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# LA Poetry Beach Festival 2022



## Colofon:

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# **Anthology**

A selection of L.A. Poetry  
Beach Festival 2022

In memoriam

# Charles Bukowski

(August 16, 1920 - March 9, 1994)

# Introduction

## Welcome to the Los Angeles Poetry Beach Festival 2022!

"Some People Never Go Crazy" is our theme this year. This is the opening line from the Charles Bukowski poem "Some People". In our LA Poetry Beach Festival anthology you will find a selection of 34 poems.

This year's edition is in many ways a success. We got four times more submissions than last year. The number of states went from 3 states in 2021 to 17 states in 2022. We also got more publicity than ever with articles in print and radio media.

The 2nd Poetry Train from New York to Los Angeles promises to be more successful this year with poets on the train to poetry paradise, Los Angeles. Like last year the Poetry Train will stop in 64 cities / towns in 20 different states between New York and Los Angeles.

New this year is L.A.P. D. L.A.P. D. is an acronym of Los Angeles Poetry Downtown and on Saturday, September 24th just a few hours after the 2nd Poetry Train arrives at Union Station, Los Angeles. We have organized six different poetry readings. The readings will be at the Union Station, Hotel Erwin, the bookstore Chevalier's, the Venice Beach Poets Monument, the Griffith Observatory and the Skid Row Museum.

"I never could talk to you"—a line from Sylvia Plath's poem "Daddy"—will be the theme of next year.

We hope to get poems next year from all 50 states. Stay tuned.

Erik Van Loon  
L.A. Poetry Beach Festival

# Marlana-Patrice Pugh Hamer, 69

*San Tan Valley, AZ*

8.2022

## My New Leff Eye Groove

Feeling robbed by the craftiest cat burglar.  
Even stole my Google Nest door cam.  
Late one night while I was snoozing.  
Had to cover my left eye after two surgeries!  
Recovery. Not seeing EVERYTHING standing up is CATASTROPHE!  
We Poets count on Our Dance! Our Daily Frolics! Our Daily Jaunts!  
Our Daily Jams!  
Today, I grooved upright at sundown.  
My garden reawakened my jazz.  
Bird maestros even making branches sing.  
Me swatting small flies alight on exposed, moist skin.  
Water accidentally falling from grateful nostrils.  
Patting my hair. My face.  
Laughing like a kid after the hose went haywire.  
Went rogue while glory showered me.  
Barbecue smells wafting from a neighbor's grill.  
My new left eye no longer playing peekaboo solos.  
Finally savoring Summer high notes in harmony again!  
Thankfully absorbing, reclaiming EVERYTHING I feared might be lost.  
Gratitude in every bass and treble clef of my body.  
Thirsting for endless snapshots and selfies.  
Departing sun rays seizing me. Not wanting to let go of the improvs!  
Angry rocks hurled intercepted by hypnotic mellowness of melodies.  
Seeing more clearly, I groove into a new creative trance.  
Now deflecting NOISE more fiercely. Firmly believing!  
WE POETS WILL STAND! JAM! DANCE!  
DANCE on God's precipices FOREVER!

# Claire Acerno, 62

*Los Angeles, CA*

6.2018

## Housewife

the word alone conjures  
shmata, rollers, face cream  
belly, never getting laid  
pushing a half full wagon  
glaze in eyes, coupons in hand

leaning over an oven  
one hand bathed  
in flowered mitt  
head in oven  
turning on the gas...

yesterday they came with trucks  
to cut down some trees, roots that threatened  
to choke my house, lift it off its foundation

i stayed home all day to oversee  
the noise, the mess  
change is ugly

i danced in the kitchen, cooked banana bread  
and red sauce, cleaned with buckets of soapy water, spilled bubbles  
on dirt, watched years  
of dust and grime wash down the cracked driveway  
never once did i think about sex or death

this morning (while bringing out the laundry)  
i saw one finch  
sitting on what's left  
of her home  
one ugly branch    a twig really  
she told me it was OK  
that her home is in flight

I never leave.

