

THE SEVENTH QUARRY



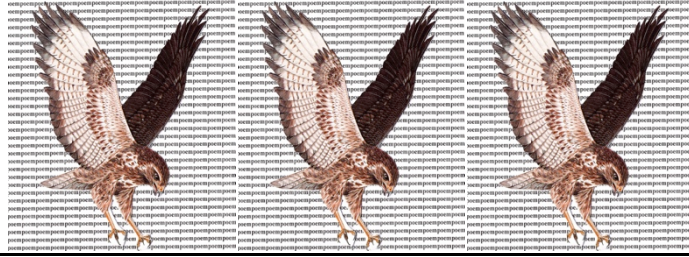
POETRY

ISSUE THIRTY-THREE

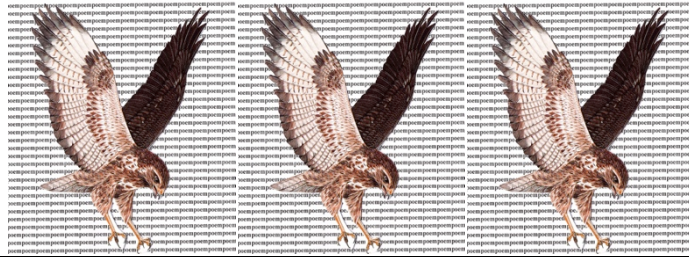
WINTER/SPRING 2021

SWANSEA POETRY MAGAZINE

THE



SEVENTH



QUARRY

SWANSEA POETRY MAGAZINE



ISSUE 33
WINTER/SPRING 2021

EDITORIAL
ISSUE THIRTY-THREE
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This issue features work from America, Canada, England, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Nigeria, Scotland, and Wales. It also includes a Poet Profile of American-Iranian poet Sepideh Zamani and an interview with Ireland-based Welsh poet K. S. Moore.

The collaboration between The Seventh Quarry Press and Stanley H. Barkan's Cross-Cultural Communications, New York, continues into 2021.

Many thanks to the contributors and to the magazine's subscribers for their ongoing support.

Special thanks to Stanley H. Barkan for allowing me to use the lines from his poem *Morning Poet*, from his book UNDER THE APPLE TREE, on the back cover.

Peter Thabit Jones, Editor

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THE SEVENTH QUARRY PRESS

Published by The Seventh Quarry Press

ISSN 1745-2236

Address: 8 Cherry Crescent, Parc Penderri, Penllergaer, Swansea SA4 9FG, Wales, UK.

www.seventhquarrypress.com

seventhquarry@btinternet.com

UK: £4.50 per issue or £9 annual subscription. USA: \$15 per issue or \$30 annual subscription. Please make UK/USA cheques out to Peter Thabit Jones.

Submissions: no more than FOUR poems.

Please enclose a s.a.e. with postal submissions.

Poets beyond UK must enclose an envelope with International Reply Coupons

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(photo © 2021 Peter Thabit Jones)

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This issue is dedicated to Aurel Pop (1949-2020), the highly respected Romanian poet, literary critic, and publisher.

I met Aurel in a college in Satu Mare in 2009, when we launched my verse drama, *The Boy and the Lion's Head*, translated into Romanian by Dr. Olimpia Iacob and published by his Citadela Publishing.

I recall a caring gentleman, a person who was very modest about his admirable achievements as a poet and a publisher. He gave me a batch of the books, beautifully produced, to take back to my home in Wales. I will be ever grateful to have known him and to have experienced his genuine kindness, and ever grateful and honoured to be listed as one of the poets published by him.



Aurel Pop

AGOR Y CLAWDD*

As they stabbed and
punctured the years of
entanglement, bramble
invaders reached out

their arms, the gorse
wept her yellow tears
knowing her seeds were
sleeping safely underground.

The wind-bend hawthorn,
who never did care where
she was placed, released
a trembling of birds as

her roots were ripped
from the ground.
Earth-scent trickled
from them, warning

others in a language,
too slow to save them,
but maybe one day
we'd understand.

(*clearing the hedgerow- Welsh)

Ness Owen Wales

DISTURBING THE ARTIST

*(After The Hall of Illusion
Ed Povey)*

You have been warned
Don't talk to artist

don't ask him where
to begin or the names

of those soldiers you
know never saw home
again.

Breathe quietly
here behind him,
hungry for any story
that isn't yours.

Search for the
agony in faces
you know will
betray your form.

Who isn't drawn to fire?

you ask the heart
beat in your womb
pour your life over
his shoulder knowing
he won't look back.

Ness Owen Wales

**AT TWO A.M., THE JUKEBOX SHAKING
WITH "JUMPIN' JACK FLASH" in 1975**

He never misses a shot
when the Stones are rocking closing time
and Jagger rasps, "I was born
in a cross-fire hurricane,"
while Lysol lights flicker
and Christopher blasts
the eight ball across
a hallucination of so much
green everyone's loud voice
tucks into a whisper
that his chalked blue will always
be kissing the smudged orb.

They haven't seen him lean
into the shot like that before,
his hip up and over the bumper
in the body language of nudging
some nobody's-out-of-his-league girl
from high school, or peer down the cue
sighting the Euclidean logic
of a difficult bank to beat the two
guys from the mine in their rust-stained
jeans, hooded sweatshirts,
and horror when they see the eight-
ball bank career into the hole
where they spend all their days,
digging for any excuse to crawl
into the disgusting daylight of a town
that can never clean itself up.

Russell Thorburn America

NOISES OFF

We lay in bed, shoulder to chest,
And I heard your beating heart;
It spoke of spring and Equinox.
Your listening transcended me:
"That's the recycle van," you said;
I heard a random chug and whirr.
Then a sudden thump above my head.
"The man upstairs moves something heavy,
Solid as well, by the sound of it."
The blow for me spread like a bruise,
Black starburst on the floor above.
Then you: "That rattle is the postman."
I just discerned a tic-tac by the wall.
Your sensing, like your heart, moves beyond me.
I wriggle closer; flatten my flesh.

Rob Lowe Wales

GLENMORE

The crack of something falling; then the lull
of cloudbanks pulling silently apart
above the valley. Round their ragged cast
a dog comes racing; muscles bunched and loosed

and all the hillside turning— beaten ground
becoming water.

--

It was not the blood
that issued cleanly from the lurcher's mouth
and tipped her forepaws, as we caught the bird
and brought it clear. The way the feathers lay

was beautiful; unbodied in the light
their colours rose and shifted.

What remained
was absence—of a quickly fading warmth
and the bright slope of a hillside.

Anna Forbes Scotland

COLLECTOR

Taking a robin's egg
between finger and thumb
and piercing it twice
with a darning needle

you expelled
the whole of its interior
in three phlegmatic gobbets
tinged with red

which spattered
like dropped paint

onto the surface
of the kitchen table.

I watched you
swaddling your prize
in its new nest
of whitened cotton

longing
to hide myself
inside the sanctum
of that blown out sphere.

Anna Forbes Scotland

SEWING LESSON

We stick, and have nowhere
To go. So we go in, needle,
Thread into cloth. Puncture-
Suture-stab and heal.

Letting go. Voices in the round.
We root down, become joined
In tight weave, subtle sound
Only gods hear and know.

Worms traversing through
Thick fabric of mud, rain
Diving in to last dust of snow.

Karen Poppy America

CATS VERSUS ANTELOPES

Now it was my turn to smile faintly. I was not going to let anyone-not even the British poet from St. Louis-spoil my Literary Evening. —Groucho Marx, in a June 1964 letter to his brother, Gummo, regarding dinner in London with his “celebrated” pen pal, T.S. Eliot

Antelopes move
Composed,
Lyrically.

I am the antelope,
The poet, returned
To the field.

Before you, I bow
My great horns,
Never obsequiously.

Then I run you through
With the most
Magnificent part of me.

Your cons, always greater
Than your prose, but
I still love the cats.

Karen Poppy America

ELEMENTS

Snow

A million poems
A million voices
Falling flakes,
Some will stick
Some will fade away

Rain

An infinity of droplets
Caught in a catcher like dreams
Sending me to sleep

Sipping like a bird

Hail

Drumming on the stones
A cacophony of icicles;
A solo performance
Swept away

Clouds

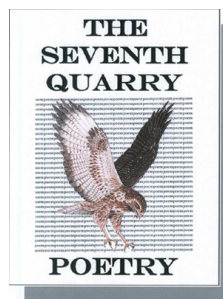
Gods in the sky
Shape shifters
Silently moving;
My head is still

Rivers

Heraclitus stood here once
Observing change

Noticing

Gerry Ray Wales



A BARITONE OF SLAUGHTERED WHALES

Today I am a cello
Bowing longer sounds
Along the length legato strings
To draw a broken heart:
A baritone of slaughtered whales by Bach

Today I am a violin
Perky, plucky, pizzicato
On top of the world
Of trifling matters:
A country boy of fiddling trifles

Today I am a terrible trumpet
Blasting notes in a stadium
Of diabolical chants we have to win
In a game or else we fly
A honey bee into the bog

Today I am a triangle
Or a glockenspiel in a lesson
From a teacher pale with music
Copying notes into a book
I never read

Gerry Ray Wales

I turned around and you were gone by Rhoda Thomas.

