

THE KUMQUAT CHALLENGE

Whatcom Community College Library's Poetry Challenge
featuring poems by current and former WCC students, staff,
and faculty in celebration of National Poetry Month.

2019

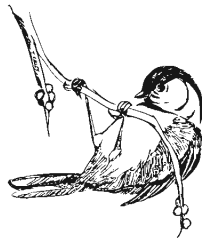
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PREFACE

The library is grateful to all of the talented poets whose work is represented here. To meet the Kumquat Challenge, all of the poems have to include all ten words of the library's choosing.

The 2019 Challenge words:

open ardent yearn shimmer keen
hour mingle intent quarter just

Special thanks to members of the judging panel who carefully considered all of the poems:

Anna Wolff (WCC English Faculty)
Anne George (Chair, WCC World Languages Department)
Ben Kohn (WCC Humanities Faculty)
Brian Cope (WCC English Faculty)
Betty Scott (Winner of last year's Kumquat Poetry Challenge)

A word about the judging:

All poems are submitted to the panel without names attached to ensure impartiality.

The Kumquat Poetry Challenge is sponsored by the Whatcom Community College Library in recognition of National Poetry Month which is celebrated every April. We welcome submissions. Hopefully you will join us again for any future poetry challenges we might issue.

Ara Taylor
Spring 2019

On Celebrating Poetry

National Poetry Month was inaugurated by the Academy of American Poets in 1996. Over the years, it has become the largest literary celebration in the world with schools, publishers, libraries, booksellers, and poets celebrating poetry's vital place in our culture. Whatcom Community College's *Kumquat Challenge* was initiated in 2007 and yielded 25 poems by current and former WCC students, faculty and staff. It included a poem by Penny McMahon—thirteen years old at the time—who identified herself in her accompanying bio by saying “I was a student at the Whatcom Community College's Child Development Center when I was four years old.”

This is the 13th *Kumquat Challenge*. Thirteen years is old enough to go from newborn to teen.

One of the ten words included in the first challenge was ‘kumquat’ – thus the name. Every challenge since then has included a ‘k’ word. Past ‘k’ words: kumquat, kimono, ken, kindle, knot, keep, kind, key, kick, kestrel, kiss, know and, of course, this year, ‘keen’. The year we chose ‘kimono’ we inadvertently tilted the poems toward the erotic by also requiring the use of ‘glimpse’, ‘silk’, ‘pearl’ and ‘cream’. We hesitated before choosing the word ‘kindle’ in 2010, thinking we might be giving a boost to Amazon's *Kindle e-reader*.

New this year, Anne George expanded the challenge to WCC's World Languages department. Included in this edition are six poems composed in french by two faculty members and four of Anne's first year french language students. They can be found toward the end of the book, directly after the poems in English.

Submissions this year come from poets as far away as Laramie, Wyoming, and San Francisco. Many of the poets included in this volume have submitted poems year after year. It seems we have created a “Kumquat Family” of sorts.

Thank you to all the many poets who joined in WCC's 2019 *Kumquat Challenge* by honoring us with your poems this year.

Sincerely,
Ara Taylor



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Poems / 2019



Horizons (Madhuri, 2018)

open	ardent	yearn	shimmer	keen
hour	mingle	intent	quarter	just



The Ardent Few

Just as the clock strikes the hour,
The dark cloak shimmers with a blackened light.
Yearning to collect the souls
Of the ardent few.
A predatory lion
With the intent to hunt
Those keen on life.
Those who refuse to open their hearts
To the possibility of demise.
The untroubled mingle as the cloak awaits,
Dictating the fate of the unknowing quarter
Whom death haunts.

Rielley Rogers



Arroyo

The hour is deep,
ardent in its keep.

Ferns gently mingle beneath the shimmer of ice.

I yearn for open quarter,
keen on my intent.

There is only trickling water just below my tent.

Brett Straka



At the Gate

Just an hour until take-off.
Outside, the runway shimmers in the heat;
Inside, in manufactured chill, passengers mingle.
The businessman, intent on boarding first,
Gives no quarter to the mom with kids.
Ardent lovers entwine on rigid, unforgiving seats.
A nervous flier opens, closes, opens purse,
Breathes deeply, yearns to have arrived.
Keen ears pick up the PA system's stutter;
The mother marshals her brood,
The lovers stand, the crowd swells forward,
And boarding begins.

Marian Exall



Open Door (Peter Ilsted, 1910)



The Beach Town, Still the Same

The end of March, late afternoon and I'm intent
on finding something heartening, some fun,
some promise in this winter-empty town.

At a quarter to the hour when he might close,
the warehouse owner, keen to make a sale from his supply
of mop heads, bracelets, nails and tacks,
worn clothing, pipes and planks and bones,
waits while I surf old song sheets for familiar tunes.

On the apron of the Main Street Stage,
a makeshift platform tumbling down, three men sit
in quiet banter, pass a bottle in a wrinkled paper bag.

The Ladies Aid across the barren street is boarded up,
might open soon, perhaps next week, when April comes
to flit and mingle with the daffodils already dancing here.



The Beach Town (continued)

A lone bird on a wire, red chest and neck,
long narrow tail, a finch I think, chants its melody
of ardent optimism just above my head.

I could sing karaoke at the diner down the road, but stop
and watch the shimmer of faint sun on pewter sea,
the light, the dark, the dull flat tumble to the shore and know
now what the secret is— that needs no song, no yearning,
no new vow—the ocean's undulating loyalty.