# Thomas Augustine, 53

*Lakewood, CA*

8.2022

## Some People Never Go Crazy

Some people never go crazy  
but they may gnaw on invisible gravel.  
Astro projecting thoughts to distant planets uncharted by spaceships.  
As the world slowly unravels around them,  
they relish in the teleported visions in their head.  
Recalling things unsaid to ghosts of the past.  
The aftermath if ever discovered,  
is the fast track to hunched men in white coats and thick glasses.  
Pressing to prescribe placebo pills.  
Disguised as an antidote for all life's ills.  
Promising to alleviate flaccid erections, surging blood pressure  
or sluggish cholesterol.  
Some people never go crazy.  
Each thought is carefully polished and encased.  
It is easier to just numb the soul with a pickled liver  
courtesy of rot gut vodka.  
Becoming shift shapers balancing chakras.  
A steady gaze at reality too long, earns you a strait jacket.  
Straight lines in this life are reserved for military and school.  
Both disciplines mastering the cool of walking in single file line  
calmly exiting a burning building.  
Some people never go crazy,  
choosing to count new spots in the sun;  
avoiding the hamster wheel existence enclosed in cubicles.  
Knowing the end game leads to gray hairs, meager pensions,  
state sanctioned health care and a boatload of regret.  
Some people never go crazy.  
They just refused to be snookered into the idea that rain isn't wet.



Glendale, CA

9.2022

Everybody goes crazy here  
But not me  
I've the will of an ox

I nod, as I finish grabbing my belongings  
Glancing at the door  
No hesitation, my feet in a starting position

In the two days I've been here  
My eyes burn from what I can only guess is sulfur  
The air smells of disease  
And your body tenses filled with unease and discomfort  
I've started seeing shadow people in the corners of my eyes  
And my hair stands up periodically and everyone goes quiet  
As if we're of the same mind. Don't move

Her hands  
Are curled from arthritis  
And her eyes have a slight fog, a distance  
She rages of resilience  
And shames me for my cowardice  
I don't care

There's freedom in failure  
There's freedom in giving in,  
and giving up

# Blake Denham, 29

*South Pasadena, CA*

8.2022

08/26/22

The hard bright gray of the wet dark overpass is beautiful to think about.

The river obeys the man made channel

The birds are none the wiser:

They titter about the brown dry leaves  
probing for organic solids

like us in conversation last night.

Hard brick walls shelter the soft warmth from the cold dark outside

– ... It's the most read fanfiction with over 500 million likes.

– ... It's called misrepresenting: he would say "I'm pregnant" when his stomach hurt.

The birds chirp as they cast aside brown leaves.

The warm golden tea quivers as a rejoin our circle

wherein mysterious colored cards are spread:

red for sex, white for relationships, gray for career, green for money,  
purple for family:

– My ideal mother in law would treat me like their daughter...

– I'd like to make sex less serious and connect in other ways...

– Tarantino is my favorite: he has a foot fetish and I've read his  
scripts and I appreciate him more because...

We titter about the questions and the soft white porcelain is empty  
and my stomach is warm.

It is beautiful to think about the various colors;

It is nice to rest my head on your solid shoulder;

The warm lights and the expansive incense and Jesus on the keys.

– It's like a pocket universe.

The hot orange bus hums along the dark wet overpass

the cool green algae below the dark water of the river.

The white bird, brilliant in the sun's light, flies away.

It is beautiful to hear the bike's oily chain sing

and to feel the soft mild air pass about me

as I fly along the path.

# Maria Duarte, 36

*Long Beach, CA*

*9.2022*

## On the Edge of Sunset

In between the folds of the night  
I found a sticky note with a body  
on it. Ohh my dear! I have killed you,  
the bones of my reflection appeared.