A collection of 30 poems and illustrations.

Published by Sketty Books. Price 7.50/ISBN 978-0-9575918-4-4

Information on the book is available from rhodathomas1917@yahoo.com

REINDEER

I am the reindeer
thundering the hungry tundra
blundering into the thickness of the blizzard
under an oblivion of white.
Snow birds hurtle, slash and scream
until the blind wind bleeds my ears of sound.
The arctic sky scorches my brain.
Lights flash green, extravagant,
shift into violet,
ambivalent, delusional, malevolent.
I am steadied by the North Star,
as magnet to steel.

My blood beats warm and timeless.
My shamanic lungs surge
as I lunge to leap
the gap between worlds.
Groundless, my hooves lift
and I soar into the starving mouth of the night.

This girl child clings to my neck,
thin arms around my bellowing throat,
feet black with the kiss of frost.
She is weary with relentless travelling
and tireless with the hope of her journey.

I must bear her
to the Snow Queen's ice palace,
the glacial lake,
the frozen mirror,
broken, glittering, tricking,
to find her solitary brother
silent, geometric,
locked in abstraction,
fragmented
in the hostility of eternal winter.
And melt the glass splinter
in his eye, his heart,
with her tears.

Winter 2017

(Inspired by the Hans Anderson tale of the Snow Queen)

Rosy Wood-Bevan Wales

VIEW FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE RABBIT HOLE

What is this thing come
tumbling into the dark
thudding on the soft leaves
at the bottom of my heart?

Quick, hold it up to the light
Of the faraway pin-hole sky.
We need to see the colour of its eyes.

I was not expecting this visitor
Yet am not resisting
The recognition
In its vision.

(If you sing I will know who you are.
When you sing I will know who I am.)

Are we fragments of your sleeping fantasies
or tree roots that dream of the breeze?
Old bones reincarnating in this underground dawn.

But this is not your place to stay
nor my place to keep you here.
Transitory sister,
borrowed brother,
found and lost child,
rebirthing in reverse,
burrowing and rabbit-holed

You will follow the lolloping lapine
into the blind limbed labyrinth
and leave by the small door
I had not seen before

Eat me, drink me.
Meet me.
Think of me
No more.

Rosy Wood-Bevan Wales

“VIS-À-VIS”

No one calls me at night.
I am forgotten like carrion.
Who would care?
Where would I end up?
If not in a hospital room, bare and white.

Like a wounded beast, half dead,
That is trudging towards a trap,
I am trying to come back to life,
Rising out of the books I've read.
It's not about the mortality of life.

That's not the case.
It is about the uselessness of those boring rules,
Suggesting we continue a senseless race
Without any conscious thoughts.
Without any goals that make sense,
Only to reach a really “fun” end.

It's not that I am waiting for somebody to call.
They have been loveless,
As if selected-all.
My heart is pricked by their greed and gall.
Sunsets of recurrent patterns.
And so let it be.
My life is vis-a-vis.

Steven Duplij (Stepan Douplii) Germany
Translated by Larissa Kulinich

POET PROFILE: AMERICAN-IRANIAN POET SEPIDEH ZAMANI



Sepideh Zamani © 2021 Sepideh Zamani

Sepideh Zamani (born 1973 in Iran) graduated from law school in 1999 and moved to United States two years later. Her essays, short stories, novels, and poems focus on immigration, gender inequality, and the lives of ethnic and religious minorities under cultural and religious cleansing and assimilation. Her book collections include: *Barbuda*, short stories, published in Persian in 2016; *Ouroboros*, her first novel, published in London in 2018; and *Women Looking at the Sky*, short stories, published in 2019. Forthcoming in 2020 is collection of short stories, *Sleeping in a Dark Cave*. She also translates from and into Persian. She translated *The Divine Kiss* by Carolyn Kleefeld and *Pumpernickel* by Stanley Barkan into Persian. Zamani is a member and Persian translator of the cultural foundation ITHACA of Point Editions.

IN THE MIDST OF WINTER

Rain fell
And the window wept
Snow fell
And the window frosted

The window was stuck in the midst of winter
As I awaited the seasons
But the window,
This window was forgotten.

Sepideh Zamani America

THE PHOENIX

A woman descended from Gordafarid
Removed her white scarf in silence
Atop a platform on Revolution Street
And held it up on a tall staff.

Her hair fell down against her shoulders
Her scarf held in the sky like a flag
As if a spark in a stack of hay
Setting fire to the evil around.

People of strange descent
Began to drag her to the ground
As though the woman had raised the flag
To declare a war against the man.

Unaware that for centuries
Every time they burned her down
Just like the Phoenix, from her ashes
She was reborn, rising above and flaming again.

Sepideh Zamani America

HARAZ TO ARAS

Snow, white and cold
From Haraz to Aras
Rests on my memory.
Snow high and tall
Covered the motherland
With no end in sight.

Dreaming or wide awake
Fed up with all that was
Drowning in life itself
As I prepared to leave
When the time came to pass
Through the long, twisted path.

All that was and is
I left behind and never looked back
As if they didn't exist
And with them I left the terrors
The blurred days of that past
Although they still persist.

Sepideh Zamani America

ETERNAL

I dream sometimes
of my father in our last call.
He said, "I was waiting for you."
And I was delighted
for calling in time,
though it was our farewell
which was short
but long as eternity:
Eternal like the frequently wet roofs
and humid days of Shahi,
eternal like farmers
who plow in order to sow seeds
and loosen and harrow the soil

each spring.

Shahi: a city in Mazandaran Province, Iran

Sepideh Zamani America

HEADLESS GERANIUMS

In my motherland,
the geraniums are headless
soon after they bloom.
Sometimes their heads are broken
by the stones thrown at them.
Sometimes they're beheaded.
Other times they're sacrificed
with a knife at their throats.
Recently a sniper
shot them in the head.
When you arrive in my motherland,
ask about the Geraniums
because it seems like the whole world
believes this to be a rumor
or they'd rather just ignore it.
Should you arrive in my motherland,
ask about Geraniums—
They are all headless.

Sepideh Zamani America

STORM

Even if the storm takes my hand
and runs with me along this path,
I won't have the chance to unite with you.
I must play the tar and sing.
Thousands of poems must leave my lips
so that maybe
in the rapture of my strumming and songs and poetry,
a miracle will occur
and I will forget

my wandering
in search of you.

Tar: an Iranian long-necked, waisted instrument.

Sepideh Zamani America

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THE BOOK OF CHANGES CAME WITH CROWS

Two crows watch their buddy from a madrona.
He is reading aloud from his book of changes.
Words drift round like leaves
saying crows are wind drifters and root torches.
Words rise in green whispers
telling of when three crows
courted a Salish sea rose
the color of mountain faces.
Three crows sail the flag of creation,
painting themselves into the landscape
of our hours and footsteps.
They invite us to taste the years of rages
and illness and touch the medicine of the earth.
We wake to three crows holding the tail of time.

Duane Niatum America

WELSH RIVER BOY, SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

My antecedent Gwilym was brought up
on the banks of the River Gwaun.
They had a smallholding, milking cattle, hens,
alongside the gurgle of the river,
not that much bigger than a busy stream,
running down to Fishguard and the bay.

Gwilym was happy there but in time
he hankered for wider, deeper waters.
He went to work on the Fishguard ferries,
crossing to Rosslare on the Irish Sea.
He loved the spray, the movement. Days off,
he was back by the Gwaun, calling home.

And then to wider waters still, Southampton port,
a job as crew on the liners to New York.
He'd get home now and again, loved the stays
with his parents, in the green region
where mallards nested half a mile downstream
and the Gwaun pulsed and bubbled to the bay.

After he'd gone to America, he never got back,
but he'd write, faithfully. He told them of the crash
of the bull market, which sounded to them
more like Fishguard fair, not New York style at all.
They knew themselves that times were tough.
Prices were struggling. Dairy was getting by.

His final journey was not across waters
but a trek across land, to California.
He told them of the project in San Joaquin Valley.
He was helping to build canals and aqueducts,
bring irrigation, combat drought. Meanwhile,
the Gwaun still gurgled down to Fishguard bay.

Robert Nisbet Wales

SPHERE SPUN by Jim Gronvold

Jim Gronvold's *Sphere Spun* is a collection of poems that reflect thoughtful simplicity,
respect for nature and a poet's appreciation for being alive.

Price: \$15.00 ISBN 978-1-73629-730-8

\$10.00 Kindle Edition

GARDEN OF PLAS NEWYDD

It was the garden that drew me –
walking home from school,
green topiary – almost emerald –
so precise and cultivated.

Not until years later
did I hear how two women
lived in this black and white
timbered cottage, visited
by poets and artists.

I always wanted to see
beyond the last bushes,
into deeper shadows,
slipping away to a
wooded hillside.

Not once did I see anyone
tending the shrubs, clipping
with small shears their
perfect rounds and ovals.

They shone in sunshine,
deepened in rain,
could easily have been
a picture behind glass
shimmering in a frame.

