

THE SEVENTH QUARRY



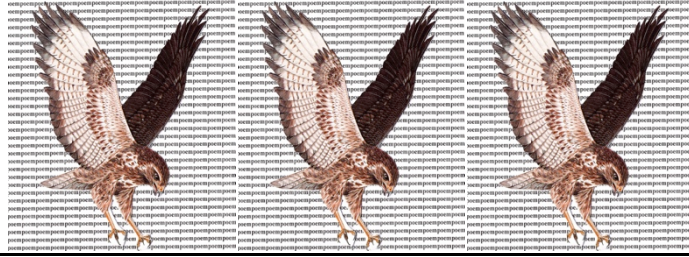
POETRY

ISSUE THIRTY-FOUR

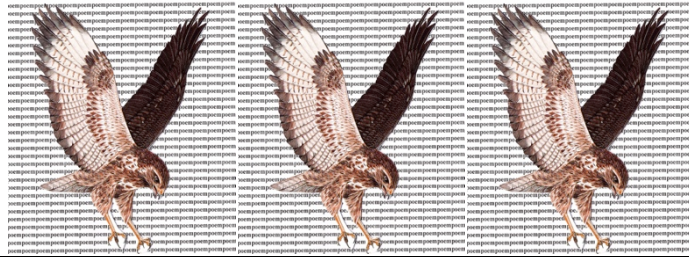
SUMMER/AUTUMN 2021

SWANSEA POETRY MAGAZINE

THE



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ISSUE 34
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EDITORIAL
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This issue features work from America, Canada, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Spain, and Wales. It also includes a Poet Profile of renowned British poet Fiona Pitt-Kethley, a review by Jessica Newport of the new The Seventh Quarry Press book *Remembering Vince Clemente*, and a review by America's Bill Wolak of Hassanal Abdullah's new anthology of Bangladeshi poetry.

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

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

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

Peter Thabit Jones, Editor

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(photo © 2021 Peter Thabit Jones)

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UPDRAFT

Gulls air-surf
the crushing curls

riding long moments—
inches from edges
of stretches of swirls

scratching their
feather-tip shadows

on crashing crests—
ancient and fresh
as the ocean flows.

Jim Gronvold America

WHORLS

In fine, clear, moments
when heart and mind
align for a bright—
but brief—beat of time,

Sight and insight
might combine and find
spinning currents
that seem to rhyme.

Silent swirls
of elements
that flow from
roaring torrents

as waning whirls
of turbulence
that churning turn
through impermanence.

Jim Gronvold America

WELSH VALLEY WHITE-OUT
(after Hokusai)

every slow step takes note
of its crunch
and underfoot creak

the open-pored snow here
thicker and broader than
its supporting twigs and boughs

the black mountainside
veined with snow gullies

and in the middle distance
the ruby glow of a tin shed

Sam Smith Wales

WE ARE EVERYWHERE RULED BY THE RIDICULOUS

Although
now sceptical as an encyclopaedia
so not trusting people (myself included)
and their peculiar judgements (mine included)
I find myself unable to side with anyone (myself included).

Although
knowing now that I'm not anti-authority
(that authority's been anti-me)
still I fall for the little tricks
by which the privileged make
the rest of us feel small.

Although
I have been proud to be both riff and raff
and while no master of slingshot mathematics
often I have gone back to seeing myself
as less than a speck on a speck of dust
in this ever-changing multiverse.

Although
I may have lived too long with only words
to now be frightened by odd ideas
(the white of milk can leave the blackest stain)
still I know that when the ideas are flowing
is when my pen will run out of ink.

Sam Smith Wales

FLIGHT

The washing machine is a hungry bird, eager
to taste the nightie you died in.

I must wash you away: these folds
still hold your last breath.

You taught me not to cry
over milkspilt yesterdays,

so I'm glad you're not here
to see me lift a cloud of lace, and

somewhere in its flight, forgive me,
give way to useless tears.

Karen Ankers Wales

FORTHCOMING from The Seventh Quarry Press: Summer, 2021

EASTSIDE STORY/Recalled by Members of Swansea's Eastside Historical Society. A wonderful collection of historical facts and personal memories about the Eastside of Swansea. Illustrated with photos.

Foreword by Peter Thabit Jones

DAZED AND ROSIED

Sugar coats my throat
and seeps into my chest. It pours through my shoulders,
cascades past my forearms and collects in my finger pads.
Sweetness creates tors and holes in my flesh—
crystals cram into the chambers of my heart, weighing it down.
Will I still count as a woman despite my tears and absent heart?
Should I put myself on the hob and caramelize my veins or sit idle,
sometimes stirring sugar into my bloodstream.
Daisies raise from their flowerbeds—
they take shape as a woman I want to love and become,
their leaves cupping one another within their curvatures.

Their milk ray flowers tickle my ear. They whisper
deceit stitched words as they thread their bare stalks through each other.
Daisy chains decorate my hair
and pull my strands towards my room's light switch.
Their petals' breath is the only thing to warm my cheek in the dark.
All our fears coalesce as the night strips its shadows to become sunrise.
Sugar restores us into tangible beings
as daisies and I learn to exist within each other.

In the morning, my body resets itself. My eyes cry sugared almonds
that glimmer like windchimes as they meet the ground and crumble.
The sugared almond fragments release sunlit shards, sharp and green in their scent,
all-consuming and wild. I live in their heat;
I steal their warmth and use it for my own bones.
I bundle some of it up and share it among the roses the daisies don't know I visit;
my passion induced fever turns their petals peach.

The plants' clinging rosehips fill the air with burning.
This confidence is foreign to me.
We don't turn the lights off,
we're unafraid to replace a bulb,

unafraid to bloom where we may,
but quiet as we show each other our thorns,
delighted amidst our faults and falsities.

Ava Patel England

LUNCH AL FRESCO

A pizza lies between us
patterned with dark olives
and basil leaves. The sun

beats like a fatalistic drum
against my scalp. It bores
into the back of my neck

and licks my arms, leaving me
with dark forearms, pale shoulders.
When you turn your back,

I pick the olives off my pizza slice
and flick them into our plants,
aiming carefully for the black soil.

Ava Patel England

SOMEWHERE I'VE NEVER VENTURED

is into the depth to which your eyes perceive me.

The first kiss against unwashed lips
tastes like fat, tender strawberries.

The flick of your tongue against mine
spreads heat like a beam of sunlight,
tart against my teeth and gums.

Our hands in each other's dips and gaps
cling to the skin like the magnets
that dot the door of our fridge.

We shield ourselves carefully
like eyes flickering in the sunlight.

Ava Patel England

'EVALUANT'

long evening & hours to grade
the days that left, hurrying
into old calendars; a backward
gaze fixes the flurry of victory
to recall, & forgets the charge:
what every scrap of valour cost.
clear morning enlarges the view,
treasuring too the fine retreat:
mind that measures the cave's depth,
stowing away a reserve of value.
here's no time for worrying at glory:
assess sunlight by the worth of shade,
a balance of the blaze & dark.
remember when a spark flew out:
became the star that valued night. .

Charles Wilkinson England

THE BEACH

Thoughts thrown on the wrack line:
an idea for a shell, gravel's last song,
the story of driftwood. The work
exposed & recovered: the sea
revising the swash zone.

A beach
composed by the lengths between
the crests & how waves grade sand;
dunes arranged by what's carried
furthest when the wind's at rest;
finest grains abraded by transport:
the joy of travel turns them round
to good account, the tale musical:
the moon's polish on tidal tunes.
Surface tension's above where water
keeps the words; each particle held
in suspension.

Sounding the deep shows
coasts change: an uncertainty along
the shore expressed in caves; far beneath
the fantastic blue, dark decrees a cliff's
collapse, a stack saved; unseen, a seabed's
curves control the force of waves that ride
on storms to shape the sand anew.

Above is a space the text turns to air:
a place where warm thermals rise
as terns
cry & veer.

To search for a form peer
down at the beach, but each new wave clears
a page no mind can reach – & all is *aporia*

Charles Wilkinson England

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POET PROFILE: FIONA PITT-KETHLEY



Fiona Pitt-Kethley © 2021 Fiona Pitt-Kethley

Fiona Pitt-Kethley is the author of more than 20 books of prose or poetry. Her work first came to public notice in 1986 with the publication of *Sky Ray Lolly*. She is also a prolific journalist. After her first travel book, *Journeys to the Underworld*, she started to be commissioned to write opinion pieces by the *Independent* and later had a monthly

column on the Art of Sex or Sex in the Arts for the *Guardian*. For some years also she had an allotment column in the *Oldie*. Her most recent pieces have been for the *London Review of Books*.