# Kim Marie Farris, 53

*Studio City, CA*

*9.2022*

## **It's easier to hate you**

It's easier to hate you  
Than to feel like a fool  
For ever believing in you  
Or that you believed in me  
It's easier to hate you  
For all the lies  
I so wanted to be true  
It's easier to hate you  
When I see you  
Everywhere I go  
It's easier to hate you  
For taking advantage  
Of my feelings and trust  
It's easier to hate you  
For taking me for granted  
Knowing I'd be there  
Time and time again  
It's easier to hate you  
For blindsiding me  
Disappearing  
without a word  
It's easier to hate you  
Than to reminisce  
Holding hands, your embrace  
never wanting to let go  
It's easier to hate you  
Than to suffer  
such heartache  
And sorrow

It's easier to hate you  
Than to hate myself  
For falling in love with you

# Katrina Khan, 21

*Los Angeles, CA*

*9.2022*

## Couple of Pain

"Take what you want"

Her voice shaking

"Take what you will"

Her spirit broken

Just leave me here

Just let me be

Don't hurt me more

I need to breathe

She hit me every day

Humiliated me a thousand ways

She cries away those lies

There's a monster in those eyes

Keep your pose

Why don't you hurt me more?

Keep your dose

And your mind, it goes

They hurt each other

Till their hearts went sore

They bled each other

Till they could feel no more

I tried and I tried so hard

I fought and I fought so much

Nothing is ever enough for you

Everything is brighter than you

I just want to be free

I don't want to see your eyes

Your miserable lies

Your hopeless smiles

# Jeffrey Kingman, 63

*Vallejo, CA*

11.2021

## Sick

If I say mask  
    what do you expect?  
I poured vodka into  
    a little spray bottle, spritzed it  
    into my mouth.  
Blow-dry your throat, the man says.  
Should I press the laughing emoji  
    or write it out?  
Stickers on the floor  
    scraped and dirty  
    but the words are still there.  
After you, brother.  
Everyone's tired?  
    They can all take a big fat nap.  
Let's all go to the Fillmore  
    and stand close to the stage  
    and look down at our shoes  
    and press against each other.

# Natalia Lazarus, 56

*Beverly Hills, CA*

7.2022

## **Curtain Call**

For the obstacles that torment us  
I take my final curtain call  
Together  
We created US  
Nonetheless  
I take my final curtain call  
In the deepest of humility  
For not being all that you had imagined  
In the deepest of sadness  
For having lost you  
In the deepest of gratitude  
For having found you  
In the deepest of passion  
For I have loved you  
A moment with you in my heart  
Now the time has come to part  
I bow my head  
To you at last  
Though thrust into the unknown  
I find myself again  
Thus I take my final curtain call  
For above all  
Our moment has passed

# John Leslie, 66

*Los Angeles, CA*

*9.2022*

## **Empathy**

I defined empathy for third graders:

"If a coconut falls on your friend

And you laugh like a hyena,

You do not have empathy.

But if you say 'Ow, that

Must hurt a whole lot.'

Then you are blessed

With the gift.

Not to care about anyone but you!

How crushingly lonely that must be.

I think it could drive you crazy.

But if you know your troubles

Are shared the world over,

You can watch them shrink

To nutshell size

Then vanish.



# Shruthi Mathur, 1

*Marina del Rey, CA*

1.2022

## Dandelions

I have all these thoughts boomeranging out of me  
They come back around they slap me in the face  
They scorch my hair and make it spread thin  
They cut my tongue 'til the words spill out

Bloodied behemoths - they've discovered this portal  
From which they may be birthed  
And now I feel a thousand pregnancies of the mouth  
Constantly until they have emptied my entire body  
And I have nothing more inside but a deep dark pit

But alas. I wish. This could never be true.  
I am a woman - an eternal spring.  
My well runs from the pipe in my throat down,  
Through the veins that pop into my heels  
And stamp anger into the earth  
Marking my every endurance

Why are we entrusted with creation?  
We can create others with factory perfection  
Yet our true mastery is our self destruction  
We do not revere hulking objects with more power than us

No we are more vicious  
Concentrated serial killers of our own molecules  
The slimmest blade we fashion - see it sparkle  
Any sign of metamorphosis we slash down one by one  
Dandelions

# Camille McDaniel, 25

*Long Beach, CA*

*8.2022*

## **Breakdown Breakdance**

This is the breakdown  
Where choked up breaths  
Hiccup like hi-hats  
Words drown with the bass of  
Tears crashing to the ground

Go 'head and two-step to the beat  
Heart flutters flood the ears  
When I tap the sides of my legs  
Like tambourine do you feel  
The beatdown in this body?

