

Stone Highway Review



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Stone Highway Review is a new journal of poetry and prose, dedicated to publishing women and other underrepresented voices. **Stone Highway Review** wants to publish the beautiful, the exciting, the new. **Stone Highway Review** is edited by Amanda Hash, Katie Longofono, and Mary Stone Dockery.

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Table of Contents

Southern Cooking <i>Brandy Abraham</i>	1
Winter Garden <i>Thomas Fox Averill</i>	2
Technique Number Two: Melancholy and Music <i>Michael Bagwell</i>	3
The History of Daddy <i>Allie Marini Batts</i>	4
Night Music <i>Sean Beld</i>	6
Questions on the Dark <i>Carley Besl</i>	7
This Much <i>Carley Besl</i>	8
Bridge Winter <i>Crow Billings</i>	10
Anthropomorphic Sweetheart <i>Rhea Cinna</i>	12
Havana <i>Rachelle Cruz</i>	13
[Wedding Favor: Chocolate Truffles] <i>Kristina Marie Darling and Carol Guess</i>	14
Pearl-handled Letter Opener <i>Kristina Marie Darling and Carol Guess</i>	15
The Decades Have Wings <i>Laura Davis</i>	16
[eucalyptus smell & wild green eyes] <i>Jonathan Dubow</i>	18
My Last Confession <i>Angele Ellis</i>	21
This Week in Mad Science <i>Jen Ferguson</i>	22
Leave-taking <i>Jen Ferguson</i>	23
You <i>Diana Friedman</i>	24
Introduction to Engineering by Wile E. Coyote, Super Genius <i>Jeannine Hall Gailey</i>	25
interchangeable genitals <i>Aimee Herman</i>	26
how to commit to being alive <i>Aimee Herman</i>	27
Midnight, Coral <i>Kale Humphrey</i>	28
The most lonesome <i>Emily Janowick</i>	29
Mistress of the Titanic <i>Hilary King</i>	30
In Transit <i>Jen Knox</i>	31
The Loneliness of Nine Years Old <i>Christine Langill</i>	33
Mother Tongue <i>Sarah Leavens</i>	34
Impasto <i>Sarah Leavens</i>	35
Ghazal of the Quitting Doll <i>Jennifer LeBlanc</i>	38
She Would Have Named Me <i>Jacob Paige Lewis</i>	39
Dirt in Your Bowl <i>Becky Mandelbaum</i>	40
Paws of a Fox <i>Freesia McKee</i>	41
Heat Wave <i>Al Ortolani</i>	42
The Phoenix Man <i>Melina Papadopoulos</i>	44
Market <i>Mark Petterson</i>	46
Lost Sex <i>Katherine Ringley</i>	47
The Women who Carry Rain in their Purses <i>Daniel Romo</i>	49
hang the key <i>Miriam Sagan</i>	50
silence 3 a.m. <i>Miriam Sagan</i>	51
The Flirt <i>Carla Schwartz</i>	52
Thirteen Tastes like the Pantry Floor <i>Leah Sewell</i>	53
Marionette <i>Leah Sewell</i>	54
Woman on the Side <i>Leah Sewell</i>	55

[playing with dolls] <i>Virginia Smith</i>	56
[blonde and sad skeletons, whistle, whistle] <i>Virginia Smith</i>	57
[i sleep in the hand that breaks the clocks]: a cento <i>Virginia Smith</i>	58
Rose <i>Kate Sparks</i>	59
Chicken or Beef? <i>Meg Tuite</i>	60
Stay Out of My Garden, Steve Buscemi <i>Jeff Marcus Wheeler</i>	61
Mouth in Two Parts <i>Alyssa Yankwitt</i>	63
The Intimacy Junkyard <i>Alyssa Yankwitt</i>	64
Snowflakes <i>Changming Yuan</i>	65
Contributors	66

You

Diana Friedman

i. now

This is not the way we want to live, you and I. Headaches blasting in at dawn, an overactive jaw grinding your teeth into shrapnel. The accumulation of months of worry about money, the state of the world, my love, what your parents will say. All of it unyielding like a bandage around your torso, until you wake, whimpering, because you cannot breathe.

You cannot move.

This is not the way we want to live, you and I.

ii. death

Your grandmother is dying and no one called to tell you. Your mother is losing all her sleep in the hospital, crouched by her mother's bedside.

Things are really bad here, your father says.

How bad, you ask.

Very bad, he replies.

But that's all he will say. That's all he's ever said.

You tell him you are getting married, but that doesn't seem to matter to him either.

Okay, he says flatly. Do what's best.

When you hang up, I look at you, really look at you; how far you have come.

I don't mean the thousands of miles from that distant and foreign hemisphere, not that, no.

It is lovingness.

iii. then

You've seen your grandmother fall when you were a small boy playing in the garden, this woman who raised you. She washed the clothes in a large metal tub in the front yard, the streets were dusty, the dogs loud. You looked up to see her disappearing into the water. You screamed, and you screamed again, and she didn't rise.

What other things have you never told me?

iv. later

Your father used to hit you. And your grandfather.

Whack.

Did your parents love you? You don't know.

You cry now.

Only when you were good.

Maybe.

v. now

You reach for me, as you do every night against the cold. You are so hungry for my love, solitary bird that you are, nesting in your corner whenever you can.

You.

Come here.