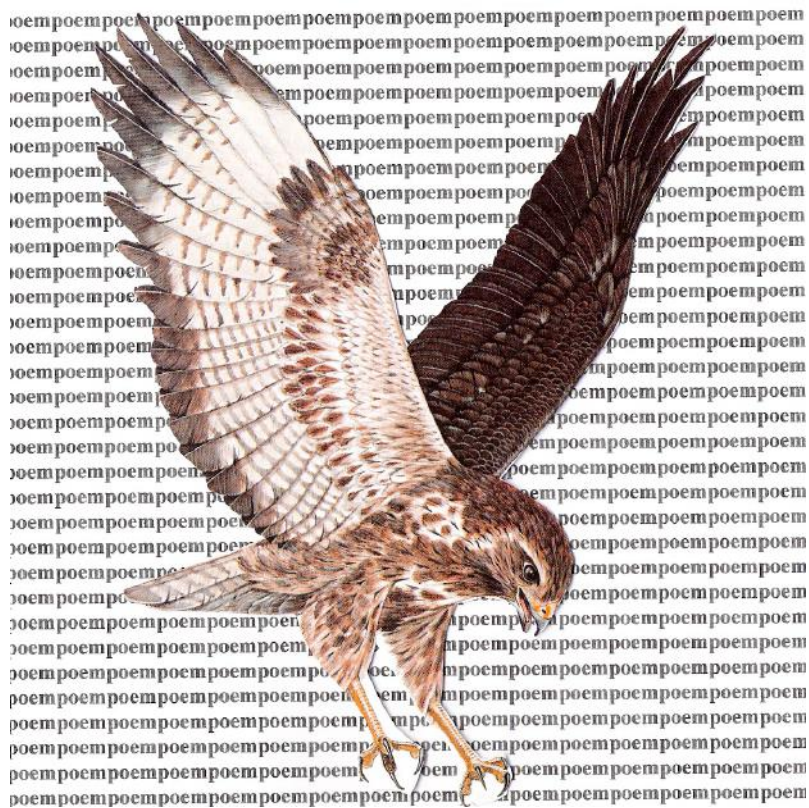


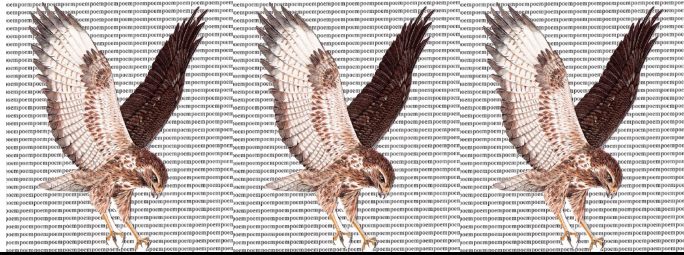
# THE SEVENTH QUARRY



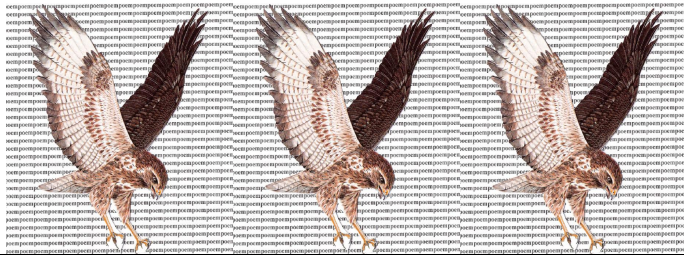
# POETRY

**ISSUE TWENTY-FOUR**  
**SUMMER/AUTUMN 2016**  
**SWANSEA POETRY MAGAZINE**

**THE**

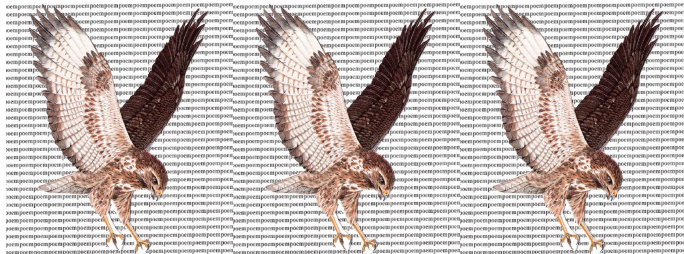


**SEVENTH**



**QUARRY**

**SWANSEA POETRY MAGAZINE**



**ISSUE 24**  
**SUMMER/AUTUMN 2016**  
**INCLUDES AN INTERVIEW**  
**WITH RENOWNED AMERICAN POET**  
**WILLIAM HEYEN**

**EDITORIAL**  
**ISSUE TWENTY-FOUR**  
**SUMMER/AUTUMN 2016**

This twenty-fourth issue features work from Albania, America, Canada, England, India, Israel, Italy, Philippines, Scotland and Wales. It also includes an interview with renowned American poet William Heyen; an interview with American poet Michael Graves; and an interview with India's Dileep Jhaveri, a leading poet.

The collaboration between The Seventh Quarry Press and Stanley H. Barkan's Cross-Cultural Communications, New York, continues into 2016.

Many thanks to the contributors for their poems and to subscribers for their support. An extra thank you to Vince Clemente, a State University New York English Professor Emeritus, for being Consultant Editor for THE SEVENTH QUARRY in America.

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

Consultant Editor, America: Vince Clemente

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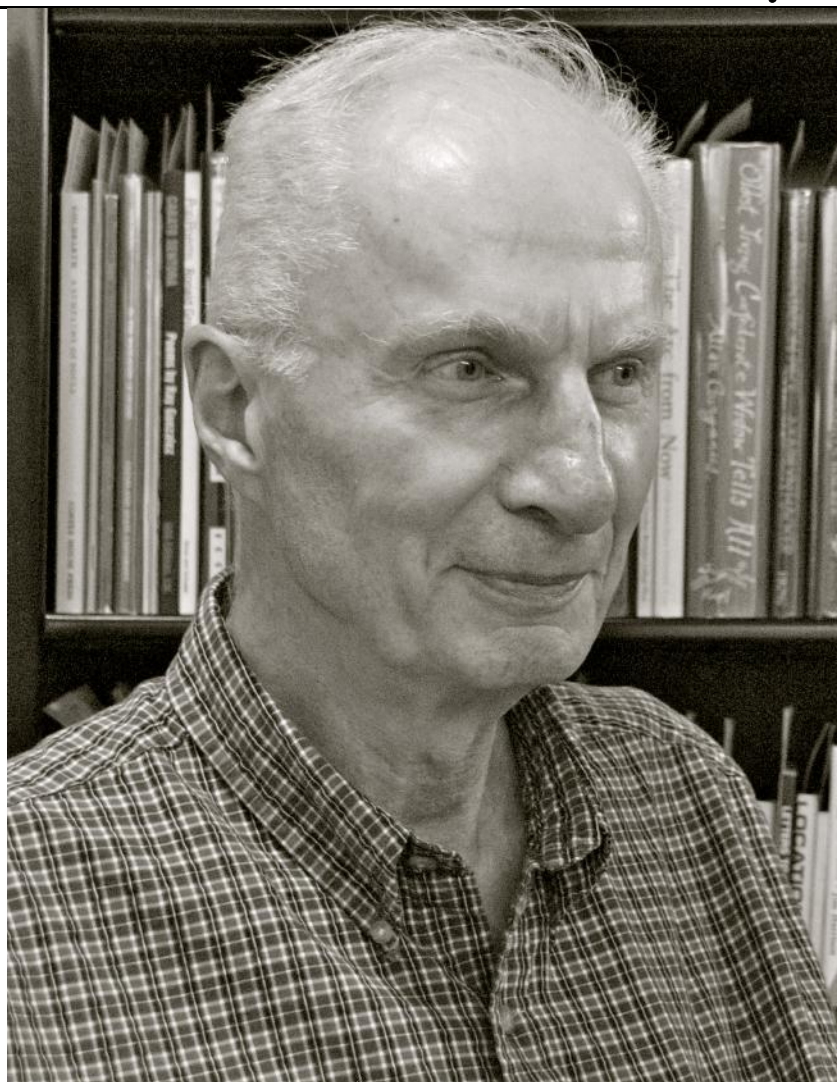


PETER THABIT JONES  
(photo © 2016 Peter Thabit Jones)



VINCE CLEMENTE  
(photo © 2016 Peter Thabit Jones)

## Interview with American Poet William Heyen



William Heyen © 2016 Bill Wolak

**William Heyen** was born in Brooklyn, NY, on November 1, 1940, and raised by his German immigrant parents in Hauppauge and Nesconset in Suffolk County. Eventually, he earned his PhD in English at Ohio University, and has also been awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from SUNY. A former Senior Fulbright Lecturer in American Literature in Germany, he has won Guggenheim, NEA, and several other awards. His work has appeared in hundreds of magazines and anthologies, and he is the author or editor of dozens of books, including *Noise in the Trees* (an American Library Association "Notable Book"), *Crazy Horse in Stillness* (winner of the Small Press Book Award), *Shoah Train* (finalist for the National Book Award), and *A Poetics of Hiroshima* (a Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle main selection). His voluminous journals are appearing from

H\_ANGM\_N Editions. In 2016, Etruscan Press will publish *The Candle: Collected Holocaust Poems / 1970–2015*. Mr. Heyen lives with his wife in Brockport, NY where he is Professor of English/Poet in Residence Emeritus at the College at Brockport.

In July of 2015, Bill Wolak and Stanley Barkan traveled to Brockport, where this interview began. The interview continued during a visit with the poet to his archive and book collection at the University of Rochester Library, and then was completed by e-mail.

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**Bill Wolak:** At what age did you first become interested in poetry?

**William Heyen:** You know, Bill, I was an athlete, even an All American soccer player in college, so most of my time was taken up with sports. But I remember being about nineteen and scribbling verses on the flyleaves of textbooks while in undergraduate classes. My doggerel was probably the result of being dropped by a high school girlfriend a couple of years before. I do believe in trauma as (sometimes) the spark for poetry. My hurt sounds trivial, maybe, but I was devastated. But we never know when we are having good luck. I've been married to my soul-mate for 53 years.

In graduate school at Ohio University, I began to get serious, began reading contemporary poets like Richard Wilbur and James Wright and saying to myself—competitive now but not in sports—hey, I can do that. I soon found out how hard it was as I lost sleep scratching and scratching. How was it possible to break through into a poem? It took me about five years of fairly obsessive work to have enough poems for a first collection (*Depth of Field*, LSU Press, 1970).

**BW:** Can you give us an idea about the poets who have had the greatest influence on you?

**WH:** Well, maybe I've been most influenced by individual poems—or prose (I think the greatest book I've ever read may be William Faulkner's *Go Down, Moses*—I get choked up reading many passages)—but certainly Walt Whitman is at the top of my list as the greatest poet who ever lived (except maybe for Homer). You'll find essays of mine about him in a couple of my prose books. And a couple

of sons of Whitman have been important, Theodore Roethke (subject of my dissertation) and Allen Ginsberg, as I always try to stay receptive to break-through, as they and Saint Walt broke through. Among the modernists, I knew and corresponded with Archibald MacLeish, and loved him and learned from him: "For all the history of grief / an empty doorway and a maple leaf." But I think the modern poet who most helped me land and helps me still is Wallace Stevens, and this mainly for the way a poem can keep moving, keep flowing, forge a forward motion that penetrates and encircles the musical imagination. Poems like "The Woman in Sunshine" and that wonderful late poem "The World as Meditation" show the way for me. And there are the poets of exile, Paul Celan in particular—what voltage! Too many other poet influences to try to mention them.

But this caution. William Stafford—another poet important to me for myriad reasons—when asked about the greatest poetic influence on him said that it had been his mother, her voice. So, yes, we read and absorb and find poets and poems to help us create our own sense of beauty on the page, but family influences are strongest, and our childhood landscapes, and our teachers and teammates, and the history, in my case certainly, that entralls and appalls us.... My book *Titanic & Iceberg: Early Essays & Reviews* is a good indication of what was on my mind in my early years, my readings I was hoping to become, as we say these days, "part of the conversation." Also, *Home: Autobiographies, Etc.* (which includes a few other interviews).

**BW:** How would you define poetry?

**WH:** Well, any definition would seem to narrow it. Maybe it has something to do with that which exists beyond paraphrase, beyond interpretation and theory, beyond translation. But I do think that poetry is our only chance as a species to survive on this earth, and I'm not just talking about our lyrics, our word/language constructs, but about a way of thinking that might enable us, as Emerson requires, to "integrate." The poet is the one who integrates, who makes us realize that we of all cultures are in this together, that the bell tolls for all of us, that all is One, in the end, as we move toward our common death. But I don't want to preach about this, or to understand it to the point where I become smug. I just want, by way of sound/story/image/rhythm to find on my own page a poem that is smarter than I

am, as Archibald MacLeish says it must be, that has within itself whatever it needs to go on thinking about itself (and us) and its meanings longer than any one of us will. I've written my best poems in a semi-trance, one line appearing after another, rave and dream and song-sound, and have later been surprised at how much has welled up from me into them.

**BW:** Can you explain a little about your writing process? How do you compose poems? Do you begin by jotting down the lines by hand or do you compose directly on a computer?

**WH:** Everything is by cursive, at first. I compose myself, and any poems I'm lucky enough to hit, by way of the handwriting I learned in grade school. New generations of writers I'm sure can feel the fusions of mind and word while their fingers are on a keyboard and their writing appears for them on a screen, but I can't imagine this for me. I'm a thousand years old. I need a pen, ink, paper, the flow of letters from left to right and then left to right again. I type nothing up until I think it's finished, though I do sometimes make minor revisions before printing something up for staring and hearing. These years, when a poem does come—I've 250+ new ones toward a huge book that will be called *Chainsaw*, and I'm in no hurry to publish it, and won't be—it usually needs little revision, certainly not as much tortured rewriting as when I was in my 30s, 40s, 50s. And I have so many new ones now that I'm not afraid just to cross a poem out that has appeared in my notebook, and scrawl "forget it" below it if it doesn't sufficiently complicate itself or if it lurches in ways I can't fix. And I've been in poet's heaven, thinking (maybe of course deluding myself, but I don't think so) that my recent poems are my best, by way of natural voice and by way of the unconscious consolidations of craft over the decades.

**BW:** Do you have a daily writing routine?

**WH:** Not really. When I was young, I'd sometimes write all night when I should have been doing something more practical or sleeping, and then I'd be wiped out the next day. Now, I usually begin by writing in my journal each morning, & then maybe draft a new poem, or go through a sheaf of things, or write a snail to a friend. Then, for the rest of the day between whatever else is going on and helping



to keep our house in repair and this acre of land not manicured but in some kind of order, and not to mention that my wife and I have four teenage grandkids, my writing is hit or miss. But I've been very fortunate, and know this, because of my academic schedule over decades, to have had summers off, long vacations, sabbaticals, grants. And reading intensely for teaching literature classes has been part of the whole learning and writing process for me. I got into teaching when there were plenty of jobs. I'd not like to be getting out of graduate school now and looking for work.

