

# The Slag Review

Summer 2016—Issue 1

Dear Reader,

What you hold in your hand is not a book—well, I guess it is a book, don't interrupt me—anyway, what you hold in your hand is a collection of chances given, of danger, of experimentation, and ultimately transformation. As iron and bronze can be forged into something new and unrecognizable, so too are the inner thoughts of poets, the beating hearts of artists compressed into these pages.

We are honored to have received these submissions, privileged to curate them here, and delighted to share them with you. Inside you'll find sinister dating websites, Japanese pottery poems, your childhood memories, and so much more. In creating this magazine, we have been changed, and we hope that as you experience the work within, you will be as well. So read the hell out of this, find these people, write and paint and forge your own new creations.

What are you waiting for?

Turn the page.

The Slaggers

Vlog

FIRST!  
-TDM



← Tom made  
this - neat, eh?

Carleton only  
wrote this because  
I'm Canadian.  
Rude.  
TDM

## The Slag Review

a journal of art, literature, and metallurgy

Editor in Chief:

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Thomas D.J. Maynard



We all know  
who the  
real hero  
is ...  
the reader.  
-Therese

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Cover artwork: "Untitled(orange)" by Harry Elfenbaum

Design by Carleton Whaley

Scratch-n-Sniff Patches by Thomas D.J. Maynard

Pegi Deitz Shea

## Hmong Knives

(in Ban Vinai refugee camp, 1989)

Away from the depression  
of farmers with nowhere to farm,  
we begin to hear percussion—  
metal on metal.

The nearer I get, the more  
sound waves concuss  
in my gut, jar my jaw.

Around a bend, there it is:  
a forge, fanned by great fronds,  
shaded by a bamboo roof.  
In the darkness, two orange glows—  
two Hmong men,  
in black pants, blue shirts,  
brimmed leather hats,  
work sweat-free in the inferno.  
The first poundings shake the ground  
but here, a second hit, a bounce,  
a playful ping—the smiths' reward  
for swinging the hammer so high  
and bringing it down so true  
upon its red-hot mate  
on the anvil.

Proudly, the men carry  
over their wares—  
knives engraved  
with flowers and scrolls,  
swirls and stars.  
The bamboo sheaths  
wear braided reeds;  
hilts are carved from bone.

I'm told to bargain in Thai,  
so the men will respect me.  
Still, my one hand holds guilt,  
while the other hands over  
a few dollars-worth of baht.  
The smiths smile for pictures,  
then I bow and thank them,  
"Kawp kum kha."

As we walk away, I know  
that every time I mince  
ginger and lemon grass,  
the blade sliding smooth  
as a snake in water,  
and every time I light the fire  
under my cast-iron wok,  
I will see the Hmong men  
and their mettles  
glowing in the blackness,  
feel the resounding  
music of their labor  
lilting in the leaves.

I love this poem.  
-Tom the Blacksmith

Nicholas DiBenedetto

R Turning

did you look it up?  
C'mon! what're you  
waiting for!?

Maple sends her fruits out in an arc, moving like a miniature-maker at work. It's an art. Encircled by the cursive Wind, they autorotate along, whirligigs in an untwirled twister. Maple notices one through her hair, strung by the rollercoaster air. It seems still for a moment, set like bone, set like the sights of some cursorial thing on a potential threat. My hand follows its helicopter descent until it rests in the creases of my palm. I crisp open the samara and find myself in fertile company. The whirligigs are turning.

Amanda Buck

## paper doll (n.)

*A piece of paper cut or folded into the shape of a human being*

What surprised me most was the feel of it  
—how unceremonious, it could have been  
an arm or a leg. I had never had the power  
until it was bestowed upon me blandly  
in someone else's bed, house, sheets:  
they would know all my secrets before I  
mastered them myself. What did I know  
of yes?

