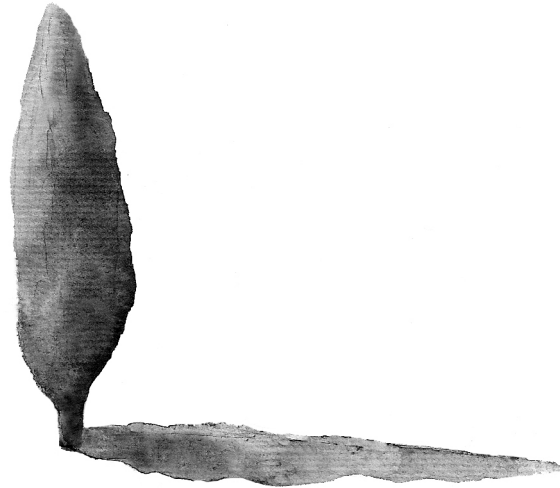


CONTRIBUTORS  
THE JOURNAL & WEB PAGES



THE SIGH PRESS

ISSUES 1-11

ISSUE 11 WINTER 2016 THEME: Has the Befana ever left charcoal in your stocking?  
TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS: Tell The Sigh Press if you've been naughty or nice this year.

\*

BOB BLESSE was director of the Black Rock Press at the University of Nevada, Reno, for thirty-three years. He taught book art courses, and designed and produced books and broadsides published by the press. He was also head of the library's rare books and manuscript department for twenty-five years. He has an M.A. degree in English Literature from California State University, Chico and a Masters of Library and Information Science from UCLA. He and his wife have lived in Florence, Italy since 2014.

I am fascinated by the natural beauty of our world and try to show this through my landscape images. I view my photography as artistic creative interpretation, rather than the recreation of static visual elements. I present nature as seen through my eyes, offering my vision as a creative composition, which I hope elicits a positive emotional response from the viewer. I also create monochrome images, which I believe are thought provoking, with positive energy and visual tension.

NAUGHTY OR NICE? I've never been a big fan of the word "nice," but I always tried to be pleasant, kind, friendly, and polite with friends and everyone I met this past year. I don't believe I've been particularly "naughty." *Keep a steady keel and avoid naughty, bad behavior* is my motto. However, if naughty behavior reflects self-indulgence, then perhaps I'm a rather naughty eater at times. But I do watch what I eat—at least until it's gone.

[ ]

GARY ROGOWSKI is the nom de plume of the fictional writer, Giga Roodski. Giga, as he is known only in Paris, has taken to haunting the streets near his favorite restaurant, the

little known Pizza de Venise on Rue Montreuil to catch a glimpse of the past. It eludes him as he sits in the copious smells from the oven.

CHARCOAL? I have found in my stocking old orange rinds, scraps of newspaper clippings, a small plastic rhinoceros, and a password to a forgotten door. No, no charcoal. The dust of years has settled in there comfortably but no charcoal. I must have been nice or forgetful.

!

PAULA MCGRATH lives in Dublin. Her first novel, *Generation*, was published in 2015. Her second, *A History of Running Away*, is forthcoming in 2017. She has a background in English Literature and is currently a doctoral student at the University of Limerick. In another life she was a yoga teacher.

PAULAMCGRATH.COM

MY HUSBAND SAYS nice, which is nice. Feedback from my kids was more mixed, however, but when I reminded them that I'm in charge of their Santa lists, they revised upwards.

~

JJ PIGLET & JOHN GERARD SAPODILLA: This year I haven't had any time for burlesque and one of the heels on my shoe is loose. I can't possibly walk in it, let alone tango or climb steps. If I tried to put washing outside it would blow away and end up in the North Sea. Maybe the North is ok for good girls, and I was always brought up to be good. I always wanted to sunbathe on the bridge of a yacht, so long as it isn't too hot. (I have freckles and burn too quickly, besides I don't like caviar.) I am always good. I know you are always naughty, John Gerard. That is quite a good combination. The Yin and Yan of the Florence writing club.

*Enter Befana and her Agent BX.*

"So, Agent BX, what about J G Sapodilla? has he been good or naughty during the year?"

"Ma'am, people are complicated."



ISSUE 10 AUTUMN 2016 THEME: When what you fall back on doesn't work anymore.  
TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS: Tell The Sigh Press what habit you would like to give up, and what new skill would go in its place.

\*

FRANCESCO DUFFY-BOSCAGLI hails from the seaside town of Santa Barbara, California. What he enjoys most in life: laughter, incredibly fine tip pens, and the quiet relief found in the rare moments in which there is nothing to do. With his pens he creates daily drawings that he shares with the world.

[WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/642\\_DRAWINGS](http://WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/642_DRAWINGS)

[WWW.642DRAWINGS.COM](http://WWW.642DRAWINGS.COM)

IT IS LENIENCY with myself that is my worst habit. I always allow myself more time than allotted, it is not something I can fall back on. Ever. And you'd think this would be easily learned and then fixed. It is not. It is something that sticks by you, as if the procrastination itself has begun to procrastinate.

,

LUKE WHITINGTON left Australia (and a career in diplomacy) to learn Italian at the University for Stranieri in Perugia. He spent 19 years living in Italy restoring old ruined buildings, then did the same in Ireland for nine years while launching a multi-media centre (Pleasant Factory) in Dublin in the 90s. His work has appeared in publications in Ireland and Australia such as *Post*, *Five Bells*, *Quadrant*, *Overland* and *Contrappasso*, and has been anthologized in *Henry Kendall Prize Anthologies*,

*Australian Love Poems 2013*, and *Canberra Poets Anthology 2015*. He participates in public readings of his work, including in Florence, one of the places where he divides his time.

Rather than habits, let things evolve. Habits are for drudgery.

—

VOLODYMYR KUZMA is a Ukrainian-born violinist who has lived and worked in Florence since 2002. Currently he is a Professor at the Scuola di Musica di Fiesole and also gives many concerts in Italy and abroad. His hobbies include composing music and writing, which is usually done during his travels.

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/CHANNEL/UC2-77HVEPOBoKxD5W\\_VfP9Q](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2-77HVEPOBoKxD5W_VfP9Q)

[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/VOLODYMYRKUZMAVIOLINIST/](https://www.facebook.com/voodymyrkuzmaviolinist/)

IT'S A TRICKY QUESTION because in my opinion we all change, adapt and evolve constantly so, week to week, I always try to improve myself, shed some bad habits and learn something new.