**BW:** Hidden back in the woods behind your house on your acre of property in Brockport, you have a delightful little writer's cabin. How and when was that constructed? Is that where you do most of your writing?

**WH:** Well, Bill, to call my 8' x 12' shack a cabin (as I've called it) is probably to flatter it. But, yes, I'm glad I've had it, and you can see artists' woodcuts of it on the covers of the first volume of my journal. Anyway, about forty years ago my father and my older brother, Werner, drove up from Long Island and banged it together for me (I'd laid down the foundation blocks). It ain't much, but is secluded, & quiet, and I used it a lot for decades. It's only 250' or so from my house, but I never did schoolwork back there, so by the time I walked back I was ready for journal writing and poetry and maybe some snail correspondence. I still get back there, but not nearly as often as when we had so much stuff going on in our home when our two kids were knocking about and the phone was always ringing . . . Look, all of us who belong to the tribe of scribblers try to place ourselves, like old dogs, where we are comfortable, and where we don't have to be social every minute. And the cabin is a sentimental place for me, too: William Stafford and Joyce Carol Oates and Stan Plumly and publishers Bill Ewert and Antonio Vallone and my late friends Anthony Piccione and Al Poulin have sat in there with me. And even poets from China and Sweden. And all my family, too. And now you and Stan Barkan have visited the cabin. Maybe I should have kept a guest book!

**BW:** What was the best poetry reading that you ever attended? Why does that reading stand out in your memory?

**WH:** Interesting question, one I've never been asked. Several readings come to

mind quickly. One by David Ray in the early 60s at Cortland, NY, where I was teaching at the time. A student asked Ray how he felt about it when someone didn't understand his poems. He said he didn't care. I was upset at the time, but now understand this better (as defensive, as not wanting to water down) but would have expressed this more gently than he did. Whitman said that in the main people had to come to poetry, that poets couldn't go to the people (even as he had his arms wide open for all of us).

And a reading by James Dickey when I was in grad school—his stories around and within his poems. And a reading at Brockport by Galway Kinnell that dazed me for the command of such earned poems known by heart; and a few readings by that generative force Joyce Carol Oates, on whose every sentence I felt suspended; and a reading by William Stafford in Rochester when he said something that still reverberates for me in complex ways: "I love feeble poems"; and, to mention just one more among so many vivid recollections, a reading by William Everson where, in an uncomfortable science lab room, after being introduced, he didn't say a word for a full five minutes, but tried to get comfortable, turned around & around, closed his eyes, & folks were even beginning to leave, but then he began, and was mesmerizing.... These days, I guess I most enjoy small readings, poets/folks in a circle, taking turns, kindred spirits communing. Over the decades I read or lectured at several hundred places, but am no longer interested in travel. I can travel while being at home. I might never get on a plane again.

**BW:** What role does stillness play in poetic composition?

**WH:** Yes, we have to reach, I think, even after agitation or fear or bafflement or any of a hundred unsettlements, some state of calm, quiet, stillness wherein, almost of its own volition, our poem can keep on its own course. A Zen teacher at Brockport, years ago, spoke of the moon being reflected on a river, the river (with its disruptions) flowing by, but the moon, the moon beneath our breastbones, staying in one place. I have an essay about this in *Pig Notes & Dumb Music*.... You know, Saint Walt could get angry at a dumb dog who barked even at a familiar neighbor, but he carried the moon of stillness inside himself.

**BW:** What is the relationship between your journal writing and your poetry?

**WH:** I don't know. Maybe it helps me reach ease as I get my worries and angers off my chest, and as I keep hauling myself up into the present. You know, Bill, my journal might be the most extensive (I didn't say best) in our literature. So far, I've gotten only three volumes into print, and keep typing little by little, but seem to write more new entries than I can type old entries. I'm typing 1999 now for volume four, and these are quarto-sized single-spaced 10-point 575 or so paged volumes. I might have to try, though I'm a semi-Luddite and creature of habit and reluctant, voice-into-print technology before long.

But I don't draft poems in my journal. I talk of my reading, my family and friends, ask my journal what it might like to hear from me today, report my anxieties and successes and furies and failures as I try to become a grown man. I let memories arise. I think I'm pretty good at not being self-conscious—and being so far behind when an entry I'm writing today might eventually appear (maybe not in my lifetime) helps. But the most important thing for me is not to censor myself, and when I publish a volume I do not edit down to scintillant moments. I wish I had journals from poets important to me who talk not just about aesthetics, say, but about taking out the garbage and dental appointments, about how they live in the world when they are not reading Dante or are in the ethereal throes of inspiration. Maybe my journal is part journal and part just diary.... Look, we're all scribblers—let's enjoy ourselves and fill blank books (or computer files) with thought and feeling, with life. And I must say, I'm sort of surly about my journal volumes, thinking that I didn't ask you to read them, so don't look for them, and if you don't like what you read and think me unworthy, just fuck off and find something else to read.... At the same time, I'd like to think that reading Heyen's journals might become an acquired taste, that the often-asinine and puerile journalist might grow on you....

**BW:** How do you conceive of the poet's role in America today?

**WH:** I don't suppose it's any different from any poet's role in any society at any time. In any case, I wouldn't want to freeze myself into any position on this. Let me answer with a little poem. It's maybe too sentimental, too-too, but here it is, plaintive and resigned and maybe content and even happy. I call it "Evening Song":

Now it is too late not  
to kiss goodbye  
to all I might have been & done  
if only  
I'd not kept faith with you  
& you with me  
all my years, my soul,  
my poetry.

I hope I've kept faith with my soul, my inner-self, my intimations toward ... beauty, even when beauty is shot through with terror. I might have been and done other things, but I've no regrets. I do wonder what other life or lives I might have had, but I've needed to try to write poems, or, to put it better, to put myself into a position of reception wherein poems might emanate from my mind-pen. There's a powerful moment in Emerson's Nature when he says that "Every man's condition is a solution in hieroglyphic to those inquiries he would put." Maybe this says that I've had the life I've had and am now in this place where I am, doing what I do, because of the questions I asked myself, unconsciously, when I was a boy and young man.

**BW:** Part of your archive is now housed in the University of Rochester Library; many of the books that you've collected are now in a room surrounded with glass-front bookcases.

**WH:** Yes, for fifty years now I've collected first editions of contemporary poetry, and had books inscribed whenever I could. Association copies are very important to me, and I haven't wanted them spread out on the rare books market as have been books from the libraries of Richard Hugo, William Stafford, Paul Zimmer, and so many others. Luckily, Peter Dzwonkoski, the head of Rare Books & Special Collections at Rochester about twenty years ago foresaw such an archive as it came to be, felt the way I do, and worked to buy my books, correspondence, manuscripts. Now, it's as though I still have my books together—nothing can be placed in that room without my permission—and the institution is caring for them in a climate-controlled room where there are sometimes classes and readings where all my precious Wilburs and Staffords and Oates and May Sartons and Cynthia Ozicks and Seamus Heaneys and Ray Carvers and Robert Penn Warrens and Archibald MacLeishes and hundreds of other poets ranging from the very famous

to the largely unknown listen in. There are long stories behind my obsessive gatherings of so many books, all my altruistic and selfish reasons. I was so glad that you and Stan Barkan got to experience that room.... Of course, I still have at home hundreds of gems, so am not lonely for books. I have for example copies of the anthologies I've edited, special copies inscribed by dozens of contributors to American Poets in 1976, The Generation of 2000: Contemporary American Poets, and September 11, 2001: American Writers Respond. Priceless.

**BW:** Can you describe a few of the unpublished poetic projects that you're working on now?

**WH:** Ha, glad you asked.... Well, there are the journal volumes that will keep coming out as long as I live, knock wood. And I've mentioned Chainsaw. And I've enough essays to expand Pig Notes & Dumb Music. And I've got about 3,000 (no kidding) 13-syllable poems, my "scherzi," to do something with eventually. And a letterpressed book of 28 baseball poems is coming out. And The Candle. And I've a folder building of form poems, non-free-verse pieces. And, come to think of it, I've written about 30 little plays, meant to be read only, staged only in the mind, that I haven't typed up yet. (And there will be productions of June Prager's Distant Survivors, a play which she built from my Holocaust poems.) And I'm fooling with a preface right now for the bibliography of my work by Michael Broomfield that he's been at for decades (his two previous bibliographies, ahem, are of John Updike and Robinson Jeffers). And I want to do a book called, in homage to incendiary Emerson, Nature, which would reprint my books The Chestnut Rain, Pterodactyl Rose, and The Rope, nature/ecology books, and select such poems from other of my volumes. I'd like to find an editor for this who might do the typing grunt-work & write a preface. I think I have a publisher. Is there a volunteer out there? I'm at 142 Frazier St. / Brockport, NY 14420....

### **THE AMERICAN MEASURE**

On my natural way to the discovery of what it dawned on me to call  
the single-line couplet,

I spent days on my back acre pulling wild grapevines from trunks & limbs  
of dead ash

that the emerald borer had killed, & now the trees would be firewood,  
    & grapevines  
would obstruct my chainsawing, so, to be safe, I pulled them down,  
    some vines an inch thick,  
cleared spaces, cleared entanglements, & then would fell a tree.  
    As I worked,  
I talked to myself, having come to this voice, it was late summer,  
    then early autumn,  
then late autumn, I kept working, kept talking to myself in these single-line  
    couplets that were like  
a chainsaw chain cutting into an ash trunk, the razzing & the chewing,  
    the chips buzzing  
to my feet, then the tree falling, & then the cutting into sections, good work,  
    the American measure  
that Doc Williams always looked for to get himself said who never,  
    so far as I know,  
chainsawed, but who listened over my shoulder, the happy genius  
    of my woodlot.

### **MY HIGH SCHOOL FLAME**

I found what seemed to be a human heart entangled in fish-  
    line & beach grass,  
or maybe something from nature had washed up, coconuts  
    or brine-shaped  
driftwood, or was it a rolled-up skirt or letter sweater  
    or cerise blouse,  
but, yes, it might have been a human heart, or should have been,  
    but it was only—  
I danced up to it & bent to it & kept listening—it was only  
    an old song

I'd once sung, wouldn't you know it, not her heart, or mine,  
just our old song.

William Heyen    America



**William Heyen and Stanley H. Barkan in front of the Heyen writing cabin**  
© 2016 Bill Wolak

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## **WHO IS STANLEY BARKAN?**

I don't know Stanley Barkan  
And the sea of words he swims in.  
He crosses tongues, not swords,  
Proving the pen is mightier.  
They say his house bleeds ink,

And little tsunamis of print  
Reach a hundred foreign shores.

I had one of Stanley's dreams last night.  
Poems, like schools of fish,  
Flashed in the dark waters—  
Think the Persian Gulf,  
The Indian Ocean, the Atlantic  
And Pacific, Galilee and the Great Lakes,  
The Straits of Magellan, the Black Sea—

Even in his sleep  
Stanley looks out far and in deep.  
“Watery poems,” he says.  
He says, “Translate these.”

James Palmer America

## COACHING STRATEGY

Coach J was no coach K;  
he actually believed  
that his endgame coaching strategy,  
operating in a vacuum,  
                                would be  
the difference between his team's winning or losing  
And he was proven right,  
                                twice,  
  though  
probably not in the way he intended  
One year in the tournament  
he called timeout as his player nailed the winning shot,  
nullifying the result;  
his strategy could not produce a similar result  
and his team went on to lose in overtime  
The next year in the tournament,  
                                with



time ticking down and the ball in the hands of his best player,  
with

the player in a position to have several options  
for the creation of the last shot,  
he called timeout to devise a better strategy,  
which  
allowed the other coach to devise a strategy  
to keep the ball from the best player  
and force a lesser player to take the last shot;  
said lesser player missed the potential game-winner  
and the team lost by one  
Coach J is now ex-coach J

Michael Ceraolo    America

### **STILL...**

Still sleepless that sleepy soul in the morning  
That lily that is as sweet as honey  
That has spent all night long spying on stars  
All night long

He will sleep  
He will sleep upon the fall of dusk  
The birds and the morning light sing in one voice

I too will sleep on his Madonna horizon  
Where the ocean's mysteries flee to shelter...

Alisa Velaj    Albania

### **BIRDS' SORROWS**

Yesterday at midnight the goldfinch passed away  
My father was embraced by the sadness  
That I rarely have seen him like that.  
Then came the morning  
With a solitary canary into the other cage

And an empty cage in front of it.  
We waited too much for that canary to sing  
All day long we waited  
But at night it died suddenly with locked voice.  
My sorrow was infinite then  
That's why I remembered one night of nights  
When we heard the news about a violated passerby  
And we sat down to eat dinner as always  
Without even a prayer for the unfortunate man.  
(We said just that in this country  
The human being is worth a feather)  
Meanwhile our fragile canary  
Stopped the song for its bird friend ...

Alisa Velaj    Albania

Translated from Albanian into English by Laureta Petoshati

## **BOTTLES**

Winter's tight embrace  
recedes for the morning,  
the weak sun glinting  
off a thousand glass shards  
washed from unknown shores.  
A carefully sculpted oyster  
held in a boy's soft hand,  
living treasure trapped inside  
waiting for childhood's sad end.  
Young feet leave only fleeting  
impressions in the purest mud,  
the tide's oblivion comes too soon  
lapwings rise with the daytime moon.

Tim Gardiner    England

## THE DEVIL'S MARK

Stalking Mistley Pond  
under a full moon,  
the Witchfinder's ghost  
cannot rest tonight.  
Scolding tongues  
echo on the breeze,  
the Devil's Mark  
on this lonely town.  
Needles pierce skin;  
the conscious bleeds  
more keenly than  
green spindle bark.  
Her face in the water  
reflects the beauty  
only time and pain  
unfaithfully forge.  
Submerging his face  
just long enough  
to drown in his lies  
one more time.  
He has so much  
to answer for,  
ceaseless insomnia  
her revenge.

Note: Written in Manningtree, Essex, England, home to Matthew Hopkins (in the 1640s), the infamous Witchfinder General

Tim Gardiner    England

## **BOUDICA**

She invades my thoughts  
the arrow implanted deep.  
Golden hair scatters to the wind,  
her Roman nose disapproving.  
A battle of wits, fierce intellect  
masking tender insecurity.  
This war is over, my temple  
ransacked. Burnt to the ground.  
Embers still smouldering.

NOTE: Boudica, queen of the Iceni tribe, destroyed Camulodunum (modern Colchester) in AD 60 or 61 during the uprising against the Roman Empire in Britain.