Linda Conroy



Cantilevered

Hard hats mingle
on the cherry picker
Ardent sparks
from the hoisted beam

Intent
Yearning
Open
Keen boots
dancing

Shimmering metal
Eight hours
Punch in
out,
quarter past.

Room 301E



Clinical Instructor Blues

I am a new nursing instructor
sitting at my desk with papers galore thinking how can I taper the flow?
dreaming in silence trying to make the compliance
I weave in and out of grieving
yearning for entertainment, a show or performance
longing the evening's cabaret, I will soon be on the highway -
What a good day!!
I know what is expected and go with the flow
but with tear filled eyes that cloud like smoke I begin to choke
I don't want to break from the ache
left with music in my heart I can still transcend
and I will contend - my good friend
It is the students who give insight and invite a new foresight
I will succeed - despite.

Penny Friedman



December 1, 1969:
Vietnam War Draft Lottery

End of fall quarter.
Not be forced to fight.
That's my intent.

Ardent opposition to
the war won't affect
the number I'll see.

Mingle with friends.
Try not to think.

Three hundred
and twenty-one!

In just an hour,
TV will show my fate.

I'm free!

Harvey Schwartz

I yearn for a
high number
with open eyes.

Keenly watch my
future shimmer
on TV screen
like light on a lake.



Dreaming

His keen expression
made it clear,
intent was malicious,
the hour near.

For just a moment,
I yearn
for your ardent touch.

In the midnight hour, he
takes no quarter.
The mingle of sweat,
the shimmer of dreams

Love lost.

Pa'e Rista



Fleeting Endeavor

The quarter begins with the intent to yearn,
Keen to seek, eager to learn
A desire to mingle for just an hour
An ardent flame in all its power.

Just like that the time has passed
A ticking deadline unsurpassed
The only path seems more so dimmer
An open heart refusing to shimmer.

Dhiyaa Ramadhan



The Golden Hour (Thomas Moran, 1875)



For Grandma

As if watching water shimmer in the sun,
thoughts of you open up my heart
and put my mind at ease.

When things get tough and I feel unloved,
just picturing your smile reminds me
of how lucky I am to know someone as special as you.

Though reminiscing won't bring back the past,
I yearn for the hour when your gentle push
sent me sailing down the street
no longer bound by training wheels.

I pine for the nights when,
intent on preserving a child's imagination,
you'd place a quarter under my pillow
in exchange for a lost tooth.



For Grandma (continued)

My fondest memories are sitting with you on the patio
watching the hummingbirds mingle
in the cool morning breeze.

Or perhaps the days when you'd sit me
on your lap and
read me stories in the rocking chair.

Your ardent love of books has taught me
to seek out wisdom in the world.
To be curious and excited to learn.

You've given me more than I could ever ask
and I am keen on making you proud.

I love you Grandma.

Monique Everett



Forage and Silage

I'm intent on getting some
good karma for good carbs.
I'm keen on quinoa,
and ardent about amaranth.
Farro is fabulous but just you
spend an hour with spelt.
Could you ask for more?
Then mingle with wheat berries
and pay a call on barley
(it makes soup nicely gnarly).
Wheat is no run of the mill grain
and makes me yearn for yeasty bread.
(Or is it a case of couscous for you?)
Why not harmonize with hominy?
But you know maize is just as corny.
Cooked groats of oats gets my vote,
especially with raisins and syrup of maple.



Forage and Silage (continued)

Let's face it, bulgur can be vulgar,
but buckwheat competes on that score.
Would you eat a pseudo cereal?
I am sure you do.
Legumes are fine by me, plus
they fix the nitrogen, you see?
(Pulses are the dry edible seeds
within legume pods. A new word!)

Wild rice is wildly *not* rice but
just rice can be nice (yes, with butter)
and if it's pearl rice it will shimmer!

C'mon, open a sack of sorghum.
Hey, a quarter pound of any of these
with four times the water might be enough
to batch sparge the mash for the wort kettle.

Sally Sheedy



Frittering Away the Shimmer

(Written by a future grand-child)

He was open to exploring the shimmer, ardently
intent on understanding the mental penumbra
that would appear in an early hour to mingle with his hippocampus,
stifle his amygdala, leaving him with a sense of pure unadulterated bliss.
Early on, he relied upon the shimmer being there as he was
pulled into materiality,
and from time to time he would play there.

Dancers, monks, CEOs, medievalists, contortionists and most of the rest
have yearned for a mere quarter of a second of this keen, boundless sense
of euphoric peace. Yet,
he pleased himself with a lifetime of Facebook dings and iPhone whoops,
leaving just books on Eastern wisdom that his grandson would intercept
in a box bound for the Goodwill.

Brian Cope



Good Bye

A single tear
slipped to mingle
with the others.
I will not cry.
It's hard enough
to say good bye.
But a shimmer lingers
to belie the try
of intent.
Just an hour remains
to quarter
my ranging emotions
to control
my keening devotions.
I yearn to open
wide my heart
and let
this ardent ache
depart.
But I will hold my friend forever.

Mary Mueller



Gratitude

I.

Two daughters remove fixtures, paint walls,
stage the house into magazine-ready saleability,
Kondo-readying us for our new condo.
Marie would be pleased at their downsizing
and the parsing of items into categories:

KEEP, SELL, DONATE, DUMP.

One son, ladder-borne, sanitizes the attic,
his gloved hands mingle with rodent deposits
and the webbed netting of spiders.

Wise to his mother's yearning,
he, an ardent eliminator of the unnecessary,
notes the slight nod of my head, heaves
unused items destined for disposal into
his pick-up before I can change my mind.