,

ISABELLA RONCHETTI is an artist-writer/misanthrope/sesquipedalianist who intentionally wears mix-matched socks and taught herself to raise one eyebrow. She finds inspiration in dreams, stories, shapes in the cumuli, and peculiar happenings from everyday life. Her award-winning work has appeared in numerous publications such as *Diverse Voices Quarterly*, *Canvas Literary Journal*, *Foliate Oak Literary Journal*, *GREYstone*, *Glass Kite Anthology*, *Bluefire Journal*, *The Claremont Review*, *Celebrating Art*, and *Poetic Power Anthology*.

[WWW.ISABELLARONCHETTI.COM](http://WWW.ISABELLARONCHETTI.COM)

OFTEN WHEN I FEEL ALONE, I climb eight flights of stairs to the roof of a parking lot. I watch people walk by, I watch them go through the boring motions of their day,

completely unaware of me up there. I realize, from watching these herds of people who are all the same, unquestioning, that I am stagnant and boring like everyone else. I am trying to change little things throughout my day, trying to make my life a little less predictable. I owe this to my throne on the roof and to all the oblivious passers-by who are living their lives without questioning why they do what they do, but once they figure that out it will probably be too late.

~

ANONYMOUS HAS HAD A RELATIONSHIP with Florence since 1992, often enjoying the secret that she is intimate with the place and culture despite her anonymity in the weighty terra cotta city swarming with tourists.

ANONYMOUS WOULD LIKE to stop mixing Italian and French whenever she tries to speak French, a language she once knew well. This unfortunate habit would be replaced with neat language compartments in her brain where the French are having their croque monsieurs and the Italians are gesturing over espresso (as only espresso should be made), and never the two shall meet.



ISSUE 9 SUMMER 2016 THEME: The heat is on.

TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS: Tell The Sigh Press about a situation when the heat was on but you kept your cool.

\*

ELENA SECCI was born in Florence where she attended the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno. She currently lives in the countryside between Pisa and Livorno. Her paintings can be found in many private collections in Italy, Germany, and United States.

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/ELENA-SECCI-ARTIST-112393708830610/

THE HEAT WAS ON when The Sigh Press asked this very question. Presently, I am in the middle of grading papers, writing student reports, and holding parent-teacher conferences, but I have to keep my cool and grin.

,

ANN LETTICK is from Connecticut but has spent most of her life in Italy with stints in France and Mexico. She is a long-time lecturer of English language and American culture at the University of Florence. A writer of short stories and poetry, Lettick's poems are largely based on her autistic brother. Her work appeared in the US in *Exquisite Corpse*.

THE HEAT WAS ON years back when I walked into a classroom of about 50 immigrants in a Los Angeles night school to teach them English as a second language. Had never taught such a big group before, felt like I was up on stage... Turned out to be my best job, with dedicated, grateful students. A point of pride was that I learned all their names.

,

RICHARD JAMES ALLEN'S ten books of poetry, fiction and performance texts include *Fixing the Broken Nightingale* (Flying Island Books), *The Kamikaze Mind* (Brandl & Schlesinger) and *Thursday's Fictions* (Five Islands Press), shortlisted for the *Kenneth Slessor Prize for Poetry*. Australian-born Allen won the *Chancellor's Award* for most outstanding PhD thesis at the University of Technology, Sydney. Widely published in anthologies, journals and online for over thirty years, Allen has been the recipient of numerous awards, nominations, and grants, and has enjoyed unique opportunities during his international career as an acclaimed writer, director, choreographer, and performer.

WWW.PHYSICALTV.COM.AU

WWW.FIXINGTHEBROKENNIGHTINGALE.COM

WWW.POETRYLIBRARY.EDU.AU/POETS/ALLEN-RICHARD-JAMES

THE “HEAT IS ON” for anyone trying to live the life of an artist in the 21st century. Competing claims argue for your time and attention, challenge your sense of value and the worthwhileness of what you have dedicated your life to, fight to pull the development of your work off its coherent trajectory. I keep my “cool” through the practice of yoga, which clears the pathways of the mind and body and allows the chaos of the world’s demands for attention to become a pattern, a dance of being, from which I write.

—

KB BALLENTINE’S work appears in *River of Earth and Sky: Poems for the Twenty-first Century* (2015), *Southern Poetry Anthology, Volume VI: Tennessee* (2013) and *Southern Light: Twelve Contemporary Southern Poets* (2011). Her third collection, *What Comes of Waiting*, won the 2013 Blue Light Press Book Award.

WWW.KBBALLENTINE.COM

I TEACH HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE and we had our first dress rehearsal for *Peter Pan*. I run it just like the show, without interrupting or helping. During the set changes, it was taking them too long to move. I sat (im)patiently during the first two scenes, sweating them out, and finally helped move set pieces without saying anything. It was not a good rehearsal, but it was an excellent production (finally).

,

JENNIFER RIEGER is a writer and teacher in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She holds a BA in English, an MA in Literature, and is currently finishing her MFA with a concentration in poetry and creative nonfiction. When not revising, grading, or chaperoning high school events, Jennifer enjoys loving the hell out of the beautiful people in her life.



A BLANK PAGE is daunting. It's the writer's crux of hope and anxiety. We analyze, we ponder, we stare at blank walls, and open countless bottles of wine—anything to invoke the muse that saves us from ourselves. But in the end, my advanced degree in procrastination pulls through, and I'm whole again.

~

CARY TENNIS, prior to his role as advice columnist for Salon.com's "Since You Asked," was a journalist, spoken-word performer, and musician. He studied English Literature at the University of Miami and Creative Writing at San Francisco State. With his wife, Norma, he now lives 90 kilometers south of Florence in Castiglion Fiorentino where he writes, in addition to holding writing workshops around the world. Tennis' book, *Finishing School: The Happy Ending to that Writing Project You Can't Seem to Get Done*, co-written with Danelle Morton, will be published later this year by Penguin/Tarcher.

[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/CARY.TENNIS](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/CARY.TENNIS)

[WWW.CARYTENNIS.COM](http://WWW.CARYTENNIS.COM)

WHEN I WAS A LONGHAIRD HIPPIE in Florida, I was driving across the state in my Volkswagen bug. I had some marijuana in the pocket of a jacket in the back seat. When a Highway Patrol dude pulled me over and asked if he could search the car, I said OK, as I knew he would anyway. As he leaned in to the back seat, I casually picked up my jacket, as if to reveal what was underneath, when the real prize was in the pocket. Escaped getting busted. Kept my cool. Stayed out of jail.



ISSUE 8 SPRING 2016 THEME: The itch and scratch of spring.

TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS: Tell The Sigh Press about an itch you'd like to scratch.

\*

LILLIAN RODRIGUEZ: I have many pursuits that occupy my time, and many more obsessions that occupy my mind. I suppose this makes me an artist, so after receiving my BFA from Alfred University, New York in 2015, I moved to Florence, Italy, for an artist residency. I spend my days observing, writing, photographing, and collaging it all together in constant search of some clarity.