Tim Gardiner    England

## **GREEN**

A little green voice  
from some forgotten cranny;  
A springtime green voice  
pushes up through sorrow's sludge  
green like a sliver of hope

up through ash and bone.  
A green without memory,  
chameleon green,  
a green the color of faith,  
a green not yet determined.

Kristine Doll    America

## **SINGLETON OAK**

Stranded,  
like a wrecked ship on a green-grass sea  
the fallen oak rests,  
waiting for a magical tide to lift it to life again.  
The great storm, Nemesis, took it down  
against its will to live a hundred years;  
grand in its demise: bold and durable,  
protected by its wrinkled, rippling bark,  
deep grooves of character.  
Stumps of its remnant branches give birth  
to imaginings: long forgotten creatures,  
mythical monsters that haunt the liquid deep.  
A sculptor's spectral dream!  
Scars are smoothed by kinder winds  
to shine like polished barnacles.  
Growth rings, too close together now,  
blur the evidence of passing time.  
Age is this oak tree's best-kept secret.

Jean Salkilld    Wales

### **DVD**

## **THE POET, THE HUNCHBACK, AND THE BOY**

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Filmed by Franco De Marco of Holly Tree Productions, Wales

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## **THESE BOYS ARE HISTORY NOW**

I'll sing a blues for those two boys,  
cycling through their time and place,  
a south-west corner of a small island,  
thirteen years on from a continent's vast war.  
A tall road, summer-sweet with tarmac,  
climbing from a seaside village,  
from rock pool to hedgerow, tyre hum -  
and the dates, the hopes, that Friday next,  
the girls with pony-tails.

They are history now, those boys,  
and we might search for them,  
the names, the boys, the sentiments,  
stacked up in family photos, newspapers,  
exam results and names of teams,  
postcards from Paris , microfilm.  
(Praise, praise, to the stackers and recorders).

Sometimes they seem to fade, that scene, the people,  
yet still they haunt that recollected tarmacked road,  
evoking, evoking.

Robert Nisbet    Wales

## **ALPHA POINT APOCALYPSE**

You are the first and the last  
from the beginning until the end

You are the womb and the grave  
from the sex to the worms

You are the sun and the moon  
from the fire to the shadows

You are the strength and the weakness  
from the high rise to the fall  
from the primal roar to the gasping moan

You are the truth and the lie  
from the creation to the garden  
from the honest word to the deceitful tongue

You are the flesh and the soul  
from the body to the source

You are the angel and the animal  
from the halo to the fangs  
from the perfect peace to the carnage

You are the order and the chaos  
from the evolution to the breakdown  
from the build up to the crash

You are the love and the hatred  
from the full heart to the black coal  
from the open to the closed

You are the breath and the wind  
from the lungs to the oxygen  
from the organs to the sky

You are the first and the last  
from the beginning until the end

Scott Thomas Outlar    America

## **DRIVER**

I haven't seen him for years as the times were  
changed. But things come back as a tide  
does, with deliveries switched to evenings again.

His hair thick and tall somewhere,  
grey like the limestone rock that sits in Llangollen  
from the sea that once swelled around there.

He walks with the toe caps, never a fluent step  
but a ball and chain drag of the knee.  
The forty foot trucks house cages and tote boxes

some heavy, car heavy, others you can swing  
into goods in with a hip twist. The lever off the tail  
lift, back bent and spine crunched, a pull of a cage.

A push up the small tarmac ramp that joins the car park  
to the building. A head scratching gradient.  
One you can imagine to be at the end of all

this, as you head into the goods in of death  
waiting to be tagged, sealed, strapped, then sent off  
to somewhere new, some place else.

Gareth Culshaw    Wales

## **BUTCHERS**

The last shop before a run of houses  
Jones the butchers.  
father to son, father to son  
passed down or up depending on your outlook.

string wrapped slabs like parcels  
felt tip markings on white labels  
ounces grams, pound kilos;  
things I never knew the weight of,  
but you don't at that age  
everything is light and quickly forgotten

ruby red, creamy red, blood red, brick red  
shoelace mince, sand coloured pies.

I always stood behind, half seen, unheard  
brown paper bags swung by finger and thumb,  
the firm press and hold of a butcher's hand

Gareth Culshaw    Wales



## LIPS

А себя, как я, вывернуть не можете, чтобы были одни сплошные губы

В В Маяковский

But can you turn yourselves inside out, like me

And become just two lips entirely?

V.V.Mayakovsky translation by Andrey Kneller

- What about the air?

- Yes, you can touch the air

Despicable Me

The world is shaped as my lover  
Constantly kissing  
The face of a room with an eye of a painting  
The chin of a laptop screen  
The smell of a birch tree grove  
Awakening on top of the hill

The kiss against my lips can be watery  
Air bubbles flow  
The face of a coffee bar  
The belly of parquet floor

Sometimes my lover  
Is shy, withdrawing  
Below larches' boughs  
Sometimes I get distracted  
As the wind bellows  
And upturns the crows

But then the kiss  
Is pressing stronger  
And I know once more  
The face of a Modigliani princess  
The touch of a palladium core

Oxana Poberejnaia    England

## THE WAY THROUGH TOMSK

Inspired by *The Way Through the Woods* by Rudyard Kipling

They shut down the Little Squirrel sweets shop in Lenin Street.  
Price tags stick out of shiny toilets there.  
And now you would never know  
That once it was the only place in Tomsk to get a  
Milk shake with blue foam on top.  
Only in coin collections you will find the globe embraced by wheat wreaths on the  
back of kopecks,  
Which children used to put onto a plastic dish,  
Where plastic cards now flash.

Yet, when I walk down to Lenin Square,  
My eyes look for a wooden sculpture above a carved door to the Little Squirrel  
shop in Lenin Street...  
But there is no Little Squirrel shop in Lenin Street.

They shut down the House of Books shop in Comsomol Street.  
They've straightened the shelf maze into supermarket aisles.  
And now you would never know that here Soviet middle class joined waiting lists  
for Leskov and Saltykov-Schedrin,  
And Soviet teenagers came in search of semi-state-approved Dumas and stories of  
nobility.

Yet, when I ride private mini-buses, I hear requests to stop at the House of Books  
shop in Comsomol Street...  
But there is no House of Books shop in Comsomol Street.

They shut down the Swimming Pool Tom in Red Army Street.  
They painted it red and inside they put pool tables for Armani red-jacketed New  
Russians.  
And now you would never know that a five-year old girl was afraid to step on a  
painted snake in the Toddlers' Pool,  
And that once she forgot to put on her swimming gear walking out of the showers  
at a PE lesson.

Yet, if you open a box with a fairy-tale lid you will find a photo of the five-year  
old girl on a cardboard pass to the Swimming Pool Tom in Red Army Street...  
But there is no Swimming Pool Tom in Red Army Street.

Oxana Poberejnaia    England

## FROM DUSK TO DARK

good night

turn off the radio

close the door

make sure the lock is secure

watch the clock

as it transforms dusk to dark

and when you draw the curtains

watch the clouds as they glow orange

see the leaves wave with the wind

say hello to the new moon

count the constellations

hold a star in your palm

to warm and to calm you

sleep well

Helen Bar-Lev Israel



**Kilmore Quay** © 2016 Helen Bar Lev

## **PICASSO'S CAT SCULPTURE**

*(17 October 2015, at the MoMA)*

Once again  
I see  
Picasso's cat.

First at  
his museum  
in Barcelona.

Now here  
at the MoMA.

It's almost  
as if he  
caught the cat  
in motion,  
between purr & meow.

A cat is  
a thing of  
touch and sound . . .  
and motion.

It lives  
in my apprehension  
and  
mythological metaphor.

Now captured in bronze,  
the metal the Nazis forbade  
artists to use  
during WW II,  
it's also a fixed defiance  
of those who'd try  
to fix us,  
to fit us  
only for museums,

Like a people that  
used to be,  
used to exist.

Stanley H. Barkan    America

**Interview with Michael Graves, American poet**



**Michael Graves © 2016 Michael Graves**

New York's Michael Graves is the author of *Outside St. Jude's Adam and Cain*, *Illegal Border Crosser* and *In Fragility*.

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**Peter Thabit Jones:** How long have you been writing poems?

**Michael Graves:** I'm not sure my memory is accurate, Peter, but at least as early as junior year in high school, which would be nineteen sixty-eight (1968).

**PTJ:** Who are the writers who influenced you?

**MG:** I'd like the question to be who influenced me early, late, you know, to ask about specific times, but I was a big fan of Louis—Louise? Varese's translations of selections from Rimbaud as a young man. I was advised to go back to college to learn what had been done—I had dropped out in Spring 1969, around the time of the Kent State Massacre. The first poets I was exposed to at Hunter College were Yeats, Hopkins, Joyce of *Chamber Music*, Eliot. I learned alliteration from Hopkins and took to it like a fish to water, and it is still prominent in many of my poems. Most of this sort of thing was unconscious and instinctive, but I took to the drama of Yeats' middle and later poems and his—perhaps one can say—mix of directness and rhetorical style. The earliest anthology I can remember really being taken with was Hayden Carruth's *The Voice That Is Great Within Us*, though I might have been exposed to Lewis Turco's textbook earlier, which had Donne's 'To the Sunne Rising'.

**PTJ:** You present the Left Bank Books events, so how important to you is the poem on the 'stage' as opposed to the poem on the page?

**MG:** I think a poem has to work on the page; that's the ultimate test, but it is probably fair to say that if it does it will probably work on the stage also, especially because it will probably have enough sound texture, voice, tone, cadence, rhythm, sound texture—I guess all of this can probably be summed up by the word music. If a poem has music, it should be heard out loud, even if only by a reader reading it to him/herself.

**PTJ:** How important is the crafting of a poem to you?

**MG:** It's hard and perhaps unfair to put the elements of a poem or creativity into a hierarchy, but I think craft is of tremendous importance, but then again, so, often, is everything else. I guess much depends on whether or not one thinks of poetry as a high art. The goal, or certainly one goal, is to make the sound and sense—you will probably recognize the title of a good textbook in the phrase—inseparable, or perhaps a much better way of putting this would be to make form and content/theme inseparable. This might be a perfect ideal, but it seems well-worth having. Craft serves vision, significance, emotional power, beauty and memorability. A good place to start developing an awareness of craft or deepening it, if one is not familiar with it, is Alexander Pope's *An Essay On Criticism*.

**PTJ:** There are those who believe poetry has become a game among like-minded people. What do you think?

**MG:** I don't know if I'm qualified to say much about this. I read deeply in James Joyce and Yeats and return over and over to James Wright's *The Branch Will Not Break and Shall We Gather At The River*, but I don't read widely in contemporary poetry. This is not to say I'm uninterested in other writers, but one only has so much energy and time, so I focus on ones I consider great and whom I consider myself to be belated in coming to understand even though I have been returning to them for most of my life. I might be too old to really care about the contemporary scene. I believe the great Irish poet Thomas Kinsella has said something like one finds oneself pretty much alone after a while. Although I'm still healthy and pretty energetic at 65, I think I'm inclined to say any poetry that's too doctrinal or programmatic is likely to be too limited for my taste, especially if it's prosy or too willfully obscure.

**PTJ:** What are you working on at the moment as a writer?

**MG:** My *New and Selected Poems* is forthcoming from Nirala and Yuyutsu Sharma and I will be going back and forth deciding which poems to keep in the manuscript I've submitted. Meanwhile, some short poems keep coming, about one a week. And I would eventually like to record Blatnoy, an outrageous beast of Russian immigrant who speaks in what I like to think is a wildly poetic broken English. And he keeps insisting he has something to say every so often. And he is

often funny.

### **SO LOVE MIGHT BE**

Without shout, or scream, or howl,  
I spoke my rage to the one who calls  
For peace with silence. Hostage still,  
She flinches at the memories of old  
Recurrent violence, and I, compelled  
To bless or blast, pitying her for what  
She's lost, asked only to be heard, not  
Believed or surrendered to, but heard,  
So my contorted face might soften,  
And love might be the final word.

### **MARRIAGE**

You stood before a mirror  
And pronounced the wedding words  
In a ceremony for yourself.  
Then, having none to kiss,  
Imagined that you graced the ring finger of your hand  
With a band of primal black,  
A keepsake of the mother, ancient night,  
Then, turning, took a piece of dark cake,  
Which seemed a sort of eucharist to you.  
You felt the moonless sky  
In which a star cannot perceive its counterpart  
And burns alone,  
And knew that shadow would reside in you  
As death made visible  
And walk within you as you walked  
As if she were your bride  
And hang upon your arm,  
A black rose in her hand.



Michael Graves    America

***theseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarry***

Since my brother and I  
Sit stitching wings  
Onto butterflies  
***cross stitch***  
***knit one***  
***pearl one***  
Release from the jar  
We speak not  
Of family matters  
Of trivial demeanours  
Like our mother  
Lying in effluence  
While my father  
Unravels like a spool of thread  
We speak not  
Of the debt  
The dogma  
The destruction of  
Our beautiful wives

Since my brother and I  
Create sweet music with  
Each other's ribcages  
Like flesh and form  
Snuff boxed silhouette  
Black crow dreamscapes  
We daren't speak  
Of little boy blue  
Deciduous trees  
Death incarnate  
And the rattle and hum  
Of our mothers  
Bronchial fire

Since my brother and I  
Lay still inside one another  
Acid reflux and shameful glances  
Boiled sweet reflections  
Mist eye menders  
Hospital trolleys ambushed  
Sent back to whence they came  
We do not have time  
For trivialities  
Such as life  
Death  
And the flames that lick  
Suck and caress  
At our parents ethereal chaos

Since my brother and I  
Plough fields of youthful ambivalence  
With rusted tractor wheels  
And rabbits slit from ear  
To twitching ear  
We do not have time  
To discuss the cancer  
Or the amputation of limbs  
The war in the east  
Or the son in the west

Since my brother and I  
Live only for ourselves  
We do not have time  
To attend funerals  
And light pyres  
For those we love  
And those we lost  
While we were trading places  
And melting like wax  
Into the eyes of eternity.

Stu Buck    Wales

## **WHISTLE-STOP**

*New Towns For Old, script by Dylan Thomas - a Ministry of Information film*

Far away from the smoke, new towns for old,  
What an august scheme seductive and bright,  
In twenty years it would be black with mould.

How can a man's labour be cheaply sold,  
In the whipped backed glare of progresses fight?  
Far away from the smoke, new towns for old.

Pock-marked with soot and rubble in the cold  
Clang of hammers, the steam pistons dog bite,  
In twenty years it would be black with mould.

A floating town of chimneys prop and hold  
Loose legged trams running tours of the bombsight,  
Far away from the smoke, new towns for old.