Apart from the satirical poetry she is best known for she has written on many other themes. She has had a lifelong interest in history and this was a subject in many early and late poems. Some poems are also vignettes of a particular landscape. There is often a touch of the metaphysical behind the description. Since 2002 she has lived in Spain with her family and many adopted cats. Her husband is the chess grandmaster, James Plaskett, and they have a son, Alexander.

One of her interests is collecting minerals and visiting mines and she has compiled a long series of poems relating to this. She is also a keen hill-walker who visits sites such as old fortifications on the mountains around Cartagena where she lives.

PRAYER TO THE LARES AND PENATES

My German great grandfather who decamped
leaving a Bristol girl to raise his child.
And Harriet Richardson, abandoned girl,
in turn passed on her kid for bringing up,
no birth certificate, but cash enough
to hide her kid and be respectable.
My Gran, mistreated, was soon snatched away
brought up in place of one who died at birth.
Harriet lost contact soon and that was that.

My father's parents didn't approve his wife.
Didn't attend the wedding at the time.
His mother died of shock at losing her son.
I have one photo to remember her,
a picture from her youth, sisters beside.
Ellen Reed looked slightly Victorian
A woman who died years before I was born.
A distant relative traced her descent
from pilots based in Pill, some of whom drowned,
a teacher named Bathsheba in Corfu.

My grandfather, a widower, came around
and entertained my parents for a while.
A rich but stingy man when Christmas came
he sank a crate of champagne on his own.
Not wasting it on sons or daughter-in-law.
After his death, his cash bought us a house.

Part of my past, in some sense family
those other ones who kept away from us.
They chose a separation from the rest.
I call on my dead family to help,
especially the ones that didn't in life.

Fiona Pitt Kethley Spain

CUEVA DE LA LOBERA

Cave of the Wolf's den. It's a mystery.
A chunk of stone about three metres high
sandwiched between the rocks, thrust in the cave,
just enough space to creep inside. Behind,
I find abandoned smoke bombs on a ledge,
one red, one blue, imagine how they looked,
pouring out either side of that huge block.

From time to time, people light fires nearby,
practice strange rituals, draw pentacles
and cabalistic signs upon the rocks.

Beneath the winter half-light in the pines,
Everything's grey or sepia around.
A photo taken looks a century old.
The only colour on this scene, like film
hand-tinted, frame by frame, comes from some moss.

Fiona Pitt Kethley Spain

SANTA BARBARA

Each year, her knights, a group that is all men,
meet up for mass, then light fire crackers outside,
process her image from La Unión's church
up to a little chapel by the mines.

She's always represented by a tower.
She cut an extra window in its sides,
three symbolised the Trinity. This earned
her death. The usual saintly tale ensues
where torture never is enough to kill,
only decapitation does the job.
A saintly life is harder to put out.
And at her death her killer was struck down;
her lightning force ended her father's life.
And so, this saint's the one prayed to by those
who use explosives in their daily life,
(The santabarbara in a Spanish ship's
the powder magazine. Her image keeps it safe.)

Her skills earned her a place in miners' hearts.
A saint to guard them from most accidents,
make sure explosions follow the right path,
that tunnels don't cave in and bury them.

Her tower reminds me of the tarot one.
That extra window looking on the world,
like the third eye, perhaps looks somewhere else,
something forbidden, hidden from the rest.

Fiona Pitt Kethley Spain

LET THERE BE LIGHT

A single light bulb washed up on the beach,
some twenty-seven centimetres long.
The glass is thick, blackened, burned out inside.
The screw-top's brass, covered with flesh-coloured paint.
The filament's more coiled than average ones.

The beach I got it from is near the port
where tankers and container ships unload.

Where is it from? Some distant land or near?
How many years left bobbing out at sea?
Everyone has their own ideas on this.
My husband, a Titanic fan, believes
It's from a shipwrecked liner washed ashore.
Our son swears that it's from a lighthouse beam.
A gourmet thinks a ship that hunted squid.
I see a history of war in it.
A searchlight from a former battery?
Its beam illumining the bombing planes
or pinpointing a ship to fire upon.

Fiona Pitt Kethley Spain

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**THE SEVENTH QUARRY PRESS IS TO BE PLACED ON THE
PRESTIGIOUS POETS & WRITERS, INC, NEW YORK,
DATABASE OF PUBLISHERS**

**The Seventh Quarry Press has been recognised as a quality publishing
press by Poets & Writers, Inc, New York, and will be added to their
database of publishers.**

**Many thanks to Gayl Teller, American poet, for nominating
The Seventh Quarry Press.**

WHEN VENOM TURNS TO KINDNESS

My feet are glass oblong shaped pieces of meat
sun is enlarging them & my inner Grendel
drinks from cups of sparkling yellow spite;

my kindness is used against me again
the idiocy of travesty is the solace
they bring to my doorstep -

via cowards using computer screens
sprawling venom of their envy
like children at the top of a playground –

though it hurts to take the final blow
remember a karmic river
will bring them more sorrows
that wait on the shore to a road
they built for the pain and hurt of others.

Matt Duggan England

SOMETIMES THE DEAD WALK WITH US IN OUR DREAMS

We all take a piece of the day with us
sometimes the dead walk with us in our sleep.
do traffic wardens dream of number plates?
politicians have current nightmares
maybe they just don't know how to dream –
do writers dream of the perfect plot-lines
wake to remember nothing –
but the first few lines circling
do painters see their images
between coffee breaks & limited sleep –
did the poet from Somerset
wake to the Man from Porlock
when induced in dreams he once inspired -
sometimes the dead walk with us in our sleep.

Matt Duggan England

GIRLS OF SUMMER

Summer breathes in
other-worlds.

For a moment I leave her
sand locked under gull-soar
all hat brim and sighing
knowing she's brought the
wrong shoes. Wasp-waist
pulled tighter for the beach.

Stepping backwards
knee, shoulder, head
underwater, counting
for the ninth wave
muffles her curlew cries.

You never did belong

Salt sting, breath-held
tide carries me further
looking skywards, sun
bursts into depths of blue.

*How long, how long
before she drowns on
the shore?*

Ness Owen Wales

NETTY'S FROCK

They tell us we
shouldn't speak
of the dead just
let them rest but
Netty's frock called
to me from the

bottom tallboy draw
tucked tightly in the
corner, unfinished.

A defiant red, though
I only knew her in black
and white and from
other people's stories.

Putting on her dress
I found her shape,
the curve of hips
that loved to dance.

It clung to me in
a spark of charges.

Mam always said
she'd finish the un-
done hem, so one
of us could wear it.

People would say
what a beautiful dress
and we'd tell them
Nettie's story.

Ness Owen Wales

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other sections: www.seventhquarrypress.com**



DEMOBILIZED

Why would he rarely talk to us as we passed his lovely garden?
A single nod or a fleeting wave was all he would give away.
He may tell us there was emptiness when doubt began to harden
the pleasure that he felt when Dafydd came to stay.

If only he would talk to us he may tell us why he lingered
long on the freshly painted gate, his back towards the sun;
how, often his misted eyes would cling to the rough, rural road ahead
as if he was searching, searching for someone.

But while the roots of his plants may hide the garden's fertile soil,
there is an injured soul above with wounds that doubt makes raw.
He will tend his lovely garden, its fruitfulness will not fail
and wait for Dafydd to come home from the war.

Jean Salkilld Wales

DETECTIVE

He could have grown from any thin mist
- been a toiling moujik, or listened to lapping water
from his Venetian palazzo. No matter:
he had a moustache, for poking into the fraying decorations
and finding the dead body of some sap like Polonius.
The law, for him, polished the world
into a monochromatic island of good and bad.
Only that insidious mist troubled him
with illusions and the uncertainty of the past.
All are both guilty and innocent, the mist whispered.
Now drink up a lover, take vodka.

Cathy Bryant England

THE SPECKLED BAND

Approaching my bed, I saw the snake
lying curved, waiting for prey.
We're in the UK, my mind pleaded,
in a rented flat! But pets escape.

Pick up a city and shake it upside down
and continents of fauna will fall out.
Unlike D.H. Lawrence, I didn't want
to admire its majesty or throw a stick at it.
I wanted to scream and then phone someone:
the sort of professional who copes with things.

