we grow

growing up  
keep growing down  
to earth

woodsmoke  
its floating shadow  
gracing the snow

the dark  
endlessly replete with  
eye openers

going in  
a journey beyond  
us

—Cheryl Burghdurf, Middlesex

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## As Gio's Birth Approaches

*November 2021*

We are praying  
each of us  
for you, soon to be.  
To health, to joy  
to uplift and strength  
and boundless love  
and community, weaving  
a world that will hold  
you in its heart,  
in its caring arms  
so that you may shine  
into our lives  
into the echoes past  
and days to come.

—Ed Burke, Brattleboro

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Spring Snow Banks XI

At the edges of the old dirt road  
Static swells are receding  
The same force that thaws the rivers' murmurs to applause is pulling the  
softening crests back  
Under rocks  
Across moss  
Into damp hollows  
Through the crosshatches of twigs and fallen floating trees  
Breaking at the base of white pines to finally rest in vernal pools

Winters' preoccupations are scattered along the rich dark verge  
A shovel handle  
A box of matches  
A single glove  
The Sunday paper still curled and cocooned

I pause and like breath held too long I fill my being with the smell of musky  
earth  
And greet the sweet song of "Old Sam Peabody, Peabody, Peabody"

—*ana burtnett, Worcester*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Resurrection

I've got an idea all this  
is not going to end well  
But is there really any way  
for The End to happen  
well?

I suppose if I was a species  
of plant or animal menaced and  
bedeviled by our encroachment,  
filthy habits and selfish, sordid behaviors  
The End might actually look  
pretty well

They say our innovative prowess  
our technological capacity  
will save us (from ourselves)  
or at least delay The End  
maybe for a few more years  
or, sadly, make it evermore ugly  
and even less well

But there may be some justice in all this  
in that The End, no matter how or when,  
allows the resurrection of all that is  
balanced and pure and right in Nature  
so this beautiful Earth, soiled by us such as it is,  
will finally, again, become well

—Barry Cahoon, Danville

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## A Mother's Prayer

Be still and quiet like the hush of the snow that covers the fields of clover and wheatgrass, braided by ancestors long ago who do not belong to you.

Cast your eyes not to the stars in the night sky where old hopes die. Gaze instead upon your soul. Does it know who you are or where to go? Or is it you who should follow its calling?

Mother Earth does not wait for you to see. She has her own longings to be free, and will continue to dance long after your body returns to her fields, forests, and seas.

For you do not yet understand your place in her world, as if she revolves just for you. Quiet yourself and listen to the Starlings who sing of her sweet song. Listen for her winds, blowing strong across mountaintops you will not ascend. Lie in the grasses of Spring and be carried gently through the sky, grounded by the weight of her world as she heaves her great sigh.

—Karloyn Sudler, Cabot

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Oak

I thank the oak  
for this  
leaf—

spiky at edges  
part red, part green

like my heart  
as I stand with Mom.

She leans into her walker  
this blue-sky fall day

and we look up—  
her forte in life—

loosen our jaws and gaze  
till we see tiny beauties  
tucked in all over

or waving at us  
like this leaf

—*Alice Christian, Colchester*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## A Love Letter to the World,

The breath of change stirs the kettle of displaced energy into fragments of purpose  
Listen, listen to the trees  
Hear the music for a new dance  
Open spaces to remember inner wisdom  
Long ago drowned out by the motors of greed  
Humming now  
Can you hear what was forgotten long ago?  
Can your heart be a warrior to heal the cracks of the collective soul?  
The breath of change  
Listen, listen  
Listen for love.

With wholeness and heart,

—Rae Carter, Plainfield

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Free Will

I am quivering,  
We are quivering,  
A world is quivering,  
On the edge of wild,  
Or civilized,  
politicized,  
medicalized,  
capitalized,  
cannibalized.

What dearness do you desire?  
What path do you choose?  
Voluptuous or emaciated, a body surrenders to dust someday,  
While the machine that never lived continues.

—Peter Clark, Woodbury

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Goldberg Wednesday

*J.S. Bach 1741 / Glenn Gould 1951*

Ships full of immigrants pour Chinese men  
onto the shores of what they called Jīnshān—  
Gold Mountain. Some discover ore, the rest  
make San Francisco streets their wilderness.

A hundred years, five thousand miles before,  
some boy's agreed to play the harpsichord  
to soothe to sleep a Russian diplomat—  
tight-built constructions on a theme by Bach.

Gould's hands, like harriers that perch for game,  
sweep down across a mouseful field of keys.  
As each is gathered, it calls out its name,  
and sung together, immortality.

The architecture builds within the hearts  
of those afar, asleep, awake, apart.

—PH Coleman, South Burlington

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Palimpsest

Last night's sheen of new-fallen snow  
almost, but not quite, obscures  
the manuscript of life here yesterday:  
the fox's bold, straight path right past the house  
into the woods,  
rabbit's triangular hops  
(no trace of meeting with the fox,  
at least not then, not here);  
the squirrels' leaps;  
and what might be a bobcat's feline prowl,  
or maybe just the neighbor's giant cat  
out late in search of mice.  
Traces of the random past the undercoat  
all of that will be written next.

—Ann Cooper, Middlebury

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Telling Time: Five Haiku for the Year

1.  
one leaf at a time—  
our daughter's  
first word

2.  
old couch  
the cat steps down  
into stillness

3.  
wave-rolling shells  
clatter  
now as wind chimes

4.  
telling time  
her hands move  
across my face

5.  
a hillside  
covered with full moons  
after the clearcut

—*Michael Cramer, Guilford*

*All five haikus have been previously published: 1. in bottle rockets #46; 2. in the anthology Window Seats, 2021; 3. in bottle rockets #45; 4. in string theory: The Red Moon Anthology of English-Language Haiku 2021; and 5. in New England Letters no. 120, October 2021.*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Lamentation of Another Evening Wasted

*after Li Bai*

The wine jug has been filled and emptied, filled  
and emptied. My lips alone have kissed its wide,  
wet mouth. Leaves of torn and crumpled paper  
scattered about the chamber, covering  
my feet. An entire night of raising a cup  
to beg the moon's blessings, hands blackened with ink.  
Stain of autumn moonlight on my writing desk,  
stain of forsaken verses on my fingers—  
a night of drunken lines mourning my drunken days.  
One page worth saving. If I thought I could  
make it back to my room, I would drag  
my body down to the banks of the Yangtze  
in the awakening dawn and let  
this single sheet set sail on its waters  
under the branches of the red maples.

—Ralph Culver, South Burlington

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Mary

I've known you for 45 years,  
You weren't the hugging kind,

Too combative for the touchy  
feely stuff. Your history deprived

you of any loving touch. You  
always had to be in control.

I offered an occasional kiss on  
the cheek, now papery thin at 94.

But now as you stand with your  
walker ready to go to lunch,

you let me comb your hair,  
strands of white falling into place

as you tell me what to do.

—Whit Dall, Montpelier

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## *Formicidae*

The ant is “your man,” or rather “your woman.”  
The mainly-female population run the show,  
a gynocracy—the males with a shorter life-span,

just good for you know what, then out they go.  
These workers tend the nest and queen:  
builders, carpenters, plumbers, metro-

workers, undertakers, inspectors of hygiene.  
Too old for their trade, they change livelihood,  
become foragers, selfless in their new routine,

sacrificing themselves for the collective good,  
out-in-the-open prey, like the ant this instant  
on our deck, carting food back to the sisterhood,

equivalent to one of us carrying an elephant.  
If effort is *real* victory, the ant is triumphant.

—GREG DELANTY, *Burlington*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Invisible

The white cat with black spots  
wants to hide  
sits straight and still  
looks out from  
behind a tangle of branches  
sure he is safe, unseen  
and quite pleased  
he can see me.  
So we stand staring at each other  
our stations in life  
perfectly attuned  
to this game  
of invisibility  
he, muscles, sinews revel  
in cat, the hunter  
I, poet, stalker of the sublime  
hide in plain sight

—Arlene Iris Distler, Brattleboro

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Ancient Road

A town committee at wood's edge  
out to search a disputed road  
now called ancient  
old maps new owners  
borders drawn  
volunteers and neighbors  
laughing at stories  
marveling at deer yards  
crisp smell of fall  
screech of jays  
a ripe blue morning  
the shout from deep in a glade  
*the road ran here*  
assorted stones  
a mud-rutted track  
a round of handshakes  
home by noon

It could be this easy  
finding our way  
from here to there  
from where we came  
and how to move on  
no guns in sight

—Danny Dover, *Bethel*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Communion

*with a nod to William Carlos Williams*

The crescent moon resting on my windowsill  
offers its light to an undistinguished gathering of clouds.  
This is the light of a dazzling sun—  
one whose unimaginable heat is  
intolerable to our delicate forms—  
splintered, spread, stretched throughout the void.

This is my body, broken for you.

So much depends upon  
an incandescent yellow dwarf star  
marbled by magnetic fields and  
circumscribed by nine grateful planets.  
But also upon a battered sphere of cold stone  
that watches over us, alone, as we sleep.

Take, it says, and eat.

—Teegan Dykeman-Brown, *East Calais*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Some Thoughts While Packing Emergency Food Kits

The contents of which include  
tuna, Ensure, crackers, peanut butter,  
jelly, protein bars, and me here  
mulling over a country  
that changes rules about  
food equality, food insecurity and  
who can qualify.  
It's a disturbing concept this one,  
qualifying for food.

—KATHRYN EBERLY, *Montpelier*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## December Twilight

It happened again—my shadow projected  
on the path beneath my feet. The woods  
had nothing to reveal. I turned, expecting  
light, the last of the sun, but I couldn't  
make it out through the dense, lifeless tangle  
of bare branches—December twilight.

This was where the ferns grew, where the birds sang,  
but that was summer. The coming of night  
casts shadows of its own, calls in its debts.

These dusk projections—is this how the deer  
know where they shouldn't go, is this what gets  
them through the seasons of hunters and fear,  
winter and its empty kitchen? I told  
myself that this was nothing—just the cold.

—Michael Fleming, Brattleboro

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

For Zane

I Wonder

Did you end in doubt, second thoughts, with regret?  
I would rather, in your madness, you felt fierce joy,  
Gleeful defiance for a fait accompli, a deed done.

You have stolen our future  
Our past sits too heavy with your weight  
With each remembered joy tumbling down, down,  
a boulder  
slamming me to the ground  
We will have no more, no new, no next

Yesterday is not enough, but it must suffice.  
Today is an aching sorrow.

I will always love you.

The abyss your final gift; at any moment I find myself at the edge  
Of the yawning blackness, vertiginous

This wound will not scar  
There is no healing

I gladly, even joyfully, will take the tears and the loss

To stay close to you

I will always love you

—Ken Folta, Barre

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Doomscrolling through the Days

At last. a snowstorm, something comprehensible.  
I pull the blinds all the way up so I can watch,  
but dull skies and drizzle are all that come—

until late afternoon hits 32 degrees. Then thicker,  
whiter weather turns Elm Street all Currier & Ives print,  
and I'm glad. A friend has sent a tough NYT article—

one of those rare, revelatory pieces that puts names  
to the kinds of angst we've all been feeling as Game Over  
keeps blinking red on the globe's Doomsday Clock.

Now who will care to inherit that little oak chair  
I found at Number Nine Antiques? It belonged  
to the Barre Fire Department, dates to the 1870s

or earlier. So what can that weigh now?

—Sarah E. Franklin, Montpelier

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Unclaimed Baggage

Perhaps it was on its way  
to the airport,

the bag, not expecting  
to be opened until

Paris, Rio, Rome.  
How sad to have its trip

abruptly broken by some slip—  
No one driving by knows why.

