

# **THE BOND STREET REVIEW**



**Winter 2025**

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## From the editors

Hello all – this is Eric writing. I hope this finds you well – we’re glad you’re back with us for another month. As some of you may know, in addition to being the co-editor of *The Bond Street Review*, I am also a long-time theatre artist. More specifically, a dramaturg – look it up. I’ve worked on a lot of plays over the years, and in the course of that, done my share of what are referred to as “memory plays.” They are pretty much what they sound like – stories where memories play a significant role in the arc of the tale. This issue puts me in mind of some of those plays with its mentions of family homes being sold, first summer jobs, and the hazy (mis)remembrances of the 1980s. And how sometimes you need that kind of distance to grasp the importance of moments behind you. I’m certainly no fan of nostalgia but I definitely understand the value of occasionally revisiting our memories.

Once you finish reading this issue, we hope that some of the pieces stay with you for a good, long time and that perhaps you’ll remember them from time to time. We also hope that you’ll be sure to share the issue far and wide and generously.

Until the next time...

With gratitude,  
Eric Evans & Kathy Sochia  
Co-editors

Cover image: Nellie Adamyan / Upsplash

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## **This Is The Strangest Sky**

By Michael Brownstein

so blue it highlights her eyes,  
the white sun,  
and grass in dire need of drink strong green and full of itself.  
This was the year winter did not come  
and summer arrived before spring.  
We cut the lawn for the first time in March,  
watched a frenzy of honeybees in April  
and harvested our first wild strawberries soon after.  
By the time May arrived,  
we had gone swimming in the pond outback,  
the municipal swimming pool had opened,  
and the first heat violence churned through the park.  
The rivers of mud cracked,  
the banks knee dropped into crumbs  
and the worst part of all of this was the lack of any comforting breeze.  
We sat on the swinging chair in the shade of the porch  
and waited for the pause to fast forward.

## **On the sale of my parents' house**

By Marietta Calvanico

A man went to work sick  
A woman in worn out socks  
turned the thermostat down  
on winter nights  
Uncelebrated harbingers  
of generational wealth to come

The words and photos  
in a real estate listing  
miss the importance  
of the empty bedrooms that once called  
to bring a family together  
now waiting for the next chapter

This modest house gave a place  
for a family's heart  
layers of memories that lie silent, unseen  
residents of the past  
this, too is generational wealth  
a reflection of two lives well-lived

## **Hands**

By Marietta Calvanico

that built a house  
painted a garden scene  
worked in the vineyard  
carried bags on board to cross an ocean

that pruned the roses and clicked the camera shutter  
kneaded dough, brushed my hair  
pushed a swing  
lifted me high

my hands that changed diapers  
folded laundry  
fried meatballs  
made beds

that dropped tokens  
swiped metro cards  
my hands that have loved  
the same man for forty-five years

the shape of my nails, fingers, hands  
the shape of their hands

## **Some Supposed Progress**

By Eric Evans

"The '80s almost killed me  
Let's not recall them quite so fondly"  
- "Positive Jam", The Hold Steady

The '80s are a myth and like all  
such legends contain bits of truth  
scattered throughout, fragments of  
reality recast and reshaped almost  
to a point past recognition, a blinding  
day-glo blur of neon and spandex  
seemingly destined for workplace  
Halloween costume parties, the  
revelers unaware of

St. Vincent's  
patients hovering at the gathering's  
edges, emaciated and gaunt,  
tattooed with the telltale purple  
spots of a disease not presidentially  
spoken

as the windows fog from  
the exhailes of the homeless let  
loose from their institutional  
homes when costs got cut and  
treatment followed for the sake  
of virtueless votes landsliding  
on the broken glass of government-  
issue crack pipes crushed in the  
rush towards some supposed  
progress,

progress to be forgotten  
or misused soon enough, left to  
hang in closets and thrift stores,  
waiting for another generation to  
wander along and try them on,  
tailoring this and mending that  
in the hopes of a much more  
perfect fit.



## **Sunflower seeds**

By Corinne Harrison

Mum plants each one with relish, those handfuls of rugged black and white sunflower seeds. A hand dusted with soil, one seed per pot, pushed down with her forefinger.

Grow, grow, grow.

Every morning she stands at the window where terracotta pots crowd the ledge. I watch from the table, feet kicking inches above the floor, as the kitchen fills with the heady smell of earth.

Grow, grow, grow.

She tells me her life before I was born had been flat. Dad hadn't let her work, had moved them to our siloed cabin where the only thing that rose above ground were wooden walls and a tin roof. So she turned to the only pleasure left to her, answering dad's business accolades with her own horticultural ones.