This isn't how our mothers' wished  
it for us, paper dolls, drawn and easily  
ripped. Yet, they were the ones that dressed  
us and gave us expressions for encounters such  
as these.

I was always so eager to please, erase.

I liked the way you positioned me like a mannequin  
—that you had a plan for each limb. It's true,  
I took the tights off myself and kissed  
what I wanted to kiss. I suppose  
I was destined to love you because you said my  
name and didn't know the panicked child I'd been.

Christy Corey

## Nude

*watercolor in sketchbook*



Jameson Croteau

Kintsugi

— the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery with gold

Can you drink love from a woman,  
Even if she has cracks?

She was not perfect.  
Nearly, by not.  
It was a simple thing,  
At first,  
To buy gold earrings  
To match  
Her green eyes.  
A small Augmentation.

At parties,  
A loose ringlet,  
I would fix  
With a silver barrette.  
Pressed down into her skull.  
She adjusted it.  
A platinum ring weighing,  
Down her frail hand.

Freckles dotting on a nose.  
Cute, but a blemish  
That I would have to hide.  
No. Not disguise,  
Show, gild with gold.  
It was my job, my only job,  
To make her beautiful, admirable, desirable  
Despite her humanely flaws.

Piece by piece  
I showed her imperfect nature  
To everyone,  
Until there was nothing left to hold.  
A cup shattered to the floor.  
It had taken me far too long to realize  
That scars were human,  
And she was not pottery.

Devin-Samuels

And the Sleeping Me Aches

The tired bone  
Shambled ligaments,  
All jello across a mattress.

It's not mine  
But I sleep on it,  
Like a lot of things I sleep on:  
The box spring, her insta-gram message,  
Like the night.  
Its bosom all *hold*,  
All sweet spring chirp.

Not my spring.  
Chirp sweet melody,  
Anyway day in  
And out day  
Till each palm a collision.  
Still unborn and still born  
And unstilled when this sleep get out of hand.

Can you see?  
How glow I is?  
How am I be, a war,  
A fire still pulled by moon.

How sleep be half a howl?  
Half a throat she caught in.  
The neck,  
My neck

wound,

Unborn yet stay tuned,  
Say moon,  
Soon beautiful moon,  
I wane.

SLAM.

Therese Masotta

## Spaced Out?

What do I know about

space?

I know that

There are only enough atoms in the universe for each to fill  
one cubic centimeter

at a time.

Which means, the cluttered junk you have in your life,  
everything and one who's making you feel a mess?

You can spread it so far apart from itself

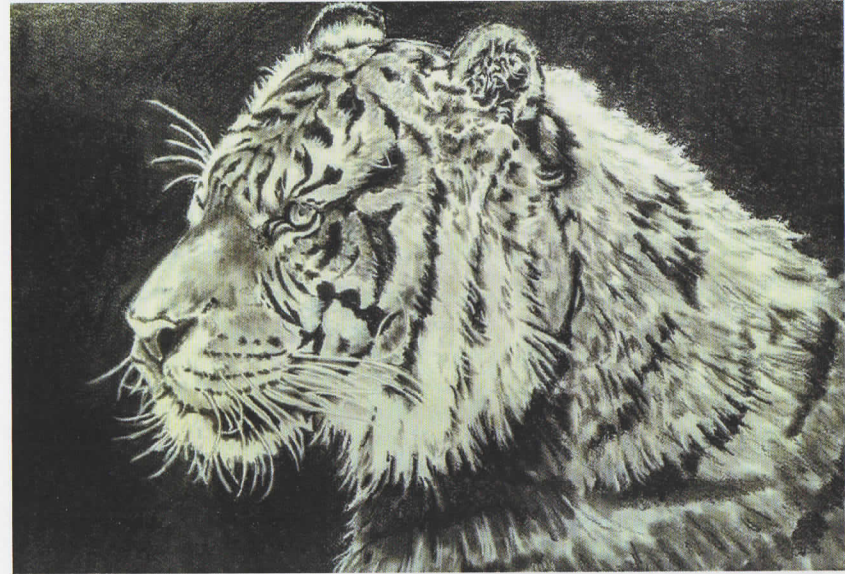
That each of its atoms  
Won't even know  
The others exist.