Perhaps the family didn't notice  
its fall from the roof. They

were happily singing—  
fifty-two bottles

of beer on the wall—  
the two younger ones

thinking about all the new clothes  
they'd wear at the beach,

on hikes to the Alps or to Disney or Hawaii  
while the third, a teen, too old

to sing in such ways, looked  
out beyond, while all the time

one of their suitcases was on the ground  
at the edge of the road, contents exposed

to spinning wheels  
and crows.

—*Debby Franzoni, Castleton*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## New Watch

This used to belong

to

Bill Tilley

he's from PEI

he died

you know

so

the watch

he left behind

Is mine

Thank you Bill

boo

hoo

no time

for you

—*M. Fraser, Montpelier*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Teaching Inquiry

When I was a child, I was told life and death stories  
by a melodic voice in a candle-lit room;  
we shaped beeswax into cloaks and dragons.  
To whom much is given, much is asked.

Now, in the kitchen, the little girl points to dates;  
I give her one. She asks for another date. I say,  
“How did you know this was called a ‘date’? You knew when you tasted it?”  
She says, “I already knew.” This is how teaching inquiry should be.

I’ve gotten so good at asking questions.  
But mostly they’re on a baby level, or I don’t get to ask them  
to this room full of traumatized teens, when I can’t breathe.  
I do have plants. They water them for me, and learn without words  
how seasons change, how soil changes with drought,  
human history

I do have a jointed snake they love to hold. And broke.  
This illustrates spines, this illustrates mountains. Physical versus political maps.  
They play with the headless body until I can get back to the junk toy store  
halfway between Brooklyn and Vermont

I do have a poster of Audre Lorde, arms stretched out, daring us to be powerful  
and a sculpture of a long-necklaced African woman:  
Ways to make my classroom feel safe to African American children  
who only have a white teacher to role-model being alive  
And I did learn to model myself in fitted pants and popping colors  
To speak up so I could listen

—Gaia Fried, Elmore

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Birthday Wish at 23

*If the possible is failing us, what is the impossible that would not?*  
—Ron Koss, Parallel

There is sun and snow on my birthday  
I take my skis and leave my phone at home  
so I can focus on the real world.

In the woods, my tracks become a woven prayer.  
Planes fly overhead and passengers wave  
like they know me, like they are reading my mind

but it isn't a secret—maple roots and mycelium meet daily.  
They cannot do this alone—they are tired  
of cleaning the air, they need me, you, us  
to make a big stink, to stop sending polite emails.  
The status quo sacrifices beauty, (truth).

I put my ear to the living birch bark, *you can do this,*  
*you can do the impossible.* I have long waited  
for my white-haired leaders to save our planet  
but in thirty years where will they be? In thirty years

I want to be in this forest with icicles—skating rinks for the voles  
where the trees are so thick, I can barely see a road beyond.

Let's do this. 0% for profit. 100% for the planet. 100% for us—equals,  
made in G-d's image, separated by ropes that can be cut.

—Navah Fried, Montpelier

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## White Spires

It spiraled and floated.  
It rested on a blade of grass.  
How it waited to be noted,  
Then slowly vanished, Alas.

It rested on a blade of grass,  
A tiny city it seemed to hold.  
Then slowly vanished, alas,  
Its adventures never told.

A tiny city it seemed to hold  
All glistening and white.  
Its adventures never told.  
The King and the Knight.

All glistening and white  
Like a picture, it was drawn.  
It filled me with awe  
Then the snowflake was gone.

Like a picture, it was drawn.  
It spiraled and floated,  
Then the snowflake was gone.  
How it waited to be noted.

—*Josie G., Burlington*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Adorable

A black and white photo of me  
hangs in the kitchen hallway.  
I am a year old and stand on  
a *Scrap Iron Age* magazine  
atop a grand piano,  
wearing a white sailor suit,  
an ashtray near my feet.  
I hold a tiny toy train engine.  
People passing by admire the photo.  
“You were so adorable!” they say.

If I emerged from the photo  
and crossed the hall, I would step into  
a bright watercolor of a Parisian  
flower shop. A long-legged woman  
walks a little dog in front of the store.  
She would like to take me home with her,  
she is willing to wait for me  
to grow up. She has no idea I will have  
Parkinson’s Disease. She just wants me,  
now, while I am still adorable.

—Charles Barasch, Plainfield

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Pinus Strobus

*I hear you call, pine tree*

—Yone Noguchi

I knew she was ancient by her generous girth,  
creaking like an old house in the winter wind,  
thick bark and scales as dark as the eyes  
of the night creatures gathered near her  
at dusk, poised, waiting.

Soaring above her neighbors  
just below the hayfield, needles hanging  
in feathery fascicles, spruce limbs  
woven through her myriad of branches,  
she waits for the processional of seventeen  
wild turkeys who crisscross the shadowy field  
and fly up to roost in her strong arms.

Heads folded under wings, wings draped  
over branches, vigilant, teetering  
between response and repose,  
they find refuge, high above  
the coyotes and foxes.

—Andrea Gould, Plainfield

*previously published online in Constellation: Seed, Literary North*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## The Pedernal Mountain Perspectives of Georgia O'Keeffe

It's not her array of bleached skulls,  
nor her plump petunia pistils,  
bold colors or abstract bone holes,  
drawing my eye to the stilled life,  
but her insistence on beauty plucked  
from the day's minutiae.

But in the distance,  
beyond the prickly pear spine,  
buffalo blue grama grass blades,  
and gambel oak acorn,  
far above the twisted juniper and sage-  
dotted hill, sunlight swathes  
the mountain silhouette that outlived  
her love affair with its line.

Her legacy wanders the breadth  
of this holy landscape—  
our shared ties to places wild.  
And her ghostly presence presses  
each new view to expand my mind—  
to open my soul.

—Gail Grycel, Westminster West

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Breathe

today I can't catch

my breath isn't quite enough

to fill me back up

—Tom Graham, *Hartland*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## When Spring Comes

Green lawns will sparkle in pink and yellow when Spring comes.  
Graveyard tulips will sprout with bravado when Spring comes.

Winter will slip off the curb, slide out of the gutters.  
A lazy cat will watch from the window when Spring comes.

Behind a fence a child will observe birds in the grass  
and sing “Here I am, here” like a sparrow when Spring comes.

Nobody will wait in long lines outside in the cold.  
All night young and old will dance the mambo when Spring comes.

We’ll wake up early, eat ice cream and cake,  
forget all our worries when Spring comes.

Black ants will crawl on the steps, bees will stir in the shed,  
the torn screen will let in mosquitos when Spring comes.

We’ll scatter morning glory seeds along the way,  
waste time on a merry-go-round, and oh, when Spring comes

our debts will be paid, the basement swept, appointments kept.  
New clothes and friends will cover up sorrow when Spring comes.

We’ll love each other in different positions and places—  
a pillow, a bridge, a banquette, a beach—when Spring comes.

We’ll lay daffodils on a grave, write a poem or two,  
then you and I will fly off to Rio when Spring comes.

—N.G. Haiduck, Burlington

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## The Octopus's Garden

I remember an iridescence,  
A shy, winking eye, a liquid  
Recoil into a tiny cavern.  
The sough of my own breath,  
The water's cool slide on my throat and arms,  
He blending back into his stony lair  
Then, curious, oozing half-out again.  
*I mean you no harm*, I breathed  
Through the snorkel.

*Who are you?*

He replied, a hesitant tentacle extended.  
*One who would like to live here,*  
*If I only had gills*, despite the jaws  
Of his neighbor, the chestnut moray,  
Its predatory saw-toothed glare.  
Swept away, all of us—  
They by hurricane, I by lost love,  
That Eden with no apples  
Scoured clean as a coffin-shell.

—*Roberta Harold, Montpelier*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Close Call

At 5 degrees Fahrenheit thick ice glazes the driveway.  
Alone, not owning crampons, it's necessary to drive somewhere—  
with the wind chill factor, arctic conditions, there is no traffic,  
nor pedestrians, nor the possibility of walkers. Nearing my car,  
without warning my feet slip out from under me. I am as helpless  
to prevent what's happening as if I were out of control in a vehicle,  
spinning round and round on black ice. Time in slow motion—  
sole thought is whatever the effort costs—must not permit head  
to wham the hard ground, for in this harsh weather,  
if lose consciousness—freeze. Before I cease falling,  
before my legs, before half torso beneath the automobile—how long  
does it take a warm body dressed for extreme conditions to freeze?  
How long before a passerby will notice an out of place  
pile of clothing lying under a car, and who will discern anything  
at all with the snowplow snowbanks pushed shoulder high  
both sides of the drive? All I have not done in life parades  
through my mind in seconds before I land on ice and snow:  
grandchildren I won't meet, all the writing I plan to do,  
friendships I haven't formed, places in the world I will not see.  
I lie still, take stock: I haven't hit my head, thank God—I didn't  
knock myself out. My fingers by inches go frigid in my gloves,  
I manage with my feet to wiggle out backwards.  
Winded, I rest, stand safe, grateful. I escaped—one misstep.

—Kathleen McKinley Harris, Charlotte



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Escaping Escapism

The luxury of privacy or the intimacy of knowing.  
I want you to hold me. I want you to let me go.  
Slipping into silence. You are never enough but you are just right.  
Sweat drenched, from mountainous woods I emerge. Rocky pool reflecting sky.  
Stripping off what sticks to me, I slip into the cold of earth's womb.  
Slide back into myself. A devouring of now. Dripping life into life.  
Only I and love may be. Maybe. What really matters beyond this but love?  
Nothing more calls to my soul but this and the telling of it.  
Pull me out. I climb back in.  
Pull me in. I climb back out.  
It is my story after all.

—Tracy Haught, Montpelier

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Ode on a Flock Of Sandpipers

a flock of sandpipers  
peck for breakfast  
in the glistening wet sand  
of each receding wave

a snapshot  
captures  
a trompe l'oeil:  
their skinny legs and skinny beaks  
a cluster of three-legged stools  
their bodies creating both  
shadow and reflection  
in the sunlit wet

flip the image  
upside-down and  
it's still  
acceptable  
though startling  
to the eye

—*Ellie Hayes, East Calais*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## I Tried to Write a Nature Poem

Here we are five days shy of spring  
after a winter of mild temperatures and little snow.  
The fields are bare, but stubborn patches  
still huddle on the north side of things,  
and mud abounds.  
The greens of the daffodils are up  
in the sunny spots  
on the south-facing hill  
in front of the house.  
Our fox has been spotted  
crossing the long drive.  
It seems though that the bears are yet abed,  
since bird feeders are still intact.  
Geese pass overhead, talking among themselves,  
bringing the symbol of victory up from the south.  
The ancient maples are festooned with sap buckets  
and sweet smoke wafts from the neighbor's sugar house.  
I tried to write a nature poem but opted instead  
for a long walk in the woods behind the house.

—Ken Hebson, Brattleboro

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## In That First Year

Tree swallows swooped through the spring air.  
One, two . . . one hundred.

Summer soiree, we didn't dare.  
Four thousand . . . one hundred fifty thousand.

Autumn seeds carried the future,  
three hundred thousand.

Winter white without a suture.  
Five hundred thousand.

Spring babies coming round again,  
lives lost, lives found, in absentia.

—*Kathleen Herrington, Montpelier*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Awaken

My body glides forward, the board beneath me.  
As I part the air, the current caresses my skin, my face.  
The wind whispers in my ear.  
In the forest, the birds sing their vespers.  
Above, the clouds dance.  
The earth awaits for me to merge  
the world around and within me.  
Ready for me to awaken to love.  
As the boundary between thins,  
the transcendent pulse radiates through me.

—Emily Hershberger, Hardwick

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Hideaway

Crackers, mustard, tuna cans,  
what will I eat tomorrow?  
Piles of sand, some starfish and  
whatever I can borrow.

Seas come sliding slip me out  
with every ripple ringing,  
cirrocumuli about  
and all the seagulls singing,

Borne aloft by butterflies  
on palanquin of teasel,  
settled on a mossy rise  
and greeted there by squeasels.