Perhaps the poet in me
(or my mostly-sloughed sense)
made me frown and peer, and bend down.
It didn't strike.

It was a rolled-up pair of knickers.

The bright cotton bottom and the pale trim
at legholes and waist formed the stripes
that had screamed "venom".
Such a petty, pretty little garment.

Cathy Bryant England

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

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

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YOU TELL ME OF STARS

You tell me of stars.
How they chase you,
Shining like great claws, he
White-teethed and holding
You down in the dark.

Your father unbuckles his belt.
You, as small as a mouse,
Still-gripped with fear,
Although they call you
Red deer, celestial doe.

You tell me of your blood
Dripping to sea, becoming
Islands of enveloped sunset.
You tell me of your transformation.
Deer to antelope, scorpion's poison.

You tell me, and I tell you:
He must be brought down
Before he kills all animals,
Before he violates the entire earth—
But whatever we do, he stalks you, his daughter, forever.

Source: Borrows from Bringham's final movement of "New World Suite N^o3," "IV: Winter Solstice, Cariboo Mountains," "Orion, the old god, disguised as a deer, is out /stalking Aldebaran, the doe, his daughter, forever."

Karen Poppy America

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EPITAPHS

My partner's will read,
"I forgot my password."

Mine will remind,
"Don't forget to breathe!"

A friend wants chiseled,
"I'm here to help."

When we're down
There all alone,

Or side-by-side,
In mausoleum,

Perhaps catacomb,
What does it matter

Each distilled phrase
Boiling down every life?

A kernel is not disaster—
Indeed, high praise:

To be reborn, countless
Times, in others' laughter.

Karen Poppy America

OUR OWN BEAUTIFUL BRUTALITY by Karen Poppy

Copies on sale and information via:

<https://www.finishinglinepress.com/product/our-own-beautiful-brutality-by-karen-poppy/>

WEEDING

watching a redbreast watch with
dark eye how the grubs and slugs
indolently avoid the hoe in my hands.
Worms curl and dive into soil and my
oak tree's silent branches
dip and sway in the heat
this black earth crumbles
loamy, warm and peaty black

the cat bells his way along the garden wall
watches the robin
watching me until
we three are netted
by unblinking eyes.
The flame-y scent of
geraniums draws bees --
butterflies dodge among the
buddleia and fuchsia

The Shrewsbury train rattles along the
wetlands with its westward sound
the earth holds her breath

pauses

then breathes again

Anne Phillips Wales

CASWELL AT HIGH TIDE

where the grottos are hollowed out by giants' fingers
eroding the faults and thrusts of folded limestone outcrops.

They drink the light till the horizon crystallises.

With salt crusted skin
we searched the caves
for pirate treasure

messages in glass bottles
doubloons
finding only seaweed pennants
for our sandy forts
already eroding in the wavy tides.

Here we stole kisses like contraband
savoured the salt lick of rock and the
drip in deep caverns
far from the sun's reach.
The rock pools were ferny with sea cress
Each limestone dimple a surprise.
sand crabs skittered in damp places
our nets laden with sea booty.

We counted the waves —
Waited for the seventh
poised between splash and deluge
Trying not to scream with
cold delight or anticipation

When the wave broke
you raised me
dripping
laughing and
sopping wet

Tears and sea water blinded my walk home
towelled in your love
you lifted me once more
over pebbles steadied my feet
in your hands.

Anne Phillips Wales

TRACK CHANGES

The most lonely space I ever
saw, incomplete, for people-void,
white-light site with a vacant stare,
abandoned cell, no prisoners,
insomnia, awake through force,
unstaffed pale face, station at night.

The starkest change from Adlestrop,
fluorescent unknown name strip broke
by bottle thrown or stone from slab.
But who would want to recall tag?
Willow herb at least growing, live.

Imagining a singing bird
too far for inner sight or ear –
too bleak for calling, colly wing.

How distant Cardiff Central or
even platform three, daily busy,
populace, porters turn deaf ear
to luggage plea, livery, soot,
the pencil boy with spotter pad,
juggernaut brewing smoke signals,
bogies hidden, wind-up copied,
Hornby Double O, hobby track.

Stephen Kingsnorth England

I LOOK AT MY WATCH

My darling time, I say
You are eating me alive.
And I love it.

Carole Weston America

THE VOICE THAT SMASHES GLASS

To the British poet, George Barker

My master walks ahead of me
I see into his soul
My master knock my building down
I have no place to hide
All human speech inhabits him;
All poetry and myth.

He is the monster
Of my mind.
He is the fire
Of human kind
He is the voice
The smashes glass
He is the ass
That turns the world

Carole Weston America

WE PLANNED TO GO DOWN WITH THE PAINTED SHIPS

after André Derain's Fishing Boats

Those boats were lined up like a Fauvism scene:
creaking veterans on the beach, a tired regiment
of starboards and sterns and sails,
some angled to the lighthouse,
some to sea, some prouder
and pointed to the sun.

We bumped into them
as we ambled down the beach:
stones slipping between toes,
salt coating our tongues while seagulls
yawped for ice cream.

But among the bustle, the swaying of the crowds
the screech of rides and crackling of radios,

it was the boats that caught our peripheries and
snared us back in.

We ran our twitching fingers across
their flanks' splintered wood,
the rusted bolts grinding in the wind,
the split hulls cracking in the summer heat.

Tugging at the warped masts and tangled lines
of these brittle skeletons awash with an evaporated
time, the flaked white and bleeding browns
dared us to board onto a beached grave

just alive enough for us to imagine the trip.
We could steal a boat, as Wordsworth did,
but swear to each other no mountain
would shake our spines, no black night-time wave
would strike us back.

We would discover Atlantis,
sail through the Bermuda Triangle,
brave the depths where dragons be,
and if worst came to worst, be buried at sea.
How bad could it be? They say that drowning
is the best way to die.

But then the Penny Arcade's lights blinked,
the fish and chips wafted over the waves
and Mum and Dad hurried us along the sand
back to the safety of the land.

Luigi Coppola England



STEAM RISNG TO FLOOD

Today, above the river in full flood,
the pontoon drowned, and popping water swirl,
trod puddle's narrow bridge-path, where I stood
now mesmerised by cold/damp paddling twirl

to yesterday: the bridge was blocked by ire.
I leaned to look: twin bumpers were apart
and then, a cloud of smoke... Could this be fire?
The taxi driver's patience rose; false start,

a lady's right of way budged not an inch.
As car horns sounded, time could not stand still.
Reversing; he drove through, oh, what a cinch!
She zipped across the bridge like water spill;

the bus and brewing jam spilled round and rude.
Today, a storm passed by, with attitude.

Wendy Webb England

BLACKBIRD GONE

Blackbird sings flicks its wings in the wind.
He holds a song all summer long, then it's lost.

Leaves cork, nightmares stalk, blackbird stuck.
Though spring is here it's winter's fear that he feels.

Blackbird waits on rooftop slates in sunlight slits.
That bring dawn, the day is born, and starts to bore.

Trees spurt green ignore what's been from the songs beat.
For years I've heard this singing bird, even at birth.

I live at night in the sun's light once the blackbird left.

Gareth Culshaw Wales

I WAS HALF HIS SIZE

Those days in the cemetery walking along the paths
that were being forced up by the roots of trees.

Marble gravestones inched their way to the floor
became drawbridges for sunlight.

The tap that dripped when tight, gushed when open.
Pots of flowers filled, then brought back to her date.

I was half the height of you back then. Wondered what
the other half would bring. There was silence and a vast

sky above. Her chiselled name stung the marble. I never
treaded on her lawn thinking maybe one day she would

come back. But all the time you stood there knowing
that the other half of my growth was the slowest lived.

And felt the same day, after day, after day.

Gareth Culshaw Wales

MONA LISA OF THE NORTH ON SEEING VERMEER'S 'GIRL WITH A PEARL EARRING'

You will recognise me from
postcards, pencils,
placemats and posters
bought hurriedly in gallery shops on
rainy day, 'highlights only' tours.

You are drawn to my enigma,
to the contradictions here;
the dark background,
the clarity of light on Turkish silks,
my moist, parted lips,
my almost clerical collar.

I am a fresh faced, startled girl
yet my ear is owned by that brash pearl.
Like others before , you question
my relationship with Johannes.