Mary Wynn

## Berani

charcoal on paper



"Tyger Tyger, burning bright..."

Lillie Gardner

## Welcome to ExpirDating™!

Dear brian1988,

Welcome to ExpirDating™! We hope you are as pumped about implementing our cutting-edge philosophy of expiration-dating into your life as we are to have you permanently registered into our system! As you know, ExpirDating™ isn't just a dating website; ExpirDating™ is the lifestyle of the modern age. We couldn't be happier that you've made the decision to embark on your own personal journey of tallying up loves and losses, mistakes, successes and regrets that you will be able to carry with you for the rest of your life. We know that this unprecedented amount of interpersonal experience—which can be guaranteed by *no* other dating website in history—will make you a more well-rounded human being able to empathize with others, emote more profoundly, and feel good about yourself and your adventurous time on Earth. You will, essentially, be More Human™. And being More Human™ has been scientifically proven to have a direct and positive impact on the creation you bring into the world—whether it be a novel, a painting, a film, a child, a cultivated attitude, or various other cultural products of self-expression that serve to connect and benefit humanity. *And*, to top it all off, you'll never have to suffer the excruciating indecisiveness that creeps in after the honeymoon phase of a firmly established relationship, nor the nuisance of calling off a relationship—*ever again*. Yes, that's right—your relationships are *guaranteed* to end without an awkward breakup and without guilt being placed on either side's shoulders! What could be better?

Here in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it's common sense that life is about options, experiences, and trying as many things out as possible so that we can continue growing into our constantly evolving Best Selves™. Long-term relationships (LTRs) are clearly a thing of the past, so why waste time dating naïve old souls who still stubbornly cling to childish myths like Marriage and The One? Why spend your precious and limited energies on lazy, closed-minded people who are willing to settle for one situation when they could be experiencing one *thousand* others? It's only at ExpirDating™ that you are *guaranteed* to form relationships with people who share this practical and common sense perspective on life. Only at ExpirDating™ are your relationships *guaranteed* to Expire™ guilt-free.

### Date-on-a-Deadline™, Not for Life

Now that you're a member of ExpirDating™, none of your relationships will ever last longer than a one-month period again. That's because both you and your date have already signed contracts to seal your fate! brian1988, when you signed your binding contract to pay \$600/month for life (and what is that? Not even half of the monthly rent on your Brooklyn studio apartment?) at 11:49 p.m., February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016, you guaranteed that you'll be Dating-on-a-Deadline™ from here to eternity. At the closure of each short-term relationship (STR™) we meticulously hand-arrange for you, your \$600 will be automatically deposited *back* into your account within 3-5 business days. So, what does that mean? Could it be real? Is it too good to be true? No! It *really* is free!\* All you have to do is submit the Relationship Expiration Paperwork (REP) before your one month is up (callitquits@expirdating.com), and all of your

money comes back to you, guaranteed.

### Leave No Stone Unturned, No Itch Unscratched™

So who will you be Dating-on-a-Deadline™? brian1988, it looks like you indicated a preliminary interest in gaining life experience with BISEXUAL WOMEN, ASIAN WOMEN, and RICH WIDOWS on your application form. Luckily for you, we've already taken the time to set up your first three relationships with Annie Melbourne, Randi S., and STFU69 based on your profile matches! You will soon receive an email detailing your first ExpirDating™ relationship with Annie Melbourne to begin on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016. In this email you will find the ExpirDating™-approved Temporary Contact Code (TCC) for your first STR™ partner. (*At this time, we are obligated to remind you of the clause you electronically signed on page seventeen of your contract that you will neither offer nor accept contact information—a phone number, an online friend request, an app follow, an address, or any other means of person-to-person contact which we reserve the right to determine—that is other than the ExpirDating™-approved TCC that each member of the STR™ will receive. While this may seem frustrating at first, do remember that our goals are to provide you with flash life experiences that have a beginning and an ending—just like everything else in life—and to protect the fleeting quality of these experiences for the benefit of your personal and creative growth. If you and your STR™ partner contact each other via means other than your TCC before or after your REP has been submitted, this will be a violation not only of your contract, but also of our shared common sense living philosophy that ultimately serves the betterment of life on Earth.*)