In this land no winter clings  
and egrets preen among us,  
dogs have wings, and golden rings  
are worth their weight in fungus.

No kings to be bothersome  
or charlatans to guide us.  
Gardens grow germaniums  
of flotsam and detritus.

Alabaster macarons  
with whirling whortleberry,  
afternoons of pork and prunes  
—and ne'er a dictionary—

—*Sam Hewitt, Essex Junction*

*previously published in Mountain Troubadour, 2021*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## At Least the Clouds Are Normal

At least the clouds are normal,  
great, big cumuli, which sun  
from the west illuminates,  
whitens the cloud knobs and tendrils,  
the slower members of the family,  
but still attached, poking out  
or receding; sun's whim is making faces,  
3-D faces, of those big puffs.

Swear I saw an an older soldier  
wearing his helmet from WWI  
and—get this, I promise—  
Mt. Rushmore with the bust of Trump  
in the leading position.  
The parade continues but the western sky darkens  
and bigger, misty clouds shoosh the great men  
over to New Hampshire and Maine. I hate to get political.

The wind is picking up and a couple, final cumuli  
float happily as a cherub morphs into a male  
hippie's face, but I came out to watch the phoebe  
feed her chicks and looks like rain is on the way.

—Geof Hewitt, *Calais*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Commonsensical Cupcakes

It makes good sense to bake a dozen  
cupcakes, easy peasy,  
rather than time it takes to bake a whole cake  
Each cupcake serves as a single slice  
contained in its own sensible cup  
no fussy cutting

The sensible cupcake is thrifty, versatile  
a popular first choice of birthday party  
celebrations for little kids. Most cake  
recipes make twenty four cupcakes more  
reasonable than a sheet cake

Cupcake possibilities range from sweet  
and fluffy with a cherry on top to sweet  
and sour strawberry rhubarb spring  
glazed to the useful chocolate zucchini  
cupcake with a thin ganache icing and  
healthy cream cheese frosted carrot  
cake cupcake along with an old family  
favorite creation of Chunky Monkey  
banana chocolate chip cupcake

Cupcakes are just enough!  
practical, efficient, frugal, commonsensical  
Keep it sweet, inside and out

—Alicia Hingston, Danville

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Most Often in Spring

It wasn't until I was pruning the thyme  
along the edges of the stone steps—  
no, hacking it, really, big chopping cuts  
with the orange-handled pruners,  
the straggly vines gone dry and matted  
from the depredations of winter—  
only then did I understand why  
taking one's own life  
happens most often in spring:  
the dead scum of winter wrenched away,  
tender young shoots sequestered  
underneath, impossibly green,  
under cover, biding time, not ready  
for this much revealing light,  
not ready for the harsh truth  
of the crimson-throated tulip,  
oh lord, not yet

—Nancy Hewitt, *East Randolph*  
from HEARD, *Finishing Line Press*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Meandering

I was distracted by a bird

its song cut through a poem  
taking shape under my tongue  
something about nothing in particular  
became Spring reflections  
in a pool at my feet

I surrendered to wings that sprouted  
from overburdened shoulders  
and looked to the clouds for repose

—*Lily Hinrichsen, Bristol*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Herald

The hay in the manger  
The snow on the ground  
The little horse, Herald,  
Nowhere to be found

The stars through the skylight  
Shone down on his head  
Our little horse, Herald,  
Asleep on our bed.

—*Jim Hogue, Calais*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Life List

At the end of the tattered bird book  
my father kept for years is his

Life List of species sighted, on hundreds  
of birdwalks, his neat scrawl noting

'53 Nuthatch, '59 Yellow Throated Warbler,  
all these small groups of birders strolling

through the woods, suddenly standing still,  
holding huge binoculars trained up,

to the same tree, a snatch of color, the size  
and shape of beak spelling major victories,

duly noted, while now I download an app  
on my phone and slowly memorize

the sounds I hear, one by one,  
the first five being a House Wren

in various moods, adding to my own  
List, begun years ago,

'87 Eastern Phoebe,  
the year my son was born

'84 Rose-breasted Grosbeak,  
the year my daughter arrived.

—Sarah Hooker, Marshfield

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Another Hole This Winter

It's hard to focus on the far-away  
ice fishermen, so small, like ants with augers.  
They've pitched their shanty. To keep warm, they sway  
this way and that in a tight huddle near  
their fishing hole, their circle of faces  
reflected in the cut-out lake. They wait.  
Someone will say something. Others will take  
their time, then speak. They see their breath. Today's  
sharp air is hard to bear. I shiver for them.  
Next village over, same sort of scene, but  
not. Such raw weather. The road's high snow berm  
has been trekked across and a fresh hole dug  
in the frozen graveyard, where grieving, huddled  
men brave the cold, heads bowed, and search for words.

—*Mary Elder Jacobsen, North Calais*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## If Life is but a Dream

Today was like the inside of white paper,  
that kind of pure, and something in me  
burned with a white heat so bright,  
I understood the Lama from Tibet  
who said plants are sentient, and fire,  
water and air are too.

All afternoon I sat in air-conditioned rooms,  
dreaming that my bicycle set me free  
gliding under dappled tree light.  
Perhaps tomorrow I will be free all day.  
Walking home tonight, glass spheres  
in a store window reflect day's last light—  
enough to make a small universe.

*We wear the universe inside us,  
said the Lama, and we breathe  
it in and out all day.*

—Susan Jeffs, Middlebury

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## A Bowl of Wild

There is a bowl of wild called Ndakinna  
that holds the light of a tiny golden person  
who runs as fast as her legs will carry her  
chasing an eagle through a clear sky, under the trees  
towards a distant, ancient home she recalls deep inside.

Can you hear the dedication  
in her earthen footsteps?

Dusk is approaching, and she kneels down in the snow  
and kindles the fire in her heart deep and red.  
She stands nobly with her dog, looking down the mountain,  
fully at home within herself, a tiny wild being  
in an endless golden bowl.

—*Miriam E.J. Goldthread, Burlington*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Vermont Visions

Birds are blessed with melodies  
which distinguish them from others  
In the winter frost  
their feathers serve as covers

Flocks mingle among snowflakes  
etched against gray skies  
while smoke from Calais sugar shacks  
rises near as high

Landing on icy branches  
with impossible precision  
I wonder if the birds are real  
or merely wishful visions

Above white speckled Elmore evergreens  
the graceful creatures soar  
stirring my vicarious excitement  
like nothing has before

They continue this vertical path  
too far to survive, it seems  
then are lost beyond the clouds  
like forgotten parts of dreams

If I'm ever born again  
this form would not suffice  
I'd choose flying over Vermont with blue jays  
for all of my next life

—Gordon W. Jones, Montpelier

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## The Calf

I saw my first calf born early on a June morning  
a Holstein  
two ivory hooves then a flat blue-black delicately whiskered nose  
she had inch-long eyelashes a wet cowlick  
new legs wouldn't hold her  
I warmed a bottle filled with her mother's thick yellow milk  
slipped fingers between flat edges of perfectly formed teeth  
she wrapped them with her rough tongue  
three tries pitching like a ship in rough seas  
and she was on her feet  
straw-flecked ribs heaving  
brown eyes shining  
flicking her tail  
lunging toward the smell of milk  
drinking with gusto

—Karen Kane, East Montpelier

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## And I

*after January 6th, 2021*

The tallest oak tree  
Stands still  
Grows taller  
An insurrection

Against the cold and retreating snowflakes  
And I, surprisingly, am a little more hopeful  
I, and the oak, breathe free  
Now

—*Samantha Kolber, Montpelier*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Baseball Nostalgia

What was our undoing, collectively, we usually get around to  
after a few or far too many, hearing our answer  
speculated in the moonlit lake near the statue at the seat of the town gone quiet

Hand me one of those, I ask, tapping the pack on the bench  
partly hoping to ground my body  
partly attempting a simple accounting  
Three dead at least: suicide, overdosed, drowned,  
One live ghoul: schizophrenic  
And each of us, still, the smart, the promising, the enlightened  
Did we dream our youth together,  
were we the tired cars hot-boxed to Biggie  
hangover games to 100 by ones and twos  
the old man track coach hiding in your locker to make sure you ran that year  
—wait, did that even happen?—  
and the chorus of tall tales and fantasies and madness and  
the insults and intimacy  
the myth both too big and too confined  
the terrible misunderstanding  
and a language of our own?  
Maybe, I propose, not knowing what might follow,  
we're curious why we made it—qualified, of course, from privilege to privilege  
and so on—  
and if we will continue developing loving relations,  
or if we'll keep wanting to,  
when so many of us couldn't.

—Bradley Kukenberger, Waterbury Center

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Wonder

Think of the stars—  
Think.  
How big they are—  
Immensity—  
Longevity—  
How many trillion miles  
Away?  
So far  
But here  
Right here  
Up there  
Near  
My bright moon  
The moon that shows  
An old man's face  
So clear  
So close  
I see it  
All  
Tonight  
With my childhood  
Eyes.

—Maxine Leary, Montpelier

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## The Illusion of Winter

The illusion of winter  
Easily viewed through the glass.  
Me, on the warm side  
Out there, every branch highlighted  
With last night's fluff.

But even in late December  
With the solstice behind us  
It's no more than a winter tease.  
Good for sledding (maybe)  
Too crusty and bony  
For skiing in the white-capped woods.

As I write  
Most trees already dripping.  
The low filtered sun  
Strong enough to dissolve that new thin coat.

Is it my misremembering that recalls  
When snow was plentiful  
And Xmas break meant frolicking  
With the kids  
In our winter wonderland?

Or is this just another reminder of change  
From how things used to be?

—*Michael Levine, Middlesex*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## The Ice Cream Shop as Proof of the Existence of God

She knew it would be Good  
when She created Cows  
and Sugarcane      and Fruit and Ice.

She smiled when the first Chef  
(who was minding hot and cranky kids)  
took cream and sugar and berries,  
put them in a chilled bowl,  
and stirred with a wooden spoon until . . .  
. . . it was something wonderful!

She knew there would be more  
and the Children would praise Her.  
Even the Apple. can. not. compete.  
The Flesh is hungry for what once nourished it.  
And that cold, creamy sweetness gives  
comfort in the midst of uncertainty.

So, when you enter the Temple  
of mumbling glass cases, and breathe in  
the incense of cream and sugar, and feel  
the floor stick to the bottom of your shoes,  
remember this:

All is calm and all is bright;  
There are no sins in this place;  
You too may take and eat of Her Holy sweetness.

—Cynthia Liepmann, Middlesex

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Arise

To the quarrelsome cerebral debate  
twixt past and now, twixt  
fossilized habit and unexplored unknown,

my urge to come forth  
arises. Seeking  
to render clear  
the sparks of my sky.

I arise and write

wanting freedom

from pervasive  
wounds of childhood.

To unbury  
my truth. I arise  
with discomfort—in truth,

with disdain: for injustice,  
intolerance and deceit.

Is it selfish  
that I stream words  
to rid my own synapses

of enslaving untruth and deception,  
to reinstate  
my own compass?

—Hugo Liepmann, Middlesex

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## parallel universe

It's not as if we really  
have any choice:  
we can't uneat  
breakfast after dinner,  
nor unpick peas in the garden  
or take back hurtful words  
once they've been spoken.  
We'd like to return those boots  
that don't quite fit  
but we've worn them outside  
so now just have to hope we can break them in slowly,  
get used to their pinch  
and squeak.  
If only we could shift  
into a parallel universe  
where we could change our mind,  
call for a mulligan,  
back up in this flow of time  
we call life,  
but the universe is expanding  
so on we go.

—craig line, *Calais*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Two men and six geese

It'd start to reek, so every week  
A spot we'd seek, Alex and I,  
To move the coop, the six-bird troop,  
Along the loop, heave-ho and sigh.

