



RED BUTTE GARDEN  
**Spring Poetry**  
**Anthology**  
2020

# The Magnolia

*Phillip Brown*

The magnolia holds a hundred closed blooms,  
branches candled like a chandelier.

Then spring strikes its match, lighting  
every wick. Perfume is the first alert

as waxy petals soften and drip onto the lawn,  
the whole street corner turned pyre,

a blushfire burning two weeks before  
it dies. Pink fades, fragrance dissipates

like smoke, the sky cloaked with clouds.  
But look how the buds begin to split—

it's a two-part magic trick.  
The pyrotechnics were only show to hide

the sleight of hand. Now it conjures feathers  
from empty limbs, a phoenix of leaves

appearing all at once. Such a green finale!  
What I had imagined all winter

now revealed before my eyes. And the rain,  
as if on cue, taps every rooftop in applause.

## About the Author

Phillip Brown received his MFA in poetry from Oregon State University. Currently, he lives in Logan, Utah where he works at the Nora Eccles Harrison Museum of Art and writes poems during lunch breaks. His poetry has been published in various literary journals, and he was recently nominated for his first Pushcart Prize.



# The Spring Season

*Alexa V.  
Youth Winner*

Spring flowers bloom  
bees coming soon,  
with the laughter of children  
running throughout the garden  
Though it's warm  
the cool breeze brings such a charm  
For when hibernation is done,  
animals will go out and have some fun  
Throughout the forest  
the wind sounds like a chorus  
with pollen flowing through out  
Surely this season, nature will be cared about.

## About the Author

Alexa is 12-years-old. She loves to draw foxes and any animal that's cute. She also loves to play volleyball and ski. She has a twin sister named Sienna, a dog named Taffy, and a kitten named Truffle.



# Springtide Celebration

*Lindsey Barr*

The Garden is hosting a party  
Would you like to attend?  
It is a celebration of Springtide  
Of the end of cold and dark  
Of the lengthening days  
And the strengthening sun

The Garden will dress herself  
In a green, red, and purple gown  
Of fresh, light-drenched leaves  
And for her guests she will grow  
Vibrant teacups called flowers  
Filled with the sweetest nectar

Hundreds of guests will arrive  
On a variety of colorful wings  
Jewel-toned hummingbirds  
Striped bee princesses  
And noble butterflies and moths  
With powdered velvet capes

Fear not friend, you will fit in  
At this grand and auspicious event  
If you mingle politely you will learn  
From the Garden's trusted guests  
And if you are full of noticing  
You will see Springtide's magic

## **About the Author**

Lindsey Barr is a student at Brigham Young University with a passion for the written word. For the last three years she has maintained an Instagram account (@redheadpoetess) where she regularly posts her writing. Her biggest poetic inspiration is Mary Oliver and she happily collects her books whenever she can find them. This is Lindsey's second poem to be featured in Red Butte Garden.



# City Spring

*Victoria Childress*

It's lying in bed between snooze buttons  
and hearing larks  
in the parking lot outside your window.  
It's mornings that start late but get bright suddenly  
and a different slant  
to the light stealing – more boldly now – through the blinds.  
It's turning the heat off  
and an apartment that smells different  
and emerald ash beetles gleaming on your car.  
It's switching from chai to frappuccinos. It's a bigger crop  
of food carts in Research Park. It's happier co-workers,  
and new Employee Wellness classes, and daylight  
through the windshield on your way home.  
And then it's worms wending alongside your jogging feet,  
and the tiniest rabbits in the Russian knapweed,  
and weeds along South Temple  
in every shade of purple –  
and still being surprised to see flowers. It's feeling grateful  
you didn't miss the one day when they all bloomed together.  
And – blessedly  
late, not until you yearn for it –  
it's a sunset in all the citrus shades of Pinkberry  
deepening behind druid circles of deer.

## About the Author

Victoria Childress studied creative writing at Virginia Tech while earning a master's degree in public health. Originally from Virginia, she now lives in Salt Lake City, where she works as a Clinical Research Coordinator at the University of Utah.



# Spring's Herald

*Jolene Whitney*

She sings her song at dusk and dawn  
She devours the worms in the lawn  
She builds a nest in my tree  
She is the herald of Spring for me

She wears red upon her breast  
She has pale blue eggs in her nest  
She sings with joy each morn and night  
She is the herald of Spring's delight

She sucks the nectar from cherry blossoms  
She defends her nest from the local opossums  
She bathes in rain puddles, her head a bobbin'  
The herald of Spring is the reliable robin

I know when the season arrives each year  
Because her song is what I hear  
Though other signs can be found  
The Robin's song heralds Spring is all around

## **About the Author**

Jolene Whitney is a recent retiree from the Utah Department of Health, Bureau of EMS and Preparedness. She enjoys spending time with family and friends, reading, gardening, taking wellness classes, cooking chocolate making, and whatever piques her interest. Jolene is also taking classes and workshops to learn more about photography. She is grateful for the opportunity to be more in the moment and to challenge her creative and artistic side which includes occasionally crafting poetry.