So, remember to have fun and soak up all you can from Annie Melbourne before it's time to Expire™!

### Life Experience Doesn't Come Out of Nowhere; Life Experience Comes Out of ExpirDating™

We know you'll enjoy your journey to worldliness, personal growth, and being More Human™ as much as we will enjoy creating it for you, just as we have for over 500,000 other sensible and emotionally fulfilled Americans who are dedicating their lives to becoming their own Best Selves™. Our job is to help you through every relationship's initiation and expiration, so please never hesitate to contact our office with any further questions (relationshipcounseling@expirdating.com).

*\*If you choose to keep in contact and remain in an ExpirDating™ relationship past the one-month relationship expiration deadline and both parties refuse to submit the REP (or if both parties are discovered to have maintained contact via alternate and illegal means, resulting in a nullification of the REP), both parties are required by law upon signature on their respective contracts to return all monthly payments of \$600 to ExpirDating™, Inc. from the time of registration to the time of commencing an LTR and violating the contract. (For example, if registration occurs on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 and the contract is broken on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018, a total amount of \$22,800 is legally owed to ExpirDating™, Inc. within 3-5 business days.)*

Yours in Living Life to the Fullest,  
ExpirDating™  
(We're Betting on Love.)

11  
\* This is the only CI think I mistake  
in the book, sorry Lillie. I forgot to  
change the font.

(You monster, Carleton) K.M.

Anna Ziering

## Driving I-25 Through Caspar, Wyoming

Is like rolling up the dropped road like a TP roll  
from the floor in the pit-stop bathroom; eating it

like Pacman at the old stale-man arcade  
that brewed our kiddie cologne: fuck-ups, burn-outs, bad kids

with lipstick-stained butts (we prized those smokes: their germs, the grossness,  
the closeness to sex). We were hungry

to move like men – to drop in, drift on, drop a lowball glass  
on the bar, walk out into the hot door-light

that cut the smog and made everyone squint.  
We wanted the trucks outside,

their roll-down windows and trailers that dragged left,  
those lives that weren't our dads'. Those men,

if they had kids, hadn't seen them in days,  
kids who had brothers they'd never know about – mysteries,

not like ours, the babies who buzzed around  
behind us or the faggy ones who got straight A's. I haven't seen Jason in six days

or talked to his momma in four, since Wednesday 10 PM when I got to HoJo's  
and called her to jack off. She talked about groceries. When she heard me,

she said *Jesus, Stan* and hung up in disgust. Not the first time. I finished anyway  
and splayed out on the bleached sheets. I lay and watched the dark,

the freeway's white lines rolling under my eyelids  
like cigarette wisps, urgent and burning.

## Raveling

(after Sappho)

Friends, cover me with one of our delicate cloths.  
I cannot work the loom today.  
With smelted eyes, my darling one summons me,

burning, drawing me down:  
to longing, desire that pours over  
his face when he hurts me,

honey smoothed on the bruises, after.  
Why is it day? Why are we parted?  
Why am I here at the loom, dripping sweat on the threads?

Come, evening: the sun offers nothing.  
Bring us back to each other, our sticky-wet hungers;  
bring him back to me.