We'd strain our knees while the free geese  
Did as they pleased in pouring rain.  
From the new base began a race—  
A tame goose chase—we looked insane.

Neck muscles tense, erect the fence.  
Who could make sense of this contract  
Between two men moving a pen  
Each weekend when time they both lacked?

Wading through grass, what'd come to pass  
From this masterclass of letting go—  
Under command of geese, expand  
To meet demand?

We did not know.

—Peter Luyckx, Montpelier

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Watching the International Space Station

Hustle hustle hurry,  
Stomp into boots and rustle into hats in a flurry  
To get out of the in and into the outside,  
Because tonight's black-ice stillness clears the stage  
For the International Space Station.  
Its newness sails across the celestial rink  
To the brink of the treeline,  
Slipping past all the lit up lives,  
Our own match sparked times  
And the dimming tail-light skies.

In the time it takes to blink  
From winter's jabby little knives  
We wonder at this new-age castle in the sky,  
"The size of three football fields,"  
All done, all gone,  
Nothing left to shiver for,

Except these odd fiercely colored stars,  
The surprise guests who might be  
Mars, Jupiter, Mercury,  
And a wish to be that telescope of Mr. Hubble,  
Which saw trillions of luminous bubbles  
Hovering up there in the silence  
Where we see only black velvet Infinity.

—*Laura Martinez, Duxbury*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogg-hubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogg-hubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Colors of Lightning

when the lilac lightning strikes

we can explore each other  
to the depths of our beings,  
go deep into the Mariana Trench\*

when the orange lightning strikes

it is where we go when we  
can't breathe and our lives  
depend on each other

when the black lightning strikes

it is electrifying between us

when the green lightning strikes

we are in a dimension  
of power, madness and passion

when the pink lightning strikes

nothing is unsaid,  
untouched, unseen, unknown  
between us

when the lilac lightning strikes  
again,  
deeper,  
more,  
still,  
always.

—Kimberly Madura, *Essex Junction*

\*The Mariana Trench, located in the Pacific Ocean, is the deepest place on Earth.

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## On Paper

My father shipped books  
out of a warehouse basement,  
toiling between the printers  
in an air of heat and ink.  
His father pressed the pulp  
beneath smoke of the brick mills  
that crowded the waterways  
and memories of my youth.  
And our fathers swung their axes  
just north of the map-edge  
in a chorus of progress  
that drove the forests downstream.  
—these days, I hold my pen close  
to the page without touching it,  
tracing the ghostly shapes I've known  
that haunt the space between.  
But when all the rivers are finally freed  
and the men have come back home,  
will the children remember their love?  
Or will they need to write it down?

—*Jack Markoski, Montpelier*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## As if in Heaven

My lover has taken my picture: I am standing next to two bodiless heads floating above the floor. They are part of a mobile of the many dear-departed we don't know. They hang from filaments normally you cannot see, and except for the twinkling brass hooks in the tops of their heads (and the lack of bodies) you would think they're as real as I am. One head even looks like me. It faces the same direction I face, though the eyes look

elsewhere. My beloved has waited a long time for this moment to align, balancing on her good leg, with no cane, her camera clutched and trembling in her one good hand, and the anticipation has left me with a smirk she catches. Then the head like me, his cheeks a little fuller, his eyes a little older and filled with the memories of things I may never see, sets his mouth firmly and continues his long turn away: just as a heavenly body would in a real heaven.

And the other head, the one I haven't described at all, filled with that attracting force all heavenly bodies have, looks away from all that is mechanical: the camera, the quick click of what we often capture, and my lover's leg brace with its polished steel joints winking in the light; he looks at me as if all this hanging and turning still hasn't let him forget what it was like to walk to and fro, up and down in the earth, feeling every inch of the body's pain.

—Tim Mayo, Brattleboro

from *Thesaurus of Separation*, *Phoenicia Publishing*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Wooden Fence

Our fence slumps  
and leans,  
its white paint  
peeled, faded gray with mold.

Every eight feet a cedar post  
barely stands  
on its rotting foot.

Yet still, it loosely embraces  
our patch of grass and trees and home.

Where toddlers once ran wild  
to escape the confines of love  
and see what else might be  
beyond its invisible hold  
but were stopped short by the wooden board fence

that kept the nightmares out  
until it was time to open the gate  
and let them go.

—Elizabeth McCarthy, *Walden*

*previously published in Young Raven's Literary Review, Issue 15, December 2021*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## When I Stepped Onto the Deck After Sunset

a sliced moon floated low in a circle of its own light—  
no stars at that level, only one sure beacon in the southwest—  
I thought it must be Venus. Against shaded blue, maples pressed designs,  
so fast had new leaves unfurled this warmest May day.

From a vernal pool I heard peepers  
chirring, thrilled to be back in their bodies.  
White porch chairs glowed, ghostly, as if  
last summer's guests just left, food smoke dispersed.

Even as darkness dropped, night  
did not arrive. Time paused,  
matter dissolved at the edge of evening  
and I waited.  
Without counting  
I waited. . . .

—*Ellen McCulloch-Lovell, Montpelier*  
*previously published in Grey Sparrow Journal, July 2021*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Sunflowers

In Gauguin's room in the yellow house in Arles,  
aureolin and gamboge sunflowers boast  
deep purple eyes, fibrous stalks in a yellow vase  
sit on a table in a room with cadmium walls  
lit by saffron sunlight filtered through  
yellow curtains, all this yellow  
an antidote to the gray fog of Vincent's youth,  
a symbol of happiness some think—  
or insanity—yellow "a color  
capable of charming God," he said.

—Becky McMeekin, Braintree

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Freak Snowfall

Jeezum peepers,  
it's the end of May and it's snowing.  
At least the lettuce doesn't care,  
defiantly green in brave little rows.  
Pat added manure when he rototilled,  
maybe the tomatoes will do better this year.  
That planting is still weeks away.

Today,  
Snow showers,  
and a stiff neck.

Heavy wet flakes fall on a slant,  
The pine tree flops around in the wind.  
I wish I could cry.  
I could try listening to  
"Change Is Gonna Come" by Sam Cooke.  
I need some kind of solvent  
to dissolve the subterranean  
steel tear vault.  
I wonder what else is down there.  
Better to just dig in the soft soil of the garden.

—*Joanne Mellin, Winooski*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## clinking glasses

when our glasses  
clink together,  
our eyeglasses  
I'm talking about,

when we clink glasses  
in a slow sweet kiss,  
it's music  
like softly clinking  
tea cups,  
like small stones  
sliding together.

our lips meet.  
our glasses clink,  
we try to produce  
some interesting clink rhythms,  
I see her face so close  
through our glasses.

—*Bob Messing, Montpelier*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Spring Peepers

As the sun slowly softens the snowdrifts,  
and the icicles melt from within—  
after bleak, wintry months spent in darkness,  
in the woods, sundry stirrings begin.

From beneath leafy blankets, they wake—  
elfin frogs summoned up by the sun.  
Shadows fall, and a horde of spring peepers  
serenades us: “Spring has begun!”

—Christy Mihaly, *East Calais*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## The Poet

we were drops in a pool  
vibrating to the sounds of her words  
sharing a destiny be it the heavens or the seas  
replenished by hope  
her book grasped in salutation  
who is this for, she asked?  
an unmet soulmate, I replied  
then let this be an introduction, she delighted  
scribing your name

—Steve Minkin, Brattleboro

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Riddle

We outnumber people three to one.  
I'm not competitive but I remember  
a hundred human faces, I know many  
words, prefer classical music. Play a polka  
and you may see me dance.  
Given enough space I can run  
up to nine miles an hour  
beat many humans in a chase.  
Like people I dream but my nightmares  
feature minks as serial killers. You may know  
the color of my children by my ear lobes.

Tell me what I am.

—*Nicola Morris, Plainfield*

*A. A chicken.*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Cemetery Walks

*haiku*

Mountains  
unmoored by clouds  
our floating world

\*

First  
sprinkling of snow  
a singular grace

\*

One hundred crows  
black ashes  
swirl the sky

\*

In memory  
stone shadows  
on the snow

—B Morrison, Brattleboro

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Snow At Last

I have been waiting for the snow, missing its presence  
Its embrace covering and protecting  
The resting grass and perennials that quietly wait  
For the longer warmer days to come  
Yet without the snow cover these dormant living things can freeze  
And die before rising or blooming again  
And trees also need the protection of the snow-covered ground  
So when warmth returns and thaws  
The frozen earth, the snow will melt, turning to water that seeps  
Down to thirsty deep roots  
And I too feel surrounded by the snow's protective embrace  
As I sit looking out my window  
Across a beaver pond where heavy snow covers distant fir trees  
In hazy accents of gray and white  
While trees close by are covered in a more present  
And intimate white  
That duplicates the patterns of the white  
Pine branches  
And everything I see is under a soft gray sky  
Filled and created by snow  
That is almost invisible, so I can't tell where  
The sky begins or ends

—Joan Murray, Worcester

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

The embossed steel-plate deck of the river . . .

The embossed steel-plate deck of the river  
with its raised rivets dolloped by recent snow

end of the day pastels and blue-grays  
sidelit by an offstage sun never content with being outstaged

(there may be a dark side of the moon a dark of night

but the planets and moons are the hands on the curtains  
behind which a sun pulls levers left and right day and night

pay attention to that helium behind the curtain  
a great and powerful wizard of fusion)

some of these shades—imposters, improvisers  
impoverished as to time (it is brief)

impoverished as to viewership (it is less)  
but richly imbued with a wisdom

an ability to discern a quality a relationship  
between waves and particles and particulates that gather

disperse gather again; an ability to perceive longing  
or so it seems to perceive yearning or so it seems

around this solstice and all that closes in  
drapes grays chills bones all that tentative illumination

and then this never before seen light these  
hidden ambient tracklights setting low cloud cover aglow

and you wonder, so, can a cloud glow blue?  
and the winter sky replies, of course, indeed, absolutely, or so it seems.

—Chris Nevin, Moretown

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Clyde's Ashes

His eyes never saw the whale or the arc  
of mountain range or glare of icecaps,

images the unmanned spacecraft *New Horizons*  
would bring to Earth two generations later  
with Clyde Tombaugh's ashes  
along for the ride in a small metal urn.

His body never went to space when it was whole  
(blood and bone, muscle and sinew)  
but he believed in extraterrestrials and unidentified flying objects.

He believed in God.

On his family's farm in Streator, Illinois, Clyde built telescopes in a pit he dug,  
squinted at stars and sketched planets, even discovered one in 1930,  
a lonely faraway rock an eleven-year-old girl named *Pluto*.

His body returns, not to Earth, but to the land he saw in the sky,  
which shares a name with the Roman God of the underworld.  
At the end of the line, he is given back to Hades.

What's left of Clyde orbits alone, a posthumous Magellan  
at the helm of an expedition he charted only in dreams,

painting a glacial bright spot, peaks or craters shaped  
like a paper heart a child might give another  
on Valentine's Day, or an open palm outreached,

which someone else names *Tombaugh Regio*,  
the Heart of Pluto.

—Erika Nichols-Frazer, *Waitsfield*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Tossed

The sun cannot warm up the cold  
Your shadow left behind  
And all those lies you never told  
Never come to mind

The ship I took to leave that place  
Never found the shore  
It tossed about from face to face  
But did not cross the door

This wandering bark, now tempest tossed,  
Can see a distant light  
To get there is worth any cost  
To pay another night

—Carla (Neary) Occaso, *East Montpelier*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Cry of the Tundra (Dec. 13)

Desert grassland will you play with me,  
With your beautiful tundra animals wild and free,

Your treeless empty wasteland,  
With its mountains and their vast expand,

Its mighty whites: the fox and the hare,  
No limits of prosper do these animals bare,

Antlers and hooves forever trotting,  
With the many lemmings and voles at their feet plotting,

Dry and frozen landscape how your mosquitoes fester,  
With the bothering bugs and their constant pester,

Reindeer eating at the vibrant lichen blend,  
With the ever scouring wolves forever yet to fend,

The geese returning with annual fly,  
And the loons with their eerie crie,

Lands covered with cushion plants growing from the foreboding soil,  
How the small flowers and shrubs foil,

Long nights in winter and long days in summer,  
With the grizzly bear and its magnificent slumber,

The snowy owl with its unsettling hoot,  
The mice and rodents; how they steal and loot,

To the tundra with your spectacular heart,  
The animals and botany have been wondrous but it is time we must part,

Flickering lights of aurora borealis and your endless, ancient sounds,  
I take you forever with me through the earth and its heavenly bounds.