[HTTP://LILLIANIRODRIGUEZ.WEBLY.COM/](http://LILLIANIRODRIGUEZ.WEBLY.COM/)

WHY IS MORE VALIDITY given to life in front of open eyes than life behind eyes closed?

!

“JOHN GERARD SAPODILLA, when and how did you start writing short stories?”

“From time to time I was far from home during the week, at night I used to call home and tell a fairytale I had invented to my then little daughter. My stories were recorded and later I put them on paper.”

[HTTP://SAPODILLA.ILCANNOCCHIALE.IT/](http://SAPODILLA.ILCANNOCCHIALE.IT/)

SCRATCHING AN ITCH CAN BE DANGEROUS. I always intended to visit Victoria Falls. What if I fell in the Zambesi? So, I am going to Naples in the spring, where they make the proper *Pizza Margherita* and on the way I will stop in Florence, for *Fiorentina di Razza Chianina*. Scratching two itches is better than one.

JJ PIGLET: I was trained as a geologist, appropriate given the mining history of the north of England, but I have always preferred spangles and diamonds, so I became a burlesque dancer on the ‘Miners and Working Men’s Clubs’ circuit. Sadly these were closed due to Health & Safety regulations and I now resort to secretarial duties and mole-catching.

IN THE REAL WORLD my time is spent in the wild rural Pennines of northern England so accordingly I feel the need to experience more culture, beautiful architecture, glorious

wines, milder weather and fewer sheep. Italy is where I choose to satisfy these needs and stretch my imagination.

!

ERZSÉBET GILBERT. THINGS I'VE DONE: dwelt in Florence for three years, gotten an impractical degree in the Philosophy of Science, and almost died. I've also published one book, entitled *Logodaedaly, or, Sleight-of-Words*, released by Wolverine Farm Publishing, which earned IndieFab/Foreword Reviews' 2011 Nonfiction Book of the Year. Things I adore: astrophysics, memory, cats, words, and love.

[HTTPS://INDIEFAB.FOREWORDREVIEWS.COM/BOOKS/LOGODAEDALY-OR-SLEIGHT-OF-WORDS/](https://indiefab.forewordreviews.com/books/logodaedaly-or-sleight-of-words/)

AN ITCH I'D WISH TO SCRATCH? I love that feeling of dust between the toes, but, as of yet, I have not visited the moon.

,

ALICE-CATHERINE JENNINGS holds an MFA in Writing from Spalding University. She is the author of *Katherine of Aragon: A Collection of Poems* (Finishing Line Press, 2016) and her poetry has been published worldwide in various literary journals. A summer residency at *Tenuta di Spannocchia* near Siena, Italy, sparked an interest in medieval mystical writers. Jennings divides her time between Oaxaca, Mexico, and Texas, where she lives with her husband, photographer and historian, John Mark Jennings.

[WWW.ALICECATHERINEJ.COM](http://WWW.ALICECATHERINEJ.COM)

SPRING IN THE DESERT of Far West Texas is the driest, hottest and windiest season of the year. I hate it. It is the time when I stuff my pillow with minty herbs and dream of water and rain and all things green.

[ ]

JEFF SHAPIRO, born and raised in Massachusetts, is a former columnist for the UK edition of *Cosmopolitan* and has had nonfiction articles published in *New Society* and *International* magazine. He has authored two novels, *Renato's Luck* (with movie rights optioned to Mango Productions, Inc.) and *Secrets of Sant'Angelo*. He teaches English at the Università Popolare Senese, and Creative Writing at Siena School for Liberal Arts and the Siena Art Institute. A resident of Italy since 1991, Jeff and his wife, Italian singer Valeria Indice, live outside Siena. He is currently at work on his third novel.

[WWW.SIENASCHOOL.COM](http://WWW.SIENASCHOOL.COM)

[WWW.SIENAART.ORG](http://WWW.SIENAART.ORG)

[WWW.UPSENESE.IT](http://WWW.UPSENESE.IT)

I ONCE ASKED a British friend whether she, too, noticed the extraordinary intensity of springtime here in Tuscany. "Absolutely," she said. "Makes you want to shag a tree." More than an itch I'd like to scratch, my sincerest wish is to never ever lose the itch.

~

LAURA FRASER is a San Francisco-based freelance writer who is the author of the NYT-bestselling memoir *An Italian Affair*, as well as the memoir *All Over the Map*, along with hundreds of national magazine articles, some of which you may have read when you had your highlights done. Although she's never pulled up stakes and moved to Italy (hate to give up that rent-controlled SF flat), she visits as often as she can. She is the co-founder of Shebooks.net, which publishes e-books by and for women. Her latest book, *The Risotto Guru*, is available there. Laura also teaches writing workshops in Italy and Mexico, which you can find out about at [laurafraser.com](http://laurafraser.com).

[LAURAFRASER.COM](http://LAURAFRASER.COM)

[SHEBOOKS.NET](http://SHEBOOKS.NET)

I'M ITCHING TO GO to an Italian island, sit on a terrace overlooking the sea, and eat a lunch of stuffed *totani* followed by a pasta of fresh fennel fronds and sardines, accompanied by the light local wine. Then, after an espresso and some conversation, I'd like to go jump into that sea for a swim.



ISSUE 7 WINTER 2015 THEME: Instincts, maternal or otherwise.

TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS: Tell The Sigh Press about a time you didn't follow your instincts and wish you had.

\*

ROSALIND KEITH is a British-born painter who has lived and worked in Florence since 1983. Since completing her academic training at the Charles H. Cecil Studio in Florence, she has dedicated her work to the painting of personal themes drawn from her imagination, abandoning the "Sight-size Method" and limited palette in favor of experimentation in various painting mediums. A recent one-person exhibition, *Abbracci*, was held by the Council of Cerignale (PC) in August 2015.

ALL MOTHERS KNOW not to tempt small children with new summer clothes when it's cold. My daughter's first glimpse at her new bikini on a chill April evening led to a tug of war that ended with a fall backward into the cupboard that knocked her out cold. I held her limp naked body in my arms, wondering whether she'd be coming back. Her return was equally as bewildering as her departure when she came to and smiled back at me.

,

LUKE WHITINGTON left Australia (and a career in diplomacy) to learn Italian at the University for Stranieri in Perugia. He spent 19 years living in Italy restoring old ruined buildings, then did the same in Ireland for nine years while launching a multi-media

centre (Pleasant Factory) in Dublin in the 90s. His work has appeared in publications in Ireland and Australia such as *Post*, *Five Bells*, *Quadrant*, *Overland* and *Contrappasso*, and has been anthologized in *Henry Kendall Prize Anthologies*, *Australian Love Poems 2013*, and *Canberra Poets Anthology 2015*. He participates in public readings of his work, including in Florence, one of the places where he divides his time.