Here comes the hook  
Simmering in jazz and sex and  
Mood swings feigning normalcy with  
A jagged dance of the head and hand  
The dj's back to experimenting

You gotta get down  
Lower than the linoleum could ever be  
Downer don't call me Debbie  
I'm Deborah, reinvented, deep and dancing  
Toward the lowest point of the sea

This is the breakdown  
All eyes on me watch me  
Breakdance in the holding room  
Breakthrough a gown flapping in sterile winds  
Broken, I spin this track over and over again

# Linda Ravenswood, 42

*Los Angeles, CA*

5.2021

## Coming home from work / through his kitchen

he's lined  
clean cups  
along the sideboard.

maybe love letters  
in ivory  
milkglass. they're glowing

draining  
water trailing.  
soft icing — our home river:

these were his first greetings  
to me.  
was he waiting somewhere.  
was i on his mind.  
a few grandmother cups  
can plant home in an evening kitchen —

all the kids in bed —

& me  
around small corners  
looking for him.  
& he wants to be found.

there was distance ahead  
but that night, he let himself pour  
down on me. a flight  
between the hard edges of  
marriage & so much retreat.

# Sutchai Savathasuk, 25

*Arleta, CA*

*8.2022*

## **A Detoxic Relationship**

I needed you, but I  
didn't want you then, yet I  
pulled back the curtain, and I  
stripped myself bare, so I  
could turn you on.  
I hesitated to enter / you  
seemed cold at first, then you  
warmed me up, and I  
felt real good.

Hot, wet, steamy, passionately rubbed you all over me.  
Drippin' on my melanin, you  
made me moist.  
All the while, I tasted clarity when I was in you.  
Ideas, conversations burst through all imaginations  
rushing through my head rushing  
down my dangling  
participles.

And I knew, I couldn't stay with you forever,  
and it's true, this feeling is temporary,  
and I could only keep coming  
back to you  
when I needed you.  
So I breathed you in  
with one last exhale,  
turned you off as I  
stepped out of the shower.

# Leah Schwartz, 25

*Granada Hills, CA*

*8.2022*

## Sanity Rites

My friend tells me there is a way  
Of living- an ethos of pussy.  
Modeled after the common  
house cat- it states: live like us.

To entertain this you will have to remove  
all of your clothing. Ideally you will rip it off.  
You will have to lie in the sun and spread  
your legs to let the light  
into the darkest parts of you.  
You will have to lick yourself  
clean.

Call it cruel, but you will have to do this too-  
unhinge your jaw  
to grab quick footed vermin  
and say things like, "goodbye, fuck you, no."  
this is the way  
of the common house cat-  
to never go around, but through.

# Rob Stone, 31

*Los Angeles, CA*

4.2022

## Dead Horse

you only half shrugged, not double shrugged,  
when i asked if you're ready to beat the crossword.  
i gave you a troubled hug, walked away,  
contemplated a synonym for spurred.  
maybe you wanted some cinnamon tea,  
a long foot rub, and a quiet, kind word.  
i posed all three and got three no's.  
thought, well then, tonight i suppose  
i'll lie beside icy silent snow.  
i finally simply said tell me what's wrong,  
but you didn't reply, like you hadn't heard me,  
just toyed with your plant's soil, black and earthy,  
until you said (looking away, as if i weren't worthy),  
""why do you treat our love like taxidermy?  
stuffing, sewing button eyes, preserving -  
god, dear. letting this die is an act of mercy.""  
you left the room, perhaps unaware  
that you did something more brutal than only hurt me.

# Jennifer Kindler, 61

*Mendota, IL*

8.2022

...

Some people have never been crazy,  
Never believed in fairies or elves;  
They look at me and wonder  
Why dolls fill this grown woman's shelves!  
Some people have never been crazy  
Or had the chance to laugh at themselves.  
Some people walk around nobly  
Living lives that follow a plan;  
I look at these people and wonder  
How my life got so out of hand.  
But then I stop and realize - sometimes  
Life is fun to not understand!  
Like – the giggles that suddenly come  
At a most inopportune time;  
Or smiling as my world crumbles,  
Telling all who ask that "I'm fine;"  
Or knowing the God that blesses  
With a graceful love so divine.  
Walking out in the rain,  
Having fun getting wet;  
Trying for success again  
After all the failures I forget,  
Somehow still believing my dream  
Just hasn't happened YET!  
What will they see when they look at me?  
I wish I never cared.  
But people who have never been crazy  
Really have me scared!

