

# after hours™

a journal of Chicago writing and art

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## Contributors

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\***Christian Aldana** is a writer based in San Francisco's Richmond neighborhood. He works in retail management. He's typically in Golden Gate Park. Other works can be found in *Underblong*, *The Slow-down Show*, and *Military Experience & The Arts* amongst others. He fled to Chicago and lived there from 2015-2022, then returned to San Francisco to finish his MFA at the University of San Francisco. He loved getting Red Hot Ranch because it was Chicago's best comparison to In-N-Out and running along the lakefront trail when marathon training.

**Nancy Burke** is a poet, fiction writer, psychoanalyst and psychotherapy activist from Evanston IL. Her work has appeared in *Story International*, *After Hours*, *American Poetry Journal*, *Confrontation*, *Whitefish Review*, *Alaska Quarterly Review* and other literary publications, and has won numerous prizes. Her well-reviewed novel, *Undergrowth*, was published by Gibson House Press.

\***Francis Tyler Cald**, better known by his pen name F.T. Cald, is a Los Angeles raised and Chicago-based poet and personal essayist. His work focuses on the poetry hidden in everyday dialogue and the nuances of interpersonal communication. Cald is the creator and publisher of *The Chicago Nighthawk*, a bi-annual literary and visual art publication that showcases work from local artists centered around themes of urban nightlife. F.T. Cald graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2023 with a concentration in writing/sculpture. He currently lives in Logan Square with his dog and best friend Mimosa.

**Dan Champion's** poetry books are *Calypso* (Syncline Press, 1981), *A Playbill for Sunset* (Ice Cube Press, 2022), and *The Mirror Test* (MadHat Press, 2024). He is the author of the monograph *Peter De Vries and Surrealism* (Bucknell University Press, 1995) and a coeditor of *Walt Whitman: The Measure of His Song* (Holy Cow! Press, 1981; 1998; 2019). His poetry has appeared previously in *After Hours* and in other journals and anthologies. A native Chicagoan, Dan lives in Iowa City, Iowa.

**Brenda Cárdenas** is the featured poet in *After Hours* #48. See page 32.

\***Johnny Cate** is a poet, copywriter, and vintage T-shirt collector from Asheville, NC.

**Suzanne Cosgrove** is a Chicago native. By day, she is a journalist and legal analyst. By night, she is working on a collected book of poems.

**Albert DeGenova** is an award-winning poet, publisher, and teacher, as well as the Executive Director of Write On, Door County. He is the author of five books of poetry and two chapbooks. His most recent book *Human Nature*, poems of witness was published by Kelsay Books in January 2024. DeGenova is the founder of *After Hours* Press and co-editor of *After Hours* magazine, a journal of Chicago writing and art, that launched in June of 2000. He received his MFA from Spalding University in Louisville. He is also a blues saxophonist.

\***Kathryn P. Haydon** wrote her recent poetry collection, *Unsalted Blue Sunrise*, throughout the seasons of a year on a bluff overlooking Lake Michigan. Her poems have been published in *humana obscura*, *The Heron's Nest*, and *Frogpond*, among others. Kathryn has won awards for both her haiku and poems, and writes a column on creative thinking for *Psychology Today*.

**Leslie Henderson** is a recovering journalist who has practiced her hobby of photography all over the world. A veteran traveler who has lived and worked in both Beijing and Prague, Henderson's last major journey to Antarctica ticked off the last box of the seven continents and five oceans. A Chicago native now living in East Tennessee, she is a mom of four, grandmother of six and slave to two small, hilarious, dogs.

**P. Hertel** is an artist, writer and Chicago native. She is a founding member and co-editor of *After Hours*.

\***Montana Lavallee** (They/Them) is a poet and teacher with roots in Chicago comedy. Unless the reader considers high school literary magazines publication, this work is their first to be published. They hope that their constant forward momentum might inspire some rest.

\***Nicole Lombardi** is a high school creative writing and literature teacher. Since October of 2023, Nicole shifted her writing from the personal essay to poetry centered on the suffering and resilience of Palestinians in Gaza and West Bank. She has poetry and prose featured in *English Journal*, *Mindful Word*, *Beyond Words Literary Magazine*, *Dissident Voice*, *Verse-Virtual*, and *Feels Blind Literary Magazine*. Nicole enjoys winter, long mornings on her porch, and Spanish wine. She lives in Oak Park, IL with her family.

\***Craig Malesra** is an English professor in Rhode Island. He writes about the things he loves.

**David Mathews'** work has been nominated for Best of the Net, a Pushcart, and he was a two-time finalist in the Gwendolyn Brooks Open Mic Awards. Recent publications include *Midwestern Gothic*, *Eclectica Magazine*, *Belt Magazine's Rust Belt Chicago: An Anthology*, and *Open Heart Chicago: An Anthology of Chicago Writing*. David lives in his hometown of Chicago, where he works as a Creative Writing Instructor at the Chicago High School for the Arts (ChiArts).

\***Sharon Mathews** enjoys reading multiple books at the same time, frequently visiting her grandchildren, and of course shinrin-yoku ("forest bathing"). Coming back to poetry with encouragement from her son, their work together can be found in *After Hours*, *Eclectica Magazine*, and *Proximity Magazine's True*.