He Boraxes rug stains into invisibility,
pilots a rug cleaner over yards of carpet,
replaces switch plates, installs a bathroom heater,



Gratitude (continued)

carries sofas, beds, thirty cartons of books,
erects and steadies eight bookcases,
positions furniture, mounts TVs, builds shelves,
slices remaining cardboard boxes into quarters.

Another son, rabbit-quick, hauls, unloads, organizes.
Returns to his out-of-town home. Repeats.
Posts photographs to social media platforms.
Predicts no sales. Correctly.

II.

We settle in, make changes.
Our daughter-in-law shifts
an IKEA desktop onto table legs
which double as file cabinets.
Loaded, they are heavy; they will not open,
but she is solution-oriented, keen of eye,
a workwoman, intent on success.
She slides, just so, a slim triangle of
found wood between the floor and the drawer.
She is a shimmer.



Gratitude (continued)

III.

I am a-shimmer too, caught smiling
in a glow of gratitude for adult children
who make possible the hour of our
departure from one place, one life
to another place and another life.

Linda Q. Lambert



Harbor

Four masts mingle against
An ardent sky's fading hour.
Just a gentle chop
Shimmers the harbor, nudging rest
In these autumn quarters.

Trim and taut, these keen hulls hide
The patch, the open gash, the bail.
Mute remnant scars of storms survived,
Storms that ripped, intent to dash
Each plank to slivers, each sail to threads.

Four masts stately safe at harbor,
Holds heavy with astonished wisdom,
Yearning towards voyage still.

Ellen Barton



Horizons

I don't like to mingle.
I'm not keen on her ardent intention
to open me up
for just a quarter hour.
I don't yearn to shimmer,
not in that way.
But quietly, yes,
like a soft riverbank.
All rivers turn to ocean eventually,
catch the light on their way out.

Kate Harrison



French Quarter, New Orleans (2014)



Immigrants and Refugees Are Us

The people of Christchurch keen
over the killing of fifty members
and guests in the Al Noor Mosque
and Linwood Islamic Centre.

Their feeling of safety was shattered
after the shimmer of gunfire
fractured the air
in this once idyllic New Zealand city.
As the killer opened fire with an AR-15,
he video-streamed his horrific act.
In less than an hour fifty were dead.
Did the killer yearn to become famous?

Jacinda Ardern, New Zealand's Prime Minister,
hugged members of the victims' families
and spoke of the migrants and refugees
who had chosen to make New Zealand their home.
"It is their home. They are us," she said.



Immigrants and Refugees (continued)

Ardern gave no quarter to the killer and refused to name him. “There is no place in New Zealand for such acts of extreme and unprecedented violence,” she declared ardently.

New Zealand legislators didn’t mingle. In six days they passed legislation to curb gun violence. Trade Me, a New Zealand auction site, voluntarily banned the sale of automatic weapons.

Their intent, to ensure this unjust carnage never happens again.

Judy Teresa



Is it Just?

In the quarter of the exercise yard
where the weak sun shimmers,
 its rays
 mingle
with the shadow of the single tree.

She yearns to be in the wide open
part of the sky, beyond the fence.
 Away.
 Free
with her daughter again.

There was no intent to poison.
It was an accident, ignorance.
 The berries
 in the garden
just grew by themselves.

Rec hour is over.
She returns to her cell,
 ardent,
 keening
for the years locked away, lost.

Julie Horst



Last-ditch Love Plan

Now is the time to mingle,
just the two of us. I cannot let

seconds pass, hours slip by,
must seek an opening, be keen

about entry — intent on it, even.
I shall yearn for her, be euphoric,

ardent, blithe. Give roses, candy,
wine. Shimmer, hover, make a fuss —

promise affection, long talks, back rubs.
If she remains aloof, distant, cool,

it means unveil the BIG gifts — iPhone,
smart TV, necklace of gold.

Jet ski, Lexus, gossamer drone.
As a last resort, I will draw

and quarter my heart. Gift-wrap
the pieces, add ribbon, white bows.

She will receive four throbbing loves
eager to pump passion into a hollow life.

Tim Pilgrim



Man of the Hour

My ardent heart
gives no quarter.
It is fully open
as I yearn
to mingle
my feelings with yours.

Are you just as keen
as I am
to do this?
How intent are you?
The fantasies of what could be
shimmer in the air
above us both.

Caroline Balzer



Ode to a College Student

Ardently intent
Shimmering with yearning
In early quarter

That keen openness
Now mingling with vacancy
As the hours turn.

Darcie Donegan



Ode to Traffic

Shimmering scales, oily, unctuous snake
Hour upon hour your coiling menace grows.
Insatiable, you give no quarter, none.
And yet, ardently, still we feed you more.

Sumptuous pet, your comforting embrace
Just barely veils a gentle strangling squeeze.
Open those coyly hidden fangs and seize
Our tasty offerings: toddlers, towns and trees.

Not our intent to let your maw consume
Whole villages, one hundred souls a day,
And yet their keening wails cannot be heard
Above your roiling growl, our engine's purr.

Unmingled, waiting, 'tombbed in metal cubes,
We millions inch toward invited doom.

Ellen Barton



Regret

In this final quarter of time
My intent is to pay attention
To live solely with keen focus
Fully open to all possibilities.
So many years squandered
Just skimming lightly above the surface
Following the dazzling shimmer
Letting the mingle and chattering
Substitute for true connection.
Now in this late hour
Strive to capture true and ardent meaning
In the fleeting moments remaining.
Yearn, now, passenger,
For all that might have been.