I'll go home with you, darkness,  
leave the silk draped on the frame like rain,  
and then, my dear one, I will clothe you

in garments of my hair,  
in my hot skin, I will drench you  
in honey, we will wash the raw day clean, when you return,

you must, return to me,  
stop the shuttles' taunting  
of warp and weft, their hungry  
ripping—



## A Family Trip to the Store

One Sunday morning, after my momma and I returned home from church, I was sitting on our front porch. This porch had been enclosed with wood on the bottom three feet and had glass panels on top, so I was pretty much hidden from view. There was a seldom used road about one-and-a-half football fields in length in front of our house. This road led past a very large fresh fruit packing house to a section of town in which poor whites lived. So as I looked out this particular morning there was this scene unfolding right before my eyes. I looked down the road to my right toward the packing house because I heard a ruckus coming from that direction. I was all of about eleven years old. I may have already accepted Jesus as my personal savior, confessed my sins and been baptized by full immersion, which was the Baptist way.

This white man was trying to get someplace. This white woman kept running after him, crying and begging him not to go. She would run after him and throw her arms around one of his legs, weeping and begging. He would just drag her along for a few steps and then, when he tired, push her off him. Then she would run after him again, throw herself on a leg, be dragged along for several steps and then pushed to the ground again. This happened over and over again, about every ten yards or so all the way down this road until they were right in front of our house. This woman would be pushed to the ground in her torn, thin dress, then she would come crying after her man, throw herself on him, grabbing a leg, and be dragged along for several steps until he got tired and pushed her off again. Trailing along behind this man and this woman were three little chillin, all crying and all under five years. It seemed like I was watching for at least one-half hour. I couldn't stop watching. I could hardly breathe. I told my momma. She just told me to stay quiet and stay out of sight. It finally dawned on me where this man was heading. There was a liquor store about 150 yards on the other side of our house.

My mother hated alcohol. She barely tolerated my daddy keeping a fifth of Canadian Club in her kitchen cabinet. He would come home at the end of the day, pour himself a shot glass and drink it right down. He said it was for medicinal purposes. It wasn't until I was much older that I came to realize he did his serious drinking at the office before he came home. And it wasn't until I was in my twenties that I came to know from my aunts that most of my momma's brothers were heavy drinkers. I suspect her first husband may have been a heavy drinker as well, and may have gotten physical with my momma when he drank. He was about twenty years older than my momma when he married her around her 17<sup>th</sup> year. My momma must have been terribly desperate to risk going to hell for certain for divorcing Mr. Coleman, that's what her sisters said. Anyway my momma hated alcohol and I already had her fear in my body at eleven watching this scene unfold.

About twenty minutes later, I saw the same man walking back, resigned now, from the direction of the store. The same woman walked, quiet and slumped now, about five yards behind him, and the three little chillin still trailed along behind all in a row with tear streaked dust caked on their faces. Everyone seemed plum spent. I realized the liquor store was closed on Sunday.

If you haven't ~~had~~ had the pleasure of meeting Joe, he is the sweetest resident of Storrs, CT, orders the best breakfasts at the coolest cafe, and is extremely interesting. But he's also extremely humble. Joe will, without a doubt, brighten your day.

Nathaniel Herter

Naïve

Expend yourself today  
since night impends  
in scarlet sighs

of branches shorn  
by grasping children  
already far too high.

High, and leavened,  
risen, and awakened  
in oppressive humid

green, and I alone  
breaking glasses keen  
and keening quiet.

Behold, and betake  
me, playing in mud,  
slapping mossy roots,

bearhanded, bear me  
back and caress, barely,  
in bare twilight bask

together, lest I turn  
in sudden spurt  
to something less.

← THIS GUY IS REALLY  
COOL.