—Polly Olson, Northfield

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Oh, Bird

Oh, Bird, tell me how does it feel to float on wings of ivory and gold?  
What is it like to have the world at your wingtips?  
Tell me, of the world beyond these acres,  
Of the thrilling adventures that you sing of  
Oh, Bird tell me why after the beauty and wonder you have seen  
You sit, perched on my window, reminiscing  
Tell me, If there is such joy to be found in familiarity  
Why do I long to see the world beyond the bounds of normalcy?  
Oh, Bird I cannot ignore the queries that pull at my heartstrings begging for resolution  
Tell me, If you do not have all the answers then who does?  
Oh, Bird bring me with you as you fly away, you leave unanswered questions in your wake

—Grace Bolton, *Lincoln*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Neonatology

We call him Hugo Apollo  
a science fictional name  
perfect for the first space  
he inhabits after birth,  
a place out of time  
where two-pound babies  
held close in their capsules  
sleep in the beep and  
whoosh of machines.

Wires and tubes tendril around him  
sliding chemicals into his scalp  
and oxygen into his lungs.  
Electrodes stick to his chest  
as though Houston  
is listening from afar  
ready to radio in  
with a lullaby  
at the slightest blip.

A waning crescent glows  
outside the hospital window  
but his outer space begins  
eight inches from his face  
and the moon will have to wait.

—Holly Painter, South Burlington  
*previously published online on Lunch Ticket, 2021*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Since You Were Born

A shelf of snow  
Hangs precariously off the roof edge  
Held up by nothing

A smile cracks  
And everything in me melts  
We defy gravity  
Now

—*Devon Parish, Montpelier*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## A List of Rules to Remember & Apply

1. Airplane Rules: put on your own mask first
2. Campsite Rules: leave people, places, & things as you found them or better
3. Work Rules: avoid conversation about sex, religion, or politics in professional settings
4. Family Rules: don't rock the boat unless you know how to swim
5. Driving Rules: stay to the right & in your own lane unless you need to pass
6. Sobriety Rules: the wreckage of your past will reemerge—go through, not around
7. Art & Writing Rules: there are no rules, follow what the ether brings you
8. Social Rules: you are under no obligation to keep anyone in your circle who doesn't respect you or your boundaries
9. Morning Ritual Rules: center yourself, set intentions, hydrate

—Robyn Joy, Montpelier



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Mother Was the Earth

If the thunder was your son and your daughter was the sky,  
If the waters in the river were your brothers rushing by,  
If your daddy was a valley where the wild flowers grow,  
And the mountains in the distance were your sisters capped with snow

Would we see this is our family,  
Would we know their godly worth  
And they're blessings all from heaven  
If our mother was the earth?

If those trees are standing tall because Grandad's at the roots,  
If the ocean tides keep rolling all because of Grandma Moon,  
If that burning sky above was a child looking down  
Digging into soil to help grow the fertile ground

Would we see this is our family,  
Would we know their godly worth  
And they're blessings all from heaven  
If our mother was the earth?

If we listen for the ancients in their storm clouds' lullaby  
And we hear the call of children in a coyote's plaintive cry

Would we see this is our family,  
Would we know their godly worth  
And they're blessings all from heaven  
If our mother was the earth?

—Kristen Plylar-Moore, Montpelier

*previously released in song form on the album REVIVAL, 2018*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## **I'm Tired.**

I'm tired!

I'm tired of the reminders.

I'm tired of the nightmares and flashbacks.

I'm tired of my angry outbursts and having to apologize because of how I react.  
I'm tired of expecting YOU to forgive ME when forgiveness should not even be an option.

I'm tired of feeling responsible for a situation that others were in that I did not fix or get out of sooner.

I'm tired that he still controls my life and I've been gone from him for 20 years.

I'm tired of trying to cry and not being able to.

I'm tired of expecting your unconditional love as well as your emotional & physical support for something that somebody else caused, YET you still do!

I'm tired of the fight and flight.

I'm tired of not sleeping.

I'm tired of my mind running.

I'm tired of fighting this fight.

I'm tired!!

—Bonnie Jean, East Montpelier

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## The January Scarf

It is too thick, ugly, made of the scratchiest  
wool, thanks, Cheviot Sheep. The January Scarf.  
So—take one end and wrap, wrap, quick, trap the ends  
Deep within the parka. There!  
The neck, warm as a biscuit  
The barn animals want attention but I'm  
only there to feed and water.  
I go back to the house, my eyes slits  
above that old scarf. I think about the  
time of the Cheviots! How we took  
bags of wool to Maine, then brought home  
blankets and knitting wool. The blankets were  
too warm for a well heated house,  
and I only made the one scarf.

—Molly Power, East Montpelier

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Rooted

In sheltered green above the stream  
among the pleated rocks  
trees have taken hold.

Rooted in some wind-blown leaf or moss,  
working their fingers and toes in  
between molecules of rock,  
they gently transform stone  
to bark, wood, root and leaf.

Some are seedlings, thin as pencils,  
others are saplings, finding their way  
to the light.

A few lift trunks as big as a human torso  
above the ledge.  
These older trees, so deeply rooted  
look as if they grew  
from seeds of stone.

Through some green wisdom,  
they have taken the long view  
They have not split the foundation  
on which they stand.  
They are anchored and anchoring  
and together,  
they may outlive us all.

—Susan Reid, Montpelier

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Untitled

winter clean you are  
clean white sheets like babies' cheeks  
the ruddy blocks adorn  
the roofs tucked in with down duvet  
while sparkles dance upon the wide

winter dirty you  
your smears and spatters staining  
automotive flatulence maling'ring  
stew of slush and asphalt trespassing  
upon the old longsuff'ring streets

winter long you are  
in small town take-your-time Vermont  
and dare say I  
(no matter clean or dirty how you are)  
in February late  
your welcome now is overstayed

—*Andrew Rs, Montpelier*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

Reading Wang Wei Thinking of an Old Friend A Thousand Miles Away  
*for JJ*

Will we ever see each other again old friend,  
share a motel night of poetry and bourbon,  
one more small town diner breakfast,  
before this one way trip is over?

It's sad to think we might not.  
In truth, I think we will,  
otherwise this poem  
would be too hard to write.

—Charlie Rossiter

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Sam Learns to Swim

My father knew everything when I was six years old.  
It did not occur to me  
That maybe he had never taught anyone to swim before  
When I begged him to teach me.

And, truly, I was safe,  
His strong, tender hand on my belly,  
As the cold brook flowed under me.  
The safest place in the world:  
My father's hands.

Later that year we were fishing on the pier,  
A string dangling in the lake, a worm on the hook.

Feel that! A fish!  
And I fell into the water.

My father dived in  
In his shirt and trousers  
To save me.

I had swum to shore before he reached me.  
I could take care of myself.  
He had taught me well.

I can picture now  
My soaked, strong, sweet father  
And his wet dollar bills laid out  
Drying in the sun. . . .

—*Sam Sanders, Montpelier*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Under the Covers

Under the covers  
My bed is warm and cozy  
Don't want to get up

—*Bob Sassaman, Calais*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Pashi

You appeared out of nowhere on a Summer night  
A flash of fur, a streak of white.  
A cat? A rabbit? A dog? A clown?  
When you came inside things turned upside down.  
And off on the floor and full of white hair.  
Look he's here and now he's there!  
You sang and pranced and trilled and twirled  
Brought dancing light to a stagnant world.  
Living art wherever you sat.  
The blank canvas of a pure white cat.  
Then you left us in the Autumn bright  
Leaving behind your body of white.  
Did you come out of the woods? Or fall from the Moon?  
How did you arrive and why did you leave so soon?  
Oh, where did you come from, dear Pashi White?  
Out of the ether and into the Light?  
You were the strangest cat by far  
A streak of white, a shooting star.

—Nancy Scarcello, Florence

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## October Mountain

Rocky dome  
gives way to fuzzy gray,  
emerald, and burnt umber  
trailing down her thick neck and  
up again where broad shoulders meet  
those of her neighbors, down the line,  
an age-old spine. Dawn's early light paints  
her sides rosy gold fading to slate shadows.

How many feet have trod these trails? How many  
paws or claws or slithery bodies have traveled over  
this loving ground? Have stopped. Have drawn in breath  
in sheer wonder? How many souls have stepped into this  
moment of fresh possibilities? Have watched as she shakes  
off the darkness, shedding it like water from her sloping sides  
as the world becomes a colorful quilt, wrapping her in bold beauty.

What are                      your thoughts,  
Mr. Two-trunk              Maple?  
Of all this                    wonder laid out  
before you                    each morning  
like a banquet.

—Carolyn Cory Scoppettone, Middlesex

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

**Finally,**

there is nothing between me and the snow,  
the sky, and imperfection.

Away from pressure,

stress, all the words I can never find

and a couple hundred teenagers' nervous energy

I am my own fireworks. There are no

grades rankings assignments places ages scores corrections judgements split times  
there is no acceptance but an open sky, an open path, an open world.

Just me, only ever me, but I am not alone;

every path, every stride, every snowflake is with me

awkward loud rambling quiet clueless intellectual as I am

because here I am already enough.

I am okay.

And now, when running away feels like running home, I know

I've found a better heaven than any promised land.

When I do come home,

out of a white-dusted silver-encrusted winter

it doesn't ever need your approval to be beautiful,

that freedom is inside me forever,

rosy-cheeked wild-haired half-frozen little devil I am.

Other sanctuaries I return to with the wildness of the sky

tucked inside my chest.

—*Miriam Serota-Winston, Montpelier*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## In Hamelin

Sometimes, when I miss you, the wind blows through my skeleton.  
I think these bones must be hollow—  
what other explanation can I give that haunting hum?  
Stumbling, a child fumbling the ridges of a flute with unpracticed fingers.

I suppose anxiety is a bit like the Pied Piper, promising to cleanse my life  
while stealing something else.  
I remind myself that panic is the verb used by children with monsters under their beds  
and thrill-seekers plummeting on bungee cords, strapped in,  
but I get distracted by all the words  
and forget that I'm strapped in.

I've started collecting the color yellow.  
Not in a jar, just with my eyes,  
as if photocopied dandelions and soft butter could keep me warm.

Maybe it's because yellow is the color of the house I learned to walk in,  
the only house where I've drawn on the walls.  
Maybe it's that yellow washes out the pallor in my cheeks, dulls my hair to monochrome,  
and so I watch the rest of the world carry it without me,  
carry on without me.

Sometimes, when I miss myself, the wind blows through my skeleton.  
But if the Piper plays just right, we can all watch our skeletons dance.

—Aurora Sharp, Moretown

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Burned house horizon

Tonight among the cheeses we  
theorized about the burned house

horizon and imagined leaving it  
all behind one match and then

you're out the door a bag slung  
over your shoulder the train

whistle whispering its come on  
Look we all have our days and

this is another one opening its  
door on what could be sorrow

or what could be joy They say  
it's all in your hands what

you make of it. The trees were  
crowned with crows and maybe

that's the sign they waited for  
Tie your shoes spark the match

walk out into the glowing night  
as if you know your future.