How can a borough's soul be weighed in gold?  
Standardised in skipping rope and box kite,  
In twenty years it would be black with mould.

A whistle-stop tour soothes the neatly rolled  
Up plump skeleton key men who recite;  
"Far away from the smoke, new towns for old."  
In twenty years it would be black with mould.

Grant Tabard    England

## **EXPECTING SOLDIERS**

*inspired by 'The Flight into Egypt' by Nicolas Poussin*

The traveller sits languid,  
Seemingly familiar with the scene  
Which unfolds before him.

A guide, this heavenly creature,  
Ferries the holy family into Egypt,  
Hurries them beneath yellow varnish.

Smelt blue pigment sky  
Like an out of tune piano  
Misdirects the language of direction.

Pentimenti along the corneas  
Splitting the eye in two.  
A tree painted in reserve,

Mechanism of the idea of passion.  
Joseph the warrior in fear, ochre on the nose  
In Eucharistic robes.

The Virgin's royal blue  
Beneath a fold of light burgundy.  
Substance of blood,

A veil of pure white crowns her.  
She turns her head to the direction they've come,  
Expecting soldiers.

Grant Tabard    England

### **FAIRYTALE OF A FIRST CHRISTMAS**

Our first Christmas was a thousand miles away  
with just the two of us, in love with first names.

In the morning the Sun's rays shone  
through your ratty nightdress that I loved so  
with tinsel threaded through,  
numbed to the revolving outside of our core.

We spun around an imagined band of gold,  
a plastic garland's matrimony with the TV in silence,

a chorale of smiling faces muted.  
I'd like to rest my head on that memory

before all these small things become weary of us,  
with you, with two heartbeats hidden away in your nest of fire.

Our last Christmas will be held together with stretched elastic bands covered with a liberality of faded glitter, as cold as a struck match.

Grant Tabard    England

### **LIQUOR OF INK**

The empty coffee cup, gently stained with the liquor of ink, is not sure of me and my face of masks. A cone of breeze coats the inside of this chalice of muses; an incense of drained vixens, ghosts of steam and husks of motorway lights. I peer in, the throaty morning's belly sags, holding graves up like babes. Thinly now the roasted beans hush softly, ghosts of inspirations spent scurrying through my innards like rats chasing the meat of my process, a cross-pollination of juice from inside the cherry and the purple fruit of a man's rumbling cello bow imagination.

Grant Tabard    England

### **THE GOLDEN ORIOLES**

They lived in the top of the tallest tree  
quivered with the Southern breezes  
Their song liquid sunlight  
Told tales of Orient  
Of paramours and secret trists  
Their flight was only up

Up one day from their Poplar tree  
By the lake that mirrored stars  
They flew into the great bam  
Only up they flew  
amongst the great Oak beams

There was no opening to the sky  
And only swallows knew  
The entrance to the day  
so round and round they flew no  
tales of Amethyst or Pearl  
Could tempt them from the dark

Evening came on  
The barn came one with night  
Two Golden birds  
that could only fly up  
trapped within its roof

In the morning the birds were gone  
and were no more seen or heard  
Atop the sighing trees  
and only tears filled  
the pool that mirrored stars

Ian Griffiths    England

## **THE CALLING**

as a lifelong quest  
to comprehend  
that original calling  
#  
what they wanted of me  
#  
what he wanted yes  
but most of all  
what she wanted  
#  
and the others too  
#  
so basic and earthy  
and immediate  
beneath the dancing

#  
black locust leaves  
#  
were those times  
their times  
my times  
#  
between the anticline folds  
#  
of the dead among the living—  
I was unable to reach back  
unable to speak  
#  
across the chasm  
#  
or to be heard  
amongst the echoes  
collapsing behind me  
#  
in the shadows of that holler  
#  
my dramatizations and  
bizarre enactments  
did not play well  
#  
did not play at all  
#  
too much of the disease  
and not enough palliative  
consolations  
#  
in the failures of my sermons  
#  
and specters and scenes  
to engage or enchant  
or transfigure  
#  
their vanishing

John Dotson America

*theseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarry*



**Mirrored Souls** (Mixed Media on Canvas, 36" x 30")

© 2016 Carolyn Mary Kleefeld



## **NAKED TREES OF WINTER**

*(for DC)*

From the jet window  
we witness unexplored vistas  
whisking by, and  
rapidly vanishing horizons.

This life, so vast and holy,  
is just a passing glimpse,  
disappearing before we know it.

Only occasionally am I able  
to participate fully—  
perhaps in the things  
that I love the most,  
like the precious moments  
when I gaze into my beloved's eyes.

In his eyes I discover  
the naked trees of winter  
as they sway in the bitter cold  
and wait in their roots,  
as we do for the spring  
with its warmth,  
its buds of encouragement,  
emitting the fragrance  
of new life.

Carolyn Mary Kleefeld    America

### **BOOKS BY CAROLYN MARY KLEEFELD, POET AND ARTIST**

The Seventh Quarry Press is the U.K./Europe distributor of Carolyn's books. Information on the books, prices, and how to purchase them is available from [info@peterthabitjones.com](mailto:info@peterthabitjones.com)

## OUR HIGHER CONSCIENCE

I'm disturbed by  
the teeming crowds  
the sterility of soul,  
obsession with materialism,  
gadgets and selfies,  
the compulsion toward exaggeration  
and instant gratification.

Where is the compassion  
for the needy and suffering?  
Where is the integrity, the character  
amid this sea of humans turned robots?

Global warming screams,  
yet no one listens.  
There is far too little water  
for far too many people.

Fortunately, I can return  
to my haven, a blessing indeed,  
but what about those  
noisy, seething crowds out there?  
Where can *they* possibly go?

And what about our planet?  
Overpopulated and polluted,  
ravaged by the politics of greed,  
it has nowhere to go.

Unless we turn inward  
and cultivate a higher conscience,  
we will continue to destroy this planet  
and it will have to begin again.

Carolyn Mary Kleefeld    America



**Prophecy** (Oil on Canvas, 36" x 60") © 2016 Carolyn Mary Kleefeld

## **THE PADDLEWHEEL STEAMBOAT**

along the Mississippi  
where the banjo music  
wafts across town  
in the cool of the evening  
the paddlewheel steamboat  
floats beneath the moon

houses on blocks rock  
beyond the slow climb  
the oak root woodwind  
holds a single strand of  
spider web  
dreaming the  
beauty of silk

the fishermen at water's edge  
hear the minstrel's tune;  
poets sing words of color  
fly rods hold no reels

the thin boys in ragged clothes  
along the shore  
watch the straw-hat dancers  
no moonlight falls on them  
their straits are as long as  
a depression-era bread line

the rain begins its crying;  
underneath the dripping coats,  
the birds bathe

the rosary beads set down  
like coins at the bottom of a well  
the steamboat anchored;  
the wishing docked for another winter

Gloria Keeley    America

## **ROCK THE JAZZBA**

he worked the docks  
played with Bird, edgy  
night machine jazz  
the band's foghorns bellowing  
on the wharf under the  
tetrad blood moons  
the totem pole of drummers  
spooning that spoonful  
it's 1930 in Paris somewhere  
angry prostitutes fight over  
street corner turf  
he played all night for her  
the moon's holy wafer, blood and body  
placed on tongue, whole  
tambourined from the

back of the throat  
swing the partner  
slide the trombone, ease on down  
they rode all night

Gloria Keeley    America

### **THIRST FROM A WEDDING**

Who remembers only  
thirst from a wedding?  
Who recalls only  
breathlessness  
from an embrace?  
Even if you feel cold  
as a hairpin inside,  
wait for that one  
who illuminates your loss  
like the steady glow  
of flames drawing you closer.  
You're a splinter in that burning;  
you're the sudden warmth  
of kindness that attracts  
even those with the panic  
of crocuses in their eyes.

Bill Wolak    America

### **THE SCREAMERS**

In the Confused Ward  
up on the fourth floor,  
we keep the screamers  
sedated.  
Whenever they're  
awakened,  
the lost ones,  
tied tight in their restraints,  
pray for death

through their bedsores.

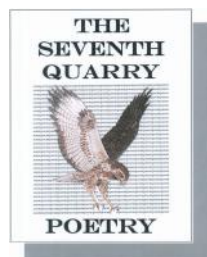
Bill Wolak    America

### **AFTER A PHOTO OF DILEEP JHAVERI**

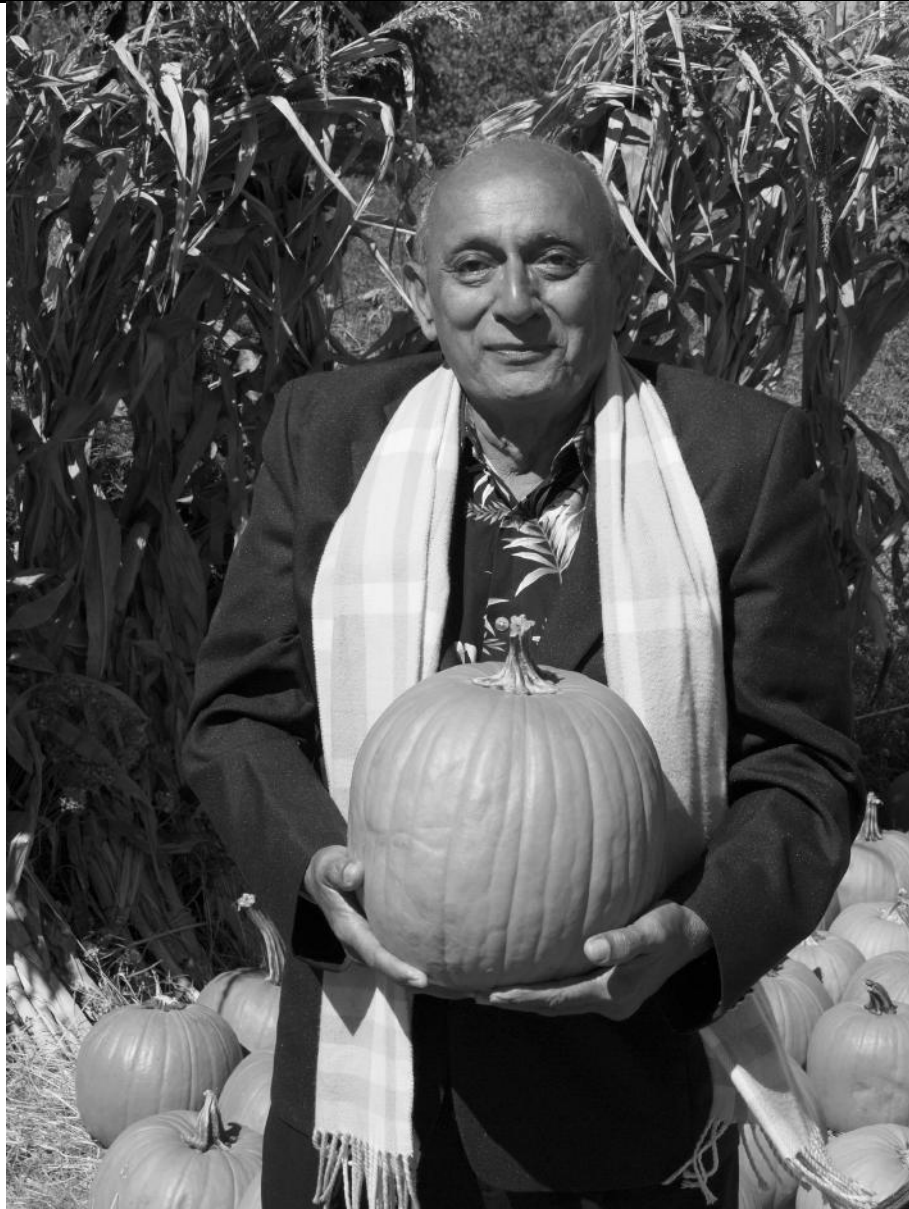
As long as you're holding  
that pumpkin with the steadiness  
of a dragonfly's gaze,  
the monsoon will arrive  
shaking her bracelets at snakes,  
and lovers with skin  
submissive as perfume  
will offer their nakedness  
where burning leaves no trace.

As long as you're holding  
that pumpkin carefully  
as a heron stepping  
into the shallows,  
the wildflower's  
vibrating lipstick of bees  
will greet the daylight  
like a temple elephant,  
and nothing will disturb  
the lover's deepening embrace.

Bill Wolak    America



## Interview with Indian poet Dileep Jhaveri



Dileep Jhaveri © 2016 Bill Wolak

### **Anthropocentric Misconceptions and Other Unpredictable Encounters with Eternity: An Interview with Dileep Jhaveri**

Born in 1943, Dileep Jhaveri is one of the most dynamic and articulate poets writing in India today. Like the Czech poet Miroslav Holub, his poetry mixes the objectivity of a scientist with an indefatigable lyricism. For Jhaveri, poetry is a theatre of ideas and emotions, and theoretical propositions. Dileep Jhaveri is a practicing general physician based in Mumbai and a well-known Gujarati poet and

playwright. He has published two collections of poetry in Gujarati entitled *Pandukavyo Ane Itar* (1989) *Khandit Kaand Ane Pachhi*, a travelogue *Chale Purvaiya*, and a play *Vyaasochchhvas* (2003), which has subsequently been translated into English as *A Breath of Vyas* by Ms. Kamal Sanyal. Recently, he has published two books of poetry in the United States, *Once This Mist Clears* (2014) and *Fire Writes in Several Scripts* (2015), both by The Feral Press. His latest translation is titled *Breath Becoming a Word: Contemporary Gujarati Poetry in English Translation* published by Sahitya Akademi Ahmedabad. This book is also translated into Irish by Gabriel Rosenstock and his associates. In addition, many of his poems have been anthologized, and his poetry has been translated into English, Hindi, Marathi, Malayalam, Bengali, Korean, Chinese, Irish, and Japanese. He has received The Critic Award (1989), the Jayant Pathak Award for Poetry (1989), the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad Award (1990), and the Karunanidhi National award (1913) by BAPASI. In addition, he has been honored with an award for Lifetime Achievement from the State Government of Maharashtra. Inside India, he has been invited to read his works by the Central and State Sahitya Akademis, various universities, and assorted literary groups. He also has been invited to read widely abroad, including at the Asian Poets' Conference in Korea in 1986, Taiwan in 1995, and such other countries as Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Also, he has conducted two reading tours throughout the United States. Dileep Jhaveri serves on the editorial boards of *Museindia.com* and the *Kobita Review*. Bill Wolak and Dileep Jhaveri met in Nagpur, India, where they were both featured poets at the 2011 Kritiya International Poetry Festival. Afterwards, they both were featured poets at the Hyderabad Literary Festivals of 2013 and 2014. During their last meeting, in 2015 when Bill Wolak was giving a series of poetry readings in India, the subsequent interview was started, and it was completed over the following months.

