

## **Literary Arts – Ira Sukrungruang**

This was a joy to be part of. Thank you for asking me to judge.

### **Christian McKay Heidicker**

If I were a child, I would have been enthralled by Christian McKay Heidicker's work. I am enthralled by Heidicker's work now as a parent raising a son in an unforgiving world. Heidicker opens the doors of the imagination and provides young readers something beyond the simple joy of escapism. His paranormal stories contain the harsh realities of a familiar world. His characters transcend the veneer of talking animals or vampiric monsters; they are us, struggling, us learning, us coping. They are us.

### **Kimberly Johnson**

Reading Kimberly Johnson's poems, one must allow one foot to rest in the quivering spaces of the surreal and the other to be anchored to a world that does not stop. Yet, in the quiet music of her language, in the juxtaposition of the personal and the spiritual, from poet to wife to mother, time does in fact still, allowing us access to the depths of grief, of fear, and the inevitability of seconds.

### **Lynn Kilpatrick**

How do you tell a story in small spaces? How do you negotiate adequately the nature of the fragmented self? Lynn Kilpatrick tackles these questions in her series of short-short essays that builds toward a non-traditional narrative centering on childhood and (mis)understanding, the body, and violences on the body. Each piece is like a breath held; each piece, another stone in the ugly history of the violence against women. Kilpatrick's sharp and short prose gives little, but we leave with so much.

### **Patrick Madden**

I imagine to sit in Patrick Madden's mind is to be witness to a kaleidoscopic array of thoughts and ideas and images and influences, this wonderful lyrical and sensorial trip. Madden pays homage to classical roots of the essay form while infusing modern meanderings. Curiosity arises not only through language but also the visual rhetoric of space, the infusion of image and musical scores, the creative play of the wonderful parentheses. Like the essayist Brian Doyle (whom Madden plays homage to), his work starts as a speck, a seed, and with each passing paragraph, that speck, that seed grows and grows and grows into something beautiful.

### **Paisley Rekdal**

The speakers of Paisley Rekdal's poems situate themselves in a myriad of intersections, complex crossings of the personal, the historical, and the scientific. Her

poems, in various beats of song, present a myriad of mirrors. In those mirrors are reflections of larger truths: love with hardened edges, fractured identities, nameless desires and longing, all situated in the (un)natural world.