—Rebecca Siegel, *Thetford Center*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## I Love Rivers Best of All

I love rivers best of all—  
Better than the mother-organ murky lake  
Better, even, than the pounding  
And glorious ocean

Especially in July  
When the berries are ripe  
And I smash them  
To the roof of my mouth  
With my tongue

Down the cool forest trail  
Strewn with quartz  
I come to the river  
Where my greed unbinds—

There is always another berry,  
More than enough rocks

—Michelle A. L. Singer, East Montpelier

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## My Heart, A Blossom

My heart is a closed tight blossom  
The ombré kind  
My stomach: Pine needles, cut grass that sticks to sweat, and  
A well of lyrics from the same three chords  
*I am alone*

From the minute we're born, it's known, we're alone,  
We cannot talk like them,  
Mock like them,  
Or stalk like them,  
We lay as they gawk within

A child of innocence  
Born from an unclean place,  
Carried within disgrace

From the first moment in life,  
We're misplaced

—Lorenza Fechter, Montpelier

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Bilingual (Japanese/English) Tanka

果てしなく遠いところに行くごとく今は静かに内に籠りぬ  
as if  
I were going  
an endless distance  
I step quietly  
inside

疫病の世に大鳥訪ぬればネバーモア―と木霊が響く  
in the world of  
a plague  
visit the ravens  
echoes  
nevermore

凍る道塩の結晶光る頃一人居の母薬缶を磨く  
salt crystals  
shine on the frozen road  
my mother  
living alone  
polishes her kettle

赤いリボン辿りて巡る森の道狭まりし世の広がりゆけり  
following red ribbons  
a new trail opened  
in the forest  
the shrunken world  
expands

—大石道子 *Michiko Oishi, Montpelier (English translation by Judy Chalmer)*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Chet

Dad said Chet was a king in those parts.  
On a weekend, his family farmhouse  
had a throng, guys outside talking  
cars and tractors, drinking beers,

feeling good to be who they were,  
and where they were, with Chet, in the  
midst of car parts and farm implements,  
a week's work done.

I met Chet when my mother brought a  
cake down for his birthday.

That Fall, Chet and I abandoned a  
neighborhood party, to stand among parked cars.  
His hand, thick-fingered, calloused and scarred,  
caressed a hood.

"I can just touch a car and I know what's wrong with it.  
It just comes to me. And tractors,  
never had to go to school for it."

Chet and his wife went to the Assisted Living  
a few years later when she needed care. With  
no car lot, no parts and pieces to reach for, he  
got sick too. He sent cards to my mother:  
"Doing good. Be home soon. Your neighbor,  
Chet."

—Amy Handy, Montpelier

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## The Vine

There is an influence that we all incessantly need  
It grows and forms in love from those who allow us to feed  
The sturdy vine and everyone on it  
will unknowingly become intertwined,  
Some people on the vine may have been deceased  
although this will not lessen what we have learned of their peace  
The older ones that are bored within the root  
are like our grandparents as if giving us a boost  
they tend to be the ones that are steady and sure  
understanding that only children can bring out what is pure  
they have weathered the rocks, wind and rain  
and they will shelter us all as we go through our pain  
they will shelter, not block and will allow us to twist and grow  
and then the sun will shine again and we will not question to know,  
that love and life is about reaching and climbing  
and wrapping ourselves around that tenuous vine,  
over and over and over again, not remembering time.

—Corinne Davis, Montpelier

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## May Snow

The snow should have known better:  
not even the hairy woodpecker  
hammering his hot call  
on the red barn's tin roof  
could miss how the fuse  
that lit the greening buds  
caught fire right on cue.  
Love will not be smothered,  
the snow should have known this,  
the flaming tulip, the blazing daffodil  
cannot be quenched,  
not by any blizzard of unseasoned snow.

—*Eleanor Kokar Ott, Calais*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Ice Pick

I try to reach you every day  
roped by memories we all have of you  
five years on and our loss  
is as sharp as that ice pick  
the ice pick i use to gain purchase  
on the almost coldening mountain  
of our particular story

Remember how you stopped the car  
on some side street in DC after  
we'd been at a rock and mineral show  
and I, following, stopped behind you  
to discover you were waving me out of my car  
to dance to a song we loved playing loud  
on the radio?

You could really dance.

—(sb) sōwbel, Montpelier

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Tempo Rubato

Sometimes on our loop of seeking-and-reward  
I'll look back to find the dog, head askew,  
gripping a bone still raw with life. Today  
it's a pelvic wing, scored from the ribs and spine  
picked clean in the oxbow, that he lopes ahead  
far enough to flop down and crowbar his jaw with,  
until I draw even. Each time I pass  
he heaves himself up with a reluctance  
he can't hide—not from me, lugging my own bone  
to tare life's spark, stealing a beat so I can lag  
to gnaw down to the marrow—until something  
crashes past, kicking up its high white flag  
and after the chase I can't remember why  
I feel light listening to the whistling sparrow.

—Rebecca Starks, *Richmond*

*previously published in Fetch, Muse, Able Muse Press*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## The Walkabout

From my vantage point  
I can feel the forty years  
Of Sand Beach in Acadia;  
The arcing strand that curls between  
Atlantic granite sentinels.

From this perch I recall  
How our children challenge the surf,  
Retreat, then fall and squeal in the  
Cold wash of salt water,  
Those *temporary, timeless* waves.

From this seat I can touch her:  
Girlfriend, lover, wife, mother,  
Now my empty nest companion  
Who walks and walks and walks;  
Steady pace and steady stride.

Hanging on, I see the tide-  
Washed sand and sense the left  
Then right compressing of her footfall.  
Her balance tested but holding, in  
The weight of all these days.

Her footprints deeper than they ought to be;  
For thirty years and more she's carried me.

—David Stauffer, *Peacham*

*previously published in the Mountain Troubador Summer Contest, 2019*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

**Prelapsarian, it was never enough:**

morning trumpeted in woodlands,  
afternoons in the arms of someone silky.

She watches the cardinal  
hop in front of daffodils,  
conspicuous in its red.  
The stronger you are,  
the less you need  
to stand apart.

How the crow studied, wholly  
an eye. She would have sworn  
it looked, in each curve, scarred.

—*Samn Stockwell, Barre*

*previously published in Main Street Rag, vol. 26, no. 2, Spring 2021*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Foxglove Digitalis

Mother Fox puts on her gloves, so deftly she can slink  
Soundlessly across the hillside hunting,  
For babies in the den await.  
She is deadly in her Foxgloves, for Foxglove Digitalis,  
makes the heart stop and all the blood cease, yet beauty shrouds around it . . .  
But Mother Fox's heart beats strong  
to their poison she is immune,  
so she can fight and win for her children, who cry out a merry tune:  
"Mother Fox has stopped a heart,  
the Deadly Foxgloves served her.  
Fox babies rejoice! Fox family is fed,  
and all the dead deserved her!"

—Ashley Anne Strobridge, Montpelier

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Birds and the Shadows of Birds

They fly over.  
Even if you don't see them  
Their cut-paper shapes  
Cross your path.

As if everything wasn't meant  
To be seen absolutely,  
Like love, invisible  
Everywhere crossing.

—*Diane Swan, Barre*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Was That You?

Was that you? The haggardy man?  
Hair stiff in need of washing?  
Asked me for a dollar.  
I thought about what you said,  
“to the least of my brothers,”  
Then happily retrieved a bill from my purse.

Was that you? The young girl crying?  
Afraid to go home.  
It had been so long she said.  
We talked for awhile. She rehearsed—  
Thanked me for the dime.  
My time.

Was that you? Staring through my father’s eyes,  
after all those years of silence?  
I heard myself revealing your words,  
Somehow finding the means to say,  
“It’s okay Dad . . . I love you.”

It was you wasn’t it? Working all the while,  
Through their needs, my heart, your mercy.  
Rejoicing that when you come to us,  
as a stranger, a child, a loved one,  
that we will answer your call—  
To respect, to assist, to forgive.

Thank you Jesus, it was you.

—J. Szwed, Plainfield

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

**For 11 years**

A poem for That Face:

Healthcare is preferential  
to pain and gross physical symptoms.

I get it.

Pity the person  
who has a high tolerance for pain, and the ability to adapt when the body  
doesn't work the way  
it should.

Pity the person  
who gets brushed off because only one piece of their issue falls into the  
purview of the highly specialized specialist.

Pity the person  
who deals with the horrible using the emotional resilience  
of humor.

I got it.

For 11 years.

But don't pity the person who handed this to you.

—*Not The, Middlesex*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Coffee Dog

Millie, my Boston, smiles through dark mask.  
White patterns border no sugar latte fur.  
Not black white, she confuses passing folks,  
Asking, *Small Boxer*, I kindly reply, *Boston*.

She presumes to pass at doggie daycare.  
*A Boxer*, she may boast, my liberated girl.  
Elder dogs might allow this nervous fib.  
Youngsters sniff in awe as Boxers are few.

Pandemic Pups know little of the before,  
A bountiful generation of canine saviors,  
To talk to and cuddle and hug uncovered.  
Millie reminds me her mask is here to stay.

—Tobe Tomlinson, *Essex Junction*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Snow Leaves

There's something unbecoming  
about the revelation of the land—  
the way the boulder laced  
with lichen in silence shrugs off  
its shroud of ice and shivers  
naked in ancient rawness,  
as if never seen before;  
and the way the oldest fir trees  
groan as their once buoyant boughs  
bend just to the point of breaking  
before releasing their load of snow.  
The way the earth, so recently  
sealed, opens too easily and melts  
to mud, the roads becoming  
great ruddy ruts, undignified  
and wretched, not quite impassable,  
and then they are.  
The way the sky reflects indifference  
to the circular sequence of change  
to the girl, now woman,  
who is the world.

—M. Underwood, *Saxton's River*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## A Prayer for the Suffering Near and Wide

Oh, heart, keep me soft.  
Remind me of my world's unlikely charms,  
her persistent comforts—  
the slice of sunlight that finds entry  
even when the blinds have been drawn,  
the robins who choose not to migrate  
despite the deepest freeze,  
yellow grocery store tulips in February,  
the good dog  
soft at my shoulder.

Oh, heart, keep me soft  
when it seems all I hear  
near and wide  
is the crackling cacophony of this  
world splintering.

—Betsy Unger, East Montpelier

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Above the Mask

Valentine's Day 2021

COVID 19 continues its invasion  
the body count increases worldwide

your eyes focus on mine across the table  
there is a slight crinkle around them  
maybe an unseen smile.

I put my card on the restaurant table  
and slide it the 6 feet between us  
hands already sanitized at the door.

Red hearts with smiling faces on the cover  
inside the lines, "You are dear to my heart  
forever."

You read these words and our eyes  
above the masks begin to shine  
with light not tears

We have survived  
this  
year

—Nancy Vandenburg, Milton

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Breathe

*for Kylie Dawn*

My little girl shares with me  
what she has learned—Earth may end  
up like Mars. She can't sleep.  
There's very little oxygen on Mars,  
how would we breathe?  
And the configuration of the stars  
could shift Earth's axis, send us flying  
helplessly into space. What if the sun explodes?  
Or what if we end up like Venus?  
Four hundred degrees Celsius—  
how could we run barefoot in the sand,  
the soles of our feet turning red like molten lava?  
Studying the solar system gives her nightmares.  
I tell her to close her eyes.  
Take it from the old and wise—  
worry kills surer than a hole in the skies,  
  
so sleep soundly. But remember,  
when I come to tuck your quilt around you in  
the middle of the night, and you are as still  
as polished stone in the moonlight,  
stir softly, breathe, so I can hear you,  
breathe out the uncertain darkness, breathe in  
the earthly dawn.

—Patti Wahlberg, Cabot

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## The Salt of Infancy

Began with the first inmate's death.

Curled as they were around the tongue of space  
That was the cuff window  
Made for hands  
But somehow holding their head . . .