Now, you wouldn't believe that our house, the only visible landmark on the Nevada plain, would host creepers along its wooden exterior, chrysanthemums and peonies colouring the arid yard, hanging tumbling greenery in the corner of the living room. Impossible marvels. The land outside is swallowed by a vast terrain, a beaten down desert that rarely sees rainfall.

But the tips of mum's fingers carry small pockets of magic it seems, for the sunflower seedlings grow, grow, grow.

She gets me to carry them outside, hacks the dry ground and plants them, dozens and dozens of them, under a sepia-streaked dusk pierced by wind and coyote calls. But however callous the plain, however harsh and cracked the ground, the sunflowers remain.

Ankle high, they part a narrow tread to the front door and dad comes back in the evenings, leather briefcase swinging from his hand, telling her it's too crowded out there, it's too much.

But she wills them higher, higher and they bobble, rise and stretch. They overtake the windowpanes, their pan-sized leaves jostling for space and soon we are surrounded by a regiment of stems. They screen the view of dad's approaching car, grow over his shocked expression. A sea of sun-coloured flower heads strain for the sky and overtake the helm of our roof and engulf us.



## **After Genesis 2:24**

By Lon S. Kaufman

In a Seattle store a sales clerk leaves before lunch to buy groceries for a special meal.

In an Omaha office a worker leaves early to buy white wine, tapers, and a bouquet.

In a Calistoga condo a woman hums as she prepares her special Duck a l'Orange for two.

In a Kalamazoo co-op a man smiles and sets his table with candles, crocus, and Chianti.

In a Los Angeles living room a wife on her toes hugs her husband as he unhooks her bra.

In a Detroit dining room a husband kisses his wife as she reaches to unbutton his pants.

In a Buffalo bedroom newlywed lovers cleave unto one another becoming one flesh.

In a Brooklyn bed a husband becomes enraged while screwing his wife.

The battered woman runs naked into the hallway.

## **Our Song**

By Lon S. Kaufman

I am 6.

It's late Fall 1962 on a blustery day when you talk to your breath as the wind slaps your face.

Poppy and I sit on our green slatted bench as we do on our side of the asphalt path across from the wrought iron fence as the Hudson births the Harlem and the sun rises behind the Bronx embankment.

I wish I were calm like Poppy who with his round Asian face, bald head, white shirt, and dark wool suit, looks wise with his immigrant education. He says nothing about how I fidget when I get anxious. He sits eyes closed feeding the squirrels from his fingers.

Poppy gives me another peanut, tells me again to close my eyes and let our song calm me. I can't hear the song. Poppy smiles knowing my brain will soon provide a tinnitus. The peaceful sound of the night forest floor that calms me just like the sound calms my Poppy and my Poppy's Poppy. Our song.

I am 67.

I sit on the green slatted bench.

I close my eyes and listen to our song.

I feed the squirrels from my fingers.

And I smile as my grandson fidgets  
as we do when we get anxious.

## **Sploot**

By Tim Pilgrim

Squirrels do it, so do cats.  
Lie face down in extreme heat,  
limbs spread wide, bellies flat.  
Black holes find each other, dance,  
send gravity waves through fabric  
of the universe. Squirrels try to cool,  
survive, revive at night, hope never  
to sploot again. Black holes swirl,  
collide, unite, take a few galaxies  
into oblivion with them. Scientists  
wait breathless at telescopes,  
eager to witness the final moans.  
I lie naked on my back, alone,  
sweat, ignore noise next door.  
Nothing rises into the black.

## **Hat Cake**

By Michael Salama

My best friend at 15 was a scorpion tattooed convict and sous chef named Omar. We met working the dinner shift at Shirley's, an upscale mid-80s-yuppie steakhouse more famous for who ate there than what they served. For me, it was a summer job I could get to using my learner's permit. Omar had invested years there, starting out as a dishwasher. I first knew the place as a standby for sundry milestones: junior proms, birthdays, and wedding anniversaries. The guys I ran with thought all their waitresses were Bryn Mawr sophisticates, who could buy beer, and quote from *Metamorphosis*. Their house uniforms were starched white blouses and velvet black pencil skirts that coaxed from their wearers a discomfoting metronome-wobble which ignorance mistook for deliberate allure and sultriness. Job applications were done on paper and left in a wooden box near the maître d station. My only prior work experience was tutoring geometry and hauling green clay to surface tennis courts, so it was surprising to get a call for an interview. "Michael, this is Suzy from Shirley's, would you like to come in and talk about your career opportunities here?"