Sue Cole



Repairs to the Co-op

(633 2nd St., Stevens Point, WI)

That building stands in my memory
as a harbor for old light. Within,
the shadows that linger
come from a different era—motes of sun
mingled with dust on unvarnished
wooden shelves, jars of shifting
glass, tinged with blue or green,
holding herbs or clumps of ginger.
Just two up, sandstone steps
formed a fan of welcome
around the wood and
glass-paned door.

A century past, or more,
Women in babushkas passed through
its door to barter wool for flour,
or buy whatever.
In a town of 1100 inhabitants,
five Catholic churches,
some fine as small cathedrals,
one right across the road.

Two miles north, sand-hill cranes
glided over the marsh, and black bears
occasionally ventured into town.



Repairs to the Co-op (continued)

Seasons commanded the way of life:
spring a verdant stress of green,
summer a shimmer of sun and heat,
fall, its colors ardent with their passing,
winter giving no quarter, with the wind
keening and the January cold
dipping to 40 below zero.

In 1970, the square was still there,
crowded every Saturday morning with
immigrants who still spoke English
so lubbed with Polish that signing
was the only way to specify amounts
or what you wanted, from baskets
jewelled with beets and purple potatoes
brought in by horse and cart.

It was never my intent to leave
but ghosts and sorrow got
the best of me, and so I left.

I am old now. The bells
of St. Peter's toll the hour
as I open the door to the co-op
once again, and step into its golden
dusk to find what's been, or hasn't,
been repaired.

Ara Taylor



Retirement Home Prom

(Music and rotating glow-ball in a decorated multi-purpose room.)

BEVVY: I want to see some ardent mingling.

KEVIN: Then we can go?

BEVVY: We're here at least an hour.

KEVIN: Just an hour? Promise?

BEVVIE: An hour and a quarter.

KEVIN: Dammit.

BEVVIE: Be open. You like these people.

KEVIN: I like these people when I can hear them.

BEVVIE: Who needs words? It's a dance!

KEVIN: (holds up his cane) It's a cane!

BEVVIE: Yearning to dance, it's half the fun.

KEVIN: Your intent is that I have a half-fun hour and a quarter?

BEVVIE: Suck some more joy out of my only night out, Kevin.

KEVIN: Could you please stand still?

BEVVIE: Are you disoriented?

KEVIN: Please?

BEVVIE: Okay!

KEVIN: There's -There's a nice shimmer from the lights off your dress.

BEVVIE: Keen.

KEVIN: Show me the light while you dance.

BEVVIE: Back in an hour.

KEVIN: Deal.

(BEVVIE dances off, KEVIN slowly sits. Settled, he smiles at what he sees.)

Sean Walbeck



Rupture

In the French Quarter the wind keens
In open windows through abandoned houses
As the water flows slower across the hours
The light picks up the spreading ripples
Shimmering brightly against the sad dark places
And through the iridescent sheen of mingled oil slicks
A fish thrust into the urban jungle
Weaves between the rotting timbers
Intent on some small destination
Lying just around the next drowned corner
As the waves of hot humidity rising tease
The small forgotten mammals yearning
For some drier simpler day beneath the floors
When they and the house's human occupiers
Met with ardent sweet desire
Unaware of the storm of change that lingered
Ominous on the far horizon and the sea.

Katrina Ivers



Sacred Connection

I am an ardent student of your love
Open to experiences, communing together
Intent on exploration of pleasure
I yearn for that ignited hour
Keen to feel your essence mingle with my own
No quarter given, you demand my all
Just one moment etched in time
I shimmer to life in your arms.

Trina Bol



Sand Sifting

Sitting on the beach still warm from the afternoon sun
Wiggling my toes and fingers in the fine sand
Breathing cool ocean air with just a hint of seaweed
Waves intent on lapping at the shore

The small boat moves with purpose
As it partners with the wind
Seagulls as they keen to one another,
Circle full sails ardent in their embrace
Of the steady breeze

Clearing the hills mingling with the lingering clouds
A quarter moon peeks through, yearning to cast a
Shimmering glow across the water
How long has it been since I watched a star
Shooting across the sky?

Holding my breath, exhaling a prayer
Opening my hand letting fine sand sift through
Marking the hour with God and the moon.

Barbara Stromme



School Strike for Climate Change

“I don’t want your hope... I want you to panic. I want you to feel the fear I feel every day. And then I want you to act.”

Greta Thunberg

Below the steps of Bellingham City Hall the crowd mingles. Two to three hundred people, mostly middle school and high school students, few older people. Attendees are orderly, and the strike hums with good vibes. Signs urge immediate action to cut carbon emissions. Many are pithy: “If you don’t act like adults, we will!” and “I’ll clean my room when you clean our planet.” The student organizer is the opening speaker, eloquent and ardent. Speakers—including two adults—are earnest. Student-led chants are enthusiastic: “Whose planet? OUR PLANET! When do we want change? NOW!” The strike is infused with yearning to address the climate emergency, to repair our overheating, breaking world. After just an hour, the strike ends with an admonition to return to class. Cutting class would undermine the strike’s intent. Three quarters of the attendees leave



School Strike (continued)

rapidly, while knots of people gather at the action tables.
Here and around the world, these global citizens
choose action over keening or resignation.
What if all of us choose action over mourning or apathy
or denial? I fear the world young people will inherit.
It is their future. It is our future, too. There is little
time. Today shimmers with possibility and promise.
With talk of an early spring, and panic.