"Stupid inmate." The public says. "Good riddance."

But were they "that stupid" or that desperate in  
Trying to escape the ghouls of that terrible palace?

There they lay,  
Nestled, as a limp fetus in a womb of iron,  
Even as they left their body and ascended,

The granulated mist of their soul flinging itself  
Up over the barbed wire fence,  
(Flung salt in a gale storm)

Cutting across the plains  
Headed for home.

Until they came to rest on the near empty dinner table

And were shaken into each relative's meal  
Before the family even knew

The prisoner had returned,

Salt-to-salt, Earth-to-earth,

To their empty hands.

—*Kim Ward, Montpelier*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## A Murder of Crows

There's a gathering of crows out there  
in the fall leafless trees,  
black Corvids on the dreary black branches,  
darkness becoming them.

The mood is not improved  
by the leaden threatening sky.  
I remember they are called  
a murder of crows, not a flock.

Folklore has these scavengers  
as omens of death,  
gathering in cemeteries,  
on dead bodies on the battlefield.

Now holding forth  
up there in my oaks,  
conducting trial for their wayward,  
the transgressors group-murdered.

The Fifteenth Century notion is dark.  
But on a bleak late November afternoon  
I'm given pause to reflect on Nature,  
on group justice, and death.

—Janet Watton, Randolph Center

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## What of the body?

What of the body  
that dissolves fear of water—  
an ocean that is not an ocean,  
an ocean more expansive than ocean  
soft in its waters  
enveloping clear green like sea glass  
liberated from gravity  
enveloped in velvet through  
the mechanism of the submerged ear,  
I enter the body of the city  
wrapped in the embracing currents  
deemed the most dangerous of hazard level 5,  
but danger is not in evidence here  
where fear is disappeared in invisible horizon  
and the beauty of an infinite backstroke  
spreading its wings  
with shoulders that finally make sense

—JC Wayne, Shelburne | *The Poartry Project*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Summers Cage:

Snow falls like leaves from a tree,  
Blanketing the land in beautiful white,  
The skier, locked from outside now free  
Stands in the glowing light.

The sky blue, no cloud in sight,  
The sun on the stage a brighted orb,  
The skier like a bird in flight,  
Soars on wings that were absorbed.

The trees bow when they go by,  
Over hills paved with crystals, small and tiny  
As they look up at the sky  
They see pinpricks of light, bright and shiny

As night falls, quiet and deep  
it lays on the land a veil of sleep.

—*Benjamin Wetherell, Montpelier*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## The Ever-Given

When I think of my depression  
it's not a wraith or a demon  
but the huge container ship

stuck in the Suez Canal, lodged sideways  
for days, blocking the world's commerce,  
that massive steel hull wedged

into mud and silt, two hundred  
thousand tons of grief, fear, shame

looming like a cliff above a tiny backhoe,  
the yellow ant of my effort  
scrabbling to dig and dig,  
one spoonful of sand at a time.

It was the moon I tell you,  
not the tugboats or earthmovers.

The full moon brought the spring tides  
that lifted the ship, shifted her prow,  
opened the waterways.

I'm not saying the answer is to wait  
for the waxing, but what if  
we had faith in gravitational pull,

what if we knew  
release was always available,  
what if we didn't  
have to work so hard?

—Diana Whitney, Brattleboro

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Expectation

There was a tiny archway  
Between two cedar hedges  
Into which my father  
Optimistically planted  
A peony bush.

Those white-pink petals  
Frisled like icing  
On the edges of a birthday cake,  
And ants worked busily to  
Open the flowers to the filtered sunlight.

We could not reach the vegetable garden  
Without pushing against, through, and past  
That diaphanous riot of buds and blooms,  
And if ever there was a reason to hope  
In what lies just beyond what we can see,

This was it.

—Emily A. Wills, *Fairfax*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Vermont December

It is December and we must be brave.\*  
The days shrink, the morning dark is  
thick as a dense cabernet. Afternoons  
leak light until we feel abandoned.  
Only an early rising moon proves  
the world has not run away forever.

It is December and we must be brave.  
It will get colder, icier, falling  
is a danger yet I will not cower.  
I pull yak traks over my boots,  
gingerly venture to the roadside  
mailbox. When I was a child in  
Pittsburgh I did not imagine  
retrieving mail would take courage.

—Heather Wishik, Montpelier

\*This line is from Natalie Diaz's poem "Manhattan is a Lenape Word" in *Postcolonial Love Poem*, Grey Wolf Press, 2020.

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Hope Held Under Magnifying Glass

Sometimes  
we are exactly  
what we need—  
    a convex lens  
bends light inward and everything seems closer  
we are light  
    we are a little larger than life we find  
ourselves hitched to this here drop of water even though we see  
sun-blind, the glass suffocating from its sore sand throat  
its own origin story crawling through fear but with  
a heart turned toward miracles of streetwear punk-spirit  
there we'll turn up at a true mirror on a literal corner-store  
realize, burst or bust, we all are (working) overtime—  
  
clock outta the chaos to release what inevitably awaits us.

—*Bianca Amira Zanella, Rutland*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

**in hot water**

my ascending gaze

clings to a small darkness

stuck on white PEVA

a snail's curtain call

—*laura ziegler, Plainfield*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Free Market

Buttercurl highway  
rolls in gold  
light in the distance from my window.

I touch the loaded trucks & minivans,  
& cars with trunks,  
the sight.

I lick the freedom,  
imagining rich destinations,

but I know.  
I sometimes pretend I don't.

Night falls,

have I not moved?

By the window  
I ache

shaking  
in the margin of error,

an accidental survivor.

The night train strains  
against the tracks.

The sound  
the traffic on the highway  
the people inside

and my escape

—Eva Zimet, Montpelier

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Go Left of East of Eden

Walk past the kitchen,  
out the front door,  
and down the garden path.  
Keep going through the gate  
left open wide  
when Adam rode to town.

Leave the chickens to their pecking.  
Leave the horses to their munching.  
Leave the clothes to their dampening.  
Leave it all and walk away,  
barefoot or not,  
follow the path  
left east of Eden.

Head to the place  
where one only goes  
in storybooks left  
open in the winter.

A place stretched fat and thin.  
A place both in front and far behind.  
A place where light and dark come to play.

A place where it's safe  
to be Cathy.

—Heather Corey, Montpelier

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## The Leap

It was not what I thought  
as if thoughts could teach me like your animal body—  
the sleek bolting fox—tail a streak of flame  
out of nowhere toward the one dark opening  
under the Hemlock's thick folded arms.

I wanted to follow those fiery front feet in  
to the space he'd found alone  
airborne and directional  
into all those crossed branches.

My favorite childhood memory is leaping  
from tide pool to tide pool, the waves knocking  
me down, sinking in sand, running with sea  
going deep, the icy swirls numbing fear,  
feeling the rift, and then the flow, following

far from judgment, or even hope,  
holding to my own rhythm of the waves. What desire

is enough to go there? Into oblivion or freedom?  
A closed eye, a silenced ear follows  
the heart beating as it did with tides and moons,  
—a listening with some other organ.

The way a deer misses the car, to leap  
the ditch and clear the fields, fear moving with him and releasing again—  
because he has fields to forage, life to live? Is that when he opens  
his throat to sing?

The mind so incapable, is dancing in a ditch

—Lar McMillan, Burlington

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

so what are we here for?

every step in the snow  
leaves a deer print  
if you are a deer  
but how do we know  
what we are supposed to do in the world  
really well  
where if we don't do it  
no one else will  
so what are we here for?  
lifting up a friend  
saying good morning to our children with so much love  
reminding the person working at the store  
that what they are doing is helping a lot of people  
checking in on the ones who have it a lot harder than me  
i am satisfied sometimes with a few good words  
but I can do more  
every step in the snow and along the way  
i can leave soft impressions in the lives i touch  
lighter than deer prints  
sending warm vermont forest love  
through the snow that keeps getting deeper

—*david fried, Montpelier*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## The Leash

If, one day, you are walking in the woods  
and everything insidiously wicked in this world comes to find you  
and slips a leash around your neck  
and shakes its box of treats labeled Power and Product and Push Harder—

Pause.

Yes, here by the birch and the beech  
that have grown together in an embrace.  
I did not say stop,  
leave the trail, fall down, give up.  
But stand still now  
for a moment. Empty your bladder. Drink some water.  
Nothing is to be gained by climbing one more ridge  
with a parched mouth and aching insides.  
What would it be to care for yourself enough—  
Not just *enough to not die*—  
but enough to hold the roar of joy in the same body as the roar of discomfort?

I know. The trail is hard,  
rocky, muddy. You didn't train for this,  
and you're almost certainly wearing the wrong boots.

Listen.

When you begin again,  
walk fast for the joy of walking,  
for the way it swings your hips and powers your thighs.  
When you begin again,  
lift the leash over your head  
and let it fall in the hay-scented fern at your feet.

—Dana Dwinell-Yardley, Montpelier

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.





# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## **This Past Winter**

We found new ways to explore the narrow roadbeds of our unreflected lives

We uncovered old ways to remind ourselves and others of serene merry making

We started singing and cavorting in the white blanketed south yard

We embraced the momentum of the moment and turned it into a day's outing

We filled in the empty spaces with catcalls and delicious muffins

We shouted expletives deleted as we railed against a whirl-a-wind winter

We took comfort in delivering small tokens of gratitude

We danced to melodious jazzy tunes radioed from Calgary after the days' affairs were put to bed

We looked for others who embody grace in the face of this relentless onslaught

We welcomed the advent of spring as a long awaited gift

—Robert L. Lincoln Jr., North Middlesex

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Cherry Collection

*a sonnet*

Something repeated yearly in sunlight;  
ignored by hands for seasons recall;  
beauty for granted covered in white;  
out of chilling winter a spectacle.

The survivors of wilderness and rue;  
shriveled in states of oxidization;  
wondering why their harvest wasn't due;  
insides are goo, outsides dehydration.

There, time has passed and now botulism;  
from monochromatic seen, recognized;  
seven moons have been left to realism;  
much like wrinkled skin painted and varnished.

No mouse, squirrels, chickadee or raccoon  
would eat cherries that didn't end in spoon.

—Darcie Tredwell, Barre

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Green Mountain Gloaming

The stereo was busy as  
we swayed under an icy December moon  
Warmed with mull wine  
—some recipe you found online  
Burnt marshmallows on a dwindling fire  
Melting flesh dripping from maple twigs  
Medieval torches, sticky grins, hungry eyes  
Crunchy snow beneath our boots  
Eventide explorers of the heart . . .

—Greg Robertson, Northfield

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Inland

My stomach is inland to my raging oceans,  
of eye, lash, curl of hair, salt spray.

My stomach is warm,  
to the steaming sweet potato casserole,  
soft potatoes, alike.

My stomach sits patiently,  
contemplating the worthiness of its hunger,  
through the lens of my outer shores.  
My reflection in the mirror,  
point of my chin, jiggle of my thigh, edges of my belly.

To my frenzied brain's dismay,  
my stomach accepts this sustenance.  
Overcoming any second thought—aroused by my brain,  
who works overtime.  
Who sees only a shallow glimpse of the reflecting pool.

The sweet yam and soft potato call to my cells.  
They cheer, content, as they are fed this nourishment.

My brain wakes in alarm to this feeling of security.  
It sends mixed signals,  
but my stomach is warm, and I am happy.

After all,  
the raging seas and unnavigable tides  
are only exterior,  
to the inland bay, that I embrace as my home.

—Anonymous, Montpelier

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Peekaboo

Just because  
you close your eyes

doesn't mean  
I'm not here.

Isn't that amazing?  
It's remarkable

how profoundly I do  
exist

with  
or without your eyes.

—*Toussaint St. Negritude, Newark*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*





# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Advice for the Traveler

Let your lover kiss your arms, cheeks, lips, and neck  
for protection. Wash your feet with lavender oil.