Frances Sackett England

NEAR ST. QUENTIN

After *A Front Line Near St. Quentin* by C.R.W. Nevison (1889-1946)

The distant trees are plumes
of smoke in this desolate place.
Old snow brushing the earth to the horizon.
A barbed wire fence, broken now,

between the lines of no-man's land.
But poppies grow
scarlet, sparse, born
from blood and body parts.

I look at the postcard
showing Nevison's bleak portrayal,
then at a photograph –
cricketers in the 1950's,
lining up with their winning cup.

And stuck to the back, as though
to fill a frame, another card -
two brothers killed in France,
used to back the happy team,
who in their summer whites,
had never known the carnal
fields of Somme.

Frances Sackett England

THE MORNING BUS COMMUTER

When she got off the bus, she did not look
the sort to smoke. A few steps later her mouth
blew out the day before.

She was the height of a winter's horizon.
Hair cut in half by a bobble. Hood covered
in fur, pockets big enough for a C5 envelope.

Her legs bundled forward as her voice
chatted to a work colleague.
Some of her words got lost in the passing traffic.

When I passed by I felt her follow my steps
as a car in a cul-de-sac. My feet quickened up
the morning, and when I turned the corner

I saw her come down the street steady as a ship
into port. I did not know her last week
but this week I do.

Gareth Culshaw Wales

BEFORE THE MORNING BEGAN

The morning had not begun when I walked to work.
I waited under an oak tree, watched the sunlight
start to grab the earth as a bowler with a cricket ball.

The branches above my head veined the sky
a church steeple grew as a weed from a shadowed
garden. A robin sung from somewhere in my head.

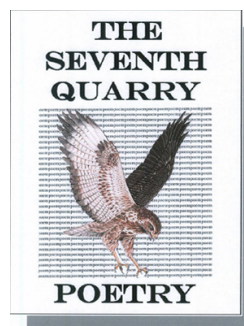
Streetlights held their glow while the sun climbed
out of space as a child out of bed on a school morning.
I stood listening to a roaring river take away the night.

For a time I had my head to myself. Saw the hills rise
from the ground, heard cars rotate the earth, caught
a glimpse of my sleep in the currents of the water.

Then a dog walker broke up the pavement with their boots.
A double-decker crashed through the clouds. Mallards
became disgruntled, and the sun rounded the sky.

So I walked to work unsure of where I live.

Gareth Culshaw Wales



A MATTER OF HOPE

From ages to ages
the light is still burning
in the deepest nights

when the raging storms
try to switch it off
the gentle sun always
keeps the blindness away
when a gleam is still at sight

no more grief in dark old nights
since the blaze of the gentle light
will always ignite hope and good deeds
from time to time for happy endings
in the good nights

Huguette Bertrand Canada

AN AFTERNOON VISIT

Alongside a man in a white coat
I went down downbeat corridors,
narrow windows as tall as totem poles
put a black hat on my head;
the walls stored dark secrets
that ebbed in my ear,
like a tar-feathered tide at midnight.
Girls who broke Godly codes
forfeited the right to waltz with the wind
and spin in the sun.
Priests paved their way to exile.
to a domain of locked doors.
Recollections as deep as a cavern
surfaced in thimble sized doses;
visitors were fewer than foxes in daylight.
Figures as fragile as bone-china
paced to an inner compass,

cigarettes dangled from closed lips,
smoke soared like small bonfires.
Characters were as wistful as willows;
a therapist enticed their fingertips to move
in slow motion till they created sketches.

Ann Flynn England

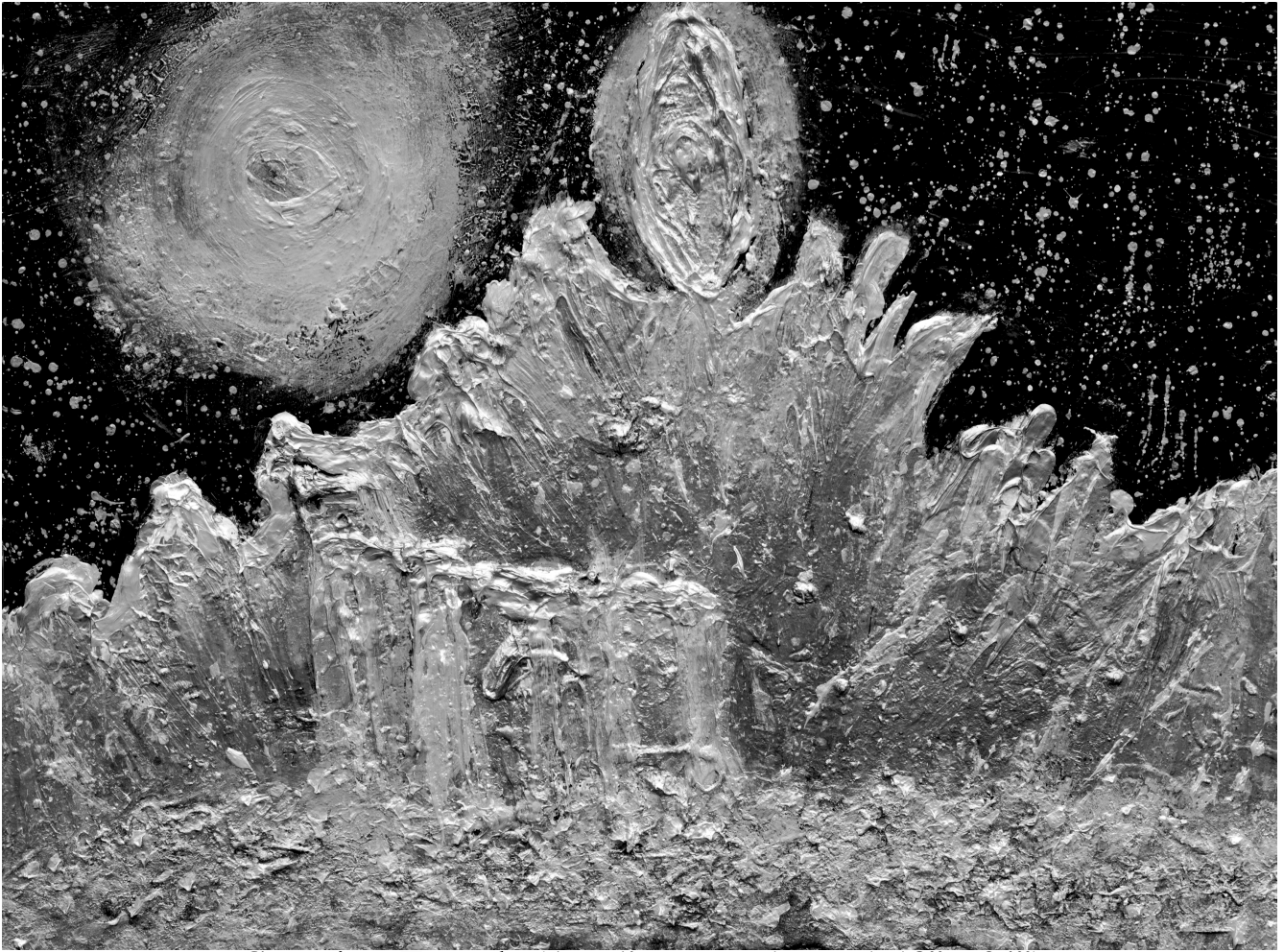
CARA

A captive cat arrived for appraisal.
I was told troubled folk
had given her up for adoption.
She had three birthdays;
a hazy image emerged.
She hid beneath a cupboard,
without pen and paper, she made a statement,
laid low for a second chance.
I vowed to be a worthy owner.

Her presence lit up a space,
a purr travelled to alien territory.
Trust grew in subtle ways;
her soulful eyes transmitted her name.
Special words were uttered wistfully,
Cara crept into a labyrinth,
advanced in the right direction.
She made her dream known,
the ghost poet had paws.

Ann Flynn England

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Croatian Temple (Acrylic on Hard Board, 18" x 24")
© 2021 Carolyn Mary Kleefeld

THE FREEDOM OF THE CLOUDS

The sleek limbs of the pines,
moistened by the spring rain,
are entwined like the limbs of lovers
after their feasts of love.

Although the churn of sea
resounds below,
the day is calm.

A necklace of raindrops
falls from unfurling blossoms,
revealing a transparent beauty—
the face of spring to be.

And I let my spirit merge
with the freedom of the clouds,
billowy white and drifting
after the storm.

Carolyn Mary Kleefled America

THE DRY AND THE ZODIAC

The creek is shallow and running slow.
Winds do their best to rip the top soil from the fields.
Give it time. This will be desert yet.
Meanwhile, up in the sky - a lion, a goat, a ram.
They're, no doubt, doing well for themselves.
But, in the earth, the crop is no more
than the jawbone of a sheep.
No doubt, the deadly scorpion will make much of this.

There is the archer's bow.
May as well aim its best arrow for a heart.
All this dust, red-eyed, no rain,
and heat that seeks out rattlesnakes
coiled on heathen rocks.

High on the hill, many a stone cross,
where faith met a devil
as relentless as a virulent parching sun.

Old fossils. Ditches dug in futile search for anything liquid.
Unlike the water-bearer in the sky,
her jug brimming.
All that zodiac. But none of any use.
Not a fish. Well maybe the scales.
They seem to recognize the reality
that drags ambition down.
And the grinning twins – sister bad and brother worse.