\***Beth McDermott** is the author of *Figure 1* (Pine Row Press), a 2022 finalist for the Foreword Indies and a 2023 finalist for the da Vinci Eye/Eric Hoffer Award; and a chapbook titled *How to Leave a Farmhouse* (Porkbelly Press). Her poetry appears in journals such as *Pine Row*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, *Terrain.org*, and *Memorious*. Reviews appear in *American Book Review*, *After the Art*, *Kenyon Review Online*, and *RHINO Reviews*. She's the recipient of a Distinguished Teaching Award from the University of St. Francis in Joliet, IL., an Illinois Speaks Micro-Grant, and first place in the Regional Mississippi Valley Poetry Contest.

**Patricia McMillen** is a musician, activist and clown-in-becoming. Her proudest achievements include 25 years playing banjo with string band The Common Taters; joining the Abolition in Illinois Movement to defeat the Illinois death penalty; and negotiating the sale of 1000 acres of family farmland – now home to Illinois' first bison herd – to The Nature Conservancy. Her first full-length poetry collection, *Running Wild*, was published in 2024 from Finishing Line Press, Georgetown, KY.

\***Marc Meierkort** is an Adjunct Professor at Columbia College Chicago, as well as Managing Editor for *Allium*, *A Journal of Poetry & Prose*. He earned an MFA in Poetry from Columbia in 2022. A Pushcart nominee, his work has appeared in *Thuya Poetry Review*, *Swamp Ape Review*, *The Oakland Review*, and *spoKe*, among others.

**Siegfried Mortkowitz** is a writer living in Prague. He is the author of the chapbook *Eating Brains and Other Poems*, published by After Hours Press. His poems and autobiographical complaints have been published in *Body*, *After Hours* and *The Prague Revue*. He is the author of the online blog "Offbeat" on Substack, about how poetry (his own and others) has helped to define his life story.

**Jean Passarelli** has a special history with After Hours Press as her first poetry acceptance around 2005, which fueled more widespread submissions and published Poetry and Flash. It is a thrill and an honor every time! When not writing, Jean can be found fostering her obsession with dogs, walking the city (gave up the car 3 years ago), traveling to domestic cities, and of course, enjoying family.

\***Joe Phelan** writes from the western suburbs of Chicago, where he lives with his wife, sons, and intrepid rescue poodle. Joe's poetry has been featured by *Ekstasis Magazine* and *LIT Magazine*, with new work forthcoming in *Maudlin House*.

## Contributors

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\***Binx River Perino** is a queer poet from Texas. He holds a MFA in Creative Writing from Emerson College and his work has appeared in *Door is a Jar*, *Beyond Queer Words*, *samfiftyfour*, *Cold Mountain Review*, and elsewhere. Based in Chicago, he has been a frequent guest reader for *new words {press}* and occasional contributor for *Third Coast Review*.

**Donna Pucciani**, a Chicago-based writer, has published poetry worldwide in *Shi Chao Poetry*, *Poetry Salzburg*, *ParisLitUp*, *Agenda*, *Journal of Italian Translation*, *After Hours* and other journals. Her seventh and latest collection of poetry is *EDGES*.

**Moira Pujols** publishes literature and cultural journalism in Spanish. She is a regular photo contributor to *After Hours*, *Contratiempo*, and *Plenamar* magazines.

\***Aria Shum** is a poet and prose-writer from Chicago, Illinois. She is currently studying violin performance at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Outside of music and writing, she enjoys exploring rooftops at five in the morning and talking to strangers.

**Jan Stojaspal** is a freelance journalist and photographer based in Prague, Czech Republic. His photographic work is a visual exploration of people and places in and around Europe, with a focus on Mediterranean areas and countries of the former eastern bloc.

**Judith Valente** is the author of the award-winning chapbook *Inventing An Alphabet*, chosen by Mary Oliver for the 2005 Aldrich Poetry prize, and the full-length collection *Discovering Moons*. She co-edited the anthology *Twenty Poems to Nourish Your Soul* and is the author of four non-fiction books. Her latest book, *The Italian Soul*, will be out in May 2025 and her newest poetry collection, *How to Be A Contemplative* is forthcoming in 2026 from Kelsay Press. She is a former staff writer for *The Wall Street Journal* and correspondent for national PBS-TV, and two NPR stations in Illinois.

\***Karly Vance** grew up in Bay City, Michigan and studied writing at Hope College. Her writing has been published in journals including *Common Ground Review*, *Dunes Review*, *Midwest Quarterly*, and *Madison Review*. She has lived and worked in the Chicago area for fourteen years.

Photographer and writer **Santiago Weksler** was based in Chicago for many years. His photographs have been featured in a number of exhibitions in Chicago as well as his native Peru. His work has appeared in *Contratiempo* and *After Hours*, where he was the featured artist for Issue #22.

**Caroline Wellman** holds advanced degrees in writing and American literature from the University of Arkansas. Her poetry collection *Presences* was published in 2014 by Parallel Press. Her recent poems have appeared in *Big Wing Review* and *Sand Hills Literary Magazine*, with work forthcoming in *Missing Pieces*, an anthology on grief (Quillkeepers Press), and the anthology *Shooting Stars at Sky: The Poetry of Play* (forthcoming this fall from Mamas Kitchen Press). She lives on the traditional lands of the Sac and Fox indigenous peoples, and she currently works for the US Postal Service.