I HAVE NEVER ignored my instincts, they are invariably right.

!

COLLEEN O'CONNOR RICKEY lives in Western Massachusetts with her husband. While attending Amherst College, she studied abroad at the Siena School for the Liberal Arts, where she worked on the story in this issue. Since receiving a BA in English in 2011, she has held a variety of positions, including as an administrative assistant, operations manager, and admissions counselor.

I GOT A WEIRD VIBE from a landlord once when I was checking out an apartment, but it had a garden. I rented it. The landlord, who lived in the rest of the house, practiced with his band at 4am, forgot to order heating oil, and brawled with his friends in the middle of the night.

,

ANN LETTICK is from Connecticut, in the United States, but has mostly lived in Italy, with stints in France and Mexico. She is a long-time lecturer at the University of Florence. She has reams of poetry and some short stories; many, like the ones published here, are based on her autistic brother. The latest publication in which her work appeared was the American review, *Exquisite Corpse*.

RECENTLY I NEGLECTED to make a friend smile, skipping an inauguration I had fully intended to go to because it was a tight squeeze to get there.

LINDA FALCONE'S books include *Italians Dance and I'm a Wallflower, If They Are Roses,* and *Moving Days*. No one has ever succeeded in overturning her conviction that every page of prose secretly wishes to become poetry one day.

THERE'S WHAT'S CALLED a gut feeling. Something should be said or done to make things right. But then comes the mind-your-own business bloke. He lives in the left brain and stamps out all lead-the-way light. "It's not your place," he argues. When I listen to this mind-man, regret always follows.



ISSUE 6 AUTUMN 2015 THEME: Inner Architecture.

TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS: Tell The Sigh Press about a magical, curious, or special architectural aspect of your childhood home.

\*

ILARIA LEGANZA, originally from Puglia, is a critically recognized Florence-based visual artist. Since 2000 she has been engaged in organizing and conducting cultural initiatives and events as well as participating in numerous exhibitions in Italy and abroad. Academically trained, Ilaria quickly expanded her approach to figurative art. Embracing an avant-garde post-figurative aesthetic, Ilaria's image-making is experimental, independent, and personal. Recent solo exhibitions include *Nuovi scenari*, Dance Cavise Studios, NY; *Sui fili*, Gallery Frank Winkelmann, Germany; *Case e case, lo spazio dell'uomo*, Cultural Institute, Hamburg; and *Tra tetti e cielo*, Galleria Rosso Cinabro, Rome.

[HTTP://WWW.LEGANZARTGALLERY.IT/](http://www.leganzartgallery.it/)

IN MY CHILDHOOD HOUSE, I especially loved a table in our living room. I would make myself very small, sneak under it and crouch, seeking a mystical, special space suited perfectly to me where only I could hide. With a little notebook I spent hours imagining and drawing my future. Then someone would call and I would have to run off. Some years later, that table came to represent an oasis for my inner tranquility, the symbol of my artistic journey, the place where I could always search for and find myself.

---

BRENDA PORSTER a native of Philadelphia, has lived most of her adult life in Florence, where she has taught English language. She is a poet and literary translator, and writes both in English and Italian. She performs with the *Compagnia delle poete*, a company of women poets. Her poems appear in numerous literary magazines and websites in Italy and abroad, including *Le Voci della luna*, *Pagine*, *Sagarana*, *El Ghibli*, *Forma Fluens*, *Fili D'acquilone*, *Traduzionetradizione*, *The Browne Critique* (Calcutta), and *Gradiva* (New York). Her work can also be found in poetry anthologies, and she has taken part in various international literary festivals. In 2013 her poem *Una lettera* won first prize in the Italian national competition *Donna e poesia*. She has translated poetry extensively from English into Italian and vice versa.

[WWW.COMPAGNIADELLEPOETE.COM](http://WWW.COMPAGNIADELLEPOETE.COM)

[WWW.FILIDAQUILONE.IT](http://WWW.FILIDAQUILONE.IT)

[WWW.SAGARANA.NET/HOME.PHP](http://WWW.SAGARANA.NET/HOME.PHP)

BETWEEN THE LOWER AND THE UPPER STEPS leading to the front door, joining each pair of houses, there was a small space we called the "patio" but which was really just a stoop. And it was here that we would hang out on summer nights, those long hot nights when we were on vacation from school and could stay out until hours unthinkable in a cooler climate. We occupied the shadowy spots to play our word-games or, as we grew into adolescents, to tell our secret stories, whispering and giggling well into the night as we rocked on rusty metal chairs, night after infinite night.



[ ]

JESSIE CHAFFEE spent the past year in Florence on a Fulbright grant to research a novel, during which time she was the Writer in Residence at Florence University of the Arts. Her work has appeared in *Blue Stem*, *Global City Review*, *Big Bridge*, and *Promethean*. She lives in New York City with her husband, and she is currently a resident artist at the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Process Space Residency on Governors Island.

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/JESSIELCHAFFEE

TWITTER/INSTAGRAM: @JESSIELCHAFFEE

UNTIL I WAS 7, my family lived in a small one-bedroom apartment in New York City. To accommodate us all, my father built loft beds—one for him and my mother and one for me, with my brother's crib nestled below. I loved sleeping with my family close by and loved my bed that hovered near the ceiling, especially because from a certain angle—when climbing up or leaping down—I could catch a glimpse of the Empire State Building.

!

ISABELLA RONCHETTI is an artist-writer/misanthrope/sesquipedalianist who intentionally wears mix-matched socks and taught herself to raise one eyebrow. She finds inspiration in dreams, stories, shapes in the cumuli, and peculiar happenings from everyday life. Her award-winning work has appeared in numerous publications such as *Diverse Voices Quarterly*, *Canvas Literary Journal*, *Foliate Oak Literary Journal*, *GREYstone*, *Glass Kite Anthology*, *Bluefire Journal*, *The Claremont Review*, *Celebrating Art*, and *Poetic Power Anthology*.

WWW.ISABELLARONCHETTI.COM

IN THAT CHILDHOOD HOME, I lived haunted by earring-swallowing showers and ceilings dotted with glaring, sickly glow-in-the-dark stars. And I must mention the hollow

railing post! I used to hide notes in there, but my father glued it shut before we moved so I never got to take them out.

---

NICHOLAS CHAPMAN managed to escape to Florence after completing his schooling in England. However, he's set back by reading for an English degree at the University of Durham; he plans to run away again as soon as possible, thinking Rome might be a less detectable destination next time. He is currently writing a novel about suicide.