(so is his girlfriend.  
we love them both)

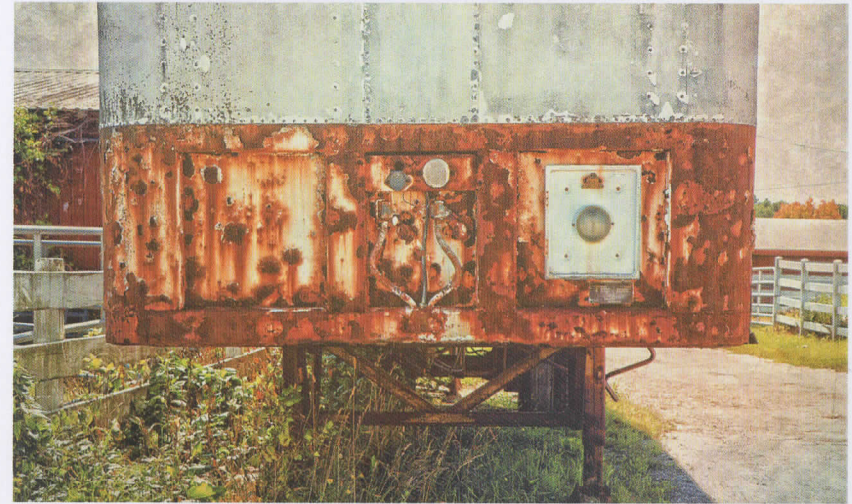
MEET HIM IF YOU CAN!

Steve Pfaffle — what an  
AWESOME

last name.  
Pfaffle Pfaffle Pfaffle

Untitled

Digital photography



Zachary Bradley

## I'm inconsistent when it Comes to Capitalization

I don't know how you missed the eight signs, fluorescent and screaming,  
but you did.

You hit the grooved pavement like a patch of sand  
and it's third grade, you're in first place,  
flying

Down Minister Brook Drive. You somersault over handlebars  
and stick the landing,  
face first,  
too close to a fire hydrant that you'll say you hit,

but you didn't.

## Smokey the Bear, the Sadist



WOW.

Watching  
a fire dance  
is easy  
until you  
have to  
put it out,  
grind it down  
to dirt  
so the forest  
won't burn.

Kik Williams

## Languish for Desire

I tried to squish my body into a bottle  
pretended to be a shell a bunch of shells  
the bunch I found on the beach  
in Cuba when I was a little girl  
the day the sand was covered in blue  
balloons the nurse said *non toca*  
*es mal* bad balloons man of war  
balloons decorate the beach  
para me I want to put everything  
in my mouth for him a leg  
a hand a breast through the slits  
of fabrics I want to do everything  
to reveal myself I'd cover my body  
in blue balloons pretend I'm a conch  
all pink inside and listen if you hold me  
up to your ear you can hear me sigh

Kik honestly has the  
best bio I've ever read.  
Read it, then check out  
her other stuff at  
"Kik Williams poetry etc. [blogspot.com](http://blogspot.com)"

My favorite night of this whole  
Process was eating Chinese food,  
drinking hard cider, and reading 19  
Kik's bio. 3 times.  
-TDM

