



SLIPFORM

2020

ANTHOLOGY

**WRITTEN BY POETS OF THE
SLIPFORM POETRY WORKSHOP
2016-2020**

Edited by Danielle Evennou



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Shout out to all the powerful poets of Slipform for their willingness to venture into the unknown, share themselves and their work, and offer steadfast support for one another. You make Slipform real and fill my heart.



This anthology features Slipform Poetry Workshop participants' work from 2016-2020 written during or inspired by Slipform Poetry Workshop. Established in 2016 by Danielle Evennou, Slipform is a poetry workshop that uses formal poetic structures to explore gender and sexuality. Slipform allows writers to hone their craft while examining a multitude of fierce poetic voices.





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a gender reveal party

Tyler French

but where cumulonimbus clouds plume from the cake when we cut

a slice

& it rains for the next century

& the Earth sponges

&, sopping&quenched, we show our teeth to each other, so proud to have birthed such
a cloud

& new Marine life flourishes

& elbows creases mold

& the starfish chortle as we leave behind the ones who didn't have enough sense to
grow gills

The Leaves on the Trees in Lafayette Park

Tyler French

The leaves on the trees in Lafayette Park
Turned first, earlier than any others in the city
Goldenrod, naval, robin their colors muted this year,

We hadn't had enough rain before their quiet
Annual surrender, they'd gotten so tired
Of being rooted so close to the nexus of their

Demise, ultimately, it may be swift and nuclear
Or swift and warming or swift and urban planning
Whatever means, it will be swift from the trees'

Perspective and that day the leaves fell into my collar
Rustled a swift turn, from their perspective,
Rustled like the thighs of my forbearers

In that park, there under that tree, a different bench
Firstborn friction, a spark in nights without streetlamps
Or light pollution, not yet, but soon, always too soon

And then, the looks between them, inverted
Men circulating the park, triangulating heat
Sun through a magnifying glass, the quiet hiss

Of burning leaves, their ears attuned to false fires,
The aperture between *release* and *surrender*
Being smaller than the smallest bone of the ear,

They stop for hours on one or more benches:
The Wishing Bench, Nighthawk Bench, Magnolia Bench,
Bright Dark Bench, Soldiers Bench, newfound comrades

Sentinels of the monuments rustling themselves
Against each other in a time when it wasn't so warm
And the trees rustled that this was not surrender

They had learned tenderness from the seed
That has nourished their roots and the quiet
Flame of tongue to an earlobe or hooked elbows

And they lapped at that house across the street
Flaming *goldenrod, navel, robin*, and I might
be mistaken but that year I believe the leaves
On the trees in Lafayette Park held on the longest.

Smells Like Town or Any of the Other Gay Clubs That Have Closed*

Tyler French

aqua di geo pleather red cocktail cherries vanilla Stoli + coke (thanks Kara!) fresh leather old leather red leather leather cleaner jungle juice cranberry + soda cut limes matted upholstery another wiff of aqua di geo mop solution cigarette smoke, no, now a vape pen urinal cakes raspberry piss pucks an ex or someone with the same chemistry vanilla Stoli + coke, a redux / a revisiting / a haunting / a re-vue! (thanks Kara...) Old Spice musk black pepper ass (fuck that coffee scrub every gay instafluencer is peddling!) salt crystalline quartz opal marble metal stall locks and hinges piston grease shaving cream wet denim pizza cheese and burnt crust from below stalactites creamed jeans rush Amsterdam double scorpio emerald black and sapphire mauve desire blueballed last call cheap not-gold-gold chain tide-washed cotton jock sticky carpet now crane motor oil now commercial dumpster now luxxary apts now anthropologie candles now just sprayed off concrete now new fast-cas something or other now

**in Washington, D.C.: Cobalt, Remingtons, Omega, Phase One, Rogue, Wannabes, Shooters, Ozone, Franklyns, The Wave, Q Club, Badlands, Mr. P's, Escandalo, Hung Jury, Glorious Health Club, Zone, Crypt, Velvet Nation, Tracks, Clubhouse, Opera, Swim, Fab Bar...*

A Tritena: Nightfall in Trap Pond State Park

Jessica G. Simon

The Great Blue Heron flaps its pterodactyl wings towards last light.
Outstretched shadows crown the setting sun on a tangerine sky.
The swamp's bald cypress trees, recede, in a slow ebb across the pond.

All human voices quiet, fires are smoke, wisp in stacks, encircle the pond.
Gold to pinks, greens to browns, until only blue gray, dusk light.
A thick lid of stars cover the blue hood of sky.

Barn swallows rush to their houses aloft, to dream of sky.
Bullfrogs groan, their deep bass moan, echoes across the pond
Ripples of water lap upon flared bald cypress trunks in moonlight.

