

A large, translucent jellyfish with long, thin tentacles is the central focus, swimming in clear blue water. Other jellyfish are visible in the background, creating a sense of a jellyfish bloom. The lighting is bright, highlighting the delicate structure of the jellyfish.

*L'Chaim!*

Jordan Journal  
Issue 5

## Editors' Note

Dear Readers,

In the Jewish tradition, families celebrate betrothals with the toast, “*L’Chaim!*” which translates as “To life!” In the fifth issue of *Jordan Journal*, we’ve collected a series of poems that resonate with this toast—works that celebrate and affirm the human life, alongside poetry that rejoice in our world and its Protector.

Issue five embraces our role as stewards of the earth. We believe that, as followers of Jesus, we have been entrusted with a beautiful world. Michael Wilbur’s photography (throughout) explores Creation beyond the ocean’s surface. Adrian Harrison’s “Your Breath” marvels at the glory of the individual and the community, while Steve Gifford’s “Giving Thanks for Life” responds to life with gratitude.

Stewardship also comes into play in our human relationships. Makenna Witherell’s “Entrusted Us” describes our responsibility to each other, and Kae Bucher’s “Sweet Pea” identifies our accountability to the preborn.

Finally, Jenel Schaffer’s “Rabota” (an old word for “orphan”) and Diana Birdwell’s “Refuge in the Storm,” examine God’s role as Protector of His Creation. He didn’t create the world and forget about us. Instead, He actively watches over us and even seeks our friendship (see Kae Bucher’s “Judged” and “To Life!”).

When God empowers us to love and protect Nature and one another, He is supporting us to imitate His role as Nurturer. He is inviting us to enjoy the world with Him and, in doing so, to become just like Him.

“And God saw all that He had made, and it was very good.”-Moses

Thanks for reading,

Stephanie and Kimberly

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Judged  
by Kae Bucher

oh yeah, you were...

before you ever had the chance  
to figure it out,  
do it right,  
play the game,  
get the grade,  
earn the glory,  
lose the weight,  
and tell your story

you were judged,  
judged by God—

judged as fair  
as noontime doves  
nestled against  
egg blue skies and forget-me-not petals of  
meadow winds

framed by judgements  
in arms of sunrises,  
kissed by morning mists  
fed sweet milk lullabies  
next to laughing currents  
you awakened

to be judged

~...and behold it was very good...~ Genesis



Your Breath  
by Adrian Harrison



I marvel at God's creative hand  
how our passion has been fanned,  
to see the butterflies floating free  
his greatest love, all humanity.

Seeing life before first breath  
and the last throes of a peaceful death  
animals procreating in the food chains  
life goes on and the balance remains.

Rivers and lakes flowing so free  
amazing colours of flower and tree  
breathtaking views like Eden's vale  
Gods perfect love that will never fail.

Sunrise, sunsets, and bluest skies  
cyclic seasons help us realise  
His breath of life is everywhere  
giving life to every soul out there.

To Life!  
by Kae Bucher

Rushing out of a garden, *Chaim* gleams like a hell-bent river fish

He flies into and over and above  
stones  
searching for his wandering children,  
who (forgetting how to swim)  
lay panting like angry beached changelings,  
bending rusty nails  
into hooks.

They have forgotten  
who they are,  
forgotten who he is

and stab at him til  
red drops of love swirl  
into pink current moons-

yet all he feels  
is the reassuring tug of his children  
as he tows them safely  
to their garden  
home

where heaven awaits  
with sun-kissed towels  
and platters of fresh-picked love...



Giving Thanks for Life  
by Steve Gifford



While life on Earth is threatened, what ta do?  
Preserve, conserve, and simply serve, with love!  
A love sincere and helpful, kind and true,  
now, that's the type of care I'm speakin' of!  
If loving seems too difficult ta you,  
please, now devote yourself ta truth; you'll grow!  
And love will start ta fill ya, through and through,  
and you with heaven's Life and Light will glow!  
Oh, thank You, Lord, for Life abundant here,  
for all Your gifts, for being ever near!  
Thank You! Amen!

Entrusted Us  
by Makenna Witherell

God entrusted us with what He created  
we are to respect animals of all kinds  
from endangered to non-endangered species  
to respect the world in which He gave us.

Whether you believe it or not,  
God entrusted us with the whole universe  
that includes solid ground to oceans  
He asks us to respect the world in which we live in.

God also made all of us  
so why not respect one another.  
God entrusted us with each and every human being  
so each of us should get along.

From the sea to the solid ground,  
from birds that fly or ants that travel on the ground.  
To each and every human being  
God entrusted us with what He created.



## Refuge in the Storm

by Diana Birdwell

*Based on Isaiah 25:4*



God is our refuge in the storm  
A refuge who is our protector  
Those who are needy and poor, may God be your place of refuge  
Look to our Creator, He will give you peace  
He will calm the storms you are in  
To be needy and poor  
Seek God and you shall not be needy and poor ever more  
His love surrounds you  
Delight in His ways and He will be your light  
He is our refuge in the storm  
His love is our protection  
The poor and needy, God loves you  
Stay near to God for He will shelter you from the storms of life  
The needy and poor, forget them not  
As You are their refuge in the storm.