# Karen Medina Valerio, 25

*Chicago, IL*

9.2022

## Para Mi Familia

I don't care that migraines come at times,  
If we can fill the room with laughter  
If joy can roam loudly in the hallways  
I am at peace.

I don't mind the bags under my eyes,  
The starving nights and fruitless days  
If I can ride in the back seat once a month  
And enjoy our harvest.

I would say our madness makes life more amusing  
A sense of humor blooming among thorns  
Little rays of light peeking through  
The doors that sustain our troubles.

And I understand why  
Why it's something to be proud of, for me  
It means warm covers  
It means a doll house on Christmas  
It means knowing everyone made it home safe  
It means a summer vacation together  
Every risk  
Every loss and win  
How beautiful our collective scars.



# Andriy Valnyuk, 24

*Chicago, IL*

*8.2022*

## Rejoice Revisited

Glory to the darkness  
you were born into  
glory to the fervor that's chewing your insides  
glory to the madness that's flooding  
your vision, tongue and thought  
glory to the mourning of a better world  
Your mind has been shattered and vestiges of serenity gutted  
in the world where the few maintain the monopoly on sanity  
feet blistered as you sprint from the haunted prison of memory  
until the only desire that's left  
is the desire to dissolve in doubt and neurosis  
polluted with fear  
there is no place near  
where you would see the world clear  
For only through angst can you grasp beauty,  
only through falling can you taste divinity, only through despair can  
you rejoice.

# Jodi Galloway, 28

*Henryville, IN*

7.2022

## **Penne**

i convinced myself at age 25 that i would meet my soulmate in the  
noodle aisle of the grocery  
an arbitrary tuesday

our hands brush as we both reach for the off brand penne  
banter ensues  
dueling wittily of bow tie and angel hair  
in a nervous flush standing for far too long in aisle 9

you ask me to join you for manicotti  
we argue about cheeses until we are grey

but i am almost 29  
chasing shadows in the aisle where you were supposed to be.

# Emil Benavides, 18

*North Newton, KS*

5.2022

## Same Skin

I look at pictures of her, the girl who loved you so  
A girl whose name I wish I could remember  
Though it sits on the very tip of my tongue  
She feels so faint to me  
Like my childhood bedroom,  
Familiar, but jarring  
No longer mine  
I look in the mirror  
She is not the same as the girl who loved you so  
I know who she is and I love her  
I see a frame once dismembered  
A woman who glued herself back together  
Held her own hand  
And wrapped herself in her own arms  
When no one else would  
Comforted by the space you no longer occupy  
Your emptiness, so fulfilling  
The teeth marks in my neck have never fully healed  
But I think I have  
Yes, I think I can finally free myself of the hold you had over  
me  
I wish you didn't have to happen to make me the woman I  
am now  
The woman who survived  
The woman staring back at me  
But I think the girl who loved you so would still like me  
If I ever get to see her again  
I mean, after all  
I did it for her.

*Dodge City, KS*

# Gone Crazy

"I'M GOIN' CRAZY!"

That heckle always got my hackles up. Did they think I was lying? I threw my head back and my jaw out, "I SAID, I'M GOIN' CRAZY!" Then they would suck their teeth and cluck their tongues and

"LOOK, CUMMEAR" them hustlers would command  
"CUMMEAR A MINNIT"

"WHATCHU GOT?" I'd demand and

But I always relished the moments when them fellas  
CROWD THE WRONG CALL and left it  
WIDE OPEN FOR ME

It was too true, too. The truth IS strange.

If I hadn't KEPT ON TRUCKIN to crazytown  
I woulda had to find another way to get away.  
It's better to be a smartass than a dumbass.

# Kwanequa Jones, 30

*Topeka, KS*

*9.2022*

## BLACKNESS

I lay there bleeding, my blood seeping into the  
Cement.