AS A CHORISTER, I spent years hanging around churches, meaning I have a slightly strange appreciation of stained glass. Winchester Cathedral's west-end window originally depicted the Creation, but the medieval masterpiece was smashed by Cromwell's forces during the Civil War. After the Restoration, the Cathedral Chapter decided to restore the window. With the original stained glass. The only problem was, nobody could remember what went where—and they weren't sure they even had all the glass. The solution was ingenious: they replaced the glass in a random order, accidentally creating the "collage" several centuries early.

JASON ARKLES is an American sculptor living and working in Florence. His work is grounded in traditional materials and techniques; figurative work in marble, bronze, and clay. He is also the host of the most popular podcast on iTunes for the devotees of figurative sculptural tradition, called *The Sculptor's Funeral*.

[WWW.THESCULPTORSFUNERAL.COM](http://WWW.THESCULPTORSFUNERAL.COM)

[WWW.JASONARKLES.COM](http://WWW.JASONARKLES.COM)

GROWING UP IN AMERICA, I had a skewed perspective on what counted as "old." My childhood home was built in the 1910's, and wired with electrics of that time—pretty primitive stuff. I remember my father showing me the electrical innards of a room he was renovating, telling me that these connections and wires date back to the dawn of

domestic electricity. To my seven year old mind, that time was equated more or less with the age of the dinosaurs.



ISSUE 5 SUMMER 2015: Short story contest (no issue theme).

TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS: Tell The Sigh Press an indispensable component to your creative practice.

\*

FRANCESCO CHIACCHIO lives and works in Florence. His drawing and collages have illustrated books, cds, posters, comics and more. From 2010-2012 he was the cultural illustrator for the newspaper *La Repubblica, Florence*. In 2010 he made images for the multimedia project *X (Suite for Malcolm)*, composed by saxophonist Francesco Bearzatti for his "Tinissima Quartet," which was performed in Europe and in the US. In 2013 Florence art gallery Il Ponte di Firenze, together with Galleria Tornabuoni, co-curated an exhibit of his work, *Il segno come racconto (The Narrative Line)*.

[HTTP://WWW.FRANCESCOCHIACCHIO.COM/](http://www.francescochiacchio.com/)

BEFORE BEGINNING TO WORK, I try in vain to free my mind of insecurities, of expectations, of that damned performance anxiety that blocks the hand and distances ideas. In order to do this, I give myself over to the pages of my sketchbooks where there is complete freedom and I can lose myself in dense marks or swim in pools of color, forgetting all sense of time, age, logic, without following a set goal, until I touch the bank of concentration.

,

D. S. BUTTERWORTH teaches literature and creative writing at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington. Algonquin Books published his creative non-fiction book,

*Waiting for Rain: A Farmer's Story*. Lost Horse Press published his books of poems, *The Radium Watch Dial Painters* and *The Clouds of Lucca*.

WHEN I WRITE I have to be present enough in the world to feel it call for me to do it justice, and present enough to the words that I can feel them push back.

[ ]

SINÉAD BEVAN: I am an Australian who escaped to Florence several months ago as a good excuse to get out of going to school. (I was the teacher.) I really like making people laugh.

[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/READMYLIPSBLOG](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/READMYLIPSBLOG)

I AM WILDLY UNDISCIPLINED when it comes to writing. Rather than invite the words in at first knock, I ignore them until they are banging down the door. When they turn aggressive and demand to be penned, I am usually on the bus. Or the loo. So most of my scribblings are born on a bus ticket. Or a roll of toilet paper.

[ ]

JEFF SHAPIRO, born and raised in Massachusetts, is a former columnist for the UK edition of *Cosmopolitan* and has had non-fiction articles published in *New Society* and *International* magazine. He has authored two novels, *Renato's Luck* (with movie rights optioned to Mango Productions, Inc.) and *Secrets of Sant'Angelo*. He teaches English at the Università Popolare Senese, and Creative Writing at Siena School for Liberal Arts and the Siena Art Institute. A resident of Italy since 1991, Jeff and his wife, Italian singer Valeria Indice, live outside Siena. He is currently at work on his third novel.

[WWW.SIENASCHOOL.COM](http://WWW.SIENASCHOOL.COM)

[WWW.SIENAART.ORG](http://WWW.SIENAART.ORG)

[WWW.UPSENESE.IT](http://WWW.UPSENESE.IT)

MUSIC. SOMETHING GOOD and hypnotic—Bach, more often than not—to smooth the bridge from worldly stuff into the daydream of whatever I’m working on. If that doesn’t do the trick, there’s the old fallback: computer solitaire until writing slips in on its own.

~

LYALL HARRIS is an artist and writer who travels back and forth across bodies of water, with lives in Italy and the US. She is a published poet and critical writer and her artwork has been widely exhibited and recognized with numerous awards. Her book art can be found in Special Collections across the United States. She co-founded The Sigh Press in 2014.

[WWW.LYALLHARRIS.COM](http://WWW.LYALLHARRIS.COM)

MY CREATIVE PRACTICE, it seems, depends on having more than one thing going on, in fact several, at any one time: a series of paintings, at least two new book art projects, editing earlier books, writing weekly poetry, organizing community art events, publishing a literary quarterly, and remembering to make dinner for the family.



ISSUE 4 SPRING 2015 THEME: The flip side of the Tuscan cliché.

TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS: Tell The Sigh Press about something cliché but that you’ve always wanted to do anyway.

\*

LUCA BARONI, 31 years old: an inventor in Florence for the past year. Two things distinguish human beings from animals: the use of tools and storytelling. With recycled materials, I am in pursuit of the dream to make machines that work for humanity.

[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/PAGES/DUMP/1514653165422494](https://www.facebook.com/pages/DUMP/1514653165422494)

WWW.RISORSERIA.COM - WE DISCOVERED LUCA AT *RISORSERIA*, VIA SAN GALLO, 69/R

IN MY HOMETOWN, I was bored and I wanted to know what it was like to be a vagabond.

,

ALEX JOSEPHY: I live half the year in Montalcino and half in London. For me, Italy is both a retreat and a home. My poems have been published widely in UK magazines and anthologies, and have won awards such as the MacLellan Prize 2014. Cinnamon Press, based in Wales, will be publishing my first poetry pamphlet early next year.

WWW.ALEXJOSEPHY.EU

WELL, FOR A LONG TIME I've wanted to be able to dream in Italian. Like dream-flying, one foot rising from the floor, then the other, it would be quite effortless, thrilling but also completely familiar. Even *il congiuntivo*! I'd realise that there had never been a time when I couldn't do it.

