

# after hours™

a journal of Chicago writing and art

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## Cover Photo

*untitled* by Mark Baker

What illustrates the pandemic of 2020/21 more graphically than a usually crowded commuter train station eerily vacant at the height of the 5 p.m. rush hour? And the fact that this eatery is not in Chicago, but halfway around the world, only emphasizes the extent of this global disaster. With vaccines on the way, we can only hope that our next cover will show people -- unmasked, and observing not the least bit of social distancing.

Meanwhile -- stay safe.

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## Contributors

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\***Mark Baker** is an American journalist, writer and photographer. He is originally from Ohio, now based in Prague, Czech Republic. He is currently working on a book about the late-80s and early-90s called *Time of Changes*. It will be published in the Czech Republic later this year.

**Andrew Byrne's** work has appeared in the *Chicago Reader*, *Oyez Review*, *Poetry Quarterly*, *North Chicago Magazine*, and *After Hours*. He is also the author of a book of poems, *First Words*.

**Dan Campion** is a Chicago native who has lived in Iowa City since 1978. He is the author of *Peter De Vries and Surrealism* and co-editor of *Walt Whitman: The Measure of His Song*, a third edition of which was issued in 2019. Dan's poetry has appeared previously in *After Hours* and in *Poetry*, *Rolling Stone*, and many other magazines. A selection of his poems titled *The Mirror Test* will be published by MadHat Press in February 2022.

\***Lex Chilson** is a writer hailing from the North Side of Chicago. She is currently studying at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with an emphasis in writing. She has previously been published in *Rookie Mag*, *Runestone*, *Dime Show Review*, and elsewhere. You can usually find her by Lake Michigan.

\***Kevin Coval** is an Emmy-nominated, award-winning poet and author of *Everything Must Go: The Life & Death of an American Neighborhood*; *A People's History of Chicago* and ten other collections and anthologies. He's the Creative Director and a founding editor of The BreakBeat Poets imprint on Haymarket Books. He was born in East Lakeview before it was called Boystown and has lived in Chicago and the Chicagoland area his whole life.

**Albert DeGenova** is an award-winning poet, publisher, and teacher. He is the author of four books of poetry and two chapbooks, and his work has appeared in numerous journals and anthologies. He received his MFA from Spalding University in Louisville. DeGenova is the founder and co-editor of *After Hours* magazine. He is also a blues saxophonist.

**Paul Freidinger** is a long-time Chicago guy, now exiled in Edisto Beach, South Carolina. Living there has helped him appreciate the vitality of Chicago poets and poetry. He has published over 200 poems in journals around the U.S. His poems were recently published or are forthcoming in *Atlanta Review*, *Basalt*, *Evansville Review*, *Florida Review*, *Folio*, *Grist*, *Isthmus*, *Kentucky Review*, *Pacific Review*, *Portland Review*, *Reunion: the Dallas Review*, *Revista Literaria: Central American Literary Review*, *Roanoke Review*, *Subprimal Poetry Art*, *Triggerfish Critical Review*, *The Brasilia Review*, and *The William & Mary Review*.

\***Cameron Gearen's** full-length poetry collection, *Some Perfect Year*, came out from Shearsman Press in 2016. Her essays and poems have appeared in *The Washington Post*, *Hippocampus*, *Dame Magazine*, *The Antioch Review*, *Green Mountains Review*, *Fence*, and many other journals. She was writer-in-residence for the Hemingway Foundation from 2017-2019. She lives in Oak Park with her partner and their two dogs.

**Alan Gross** is an award-winning poet and playwright. A Chicagoan born and bred, he currently lives in Old Town with his wife Norma Topa, a painter. His work has appeared in *After Hours*, *Story Quarterly*, *Chicago Quarterly Review*, *Modern Haiku*, *Maple Leaf Rag* and the *Robert Frost Poetry Festival Anthology*. He spent ten fine years writing features for *Chicago Magazine*. In another guise he is the jazz singer Bootsy Butterman.

**Marci Rae Johnson** is the featured writer in this issue of *After Hours*.

**Lee Kitzis** grew up/lived in Chicago/Chicagoland the first 35 years of his life. He currently resides in Marquette, Michigan with his wife, preschooler and cat. While he loves Marquette and the bounty of nature it has to offer, his heart is and always will be with the city he loves. Whenever he goes there he packs way too many noodles from Joong Boo into the return luggage, much to the chagrin of his wife. They are currently contemplating getting another piece of luggage exclusively for their Chicago trips.

**Lenka Capounová Konopásková** has been taking pictures for many years for her own pleasure and that of her friends. Her first published photograph, "Ice" appeared in *After Hours* # 34. Lenka also writes poetry and her work has been published on Czech poetry websites, as well as on her own blog. She is a lawyer and lives in Prague, Czech Republic, with her husband and teenage son Jan.

**David Mathews** earned his MA in Writing & Publishing at DePaul University. His work has been nominated for Best of the Net and a Pushcart. His recent publications include *Midwestern Gothic*, *Eclectica Magazine*, *Belt Magazine's Rust Belt Chicago: An Anthology*, and in *Endlessly Rocking*, honoring the 200th birthday of Walt Whitman. David lives in his hometown of Chicago, where he works as a Creative Writing Instructor at the Chicago High School for the Arts (ChiArts).

