

milk magazine is an online literary magazine that features poetry, visual art, experimental fiction, essays, and featured books. Now in its 8th year and since its move from Dayton, OH to Chicago, IL the editors, Larry Sawyer and Lina ramona Vitkauskas, have branched out and spread the word far and wide amongst several poetic circles in Chicago and beyond. **milk** has been, and is, an important contribution to the literary landscape, one that continues to grow in stature and relevance to the ever-changing face of poetry and art.

The intuitive immediacy and necessity of **milk's** presence has drawn much praise from the surrounding literary community and beyond, including *The League of Canadian Poets*: "...strong Beat influence, [with] touches of the *Paris Review* in its glory days... [reminiscent of] The Surrealists with romaine lettuce in taxis, [and] an elegant title which justifies a clean, colourless background. **milk** is a darn fine magazine—excellent."



Larry Sawyer began the online literary magazine, **milk**, in 1999 with fellow poet Lina ramona Vitkauskas. **milk** sprung forth from the instinctive momentum of Sawyer's editorial leadership with Wright State University's (Dayton, OH) *Nexus* (*Gold Crown Award for Collegiate Publications*, *Columbia Scholastic Press Association* at Columbia University, NY), with which Sawyer continued the tradition of funneling groundbreaking material to the "attuned" masses.

Poets and artists featured in *Nexus* under Sawyer included: Charles Henri Ford, Gerard Malanga, Ira Cohen, Tuli Kupferberg, John Solt, Yamamoto Kansuke, John Brandi, Jack Hirschman, Jud Yalkut, Tom Walker, Judith Malina, Nina Zivancevic, Hanon Reznikov, Hakim Bey, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Allan Graubard, Paul Grillo, Paul Violi, Mohammed Mrabet, Paul Bowles, Michael Castro, Angus MacLise, Lionel Ziprin, Tetsuya Taguchi, A.D. Winans, Harold Norse, Edward Field, Timothy Baum, Daniel Abd Al-Hayy Moore, Indra Tamang, Sparrow, Ken Haponek, and Ron Loewinsohn. Featured art representations included: Max Ernst, Valentine Hugo, Victor Brauner, Raoul Ubac, Marcel Jean, Yves Tanguy, Andre Breton, Brion Gysin, Anthony Wall, Jack Micheline, Ronnie Burk, Robert LaVigne and many others.

Nexus served as an imperative foundation for **milk**—its underground reputation for showcasing remarkable talent was solidified with Sawyer's tribute to Allen Ginsberg (Volume 32, No. 3), reaching the farthest corners and achieved the most critical acclaim as it was written up in *The American Book Review*. Volume 33, No. 3 was placed in *The Henry Miller Memorial Library* in Big Sur, California, and the "Moroccan issue" (Vol. 33, No. 2) was included in an exhibit of North African writing at the *L'Institut du Monde Arabe*, in Paris, France and then placed in the permanent collection. *Nexus*, however, underwent a change with the absence of contributors who opened up the magazine to include influential members of the Beat, Black Mountain, and NY Schools.

Sawyer and Vitkauskas came together to reprise *Nexus'* role on the literary landscape by summoning its reincarnation, **milk**—its electronic body/design born from unpasteurized minimalism and its complex and evocative internal content consistently delivering important work from poetic strongholds such as Michael McClure, Robert Creeley, Ron Padgett, Cid Corman, Frank Lima, Bill Berkson, Janine Pommy Vega, Clayton Eshleman, Tom Clark, Sheila E. Murphy, Tony Towle, Jerome Rothenberg, Frank Kuenstler, Spencer Selby, Mike Topp, Linh Dinh, and new, inspiring, experimental artists such as Thurston Moore, Hoa Nguyen, Todd Colby, Anselm Berrigan, Louis Armand, George Wallace, Kari Edwards, Brenda Iijima, Yana Payusova, Mirela Ramona Ciupag, Gene Tanta, and Lauren Spitzberg.

Sawyer's own poetic influences encompass the brave uncertainty of Wallace Stevens, the verité of the Beats, and the visionary aspect of The Surrealists, among others. Tom Hibbard writes of his poetry, "Similar to the [concept of the] invented [as] the accepted, the exercise of human virtues, of intelligence over the genetic, the indistinguishable elemental, Larry Sawyer's [poetry] itself is distinguished in this way. He has taken what's been given him. The difference between what humans are made out of and what they make out of themselves is blurred. In searching the limits of meaning, Sawyer has discovered a way of presenting it more sharply." Some of Sawyer's publications (poetry and critical reviews) include: *MiPOesias*, *Exquisite Corpse* (New Orleans), *The Miami Sun Post*, *The Prague Literary Review*, the anthology *Shamanic Warriors Now Poets* (JN Reilly, ed. Scotland), *Van Gogh's Ear* (Paris), *Outlaw* (UK), *Paper Tiger* (Australia), *Tabacaria* (Portugal), *Versal* (Holland), *Big Bridge* (California), *Moria*, *Mad Love*, *Court Green*, *Pitchfork*, *Coconut*, *88*, *Arson*, *HUNGER* (NY), *Ygdrasil*, *Skanky Possum* (Texas), *LocusPoint*, *Jacket* (Australia), *Readme*, *Aught* (NY), *The Butcher's Block* (NY), *Nexus*, *NY Arts Magazine*, *5_Trope*, *Shampoo*, *WORD/ for Word, can we have our ball back?*, *RANGE*, *Loop*, *Snow Monkey* (San Francisco), *La Petite Zine*, *ambulant*, *Eildon Tree* (Scotland), *Poems-For-All*, *Tin Lustre Mobile* (Washington DC), and *The East Village*, among others. His chapbooks: *Poems for Peace* (anthology, Structum Press); *A Chaise Lounge in Hell* (aboveground press, Ontario, Canada), and *Tyrannosaurus Ant* (mother's milk press).