John Grey America

THE SPELL

Did it really happen?
Was that your mother
flying high above the rooftops
holding tight to her broom?
Did she wear black cape
and pointed hat?
Did she cackle and curse,
shriek shrill as a water-bird?
You can't believe
she was ever so active.

What's next?
She casts a spell
on those doctors who
poke and prod
or the nurses
who shove pills into her mouth?
Imagine an entire hospital staff
covered in warts
or turned into frogs
or, most ironic of all,
given some of their own medicine.

But it didn't happen.
She's lying in bed,
her body
a highway grid of tubes
coming and going.
She doesn't speak.
She recognizes no one.

If there's dark magic at work here,
then she is its victim.
Ninety years of a hard unselfish life
appeared momentarily
at the bottom of the bed.
They waved a wand in her direction.

John Grey America

THE SEVENTH QUARRY SWANSEA POETRY MAGAZINE

aims to publish quality poems from around the world. Poets from the U.K., Albania, America, Argentina, Australia, Bulgaria, Belarus, Canada, Catalonia, China, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Holland, India, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Philippines, Pakistan, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Sicily, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland have already appeared in its pages.

Each issue features a Poet Profile, a batch of pages given over to a chosen poet. There is also a Books and Magazines section, which provides details and brief comments on received publications.

The magazine is a cooperating partner with Stanley H. Barkan's Cross-Cultural Communications publishing company, New York. The partnership has already contributed to the magazine being displayed at several prestigious literary events in America and the publication in the magazine of work by the late, Pulitzer Prize-winner Stanley Kunitz.

The magazine is contracted to The Poetry Library's (Royal Festival Hall, London) prestigious digitisation project, which ensures sample copies of the magazine are featured on its very popular website: regarded by many as the best source for poetry in the U.K. EBSCO (USA) archives digitised copies of each issue of the magazine. The magazine was featured in THE GUARDIAN, one of Britain's leading daily newspapers, in April 2006. It was also awarded SECOND BEST SMALL PRESS MAGAZINE IN THE U.K. 2006 by PURPLE PATCH (U.K.).

The editor has organised THE SEVENTH QUARRY PRESENTS poetry evenings. The first, at the Dylan Thomas Centre in Swansea, featured a visit by American poet Stanley H. Barkan. In its collaboration with Cross-Cultural Communications, The Seventh Quarry Press has organised several international festivals, which have taken place at the Dylan Thomas Theatre, Swansea.

The magazine is now 64-88 pages and appears twice a year, in Winter/Spring and Summer/Autumn.

UK: £4.50 per issue or £9 for a year's subscription (two copies). USA: \$15 per issue or \$30 for a year's subscription (two copies). Further information at www.seventhquarrypress.com or seventhquarry@btinternet.com

**VISIT THE NEW THE SEVENTH QUARRY PRESS WEBSITE:
a Shop to buy TSQ Press books, copies of the magazine, subscription facility, a Poet of the
Month section, and other sections: www.seventhquarrypress.com**

OUR SHORELINE

Waves ebb, tide turns,
seawater's retreat unveils
rippled sands hard underfoot.
Sun rises, dries our sodden beach
to softness and rough, warmed grains
stick, shred skin between my toes.
Abrasion's never far away,
even on our good days.

Ceinwen E Cariad Haydon England

ILLNESS

laid low I dream of slopes
heights impossible to climb
frisky huskies damp coated
ripe-perfumed romp up
to lick my hands and face
eager to pull my over- burdened sleigh

Ceinwen E Cariad Haydon England

BAGGED

Barcelona –
our local bar bustles encounters.
I sit down next to a last empty chair,
commandeer it with my bag –
determinedly deny
permanence in your absence.

Ceinwen E Cariad Haydon England

ON THIS DEAR DAILY ORDINARY

She'll be a turtle, head down inside
crumpled bedding, eyes squeezed tight
against the penetrating assault of light

and maybe she'll manage a few more
lazy minutes in bed. But,
those dear daily ordinaries

prod and tease her swaddled self
down from dream's filmy heights
and plunk her directly into a surround of sound:

awake and twittering for hours, birds
drop choice breakfast morsels
into yawning maws of their young.

Now, as sun's rays
plait her eyelashes, she'll
fully waken to this golden morning.

Frane L. Helner America

DOING HIS BEST

For Poppa, food, like clothes,
was not best when new;
give the round pumpernickel
spiced with caraway time
to age, meld flavors, dry
the pasty yeast at its center
into dense bread ready to support
a *shtickle* onion, *shmear schmaltz*,
slab purple turnip; then,
then, you've got a *gezunte nosh*.

As for new clothes friends and family insist he needs,
Poppa will stroke the soft fabrics,

give the giver thanks, a hug, then
return items to their original gift boxes
gilded with logos from elite shops
he has never wanted to enter.
Enclosed birthday or Chanukah cards
Poppa neatly tucks in fabric's folds.
Each box is then added
to the stack on his closet shelf.

The striped gabardine vest
Poppa wears every day
has a rip at the neck,
ritually done at his wife, Rose's, funeral.
Better, Poppa said, than wearing
a meaningless black ribbon.
Since that day he cries into the deaf sky: "Rosie,
Rosie, why didn't you tell me what to do?"
and goes on doing what a lonely Jew does:
daven; pray for an answer.

Frane L. Helner America

**Awarded the 2020 Korean Poets Society of America/
Miju Poetry & Poetics English-language Award**

**GARDEN OF CLOUDS/NEW AND SELECTED POEMS
by Peter Thabit Jones**

Published by Cross-Cultural Communications, USA

ISBN 978-0-89304-236-3

Price: \$ 20.00/ £10.00

Available: spd@spdbooks.org (USA)

Cover to Cover sales@cover-to-cover.co.uk (UK)

THE MOTHS AND ME

look at the world and look at my TROUSERS!”
— Samuel Beckett, Endgame

The moths and I had come to an accommodation,
or so I'd thought, informal consensus
ad idem of a hole or two, collateral filigree

above the ankle or etching on a sleeve
the sort of aperture that some clever people know
may artfully be hidden by a brief

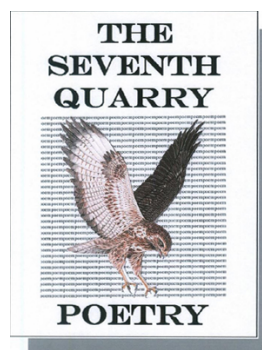
of fabrication, codicil to a skein.
And I'd retain my investigations
into fine hosiery, they confine their

depredations to that adjudicated
well-knit zone that's jealous of the ankle,
legal tender of the bone. Enough of understandings,
vague meetings of the minds, from this line on
I've set my sights on absent comprehension,
for what did those socks ever do to any lepidopterist

except insist they be worn, in general,
in pairs? I'm done: ex nunc and de futuro
I'll hold my ravening tongue; would the moths

had withheld theirs.

Bruce Robinson America



UMPTEENTH VIEW OF MT. FUJI

The selfie is a cover-up: it hides the true self.
-India Ennenga

Strange, though, I can't remember
a single thing about that day,
the weather, sky, only that it was April
and only that it was April

because that was when I was there.
And I still don't know why I took this;
maybe I was feeling confident
in the capacity of my battery,

proud of the gold strand of the
Hokusai shirt, ah, that's it...
it was the 37th view of Fujiyama
and I, grim as always yet

adamant in my satisfaction,
could not know there was
anyone else nearby.

Bruce Robinson America

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**POETRY/PROSE/ARTWORK/CHILDREN'S
PROSE/LITERARY/DRAMA**

ODE TO APOLLO 11

'We listen here on earth'
– John Keats, *Ode to Apollo*

Apollo, you give breath to poets,
And need none yourself;

Far above us, you swallow black.

You fire the arrow made of men and steel and challenge.
Ten times you have drawn the billion dollar bow
And learned from your misses, your Houstonian problems,
That the widows of your flyts burden your godhead.

You dip your arrows in flames and thunder.

As he rose his new-forged armour shone
And dimmed the light of hot Hyperion.

A splash of adamantine shuttle and white starlight
Against the black,

Like an inverted printed page.

Today, you are lighter than ink, and tree skin;
Lighter than breath.

Today, you live in the mouth of your priest.
He has a white body, and a black face;
In his visor's reflection trace the expectant eyes
Of an entire race.

He walks the silver sickle shape,
Reaps the feast of virgin dust and starlight;
Speaks the words the world remembers.

He touches the goddess's skin.
It is dry and wisps away at his step.

Poets' god, you create new worlds,
Walk the dead orb magnificent in desolation.

Apollo, god of poetry, prophecy and moonboots.

Daniel Hinds England

THE RITE OF WINTER (A Sequel to *Le Sacre du Printemps*)

Part I: The Kiss of the Earth is Rough and Stubbly

After the ritual, the girl claws her way out;
The dead earth crowns.

Her plaited hair tethers her to the split soil
Like some vast umbilical. Snaps with a brace of ice.

Her bones are twisted wire, barbed,
They tug against her skin, compressed,
They coil into

Springs.