I died with my eyes wide, looking my killer in  
The eyes, before the bullet tore through my insides.

You stood there with your gun drawn.

Police supposed to make sure I make it home.

Cameras record everything.

Except when the police are guilty.

No gun in my hand, just the crime of my skin

Tone, that's been prone to always being seen as

Violent syndrome if I breathe wrong.

Burn this city to the ground!

My life meant nothing, clean up on aisle 7.

I woke up this morning exhausted because my blackness was too heavy.

This same blackness that sets trends and creates

Rhythmic movements.

Blackness that transcends generations.

Other cultures thrive from my blackness.

Just an object to be examined.

Us conforming to what they view as "appropriate".

But even when being "appropriate" my life can be taken.

# Slangston Hughes, 40

*Linthicum, MD*

7.2014

## Return of the Madman

Far beyond being a madman I am now simply MAD... man  
Birth certificates wrapped around sunlight like dogmatic ankle weights  
And when it all became clear to me  
As I reached the moment of clarity  
I leaped off the edge  
But I didn't fall  
I floated  
No  
Something caught me  
A flock of star children  
Wrapped in the bodies  
Of birds flapping their pages  
And singing their words  
Grabbed me and asked me  
If I would show them which way to fly  
So I tried.  
Translation...  
My students make life worth living  
Even when I can barely make a living  
They make the work worth living  
Because maybe madness  
is just the crystallization process of inspiration  
before the God-particle in your own breath takes shape  
Happy to be alive yet unafraid to die  
Because there's no reason to fear death  
Once you've learned how to fly

# Cody Hannum, 32

*Cherry Hill, NJ*

*8.2022*

....

Romantic love  
Perhaps the false idol  
For it is the idealizer  
The zeal, the zealot

When some strike the deal  
They deal with the helot  
The apple of your eye  
In a garden for two  
When night casts shadows  
Along the shores of Peru

But it's the fool who surely won't risk it  
A true lover knows heart cooks like the brisket

# Cristian Valencia, 35

*Newark, NJ*

7.2022

## Shrinking

Shrinking as I wait for my shrink  
Minuscule in appearance  
Skyscrapers overshadow  
Obsolete rock with tiny feet  
Plants feed off the heat from nearby concrete  
Each brick cemented by century  
Droplet from the sky is opposite  
Magnifies true irrelevance  
Cross legged at the crosswalk  
Visitor at the cross road  
Flickering light bulb thrives in day  
At night it diminishes  
At night it is just a fade



# Aneata Obrien, 63

*Las Vegas, NM*

*1.2018*

## Crossfire

Caught in some arctic crossfire  
100 + degrees and  
you shiver.

(they say some people never go crazy)

Yet ancient scars line your face  
the same old story  
of love, desire, insatiable need  
seeps out of your dreams  
seems bursting  
into a gushing river  
threatening all in its path.

Mango fruit  
watermelon seeds  
strawberries left to rot  
it's all too cryptic  
the words you leave  
the spaces in between that speak the real message.

(as if some people never go crazy)

All the damage we can do  
in the blink of an eye.

# Sarah Key, 60

*New York, NY*

*1.2018*

## **Yo Tengo Pluma!**

Feather my ether with red stilettos click-clack click-clack how they hole-punch time before biker boots could hold me up steel my toes. My ex-boyfriend's ex-girlfriend Elena salsas in pointy-beaked heels that teeter me back to Gaudi-tiled Catalunya where my heart triple-pumped primary colors where feathers floated from nowhere and everywhere where I nested long ago. She tangos the life I chose not. Where is the point of his goatee? Faded to goat fuzz.

Feather our nests with a husband (or two); feather our nests with a child (or more) a house a job and stuff stuff stuff. We preen we primp we want our feathers to be as loved as we our pleasing plume the essence of us. We want more feathers. We don't want to be plucked. Until we do.