Andrew Shattuck McBride



The Shore Of Liberty: A Barred Door

As the tired, poor, and huddled masses
Yearn to breathe Free,
Ardent patriots intently, maniacally,
Clutch their privilege, by keenly
Preaching that Divine Providence
Radiates through a just, self-righteous demagogue.

Without two nickels,
Two dimes, or
Two quarters to rub together,
The hopeful masses desperately
Lift
Liberty's
Lamp of Freedom,
Holding it aloft hour by forsaken hour.



The Shore (continued)

However,

Blind Justice holds true
To her wayward neutrality,
As Liberty wrenches the wretched refuse
From a once open, teeming shore,
Casting her lamp
Into the tempest-tossed abyss.

The land of plenty has forsaken those in greatest need,
Casting them asunder to mingle apart,
While patriots regroup behind a golden, shimmering door
Beyond the shore of where once was Freedom.

Guy Smith



Slanted Wood and Light

the urban trees are dark spinning neighbors
mingle in my mind, shifting summer dusk
it's a quarter to the ardent symphony
and the ceiling,
it remains attached with all this sweet intent.

if it turns an hour past late
space can disintegrate
i was always a risk to the floatation
devices, how kind
for the sky to shimmer away, it flies
is there any way
for the stars to not just dance away?

if you were keen on anything
cottage stones now rotting in my throat
can't this rip open
the concept
of Time?
all i was yearning for
was anything tangible
that is all i wanted to find.

Rem Grá Naughton



Solar

Our nearest plasma asterisk suspended
in the Western quarter of a sky
festooned with clouds
It showers trees and flowers
with wavy particles and warms the Sound.

Brilliant little packets of life-force,
each animal, every plant yearns for
as it is an intrinsic sustenance.
We open up and allow its energy
into and through to mingle with our cells.

An endless repetition
an endless repetition
ardent in our Sol search
intent upon rejuvenation.

It burns, it heals, it sparks, it drains
it cracks the earth, lifts ocean and lake
into the air just to press it all together
in one muddy hour.

Afterward we're all too keen
to take it all in again – the wet and the wind
left over to shimmer in the promise
of warm sunlight.

Elliot Crips



Spring Fever

He looked at me
With such heady intent
I lost track of the day, the year, the hour
Mesmerized by the way
I felt as if his very soul
Mingled almost tangibly with mine.

I opened myself up to him
The same way
A moon flower
Opens up to the warmth of sunlight,
All revelation and blossom.

The same yearning
Had sung
Keen through my veins
When I'd thrown a quarter
Into a fountain
And wished so ardently
For him,
Back in my arms.

Lying face-to-face,
The blue of his eyes
Shimmers ethereal
Like sunlight on fresh snow.

The warmth of his hands, his heart
Could thaw even the most
Ancient of glaciers.

He holds me closer,
Kisses the top of my head.

I melt and soften just the same.

Cloey North



Standing at the Phone Booth

To yearn for connection, the kind
where you can say what you like,
just speak your mind, no intent,
save to be true.

To open our hearts,
peel away pain, layers of perception,
misgivings, regrets – feel the pulse
mingle with keen compassion.

Like you could make your own
Scarlet Letter shimmer, no shame,
stitch a lotus flower S, like an
ancient snake, uncoiling.

Like we could reach
the hour of empathy, in ardent pursuit,
look into another's eyes, the see and saw,
perfectly balanced head with heart.

Remember how a phone call used to cost
a quarter, when we still knew who to call.

JS Nahani



Strangers

In the shimmer, bouncing light
a glimmer of an ardent smile
an opening of just delight
intent to mingle with me.

In the quarters of my mind
a keen yearning takes hold
an eloquent pitch nearby
intent to speak with me.

In the shimmer, bouncing light
a conversation, a warm invite
an hour into the soiree
intent to leave with me.

Courtney Shannon Strand



Rock Strangers on the Dike (Yasmina Van Hove, 2013)



Tapetum Lucidum

Should you crave
to pass without warning
across the surface of my pupils,

and quarter your shimmer
through my window panes,

The hour of mourning will come—
for my youth, for my innocence.
My enemy, still, an open mouth,
an ardent gossiper.

The talk of the town: my lips,
Death, which passes through them.
The night's palms, glowing,
placed over my eyes.

Not just attraction;
your limbs are snares.
These hunting grounds,
hold my sounds, my screams.
I cannot bear to listen.



Tapetum Lucidum (continued)

My one-manned conversations
yearn for you, intent
on stealing your teeth,
a trap I cannot trigger.
You: still keen on killing.

These images I formed
through shadows of your stalking.
We lie in silence;
The only thing to mingle:
our hands, our lips, our bodies.

Alana Erickson



Tight Blue Jeans

I was walking down Main Street, quarter past eight
And I saw her stopping traffic in blue jeans so tight.
With her every hip sway, that silver belt shimmered.
Under the neon lights, I could hear my heart murmur.
My heart just might have skipped a beat,
But not my ardent love for the stranger I am yet to meet.
My yearning for my future wife grew stronger forever,
As I mingled amidst the crowd and followed her for an hour.
My head got filled with pickup lines.
When I was keen to send a sign
She just stopped and turned around
And said in a manly sound
“I hope you are open minded,
That I am the one you had intended.
I don't mean to be rude
But you should know that I am a Dude.”

Meyyappan Kumar



Zebra Path (2018)



Two-Bit Selene

(For Tay)

Full moon,
running on empty.
Memory of shimmer,
a gleam, but dull:
the lucky quarter
that's been rubbed
between thumb and forefinger
so many times.