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**Bill Wolak:** You are a physician with a medical practice. Why do you write poetry?

**Dileep Jhaveri:** Poetry gives sense to my everyday existence. It bonds me to a totality that is still incomprehensible to me and steers my impatient awareness to explore within it. This whole is manifest in words that emerge from and also lead to the dynamic language transpiring from ever-changing and perpetual consciousness, not only mine but of all that is living or just is. Words give me not only meanings, associations, music, and freedom; they open up possibilities to extend this freedom and offer surprises to celebrate as well as expose my failure to



sustain my intuitions beyond a certain point. Writing a poem is an intention and also an aimless itinerancy. But both are essential to evolution. Evolution is continuity without beginning or end and so is poetry. Being a physician helps me survive and gives meaning to my human existence. It teaches me to understand others, share their sufferings, make my skill helpful to restore happiness and purpose in the life of my patients, expands my joy when successful, and turns me to introspect when I fail. I practice to achieve integrity as a doctor and feel integral with the universe as a poet.

**BW:** How would you define poetry?

**DJ:** With condescending compassion, I commend the critics and pedants to this path that angels fear to tread. To define poetry, I write poems.

**BW:** How would you describe the role of the poet?

**DJ:** The poet has to find the word. He or she may have an idea, an emotion, a vision, an insight into history and myths or an irresistible urge to leap into unknown, a need to contemplate on his or her life, human condition, and contemporary reality or to seek an answer to flimsy or fundamental problems of existence. But the poet has to find a word for this. It may not be the word or the only word. This word will have a sound, musicality, associations, history, single or multiple meanings, coziness, discomfort, or hostility with other words. It may be fleeting, frivolous, fresh, fragile, fabled, flippant, fictitious, familiar, failing, fanciful, faceted, flexible, fixed, fascinating, fastidious, faulted, fake, fornicating, forbidden, and fertile and so on. But it will be a part of living language. Poetry is not just a word. All these words are like air, light, water, minerals, soil, or seasons for the fruition of oral flora that turn into a phrase, a sentence, a surprise, a completeness, or a space that is incomplete and wide and inviting to be explored. One word leads to another effortlessly or by chance or design or grace. The role of the poet is to take the reader along to discover spaces where this magic is innate. The poet is enchanted and captivated by something more than his desire or intention. He or she then becomes a mirror or a river for the reader for a similar adventure. And that is how poetry survives and languages survive and life survives in continuous multiplications and transformations.

**BW:** Is there any difference between the role of the poet in the West and the role of the poet in India?

**DJ:** Having no idea of current reality in the West, one has to rely upon history and hearsay. The poet's image has undergone many changes. At one time in the not too

distant past, the poet was a cause for adoration in a section of society like a rare flower-vase or decorated heirloom. Early youth was given to admire and retired old age sought short term shelter in poetry. A poet was best ignored, and his or her work was a boring subject in the curriculum to be forgotten after attaining grades. Some newspapers needed a few quotes to sound respectable. Musical performances needed lyrics, and operas needed romances. Some entertainers prided themselves as poets. But readers of poetry by choice have always been few. All this never prevented poets from pursuing the word. Indifferent to the mundane, they continued and retained equanimity even when awarded money, academic positions, awards, or a Nobel prize. Only a few were possessed with prophetic notions and took off their trousers in city-squares. But most poets were happy to be with each other, exchanging books, booze, tobacco, gossip, memories, and innate disdain for the critics in general. All were not successful or satisfied, so some turned to the mysterious East and alluring oriental metaphysics in their never ending spiritual sojourns. We have had some parallels and diversions.

In India, a poet is a curiosity, a crazy creature to be befriended briefly and forgotten. Encountering a poet socially always raises exclamations without resonance or echo. Soon the poet is settled in a cozy corner with a cup of coffee or a carafe of beer with withered widows or toothless old men wearing non-functioning hearing aids. Occasionally, someone would drop in breathlessly to ask whether the poet would write a few lines for her cousin's wedding, the old man will be having his eightieth birthday, and a sonnet would aptly celebrate it, or a widow may be happy with a stanza eulogizing virtues of the dear departed decades ago. Of course, these may seem satirical, but such things have happened in my life. Curiously, in an expectedly scant audience, the poet is grabbed by some bespectacled, underfed, budding genius with halitosis pushing forward a notebook to enquire, "Where can a publisher be found to print my verses?" But there are some poets who have ready audiences in their students and avid readers to review their work since they too belong to the University Brotherhood. We have also Mushairas where ghazals are recited or crooned to entertain base and obese businessmen, frustrated lovers, and curious addicts to be entertained till the applause wanes and slumber waxes. Religiously, poems form part of the school curriculum and turn into textbooks in arts colleges. The newspapers have a "Poem of the Day" column on the corner of the eighth or ninth page in the vicinity of the obituaries.

The scene differs from language to language. My Malayalam friend K. Satchidanandan is known even to the bus conductors and art-students in his native Kerala as well as nationally eminent scholars. He is translated in many languages

around the world and was nominated for a Nobel Prize a couple of years back. Unassuming and ordinarily dressed, he is comfortable with large or minuscule gatherings. In Tamil another friend in his seventies, Sirpi Balasubramaniam has a following of unbelievable sections of society, with a Director General of Police falling at his feet and thousands collecting to celebrate his seventieth birthday. He was a pioneer of modernism in his language, always soft spoken without the ardent declarations like Yevtushenko and always clad in ordinary white bush-shirt with short sleeves and loose pants. My Indonesian Friend W. S. Rendra was also known to taxi drivers of Jakarta in spite of his long years of repeated exiles. He wrote passionate poems of revolution, dressed flamboyantly, and entertained his European fellow poets lavishly in Depok, where he ran a school of drama for Indonesian youth.

What is clear in India is that all good poets are not always noticed. What help some are academic camaraderie, political commitments, journalistic contacts, and luck, perhaps! But most of the poets share the same fate all over the world. Now the Web has provided space for anyone to publish and have the narcissistic pleasure to gaze at one's name. This freedom bypasses the roadblocks created by editors and critics, but the raving responses on Facebook and other platforms remain questionable. Myriads of poetry festivals are held where naive or market-savvy poets rush, and some lose their savings in air tickets for momentary pleasure of reciting for a few minutes, and that is their monumental achievement!

**BW:** Do you write poetry every day, or do you experience bursts of creativity?

**DJ:** Poetry is certainly written everyday but neither on paper nor in clear and certain words. A poem emerges as a surprise or from an objective or repeated hard effort. The bursts of creativity observed in Rilke or Pessoa are rare. But the protracted inactivity which they experienced is common to every poet. The process of poetry is like several follicles growing indolently at a different pace in the ovary and also bursts of sperm in orgasm. Fertilization is never guaranteed. Even after successful conception, abortions and stillbirths are frequent. Deformed monsters also may be born.

**BW:** When you have a pen in your hand and you begin to write, where does the poem come from?

**DJ:** Paper and pen are in a three dimensional space. Writing happens in the fourth dimension. The poem comes from where time and space do not exist. The poem is an encounter with eternity. It is akin to listening to transparency or breathing density or singing colors or touching darkness. Poetry is like an enchanted forest

where one experiences all this. That forest is like the universe of which you are an indivisible part. You know the universe, and simultaneously you don't know it. Poetry is the same. Poetry comes from within you, and it comes from nowhere.

**BW:** Could you describe your process of composing a poem?

**DJ:** Several poems are in process all the time. Some are anticipated, some are imagined, some have perched on the psyche from the past, some are formless, and some are shrouded. Sometimes there is an idea trying to collect words around in order to become clear and be part of the design of a poem. Occasionally, like Valéry writing "The Cemetery by the Sea," a rhythm takes hold of the mind, and one has to search for the subject and language for that mysterious rhythm. Sometimes words and ideas and emotions and rhythms come running madly, and the poet has to rush to embrace a wildly flooded river. The poet may swim, float, or sink. Music and noise intermingle in multiple meters, and the result may be sublime or profane. Occasionally there is wisdom in resisting.

Here, allow me to digress to explain the influential meters and rhythms in Gujarati, my native language, and how they have affected my own process of poetical composition. Unlike the few and rather simple meters in English, we have many complex metrical structures. There are more than 50 meters that have varying length of serially ordered pronounced letters/syllables with short and broad vowels arranged in patterns with brief or long halts between them. These are borrowed from Sanskrit. A few of these meters have some freedom like in the Anushtubha, where each line has eight syllables compulsorily and the fifth, sixth, and seventh vowels in one line alternate in breadth and shortness in the next. This meter was very useful in writing long epics and also books of information or philosophy, being close to prose. Some meters were chanted while some were sung. Some had eleven, twelve, fifteen, seventeen, or twenty-three syllables of varying breadth, which may contain patterns of shorter meters with variations and additions. A short vowel would become long while preceding more than one joined consonants or at the end of a line in the stanza. It requires exacting discipline to follow the system, but the results are musically rewarding. Some of these meters effectively depict the ambience of love, flowing beauty, sadness, valor, slowness, speed, or calm. The second system is based on repeated measures of syllables, giving a short vowel value of one and two for a long vowel. A long vowel may be replaced by two short ones at places but at several intervals the places of short and broad are fixed. These meters are harmonic and were employed for emotional or descriptive verses. These also had a classical Sanskrit base. Then we have meters of four, five, six, seven, or eight syllables recurring with a pause in between, and the line would end with two

or three syllables. These meters are frequently used in melodic songs. Imported from Persian, ghazals also have many meters with their syllables having varied weights and complex rhyming patterns. I am mentioning this to impress on you that most of us writing in Gujarati have undergone the elaborate exercises of writing in these meters besides working on Western forms like sonnets or Japanese Haiku and Tanka. For many of us, a time came to break loose from these restrictions because several requisite words could not fit into the metric structure, and grammar also had to be twisted. So we started writing in free verse. But the earlier discipline held us back from empty rambling and voluble verbosity.

Now returning to the poetic process, no single or clear answer is possible. One word leads to another or many. A choice has to be made, keeping in mind multiple associations of each word. The original track is lost, and diversions or newer openings appear. The earlier exercises that I described help in controlling or modifying what a poet wants to say. Line by line, a poem evolves. But unpredictability also is a characteristic of poetry, and like a cataract or a storm, the words come rushing before the poet can comprehend or articulate them. This is where the language takes over the reins. Even when a poet is not writing, the process of poetry-making is going on in his or her mind. At the subconscious level, much is stored. Also, much is erased. At some magical moment, what is accumulated gets organized and emerges effortlessly because the endeavor was already going on. For example, *Sonnets to Orpheus* by Rilke was written in a short period of time, whereas there were long waits that were necessary to complete *The Duino Elegies* after the initial burst of writing.

Sometimes when a poet is lonely, poetry makes a visit. Silence evokes language just as a blank canvas stirs up colors. A dialogue starts, not with anyone but with the language. Memories, stored and forgotten phrases and images, vanished connections between words, elapsed rhymes and music collect to initiate a possible form and a poem begins. On the other hand, occasionally a poem in progress comes to an abrupt halt. A poet's inability to sustain, perceive, and comprehend the emerging form and articulate its shape, or personal prejudices let a poem slip away. Personally, I am an atheist and tend not to appear sentimental or committed to any creed. I try to avoid words or ideas that are traditionally employed for such intentions. So sometimes this restrains my range and makes me abandon a poem that may be budding. The anxiety of sounding frivolous also causes me to leave behind unfinished poems. At times one is possessed by fear. It is like being on a fishing boat with the net spread wide and feeling that there is a catch, and suddenly one realizes that something massive is entrapped in the net, something that cannot be brought on board easily or without danger, and one stops pulling it in. Unless

helped by the support of language that has the stored strength of several generations, history, and culture, the poet singlehandedly cannot proceed. Grace may save one in such circumstances, but sometimes one has to abandon the catch as well as the boat. This kind of experience teaches humility to the poet. The poet is not the master of words; rather, the language has bestowed a favor on him or her allowing a glimpse of cosmic continuity, the fleeting image of the White Goddess that dazzles and blinds simultaneously.

**BW:** How do you know when a poem is finished?

**DJ:** Well, it depends upon the organic form a poem is taking. This, in turn, depends upon how the poem began. If it started with a statement, then it may end with a supporting structure of ideas and images, or the statement may be followed by a counter-statement and ensuing dialectic tension is resolved or allowed to reach its crisis. In a narrative poem, the end of the story has an obvious end, but how and where to end is my choice. If the poem starts with an image, a series of similar or contrasting images is created selectively or in a long catalogue. The design can be like this—reflection, echo, shadow and fading apparition, a mere outline, a disappearing transparency where the end comes. But occasionally the narrator loses control, and bringing it somehow to an end becomes necessary. This is a challenge where I get defeated, and the poem lands in a dustbin. Sometimes it becomes difficult to proceed, and the choice is either to abandon the poem or to find a word or a phrase or incoherence or just to leave an open-ended poem with abundant space for the reader to explore.

A poem grows as a tree with roots, stem, branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits. Each has its unique form and connotation and yet offers a continuity and unity. To return to the seed is perhaps one appropriate end to the poem. The analogy can be extended to a forest. Epics are such forests, where many trees grow and numerous seeds are scattered that mature under the care of several generations of the poets. The woods may have diverse trees connected to each other by intertwining branches and underground root systems as in the *Mahabharata* or the *Iliad*. The forest may have a single dominating tree like a pine with an undergrowth of a few plants as in the *Ramayana* or the *Odyssey*. We may also acquire masks from myths and epics. Around these, we weave our personal interpretations and contemporary details to suggest the perpetual relevance of the past. In such poems, the expected or surprising end is a matter of deliberate choice.

At times variations of the starting line of intended or inspired beginning are practiced like variations on theme in music or painting and the result would be a

single poem or a group of serial poems. In a sequence, each poem is complete by itself and leads to the next also and so on. In lyrics, an opening, attractive line is developed with rhyming stanzas starting as a game. It usually ends by going back to its beginning. I am poor at emotive expressions, and many an exercise turns into crumpled paper balls.

Sometimes you know the poem has ended because you cannot go any further, because you have emptied your pool of images and memories, because a perfect form is created, because space must be left for the reader to uncover further possibilities.

**BW:** Novelists in India seem to be highly esteemed, whereas poets, as you have stated elsewhere, "exist in a very small space." What causes this disparity between writers in India?