But time's pressing on.

You glance at your watch.
You consult the guide book,
accept the current view.....

'A tronie,
existing merely on canvas.
She is given life
only by Vermeer,
an exercise in self- promotion.'

The moment vanishes.
You move on.
After all, there are other masterpieces
to be seen
and time is short.

Alison Wood Wales

IT'S JUST CHICKENS!

High stepping. . .their
avid, black eyes
spark with curiosity.
Curved beaks, arrow headed tongues serve
insatiable appetites.
Powerful, four fingered claws work the earth,
mining a myriad, tiny morsels.

Heads held proud,
scarlet, fleshy coronets quiver,
ruby wattles dangle
like badges of office.

Neck feathers gleam
rust, amber and white.
Each folds into the next with
mathematical precision. . .
a colourscape by Klimt.

Alison Wood Wales

VIGILANTIA

you'd be wrong to think this silence
wasn't being filled.
for throughout these ungoverned watches,
the hours toll a clearer arterial note
then dumb sunlight can muster.

hear now the stuttering breath or midnight
whimper from sophisticated nests,
but they are just lairs still
where sweat drowns hope and not even
nightmares dare to wander.

you'd be wrong to think this silence
wasn't being filled.

note for instance, the constant pounding
of traitorous capillaries, the hammering
of organs spavined by use and hear
your dissolution in this night's murmur.

so, you'd be wrong to think this silence
wasn't being filled.
best sleep, and do not listen.

I shall keep first watch.

Jamie William Spracklen England

A Review of REMEMBERING VINCE CLEMENTE

Edited by Peter Thabit Jones

Edited by Peter Thabit Jones. Contributors: Martin Abramson, Stanley H. Barkan, Maryann Calendrille, Gina Clemente, Maryann Clemente, Natalie Goldberg, Frane Helner, William Heyen, Dr. Olimpia Iacob, Carolyn Mary Kleefeld, Kathryn Szoka, Gayl Teller, Peter Thabit Jones

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Upon opening the front cover of this book, and seeing a substantial list of contributors, I was confident that this would be both a full and emotional tribute. My progression through the pages both satisfied and exceeded these initial expectations.

Vince Clemente was an English Professor Emeritus, a poet, biographer, critic and editor professionally, but he was also so much more than that when the testaments of those he met and inspired are taken into account. His achievements and accolades are numerous, and this will of course inspire any reader, but quite possibly as if not more arresting, are the personal attributes spoken of in the pages of this book. His kindness, his loving nature, his affinity with everyone and everything, and his spirituality are present from the outset and throughout. These qualities are ones that I am sure we would all wish to possess, and further cement Vince Clemente as nothing short of inspirational.

This book was conceived and edited by Peter Thabit Jones, an individual whose achievements and qualities strongly mirror those of Clemente. Perhaps this somewhat explains why they referred to each other as ‘brothers’. Having only met in person once, their relationship was one which predominately lay in the pages of years of ‘very long letters’. Peter shares that Vince was ‘simply the most important person to come into my life at a time when I was struggling as a freelance writer’. He refers to Vince as ‘a blessing’, and these sentiments within the opening Foreword set a precedent for the words that are to follow from family members, friends and former students as they too share stories and memories.

Perhaps the overriding theme that runs throughout this book is that to remember Vince Clemente is to remember a significant man who left a mark upon all those who knew him. As I moved through the pages, I penned some words to represent my thoughts: sensitive, understanding, kind, a family man, an inspiration. As I write this review I stand by those words. As somebody who has only gained exposure to Vince through this publication, I cannot judge his character through anything other than the words of those that did know him, but the conviction with which their testimonies are written, and the

beautifully and entirely arresting poetry that they have penned in tribute to him, give me all the confidence that he is deserving of the tribute that these pages hold.

Remembering Vince Clemente is, as I mentioned above, a heartfelt tribute. It contains some of his own work and contributions from friends, family, colleagues and those he taught. You will find images that perfectly compliment these emotional words, including photographs of him from his younger years and some personal snapshots provided by his daughter. There is the perfect balance of prose and poetry resulting in a read that feels almost conversational. By this I mean that I could imagine the featured contributors all sitting down together sharing stories and memories, and performing poetry that they conceived through the inspiration that he provided, with us as readers invited to watch and gain insight. To read this book is to hope to leave a similar legacy.

Described as a ‘heroic mentor’, and a man with an ‘open spirit, immense generosity and pure soul’ this book has reminded me of the influence that poetry and literature bring, but more than that, the power that those who teach it and discuss it can bestow. I feel inspired simply through reading the impact that he had, and I have no doubt that all readers of this text will feel the same inspiration also, whether that be with regards their own compositions, or in their roles within family and friendship groups.

The overriding takeaway from this book is one of simplicity, just be good. Vince Clemente was, in both a personal and professional capacity, and this shines through the testimonies within the pages of *Remembering Vince Clemente*. There is a plethora of emotional and heartfelt quotes to choose from, but allow me to share the two that really resonated with me. Firstly: “You were the friend I had always hoped for” taken from *Poem for Vince Clemente* by Peter Thabit Jones, and a perfect example of the simplicity of which I touched upon above. I wonder if he truly understood the profound effect that he had upon those he engaged with. The second, and perhaps the best explanation with which to bring this review to a close: “We are all diminished by his passing. We are all enriched by his having lived”. I suspect this enrichment will continue to flourish, and this book will certainly contribute to that. A wonderful read, and one that I wouldn’t hesitate to recommend.

Jessica Newport Wales

theseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarry

AMUSEMENT

I dropped a baby aspirin,
it landed on its side.

Jerry Kitchen and I used to drop coins
on my wood floor as boys

to see if we could get one to land on its side.
We did it once.

*

I finished shaving
2 days ago

and dropped the empty shaving gel can
in a wicker basket

and it landed on its rounded head.
There was nothing else in the wastebasket.

It's still standing upright.

*

Would you like to have this all tied together
in a new and interesting way?

I wouldn't mind
but nothing suggests itself.

Bernie rides the Ferris wheel on the Santa Monica pier tonight
with Vivienne.

Craig Cotter America

REPRIEVE

on my back
in ripe green grass
staring at night stars
loving Venus and our mottled moon
I remember
how nearly earth was lost

Ceinwen E Cariad Haydon England

SHELTER

Your cave-dwelling soul
hitherto unrealised
in this incarnation
leads you by the elbow
underground to refuge
homelands. Places
to sit out danger
and ponder risks.
Vast swathes of dire darkness

lit from within by buried light –
stalactites and stalagmites,
stark beauty glitters secret hope.

Ceinwen E Cariad Haydon England





The Invisible Manifests (30 x 24" Acrylic on Hard Board 2020)

© 2021 Carolyn Mary Kleefeld

STAR ANGELS

(for David C and John L)

Come play with me, my heroes.
Come be my star angels
in the jet black night.
Let's dance the waves of love
and let them lift us to the heavens.

Yes, let's dance tonight,
my heroes, my star angels,
in the jet black night.
We'll dance the waves
of love's light and rise above.

Yes, my heroes of light and love,
let us be in each other's arms,
in each other's laughter,
and be star angels
in our own expanding realm—
dancing and singing in
our eternal love and light.

March 2, 2021

Carolyn Mary Kleefeld America

LOCKDOWN ALONE

Searching the house thoroughly
as though expecting a visitor,
she only meets herself.
There are traces in every room
of all the people she's been
wrapped up in the sorrow
of broken-hearted tidiness.

As before, this unearths bones
of all the long-ago memories,
making the house feel empty.
Her name is lost in the quiet,
she feels no substance to her body.
She is only the crack
through which the dead listen.

She wonders how she got lost
when everything was mapped out,
looks at the clock, begs it
to try and keep up with her.

She retraces her footsteps
until a mirror stops her.
The image is the usual wound,
this time accompanied by tears

launching a silent prayer,
a hunger for some company.

Gordon Scapens England

A COFFEE MORNING HUMS

Tuesday morning has a tranquil tone.
Along a tree-lined road
a yellow door beckons,
eleven o'clock time to press a bell.
The room has a cosy radiance;
known items are keynotes
in a house of wonders.
Outside a French window, a garden is a lush haven
inviting visitors to explore.
Birds on a bird feeder give an aerial display,
a squirrel joins the show.
The host carries out her task with ease,
on a table an array of cakes tempt.
Flowers with unique faces inspire speech,

tadpoles in a glass vase are hypnotic.
We drift into a dreamy undercurrent,
voices mingle to create a melody
that lingers in hazy hours.