On a sick-moon night
I bear witness
to your darkest hour
and yearn
to be your animal.
Tasting salt,
I can't discern the source
(sweat and tears mingle,
your intention,
ambiguous as always).



Two-Bit Selene (continued)

I am the ardent worshipper
of the open wound of your mind.
Lovingly
I let you fester.
By now we know
nothing in our world
can be good
or just
or clean.

Keen eyes: knives.
I splinter.
You pour shadows
into my chest cavity.

I am full and empty.
I am hung up by wrists.
I am hung in the sky.

Kristen Dietz



Unnamed

We skim, smith, scan. Words wrung.

Any ardent taste yearns for a tongue.

Days open, break, mingle milk & mud.

Keen points on the first buds.

Hourly, she makes her intent known—

She gives no quarter her pink sun

But any light just scalds the eye. Any shimmer, too sharp.

Kate Di Nitto



Untitled

Yearn, shimmer! Open, keen quarter hour

Just mingle, intent, ardent.

Alden Nagel



Fifteen Minutes

Are you open to just mingle?

Do you yearn for ardent connection?

How keen is your intent?

Go ahead, put on your shimmer, it's just for a quarter of an hour.

Diana Swan



Vending Machine

I palm the quarter
and mingle it
with another.

The hour has arrived:
the quarters shimmer
as they slide into
the open slot.

My anticipation is keen.
With ardent intent
I push the button.

The mechanisms
whir to life, purchasing
what I yearn,
the end perfectly just.

Pa'e Rista



Winter's End

Gravelly buds open, petals unfurl,
Raucous shimmerings dapple the wind,
A billow of blossoms this brief quarter hour
Yet gone already, just barely known.

Dons she now dull green, intent on pushing
Our keen yearning away. Ardent, mossy earth
Noses up the frond, the worm: spring's mingled message.

Ellen Barton



Wiser

I yearn for freedom.
Escape from critical comments,
Undermining, snide remarks.
No more good ideas shot down.
Each hour, more keenly
Aware of how close I am
To a life that is open,
Fulfilling, and just.
Daily disappointment
Mingled with ardent hope
Replaced with wondrous possibilities.
I see shimmering light
At the end of this tunnel.
I am three-quarters of the way there!
My intent was not to make poor choices.
Smart women sometimes do that
Until they become strong and wise.

Anonymous





Eiffel Tower, Paris, ca. 1900, Wiki Commons



Avec Toi

J'ai essayé de me mêler
à de belles jonquilles
dans des champs sans bornes,
mais je me suis trouvée
souffrant d'intentions vides
sous un ciel nuageux
déversant sa pluie de mensonges.

Toi, tu n'as pas prétendu scintiller
comme des pétales de soleil.
Tu es apparu d'un autre quartier -
petit agneau noir,
les yeux ouverts, vif d'esprit,
d'amour ardent, mais sans astuce.
Te désirer, c'était juste.

J'ai confié mon cœur à ta douceur,
et je reste sous les arbres avec toi,
des heures, des heures et des heures.

Heather Williams



With You

(English Translation)

I tried to mingle
with beautiful daffodils
in boundless fields
but I found myself
suffering from empty intent
under a cloudy sky
pouring its rain of lies.

You didn't pretend
to shimmer like petals of sun.
You appeared from another quarter -
little black lamb,
open-eyed, keen-witted,
with ardent, but guileless love.
My yearning for you was just.

I entrusted my heart to your soft powers,
and I stay under the trees with you,
for hours and hours and hours.

(translated by the author)



Déclaration d'intention

Que puis-je pour vous
Devant mon écran scintillant
D'images troublantes

Vous
Les Sans-papier
Les Sans-pays
Les Sans-espoir
Plus morts que vifs
Vous osez
Désirer
Vous suppliez
Pêle-mêle
Ardents
Les bras ouverts
Prendre votre quartier chez nous
A juste titre
Vous attendez votre heure
Peureux.

Jean L. Baker



Declaration of Intent

(English Translation)

How can I help you
Seated before this screen
Aglow with disturbing images

You
Without papers
Without country
Without hope
More dead than alive
You dare
To want
You dare to implore
Chaotically
Fervently
With open arms
To shelter among us
Rightly
You wait your chance
In fear.

(translated by the author)



en un instant

c'est l'heure dorée
où vous scintillez
la vie ardente
n'apparaît pas souvent
votre intention est juste
vous dites des mots vifs
peut-être c'est ouf
vous désirez vivre au pif

nous sommes insulaires
mais le quartier est très ouvert
ne vous mêlez
ni à personne ni à rien

Sonja Kinser



The Golden Hour

(English Translation)

it is the golden hour
when you shimmer
the ardent life
does not appear often
your intention is just
you speak keen words
maybe it's nuts
you yearn to live by the seat of your pants.

we are islanders
but the quarter is very open
don't mingle
with either anyone or anything

(translated by the author)



Un Garçon

Un garçon est né à dix heures
Il désirait être un président
Son intention était d'être ardent
Mais la vie a donné une autre chose.

Ce garçon a ouvert le monde
Il respectait beaucoup Proust
Son intention était d'être juste
Mais la vie a donné une autre chose.

Au dernier quartier de sa vie il s'est mêlé
Au scandale de ses responsabilités
Sa vie vive est finie
Ses yeux ne scintillent plus.

Il ne savait pas à ce sujet
Que sa vie est finirait comme ça
Son intention était d'être juste
Mais la vie a donné une autre chose.