Lynn Z. Bloom

## Quality Time

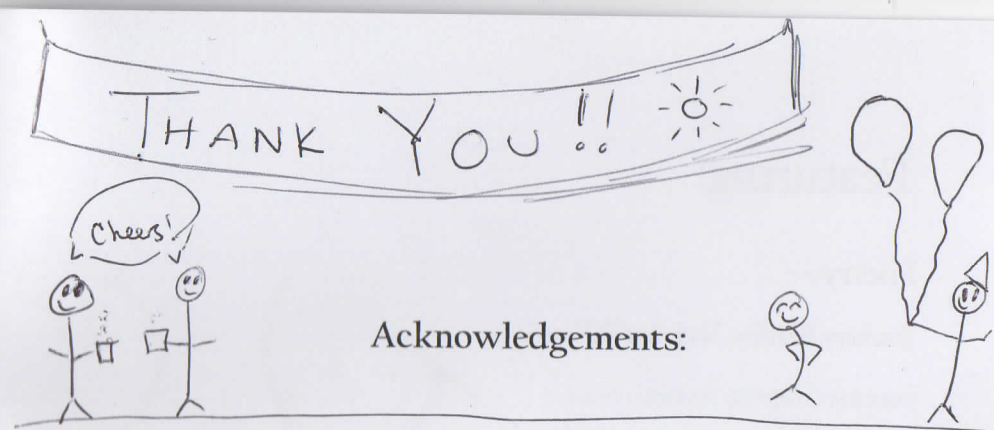
an essay

How to write about happy times when other writers—and critical readers—are suspicious of them. Do editors prefer works devoted to what I tell my students are the five D's—disease, dysfunction, divorce, disability, death—to which we could add more—distrust, disfigurement, disturbance, degeneration, destruction—the list is endless. Overcoming great obstacles seems more credible even when they're fictionalized; and attract publishers, applause, sympathy. I was, for instance, greatly moved by Kathryn Rhett's *Near Breathing: A Memoir of a Difficult Birth*; especially by the tough part—the delivery and the tense two days afterward when the baby had aspirated meconium and was near death. The book covers 10 days; in my view the writing is better at the beginning and gets slacker and less appealing as the crisis wanes.

But would there be a market for a lyrical account of a normal birth and happy delivery to a two-parent family that wanted the baby? Why not? What's wrong with celebrating the ideal?

Tie this in with the contrast—my own birth; the dead twin, the incubator burn leaving a searing scar on my now never-perfect knee—1 3/8 inches would have been all the way across the knee. The fact that my parents altered my birth certificate to erase the twinhood and never discussed it but named my sister Linda Kay, born seven years later, after the dead twin, a complement to my own name, Lynn Marie.

Maybe I've solved the problem—the significance of the happy times is understandable in contrast to the unhappy, the not so happy, the frustrating times in one's own life or in lives of others we know about. The Grace of God factor. I do not think my childhood friend who has been unable to walk for the past 38 years is pitiable because she does not pity herself; indeed she is very tough as well as resilient. For years she headed a national church related disability rights movement, articulate, active and vigilant. But I think often of her being in constant pain from an incurable bone affliction and thus unable to walk, run, dance, or drive. That said, she pilots a speedy wheelchair, she travels, she is sustained by a powerful faith, her own determination, and a devoted daughter. She was widowed far too young when her devoted husband died of a malignant brain tumor—which also precipitated family estrangement that has lasted to this day. I am glad I can walk with ease and don't have to think about putting one foot in front of the other, for the fact that my husband is alive and happy, and that our family, with—yes—negotiation, gets along well. That every day is a gift may be a cliché, but it's welcome, and it's true.



## Acknowledgements:

The Slaggers have far too many people to thank, and are still coming to grips with the fact that this magazine actually exists. We would like to thank, first off, our families and friends for their support. We would also like to thank everyone who submitted to us, especially our contributors. Thanks especially to the UConn community for spreading word about us and sending us incredible work. A special thanks to David Gorski, without whom you would likely not be holding this journal in your hands.

And, of course, we want to thank you, the reader.

## For More:

To find the bios of the contributors, the Pieces of Slag that went into creating their work, other creative pieces, and more, please visit us at: [slagreview.com](http://slagreview.com)

Our next issue will be Fall 2016, so keep your eyes peeled (isn't that a weird phrase?).

## Featuring:

### Poetry—

Zachary Bradley, Nicholas DiBenedetto

Jameson Croteau, Amanda Buck,

Nathaniel Herter, Devin Samuels

Therese Masotta, Kik Williams

Anna Ziering,

Pegi Dietz Shea

### Art—

Steve Pfaffle

Mary Wynn

Christy Corey

### Fiction—

Lillie Gardner

Joe Freeman

...and a brief analysis on our desire  
to write about trials and tribulations:

Lynn Z. Bloom



Two UConn Professors (one Emerita)??

How crazy is that?