**DJ:** Is it true only for India? Has any book of poetry ever been a bestseller? Even in the past, stories always had a larger audience than soporific poetry. Before printing and writing, verse was an easy form for narration, since music and rhythm helped in memorizing it. Nevertheless, it was the story that attracted the audience. Between cradle and kindergarten, lullabies are soon replaced by bedtime stories. After the readership took over, novels and short stories became favorites. Poetry was always on the margins. Books are made by publishers. They only make a profit if the books are sold. Naturally, the publishers print and market novels and, of course, textbooks. Students are forced to buy expensive textbooks, and the masses like to buy novels. Poetry is always for a few who crave empathy, insight, and erudition. So the little periodicals print poetry, but they are bad at marketing. No publisher willingly prints poetry. Editions of hardly 500 copies are printed out of which 100 are bought by the poet while the rest remain in basements to feed silverfish, cockroaches, and termites. Now the Internet has given opportunity to aspiring poets to publish and what happens has been said by me earlier.

The poets still remain respected, since only a few understand them. Poetry is like some magical chants or religious dogmas or relics in museums or rare species in zoos. Other ravings are reserved for novelists of serious literature or detective stories or thrillers or pulp fiction or pornography. But even these authors have lost ground to the writers of recipe books.

**BW:** What do you think draws people to poetry?

**DJ:** Only a few are drawn to poetry. Some want surprise and widening of consciousness, the path in Zen. Some want to lose themselves (poor suffering

souls!) or find themselves, the hide and seek game. Essentially both categories are the same. Poetry invents a universe and erases another. Totality replaces a part, and a part becomes the witness to continuity. Poetry provides a home for the lost one, and once the reader enters, a window is opened to reveal to him or her outside from where the reader came. It is different in novels and films, where one seeks and finds one's counterfeit self even for a short while turning authentically audacious, valiant, romantic, tragic, or ideal. Even though poetry employs such elements of life as its material, it is not content to be complementary. Nothing is completed and closed, but everything opens up. Unlike fiction or film, poetry does not provide surrogate existence but offers an alternative reality without illusions. Those seeking answers for their problems or in need of wish fulfillment move away from poetry, and if poetry takes over such a role, it does not remain poetry but will become didactic or a prosthesis. Often some poets who have written good poetry also don messianic robes, but the White Goddess forgives them. Poetry is the grace of that Goddess, which may bless the naive and the sophisticated alike.

**BW:** What did the historical writings of Arnold J. Toynbee teach you?

**DJ:** Toynbee turned an adolescent into an adult. He taught me humility. After reading Freud, Sartre, surrealists and the theater of the absurd, I became a full-fledged doctor treating patients and saving their lives. God had already disappeared and was replaced by my skills as a physician. Youth, concern for the suffering, honesty in practice, and success were enough grounds for hubris. Also, a beautiful and loving wife sharing an adventurous life added to the comfort. As a poet, I had no greed for fame, awards, or distinctions. This also added to hubris subtly.

To begin with, Toynbee expunged what was present, up-to-date, or topical, and merged them into a continuity of multiple dimensions. Time stopped existing. Civilizations lost the customary order of precedence and comparative judgments. With that, the past also stopped existing. The rulers and the subjects also were equal. Material details of the boundaries of empires, town planning, architecture, armor, trading, currency, agriculture, household articles, and such matters were translated into the divergences and confluences of living as articulated in culture, traditions, and religions. Suddenly you realize that you belong to every civilization that ever existed as well as the one that is current. You sense the successes and defeats without conceit or discontent but as opportunities of extending your existence and expanding your consciousness. Traditional meanings of victory, heroism, ambition, cruelty, sacrifice, martyrdom, perseverance, capriciousness, conversion, or isolation were altered. The human life was transformed into a



continuous sequence of evolution. What Darwin was for life sciences, Toynbee is for history. Like Freud and Frazer, he perceived patterns in his observations, correlated them, and explained them elegantly.

He made me feel one with the people who lived far away from me in time and geography and revealed to me the concept of eternity. This was neither a philosophical nor a religious experience. Without moralizing or overemphasizing, he made me realize that love survives and nonviolence keeps humanity alive. This love extends beyond anthropocentric limits and embraces the cosmos. The man-made distinctions between science and art also disappeared. He made me feel very small intellectually with his great vision, but without reducing the intrinsic value of my existence. Exalted literature and art have this property.

**BW:** How do people react to you being atheist in India, perhaps the most spiritual country in the world?

**DJ:** I was born into a religious family. What religion meant was a limited set of diverse rituals loosely connected to traditions. These rituals were observed for the self-seeking purpose of earning divine grace to be healthy and wealthy. I was expected to get good grades in school with God's blessings. We were pantheists, as most Indians are. Lighting a lamp, saying a prayer, visiting temples, revering a community's priest and sadhu-sanyasins, observing fasts, and celebrating several festivals were our religious duties. I started reading the *Bhagavad-Gita* when I was around ten years old. God was still the image seen in temples. Personally, for us, god was a Santa Claus for wish fulfillment and a large-hearted judge with swift forgiveness. Otherwise, everyday life was carried out apart from religion and god. My future atheism was perhaps possible because of this.

Living in a dormitory during my medical studies changed me a lot. There was a great opportunity to read a lot. Poetry, psychology, philosophy and books on painting were placed on the table, and pornography packed space under the mattress. Philosophy prompted me to search for the meaning of life, while psychology made it easier to understand life. The arts became the purpose of life and pornography the joy of adolescence. The medical studies demystified life. God became a question to be contemplated. But the question was from the prescribed curriculum that I had learnt from childhood, where God stood for goodness and justice.

The inadequacies and sufferings of our personal lives were sacraments for a better future that was already taking shape. But for the first time, I was witnessing the meaningless suffering of patients and deaths on a large scale. The agony of

emaciated children, deaths of infants, stillbirths, apathy of health service providers, and concurrently detailed studies of various life forms and cells of the human body as living units in laboratory and histology expanded the concept of life in multiple dimensions. The traditionally familiar God did not fit in this entire scheme. Reading the *Bhagavad-Gita* used to give me some solace, and the books of J. Krishnamurthy were intellectually provocative. But the *Bhagavad-Gita* was a random collection from several Upanishads and schools of thinking. Contradictions are inherent in such books. Some Upanishads are coherent and consistent. They can help you understand life and also may answer your questions. But God is not central in their teachings, and some of them define God by negations to lead you back to this life and world without God.

When I was around twenty years old, the Hindu religion became redundant for me, and humanity replaced it. There was a lot of pulp-philosophy in fashion in those days. What is the meaning of life? What is the self? What is the afterlife? How can you become one with the cosmic super power? The emphasis was on the difference between occidental and oriental (read Indian) or ancient spiritualism and modern materialism. For the fake philosophers and credulous readers, the choice was obvious. Fortified with Freud and existentialism, I used to debate passionately. Those who were not ready even to argue rationally or disagree honestly used to ask one predictable question. Who created this universe? Or, you must accept as true that there is some power that runs all this. Since I also did not have all the answers, they had the lasting smile of victory. The naiveté of my atheism and obstinacy of their belief both became obvious to me after many decades. Till then, I was not different from the theists, since we all were anthropocentric. Later on, the totality of life became my foundation, and the need for any debate faded away. When I became acquainted with other scientific disciplines like astrophysics, nuclear physics, biochemistry, genetics, evolution, and mythology, I understood God. There is no God. But for many, God is a necessity. There was no more need to argue. How can I argue about the difference of my skin color or the shape of my nose or my preferences of eating or my aversion of making money or my writing poetry with those who are different? Even when I cannot grasp protons, photons, gravitons, and string theory, quasars, white dwarfs, black holes, and the bending of light and time in the universe, the absence or presence of God is not going to make these easier. When overwhelmed by the structure of chromosomes, genes, RNA, DNA, and amino acid chains, I find it superfluous to believe in some controlling power. Just because humans have consciousness and the freedom or tendency to make choices to act adds to many variables and no singularity can explain or unite these in either any predetermined or autonomous developing pattern. What is

simple in one dimension becomes complex in another, and vice versa. The difference exists in language only. Philosophers have conveniently or gullibly taken advantage of language for hair-splitting. We are poets and have no need to search for truth when there are endless opportunities to create beauty from language.

After renouncing explicit religion that was inherited and disregarding God, I have remained religious by adhering to love and cultivating an aversion to wealth. Love for all may not be consistent, and anger, hurt, or hatred do surface occasionally and cannot be controlled. But one can choose not to harm anyone deliberately. This restraint is my religion, and does not require belief in God. I, too, have moments of helplessness and revert to my childhood hoping that Santa Claus will descend from the chimney. But such dreams do not last long. During distress, Rilke, Paz, Wislawa Szymborska, Beethoven, Bismilla Khan, or Picasso and such are my sanctuaries. The biggest aid to my atheism is a lack of any great ambition personally. For this, I owe no explanation.

Some preconceptions about India need to be re-examined. Observing rituals is not synonymous with spirituality. In India, the relationship of man with God has been polymorphic, and this would be true for other cultures also. All over the world, have-nots have paradoxically needed God the most in their hope to obtain justice, healing or a protection against breaking down. There are people with wealth and power who also pursue religion. But more often than not, this is for atonement. There have been thinkers for millennia who have tried to understand the purpose of existence, human relationships, mankind's place in the universe, and so on. This has happened in every part of the world, and no nation has a monopoly on spiritualism. Some of the contemplations of the thinkers have much worth and some remain speculations and some slip back to ritual religions. Not surprisingly, many have emphasized love and detachment from avarice. These concepts help the survival of the species and conservation of resources. These are excellent principles of anthropocentric management and economy. For me, these are relevant since they provide more free space for pursuing art.

My patients are suffering, and many are poor. I ask them to have faith in whatever religion they are following. Having enough knowledge of Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam, I can inspire them, cajole them, and also make them respect others of different faiths. Nearly half a century has passed since, as a young man, I used to flaunt my atheism. But what hurts till today are the excesses committed by fundamentalists of any faith. I understand their ideology, but have no answers to cure them, nor can I excuse them. But you cannot change the world by the words

of your poems. You can help a few in your small corner and short life with love. This is what I do and have no qualms of not being a part of some committed movement. It also saves time from reading verbose pamphlets and writing lengthy letters and signing endless petitions. Talking to small groups who may not have much education or intelligence but listen patiently brings small changes. Love and happiness need only small change and not large wads of verbal currency.

**BW:** Can you describe your concept of death?

**DJ:** Life is real. Death is an illusion, yet it is also real. As a linguistic expression, death has apparent clarity but much contradictory confusion about it. I consider death to be a part of dynamic universal continuity and view the limited use of the word with suspicion. In a broad sense, it means the end of existence. Our anthropocentric approach blinds us from comprehending both the universe and existence. Descartes must be excused of his innocence (or ignorance) in asserting *cogito ergo sum*. What he said was the basis for Schopenhauer's "The World is My Idea." When young, these two thinkers were great inspirations to me. They made me feel comfortable in the company of Sartre. Many years later, the realization dawned that all this philosophy was anthropocentric and of limited value in life or the pursuit of happiness. The idea of an individual soul that can be implied in 'I' is not acceptable. Consciousness is not a single entity and not the prerogative of humans alone. The Bible put man above all the other creatures. One will find similar assertions in other cultures, also. Some philosophical schools in India believe in the cycle of incarnations and put man at the top of the pyramid. Poets like Vyasa, the originator of the *Mahabharata*, asserted that in the beginning nothing in the universe was greater than humans and lamented later on human malice. On the other hand, in several *Upanishads* and books of learning, an equal importance is given to all that exists. Everything is a part of cosmic totality or unity. The relationship between the soul and God or cosmos is explored variously. God is the universe, some say, and that's how they describe the qualities of God. Some assert that God has no attributes. As a corollary, the soul, too, has no attributes. Some both denied the soul and refuted God. But surprisingly most reject death or do not discuss it in detail. The ethicists and lawmakers take death seriously and adhere to final judgment. Judaic schools believe in a day of judgment, while Hindus consider judgment a continuous sequence. Buddha emphasized nirvana as an escape from the cycle of rebirths. But the idea of Moksha was already there as the ultimate freedom from the succession of existences in Hindu religion with the qualification that only a few can earn it. Still the fundamental and fixed content of all this diversity was anthropocentric.

Consciousness has multiple layers, related or unrelated to each other. Similarly, we have several selves serially or simultaneously or being formed or erased without our awareness. Self is neither a collection of compounded consciousness nor a synthesizer since there is no such thing as a self. Mind, too, is not a single entity, and time does not exist. The concept of good and evil is nebulous and sketchy. Eros and Thanatos are manifold, cancelling as well as merging in each other. So where is death? If this body exists no more, there will be no mind. Is that not death? Now, if the world exists only in consciousness, then an individual also exists in the consciousness of others. So in one's absence also, one continues existing. As long as others exist, one does not die. My schoolteacher with dark glasses and long hair, whom I loved ardently at the age of five, still exists, and I had seen her for only two months! Homer, Rabelais, Cervantes, Rilke, Wislawa, Tagore, K.Satchidanandan, Gabriel Rosenstock, Maria and Bill Wolak, Kristine Doll, and Joan and John Digby exist within me. After my body is no more, they will continue to be in my words, letters, emails, conversations, and cosmos. Nobody is going to die.

But, what about the body? Does not death mark the end of the body? Here too the same error continues like that about the soul. The body is not a single unit. It is a complex system of countless living cells that exist independently as well as connected for survival. They have dual identity, part that is genetically inherited and part that is acquired—that is individual. At any moment millions of cells are dying and are newly being born. Life and death are overlapping each other and cannot be separated. So, the body has died many a time before death. But during this period, it is born also several times. Every day from the food as well as the air around it, the body procures life as simple or complex units like oxygen, water, salt, or nitrogen and iodine, on one hand, and carbohydrates, amino acids, fats, vitamins and other substances, on the other hand. The body also returns simple and complex material all the time. All these are life or existence. In some Upanishads no difference is made between living and nonliving. All is existence and is one with or is a part of the totality that is universe. So, when this body remains no more, it will be surviving in several other forms. The iron of my blood will be the redness of a flower-petal fluttering in air. The calcium from my bones will be delicately designed on a colorful shell on some seashore. The nitrogen of my flesh will be a fiber of a bird's wing flying in the sky. The light of my eyes will again be shining in some distant star. Where is death?

Nevertheless, all this is oversimplification. My wife recently died of cancer, and I cannot overcome my loss and grief with all my knowledge and understanding and poetry. I keep feeling guilty while eating my favorite dinners. Ice twirling in my

whisky mingles with moisture from my eyes. My sleep is torn by nightmares full of unfinished journeys and incomplete tasks with no memory of my wife. Transcending time in poetry, I helplessly ask for restoration of the past. This is the truth, the contradiction and illusion that is death. I have no answer to the question. So I seek for forgiveness after much vain knowledge.