Suzy was a southern woman with the complexion of wallpaper glue. She wore her red taffy hair in a Dolly Parton-like perm and had a laboring lisp. Having to say "Suzy from Shirley's" dozens of times a day would have been enough for me to find a new job, change my name, or just greet people with a "hey." The interview consisted of several questions on ethics and honesty which seemed designed to ensure a 100% pass rate. "Michael, if the cash register is open, should you take money from it or close it and call the manager?" "What if it's closing time and a guest left their wallet on the table? Do you pick it up and follow them to return it or leave it in the lost and found?" I was hired on the spot and put under Omar's tutelage where he taught me kitchen tricks one can now learn on YouTube: how to make potato skins (the trick is to partially bake and skin them before frying or baking), skewer shrimp (head to tail), and cut pineapple into intricate garnishes (use cookie cutters not pairing knives). He had track-line-like scars on his forearms from handling hot plates and bumping up against the grill too many times, so I was pleased to be relegated to the junior space captain work.

We bonded over college basketball, pre-*Brewster's Millions* Pryor stand-up, and the paper napkin score card we kept tacked to the walk-in freezer - our guesses as to who was sleeping with whom at Shirley's. Restaurant policy was you could eat for free on-site but no take-out. Anyone messing with that napkin wouldn't get fed by Omar. The kitchen would often reach 110 degrees and so the freezer was also our multi-purpose room, a place to eat dinner and when things were slow do impromptu yard calisthenics. Pistol squats a favorite. Omar stretched the rules on foodstuffs. Often, he'd make me a cheeseburger wrapped in foil. "You put it under your hat Michael, and walk-out, ain't nobody going to check a man's hat for food." Other food shenanigans followed a similar pattern, like double bagging steamed lobster tail, tossing it in the trash to be retrieved after clocking out. My grandfather's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday party cake was catered by Omar, flourless chocolate lava cake, carried out under my polyester maroon driver's cap, one

piece at a time and then put in an Igloo in my car trunk for transport. I should mention the pieces were double wrapped. Omar classic. It took a few trips. Omar worked there at least another 10 years. When my grandfather turned 80, we had a lunch at Shirley's and my friend brought out a piece of the lava cake hidden in his hat ceremoniously unwrapped at the table. Forever known by my grandfather as "hat cake," as in "Let's get some hat cake." "Remember that hat cake?"

## **Dried Pear Halves**

By Michael Salama

Our social Venn diagrams were uninspired. The smallest but longest intersection was Yolanda, the Bolivian housekeeper we shared for a decade. Yolanda, a toucan on stilts. With piled black hair, pneumatic lips, she cultivated rumors - mainly about herself. Like the one she fled home following a crime of passion, leaving behind a lucrative dental practice. I was a skeptic. My limited experience conjuring dentists as undersexed paunchy folk, who smelled of tuna can packing oil. Her household goods knowledge was curious, often mistaking paring and steak knives and putting washcloths where the hand towels go. Stuff I would think aloud to myself, "well Michael, a Bolivian dentist would certainly know these things and teach them to her own house staff." During her breaks Yolanda liked to tell high society stories about Donna to pass the time. We would find our spot on the bay window benches of my apartment and share Earl Gray iced teas. Many of these weren't stories but a litany of name droppings, punctuated by a monetary figure. It was like listening to CNN in a language you didn't understand, say Arabic, and you just picked out the familiar bits. Heidi Dupont Wentworth. Friend forever. Henri Rousseau Tigers. The Whitney. Ten million. Good, good friends. Bridgette Childs. Old roommate. Million-dollar reception. The Loeb Boat House. 8 carat pear shaped stone. Donna and I ultimately met, under the auspices of Yolanda's match making, at an espresso and dry goods shop, Marco's something or other. A mid-town place, like most things in life, trying hard to be something. Pre-meet Yolanda gave me the final bits of the pre-internet age dossier. A magazine perfume advertisement – for the eponymous mother product and an Italian Vogue profile of the family olive orchard inclusive of a photo of the clan at a picnic table clad in white linen blouses and flax ecru pants. I think she told Donna I looked like a good kisser, a light weight prize fighter (or was it her car mechanic?), and that I owned a lot of foreign books she was constantly dusting. At the meet Donna wore a white GAP t-shirt, a thrifted red and black tartan mini, California biker boots, and lots and lots of rings and bangles. As Yolanda would say Secretariat in plebe clothing. Greetings exchanged, Donna says "give me a twenty, I like to play this game here." "See what combinations of dried fruit you can get for it, apricots, Rainier cherries, pineapple wedges, pear halves..." "You know all the stuff that will pull out your fillings." Romance. Over the next two months we did lots of dress-up for fashion stuff, nursed coffees and ate sugary fruits at Marco's, and worked our way through the AFI 100 movie list. One Sunday we went shopping for dresser pulls & a new comforter at the Anthropologie in Jersey. We shared towels and water bottles at hot yoga and worked the *NY Times* crosswords over the phone. When the fall line was cut and ready we had our own fittings. The evening of we partied at her place with pisco sours and I was graced with my first open door defecation moment. There's probably a German word for this. In my retelling I could have figured it out earlier. This had been and was going to be a platonic thing.