Fold pieces of your past  
into cranes for your backpack.

Tuck your sliver of a silver saint in a breast pocket.  
Double-knot strong laces on generous shoes with hefty tread.

Pull the bill down on your green hat till glory upends it  
and the sweat of going gives over to cooler winds.

When a hum rises from the highway, rub whichever bone  
is your wishbone and keep on going.

Be not afraid of crosses by the road. Offer them  
the gentle roses of your breath.

—Tricia Knoll, Williston

*previously published as "For the Traveler" in Antiphon, Issue 20, March 2017*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Mass Formation

We reached for glory à la Soviétique  
and found some solace there,  
where thoughts about the ban on feeling free were formally out of style.

On groupthink's teats, cuddling, at times,  
more equal than the others,  
grateful to be community-owned by our brothers from another mother.

War came and went and solved all that  
that luxury of the statistically mundane.  
Oh, how we fought to preserve the horror of reasoning with our minds.

We wanted to be told just what to do,  
to be stirred with righteous fire,  
to mask and lick our dumbed down dreams against our logic's choir.

And what was left after the war?  
After all the gore and pain?  
Nothing left it seemed, it seemed, yet even more insane mundane.

And less than what we ever were  
and ever had before,  
given again to those who pluck and those who write the score.

—*Scott Boyd, Stowe*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Friday's breeze

In the wake of Friday's evening breeze  
I feel free to just . . . be  
Sparks of awareness  
Intense and brief  
Fills voids in tired thoughts  
I hear the train in the distance and I  
Take a deep breath, down into my guts  
Like a newborn babe  
Relief  
To know there's nowhere we need to be  
Heartbeat eases down to 74  
I think of someone's familiar face  
And breathe in Friday's cool evening breeze  
But I feel warm

—Cory Mattos, *Randolph*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Black Birch Tapping

Black birches line the wandering brooks, following subtle slopes.  
She descends the meandering ridge  
weaving through spring slush  
while miles of thin twigs below transform  
black burble and gurgle into wintergreen sap.

She's launching herself out into a cold morning.  
Frost's sting giving way to warm afternoon sun.  
Wool-dressed and booted, with yoke and buckets,  
she's trudging through snow fleas and corn snow,  
a woman in the forest making sweet steam rise.

Maple sugarbush lines the jagged ridge. When maple sap runs,  
the birch sap stills, occasional plunks in her buckets.  
River valley coolness rises, falls, and ripples in waves  
like the sap itself. Red buds and gray limbs shiver and swell.  
She's mixing together sap by the river

salted with the sweat of her sleigh hauling,  
mittened fists pour buckets and pails. Her syrup's  
pine-boiled, smokey and slow, so it takes a long time.  
Minty amber caramel and spring sun poured through morning clouds,  
the sighed distillation of light's longing.

—Rick Agran, Worcester

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## When It Is Safe Again

To go out in the world  
I'm going to put on my best sweater—  
the one that climbs up my neck,  
encasing it in softness—  
and my big silver hoop earrings—  
though I have better ones—  
because they always  
make me feel bohemian  
and then I'll put on  
my dark green boots  
that lace up and—finally—  
my signature shimmering  
lipstick—*Pink Wink*—  
and head downtown to the hotel  
where the jazz quartet plays  
and I'll settle into a table for one,  
order my drink and—  
maskless at last—  
smile at strangers,  
drumming my fingers,  
swinging my leg under  
the table, filled with  
the rhythm and hum  
of no longer being alone.

—*Florence McCloud, South Burlington*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Longstreet Dreamer

In the background lying underneath  
a blanket of a mechanical hum,  
an old radio plays the chorus  
to “American Woman” by The Guess Who.  
A bow legged man in blue jean cutoffs saunters in pushing  
a cart full of the latest order of saw blades.

He spends his breaks locked in the bathroom,  
drinking Longstreet whiskey,  
smirking,  
pleased by his own cunning.

Sometimes  
when the days are slow  
or the whiskey’s fast  
he’ll take out his wallet and unfold a fading picture  
of a grinning lanky boy with long blond hair  
dressed in a pressed white and baby blue Royals baseball uniform.

*Coach says I coulda gone pro  
he might even whisper*

to no one

in particular.

—Connor Keating, Northfield

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Emotion

Take pills forever  
Tears create a tsunami  
But, love my body

—Rachel Senechal, East Montpelier

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## The Way

The way  
Shoes clack on  
Wooden planks over the  
Music of the stream below.  
The way  
A simple peaceful birdsong  
Rises and falls  
Above and below.  
The way  
A cotton skirt rustles  
Step by step  
Forward to the forest path  
Which shows  
The way.

—Linda Hogan, Montpelier

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

To L.

I call her “the eye”:  
She gazes transversally  
Through the drops of rain  
To the sun always.  
Studying at every season  
The life of the pond and the forest.  
The beautiful creatures.  
Humanity is another forest  
With its monuments  
Shops and electric lights  
Pointing in a blizzard  
To a café or the library  
She gazes, like a mother  
Upon her children,  
She has hundreds of them

—Oswaldo Brighenti, Barre

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

touching  
sky and I stroll  
together

—Cheryl Burghdurf, Middlesex

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Uncertain Fields of White

Every night the mouse  
with his marveling nose  
scurries through a muffled  
world. Listening for the  
fox's footprints, the owl's call.  
The man with cars and work  
and bills who thinks he knows  
of fear need only look to the  
mouse. How he shrinks the world  
to his size, cowering under the  
frigid covers of his forest bed,  
burrowing in his own unease.  
Hoping beyond hope that tonight  
he will feed himself and not  
the wings of the sky,  
nor the paws of the earth.

—Connor Keating, Northfield

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Blue Fishing

And there's that tide thing.  
It's day by day high and low  
Into the shoreline sand and  
Rocking the rocks sometimes  
During a Nor'easter blast, yet  
Today the bay is mirror still save  
The oily slick of the menhaden  
Schooling just a bit below  
The waterline and luring in the  
Famished bluefish close to the beach.

—Linda Hogan, Montpelier

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Companionable Silence

Companionable silence,  
Without a companion  
Is only silence.  
Not absolute silence,  
The house still creaks  
    In wind and cold  
The furnace still  
    Wheezes on and off;  
The water filter still gurgles  
Through its daily rinses.  
But these are mere mechanical sounds.  
Companionable silence is  
The sound of love choreographed  
By time  
Into dance;  
A dance swaying to the rhythms  
Of unspoken understandings;  
Of shared chores;  
Of mutual trust.  
Now those sounds fade  
And while love remains  
The dance falls silent.

—Gregory Sanford, *Marshfield*

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Ravenskin

Our Summoner  
Of Spring  
Trance Dance  
With The Ancients  
Twirl Whirl Twist  
and Spin  
Beckon Moisten Burst  
and Bloom  
Pollinate Gestate Hibernate  
and Wait . . . Wait  
Now.  
Watch.  
The Winter  
Shift  
Shape

—*Patricia Louise Joi Canada, Northfield*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Everyone

Everyone

Trees, dogs, rocks

Peoples (is peoples)

Has, had, will have

Stories, story, tales, memories, thoughts, wishes

Smiles, sense of self, maybe

Sluggo, Grog, Oog,

Great “cave people” who knew how to throw a party.

With good food, live music, dancing, fermented mushrooms

At the end of an era, day, moment,

Collectively sighed and hugged together for a breath.

That little kid who worried about things.

That dog whose delicate sniffs beam images clearly intriguing

That girl who bravely laughed at

What is it ?

I know, and hear.

I just want you to know I

Sometimes hear

Your story.

It's different, the same no way, yes way, than mine.

Raise your glass to us!

—David Klein, East Calais

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## An Unfettered View

Silhouettes in twilight—  
eight people  
stand together  
on a hill  
topped with tall grass.

One holds a purse, another  
a child hanging heavy against her.  
No one seems dressed for frost.  
Their faces veiled, voices muted,  
their hands cannot be held.

What remains concealed  
are their sorrows and joys,  
the color of their skin,  
their origin, pronouns  
and how they cast their vote.

Just the silhouettes  
of eight people  
standing together  
in twilight  
at the top of a hill.

—Marti Snell, Vermont College of Fine Arts

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## A Barn Like That

I knew a barn like that  
When I was young,  
And had strong, farm-girl arms  
I can almost hear the gossip of swallows  
As they slip home  
To the Hay mow  
At dusk.

I see those weathered boards  
Warped by the shrug of frost,  
From the inside,  
Letting in narrow, dusty sunbeams.  
And imperfect as those walls are,  
When sheep or cows  
Or horses crowd to mangers  
With steaming breath  
I know the bitterest morning  
Will be warm,  
Smelling of manure  
And last summers' grass and clover pasture.  
Yes, I knew a barn like that  
When I was young  
And had strong, farm-girl arms,  
Inside and out.

—Susan Reid, Montpelier

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Wolf Moon Transmission

Full yellow orange moon casts a glint in his eye,  
He knows you and me, studying us in his secret way.  
Cold bright breeze rustles hairs in his ears,  
Feeling a symphony of vibrations seeping through forest darkness.  
Listening carefully, he readies his response, layering knowledge waves  
With the ether of a night more subtly  
Than anyone might suspect  
From an intellect hidden behind lupinus eyes.

When the howl comes later,  
You might think that glowing winter moon  
Has heard what has been brewing in a beast  
Bellowing out a hungry call on an icy January night.  
But the secret emissary of Sirius,  
Is instead sending a passionate song of Earthling activity,  
Through fractal encrypted frequency transmission  
Carried to the Stars on his haunting aria.

—Peter Clark, Woodbury

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Walking the High Arctic Coast of Nunavut

I scan acres of wind-carved rocks  
sketched low on tundra.  
Nothing here is random.

Hue and form, mineral and plant,  
even jagged cracks  
follow laws of the universe.

I feel soft sponge of moss beneath my boots,  
frigid wind on my face.  
I smell musk, balm, fresh frozen air.  
I hear silence, squalls, little birds in bushes,  
bees humming.

Nothing in this gallery is muted  
—shape, sound, tint, touch. The artists  
are frost and wind, kin to Miro,  
Frankenthaler, Pollack, and Rothko.

—Marti Snell, Vermont College of Fine Arts

Presented by the KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## YET

Farewell, you,  
good bird alight in the sun singing into space  
Prism!

As you melt away does the branch forget you?  
No—see? the leaves are still trembling.  
You were a friend.

And I . . .  
It's strange, this sadness (I do not like goodbyes)  
You looked in my eyes  
and sailed off on the waves of the winds . . .  
Going going gone

You have found the right way  
I am glad of it  
I am glad

YET

—Jane Pincus, Roxbury

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

Fresh scent in the air  
Laundry flapping in the wind  
Our personal flags

—*Barbara Scotch, Montpelier*

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

*Poem printed with permission of the author.*



# Poem City

MONTPELIER | 2022

## Earth Puzzle

I dreamed I was working  
on a jigsaw puzzle of the earth,  
finding the curved, shadowed edge,  
coming out of night,  
darkening ocean edged  
by the deeper dark of star-dusted space.

The puzzle pieces were large,  
irregular with odd wings and ears  
and they were beautiful,  
cloud, ocean, a little bit of land,  
abstract wisps of silver and blue  
and muted green-brown earth

It seemed that the pieces shone.  
I could have assembled them  
by their own inner light.

Two strong thoughts came to me.

This is gorgeous!

What if I don't get it right?

Then I woke on the edge of morning,  
a tiny piece in a beautiful puzzle,  
with an odd ear or wing  
and a little of my own light,  
hoping to get it right.

—Susan Reid, Montpelier

Presented by the **KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY** [kellogghubbard.org/poemcity](http://kellogghubbard.org/poemcity) or 802-223-3338

Poem printed with permission of the author.