Ann Flynn England

THE ROAD SWEEPER

The footpath captures footprints
that have an eerie echo,
like a chorus of crows.
His face is a map of milestones
about to tumble,
his uniform is as bright as a flag,
a slogan shouts from his jacket.
A haze hovers over his steps,
the rain hits him like a whip,
a mobile phone is his constant companion.
With the tempo of a funeral parade,
he wheels a small wagon
that highlights the green of a traffic light,
as if to remind him to go hastily
and inspect the street.
He lifts the litter lightly,
no notes with the image of the Queen.
He sweeps with wide strokes,
leaves fall at his feet
singing an autumn song.

Ann Flynn England

REMEMBERING VINCE CLEMENTE/Edited by Peter Thabit Jones

Contributors: Martin Abramson, Stanley H. Barkan, Maryann Calendrille, Gina
Clemente, Maryann Clemente, Natalie Goldberg, Frane Helner, William Heyen, Dr.
Olimpia Iacob, Carolyn Mary Kleefeld, Kathryn Szoka, Gayl Teller, Peter Thabit Jones

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THE PAINTER AND THE BUYER

after the drawing by Bruegel the Elder c.1565

A harvest of coins
inside a leather purse,
where a stranger's presence
watches the detached painter at work.
His mind focused,
he concentrates on the moment
that is about to be disturbed
by the hand's eternal offer.
The prose of a familiar buyer
who enters the canvas's imagination,
ageless like the estranged earth's geometry,
its poetry disguised in art
with a final agreement between
them yet to be confirmed.

Byron Beynon Wales

FOOTNOTE TO A FORCE FIELD

High-voltage power lines scythe a sward of sky,
leaving a harvest of sparrows, robins,
blackbirds, finches, thrushes, wagtails –
young fliers from the hole in the wall, the ivy
overhang, the low bush, the 'lady
of the wood', the larch and beech trees spread
in wild abundance around Ballydonlon.
No sense, you say, in grieving those that die.
Aren't they nature's many? Surely even
a sorry pragmatist, if he is to live comfortably,
must put his need of heat and light
in nature's way? So the ravener behind your eye
follows the loop of the singing cables,
while stiffened under your feet the fledglings lie.

Patrick Deeley Ireland

GRIFFIN'S CAT

Imagine the advantage Griffin's albino cat enjoys
after being made invisible, nipping out,
first thing, from the cantankerous scientist's room,
and – H.G. Wells doesn't say – the risk
of a rowdy boot. Imagine the cat, lord of all
he sees and not having to worry about being seen,
strolling up to a blackbird and snaffling it
without fuss, snagging delicacies
from dinner plates, lapping milk from pantry pots
and parlour basins. He would prosper,
that hallucinatory cat escaped through the door-flap
of science fiction. But if he mated
with ordinary cats, would his offspring be ghostly
after his own fashion, or unremarkably
furred in plain sight, or destined to dwell – as does
the bulk of the world and its expression –
in a fluctuant glimmer between seen and unseen?

Patrick Deeley Ireland

MY BIT OF JIGSAW

I have contributed to the jigsaw,
offered to the structure, my shape,
with no consideration of a box-lid picture,
much less scruples of aesthetic judgement
or naïve notions of free choice,
for who divided us?

Who ordained this cutting line,
the random, wandering, pattern divine?
So curious, I gaze upward,
seeking answers in sky
and as the haze solidifies;
the golden man, the trumpet, etcetera,

I find it, boundless in a cloud:
the hidden ingredient lacing the matrix,
the silver charm hidden deep in the duff.
And now come wild neutrinos spinning,
abandoning their parent suns...
that they too find their place, it is enough.

Clive Donovan England

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING?

Come, what have you been doing to yourself?
Let me fix a wiper for your glistened eyes,
bandage up some leaks, renew your brakes;
you have been freewheeling dangerously,
skating the ordered streets,
bumping into citizens and pillar boxes,
spilling messages everyone is too polite to read,
except for postcards of course: *'Here I stay, safe,
it's lovely here, the deep water so blue.
if you hold this picture to the light,
I have put a pin through for you,
you will see where I am.'*
Oh, you have been jabbing at your own heart again.
You are one of the people who pierce their own hearts.
You must stop. . .

Clive Donovan England



**IN SEARCH OF BANGLADESHI POETRY:
Hassanal Abdullah's Volatile Anthology
by Bill Wolak**

Contemporary Bangladeshi Poetry translated by Hassanal Abdullah offers a captivating introduction to a considerable range of previously unexplored poetry of Bangladesh. This anthology is a long overdue achievement because it is the first attempt to represent the full scope and diversity of modern and contemporary poetry from Bangladesh into well-wrought English translations. Beginning with the generation after the two most well know, modern Bangladeshi poets, Rabindranath Tagore, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913, and Kazi Nazrul Islam, whose moniker “rebel poet” derives from his astonishing poem “The Rebel” which taunted the Britishers with lines like “I am the king of the great upheaval,” Abdullah’s anthology includes 38 poets who were born between 1917 and 1983.

What kinds of poetry will the reader encounter in this anthology? Well, just about every kind of poem that you might expect from a country that cherishes poetry and the popular song: love poems, prose poems, political poems, elegiac poems, sonnets, occasional poems, poems in numerical sections, philosophical poems, historical poems—in short, a wide range of modes and styles that suitably reflect the major poetical trends of modernism and post-modernism.

Make no mistake, this anthology’s selections are by no means predictable, restrained, subdued, or safe. Quite the contrary. In a country where a writer can be attacked with a machete for a perceived religious insult, these are volatile choices: some offbeat, some unconventional, some heterodox. This much is evident immediately from one of the poems “When God Is Dead” that the translator has selected to represent his own poetry:

When God is dead
I will stop writing poems
and believe me, my lady
I will be in bed with you
for three consecutive days and nights
and will never be separated.

Consequently, there are some utterly spectacular poems in this anthology like “Her Body Turns Red” by Baitullah Quaderee:

I see her dancing like the central glare of alluvial fire.
From her naked thighs and fire-soft sleeping navel,
the aroma of ghee gallops through the air.
Erudite, her body comes up laughing
from a vast reservoir of pre-historic symbols—
the sun kept in it, as if it were her breast mark.
She becomes elegant, even brighter than that—
since the world hides beneath her assembled seat.
Her body gets red from the wild flame.
Her body gets slim from the dancing fire.
Her vagina turns into a flaming star with the dancing fire.
And the flame keeps on burning smoke free
under her consensus,
keeping the scatter history behind.
The sleeping moth of the king
performs the butterfly vow—
I see her dancing like the central glare of alluvial fire,
dancing her navel, the breast mark,
and the eternal burning light as the elusive flint.

What sensuality. What riveting figurative language. Baitullah Quaderee's poems are some of the most remarkable in the anthology, and one can only hope that the translator will offer us more of his work in the future.

Likewise, many of the poems in the anthology are filled with the overflowing elation of love and life. Take for example, Shamsur Rahman's delightful poem "I Become Happy:"

When you sail our remembrance on the
edge of your body, and set a pair of pigeons free,
I become happy.

When you dissolve yourself into a glass of water,
in just a moment to quench my thirst and gaze at me with hope,
I become happy . . .

When you set a rose to my lips
and make me shiver with passion,
I become happy.

When you approach me denouncing the obstacles,

and uplift my torn flag against the wind,
I become happy.

Shamsur Rahman's poem express the exuberance of desire when love functions as a wave uplifting the couple's shared passion. Another such poem that sparkles with expectation is Al Mahmud's "Smile":

My thoughts are spinning
around you.
I called you by many names.
Once in my youth,
I compared you to a river.
You laughed so hard,
that you could not manage
yourself, falling into my bed
and still could not stop
the excitement—
your limbs waved so much
that I reckoned the whole river was
in my bed.
Your wave did not stop.

On the other hand, in a country whose violent, catastrophic history still resonates palpably, there are poems that reflect that upheaval and misery. "Corpses Smell in the Air" by Rudro Muhammad Shahindullah captures that sense of lingering trauma:

I still smell the corpse in the air
I still see death dancing naked in the street.
I still hear the scream of the women being raped—
has the country forgotten that cruel night of bloodshed? . . .