## **Beach Secret**

By Beth Sherman

We found the mermaid under the pier where the sea grass grew tall. She had starfish in her hair and her tail was scaly and green like moss growing beneath a rock – pretty at first, but creepy to touch. Under her grey mesh netting we could see bits of skin peeking out – a breast, an arm. Pale and soggy. We picked her up and trudged toward the ocean. She was surprisingly light – lighter than a fish, lighter than rain or air. The closer we got, the more she thrashed in our arms. One look at her desperate aquamarine eyes told us she didn't want to go back. So, we took her home, filled the bathtub with lukewarm water, poured a box of salt in, and eased her down. Jolene said she'd be alright because we'd recreated her natural habitat. I wasn't sure. The mermaid didn't have a voice, she spoke to us with her eyes. Two bits of sea glass. There was no one else to ask. Our parents had been gone for a very long time, long enough for us to doubt whether they'd ever existed or if they were merely a story we'd made up to comfort ourselves.

The mermaid seemed to like living with us. Each day we took her out of the tub for five minutes and sat her on the sofa, where we fed her canned sardines and animal crackers. Sometimes a cup of apple juice. Or a carrot. Her lips were very dry. Her tail had cracked where the fins split and a greenish liquid oozed out. Jolene kissed the bruised spot. I put Band-Aid after Band-Aid on it, though we could never get them to stick. We wondered about the places the mermaid had been —she might have swum through pirate ships, frolicked with dolphins, felt sea gods stir the waves, making the ocean froth and foam. We tried to ask, but she answered each question with a breathy, tentative sigh.

One day, after combing the beach for shells, I returned to find Jolene in the bathtub with the mermaid. The creature had her arms wrapped tight around Jolene, holding her in a watery embrace; they were both under the surface. When I pulled Jolene out and she finally opened her eyes, I saw everything had changed. Her skin was so see-through I noticed veins meandering beneath her frail neck. Where her legs had been was a tail, which flapped against the tile floor. *What's happened? What's wrong?* I shouted. But Jolene couldn't answer. She was a changeling now; she had a new sister. That night, I took them back. Stars spilled out of the sky and landed with a heavy *plunk*. The waves were black as ink. I could smell the sea, rough and bitter. When I set them down in the sand, they squiggled into the water in unison, not even making the tiniest splash as they swam away.



## **Big Dolls**

By Beth Sherman

The moms meet for coffee after pre-school drop-off at the Starbucks by the bank. The moms wear Prada knock-offs, carry thrifted Birkin bags, are confident their three-year-olds will get into Yale or at least one of the better state schools. The moms are in a book club, but never finish the book. The mom with the nicest kitchen gets regular Botox injections and is sleeping with the guy who mows her lawn at the no-tell Motel Six, twice a week. The other moms know about the affair but never bring it up. They lick their fingers and wipe dirt off their darling's face, saying *no-you-can't, that's-not-nice, you-better-not*. They love their kids but wonder what would happen if they got in their SUVs and drove south without someone roping them back. They love the idea of their husbands. The moms play tennis at the same club, get mani/pedis at the same salon, complain about gaining the same five pounds. The moms watch themselves in mirrors when they think no one's looking. They compare cell phone features. Some of them want to work and when their husbands tell them *no-you-can't*, they joke that their skills are out of date anyway. They dream of alligator skin, potholes, chipped mugs – things with rough edges. They want to be overlooked weeds, not American Beauty roses whose thorns have been cut. The moms know this phase will end when their children trade juice boxes for beer bottles, know they are disposable, interchangeable, caricatures of Mothers, underpaid chauffeurs, overdressed housewives, know they fuss too much, cry over nothing, are never good enough. The moms remember when they were little and their own mothers gave them dolls to take care of. Dolls with porcelain skin, painted eyes, no genitalia. Dolls named Celeste or Arabelle. Dolls with pink party dresses tied with a bow in the back. Dolls too pretty to play with – propped against pillows. Immobile. The better dolls. Not Bratz or Barbies. The moms haven't thought of these big dolls in years but when they do it's with regret over keeping them so pristine. Today, they'd chop off the dolls' hair, graffiti their placid faces, fling them across the room until their bodies crack open, glide their fingernails over the rough parts, drawing blood. The moms dream of this, how the dolls feel pain but keep their old broken smiles.