At last, the heron vanishes in the sky beyond the pond in the deep dark night.

IVF

Jessica G. Simon

On my belly, a literal dot dot dot,
an ellipsis on either side of my navel.
A stomach speckled with semicolons,
before; after. Perhaps the points
are an embroidery pattern to follow and sew,
or a constellation to trace in the sky.
I take pills that double my breast size,
trick my body into turning mother.

I see the doctor still speaking with charts,
percentages, study $x = \text{result } y$.
I ask another question,
if only to stay a bit longer
in the presence of one pretending to know
something, anything, for sure.

Spain Honeymoon: A Pantoum

Jessica G. Simon

In the summer of my dreams
we are bay windows open
to the countryside of Spain,
our love needs nothing spoken.

We are bay windows open
in Barcelona's gothic quarter.
Our love needs nothing spoken.
drinking wine by the water.

In Barcelona's gothic quarter
the dense fog clears on a Gaudi.
We are drinking wine by the water
clarity in the clouds that roll past

The dense fog clears on a Gaudi
the moon hangs overhead like a lantern
clarity in the clouds that roll past

The moon hangs overhead like a lantern
we sleep curled like lions it seems,
I lay next to you, eternal, my dear
in the summer of my dreams.

Samhain

Barbara de García

Summer's swept away as
Autumn's descent burnishes the woods.
Mortals enter the shadow space between
Halloween, Samhain, and the third day,
All Souls when the dead return to move among us.
Irish families wait as the veil between worlds dissolves,
Nourishing their ancestors with an offered meal.

Ode to My Favorite Mug

Christine Hsu

I drink out of my favorite mug every morning.

It says, "Show Me Your Kitties."

Under the saying, there are two black and white pussy cats chilling.

My best friend gave it to me for my Christmas present two years ago.

I used to live in an apartment

And my roommates kept stealing my favorite mug.

My favorite mug had to live in my room as a pen holder because I didn't trust my roommates to give it back to me.

Luckily my new roommates know NOT to steal my favorite mug.

It hangs out on the bottom shelf above the cooking books, next to the sink.

I slip loose leaf oo-long tea into my mana-tea infuser

And pop it into my favorite mug.

The pink electric kettle boils quick

And add the hot water into my favorite mug.

It reminds me of my best friend

And of comfort

And of home.

News

Christine Hsu

I stopped reading or listening to the news in June 2020
KQED and KALW remained silent on my kitchen radio
Facebook and Twitter were in a deep slumber on my laptop
I binge watched Netflix, Amazon Prime and Hulu
Midsommer, Hereditary, The Great British Bake-Off, and The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel
I read Pulitzer winners
The Sympathizer, Gilead, Less, and The Goldfinch
I'd run down Peralta before 7 in the morning
Past Cass Recycling
Past the West Oakland Library
Past the homeless encampments of tents and RVs
Past the corner store
Past Iggy the Iguana
Past Moneybrain's mural offices
Back home
Running away from the news
I heard helicopters for a full month
My sister texted me that six cop cars were on fire
On her street by Union Square in New York City
You can't run from the news.

Horror Movies

Christine Hsu

My best friend and I love watching horror movies.

But I point out to him who dies first.

We went to see the 1st Purge on 4th of July.

The black folks in Staten Island were the heroes taking out white supremacist Neo Nazis left
and right.

I poke my friend.

Stab.

The first person killed off was Latino.

Bang.

The second person dead was Asian.

Come on!

Do the Latinos and Asian have to band together not to get killed?

I can't go on. I'll go on.

Matilda Young

Resilience doesn't mean pretty
or good or an elegant dismount.
It doesn't mean eyebrows penciled
in (unless that helps) or teeth
brushed or fucks still given.
It doesn't mean feel good or taste
good or even good for you.
It just means that every day we love
ourselves enough to try again.
Or if on that day we cannot, we love
someone else enough to try again.
Or if on that day we cannot, we love
some small orange sliver of the world
enough to try again. And if we cannot,
then there is nothing shameful
or defeated. It means we carried
what we could, our sweaters
twisted, our noses running, our joints
cracking from misuse, one breath
under a blue sky, one breath under
a gray, for as long as we could.

Advice

Matilda Young

Tony, I said, do you think it could be worth it, I mean knowing what I know, and not knowing her and not knowing what exactly I want from her but thinking she's cute and angry and pissed off about Governor Abbott just like me except she's a total badass, do you think I should shoot my shot? Tony said, look kid, there's a lot of different ways to be a person, and I've known some lonelier ones myself, walking with my headphones in and no music, waving at strangers with my eyes, eating mac and cheese at 4 pm just to pass the time, my partner in the other room asleep, I couldn't bear it, I threw the whole dish in the trash, they slept right through it, later on they came and touched my shoulder, hugged me, though they hate hugging anyone, grew up real repressed, told me, thank you for sticking it out with me, and I don't think they knew you know, but I think maybe they understood, or maybe they were feeling lonely too.