Sweet Pea  
by Kae Bucher

With ungrateful ears and eyes  
we deem little  
hands and feet bothersome,  
cumbersome, *unfit*  
to rest in the shade of our IMPORTANT  
cucumber patch lives...  
unfit to nestle

we wrestle  
with blades and spades  
and scalpels and knives  
against green peas  
who hang from umbilical vines,  
against green peas who defy  
our cucumber worlds where  
our daydreams  
bake like unswollen suns  
and “freedoms” yank  
lives right off the vine

where weeds and crisp brown leaves  
are fashionable  
and assorted  
aborted babies  
are pharmaceutically-correct  
commodities



where green peas are trampled  
underfoot  
and stale winds burn  
cigarette holes into unwanted pregnancies  
and no one is allowed  
to say much about it...

because we believe in peaceful places  
where cucumber tombs keep our lives free  
keep our lives safe  
from ever having to call  
a little one  
“sweet pea”

Rabota (Watercolor)  
by Jenel Schaffer



## Rabota

by Jenel Schaffer

How many times have I told myself, He is a Father to the Fatherless,  
One hundred, one thousand, countless numbers.  
Other voices too, silently praying and whispering "Father," "Father," "Father."  
He promises to cover those who are orphans, alone and abandoned.

His Kingdom was created for such as these.  
His heart has a special place for the little ones, left and lonely,  
Crying out to be loved, held and kissed.  
All things are under his dominion; He allows the good and evil.

He watches and waits to see who will act, who will be His hands,  
feet and loving arms on earth.  
Who will take charge and protect the babes and the broken ones?  
Will you turn your eyes and seek other things?

Or will you serve His people and show them how He loves us?  
Give to the little ones; they are not at fault.  
They look to us with deep pools begging for covering,  
We are His ambassadors, His stewards; serving angels unawares.

## Art of breathing

by Kae Bucher

Dare I become  
(for one life)  
a field left to its own device  
a sometimes surprising  
stark white branch blooming in winter  
a still-life lit by stars?

shall I give  
my only life  
for spring scents found in meadows  
rain drops on pink petals  
perfume mingles in dew-filled mists  
picnics on a small child's lips  
in lyrical abstraction?

should I barter seashells  
against saffrons peaking vales  
and warm flows on quiet waves  
where tans leave marks on limbs and legs  
and a soft-tailed doe chews steamy grass  
surreal in her perfection?

Yes...pour my passage in seasoned wines  
and effervescent flowing times  
where butterflies sip nectar  
and impressions wander through meadow weeds

please wrap my breaths around your finger...  
*so I can see streams of cactus bloom free*



## Contributors

### Editors

Stephanie Agnes-Crockett is a Library Technician and freelance journalist. Her writing appears in several Christian publications, as well as home-décor magazines. She enjoys sharing random questions and terrible puns on her blog, [www.vintagefloraldesign.wordpress.com](http://www.vintagefloraldesign.wordpress.com).

Editor and contributor Kimberly “Kae” Bucher is a barefoot poet who loves Jesus, social justice and sunlit paths which lead to peace for all of God’s creation. Her poetry has appeared (or is slated to appear in) *The Rappahannock Review*, *Awakened Voices Magazine*, *The Jewish Literary Journal*, *Snapdragon*, and *The Jewish Writing Project*. Visit her online at [www.bucketsonabarefootbeach.com](http://www.bucketsonabarefootbeach.com).

### Contributing Photographer

Michael Wilbur, Photographer: Cover image

Accompanying Photos for: “Your Breath,” “Giving Thanks for Life,” “Entrusted Us,” “Refuge in the Storm,” “Art of Breathing”

I’m just a dude who does as he do. I like to photograph pretty landscapes, cook and create stories. That’s pretty much it. Oh, and I like long walks on the beach at sunset. 😊

### Contributing Artist

Jenel Schaffer, Creator of “Rabota” (watercolor and poem)

Jenel Schaffer is a certified Art Teacher K-12 as well as a certified Family and Nutritional Herbalist. She has been teaching about herbs, nutrition, and art for over 10 years. Her work began in public school, then privately as an herbalist, then as a homeschool teacher, and currently as a contract art teacher at various locations in eastern Pennsylvania (with plans to teach in New England). Locations include the GoggleWorks in Reading PA, Trout Creek Healing Collective, Fleetwood & Kutztown libraries, Speckled Hen Coffee, Pathways to Healing, Oak Nut Farm, and private residences. Her website is [www.jbschafferartist.weebly.com](http://www.jbschafferartist.weebly.com)

### Contributing Writers

Adrian Harrison, author of “Your Breath”

I have been writing spiritual poems many years, but only started writing poetry seriously 13 months ago. I am 56, have a grown-up family and devote all spare time to writing. Shortly, I will be publishing two books that are in process of being put together at this time. I am male and have been happily married for 26 years.

## Contributing Writers (Contd.)

Steve Gifford, author of “Giving Thanks for Life”

Stephen Gifford is a baby-boomer hippy who lives next door to his lady friend of 31 years. Karma persuades him to spend time with the Lord, and he has written thousands of prayer poems.

Makenna Witherell, author of “Entrusted Us”

Makenna Witherell has dabbled in various poetic forms, including free verse, haiku and acrostics. “I don’t really have a favorite [form],” she says, “but I believe in writing from the heart.” Her selection, “Entrusted Us” is a powerful reminder from one heart to another. To read more of Makenna’s work, visit [www.allpoetry.com/makenna14](http://www.allpoetry.com/makenna14).

Diana Birdwell, author of “Refuge in the Storm”

My name is Diana. I am 37 and have been writing poetry for years. I have had some of my works published in different publications within the last 15 years. Writing poetry is my way to process my emotions of what I'm going through. What inspires me to write is through listening to music. Listening to music gets the juices flowing to where I'm able to write.

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