Adelina Dzhalelova



A Boy

(English Translation)

A boy was born at ten o'clock
He desired to be a president
His intention was to be ardent
But life gave him another way.

This boy opened the world
He respected Proust very much
His intention was to be fair
But life gave him another way.

In the last quarter of his life he was involved
In the scandal of his responsibilities
His vibrant life is over
His eyes do not sparkle anymore.

He did not know
That his life would end like that
His intention was to be fair
But life gave him another way.

(translated by the author)



L'Heure de partir

J'avais l'intention
De faire un tour du monde
Et des endroits où les étoiles
Scintillent sur les voiles.

Mon âme s'ouvrait,
J'ai désiré
Que ma vie devienne
Une boisson mêlée.

Mais mon coeur ardent
Était en avance,
Et l'heure de partir
Viendrait trop tard pour moi.

Ce n'est pas juste
Mais c'est la vie,
Donc je resterai dans
Mon quartier.

J'étais vive
Quand j'étais jeune,
Et maintenant j'ai l'intention
De juste rester à la maison.

Megan Gill



The Time to Leave

(English Translation)

I had the intention
To travel the world,
And see places where the stars
Sparkled on the waves.

My soul opened,
I wanted
My life to become
Mixed like a drink.

But my ardent heart
Was early,
And the hour to leave
Would come too late for me.

It isn't fair,
But that is life,
So I will stay in
My neighborhood.

I was lively
When I was young,
And now I have the intention
To just stay home.

(translated by the author)



L' Illusion

Fais attention!
Dans une bonne intention
Je t'invite à visiter
Un quartier silencieux.
Tout se mêle
Dans ces environs:
Les gens et les sons,
Les chats et les chants,
Les chiens et les riens –
Tout est bruit et cris.
Ah! Mais...
Une heure au zénith
Dans la chaleur et le silence
Il y a juste une femme.
Ses cheveux sont ardents.
Ses yeux bleu clair
Scintillent de mille feux.
Pourtant,
La jeune fille,
La belle fille de ton rêve
Se dissipe,
Disparaît à la lumière
Sans retour possible.
Et toi?

Tu te trouves
Pour le moment vif
Désirer de tout ton coeur
La voir
Encore...
Écoute!
La porte entre les mondes
N'est plus ouverte,
Personne n'a la clef.
Et je suis désolé
Pour cette promenade,
Pour ton coeur brisé:
Pour ton âme amère
Même si
C'est un jour heureux
Observe!
Comme le quartier bariolé
S'emplit de visages nouveaux
Sans cesse.

Mariia Neguliaeva



The Illusion

(English Translation)

Pay attention
With good intentions
I invite you to visit
A quiet neighborhood.
Everything is mingling
In these surroundings.
People and sounds
Cats and songs,
Dogs and trifles.
All is noise and shouting.
Oh! But...
One hour at the zenith
In the heat and silence
There is just one woman.
Her hair is glowing,
Her light blue eyes
Sparkle a thousand lights.
However,
The young woman
Beautiful in your dream
Dissipates,
Disappears in the light
Without turning back.
And you?

You find yourself
For the moment alive
Yearning with all your heart
To see her
Again...
Listen!
The door between the worlds
Is no longer open,
Nobody has the key.
And I am sorry
For this walk
For your broken heart
For your bitter soul
Even if
It is a joyful day
Watch!
As the colorful neighborhood
Is filling with new faces
Ceaselessly.

(translated by the author)

Contributors



CONTRIBUTORS

Adelina Dzhalelova (Аделина Джалелова) is a WCC foreign exchange student from Russia.

Alana Erickson is a writer born and raised in the PNW. This is her second time submitting to the Kumquat Challenge. She works at WCC.

Alden Nagel is a current WCC student and has an avid interest in film, both current and classic.

Andrew Shattuck McBride is a writer and editor. He is co-editor of *For Love of Orcas*, an anthology of poetry and prose about the Southern Resident orcas, Chinook salmon, and their ecosystem.

Ara Taylor is the project manager for WCC's *Kumquat Challenge*, and a former book critic for the *Bellingham Herald*. Excerpts of her reviews have appeared in many books alongside those from *Kirkus Reviews* and the *New York Times*. She is the program coordinator for the WCC library's textbook lending program.

Barbara Stromme is a lifelong resident of Whatcom County who enjoys the outdoors, gardening, and hiking. She has two children and two grandchildren and has been married to the same man for 49 years.

Brett Straka is the technical services manager for the WCC Library. He is a Bellingham native and trained archivist, who enjoys history, photography, and the local trails.

Brian Cope teaches English here at Whatcom and is grateful to be here with such inspiring students and colleagues.

Cloey North is a current WCC nursing student who writes both poetry and novels. She loves literature as a way to connect with people and to explore the human condition. Emotionality is an important concept in all of Cloey's works.

Courtney Shannon is the communications manager at WCC, and she holds an MA in marketing & communications and a BA in journalism. She is a PNWA winner for her book *Ellie's Umbrella*.

Darcie Donegan has been a WCC faculty member since 1995 in the education and early childhood education department and loves to write when she has time!

Dhiyaa Ramadhan is a current WCC international student from Indonesia acquiring a transfer degree so he can continue to a 4-year university to pursue a degree in communication studies. He actively participates in the WCC Improv Club, attending meetings and performing.

Diana Swan “has never endured the humiliation of speed dating, but has participated in many of life’s other auditions.”

Ellen Barton is the WCC health projects coordinator and works with the Area Health Education Center for Western Washington. She is a member of the Bellingham Chamber Chorale and the Whatcom Chorale and is an avid supporter of the bicycling community.