Ginger

Matilda Young

This morning, the cat went up to the puppy
and clawed his face. He had been lying on the floor
facing away. You want me to tell you a nice story?
You want me to tell you what I would not
have done? She who had been loved the best,
the only, even mercurial, even mostly feral.
She who had been the sole pet, and therefore
the best beloved. Love is a giving over,
a surrendering, that what is shared becomes
the greater still. But I am a tiny ginger bitch,
an angry rouster with one incisor left. And I know
I would have gone for his face too.

Absolute

Natalie E. Illum

bully
evolving
hijacks
kriptic
nextgen
questions
timeline
wishing
zealots

coerces
fascism
ideologies
logic
oppressing
resistance
under
xtinction

Abecedarian

dissonance
gladly
jinxes
mocks
progress
stuck
violence
yelling

How We Last

Sheila McMullin

Afterward, *she began*,
But before you leave.
Cold water runs through the rusted facet, stiffening my hands.
Don't mind the daddy long legs in the bathroom;
either they'll die on their own or you'll
forget they were ever here, you won't be back soon.
Gather those sticks with your left hand, *she told me*.
Hunting never came naturally to you though
it's in our blood; give me your right hand.
Jezebel was a princess with
knotted roots in her hair;
lineaged memories.
My hair held up by leather straps.
Never had I seen my grown body in the mirror of my childhood home
Occupied I watched myself.
Princess Jezebel; in our blood.
Quick spirit we
rescue what has been
stilted, *she told me*.
Treasure what has been
unearthed.
Verify what has been
wicked.
Xenial communities is how we lasted all these
years. Hunting never came natural to you and the
zone of your heart has become a target.

Want to travel with her

Sheila McMullin

He's had one too many already
And brushes my hair behind my shoulders

He tells me to listen
and answer whether he's a poet or a musician

says most people can't just listen
push the bullshit aside, but

family is so important
then smooths my eyebrows with his thumbs

He tells me how he met my grandmother
When my mother and aunt were still so little

What a prick their father was
How we fell in love with all of them

And he wants me to listen to the song
It's actually one of my favorites

And I'm trying to keep his attention
Away his is full glass of wine behind me

He says it's the way Leonard's voice become high and sweet
and to listen to if he's a poet or a musician

My grandfather's eyes are marbles in a glass of wine
The problem is, I want my drink, be starting on my second already

But I won't make a move for it in front of him
Last time he told me he was going cold turkey

Poured every last bottle of wine, tequila, vodka, down the drain
I don't blame him. It's been a while since we've all been together again

He's felt alone – promises that the only way he's leaving this house is in a pine box
But I've never told him I'd make him leave. He really means my grandmother,

the way she died in the hospital.

Mistaken Villanelle

Danielle Evennou

the best part of me makes mistakes
leaves clothes in the washer for days
stays up late and orders milkshakes

even when the sky rains snowflakes
I wake up on the couch surprised
the best part of me makes mistakes

abandons the leaves once they're raked
in search of snacks on which to graze
stays up late and orders milkshakes

that will give me a stomachache
an awkward line I can't rephrase
the best part of me makes mistakes

sends lusty texts that cause heartache
the right quote just misparaphrased
stays up late, orders more milkshakes

shops online for useless keepsakes
thinks that good art needs a catchphrase
the best part of me makes mistakes
stays up late and orders milkshakes

Future Pantoum

Danielle Evennou

what a nightclub looks like in 2030:
ID, temperature check, and immunization
fog replaced with hyper air filtration systems
drinking some organic tincture brewed for escape

ID, temperature check, and immunization
holy trio for young people who want to go
drinking some organic tincture brewed to erase
signals that whisper *we'll die if we get too close*

holy trio for young people who want to know
what it's like to swim through the air amongst strangers
without the whispering signals, we'll get closer
to whatever the condom was for HIV/AIDS

to reopen ourselves to swimming in strangers
fog replaced with hyper air filtration systems
and whatever the condom was for HIV/AIDS
what a nightclub looks like in 2030.

Moonstruck Suite

Regie Cabico

i.

when the orb of light
exposed our breasts, we both beamed
& banged, the sun flared

ii.

brushing your nipple
at a climax, you strike my
wrist, snap out of it

iii.

werewolves fall for his
dry ice spell, whiskey whisperer,
damn smooth kisser

iv.

you're lunar powers casts
all my woofing scruff guys
merrily out to sea

v.

our love is not a
pizza pie because you're
lactose intolerant

vi.

loving him afar
the oceans engulf you
the bed frame howls

vii.

stuck in sticky stars
& sheets lonely as the steel
bridges between us

Spring Poem That Was Supposed To Be A Sestina

Regie Cabico

Living with another poet can
drive you crazy like the waiting list
to use the computer

or the way he sneaks up
behind you to check what's
on the screen. You're always

tempted to steal each other's
metaphors like the loose change
hidden in his crumpled trousers.