# Lisa Rhodes-Ryabchich, 59

*Piermont, NY*

*8.2022*

## **A History Of Brave Folks**

Even when the COVID pandemic came & took 500,000 lives  
Some folks kept a vigilant masking campaign & went about their way  
Even when the pandemic caused employers to fire workers  
Some folks started businesses from home or worked remotely  
Even when a heat wave burned down their homes  
Some folks relocated & sought reimbursement from insurances  
Even when rain flooded their homes some folks gathered belongings & left  
Even when the plane they traveled on got stuck on the tarmac for hours  
Some folks stayed on their planes & waited for take off like praying mantises  
Even when a sick gynecologist rammed a speculum inside their bodies  
Some folks called the State Ed. Dept — never fearing being believed  
Some folks stayed when Ukraine was invaded by Russia  
Even when their courage was tested over & over like a persistent cancer  
Some folks fought with M16' rifles & Molotov cocktails  
Even when they had no formal military training  
Some folks survived with families inside the Azovstal steel plant  
Even when Russian fighter jets bombed them mercilessly  
Some folks surrendered to the Russian Military versus dying of starvation  
Even when they knew their lives were endangered  
Some folks went to the hospital during the early COVID pandemic  
Even when they feared abuse because they were immunocompromised  
Some folks in Russia spoke out against the Russian invasion  
Even when they knew they would be locked up or murdered like rats  
Some folks wake up every day with positivity  
Even when they know they need lifelong therapy  
Some folks are in pain & dying but refuse to die without a fight  
Some folks never go crazy

# Shaketa Gift of the pen Ellison, 45

*Philadelphia, PA*

8.2022

## Some People Never Go Crazy!

Sometimes I see things, no one knows this but I am sharing it with you!

Something just flew by and I look again and realize it was nothing, but something

Where am I? Wearing a veil between existence and the hereafter  
Searching for answers to the unknown in my soul

Married to the promise of forever .....Shhhhhh .....I hear noises  
It's the grave whispers, reminding me of my focal point because  
sometimes we all lose sight

This life is just a mere "fleeting enjoyment" that will soon demand  
answers and I must be prepared

But are we ever really? I am not getting enough sleep; my soul stays  
awake and I travel

to another realm of reality where my soul finds solace in the silence

Accompanied by darkness (I am, just me, and just being is enough!)

Grateful for it all, the things & people sent to ruin me. Where do the  
strong turn to?

They don't ..... They travel the road less traveled by (the sane) want  
to feel it all ..... No drinking or smoking. Just a "conscious decision"

Every day to naturally endure

This temporal enjoyment called "life" Maybe it's the penitent, the  
calm, the humble, and the astute

The one who discerns the true meaning in Locke's theory "Happiness  
and its pursuit"

The people who quietly write folk songs in celebration of the "Thee  
emancipation of people's opinions

The "pendulum of balance"

It's lonely there...very but their free

The angels are their only friends protecting them and cheering them  
on

**A.K Shakour, 24**

*Drexel Hill, PA*

*8.2022*

## **I met a monarch butterfly this afternoon**

it 'twas a chance encounter, at the end of my sweaty summer run  
i spotted the black n orange patterns on the wings, fluttering fast  
like an ambulance with the sirens turned on. i wanted to chase  
this beauty, to hold it in the palms of my hands, but it was too fast.  
my aunt used to tell me butterflies are good luck,  
this thought made me want to follow the wings to the end of the earth,  
i just could use some better luck, ya know?  
i didn't realize that growing up meant that you had to give yourself pep talks,  
in the mirror, so you don't cry in your freshly-done mascara. nobody tells you  
that being an adult means that you won't be able hide-n-seek from bills  
even when you're having a tantrum because your whole life is falling apart.

even if ya have no job, no boyfriend, no more patience,  
life still happens anyways. i needed to see this butterfly  
yesterday i had a meltdown when i lost my mermaid  
sippy cup of chocolate milk, as i was folding  
mildew-scented laundry, feeling so defeated in pajamas.  
but i have to grow up,  
even the butterflies know when it's time to man up and move on.