,

JAMES BIRD: I don't like talking about myself in the third person very much. I live in Hackney, London and print and publish other peoples' words in a publication called the *Belleville Park Pages*. I've had my own words published in both print magazines, like *Paris Lit Up*, and online magazines, like *NewWaveVomit*.

WWW.BELLEVILLEPARKPAGES.COM

THE CLICHÉ that I would most like to fulfill is to go and find myself, and everybody else, in India.

[ ]

JEFF SHAPIRO was born and raised in Massachusetts. He has worked as columnist for the British edition of *Cosmopolitan* and has had non-fiction articles published in *New*

*Society* and *International* magazine. His first novel, *Renato's Luck* (HarperCollins, New York & Sydney) has been translated into German, French, and Dutch, with movie rights optioned to Mango Productions, Inc. *Secrets of Sant'Angelo*, his second novel, was published by Berkley Publishing Group (Penguin USA). As well as teaching Creative Writing at Siena School for Liberal Arts and the Siena Art Institute, Jeff teaches English at the Università Popolare Senese and has worked on the editorial staff of *Verso* magazine. A resident of Italy since 1991, Jeff and his wife, Italian singer Valeria Indice, live outside Siena. He is currently at work on his third novel.

[WWW.SIENASCHOOL.COM](http://WWW.SIENASCHOOL.COM)

[WWW.SIENAART.ORG](http://WWW.SIENAART.ORG)

[WWW.UPSENESE.IT](http://WWW.UPSENESE.IT)

YOU ASKED, so here's what I've always wanted to do: sit on my pillow and fly, magic-carpet style, the way I used to in my dreams as a kid.

, AND

KEVIN HARPER is a Canadian ex-pat currently living near Siena. He still has trouble conjugating the verb *dare* after having been in Italy 18 months.

DESPITE IT BEING SLIGHTLY TOURISTY, I always wanted to take Italian cooking classes. A couple of weeks ago I did. It seemed to work out well. When I got home and tried pasta preparation myself, I had "issues" with manipulation of flour for the mix. The result—my kitchen looked like another cliché-Canada in Winter...

,

WILL COX: I was born in Portland, Oregon and went to university in Boston where I studied business administration. For the last two years I have been living between Paris and London while running a literary startup called the *Belleville Park Pages*.

[WWW.BELLEVILLEPARKPAGES.COM](http://WWW.BELLEVILLEPARKPAGES.COM)

I'M AN AMERICAN who moved to Paris to write and get involved with art. I am a cliché, walking. My unfulfilled cliché is to ask the girl to Prom in a really creative way, but I am already uncomfortably old for that now.



ISSUE 3 WINTER 2014 THEME: Forget the dog, beware of owner.  
TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS: Tell The Sigh Press about something that was or is breathing down your neck.

\*

LUCA DI CASTRI is an award-winning Florentine painter whose work has been exhibited in Tuscany and beyond. 2015 exhibitions are planned for METIS ArtForPeople Onlus, Milan, and Gallerie Pyramide, Strasbourg, while previous venues include: Ex-Stazione Leopolda, Florence; Symbolica, Studio E. Riotto, Pietrasanta, Lucca; Nuovo Umanesimo Galleria Logos, Roma; Viaggio nel contemporaneo, Saragiolo, Siena; Nuove Conexion, La Plata, Argentina; Innovative Tradition Art & Design, Milan. Di Castri's work is collected privately and publicly.

[HTTP://WWW.LUCADICASTRI.COM/INDEX.HTML](http://www.lucadicastri.com/index.html)

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scusami. [I'm sorry.]

Perdonami se non ti ho amato come avresti desiderato. [Forgive me if I haven't loved you as you wished.]



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CHRISTOBEL KENT was born in London in 1962 and grew up in London and Essex, including a stint on the Essex coast on a Thames barge with three siblings and four step-siblings, before reading English at Cambridge. She has worked in publishing and TEFL teaching, and has lived in Modena, in northern Italy and in Florence. She has written ten novels, with five so far in the Sandro Cellini series. Her first novel set in England, *The Crooked House*, will be published on January 8th, 2015, by Sphere. She now lives in Cambridge with her husband and five children. The Sigh Press excerpt is from *The Drowning River*, published by Minotaur, and under the title, *A Time of Mourning*, by Corvus/Atlantic.

SNICCOLO.TUMBLR.COM

DEATH IS WHAT BREATHES down my neck: doesn't it everyone's? Not dying—although I imagine that is what it may narrow to somewhat later—but the extinction of consciousness. We might call it something else, like the future, or posterity, or our children or even the state of our windowsills and skirting boards, but what we're talking about is the world when we're gone. At seven or eight it jumps out at us: what we see from behind our eyes, no-one else sees, what we think, no-one else thinks, and one day the blood and nerves and electrical impulses that keep us observing and recording, will cease to function. The world will continue, but we won't be watching. That knowledge, once absorbed, will never be eradicated: you might step around it, or push it a little further off, but the breath is at your ear for the duration. It's why you write it down.

,

ANDREAS PETROSSIANTS was born in New York to immigrant parents from Moscow in 1994. After spending much time in Italy, he returned again this year to continue studying contemporary art culture and the sociological trends within art movements and communities. He is currently working on his undergraduate thesis at NYU in

Florence. He is a rapper and drummer with groups in New York and joins musicians on stage often in Florence. Babbling thinker and pensive onlooker.

[HTTPS://ANDREASPENNAME.WORDPRESS.COM/](https://andreaspenname.wordpress.com/)

AT SUCH A YOUNG AGE, expectations, either my own or those thrown upon me, often get the better of my thinking. Expecting or predicting have shown themselves, however, as unnecessary acrobatics in prophecy. Breathing down my neck is a fabricated vision of a future self that I seem to be unable to ignore. He speaks to me and tells me what to do, but I find it comforting when I can ignore him and walk down the opposite street he might ask me to take.

“...” AND !

ERZSÉBET GILBERT: I'm honored to list this as the second chance I've been given to contribute to *the Sigh's* work, as well as my second year of living in Tuscany and my thirtieth year orbiting this particular sun. I studied the History and Philosophy of Science at Colorado State University, which was solely for my own pleasure; I've also published one book, entitled *Logodaedaly, or, Sleight-of-Words*, which was released in the U.S. by Wolverine Farm Publishing, won the IndieFab/ForeWord Reviews' 2011 Nonfiction Book of the Year, and was terribly fun to write. As an author and as a person, I am concerned with memory, cats, (un)meaning, and stars, or more generally, with love.