Riotous clouds drop torn up notes, scatter snowflakes,
To weigh down the world with pentagram shapes. Her feet are light.

Her feet are bloody from leaping spheres,
Seasons, lifetimes.

No girls surface from the river.
They split their skulls on the icy skin.

Part II: The Sacrificed

Through the mirror she sees who she would have been
Grown old.

Winter's dance is in snap-thaw jerks, her body
Cracks.

The Sage was old even in spring, in winter
She makes him dance dead feet on hot coals.

Often, he treads on his beard, for the boards she trod.

Her lover is dead. Yarilo sleeps and next season
Will take a new bride. Her spirit is suffused

With his spent seed, the last volts of the votive rite.

She leaps; she will never touch the ground again.

Daniel Hinds England

TOURS

Back of the Montego, your sopranos
warbling, dog high. Ginger for carsickness.

Castles, (ten castles) and an aunt. On less
sleep than a football match, three comatose

sloped face dozers with me. Giggled out. Driving
a £400 transit van. Crawling

up each damn hill in Yorkshire. Summiting
if the engine cooled down. Brained, arriving

home from Edinburgh Fringe. Glastonbury
festival. Shows at theatres that were once

working factories: hat, match, tobacco.
Yawning, book tired, on the south-westerly

train to your funeral. Sat in silence
in the back of an anonymous hearse.

Lawrence Illsley Wales

BOTTLE

When I noticed that you'd gone,
I ran down to the front door
and stood behind the locked frame,
looking through the twelve panels of glass
at the corner where the gravelled road
curved away up the hill.

One glass pane was contoured
like the bottom of a bottle -
a push up, shove up, kick up base.
My stricken hands strained
against the wooden struts
as my hot eyes bored fruitlessly

through the twisted glass, into a world
distorted. I willed
you to appear - to roll back towards me -
but without effect;
I was only a child and you
rarely went away.

Fifteen years later I found the lump
sunk beneath my clavicle,
behind the rolling curve of my shoulder,
a stopper in my neck
like the glass marble from a Codd-neck
bottle - a lump in my throat.

You'd been through this
once before. The telling.
The hearing. When I spoke to you
that day in the kitchen I watched
the dread rising, your legs vitrifying
as you looked at me

with magnified eyes
as if through rheumy quartz,
blown glass between us,

the sick and the well. Your right hand lifted
up to touch this invisible pane, then dropped,
clenching into a fist by your side.

Lawrence Illsley Wales

DREAMS BEFORE SUNRISE

After Dreams Before Sunrise, Acrylic on Canvas,
42 x 50” 2019 by Marsha Solomon

At dusk,
dark images form,
nightmares in
shadowed motion.

At dawn,
at the cusp of sunrise,
daymares are born.

Each is a transit point
before fantasy
before reality.

It is at the edge—
just before we sleep,
just before we wake—
idea and image
merge in dappled dreams.

Stanley H. Barkan America

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APRIL, 2020

The earthly force that always assists
persists, for us grass-people.
Women in straw hats with baskets
coaxing confetti to root
forcing sea foam to blossom, to fruit.
Effervescent seed, you have her word
--sow it, believe, and wait.

Condolences and gondolas glide
over charted statistics of cities.
We cast prayers and oil upon the water,
read predictions, calculate oblivion
--it's all right.
We'll dangle our fingers in tomorrow's river
imagining another night.

A wash of ardor and breeze
cleanses the exhausted meat of commerce,
stalled traffic, masked mouths, disease.
Today she said—I'll find ways
to converse with local bees, create
a hive of healing flames
floating gold in fresh air, immaculate.

This we learned observing waterfalls
and hearing doves' soft cries
at the end of the day
--to stay still and listen
for the crack of dead wood, the hiss of ice melting
the exclamations of pink blossoms released at last
from expectation into real sunlight.

April 25, 2020

Susan Roether America

MY POEM TO YOU (poem 3)

Is an expression of love
in a thousand tongues
A fertilization of pollen grains;
in the bloom of it's flowering
I shall weave a nest of roses
with this fluttering musing within

My poem to you

Is the glistenings of a million lantern
hanging in the midnight skies
One-by-one they shall become a
constellation of verses illuminating
the universe

My poem to you

A dose of elixir for thy weary soul
"Drink my child, drink".
From this calabash where words
become our only fortress on nights
were herdsmen unleash terror on our lands

My poem to you

A cradle of black heritage
A citadel from whence we shall
wave the flag of peace in yria
For we are the voices from yonder
Whose yelling echoes across the ocean.

EPISTLES (poem 4)

I could write the saddest lines
tonight. I could say the night is
broken and it's limes are fractured
I could chronicle creeds of Notre -
dame and how this ancient wall

bowed to the abyss of a modern
world

I could scribble a dirge to bring
calm on this wilderness. To tell
you about days when there are
no songs left in my lungs. When
the moon absconded to hide its
face behind the timid sun.

I could write about the Holocaust
and the crucified love for humanity
snooping through wreckages of war
With the souls of men blown away
like breath into the innocent dark

I could say these women died while
embracing life. I could write epistles
from this asylum to tell you about
nightmares, broken dreams and the
struggle of Aba women. The tomb -
stone told when they died ---

1929

Jesam Eko Nigeria

ROLLING GAIT

A limping old man is walking
on his artificial leg,
carrying a paper grocery bag,
full of marmalade, buns and eggs
I'm a man abandoned by God
 He thought
trapped by my own ambition
and disillusioned by love
 What am I?

A toast.

A toast? He asked himself

A toast lost in the sea of butter....
What is left of me?

Row!
keep rowing! Oh, woeful soul!
keep rowing in the galley!
and share your miserable crumble breads
with the sparrows and mourning doves.
He laughed at his own silly thoughts
while fixing his brown-haired wig
and kept limping along
a San Francisco sidewalk.

Werner Schumann Germany

THE DUEL

Today the prose will be tepid and
the night will be longer
Today the land will be drier and
the breeze will be frigid
Today the rain will be acid and
the silver will be corroded
Today the bottles will be emptied and
the heart will be exempted
Today the devil will be blue and
the pasta will be al dente
Today the razors will be sharper and
a rose, well, a rose will be just a rose
Today there will be a duel
just between me and myself
and only one of us will be left standing
Today will be the day!

Werner Schumann Germany

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MACHINE GUN

In the first World War,
machine guns were placed on raised ground
so their arc could sweep across
the wide stretch of land in front of them.
In this way, when masses of men
struggled towards them, the bullets sprayed,
slamming into their bodies, mowing them
down as a reaper might mow wheat.
After, all is stillness. Perhaps
the gunner sits stunned. The
hot gun smokes and smells and some
of the bodies can still make soft noises.
In a while, they must stink there, below the guns.

Inside me,
the bodies have been cleared.
The muddy furrows and the snapped
and snagged wire, they are also gone.
There is now, nothing there.

Jim Conwell England

THE LABOURER

He was proud to go home on the tube,
filthy from head to toe at the end of the day.
After demolishing shite all day long.
Knocking the crap out of it.
After sitting there on his arse,
legs braced to hold the drill steady,
making a lot more noise than was
good for the ears but revelling
in the noise and the mess.
Looking over the top
of the balcony wall at the students
going into their pristine white box
across the road,
studying for their MBAs,

in their crisp suits.

And he would think
that how much better he was
than them could be measured
by how dirty he was and how much noise he could make.
And when he went home at the end of the day,
he went to some squat.
Or crashed on someone's floor.

What the hell is the mather wit ye?
his father would have commented,
if his father had been talking to him at the time.
Why didn't he get himself a trade, said the plumber.
I don't know plumbing. he told the plumber.
You can read, can't you? said the plumber,
Get yourself a book!

Jim Conwell England

FISHERMEN

Fishing with our crankbait under the shallow skin of a riverbend,
we sit as three on black rumped tarps.
The day grows large, hunkered beneath oak and stirs of pondweed,
larger still until the sky bursts again.

The calm reeds that we see through the mizzle
are butted by the prow,
its nose like an unleashed, yet tempered cur.

We ponder who could leave such a beast untethered,
gently mocking the sounds of our trolling.

This boat could stand for anything,
translating our telephone calls or
meeting in the misty peaks once snow-capped,
sodden in its underbelly.

I finger the tackle box beside the long grass,
nightcrawlers the slow bait from a miry land.
We wait for a strike in near silence but our hooks show no life.

The trees here are somehow different,
they ought to be sleepier than they are,
if anything, they sing as loud as bellbirds.

And this sticks in my memory like a claw,
that of the peace,
and pissing into the rain
under a can strung up to catch the butts.

We are novice fishers, we will not return to this
place.

Upon the aft the tangle of reed and wet mud
sits unfettered, waiting for nothing,
just like us.

Mark G. Pennington England

THE GARDEN

She sits on her balcony watching
over the tiered garden.

The winds lash against fronds of fern, scattering spores,
its cool breath upon the toast and marmalade.

She looks to the misty heavens, tangled with skylarks,
and down to the pompoms that gather in arching sprays,
awaiting the whites of juneberry.

A vertical dogwood basks in the mid-morning rain,
missing the bold white bracts of summer, as does she,
and the unsung beauty.