Elliot Cribbs graduated from WCC in 2016, where he got to forge friendships with remarkable students and faculty and was allowed to flourish thoroughly throughout the journey. He is a maker of things and helper of people who has since returned to his homeland of South Whidbey Island.

Guy Smith teaches communication studies courses, serves as the social Sciences and business division chair at WCC, and wishes peace and love for everyone.

Harvey Schwartz grew up on the East Coast and has taken many art and writing classes at WCC. He hitchhiked west for a summer vacation and decided to stay. A tipi vision-quest led to a twenty-five year chiropractic career. Since retiring in 2002 he’s been a gardener, improv player, and now a writer.

Heather Williams is a librarian at the WCC bibliothèque. She studied français à l'université a long time ago and also taught anglais in Japan. This is her first poème bilingue.

JS Nahani is a Bellingham expressive artist, coach, editor, and facilitator. Her business, Creative Insights, is based on the ardent belief that expression IS transformation, and she loves to work with words and people alike. Her current favorite word - and place to be - is “forest.”

Jean Baker is an adjunct instructor of humanities at WCC with a Ph.D. in French literature. She has lived extensively in France, working as an interpreter, instructor of Anglo-American literatures, and village librarian.

Judy Teresa is a retired special education teacher. Her first book, *Flight Connections*, was published in 2017. She's currently writing about the life of her husband, George, and writing a critique of her educational experiences titled *Cathedral of Learning*. Her poems and essays have appeared in many local publications.

Julie Horst is a former WCC librarian and now serves as a Headquarters Branch Librarian for the Ninth Circuit Court in San Francisco. If you visit Julie in the San Francisco Bay Area, she'll take you on a tour of Alcatraz.

Kate Di Nitto holds an MFA from the University of Montana. Poetry was her first love. She currently works at the Area Health Education Center at WCC.

Kate Harrison was born and raised on the West Coast and now finds home in the Salish Sea region, Coast Salish Territories. She is a member of the WCC library staff and is soon to be an MLIS candidate at UBC. She is slowly learning to shimmer.

Katrina Ivers is a WCC alumnus who served four years in the USAF as a procurement specialist. She now attends the University of Wyoming, studying anthropology, and lives in Laramie. She is extremely happy, but still dreams of the madrona trees and rocky shores of the San Juan Islands.

Kristen Dietz is a current WCC student.

Linda Conroy is a retired social worker who writes poetry to portray the simplicity and complexity of behaviors that make us human. Her book, *Ordinary Signs*, will be published in summer 2019.

Linda Q. Lambert's most recent publication is "Accidental and Occasional Poet" in Red Wheelbarrow Writers' 2018 Anthology *So Much Depends Upon...* You can access her blog "Digi-Stalking Postcard Poets" about crafting a postcard "poem a day" for writers from Massachusetts to Japan at LindaQLambert.com.

Marian Exall was born in the UK and lived in France and Belgium before coming to the U.S. After practicing law for twenty years, she now devotes herself to writing fiction. She is a perennial participant in the Chuckanut Writers Conference and is a previous *Kumquat Challenge* entrant.

Mariia Neguliavea is an exchange student from Russia, studying both art and applied linguistics, who has a great appreciation for poetry even not being into it.

Mary Mueller is an occasional student at WCC and a former special education instructor who takes great joy in word crafting and writing poetry.

Megan Gill is a current student at WCC.

Meyyappan Kumar, a chemical engineer and retired executive from British Petroleum, has taught economics and management at WCC and WWU. His passion is music: he plays guitar and sings and is currently learning to salsa dance.

Monique Everett is a current student at WCC interested in social sciences and humanities. She loves creative expression and finds poetry to be an enjoyable and challenging endeavor.

Pa'e Rista is the payroll and benefits coordinator at WCC.

Penny Friedman is a nursing instructor at WCC.

Rem Naughton is a current WCC student, planning on transferring into a neuroscience program. She is intensely passionate about writing, music, and writing music. She favors the introspective abstract and has written several novels along with her poetry and songs.

Rielley Rogers is a former WCC student, currently goes to Western Washington University and is studying to be a community college professor. He is an English major hoping to eventually earn his PhD in rhetoric and composition. He currently works in the WCC Writing Center.

Room 301E faces north and is a gathering place for certain eccentric staff who enjoy observing the antics of the construction crew working on the new WCC Learning Commons.

Sally Sheedy is a systems librarian at WCC, plays fiddle, and loves to contra dance.

Sean Walbeck, a playwright and local theater artist, is currently vice-president of production at the Bellingham Theatre Guild and adjunct instructor of drama at WCC. His most recently produced plays include *Antigone '19* (WCC), *Moving Day* (BOAT Festival 7) and the publication of “Explaining the Rain” in *The Kumquat Challenge* 2017.

Sonja Kinser is a current student at WCC and will continue on to pursue a degree in linguistics. At Whatcom, she has studied the French language.

Sue Cole is the executive director for college advancement at WCC. She hikes, rows, and travels with her husband, Craig, and runs and plays with her dogs, Scotty and Wanda. She reads *A Confederacy of Dunces* every year and still misses her home state, Wisconsin.

Tim Pilgrim is Pacific Northwest poet and a retired college professor who can tell a subtle joke — as his poem shows. His other poems, many not so humorous, can be found at www.timothypilgrim.org.

Trina Bol is the travel and events coordinator for CyberWatch West and the CAE National Resource Center. She joined WCC in 2018, where she assists the CyberWatch West team.