## **CONTRIBUTORS**

**Michael H. Brownstein's** latest volumes of poetry, *A Slipknot to Somewhere Else* (2018) and *How Do We Create Love* (2019) were both published by Cholla Needles Press.

**Marietta Calvanico** has lived a rich and varied life. She built a career in advertising/marketing, worked with her architect husband in client relations and doing agency work, raised a daughter who is a teacher and played bass in dive bars. She has shared her homes with many cats. From her Staten Island condo's balcony, she can see New Jersey. From the porch of her house on the Delaware River in PA, she can see New Jersey. Both homes are excellent places to write. Her poetry, fiction and memoir pieces have appeared online and in print. Her most recent publications are a double broadside entitled *Requiem*, published by Ink Publications, and a short story, "Atonement", that appeared in the May 2024 issue of *The Pensieve*.

**Eric Evans** is a writer and theatre artist from Buffalo, New York with stops in Portland, Oregon and Rochester, New York where he currently resides with his wife, Kathy. His work has appeared in *1947*, *Parody*, *Steel Bellow*, *Decades Review*, *Dead Snakes*, *decomP magazinE*, *Red River Review*, *Posey*, *Xenith Magazine*, *Anobium Literary Magazine*, *Pemmican Press*, *Remark* and many other publications and anthologies. He has published ten full collections and three broadsides through his own small press, Ink Publications, including his most recent chapbook, *Satan in Chicago*. He is also the co-editor of *The Bond Street Review*, as well as the Resident Dramaturg for Blackfriars Theatre in Rochester.

**Corinne Harrison** is an author, digital nomad, avid traveller and book lover. Her fiction has appeared in *Cool Beans Lit*, *inScribe*, *Kelp Journal*, *Northern Life* magazine, and *Elegant Fiction*.

**Lon S. Kaufman** began writing in Winter 2021. His poems have appeared in *The American Journal of Poetry*, *The Bond Street Review*, *October Hill*, *The Poetry Super Highway*, and *The Stickman Review*.

**Timothy Pilgrim**, a Montana poet living in Bellingham, Washington, has more than six hundred acceptances from U.S. journals such as *Seattle Review*, *Red Coyote*, *Toasted Cheese*, *Bond Street Review* and *Santa Ana River Review*, and international journals such as *Windsor Review* in Canada and *Prole Press* in the U.K.-- and has published some books. See [timothypilgrim.org](http://timothypilgrim.org).

**Michael Salama** works for a film studio with several detours through academia in England. He is the author of a film treatise for Bloomberg and returns to short fiction after a long break.

**Beth Sherman** has an MFA in creative writing from Queens College, where she teaches in the English department. Her writing has been published in more than 100 literary magazines, including *Portland Review*, *Tiny Molecules*, *100 Word Story*, *Fictive Dream*, and *Bending Genres*. Her work is featured in *Best Microfiction 2024*. She's also a Pushcart, Best Small Fictions, and multiple Best of the Net nominee. She can be reached at [@bsherm36](mailto:@bsherm36) or <https://www.bethsherman.site/>

### **Books from Ink Publications**

*Satan in Chicago*  
by Eric Evans

*Juggling Fire, Blindfolded*  
by Eric Evans

*The Anatomy of a Cratedigger*  
by Eric Evans

*The Halo Effect*  
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*Punk Rock for Hip Statisticians*  
by Eric Evans

*A Beat Too Long*  
by Eric Evans

*Tristero Rapid Post*  
by Eric Evans

*Hell or Cleveland*  
by Eric Evans

*Godflesh*  
by Eric Evans

### **Broadsides from Ink Publications**

(All broadsides are free to download from  
the Ink Publications website)

*Jazz Trio at the Record Store*  
By Eric Evans

*Requiem*  
By Marietta Calvanico

*Thirteen Ways of Looking  
at a Wolf*  
By Jennifer Campbell

*Helicopter Full of Ghosts*  
by Matthew Borczon

*How Not To Dress*  
by Florine Melnyk

*The King of Water*  
by Eric Evans

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by Alicia Hoffman

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by Michael Estabrook

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The Summer 2025 issue of  
***The Bond Street Review***

will be published in  
early August 2025.

Submissions will be  
considered beginning on  
April 1st. For submission  
guidelines, please go to  
[www.inkpublications1.com](http://www.inkpublications1.com)