It is the voices that steal through with trouble,
as far as the moon can show, they ring out
to the loneliest light.

She is helpless in her skin, that porous rock below
shows her the landing.

In this story she is yet to learn, all that she has is through
another's hand, the meltwater flitting through a
windswept garret,
then she asks the wind about truth, she feels an answer,
her conviction is as the grasses quaking gently in the breeze.

She thinks she ought to seek the wind in her hair,
wrap it around her fair skin, the helpless skin,
take it to the mountains and throw off the crown.

She has that place in her mind, barbed wire,
lost eyes, missing the whole summer, a chance at freedom,
but they never tell you about the aftermath.

Mark G. Pennington England

LITTLE NAILS

My earliest memory of Brahms . . . is 'Cradle Song'. Complete misunderstanding of the text: I did not know that the word used there for carnations – *Näglein* – referred to flowers, but took it to mean the little nails, drawing pins, with which the curtain round my cot was thickly studded, so that the child, shielded from every chink of light, could sleep in unending peace without fear Nothing, for us, can fill the place of undiminished darkness except the unconscious dark.

Theodor W. Adorno, 'Regressions', in *Minima Moralia*, trans. Jephcott

From child to adult, error holds its charms.
No flower to match those curtain-pins or vie
With them for power to ward off darkest fears
By shielding me from daylight wakefulness.

No music conjures childhood quite like Brahms,
No other piece quite like his 'Lullaby'
For fears and joys relived across the years
And threats held off till curse should turn to bless.

Still we hear safety in the voice that calms,
The mother's song, the words that satisfy
Our adult need when some new threat appears
To raise the spectre of that old distress.

Yet who shall say what real or fancied harms
Once loomed beyond the curtain where I'd lie,
Half-wakened and half-knowing its frontiers
Would yield should day-fears wrench and re-possess.

Why say a thinker's care or scholar's qualms
Must have me now make light of that which I
Once found, through ignorance, could stem my tears
And wind me close in Brahms's song-caress.

Cradle and song stand in for mother's arms,
That's clear, though weary exiles may ask why
The metonymic chain so often veers
Off course to mark them down: no fixed address!

For there's no end to real and false alarms,
To pogroms signalled by a distant cry,
Or rumoured savageries that reach our ears
Despite the music's call: regress, regress!

Then infant lullabies turn adult balms,
Those lifelong cradle-substitutes that try,
Each time, to re-erase all souvenirs
Of how, each time, the comfort-yield grew less.

Christopher Morris Wales

THE UNQUIET GRAVE

In times of the Black Death no treatment was possible and the doctors were so ignorant that they did not know what caused it. Most people died within about three days of the appearance of the buboles, some without any fever or other symptoms.

when I've left my nightmares / my teeth are real / & I'm 100% aware
the best time of the day is in the morning / when I've left my nightmares
the best time of the day is in the morning / my teeth are real / & I'm 100% aware

has arrived on crotched wings / with a line by Descartes / doubt all things
that a cheque for a million pounds / has arrived on crotched wings
that a cheque for a million pounds / with a line by Descartes / doubt all things

& see through impossible eyes / & hear the world's rhymes
I'll touch everything with kindness / & see through impossible eyes
I'll touch everything with kindness / & hear the world's rhymes

yet praise the risen day & mysteries to come / certain things just have to be done
you today / me tomorrow / yet praise the risen day & mysteries to come
you today / me tomorrow / certain things just have to be done

Rodney Wood England

REFLECTING POOL (January 20, 2021)

Inauguration dawns, though it's still dark,
bright snowdrops dance Storm Christoph's awesome power.
The troop rise - on alert – walk in the park.
No news-briefs understate the need nor hour.

Bright snow drops dance Storm Christoph's awesome power;
shoots brave the soil of crocus fires, so stark.
No news-briefs understate the need nor hour,
such beastly times evaporate air's mark.

Shoots brave the soil of crocus fires, so stark,
the nation prays narcissi-joyful showers.
Such beastly times evaporate heirs' mark.
A twitter of sweet birdsong never sours.

The nation prays narcissi-joyful showers.
The troop-rise, on alert, walk in the park.
A twitter of sweet birdsong never sours.
Inauguration dawns, though it's still dark.

Wendy Webb England

ADOPTED, IRELAND, 1975

There was no morning sickness
my elbows did not once move across her belly
she never grimaced getting out of a chair
her ankles did not swell
there was no pushing, no breathing
one day, I was not there
the next, I was

I wonder what the gossips thought
what they whispered as she passed
suddenly pushing a pram
as if it were meant to be that way
I wonder if the neighbourhood girls peered in
oo-ing and aah-ing
goo-ing and gaa-ing

she told me that a gentleman stopped her once
slipped a pound note under my pillow
remarked on the similarity
my mother, smiling, nodding
secretly delighted
despite
the impossibility

though, I suppose we do have two arms
two hands
two legs
two feet
two eyes
two ears
one heart

Steve Denehan Ireland

TO JHS

Love, maybe? Oh, stop your silly questions,
It's always the same old story,
Those endless fruits of the loom
Mummy and dad are too foolish to discard,
And the black ribbons in the hair of a girl
Who's pushing like mad the mobile buttons
To the beat of a frantic rhythm
From her crutches dancing wild,
Such a great blast!
C'mon, Kore, stop it, stop diverting your eyes,
Time to get rid of your waves, husband and life,
Let it go, forget that seeds never die, as an elderly scribe
Says to those artsy souls she hangs out with
In the deep of the night, when shadows creep
Into squares and arcades, and ancient stones
Hardly glimpse, for too long they have seen
That bloody court of miracles, the place where she lives-
Just like a horror comic you say?
No, it's only too real, and so is her trashed soul,
Even if an elusive light granted her the honours of war-
Who cares, candles glow so frail,
They can't fight the Moon
Nor can words fight demise-
OK, she lost, but teens in love keep carving
Their names on some crooked tree,
Percussive sounds keep sheltering
The tangled branches of a jungle
Born at the dawn of time-
By the way, how often she yelled no to the light
And slept with the dark? Maybe a few times,
Before the prophet came here to gather men and souls,
That, and their wild, primeval eyes
Whenever young creatures fall down
From a blue Electra Glide,
Demise, gales, and barren stars their only friends-
Afraid tender caring is not in their nature,
But hey-ho, she loves dark-haired minstrels' hands,
She even lets go those cranky ladies who hissed to her

You renegade, you cut and run

Whenever life screws up-

'Cause, you see, their souls are crooked,

Hers is not.

But who's gonna live, she wonders,

Maybe a walking skeleton too busy

With obsessions and HIV,

Or Pluto always on time, he, his bloody seeds,

And a girlfriend too ready

To shear through wild blue waves?

Anyway.

C'mon everybody, let's go, the sweepstake's in full swing:

Bikers, riders, wild parties crowding into ice-cream parlours:

They too frozen in ice no hatchets can break –

Of course, no one to give shelter, no sky,

No clouds, least of all that ditzy moon

Too hung up on silver shawls and permed hairdos-

Oh well, typical women, don't you think so?

Gabriella Garofola Italy

FINDING A RESTING-PLACE WHILE CLIMBING DIAMOND HILL WITH MY SON

The forward upward move's a strain:

each time I step I wonder if I'll stop,

while you defeat this hill with seeming ease,

touch soggy ground and glide on up.

There was a time, before you came along,

when I could move like you:

goat-grace propelled me upward and beyond,

and I could pause, gaze out on vast terrain

of mountain peaks like these

and look back down, and see the trail

of those who followed where I went.

You too took steps that I had taken,

and while we both could see the path you faced,

your eyes fixed firmly on the patch of ground

where your next goal was looming.

Wait here, you say, I'll climb the rest alone.
Hell, I say, and follow in your path,
watch as you progress, growing smaller as you do.
The climb is hard, I feel it in my chest,
my head drops and the yawning gap
saps me of the strength I need
to take me to that little patch before me.

I raise my eyes and you have stopped:
your smile says you have reached a spot
where you can take a break and wait for me.
I'll follow in your footsteps, claim some ground,
hope that I can join you, son.

Bill Richardson Irealnd

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES RECEIVED

POETRY AND SCIENCE/OPPOSITES MEET by Mandira Ghosh. Published by Spring Books. Information and price available from Spring Books, #479, Sector 14, Gurugram –122 001, Haryana, India. A new book from a renowned poet of India. Mandira edited a Special TSQ Issue, Poets of India. 'Poetry is her tool of expression and she has explained to a greater extent how poetry and science interact and blend in these poems of exploration'—the late Dr. H. K. Kaul, President, The Poetry Society (India).

I TURNED AROUND AND YOU WERE GONE by Rhoda Thomas. Published by Sketty Books, UK. Available from rhodathomas1917@yahoo.com Price: £7.50/ISBN 978-0-9575918-4-4. A collection of very impressive poems, personal and political. The vitality and passion of her poetic voice and the integrity of her poetic vision is most engaging. Illustrated with photos.