I can't sleep. I can't sleep at all the entire night.
I hear the screams of the raped woman
in my drowsiness—
I see the rotten corpse floating in the river.
The headless, dog-eaten, dead body
of a woman appears in my vision.
I can't sleep, I can't sleep . . .

These unforgettable, inescapable smells, sights, and sounds cause ever-present anxiety

that prevent sleep. Another such example is the poignant “The Martyr Day: February 21”:

Mother will never call her son by his name again!

His name will jingle and spin in around her heart
again and again.

But it will never come to her lips
like a pearl;
it will never spark out of her mouth.

There are also chillingly realistic poems depicting dubious situations that might transpire in any country as in Humayun Azad’s “Everything Will Go into the Thugs’ Hands:” “I know, everything will go into the thugs’ hands, / The prettiest girl will hold the thugs’ penises / with her gentle hands and suck them through the night.” The thugs are mirrored by poetry in the midst of their crimes. The thugs, who exist in every country, await justice and the judgement of history.

And yet, there are many unexpected and unique poems to be found in this anthology.

Take, for example, Shaheed Quaderi’s “The Shining Prostitutes”:

Bring back teenage pleasures through hugs and kisses,
to the people, distorted, deprived, broken-limbed,
and the ones who have lost parental love—
fighting for their riddled existence in muddy water and storm,
are tenderly nursed by your dying breasts.

For moments, I, too, am the tacky king of this false paradise.
Nothing is worthy of what you offer for just a little change.
You are the shining bride of unhealthy times,
spreading the fragrance of life to the vagabonds.
To me, ethics have no worth
but to praise you from the bottom of my heart.

A Whitmanesque poem in praise of prostitutes without irony or sarcasm is about the last thing one expects to find in an anthology from Bangladesh! Nevertheless, it’s a tour de force of infinite tolerance and compassion. Moving. Honest. Another thoroughly enjoyable poem is Abu Hena Mustafa Kamal’s *via negativa* composition entitled “Alternatives”:

I would like to make a list of things
I never want to be, even in my dream:

One: A trigger on the enemy's gun.
Two: A caged bird in a friend's garden.
Three: An expert on all the songs my master loves.
Four: An open firing squad.

I never want to be:
A woman's second husband;
or a slash on her lips,
Tagore's poster on the wall,
or Nazrul Islam pining away in Dhanmondi.

One of the most memorable poems in the anthology is Humayum Azad's "Probably for a Little Thing":

I probably will die for a little thing,
for a segment of a short dream,
and for a little sadness.
I probably will die for a little sigh,
in someone else's sleep.
I will die for a bit of beauty.

There are even surprising poems like "The One Who Recites" by Maruf Raiham that lambaste those vapid poets whose blitherings constitute an inexcusable waste of breath and paper: "She makes poetry just a list of helpless words. / Please tell her to stop."

Finally, the anthology contains the following endearing narrative poem "Pigeons Wonders and Shame":

I have not told you the story of lost pigeons.

Yes, it was true, a few pigeons were lost,
and I was so unhappy about it.
And, as I was searching for them,
I looked into a neighboring house,
and then into another,
and then I was thinking, "Why did I lose my pigeons?"

Then it was noon, a lazy full noon, and

under the summer's sway, Jasmine was lying
on her bed. I found her as I lost my way,
sensing the underlying, seventh grade friendship.
Pigeons were not the last topic in the world!
There might be shame in losing them,
there might also be wonder!

Dear pigeon hunters, give me a cage full of pigeons.
I would like to lose them in this town,
and would like to find what grade I am in now!
I would like to have a total self-reckoning,
squarely facing whatever
shame and wonder are drifting within me.

So many times in life what is unequivocally lost leads us to something wondrously unforeseen, as when the narrator states, "I found her as I lost my way." What is lost always somehow enhances what is found; that's how we grow; that's how we manage to persevere. Let's praise all lost pigeons and the unimaginable path to the wondrous that can be found suddenly around the corner or even on the next page. Hassanal Abdullah's *Contemporary Bangladeshi Poetry* offers us many poetical lost pigeons. Let's find the generous openness to follow them always without complaint into the unknown.

Bill Wolak is a poet, collage artist, and photographer who lives in New Jersey and has just published his eighteenth book of poetry entitled *All the Wind's Unfinished Kisses* with Ekstasis Editions. His most recent translation with Mahmood Karimi-Hakak, *Love Me More Than the Others: Selected Poetry of Iraj Mirza*, was published by Cross-Cultural Communications in 2014.

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SAN MARCO

We never went into it.
Too many people.

One can pray anywhere.
Around eleven o'clock, evenings,

We would have an espresso
In the piazza.

Hardly anyone there.

I like Saint Mark's gospel.
The little nothing dress.

Venetian espresso.
Behind it,

In the arcade shops.

Glass tubes, copper tubes,
Cupids, pressure,
Simple physics.

San Marco.
Thoreau.

There is little difference.
The curtain is very thin.

So, easy to jerk aside.

Richard W. Halperin France

THE TEMPLE

A woman, an Irish poet, once gave me
A blurred colour snapshot – it looked
Like an old Polaroid – of a small house
Beside a lake. The colours were mainly

Browns, the darker browns the lake
And the reflections of the house in it.
'I call the photo The Temple,' she said,
'Because that was what we called the house.'

This was all years ago. Evenings,
I sometimes pull out the photo and

Look at it. I, too, call it The Temple.
Not for the house on the shore, but for

What is upside-down in the lake.
What temples feel like.

Richard Halperin France

TRANSCENDINT

Els petons ballaven en la negror,
i encenien una llum rebel,
que enlluernà el seu somriure...
alliberant la dona de la mort.

Els ulls cecs de negror...
no trobaven la realitat.
Era com mirar-se en un espill
i enfrontar-se a la buidor...

Va udolar desesperadament a l'espai.
L'eco frenètic dels crits cristal·litzaren.
Plorà silenciosament en l'oblit.
La seva memòria fugí en la nit...

Una mà invisible l'empenyé suaument.
Va caure en un pou amb mil sortides.
Va deixar de sentir, posseir, pensar ...
En consciència pura, es transformà...

Xavier Panadès I Blas Wales

TRANSCENDING

Kisses danced in blackness,
igniting a rebellious light,
that dazzled her smile. . .
freeing the woman from death.

The eyes blinded of blackness. . .
they could not find reality.
It was like looking into a mirror
and confronting emptiness. . .

She howled desperately in space.
The frantic echo of the screams crystallized.
She cried silently in oblivion.
Her memory fled in the night. . .

An invisible hand pushed her gently.
She fell in a well with a thousand exits.
She stopped feeling, possessing, thinking. . .
In pure consciousness, she was transformed. . .

Xavier Panadès I Blas Wales

Poet's note: Thanks to Meritxell Sales Tomàs and Rebecca Lowe for editing the poem.

PONIES

Gower, Swansea, Wales

They may seem wild to us who come to stay
For just a spell at this or that hotel
While celebrating someone's wedding day
Or bidding Arthur's Stone hello-farewell,
Yet those which block our passage through the moors
Treat locals much the same—intruding on
A schoolyard till the children kept indoors
Wish such rude creatures would be ever gone.
These ponies, never bound to any mine
Or quarry, unabashedly withstand
All human expectations of equine
Decorum on or off the common land:
While feeding, even breeding, they have shown
Each ground around to be their very own.

Jane Blanchard America

MAEN CETI

just north of Cefn Bryn

Whoever Arthur was, wherever Arthur went,
His mighty stone has been here for millennia,
Close to the backbone of this Welsh peninsula,
Where myth remains but little means what it once meant.
The truth is known to those who dug the graves below
Though they are long dead, too, as are their gods and their
Routines—or not—since even now some natives dare
Enact a faith which most abandoned long ago.
I doubt, however, any modern maiden would
Get on her hands and knees, then crawl around the stone
To learn if whom she loves is hers and hers alone
Or if she should at last give up on him for good.
Three turns, a full moon, and a cake are all required
For answering a question as—or not—desired.

Jane Blanchard America

ANGRY PREY

life is all about change,
said my old master mind
a touch of good karma
like a secretive red wolf
running away from his angry prey
there is nothing better
than a day after day
with a night in between
(if the night comes)
you're loath to lose your place in heaven
with no head space for your own dreams
you've got no choice but to pull off stakes
it's a dangerous frame
but you've got to make that move
and swim among the shinning sharks
under the deep sea of your soul
you better shove
you better run
and cross that desert
tailored made for you.