## **WHEN I LEAVE**

There'll be sunshine when I leave

From cracked cups I have sipped my lukewarm tea  
eaten over salted rice from unwashed plates  
In half smiling half sneering crowds I have stumbled  
Pulling frayed lapels against wind  
holding a worn bag rushed to catch a tram  
which I often miss  
like spring by a potted plant stacked in shuttered shed

But what of what use is complaining all this?  
Will it ever end?

Leaves fall off  
Stars burn out  
Hydrogen to Helium and Carbon to Ferrum  
Radium to Lawrencium and gold to dust  
never ending quantum particles keep dancing  
A supernova bursts billions of years ago  
its last light shining for yet more billions  
and its unseen rays blind the retina  
to reveal wordless visions

With chlorophyll in my eyes  
I have seen the sound of immortal microbes  
tasting sulphur within hot lava

The clay of my cup was grassy ground of graveyard  
I shall return to a place I never visited  
There will be sunshine when I leave

Dileep Jhaveri    India

***theseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarry***

## **THAT LAST MINUTE**

I saw your voice, heard your feelings as  
you wandered down death's path. You  
were ashen, your mind in its last  
journey, but your voice spewed the  
aroma of red roses, your thoughts  
fragrant Irises. I reached into your mind  
and felt you were going, but the aromas  
lingered heavily, like frozen rain in the  
boughs of my wishes. You who had  
been there, now only a fading vision, a  
vanishing essence with pain in your  
eyes. I heaved a sad sigh and you  
smiled at me. The boat upon the river  
Styx carrying all souls to another place  
emerged. I squeezed your hand and felt  
the coldness, I then wept.

James G. Piatt    America

## **THE WATERFRONT**

On Saturday I watched the echo in the river  
with fast rain, a slanted line of spears  
piercing the muddy red pinpricked surface  
while a changing sky controls light from blemish,

Along the waterfront I walk; open windows - mulled wine and German markets  
screwed up betting slips piled in empty foamed glasses,  
cigarette stubs trail to boisterous plastic tables,  
a homeless man sells 'The New Scientist'  
beside a busker strumming on a waterproof guitar,  
day-walkers and afternoon drunks  
journey home before evening begins its quest.  
The fat rain comes in short bursts as we huddle in shelter and shop entrance  
running for that space of dry and bare land,  
before the greyish colours turn to a midnight black.

Matt Duggan    England

## ZOMBIE LAND

Diachrome bloodstream – bar code wrapped with pulsing veins  
square box replaced our modern fane  
tramline vision fixated like choreographed sunbeams,  
our muted and exploited constellation  
a circle we repeatedly spin,  
mirroring our appearance – through doctored magazines.  
Identity and blood lay at the alter of visual castration!  
Cutting flesh  
moulding our uncertain self,  
creating a cloned detachment of celebrity asphyxiation.  
Destiny enshrined in western addiction  
– the want!  
- the admiration!  
the pressure to be on that popular shelf.  
A smiling tanned jester - Brilliant white teeth  
– square jaw – sucked in botox  
Everyone will want to be YOU!!  
You the popular – the imitator – the regurgitated walking cliché  
for the true and humbled self  
is vacant  
- lost  
– confused.

Matt Duggan England

## RED ROSE

Blood is returning to a stem in fading red  
petals of a rose cleansed- a dying head,  
you will see it appearing in a shade of velvety blood  
carefully look inside the bud see that smear of putrid blue,  
delicately dripping – fearful and leaving this rising earth.  
Insurgency of this returning rose a glorious rebirth –  
What nature truly imposes is that the rose once again will be RED!

Matt Duggan England



## **BLUE**

The womb of the words could not give birth to this longing  
Let me caress your shadow now that I'm missing you.

Shades of blue devour my heart as I awake this morning  
Now that you are gone, I am left alone, missing you.

I hate those giant curtains covering the windows  
It makes me want to wipe the tears with it, missing you.

The cold coffee, the cold bread, the cold butter,  
I ask that you remain for a second because I'm missing you.

I could not discover another word for grief, my darling,  
The syntax of time calls for a hiatus, missing you.

The chirping clock forgets its duty today, only today  
I wander into the kingdom of dreams, missing you.

Sorrow penetrates into my left ventricle for so long,  
Piercing my caged heart into its coldness, missing you.

My flowers forget to remind me to water them,  
Staring the whole day into the ceiling, missing you.

This Mojave desert thirst could be quenched by your presence  
Be an oasis with me as soon as possible now that I'm missing you.

Pain drives me mad I begin to let go and dance and sing,  
Sorrow is insulin to your diabetic kiss, missing you.

April Mae M. Berza    Philippines

## **HANDS**

(After Glen Sorestad's *When Hands sleep, what do they dream?*)

His hands dream the calisthenics of metals of an automobile,  
while hers dream of cooking her thoughts, her passion;

his hands dream juggling numbers, a jumbled telephone,  
while her hands dream of imprisoned letters finally freed;

his hands dream a marriage of spoon and fork  
as he moves brown rice to his innocent mouth,

while hers dream the bipolar bond of nude fingers  
in the canvas plate painting her hunger, her hunger;  
his hands dream how the soldier fingers camp the softness  
of her breast, her nipple, a caged nightingale,  
her hands dream the aggressive texture of his buttocks  
as he enters, her finger's surrender to his hips.  
Sometimes his hands and her hands stop dreaming  
but lie restless like defeated warriors lost  
in the subconscious of hand against hand in combat.  
Sometimes hands sleep in the awakening of desire.

April Mae M. Berza    Philippines

### **EAST OF EDEN**

East of Eden, silver rays pierce  
My languid eyes in oblivion;  
Half-awaken by the tick of time  
In the swelling of my hourglass,  
For the time has come  
And it is the climax. My climax.  
Looking at the morning star,  
My eyes shut in a speed of light  
As if the scorching heat  
Ignited the chariot to throttle;  
And friction made it less  
Painful than reality. I slumbered,  
As nightmares flashed in a  
Kaleidoscope of blurry visions,  
Frozen, my heart is frozen;  
But the star is at its zenith  
Aflame by the Power. I seek  
For light where the darkness dwelt,  
Even if I am East of Eden.

April Mae M. Berza    Philippines

## **LOOK, DON'T KID YOURSELF**

Look, don't kid yourself,  
The stars nobody can sort out:  
Lazy high-brow ladies -  
The moon being the only certainty,  
Orange, audacious she grabs winter, the old dusty shawl,  
And throws it in the hope chest –  
At long last we'll breathe tonight, our cold blue sky we'll breathe  
As thoughts come in sweeter than cider –  
Thoughts? Fine, but no memories  
Welcome here, I'm afraid, naff off,  
Once she had hope, once a lover's steps  
Didn't make that much noise,  
No.  
Stars can't welcome revolution,  
Too comfy in their still life:  
No problems and lots of space ,  
Well, isn't the sky too much  
For a handful of stars  
Or just one soul?  
Whatever –  
Sometimes lovers come back, all nice and bringing roses,  
Stories have an happy ending, after all,  
Just think of films and soaps, they cheer you up when trees and bodies  
Stop claiming answers and dash to shrubs or blades –  
High time for them to hide.

Gabriella Garofalo    Italy

## **NO MESSING UP WITH ANGELS, PLEASE**

No messing up with angels, please:  
The latest essays show they still dream  
Of an Earth that never sent her children to jail,

Of skies you can bite, no sour taste on your lips -  
Sweet daydreamers, smart conjurers,  
What you show to the audience isn't a flower,  
But stillness whenever fear freezes  
Hatchets and trees -  
Look, their fingers still move  
In the spots where shadows  
Slice through blue birds of paradise  
Just as they're shouting:  
Yes, it' is a flower the ambiguous sneer of white glass  
If you try to grab the soul of a waterfall -  
Bit tricky, water flows too fast,  
So nights let it go, drop all souls  
Hailing from shifty wombs,  
Rioting myths, snide kith and kin -  
Oh well, the calendar says it'll be Easter soon:  
What a bloody art job the blue of the sky -  
Yes, she'll say so come hell or high water,  
Despite kin, wombs and myths  
That's what she'll say to you -  
Father.

Gabriella Garofalo Italy

### **IS SILENCE A STONE, A WAVE?**

Is silence a stone, a wave?  
'Thanks a lot' they smiled and gave  
Fruit gums or picks to the starving -  
It all happens when dangerous bikes  
Whirl around and plump ladies  
Buy flowers, when skinny tattooed girls  
Shoot selfies or binge on booze -  
'Hey you, say something'

I yelled to the sky,  
'No comment' mumbled the irked clouds,  
So bloody green-eyed towards  
The blind stones of mansions, arcades -  
No, I won't drop it,  
All in green is the new demise while she sighs  
'The soul must part from the limbs  
In amiable separation -  
She's joking, of course,  
Eternity is never on sale -  
No, I won't drop it,  
Now listen, that's a good one,  
An angel was ready to grab  
The starving dropt lifeless  
Just as the young lovers couldn't decide  
Between the bistro and the trendy wine bar -  
Poor darlings, they looked so lost,  
I still see them in my mind -  
A driver too looks lost  
If he lies crumpled in a car,  
Oh, he slammed against a towering tree,  
Trauma, I guess, and its white knotty roots.

Gabriella Garofalo

## **FLOWERS FOR BLODEUWEDD**

Oak:

I am not strong,  
steadfast and gnarled.  
I am not Crone,  
an eternal Methuselah of women.  
You are not smart; I am not wise.

Broom:

In that moment my heart slows.

You stood and I could not breathe,  
I could never breathe.  
They say you shouldn't eat the flowers anymore.  
I pluck a petal and place it on my tongue,  
time to say Hello.

Meadowsweet:  
The sun rose itself fair on that first morning together.  
I ran my hands through your chest down,  
like a silk cloth.  
I had been conjured to this dirty little place  
for your pleasure.

Amanda Needham    Wales

## **GROWING CALENDULA BY THE SEA**

Take care in my yellow shell  
With seeds that look like the empty skulls  
once cradled the bundle of nerves  
we loved.

There. My hands are buried in the sand  
and I cannot reach  
out  
to stop you from drowning  
with stems bowed and vine withered.  
Carried on the breeze in all  
my feathered headdress glory.

This past year I was sure I was going to die.  
I was wrong, it was the rot in the garden-  
ash in the soil.

I am leaving this message for the Lorelei that took you:  
do not eat the flowers,  
do not drink the water,  
cut on the line.

Then, we are at the beach again,  
looking out to imaginary countries.

We are not on Earth.

Look over the Marigolds while I go.  
Prune one head for every blue eye you see,  
and pour out the milk.  
Do not unfurl the tight bud, take care  
to keep breathing.

Amanda Needham    Wales

### **BLESS THE FALLEN**

Bless the fallen, the less than ghost faces  
that haunt this cityscape.  
Bless the one who cannot give, who cannot  
nurse a broken heart.  
Bless the one hardened by degrees, by small failures  
that mount a life incapable.  
Bless the proud bearer of truth who cannot be humbled,  
blinded by spiritual vanity.  
Bless the arrogant, the one who feels movement  
only by force.  
Bless the bearer of bitterness, who has no stronghold  
but hate.  
Bless the one who fails to see the birds fly, hear  
the angels in their dreams.  
Forgive us our canyons where self-pity reigns  
and self-pity devours.  
Hold us near the harbour light though the chaos of sea  
be the only realm  
we, as of yet, have known.

Allison Grayhurst    Canada

### **ALWAYS THERE**

The door's ajar  
and my body can go there,  
through the small space of light.  
To make a landing for me

in the tumultuous rantings  
of existence – held out  
a moment, reminding me of how  
to be alive with You there,  
feeding my weakened gut, breathing  
my breath, speaking of a love greater than  
any love and in doing so, forgiving me my  
distraction and daily rituals of despair,  
forgiving me for forgetting the magnitude  
of Your mercy and Your protecting cloak  
that warms both in and out.  
The gift again at my doorstep. The times I  
do not look for You, then You find me.

I am not afraid. I am just a citizen – Yours, even when  
undirected, cynical and spent.

Allison Grayhurst    Canada

## **WITHOUT OPPORTUNITY**

Because today you descend  
the broken branch and meet  
the soil, be hot against the vaulting  
of your despair. Turn and let die  
your mangled wanting, want for  
tomorrow and that is all.

Angry terror troubles your eyes  
and gloves your admirable strength.  
But gentle are your fingertips that stroke  
music out from Death's dim head.  
And gentle is your pulsing vision  
that crosses fiery gardens,  
repelling every complacency.

Because today your life is in bondage  
to the ill-luck groan and each obstacle seems  
to make your desires  
both a burden and disgrace, I who know you



and know life's tyrannical fault, have only belief  
to effect your numbed hopes,  
have only what I know —  
the greatness of your labour  
and the way you have moved  
my most hardened vices, to turn  
and face a kinder shore.

Allison Grayhurst    Canada

## BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

**HIDDEN IN PLAINVIEW** by Gayl Teller, published by Cherry Grove Publications. Available via <http://www.cherry-grove.com/teller-hiding.html> and via Barnes and Noble and Amazon. A vibrant and stimulating new collection from the Walt Whitman Birthplace Association 2016 Long Island Poet of the Year. ‘A fine-tuned seismograph that registers the small changes and the large-scale upheavals of the human condition’ – Charles Ades Fishman. Price: \$18.

**READING FOR RUSH HOUR/A Pamphlet in Praise of Passion** by Thomas Land, published by Snakeskin. A new collection from the award-winning poet and foreign correspondent. Available via [www.snakeskinpoetry.com](http://www.snakeskinpoetry.com) Land’s is a caring and human poetic voice, one which steers quiet but very powerful poems. No price.

**THROUGH ILSTON WOOD** by Byron Beynon, published by Lapwing Publications. Available from [www.lapwingpoetry.com](http://www.lapwingpoetry.com) A strong and inspired new collection from a poet tuned into the subtle aspects of language. ‘His calm reflective poems will appeal to many readers’ – Glenda Beagan. Price: £10.

**LONDON’S RIVERS/A collection of Landscape Drawings** by Gaspar Jaén I Urban, published by University of Alicante. Available via [gaspar.jaen@ua.es](mailto:gaspar.jaen@ua.es) A stunning book of drawings and appropriate texts, ranging from William Wordsworth to T.S.Eliot. No Price.

**PRINCE OF THE APPLE TOWNS/A celebration of Dylan Thomas through words and music** by Duvant Male Voice Choir/the Dylan Thomas Society and Theatre Cadair. Available via [www.duvantchoir.org](http://www.duvantchoir.org) A wonderful CD that charts the life of Dylan Thomas. Price: £8 + £2 p&p.