# The Storm

*Olivia D.*  
*Youth Winner*

The big rain storm is coming  
I don't know what to expect  
The lightning is stunning  
And the thunder is perfect

I grabbed my rain boots  
And my polkadot umbrella  
I started for the long route  
And stopped when I reached the delta

I stopped and pondered  
And I felt as if I were a fish  
I waited until I was bothered  
By the sound of a giant SWISH

The rain droplets were dancing  
As if they were free  
I was just on a rock sitting  
And the droplets inspired me

Instead of sitting in the storm  
And feeling as if trapped by a chain  
I decided to get warm  
And dance in the rain

## About the Author

Olivia D. is a junior in high school. She is on her school's cross-country team and enjoys spending time outdoors with her family and friends. She loves poetry and the freedom it gives her to express herself in ways that she didn't even know were possible.



# I'm Arrested

*Maurine Haltiner*

by a praise of bees  
harbored in a hawthorn tree. It's nothing  
like rain-pelting drops sidling  
down, leaf to  
leaf, one slip at a time—nothing like  
sunlight sidestepping  
shade, zig-  
zagging through degrees  
of green. A flood of sweet buzzing  
shifts air. A white blossom drifts  
from the canopy, settles  
at my feet like a whole note, empty,  
mute. Will it be missed  
any more than one  
bee metronoming half speed,  
forgetting for seconds  
the melody of its wings? Or me  
transfigured  
beneath  
a heft of honey overhead?

## About the Author

Maurine Haltiner taught high school English for 33 years. Shortly before retiring, she assigned her students to write a poem, completed one herself, and shared it with them.

It became the first poem in her book *A Season and a Time*. She has since published two more books of poetry, *Every Angle of Moonshine* and *Not So Far Afield*, plus one young adult novel, *Truth Windows*, in which Logan, a high school basketball star, also enjoys poetry. Maurine also plays violin in the Wasatch Symphony Orchestra.





# Chrysalis

*Steven Leitch*

Before its flight, with wings in fold,  
entombed by emerald chrysalis mold.

*A whim, a random passing thought,  
asleep until the quill is sought.*

Metamorphosis, in slumber's grace,  
The season comes, then change takes place

*and there on printed paper lies,  
words unfold into butterflies.*

## About the Author

Steven Leitch is a member of the Utah State Poetry Society and president of the Valley Winds Chapter. His poetry has been published in *Utah Sings*, *The Panorama*, *Poet Tree*, *The Deadeye*, *Encore*, *The Mississippi Poetry Journal*, and several other national publications. He retired from the University of Utah in 2013 as a photographer for the School of Medicine and University Hospital. He also retired in 2009 from the US Army Reserve where he served 36 years as an Army Journalist, Photographer, and Public Affairs Specialist.



# Uncluttering

*Lin Ostler*

*As I unclutter my life, I free myself to answer the callings of my soul.*

– Clarissa Pinkola Estes

A spongy frozen foam  
on Spring's early ice melt  
swells and retracts,  
breathing  
at the pulse of waters  
beneath,  
beginning to flow again.

Jubilation's croaky voice descants  
from buds liberating their grasp,  
first in the open mouths of crocus  
dipping their saffron, pollen-spattered faces  
as Iris & Magnolia gasp adorations  
from the crowded scratch line.

Will we long for those Winter  
morning mists of our breath,  
the snap  
of razor-thin ices under our boots,

or simply praise each wary shoot  
rising from soils,  
the blossoms' exotic splash  
tugging our drear-weary eyes  
into this luster after all?

## About the Author

A familiar reader in Utah, and nationwide with the Far Away Poets, Lin Ostler's voice is one of a global soul--earthy, distinct & carries a particular sensibility to women's perspectives. Her chapbook, *Tidepools* was released in 2019. She has also been published in various anthologies, including Glass Lyre's *Carrying the Branch: Poets in Search of Peace* (2017), the Tiferet Journal, and the local Variant anthology (2018).



# The Edge of Spring

*Alicia Platt*

Crisp air, timid sun  
Veiled warmth, first gasps of color  
The winter softens

## About the Author

Alicia Platt runs business operations by day and is an explorer of the Salt Lake City taco-scene by night. Her favorite pastimes include last-minute travel, hiking, music, doing way too many dollar-store puzzles, and writing haikus for all occasions. She is thrilled to have her poem featured at Red Butte Garden since, thus far, her poetry is normally only shared through postcards sent to her only remaining childhood friend. Previous poetry honors include an honorable mention in her 6th grade poetry contest, and getting a business-related haiku published in an obscure book of poetry compiled by a retired professor at the University of Utah.



# Spring

*Ella P.*  
*Youth Winner*

Baby birds chirp in a small, delicate nest,  
Stuffed neatly in their space, bundled chest to chest.

A home to the new baby birds,  
the tree in full bloom,  
Against the bright blue sky,  
Warmer days on the loom.

How soon the birds may fly,  
We cannot be sure,  
They need to be brave  
and prepare to endure

One bird will go first,  
the last to be lured,  
The nest will soon empty  
and that is for sure

The lesson to be learned,  
That we all need to hear,  
Is that your courage be stronger,  
Than that of your fear





**RED BUTTE GARDEN**  
THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