THE EAR OF ETERNITY / L'ORELLA DE L'ETERNITAT (Bilingual: Catalan/English) by Xavier Panades. Published by Francis Boutle Publishers, UK. Available from www.francisboutle.co.uk <https://francisboutle.co.uk/products/the-ear-of-eternity> Plus: www.xpan.bandcamp.com www.x-man.co.uk/ Price: £12/ISBN 978-1-9164906-7-3. Xavier Panades has produced a striking collection of poetry that explores the world of a Catalan exile, where the themes of the environment and belonging mix with intensely personal experiences and wider political reflections.

INTERVIEW WITH K. S. MOORE, WELSH POET



K. S. Moore © 2021 K. S. Moore

K. S. Moore is a poet from Swansea in South Wales, who is now based in Kilkenny, Ireland, with her husband and two daughters. Her poetry has recently appeared in *The Stony Thursday Book*, *New Welsh Review*, *Verity La*, *Atlanta Review*, *Skylight 47*, *Mookychick*, *Boyne Berries*, *The Honest Ulsterman*, *Ink*, *Sweat and Tears*, and in *The*

Pandemic Poetry Anthology.

Work has also featured in *The Stinging Fly*, *Southword*, *Crannog*, *The Bangor Literary Journal*, *Fly on the Wall Press Magazine*, *The Seventh Quarry*, *Cardiff Review*, *Other Terrain*, *Spontaneity*, *Anthropocene*, *Kilkenny Poetry Broadsheet*, *The Lonely Crowd*, and others. Poems are forthcoming in *Drawn to the Light* and in the *Broken Sleep* anthology, *Crossing Lines*.

She was recently nominated for the Pushcart Prize. She placed third in the Waterford Poetry Prize and was shortlisted for Ink, Sweat and Tears Pick of the Month in 2020. She was also longlisted for The Bangor Literary Journal's 40 Words Competition. Other shortlists have included Trim Poetry Competition (top 10) and Americymru West Coast Eisteddfod Poetry Competition (top 3) in 2019.

She read at the launch of Z. D. Dicks's poetry collection, *Vexed* and has featured on Damien Donnelly's *Eat the Storms* podcast. In addition, she has performed at Kilkenny Arts Festival, Trim Poetry Festival, Waterford Writers' Weekend, Waterford Winterval, and Swansea's Dylan Thomas Festival. Video readings are available to view on the K. S. Moore YouTube channel, while samples of poetry can be found at ksmoore.com.

Peter Thabit Jones: Who and what were the early influences on your writing?

K. S. Moore: I grew up in a house full of books – with a number of children's poetry anthologies in the mix. I remember reading poems by Robert Louis Stevenson, Walter de la Mare, and Christina Rossetti. I always loved the playfulness of poetry – that sense of music flowing through language.

I wrote my first poem at the age of 8, as part of a school activity. After that, I kept coming up with new ideas and the teachers at my primary school really encouraged me. I eventually put together a book of my poems, which was kept at the school. I also joined a poetry group for children, led by a lovely lady called Kathleen McVeigh. Involvement in this group led to my first reading at the Patti Pavilion when I was 9 years old – I was so nervous! I also entered the Brynmill Writers' Circle Award for children and came joint first.

Between the ages of 10 and 11, I discovered Dylan Thomas. I was so proud to be from Swansea, like him. I'll never forget finding his words on a stone, in Cwmdonkin Park: 'Oh as I was young easy in the mercy of his means, time held me green and dying, though I sang in my chains like the sea.' I never knew language could hold such beauty,

could wield such power.

My dad was a big fan of Dylan Thomas and both my parents were a great support from early on, joining me in exploring all things poetic. I have lovely memories of us attending a special event at Dylan Thomas' birthplace – Nigel Jenkins read his poem, 'Snowdrops'. And I will never forget our holiday in Dumfries, when we followed The Burns Trail.

PTJ: You were very active on the Swansea literary scene when you lived in the city. Our paths crossed several times. What do you miss in Swansea as a writer?

KSM: I used to love going to the Open Mic nights at The Dylan Thomas Centre. I enjoyed the blend of poetry and live music. There was always an amazing atmosphere. I remember meeting you at the centre, Peter – hearing you read for the first time and being struck by your poem, 'Rat'!

I've also got wonderful memories of facilitating and taking part in readings with other poets. That was back when I ran a small publishing company for a few years. One of the highlights was reading at The Grand Theatre alongside some very talented young writers, including Georgia Carys Williams, Hilary Watson, and Martyn Sullivan. The Grand Theatre is such a beautiful venue.

There's so much to get inspired by in Swansea – being close to the sea and to Gower. I miss the ease of hopping on a bus or train and going on an adventure somewhere. It's a different way of viewing the scenery and you get to hear snippets of people's conversations, which can be very inspiring. As we live in quite a rural part of Ireland, all our trips are in the car.

PTJ: Can you tell us about the literary scene in Ireland, where you now live with your husband and children.

KSM: It's brilliant. There is very strong community support for writers in this country and it feels like literature is firmly embedded in Irish culture. I've particularly enjoyed going to The Heart of Summer events, (run by Poetry Ireland), The recording of the Christmas RTE Poetry Programme (at Kilkenny Castle) and to hear Pascale Petite and Paul Durcan read at The Shaking Bog Festival.

I've read at Trim Poetry Festival, Kilkenny Arts Festival and Waterford Writers' Festival. People are so friendly at events here and often come up to say how much they've enjoyed a certain poem.

PTJ: You are active on social media. What do you feel are the advantages and disadvantages of platforms like Twitter?

KSM: Twitter has led to me making so many writer contacts and some true friends. I've also been approached by editors of journals, which has been great. I don't always feel as if I'm sending a submission out 'cold'.

In general, I think social media can help to make us feel more connected and it can be useful, as a poet, to sometimes share work in progress to gauge a better idea of a poem's strengths/weaknesses. Even just in the act of 'putting it out there', I think you find yourself looking more closely at the words and presentation.

It is important not to start comparing yourself unfavourably with others though, and of course there's the odd negative comment or DM that can come your way, which I just tend to ignore.

PTJ: What are you working on at the moment?

KSM: I'm just putting the finishing touches to a pamphlet/chapbook entitled 'When seaweed is Medusa's hair'. It's driven by myth, fairy tale and folklore, and strives to peel back the darker layers of romance. I've also completed work on my full collection, 'Eggshell Flesh' and I'm writing some new poems, which will probably end up in another book.

In other news, I recently started up a YouTube channel. I've shared a number of my own poems, including a themed mini series. I'm currently putting some 'over the shoulder' book reviews together, which should take me in a different direction. I think video content is so important at the moment – offering the chance to see faces and to hear words spoken aloud.



MERMAID PRINCESS

You've turned on the wave machine again,
my grungy mermaid princess.

Already, you have downy hair, brushed
by your seashells of fingers.

And your eyes are blue, they are always
blue, before they dance into autumn.

Kick, if you hear me murmur my music,
between the knit of bones and blood.

I hear your heavenly womb slide, all
the ways you turn and play your scales.

Your notes are my notes, as well as
your own: they are your father's, your sister's.

The hush, as we press to feel the reply.
Is our little girl awake?

Awake as the sea in its fervent spray,
those raging quaking hours before birth.

If we find each other alive
we can walk on newborn sand.

I'll count your toes as they sink into
world. Wait, let me say, 'hello.'

First published in *Southword Journal*, 2017

K. S. Moore Ireland

IN BLOOM

A Clyne Gardens Childhood

Here, I breathe in colour.

The scarlet azalea
waits in the dip,
awash with petticoats.

Undone they are trampled hearts.
Aligned they are stepping stones.

I choose to walk,
am led to the Japanese bridge,
to the handkerchief tree.

If tears grew, they would grow
on these branches.

I lean into river-song:
rush in my ears,
white in my eyes,

climb to the fairy-tale cottage,
find courage

to let my feet gather the hill:
its sky-hewn sea view
glitters with houses.

I fall, over-dazzled,
hide in the cedar tree;

canopy leaves a quieter home.

K. S. Moore Ireland

FOR DYLAN

You of the spiral-shell curls,
the sea-chained voice.
No wonder the waves
made a play for your soul,

called you to find
every treasure of words:
all huddled sounds,
all glistered truths.

And when you found them,
how you cried of
windfall, heron priested shores.
I love your words: they are pages of me.

And as I was young, not easy,
they held the seeds of a life
I would tread, the how shall my animal
questions this crossroads.

K. S. Moore Ireland

DAY TRIP PHILOSOPHY

To give the hut a name, it was
river hut / mud house, sat on a view
of ripples and salmon-flight.

We threw stones to a sky that breathed,
talked of the days when you smoked
a pipe . . . I was a whisper then.

You had a young-dad head of curls,
a friend who could have been Elvis.
Army adventures slipped under years,
surfaced in black and white photos.

That spring, we bonded through
wild green tree time, ran
to the rambling hotel for tea.

Your voice turned tender on the drive home:
Did you enjoy the day?
An overgrown youngest child, I nodded,
holding this last hour to heart.

Your **Day Trip Philosophy** mends us all:
restless daughters looking for waves,
a tired husband who needs a dream, and me
not growing, losing you has made me a child again.