**Siegfried Mortkowitz** is a writer living in Prague. He is the author of *Eating Brains and Other Poems*, published by After Hours Press. His work has also appeared in *Body*, *The Prague Review*, and *Politico*.

**Philip Nemeč** grew up in the Chicago area, and Chicago remains close to his heart. A return to Chicago to visit a childhood friend served as the inspiration for the poem in this edition. Philip has been writing his entire life, and Chicago is the setting for much of his work.

\***Claudio Parentela** is an illustrator, painter, photographer, mail artist, cartoonist, collagist, and freelance journalist. Active for many years in the international underground art scene, he has collaborated with many zines, magazines of contemporary art, and comics internationally. A one-time resident of Peoria, Illinois, he was born in Catanzaro, Italy, where now he lives and works.

**Moira Pujols** publishes literature and cultural journalism in Spanish. She is a regular photo contributor to *After Hours*, *contratiempo* and *Plenamar* magazines. She is on Instagram at @moirap.

\***Patrick T. Reardon**, a three-time nominee for a Pushcart Prize, is the author of nine books including the poetry collection *Requiem for David* and the history *The Loop: The "L" Tracks That Shaped and Saved Chicago*. His poetry has appeared in *Burningwood Literary Journal*, *Eclectica*, *Esthetic Apostle*, *Ground Fresh Thursday*, *Literary Orphans*, *Rhino*, *Spank the Carp*, *Main Street Rag*, *The Write Launch*, *Hey I'm Alive*, *Meat for Tea*, *Silver Birch Press*, *Tipton Poetry Journal*, *UCity Review* and *Under a Warm Green Linden*. Reardon, who worked as a Chicago Tribune reporter for 32 years, has published articles, essays and book reviews widely in such publications as the *Tribune*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, the *Chicago Reader*, *Crain's Chicago Business*, *National Catholic Reporter* and *U.S. Catholic*. His memoir in prose poems *Puddin': The Autobiography of a Baby* is to be published in 2021 by Third World Press.

\***Tracie Renee Amirante Padal** is a poet, a librarian, somebody's wife, and somebody else's mother. On the side, she creates book discussion guides for NoveList, a database that empowers readers and librarians to connect with books. She is a three-time Grand Prize Winner in poetry from the TallGrass Writers Guild/Outrider Press. Her short stories and poems have appeared in newspapers, magazines, journals, and international anthologies, and earned nominations for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. Tracie lives in suburban Chicago, and is probably walking her dog right now.

\* First appearance in *After Hours*

## Contributors

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**James Silk** is a former member of The Association of American Editorial Cartoonists 2015-2018. He won first place for best editorial cartoon for the Hoosier state press awards. Other work includes illustrations for *Penthouse* magazine 2017-2019, *Blueprint* magazine Ottawa, Canada and *Born to Run* magazine, Florida. His art has been exhibited in the Sallie and Berton Korman gallery in West Palm Beach Fla. He has one piece on permanent display at the Ty Cobb museum in Georgia. He is a self-taught artist and recently retired after 37 years in the electric utility industry.

\***John Stadelman** is a writer from North Carolina now based in Chicago. He holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Columbia College, and his fiction (which is sometimes scary, sometimes sad and always weird) has appeared in *Full Metal Horror*, *Schlock!*, *Hobo Camp Review* and elsewhere.

\***Eugene Stevenson** writes to make some semblance of order out of disorder, to make sense of the unthinkable, to make still photographs out of daily rushes. His poems have appeared in *Angel City Review*, *DASH*, *Gravel*, *The Hudson Review*, *Loch Raven Review*, *The Poet*, & *South Florida Poetry Journal*, *Swamp Ape Review*, *Tipton Poetry Journal*, among others. He is the son of immigrants, the father of expatriates, and lives in the mountains of western North Carolina.

\***Norma Topa** was a member of the much lamented N.A.B. Gallery. She studied photography at Columbia College, painted with Pat Olsen at the Old Town Triangle and threw pots at Lill Street. A decade in Los Angeles led her to fine art pottery restoration and large format photography (silver prints). Back in Chicago she is painting and making photos.

\***Melody Wang** currently resides in sunny Southern California with her dear husband and hopes to someday live in the Pacific Northwest (or somewhere with equally gloomy weather). She dabbles in piano composition and enjoys hiking, baking, and playing with her dogs.

**Santiago Weksler** is a writer and photographer who was based in Chicago for many years. He has had exhibitions of his photographs at the Old Town Triangle Gallery, Calles y Suenos cultural center and the University of Illinois. His work has appeared many times in *After Hours* and he was the featured artist in *AH #22*. He recently moved back to Lima, Peru, where an exhibition of his photographs, "Santiago de Chuco, Tierra de Vallejo" was on view at El Centro Cultural Inca Garcilaso del Ministerior de Relaciones Exteriores.