[HTTPS://INDIEFAB.FOREWORDREVIEWS.COM/BOOKS/LOGODAEDALY-OR-SLEIGHT-OF-WORDS/](https://indiefab.forewordreviews.com/books/logodaedaly-or-sleight-of-words/)

SHE MURMURED INTIMATIONS in my ear, and glanced about as if the world were in motion perpetual; she clawed me, and against my neck her breath came to me uptempo like “It Don't Mean A Thing.” And I wondered how it feels to be a kitten, perched upon somebody's shoulders in the great wide world.

-

KATE DRYNAN lives in London, has lived in Paris, and is more than happy to travel around Italy when time allows. While she is not working in publishing, she tries to write the odd piece of fiction, fact, or account for whatever she stumbles upon in her travels.

YES, "MAN'S BEST FRIEND," our canine companion, requires us to give something back...into the bin that is. Designer shoes were not made to trod in it.



ISSUE 2 AUTUMN 2014 THEME: Three mismatched shoes at the entrance of a dark alley (Charles Simic).

TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS: Tell The Sigh Press about a recent encounter that took a turn and was not, in the end, what it seemed.

\*

PATRICIA SILVA is a bookbinder, printmaker and educator living in Florence, Italy. Since 2000, she has taught courses in Book Arts, Printmaking, Letterpress, Bookbinding and History of the Book with several university programs in Italy. Most recently Patricia has begun teaching with the University of Minnesota Abroad Program in Florence where her semester-long, hands-on course explores historical and contemporary aspects of bookmaking within the backdrop of life in Florence. University of Minnesota students (spring 2014) Mary Carlson, Ellen Cocchiarella and Erin Pfarr joined Patricia in creating the artists' book *24 Hours in Florence*.

[HTTP://UMABROAD.UMN.EDU/PROGRAMS/EUROPE/FLORENCE](http://umabroad.umn.edu/programs/europe/florence)

IT ALWAYS AMAZES ME how small encounters can turn into life-changing events. How a one-month summer semester abroad in Tuscany thirty years ago could have planted the seed for a permanent move and rooted life in Italy. At the beginning of each

semester, I observe my students. I see the excitement, the anxiety, the curiosity and the fear. And I wonder.... how will they change because of this experience? Most will go home with nice memories and pretty pictures to show, but, perhaps, one or two will go back having encountered something they had not planned and will return changed.

,

KB BALLENTINE'S work is in numerous journals and publications. *Fragments of Light* and *Gathering Stones* were published by Celtic Cat Publishing. Her work appears in *Southern Poetry Anthology, Volume VI: Tennessee* and *Southern Light: Twelve Contemporary Southern Poets*. Her third collection, *What Comes of Waiting*, won the 2013 Blue Light Press Book Award.

[WWW.KBBALLENTINE.COM](http://WWW.KBBALLENTINE.COM)

MY HUSBAND came home with a fresh haircut and a tissue on the side of his head. He said the stylist had nicked a mole. Since he had a doctor appointment the next day, she checked it then sent him to a specialist for removal and testing. All he wanted was a haircut.

!

ERZSÉBET GILBERT is a twenty-nine year-old American expatriate living in Florence; as the daughter of a librarian and an astrophysicist, her childhood perhaps inevitably led her to the city of Galileo himself. After studying the Philosophy of Science at Colorado State University, she traveled to forty-three countries while concurrently writing her first book, *Logodaedaly, or, Sleight-of Words*, published by Wolverine Farm Press and awarded IndieFab/Foreword Reviews Editor's Choice Nonfiction of 2011—though borders between the territories of fantasy and fact remain too nebulous for any map she knows.

[HTTPS://INDIEFAB.FOREWORDREVIEWS.COM/BOOKS/LOGODAEDALY-OR-SLEIGHT-OF-WORDS/](https://indiefab.forewordreviews.com/books/logodaedaly-or-sleight-of-words/)

AT 6:47PM, I GAVE a man the time. He pressed the red statuettes of a turtle and an elephant into my hands—for luck, he said. I have traded a moment for a fortune, though the nature of the possible world within that fate remains to be seen.

—

ALEX JOSEPHY: I'm an English poet, living half the year in Montalcino and half in London. I've lived in Montalcino on and off for six years; I've made wonderful friends here, and I learn something about Italy and/or the Italian language every day. For me it's both a retreat and a home. I've been a student and teacher of poetry all my life, and when in the UK I lead a poetry reading group in East London. My poems have been published widely in UK magazines and anthologies, and the online arts magazine *London Grip*, and have won awards such as the MacLellan Prize 2014 and the Battered Moons Prize 2013.

IT APPEARED FROM NOWHERE. One moment—empty air, afternoon heat on the terrace. The next—a flash of amber wings. It hovered, vibrating, above the lavender. Dipped a tiny beak. I was certain I'd spotted a hummingbird, the first ever in Tuscany! No, said Anna, just a hawk-moth.

,

CATHARINE SCULL is convinced she was born with a black hole in her soul where the appreciation for visual arts was supposed to go. So she did the only reasonable thing: she married an artist and moved to Florence.

BEFORE MOVING TO ITALY, I was a high school teacher. On my flight back to the US this summer, I found myself literally surrounded by former students as they were returning home from a European field trip.

[ ]

KATIE RASHID is a writer and editor who recently received a Masters in International Relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science, where she

dedicated her studies to the Middle East. She has an endless appetite for both exploring foreign lands and the written word.

[WWW.LINKEDIN.COM/IN/KATIERASHID](http://WWW.LINKEDIN.COM/IN/KATIERASHID)

DRIVING OUTSIDE OF FLORENCE, I was admiring the Tuscan foliage when I noticed a cemetery different from all others I had seen in Italy. Stopping, I emerged among the sea of white headstones marking fallen American soldiers from World War II. I had entered America in Tuscany.

~

MICHELLE TARNOPOLSKY has been paid to work with words for the past twelve years, mainly as a translator. She has also published several pieces on Italian culture for Maclean's magazine in Canada. Becoming a mother enflamed a passion for gender issues, which she blogs about from the perspective of an expat in Italy.

[WWW.MAPLELEAFMAMMA.COM](http://WWW.MAPLELEAFMAMMA.COM)

[HTTPS://TWITTER.COM/MICHELLETARNO](https://twitter.com/MICHELLETARNO)

[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/MAPLELEAFMAMMA](https://www.facebook.com/MapleLeafMamma)

THREE RED HEELS, lit dramatically against Caravaggesque darkness; like a flyer for one of the many Red Shoe demonstrations that took place around Italy in 2013. This image in turn reminded me of all the men wobbling down the streets of my hometown that same year as part of another international shoe-themed initiative to protest violence against women.



ISSUE 1 SUMMER 2014 THEME: A deliberate leap.

TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS: Tell The Sigh Press about a recent deliberate leap.

\*

MONICA DENGO has been working in calligraphy since the 1990s, having studied both independently and institutionally with calligraphers and artists Gaynor Goffe, Ewan Clayton, Thomas Ingmire and Eleanor Dickinson. Teaching and exhibiting her work around the world, Monica has ventured away from tradition and towards an investigation of innovative approaches to lettering, calligraphy and handwriting. In our opening notes, it was Monica who said, “[Forms] of handwriting become a vehicle for visual communication between cultures.” *A Dance of Line and Space* won the Sharjah Calligraphy Biennial 2014 Contemporary Calligraphy Award.

[WWW.MONICADENGO.COM](http://WWW.MONICADENGO.COM)

[WWW.FREEHANDWRITING.NET](http://WWW.FREEHANDWRITING.NET)

[WWW.SCRITTURACORSIVA.IT](http://WWW.SCRITTURACORSIVA.IT)

THIS PAST FALL I received an invitation to participate in the Sharjah Calligraphy Biennale in the United Arab Emirates. I had declined this invitation in the past, but this time I saw it as a challenging intercultural communication opportunity, and accepted. My deliberate leaps have always been somehow irrational and even a bit foolish. I go by feelings and in most cases, it has worked out beautifully and developed in ways I could never have imagined.

,

ELIZABETH LOGAN HARRIS’ work has appeared in *Glimmer Train*, *New England Review*, and *WebConjunctions* among other journals. Her essay “Black & White TV,” published in *Colorado Review*, was named a notable essay in *Best American Essays, 2008*. She co-wrote and co-produced the 2010 documentary “The Bungalows of Rockaway.”

[WWW.CONJUNCTIONS.COM/WEBCON/HARRIS09.HTM](http://WWW.CONJUNCTIONS.COM/WEBCON/HARRIS09.HTM)

[WWW.THEBUNGALOWSOFRACKAWAY.COM](http://WWW.THEBUNGALOWSOFRACKAWAY.COM)

I SIGNED UP, READ UP, attended a writing workshop. Opening session: the instructors were ill-prepared, smug. I deliberated, then withdrew. Had second, third thoughts until

I spied a fox approaching at dusk. It circled once, twice, scoped me out before darting away. Decided I was right to protect my tale.

!

DEJAN ATANACKOVIĆ was born in 1969 in Belgrade. Since 1994, he has presented solo exhibitions, video and audio installations, interventions in public spaces, as well as curatorial projects. His work has been exhibited in personal and collective shows in Italy, Serbia, Canada, USA, Slovenia, Bosnia, Albania, Germany, Mexico. He teaches multimedia and installation art at the university programs SACI and Studio Marangoni in Florence and at the Siena Art Institute.

[WWW.DEJANATANACKOVIC.COM](http://WWW.DEJANATANACKOVIC.COM)

[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/DEJAN.ATANACKOVIC.9](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/DEJAN.ATANACKOVIC.9)

I FIND THE IDEA of a *leap* directly related to the idea of vanishing. Things fall into themselves and disappear. The theme of *happiness*, so present in current economic theories, is an expression of the concern for too many things of 'importance' that vanish without trace. If I tried to define *the body of our time*, it would be *the body that vanishes*.

!

EMILY BYRD is an author, traveler, and student from the American South. She is interested in both fiction and journalism as art forms through which she can explore the human experience.

I HAVE JUMPED on trains, off of cliffs, and out of planes. What I have to do now is much more intimidating: I have to stay put. I am currently writing from my childhood home where I have cloistered myself for the summer to save money. Wish me luck.

---

LINDA FALCONE'S books include *Italians Dance and I'm a Wallflower, If They Are Roses*



and *Moving Days*. No one has ever succeeded in overturning her conviction that every page of prose secretly wishes to become poetry one day.

ALL MY LEAPS ARE deliberately infrequent and religiously last-minute. Then it happens: I realize there's the brink of an avalanche under my feet. Alas, the time has come to jump off the ledge and break all my bones. It usually takes about four years to recover. This is where the phrase 'leap year' comes from.

~

GEORGETTE JUPE is an American social media strategist, copywriter, blogger and a certifiable 'Tuscan Texan' living and breathing all things Florence. Social inside and out, she lives in the moment and eats way too much pasta. She blogs about life in Italy, food, travel around Europe and the world.

[GIRLINFLORENCE.COM](http://GIRLINFLORENCE.COM)

[TWITTER.COM/GGNITALY84](https://twitter.com/GGNITALY84)

[INSTAGRAM.COM/GIRLINFLORENCE](https://www.instagram.com/girlinflorence)

THIS ENTIRE LAST YEAR was one giant deliberate leap—from changing my entire life, my career, even moving to the center of Florence—one day I woke up and decided to follow my passions while I still could: writing, blogging, and most of all learning to trust myself and my decisions.

[ ]

KAMIN MOHAMMADI is a writer, editor, journalist and broadcaster. Since being exiled from Iran to London in 1979, Kamin has found it hard to have less than two homes: currently they are located in Tuscany and London. Her book, *The Cypress Tree*, is published by Bloomsbury in the UK and as *Mille farfalle nel sole* by Piemme in Italy.

[WWW.KAMIN.CO.OK](http://WWW.KAMIN.CO.OK)

IT'S HARD TO FIND just one—I am a confirmed 'deliberate leaper'! Six years ago I moved to Florence not knowing a soul, and five years ago I moved to the deepest Tuscan countryside although I am a city girl. The next leap is going away by myself for a couple of months to get deeply into my new book, another 'intentional exile' which makes me both terribly nervous and excited at the same time.

,

ELISA BIAGINI (Ph.D. Rutgers University) is a poet, translator and teacher in Florence, Italy. Her poems have appeared in Italian and American reviews and anthologies; her sixth book of poetry, *Da una crepa*, was published in 2014 (Einaudi). She has been invited to poetry festivals across the globe and her poems have been widely translated; notably, *The Guest in the Wood* (Chelsea editions, 2013) won the 2014 Best Translated Book Award.

[WWW.ELISABIAGINI.IT](http://WWW.ELISABIAGINI.IT)

AFTER LEAVING THE US for good in 2012, I intended to visit NY every other year, but I never went back to Rutgers, the university where I got my Ph.D. I had wanted to, but things always got in the way and, deep down, I feared facing the old buildings and street layered with memories of those years. Then, my American poetry collection came out last year and my first thought was: I have to go back to New Brunswick. Here is where I wrote some of the poems in the book and where I had experiences that ended up feeding other poems later on. It was a leap I had to take. The boarding of the train itself was quite emotional: the old Elisa woke up and started to write.