## **GANESH**

You slipped out of the ancient world  
of Brahmin and Vaishya and Dalit  
and followed my trunk and tuck box  
to the icy castle of an English prepschool

My one tusked  
pot-bellied  
eight-armed  
pocket-sized  
Hindu mascot

You said;  
I'm Ganesh the Elephant God  
son of Shiva and Parvati

*A snake binds my fleshy waist  
whilst I pin a rat underfoot*

*Stroke my feet for gain  
Stroke my belly for luck*

I rub your stomach to prevent  
chillblains, vocab tests, Matron's slap  
and the lonely vacuum of a draughty dorm  
restlessly tossing at 2 a.m.  
far from home.

Mark Floyer    England

## **DOLLOP OF RAIN**

I catch a dollop of monsoon rain  
on my tongue  
and roll the salty sputum  
of India around my palate.

Here's a drop distilled  
from the annual aquatic monolith —

stirred up from the South India ocean  
it sweeps through the coconut groves of Kerala  
drenches the arid deserts of Rajasthan  
swamps the paddy fields on the central plains  
and dowses the burning ghats at Benares  
where corpses float towards their afterlife  
in the Bay of Bengal.

On the streets of Calcutta  
claxons hoot and the tinny wail  
of a million transistor radios  
blare Hindi devotionals;  
crowds jostle the pandal of Mother Durga  
as she wades towards the holy Ganges

and I swallow it whole.

Mark Floyer    England

## **THE DUMPY STACKERS**

We no longer drink from them, the Dumpy Stackers  
bought in the decade when things arose in stacks,  
one thing upon another from the cityscapes, houses, chairs,  
to the clink-clank of ice-cubes in a glass.

Now our dumpy tumblers in their cosy box  
stare back and say, come let's speak frankly,  
Stack. Build. Hunt through the house  
for whatever lines up, pans out,  
can on can, plate on plate, brick against brick,  
bedsprings curling up to you through the mattress.  
Find every edge, lip or bevel,  
each mirror where you piece yourself together,  
for that long glimpse into the future;  
everything stacked in the sky  
and you see alley fights with bottles and bins  
when they take us from the air in pictures.

F.J. Williams    England

## **SNAILS**

They come from another gulf  
and bring fresh greens, puny stalks of grass,  
dross from nicks and sprung up carpet tacks.  
They cling to stoppers, caps, tops of bottles,  
trying with all their stretch to get inside  
and deck things with loopy squiggles of slime  
to mark their struggle with a TV cable, window catch  
or togs we leave by the door.  
They test our brickwork for weather and wear,  
crawling towards our light  
with little enough of a face and half-way to fossil.  
Easier than testing in a lab each time,  
put them in a jamjar with a leaf.

F.J. Williams    England

## **MAGPIE**

A monochrome icon till the light shifts,  
black taffeta suddenly shot with purple and green.  
Perched on the guttering he leans down,  
head cocked, eyes me on my sick bed.  
I reject the British belief:  
how can such a persistent visitor bring sorrow?

In China it is the bird of joy,  
chattering good news, announcing the arrival of guests.  
Often he has tapped so confidently  
at my window with his sturdy beak  
that I envision the single glaze shattering with one tap,  
bringing down the barriers to friendship.

He waits for me to stir, to respond to his voice.  
Loosener of tongues, sacred to Dionysus, but I need  
no wine to tell my secrets.  
He gathers them all, flies them to his nest  
with all the other glittering treasures,  
for his mate to keep warm.

Ali Pardoe    England

## **GIORGIO DE CHIRICO'S LIGHTNING**

in the Vittorio Veneto  
he catches lightning  
with his bare hands  
and writes bad verse  
in a blue Godless sky.

he's a devil for allegory  
myths and cloven hoofs  
but it's a mocking style  
and he's not famous now

lightning rebounds  
from stone arcades

all the civic dignitaries  
close heavy shutters  
bolt apartment doors  
then fidget with rosaries

he takes massive hands  
from hostile pockets -  
stands where lightning  
struck once before  
and insists on genius

Robin Lindsay Wilson    Scotland

## **VUILLARD'S LIBRARY**

the shuttered bedroom  
and the cheerful kitchen  
cannot be hurt  
by lazy bad faith  
or haphazard armies

they are remade  
for a poor man's comfort  
and a family at leisure

this is our Bible

of the material world  
where the brave women  
detach themselves  
from casual commerce

and become involved  
with their past  
present and future  
at the same time

in one brilliant pattern  
of a singing room  
my children discover  
their pleasures

each idle alteration  
creates an opportunity  
to find more ease

Robin Lindsay Wilson    Scotland

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***theseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarry***

**Americymru/West Coast Eisteddfod On-line Poetry Competition  
English language adjudicator: Peter Thabit Jones)**

**The winner of the 2015 Poetry Competition: Sian Northey**



**Sian Northey © 2016 Sian Northey**

Sian Northey writes in many genres. Her latest book is the novel *Rhyd y Gro* (Gomer, 2016), and *Pijin*, her translation of Alys Conran's debut novel, *Pigeon*

(Parthian, 2016) was also published recently. This was the first time that an English novel and a Welsh translation were published simultaneously. Sian's previous novel *Yn y Tŷ Hwn* (Gomer, 2011) was chosen for the Wales' Literature Exchange's Bookcase and her first volume of poetry, *Trwy Ddyddiau Gwydr* (Carreg Gwalch, 2013) was on the shortlist for Welsh Book of the Year. This summer, with the support of a Literature Wales bursary she will be working on a novel for teenagers written in free verse. Before that she will have spent a week at the Hay Festival as part of their Writers at Work professional development programme.

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### OL 18\*

Never Eat Shredded Wheat\*\*,  
otherwise I might cross  
the lines that keep me in my milltir sgwâr.  
Strict-metered to this place,  
my name on a gravestone  
before my birth.  
I don't see the gaps  
in the dry stone walls.  
I watch the lichen grow.

But I'm in love  
with a traveller  
who yesterday afternoon  
sent a text from Banff at breakfast time.  
Kisses of snow and coffee  
from the West.

\* the OS map that I've lived within its boundaries almost all my life

\*\*Mnemonic for North, South, East, West

Sian Northey    Wales



## SHOES

I am by now an ugly sister,  
toes cut off to fit the shoe,  
white leather red with blood.  
Red shoes that dance  
along a road of yellow bricks  
travelling with a man of tin,  
a man of iron  
who stands on a headland,  
wind singing through his fingers.  
I barely remember my barefoot days  
before the stories  
before my soles in my cradle  
had walked a step.

Sian Northey    Wales

## THE CLIMBER

One slit  
through which I slipped that little moon of ivory,  
one row  
on one of many white unlogoed shirts,  
and one by one  
I found my fingerholds  
that night, on that narrow bed  
of fragile shale and want,  
ripping my skin on your fossils  
and relearning how to tie the simplest knot.  
A morning kiss,  
and all that's left to do  
is name my route.

Sian Northey    Wales

## **CYNGHANEDD**

I never did understand  
the Aran jumper rules  
that cable knit their lines  
in fussy convoluted Fairisle stanzas.  
Experts dug through documentaries - subtitled, scratching.  
I doubted when they claimed  
to have found a piece,  
peat pickled,  
perfect,  
somewhere to the north of junction forty five.  
A sweater sleeve  
that you or I could wear  
they said,  
as they stretched it back to shape  
on harp strings.  
It dripped its dirty water  
as it dried,  
and in that, the puddles on linoleum,  
I saw the beauty.

Sian Northey    Wales

## **SCARE CROWS**

Once she stayed on the fissile cliff  
above the talking waves so long,  
so still that the choughs came  
to rest and preen on her shoulders.  
These redbilled, redlegged rarest of corvids  
blessing her with their ant-scented breath  
before she dipped her hands in her bag of chalk,  
found another fingerhold and marked the rock with white.  
White on grey,  
like streaks of jackdaw shit on a wheelchair.

Sian Northey    Wales

## TRANSLATION

A "kiss through a handkerchief,"\*  
said the poet,  
and he,  
or she, it was hard to tell,  
should know.  
The nerve endings of the lips befuddled  
by cotton, as it snags  
on skin chapped  
by a thin and narrow east-wind,  
or ragged where I'd chewed it,  
worrying about mutations  
or the bloody tears of a prince,  
whose dates I do not know.  
And yet, like those who must  
have breasts encased in latex  
or feet in red stilettos,  
it could become, so easily become,  
the only way.

\*An image used by Vissarion Belinsky, R.S. Thomas and Menna Elfyn (quoting R. S. Thomas)

Sian Northey    Wales

## LACES

There's a mystery surrounding laces  
when they are threaded through the holes  
and crossed and crossed again  
left over right over left,  
pulled tight to hold tight  
through all the steps.  
Through our steps to the well,  
fresh water, inches  
from the salt of the Swnt.  
And our steps  
hand in hand under branches  
and twigs and darkness

to a mediocre pub  
that sells cheap beer.  
The mystery is  
why one side, at the end of every day,  
is always, no exception ever,  
slightly shorter  
than the other side.

Sian Northey    Wales

### **THERE IS NO SIGNAL AT YSTRAD FFLU**

There is no signal at Ystrad Fflur.  
And as I looked they slipped them from the folds  
of their white robes  
and left them.  
Nokias, Siemens, expensive Sagems  
in rows and piles  
beside the arch of stone  
through which they entered.  
They left them there in the rain,  
to lose their charge,  
to forget their numbers,  
to flicker once  
or twice before the bluebells hid them.  
I squeezed between the kneeling men,  
the pattern of the tiles imprinted in the flesh  
and the smell of drying wool a litany,  
as they gave thanks for a scrap of land,  
and room  
to read text,  
to receive.

Sian Northey    Wales

## THE FISHERMAN

Smile hooked,  
and netted by the hairs  
that purse siene along your forearms.  
Creeled by talk  
so late at night that I can't see  
the obvious hole.

They say that boiling water's quick...  
I tasted a lobster's tears  
in that brief and agelong gap  
from sea  
to salt.

Sian Northey    Wales

*Theseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarry*

### **Selected Poems by Peter Thabit Jones (Bilingual: English/Romanian)**

Published by Bibliotecha Universalis/Collectiile Revistei  
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The book's introduction and translations are by Dr. Monica Manolachi,  
University of Bucharest.

**Prices: £6.99/\$10/€9    Available via [info@peterthabitjones.com](mailto:info@peterthabitjones.com)**

## **DYLANELLE**

People are like stained-glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within. (Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, *On Grief and Grieving*)

Instead of encountering a pool of reflective calm she found herself interviewing ‘one of the angriest, most difficult people I have ever met’ . . . . Kübler-Ross had entered the sixth and final stage of dying: rage at God for NOT letting her die . . . . She could only rage against the ‘staying’ of the light. (Adam Mars-Jones, ‘Chop, Chop, Chop’, *The London Review of Books*, 21<sup>st</sup> January 2016, p. 8)

But, of course, the opposite is also true. (Groucho Marx)

Rage, rage against the staying of the light.  
Let's not deny it: Dylan loved his Dad,  
But let's admit that Groucho got it right.

The Groucho version: psych Dad up to fight  
Death tooth and nail until things get too bad,  
But then rage at the staying of the light.

His larger point: for every truth you cite  
There's one, flat contrary, that makes you add  
A mental note that Groucho got it right.

Then going gentle into that good night  
May seem a kindlier way than going mad  
With rage against the staying of the light.

Let's not blame Dr. Kübler-Ross, despite  
The moribund suspecting they've been had.  
Let's just admit that Groucho got it right.

Still, her late temper-tantrums do invite  
The thought that Thomas Junior was a tad  
Too keen to urge the staying of the light.

Quite likely Dad just hoped to expedite  
The final scene and yearned to tell his lad  
How that wise jest of Groucho got it right.

Perhaps his one plea, 'there on the sad height',  
Was: spare me this, your conjuring of sad  
Refrains from that dread staying of the light.

For maybe those same rhymes that winged the flight  
Of Dylan's verse then spawned its myriad  
Ways of repeating: Groucho got it right;  
Rage, rage against the staying of the light.

Christopher Norris    Wales

### **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, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Holland, India, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Sicily, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland have already appeared in its pages. New York's Vince Clemente, as the magazine's Consultant Editor: America, ensures a steady stream of American poets.

Each issue features a Poet Profile, a batch of pages given over to a chosen poet. The policy is to try to alternate between a British poet and a non-British poet. There is also a Books and Magazines page, which provides details and brief comments on received publications.

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

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

The editor also organises THE SEVENTH QUARRY PRESENTS poetry evenings. The first, at the Dylan Thomas Centre in Swansea, featured a visit by American poet Stanley H. Barkan.

The magazine is now 64-88 pages and appears twice a year, in Winter/Spring and Summer/Autumn. It costs £4.50 per issue or £9 for a year's subscription (two copies). \$15 and \$30 for USA subscribers. Further information at [www.peterthabitjones.com](http://www.peterthabitjones.com)

**Editor: Peter Thabit Jones    [info@peterthabitjones.com](mailto:info@peterthabitjones.com)**  
**Consultant Editor, America: Vince Clemente**

## **PSYCHE, EROS, AND ME**

### **A Mythic Memoir**

by Deanna McKinstry-Edwards, PhD

Foreword by Carolyn Mary Kleefeld

‘Psyche, Eros, and Me weaves Deanna’s life as an actress, singer, scholar and woman through the myth of Psyche and Eros. It is a poignant and deeply powerful story. In particular, I enjoyed her approach to the complexity and pertinence of women’s issues inherent in this myth, and how the myth of Psyche and Eros continues to connect us to global concerns. A poetic writer, Deanna has a gift for expressing meaning with humor.’ – Hendrika de Vries, psychotherapist, author, adjunct professor at Pacifica Graduate Institute

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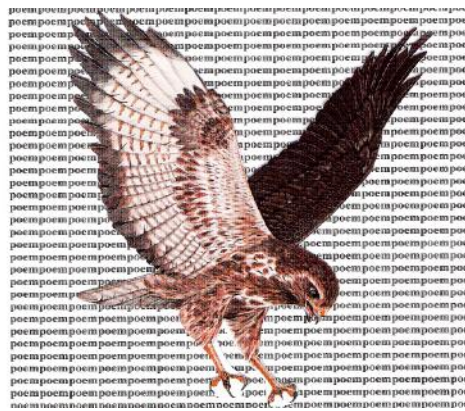
**THE RED OF LIFE: SELECTED WORKS by Theofil Halama  
Artwork by Carolyn Mary Kleefeld**

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Theofil Halama is a renowned Czech-American author, educator, linguist, and theologian. Leaving his homeland Czechoslovakia in the late 1970s during the Soviet occupation, he traveled the world. From Italy, he immigrated to the USA. He took teaching positions in Texas and then in Monterey, California, where he has retired. His multi- dimensional poetry and short stories gradually re-emerged with publications in Prague, Brno, and other Eastern European cities after the Czech Velvet Revolution in 1989.



**LOOK OUT FOR ISSUE 25: Winter/Spring 2017**

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“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

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