Werner Schumann Germany

ASK (TURKISH DREAMS)

In the fields of Anatolia
Home of Epictetus
I could feel the wind coming from the Aegean Sea

At the ruins of Pamukkale
a little ox-eye daisy strives
to enjoy the festival of life

The adhan is heard from the minarets
echoing in the mountains of Denizli
Summer nights, fluttering curtains

The drums of Ramadan at dawn

Her naked sacred body
whispering that ancient word
Aşk, Aşk, Aşk, Aşk

But what was bound to eternity
was moored with a single anchor
and drifted away

The ruins remain there,
with a stoical indifference
under the Hierapolian sun

Even today Epictetus' words can be heard
whistling around.

Werner Schumann Germany

EASTER SUNDAY 2020

The sun rises like a cracked egg
spilling its yolk over the world.
In the back field where rabbits play
the heavy beat of wings, the sharp grip of talons
suddenly end playtime.
The Easter Bunny has already hidden its soft self
tremulously away
in fear of the spreading reality
that threatens to choke us all.

J. S. Watts England



AUTUMN ECHOES ITSELF

after archival pigment print, 12 x 16", 2010

by Adel Gorgy

When leaves turn
cool blue mingling
with salmon
& yellow
& green—
even white—
a glimpse of colors
mirrors breezes stirring
a dream of time,
past and future.
Something there is
about Autumn's
reflections
that parallel spring
and edge out
summer & winter.
Looking up at the sky,
I cannot
but turn
my downcast eyes
to the shadows
in the pool
of my mythic mind.
The voice echoes,
disappears
in the canyons
of the passing seasons . . .

Stanley H. Barkan America
(October 16, 2011)

I KNOW EVERYTHING

I know why four eyes glow in the dark
of the storm-drain, as our headlights
sweep past at nine-thirty at night.

I know where the squirrel is going,
walking the slope of the power line,
and heading across the street.

I know what made the poke-holes
in my grass and in the dirt
next to where I walk, and
what it was hoping to find.

I know why the raccoon is hugging
the redwood at sunset and why
it ventured across the bare branch
of the neighboring tree and returned,
a perfect silhouette against the twilight.

I know how much confusion the puffy skunk
was in when we came home one night
and found it in our front yard,
not certain of which way to turn.

I know why the salamanders make a home
in my brick pile, and why the squirrels
tear at breakneck speed down the redwood,
the one nip-and-tuck behind the other.

I know why the hawk is being pestered
by the hummingbirds, which are madder
than a squadron of Grumman F6F Hellcats,
and just as worrisome to the intruder.

Yes, I . . . well, actually, I don't know
everything, but I do know
a lot of stuff.

Steffen F. Richards America

(November 27, 2003/Thanksgiving Day)

TOADS: A SQUATTER'S GUIDE

imaginary gardens with real toads in them

Marianne Moore, 'Poetry'

Imaginary gardens with real toads.
You need the artifice but life requires
A solid ground-bass for the heavenly choirs,
Or matter fit to freight Horatian odes.
Compare: fine novel-plot with episodes
That hit you like a wave of forest fires,
Or song that answers to your heart's desires
Till world breaks in and common sense reloads.
We poet-gardeners much admire Miss Moore,
Take pleasure in her poems, often read
Them, heart-learnt, as we work, and love to store
Her deft syllabics up to meet our need
For toad-safe zones where we, too, can explore
Life's uncouth shapes from civil metrics freed.

Your toad-less garden rapidly acquires
The look of space un-lived-in, formal codes
Un-lived-by, all the topiary modes
Of life and art to which the soul aspires
In dreams or reverie yet quickly tires
As shadows lift, as shifting sunlight goads
The lazy gaze, and a toad-chorus bodes
Their hunkering down as squatter-occupiers
Of prime south-facing pads. A time to breed,
And time for heliotropic metaphor,
Like wonder-struck Miranda's talk of seed,
Cross-breeding, grafts – let puritans deplore
Her usage if they will, those tropes that plead
A case no country gardener can ignore.

From frog to prince: result not guaranteed,
May go the other way – luck of the draw,
And so with toads in gardens, though if you're
An adept of Miss Moore's poetic creed
You'll pay the risk of dodgy toads less heed

Than how, well placed, they furnish an outdoor
Perspective and a creaturely rapport
To rough up those perfections that exceed
The gardener's brief. Behold them: plumped-up squires
Of smug repose, squat Buddhas, vibrant nodes
Of brute aseity, prodigious sires
Of plenitude whose teeming spawn erodes
Yet populates anew the bordered shires
With gardens fit for border-hopping toads.

Christopher Norris Wales

HUMIDITY

Old maple reaches
from the edge of the woods
its branches cascading with leaves
like a waterfall in an ancient
Chinese scroll painting

The branches sway up and down
in the wind off the sea
the pines swing back and forth
heavy with needles
the oak leaves shake
with a violent scintillation

and all of these flow
into a dance
like a sun-dappled river

After the rains
air tastes like water
the trees are water standing
and branching

we are water
which walks and speaks

Mark Rutter England

REVENGE OF THE GREEN MAN

Thick sluggish water laps against the walls of the ancient cathedral. Vines have almost obscured the statues of saints, and a giant lizard stares from one of the smaller spires, its jewelled tail coiled around the crumbling battlements. How long before the whole edifice collapses into the soupy water? A glint of sun, piercing the low brooding clouds, catches a last shard of stained glass, which shines bright red, momentarily, out of the tangled webs of leaf and tendril. It is as if the medieval forest scene depicted in the nave, carved in wood by a single carpenter so many centuries ago, has come to life and swallowed the building's exterior. Don't basilisks and manticores crowd that carven forest? Now it has taken over the whole edifice. The lizard, like some dread Old Testament beast, the scourge of the prophets, thrusts out its tongue as eagerly as a child might lick an ice cream cone, and snatches a seagull out of the air. More baroque than the stone ever was, ferns and vines crowd and seethe all over the walls, smashing-in the windows and liberating the cloistered air, the echoes of footfalls. The carved leaves and flowers, the creatures that have stared out of wooden foliage for centuries and seen only the floor of gravestones or the mild faces of saints, taste the humid breeze.

Mark Rutter England

THE GHOSTS OF TREES

Everywhere in this land
there are the ghosts of trees.

The fields, the heaths
throng with them,
even your garden,
your house.

They climb the stairs,
they sigh in the wind of dreams,
they creak in the early hours
and crush you when you least expect.

They stab a splinter into your heart,
their twigs poke out your inner eye.

All of our towns and cities
are a Dunsinane Wood
where the ghosts of trees
are on the march.

Mark Rutter England

“VIS-À-VIS”

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

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

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

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

Steven Duplij Germany

Translated by Larissa Kulinich

DOUBLE FAULT

They married in July, Wimbledon on TV -
sunshine, starched whites, strawberries and cream.
You'd take him for a bronzed superstar,
her for a Centre Court darling.
Bouquets and confetti on a special day
not meant to last. Ahead a glamourless grind,
of endless tetchy rallies, cut and thrust,
nip and tuck, hammer and tongs,
hot tongue and cold shoulder.
Advantage him. Deuce. Advantage her.
For one unblemished day flowers and finery
camouflaged a double fault,
and snazzy shoes belied a truth,
the feet they wore of Roland Garros clay.

Michael Durack Ireland

A40 PEMBROKESHIRE

There are demons at work
under the bonnet of a red Skoda Felicia,
demons that fork invisible lightning,
that reek of putrid eggs;
insidious demons that ply their malice
in the traffic of the South Wales motorway
and on the roundabouts
of St Clears and Haverfordwest;
unrelenting demons that betray us
to our ultimate roadside abandonment
four miles from Fishguard dock.

But there are Good Samaritans
with matted hair and ponytails,
tattooed legs and sleeveless T-shirts;
and implausible St. Christophers
in transit vans, bearing spanners and wrenches,
tow ropes, one-liners and hope;

and there are wingless angels
keeping house among Pembrokeshire hills
in Wolfscastle and Trecwyn.

And though the demons bequeath
a whiff of sulphur and the corpse of a broken car,
a messenger from a higher place
finds us a lay-by, keeps us safe;
summons Danny and Dylan and Chris,
guides us to Gwynneth's kitchen,
pours out jugfuls of human kindness,
delivers us to the ferry, and home.