Take the dove on our fire escape
whom we've named Rita
& her babies Paz, Bishop,

Ai & Neruda. He wants Rita
for an upcoming elegy
& I want them all

for a spring sestina. You
understand how difficult
it is developing allegories

with little money
but we still drive in each other
a hard bargain.



CONTRIBUTOR BIOS

Regie Cabico

(he/they/she)

Regie Cabico is a poet, theater artist and arts educator who lives on top of a Trader Joe's. He produces Capturing Fire: A Queer Spoken Word Slam and Summit and founder of Capfire Spoken Word Arts, a publishing and arts education organization.

Barbara de García

(she/her/hers)

Barbara de García is a recently retired college professor; I'm multilingual and my love of languages makes writing poetry a place to explore sound, and meaning.

Danielle Evennou

(she/her/hers)

Danielle Evennou is a writer who grew up in suburban New Jersey. For over a decade, she has kept herself busy by hosting poetry readings, workshops, and open mics in Washington, DC. In 2016, she founded Slipform, a writing workshop that explores gender, sexuality, and formal poetic structures. Her poetry and memoir appear in *apt*, *Beltway Poetry Quarterly*, *Dryland*, and *Split Lip Magazine*. Her chapbook, *DIFFICULT TRICK*, is available from dancing girl press. With the help of therapy, she is learning how to calm the f*** down. Find out more about Danielle and her work at www.whatevennou.com. See cute photos of her dog on Instagram at @whatevennou.

Tyler French

(he/him/his)

Tyler French is a writer and organizer living in Washington, D.C. His first full-length book of poetry, *He Told Me*, was published by Capturing Fire Press in May 2019. He has writing in *Assaracus*, *Beech Street Review*, *Bending Genres Journal*, *Impossible Archetype*, and *The Quarry*, Split This Rock's Social Justice Poetry Database. See more of Tyler's work at www.tylerhfrench.com.

Christine Hsu

(she/her/hers)

Christine Hsu is a writer, playwright and poet based in Oakland, CA. She has been published by *The Bold Italic*, *xoJane*, *KQED*, and *ABC News Radio Online*, and her play "I Love You But..." was a finalist in the Negro Ensemble Company 10 Minute Play Competition.

Natalie E. Illum

(she/her/hers)

Natalie E. Illum is a poet, disability activist and singer living in Washington DC. She the recipient of 3 fellowship grants from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities and a former Jenny McKeen Moore Fellow. Her work has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize, Best of the Net, and Best New Poet awards. She was a founded board member of mothertongue, a LGBTQA open mic that lasted 15 years. She competed on the National Poetry Slam circuit and was the 2013 Beltway Grand Slam Champion. Natalie has an MFA in creative writing from American University. You can find her on Instagram and Twitter as @poetryrox.

Sheila McMullin

(she/her/hers)

Sheila McMullin is a 2020 Arts for LA Arts Delegate and the author of *daughterrarium*, selected by Daniel Borzutzky for Cleveland State University Poetry Center's First Book Prize. As a youth organizer and literacy coach, she co-edited *The Day Tajon Got Shot*, the Black Lives Matter novel-in-stories written by middle school writers from the Beacon House community center in NE Washington DC, and *Humans of Ballou*, the non-fiction collection of high school students living in Anacostia who know a different side of Washington DC, both from Shout Mouse Press. She currently resides in Los Angeles, CA, where she is practicing community herbalism and teaching poetry workshops. For more on her publications, visit www.moonspitpoetry.com.

Jessica G. Simon

(she/her/hers)

Jessica G. Simon wrote her first poem when she was seven-years-old. After competing in the 2001 D.C. National Youth Poetry Slam Team, she began to perform her poems as well as study, write and edit original work. Her poems have been published in the *Atlanta Review*, *Moment Magazine*, *Magnolia: A Journal of Women's Socially Engaged Literature*, Vol. II, *Edge*, Vol. 9, *Nature in the Now*, *Tiny Seed Literary Journal* and *Super Stoked: An Anthology of Queer Poetry from the Capturing Fire Slam & Summit*.

Matilda Young

(she/her/hers)

Matilda Young is a writer with an M.F.A. in Poetry from the University of Maryland. She lives in Baltimore with a tiny, angry cat. She has been published in several journals, including *Sakura Review*, *The Golden Key*, and *Entropy Magazine's Blackcackle*.