K. S. Moore Ireland

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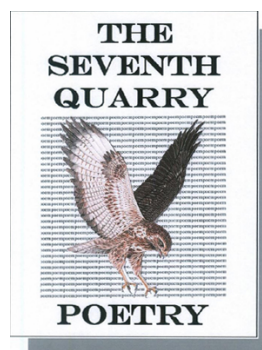
FROST IN PEMBROKESHIRE

Morning light blurred yet golden:
the first frost of winter
appeared overnight.
Crackling leaves fall at last,
patterns of ferns appear
on window panes;
a quilt of icy crystals
grips autumn's still warm earth
and hides the ancient mystery
of Blue Stone magic.
Bright sunshine spins the lie
on the day's coldness.

There is beauty around
this sculpted environment,
where works of nature
and people can be recast
into familiar forms,
all unified by brightness;
and echoing through the mind
the voice of wisdom calls:
Fingers and toes will be nipped,
wrap up warm,
Jack Frost is about!

Note: There is always speculation on why Blue Stones from Mynydd Preseli were used at Stonehenge. One suggestion is that this rock is warm to the touch—a “magical warmth” idea to people long ago?

Jean Salkild Wales



A review of *Blood and Water* by Rebecca Lowe

Published by The Seventh Quarry Press

Price: £6.99/available from www.seventhquarrypress.com

Rebecca Lowe is a journalist and poet. This collection is her first, and includes the poem 'Tick tick tick' which won the Bread and Roses 2020 Award. In addition to this Rebecca is the co-organiser of Talisman Spoken Word open mic and Swansea Poets for peace. Her work has gained substantial attention, with publication in numerous anthologies including but not limited to: Red Poets, Merrimac Mic (Massachusetts) and here in The Seventh Quarry.

What struck me first and foremost with Rebecca's poetry is how relatable it is. With strong themes of growth and the harsh realities of life, this collection is both timely and (perhaps surprisingly), hopeful. There is despair and sadness in certain places, and yet never without suggestion that the possibility of change exists. Quite often one will be confronted with a dual meaning, always presented through the most beautiful imagery, and as a result of this there is always something to leave one wondering.

Blood and Water opens with *Elemental*, which as you might predict is about the four elements of nature: Fire, Water, Earth and Air. A strong start, it sets the tone for the collection as a whole. From the gentler 'inspiration, exhalation, emboldened in the spirit' to the harsher 'Batter down the floodgates, ocean's swell dam-bursts of fury' this poem takes the reader on a journey, and this journey is one with a clear beginning and end. This structure is indicative of what lies in wait for the reader as they move through the pages, and certainly results in thought-provoking poetry.

It is on the third page that we are greeted with the title poem: *Blood and Water*, a marvellous summation of what it means to adjust to (and dare I say struggle with) the early days of motherhood. This is an intimate portrait of the journey to becoming a parent, one that often does not just come to be once the baby is born. Instead, it is a journey that requires navigation, made harder of course when one is stuck in 'an endless, sleepless wave'. I can't imagine there is any parent out there that wouldn't absorb this fondly, with a knowing recollection of their time experiencing this. For those that haven't yet, it's a wonderful insight into what is to come, and also a comfort during

those moments of isolation.

As the collection progresses poems such as *Russian Dolls* and *Signature* encompass the theme of growth that I spoke of at the beginning of this review. The Russian doll is a metaphor for multiple generations and the familial link of ‘Three proud women, Carved from the same tough grain’, whilst the signature provides a metaphor for growth and the struggle between parent and child. As is always the case, the child is desperate to grow up, whilst the parent longs to ‘keep her here, In serene suspension Between child and woman’. We have all been that child racing towards a finish line that we believe holds fulfilment, and some will too have experienced the opposing side with its desperation to keep them little for longer.

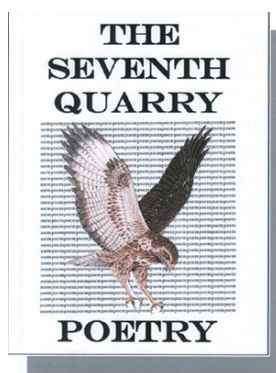
There is much to learn within the pages of *Blood and Water*, Saint Dwywnwen, the Welsh patron saint of lovers is immortalised in the words of *Dwywnwen*. Reading this poem was enriching in multiple ways, because not only did it provide the most beautiful imagery that I had come to expect from Rebecca, but it also gave me a starting point from which to begin my research into a figure that I had little prior knowledge of. The same can be said for *The Lindorm* and *Struwwelpeter*. Incidentally, there is a useful notes section at the close of the book that will provide a valuable summary for those unversed in the history behind the titles, reading these notes certainly enriched my experience with the poems.

Arguably the most arresting poem in the collection is *Tick tick tick* a terrifying portrait of what we have done, and continue to do, to our planet. Quite often the masses turn away from the results of their actions, but here Rebecca forces us to look and accept accountability for what has happened. There is sadness, anger and exasperation, and one cannot feel immune to this, unless perhaps that particular reader is one of ‘Those who live their lives in ease and finery’ who will easily ignore what this destruction can bring. Why? Well, because, after all, ‘It’s not our problem, we’ll have moved on, Be gone, what’s done is done’. As with so many of the poems within the collection this is one that will leave you questioning your choices and re-evaluating your existence and decisions. Rebecca’s words scream out with empathy and impatience, which of course is what is ultimately needed from us all. The repetition that she employs throughout *Tick tick tick* serves as her vehicle to remind us all with the utmost urgency that we are repeating the same mistakes, and change is needed now. An inspiring piece, and one that I feel will leave the reader not only pondering, but with a renewed drive to help the cause.

The closing poem *Last Will and Testament* is most probably my favourite from the collection. Here the writer gifts various parts of herself to groups that are in need. She gives those that are clever ‘my ears So you can listen To yourselves And be wise’ and she gifts her ‘no-longer-ticking heart’ to those that are always watching the clock so that they can learn ‘The true meaning Of time’. Thought-provoking, saturated with emotion, and full of the most stunning imagery that will, I feel, become synonymous with Rebecca’s name going forward, this poem is the most perfect way to bring the collection to its close. Interestingly, I select this particular title as my favourite not just because of the reasons that I stated above, but because of the surge of hope that runs through the lines. At first glance this poem appears melancholic, and it is to a point, but more than that it is a reminder that there is always the opportunity to improve, and to put right past mistakes, and this message of hope is the light in the dark that is so often needed.

It is quite remarkable that this is Rebecca’s first poetry collection, she is certainly cementing her place in the world of poetry with *Blood and Water*, and it has been a pleasure to read and review her work. To call this collection timely and appropriate seems almost an understatement, but it is both of those things. There is a subtlety to Rebecca’s words that allows you to gain extra perspective with each re-read. It has been a truly marvellous journey moving through the pages of *Blood and Water* and I cannot recommend it enough.

Jessica Newport Wales



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PRICE: £10 STERLING. ISBN 978-971-555-571-5 (co-published with De La Salle University Publishing House, Philippines)

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For more information, go to www.blackboughpoetry.com

'It is a common trope in underworld stories from across cultures and centuries that a small entrance-point opens into complex hidden space. *Underland* acted merely as that entrance-point for this *Black Bough* volume; the writers and artists gathered here have carried out their own fathomings and explorations, and the result is a collection of work that feels both contemporary and mythic, urgent and ancient. Strange voices for strange times sing out here.'

Robert Macfarlane

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Alex Langlands (Archaeologist, writer and broadcaster)

PAUMANOK

Old Algonquin
reed song,

fish-shape: breastplate
of sleek eelfare

along
alluvial mudflats,

undulating
moraine of vowel

buttressed
by landsend of consonant

& sand-cairn of ribbed-*m*
above saltmarsh

& sibilant thrush-cry
of oozing wetland.

Land of tribute: shell-hoard
of whelk & limpet

of periwinkle, conch
& mollusc

& quahog:
wampum-hoard

in tong-bunt, cherry-
stone, littleneck.

Paumanok: aquifers seep
into the bloodstream.

Vince Clemente America

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THE SEVENTH QUARRY PRESS

LOOK OUT FOR ISSUE 34: Summer/Autumn 2021

WALES: Ness Owen, Rob Lowe, Gerry Ray, Rosy Wood-Bevan,
Robert Nisbet, Gareth Culshaw, Lawrence Illsley, Christopher Norris,
Jean Salkilld

ENGLAND: Frances Sackett, Ann Flynn, Ceinwen E Cariad
Haydon, Daniel Hinds, Jim Conwell, Mark G. Pennington,
Rodney Wood, Wendy Webb

SCOTLAND: Anna Forbes

GERMANY: Steven Duplij, Werner Shumann

IRELAND: Steve Denehan, Bill Richardson, K. S. Moore

ITALY: Gabriella Garofola

NIGERIA: Jesam Eko

CANADA: Huguette Bertrand

AMERICA: Russell Thorburn, Karen Poppy, Sepideh Zamani,
Duane Niatum, Carolyn Mary Kleefeld, John Grey, Frane L. Helner,
Bruce Robinson, Stanley H. Barkan, Susan Roether, Vince Clemente

“The morning poet came early
like a worm waiting to be devoured
by very early birds hungry for words.”

from MORNING POET by STANLEY H. BARKAN

ISSUE THIRTY-THREE
WINTER/SPRING 2021

EDITOR: PETER THABIT JONES

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