# Catharyn Turner II, 53

*Ardmore, PA*

*5.2019*

## Physician, heal thyself

I understand better now  
the God complex  
because, if one thinks one is invincible  
thinks oneself super human  
thinks oneself on par with a deity;  
it is much easier to deny  
one's own fragility, frailty, grief.  
Easier to return to work two weeks after major abdominal surgery  
though you will tell a patient that they need six weeks to heal...  
Easier to hold your bladder so you can see one more patient...  
Easier to work twelve fourteen hour days in a row...  
Easier to accept that OSHA standards  
do not apply to workplace safety for one whose work  
is people healing.  
Easier to reschedule the annual exam  
as you attend to the child in front of you,  
who is crying.  
The thing is  
I've never thought myself  
a God.  
I've always thought myself a person  
And three days of bereavement leave ...  
is not enough

# Linda Joy Walder, 63

*Daniel Island, SC*

8.2022

## Crying

All memories of mother  
revolve around me crying,  
crying in my playpen,  
crying after she had the hairdresser  
cut off my pony tail to a pixie,  
crying for no reason I understood.

She barely noticed me crying,  
except when she needed silence,  
then in her scolding voice she would yell  
""STOP crying or I'll give you something to cry about,""  
all I could do in those moments was to cry silently.

Crying alone in my room one day  
after some horrific yelling scene  
that was undoubtedly in her mind  
provoked by my insolent behavior,  
I realized she never cared  
about why I cried.

Was my crying crazy  
as she had me believe,  
or was I purging the distorted images  
portrayed in mother's mirrors  
until there was nothing left  
to cry about?

# Rich Follett, 62

*Strasburg, VA*

*2.2018*

## **tubular vision**

he was a crazy man —  
designed to feint and flail,  
his outward self  
(can a nylon cylinder have a self?)  
a mirror image of my inner bedlam

on the cell with a friend  
in the ell of a strip mall parking lot  
picking up chinese take-out  
with crazy man gyrating wildly in the periphery,  
i could not bring myself to step out of the car

a vomitous, malignant rage was darkening,  
swelling into virulent parallax anguish when,  
in the throes of what could only have been  
unprecedented celestial alignment,  
crazy man tucked his head under the eaves  
and was briefly, inexplicably still ...

if he, conceived for chaos,  
could find even the merest moment  
of sanctified quietude,  
how dare i persist in psychic entropy?



# Rose Menyon Heflin, 38

*Madison, WI*

*8.2022*

## **They Never. A Sijo Sequence**

Some people never go crazy - not like me, to say the least.  
They never know fear fever dreams drip-drop-dripping so sharply  
from temptingly honeyed, obsidian tongues, both hallowed and forked.

They never feel that fire traipsing up their spine, vertebrae after  
vertebrae, and sliding slippery moist across their dermis,  
a phoenix trail of cinders in their wake, while grappling with themselves.

They never see those Fibonacci spirals of dangerous truths  
on the quickly sprouting fiddleheads of fantasy that remain  
indistinguishable from our stark, raving reality.

They never taste the stardust havoc stirred up on the wings of  
dead, neck-hung albatross or living, breathing sandhill cranes or their  
own minds dancing the wind - a rhumba, a waltz, a country two-step.

They never smell the phantom ghost of their ice skates' burnt rubber,  
cannot liken it to the scent of the pink, sentinel-thorned rose  
still defiantly in bloom in the projects in late October.

They never hear the clarion echos of ashen, silent stares -  
ever watchful, a'blinking, and deceitfully bitter - or that  
church bell air raid siren hissing temptation for their ears alone.

But I have felt, seen, tasted, smelled, and heard crazy - heard it in  
my own song, smelled it on myself, tasted it on my tongue, seen it  
in the mirror, felt it in my marrow, and I am glad I went.

# Jeff Tigchelaar, 45

*Huntington, WV*

9.2022

## **Some People Never Go Crazy**

In front of you, at least.

But just ask the walls

of their house.

Ask the fly.

The mouse.



# **LA Poetry Beach Festival 2022**

**Dear Reader,**

**In this anthology you find  
a selection of the best  
'Some People Never Go  
Crazy' poems submitted  
by a record number of  
poets from 15 different  
states.**

**Some poets are known  
for other publications  
but we also present new  
emerging poets and  
hopefully we will hear  
from them not only at our  
poetry festival but also at  
other festivals in US and  
abroad.**



**HOUSE OF  
CRAZINESS**