Sawyer is the curator of the Myopic Books Poetry Series at Myopic Books in Wicker Park. His blog is at www.larrysawyer.blogspot.com.



Lina ramona Vitkauskas brings to **milk** its construction, design, maintenance, and is the fiction editor. She is a Chicago native and first-generation Lithuanian-American. Her poetry and short fiction intrinsically draws from humorous, ironic, almost nihilistic aspects of Lithuanian heritage and her bouts with near-blindness, and a sensual, dimension and language-straddling experience. Influences include Maya Deren, Mina Loy, Wallace Stevens, Alejandro Jodorowsky, George Maciunas (*Fluxus*), Chicago-based poets Duriel Harris, Simone Muench, Daniel Borzutzky, and Mark Tardi, NY poet Jeni Oiln, Heidi Lynn Staples, Lorca, Breton (*Earthlight*), and Lithuanian mythology/folklore.

Her poetry touches upon the deconstructionist, sociolinguistic, and surreal. Poet Denise Duhamel has said of her work: "Vitkauskas' poetry is richly textured and layered, a palimpsest pleasure. While the bright surface of her poetry employs humor and kitsch, the dazzling underside confronts of intolerance and terrorism with a wise brilliance."

She has a B.A. In English: Creative Writing from Loras College and an M.A. in Composition & Rhetoric: Creative Writing from Wright State University. Her poetry chapbooks include: *THE RANGE OF YOUR AMAZING NOTHING* (Ravenna Press, 2007), *Failed Star Spawns Planet Star* (dancing girl press, 2006), and *Shooting Dead Films with Poets* (Fractal Edge Press, 2004). She recently contributed a preface to the book, *A Step Inside* (Ravenna Press, 2006) by French poet and experimental fiction writer, Denis Emorine.

Her poetry and fiction have been included in many anthologies and publications including: *The City Visible: Chicago Poetry for the New Century* (Cracked Slab Books, 2007), *MiPOesias*, *LocusPoint*, *Van Gogh's Ear* (Paris), *Rampike* (University of Windsor), *The Prague Literary Review*, *The Chicago Review*, *Unpleasant Event Schedule*, *Echolocation* (University of Toronto), *Paper Tiger* (Australia), *canwehaveourballback?*, *La Petite Zine*, *Drunken Boat*, *Shampoo*, *Snow Monkey*, *Lituanus* (*Lithuanian Quarterly Journal*), *Mississippi Review*, *The Wisconsin Review*, *Big Bridge*, *Melancholia's Tremulous Dreadlocks*, *5_Trope*, *Mudlark*, *AUGHT* (NY), *Bridges* (The Lithuanian-American Journal), *Sidereality*, *ambulant*, *Hubris Magazine* (San Francisco), *In Posse Review Multi-Ethnic Anthology* (Ilya Kaminsky, editor). She has won numerous awards including an honorable mention for *STORY Magazine's Carson McCullers Award* (1999), and semi-finalist in the *CSU (Cleveland State University) Open Poetry Series* (2002). Her essay for the NPR series, *This I Believe* is catalogued on the Web.

She has read all over Chicago and Milwaukee, including at the *Red Rover Experimental Series*, *The Balzekas Museum Of Lithuanian Culture*, *Quimby's*, *Woman Made Gallery*, *Woodland Pattern Bookstore*, *DvA Gallery*, *Around The Coyote Arts Festival*, *Myopic Books Poetry Series*, *The Chicago Poetry Festival*, and *The Santara-Sveisa Lithuanian Arts, Literature, and Political Conference*.

Forthcoming publications and projects include poetry in *Another Chicago Magazine*, *Arabesques (Algeria)* and *Aufgabe*; a graphic novel titled *Spiny Retinas* (in production); a spoken word CD titled *OPAQUE LUNACY* (also in production); and a Lithuanian translation project with a prominent, Chicago-based press. She has been asked by the editors of *UniVerse: A United Nations Of Poetry*, universeofpoetry.org to serve as Lithuanian editorial advisor, and will be a guest curator at Woman Made Gallery in the spring of 2007. Her web site is at www.linaramona.com.