Michael Durack Ireland

COMING DOWN

ascent says Vic, the mountaineer
is not the hard part

Nose Hill ain't Everest
but I get it: I anteloped up
in full vigor of lost youth,
posed at the peak, lord of all I surveyed
- panting, heart drumming
as once half the day

a grizzled farm-hand asked
what's the rush

the warehouse guys said
don't bust your guts

the old Japanese black-belt tried:
you young guys work-out hard - too hard

coming back down
my knees at last
get through to me

slow step by fussy step -
here's where I need
these two sticks,
the skill

you're right, Vic:
up was easy

James Thurgood Canada

**BOOKS FROM THE SEVENTH QUARRY PRESS
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IMPRINTS by Welsh poet Julie-Anne Grey. POETRY.

PRICE: £4.99/\$10. ISBN 978-0-9567457-6-7

DYLAN THOMAS WALKING TOUR OF GREENWICH VILLAGE, NEW YORK by Peter Thabit Jones and Aeronwy Thomas. LITERARY GUIDE.

PRICE: £5.00/\$10. ISBN 978-0-89304-997-3 (co-published with Cross-Cultural Communications, New York)

THE POET, THE HUNCHBACK, AND THE BOY/DVD by Peter Thabit Jones. DRAMA. Performed by Swansea Little Theatre actors.

PRICE: £10/\$20. ISBN 9780-0-9567457-7-4 (co-published with the Dylan Thomas Theatre, Wales, and produced by Holly Tree Productions, Wales)

THE CARDINAL'S DOG AND OTHER POEMS by Welsh poet Christopher Norris. POETRY.

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

THE RED OF LIFE by American-Czech poet Theo Halama. POETRY.

PRICE: £5/\$10. ISBN 978-0-956-74579-8 (co-published with Cross-Cultural Communications, New York)

THE COLOUR OF SAYING/A CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION IN CELEBRATION OF DYLAN THOMAS ANTHOLOGY, edited by Peter Thabit Jones and Stanley H. Barkan (includes translations of *The Hunchback in the Park* by Dylan Thomas into other languages). POETRY.

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FORTHCOMING

Summer, 2021: EASTSIDE STORY/Recalled by Members of Swansea's Eastside Historical Society. Foreword by Peter Thabit Jones

January, 2022: A full-length poetry collection by Welsh poet Byron Beynon



THE SEVENTH QUARRY PRESS

BOOKS RECEIVED

IMAGO by Rhoda Thomas. Published by Sketty Books. Information on the book is available from rhodathomas1917@yahoo.com Price: £8.99. A powerful collection of poems by a writer who exudes passion, who faces her subject matter (personal and political) with an admirable honesty and engages the reader via an original and wise poetic voice.

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

A BRIEF HISTORY OF TREES by Lawrence Illsley. Published by Live Canon Poetry Ltd. Price and information via www.livecanon.co.uk A most interesting collection of carefully controlled and engaging poems.

CRADLE OF BONES by Frances Sackett. Published by The High Window Press. Information on the book is available from abbeygatebooks@yahoo.co.uk and frances.sackett@outlook.com Price: £10. Sharp observations and focused details enhance her strong and beautifully crafted poems, which cover a variety of subjects. An impressive addition to her array of published books.

IMAGINARY LANDSCAPES by Richard W. Halperin. Published by Lapwing Publications/www.lapwingpoetry.com Price: £10. This is a collection that holds the reader's attention from the first poem to the last poem. Halperin's use of language pleases the ear as well as the eye.

CATCH ME WHILE YOU HAVE THE LIGHT by Richard W. Halperin. Published by Salmon Poetry. Price and information from www.salmonpoetry.com A book that calls one back, to savour a subtle use of language and a mature poetic vision.

IN OR OUT OF SEASON by Jane Blanchard. Published by Kelsay Books. Information via kelsay.karen@gmail.com Price: \$18. 'Jane Blanchard's most recent work will appeal to any lover of finely crafted not-a-syllable-wasted rhyme. She sifts through the everyday to reveal what deserves our attention'—Lora Zill, editor of *Time of Singing*.

HARD TIMES IN THE CITY

after Kenneth Fearing

In the city of no more bulging buildings like monolithic matrons looking down at
unnamed small fry, tiny and identical, like jujubes, like mentholated cough drops
Standing around down there milling there bereft, without purpose there
Diminuendo: Crowds

In a thousand stifling no one lives here anymore Ikea houses clenched jaw anxious
houses, no more crammed with breakfast Cheerios, no Dinty Moores, no Hormel
luncheon meats, no Brand Name birthday party Walmart cornucopias All
desolate like melancholy wives and mothers gazing at their disappearing families
like pinball lights, like painted eggs arolling down the driveway to the gutter
Nocturne: Generations

In countless Ivory Soaped up streets and boulevards and parkways Highways without
traffic emptied out and cobbled, venous and arterial Tiger Balm poetic as
occupying armies, militias without a clue, desperate migrations Picturesque and
wistful and historic as the fall down stone and concrete memories of Dresden and
Cologne and Baghdad and Kabul and Tokyo and Hiroshima and Nagasaki
Serenata: Sirens

In amoral unpeopled places In Zyklon B and all those Holocausted places
In Agent Orange parks and playgrounds Nothing there but bushes, empty
benches, swings and slides and seesaws Empty basketball and tennis courts
Empty soccer fields and baseball diamonds Places for leaving your children
Places for leaving the lint in your pockets Places for leaving your condoms
Apassionata: Silence

David Lewitzky America

BEYOND CLOSURE, a novel by Val Norris.

Published by Cambria Books/www.cambriabooks.co.uk Price: £12.

‘We see how human emotions can be unruly and unpredictable and can
transform the course of an ordered life’— from the book’s blurb.

A superb read—Peter Thabit Jones

THE SEVENTH QUARRY SWANSEA POETRY MAGAZINE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WE COULD ALL BE MIGRANTS ONE DAY

We could all be migrants one day
No-one interested in buying our house
Because the sea's rising, and well.....
They knew the Arctic was melting, but they
carried on.

We could all be trying to get off this island
Trying to sell our guitars and keyboards for
ready cash.

Leaving behind the books and bookshelves
The painting on the wall and the big TV
The roses on the patio, the runner bean
wigwams

Leaving the cats to fend for themselves
(with a headstart of 6 days' worth of dried
food).

Setting off perhaps in the dark to get there
by dawn

A couple of suitcases on the back seat
Slipping into the stream of headlights on
the highway

Heading down to the ferryport, traffic
building up

Hoping our last £5,000 will be enough to
get us on a boat and across the channel
And god knows what we'll do if it isn't.

Rhoda Thomas Wales

IMAGO by Rhoda Thomas. Published by Sketty Books. Information on the book is available from rhodathomas1917@yahoo.com Price: £8.99.

LOOK OUT FOR ISSUE 35: Winter/Spring 2022

**This issue is dedicated to the artist Svetlana Deric Jannace
(1964 – 2021)**



Svetlana, a truly wonderful artist and the daughter of my dear friend Vojislav Deric, a leading Serbian poet, was kind enough to do my portrait a few years ago: a lovely surprise from her. I used it in my book, *America, Aeronwy, and Me*, in the About the Author section. It is also featured on my website. She will be much missed by her family, her friends, and all those who connected with her remarkable paintings and drawings.

WALES: Sam Smith, Karen Ankers, Ness Owen, Jean Salkilld,
Anne Phillips, Gareth Culshaw, Alison Wood, Jessica Newport, Byron Beynon,
Xavier Panadès I Blas, Christopher Norris, Rhoda Thomas

ENGLAND: Charles Wilkinson, Matt Duggan, Cathy Bryant,
Stephen Kingsnorth, Ava Patel, Luigi Coppola, Wendy Webb,
Jamie William Spracklen, Ceinwen E Cariad Haydon, Gordon Scapens,
Ann Flynn, Clive Donovan, J. S. Watts, Mark Rutter

FRANCE: Richard W. Halperin

GERMANY: Werner Shumann, Steven Duplij

IRELAND: Patrick Deeley, Michael Durack

SPAIN: Fiona Pitt-Kethley

CANADA: James Thurgood

AMERICA: Jim Gronvold, Jane Blanchard, Karen Poppy, Carole Weston,
Craig Cotter, Carolyn Mary Kleefeld, Bill Wolak, Stanley H. Barkan,
Steffen F. Richards, David Lewitzky

“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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