

THE SEVENTH QUARRY



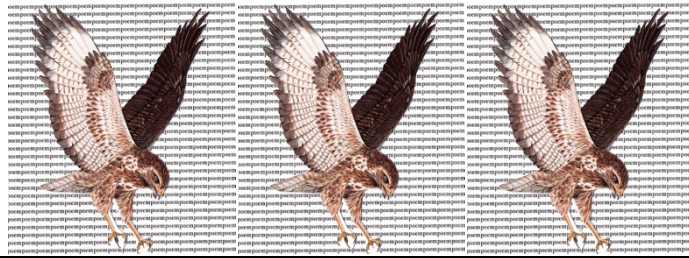
POETRY

ISSUE THIRTY-TWO

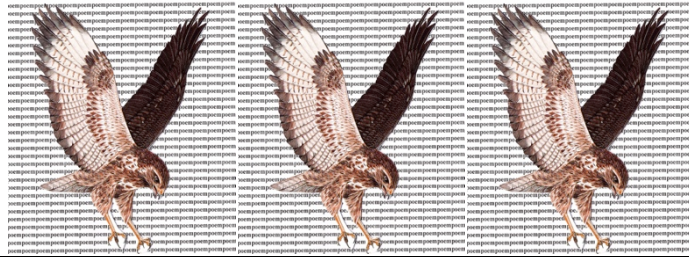
SUMMER/AUTUMN 2020

SWANSEA POETRY MAGAZINE

THE



SEVENTH



QUARRY

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ISSUE 32
SUMMER/AUTUMN 2020
IN MEMORY OF VINCE CLEMENTE
CONSULTANT EDITOR: AMERICA

EDITORIAL
ISSUE THIRTY-TWO
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This issue features work from America, England, France, India, Ireland, and Wales. It also includes a Poet Profile of British poet and writer Jonathan Taylor and an article on the Welsh bard (poet) Bryfdir and the forgotten Welsh tradition of the ‘Cyfarciad Priodasol’ by Ruth Ceri Jones.

The collaboration between The Seventh Quarry Press and Stanley H. Barkan’s Cross-Cultural Communications, New York, continues into 2020.

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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Poets beyond UK must enclose an envelope with International Reply Coupons

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PETER THABIT JONES
(photo © 2020 Peter Thabit Jones)

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VINCE CLEMENTE, CONSULTANT EDITOR: AMERICA



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Vince Clemente (April 28th, 1932-April 4th, 2020)

It is with a deep sadness that I announce the passing of my beloved friend and mentor for over two decades, Vince Clemente, Consultant Editor: America of the magazine and the Press. I will treasure forever his genuine friendship, his support for the magazine and the Press and for my own writing. A book, REMEMBERING VINCE CLEMENTE, will be published by The Seventh Quarry Press later this year.

Vince was a State University of New York English Professor Emeritus, poet, biographer and critic, whose many books include JOHN CIARDI: MEASURE OF THE MAN (University of Arkansas Press, 1987), and volumes of poetry, including UNDER A BALEFUL STAR (CCC/New York, 2006) and SWEETER THAN VIVALDI (CCC/New York, 2002), which features art work by the late Ernesto F. Costa,

who is represented in permanent collections in the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and America's Library of Congress, and *THE HEARTBREAK AT THE HEART OF THINGS* (The Seventh Quarry Press, 2012).

One of his books of poetry, *A PLACE FOR LOST CHILDREN* (1997), was a text studied on Poets and Poetry, a part-time degree module, which was taught by me at Swansea University until my early retirement in 2015.

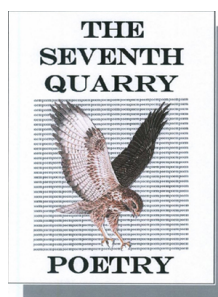
Brought up in Brooklyn, New York, his work has also appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Boston Book Review*, *Newsday*, *The South Carolina Review*, and newspapers and other publications in Britain. It has also been featured in major anthologies, such as *DARWIN: A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION*, *BLOOD TO REMEMBER: AMERICAN POETS ON THE HOLOCAUST* (Texas Tech University Press) and *SEPTEMBER 11th: AMERICAN WRITERS RESPOND*.

For many years a trustee of the Walt Whitman Birthplace and founding editor of *West Hills Review: A Walt Whitman Journal*, he lectured at Hofstra, CW Post, SUNY Albany, as well as at museums like the Hecksher and Parish in New York.

His literary friends included John Ciardi, who organised many influential NEW ENGLAND BREAD LOAF events, where Robert Frost was a frequent participant, House of Scribner's New York Editor John Hall Wheelock, who edited many of Thomas Wolfe's novels, and James Dickey, author of the novel *Deliverance*.

The twenty years of correspondence between Vince and me, poem manuscripts I shared with him and many other materials, is part of The VINCE CLEMENTE PAPERS Archive in the Department of Rare Books & Collections of Rochester University, New York.

Peter Thabit Jones



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BRIMHAM ROCKS, WINTER

We watch from the ground
as the two children
leap about like mountain goats
taking it in turn to film each other
with the new GoPro camera.
The weather turns
low cloud brings drizzle
the surface becomes slippery and wet.
We cut the rock climbing short.
I take a picture of the children
twenty feet up on top of a boulder.
They look so small, tiny specs.

We drive home at sunset
the sky filled with low cloud
streaked blood-red
a murmuration of starlings
tosses shapes in the sky, like a child's Etch a Sketch.

Later we watch the video playback on the laptop
the children balance precariously
on the edge of a rock, twenty-feet up,
the moment caught on camera
as my son says to his little sister
careful, if you fall you will break your neck.

Rachel Burns England

INTO THE DAWN

i.m Claude Henry Buckle R.I., R.S.M.A. (1905–1973)

Employed as an architect in London during the blitz
you gave the all clear before sending in the chain gang
deployed to look for survivors at dawn.
I imagine you as a young man pulling out the screaming child,
stepping over wreckage taking in the lives destroyed,
the houses reduced to a pile of burnt matchsticks.

I marveled how you captured the light in my father
as a young boy fishing on the lake. The horse-drawn carriage
travelling across the prairie. Bull running at Pamplona.
The ferry crossing the Irish Sea. The nudes of your young wife,
my grandmother, dawn light reflecting her lily-white skin.

Rachel Burns England

THE MONK AND THE PAINTER

Vincent's brush would go dry and crackle
in the wind and sun and disappear
from his fingers if he was not driven on
by the plant weaves of Saint-Rémy.
He has known he can break free from the explosions
by digging feet and fingers in earth's textures.
He finds living the life of a monk moves art
to spring from the inner fiends.
The black and white trimmed butterflies
resting on the stems of orange poppies listen
to the voices of the monks chanting in
their mediaeval cells.
Who changes whom in the churning sphere?
So much depends on the trunk of expectation.
What would the stand of cypresses be
without the fragrance of roses beckoning honeybees,
the beetle lying on the flesh of white petals?
Two women wait beside the cypresses for lovers
who might set them aglow in the solitude.
The reaper in the wheat at sunrise puts
him in touch with what counts in a landscape,
a man working into a swirl of yellow and brown.
He sees the burden of pain is to renew life
even when fate's dice say otherwise.
And in sight of the woman bruising flax,
to take pain as an awakening to the world,
the air in the lungs catching the opening to darkness.

His wandering through the fields lets our bones
absorb the story fermenting
in the undergrowth of ivy.

Duane Niatum America

FROM THE BEGINNING

Coating the soles
of my feet,
is the soil
I will be buried in.

It comforts me,
knowing it is there,
its grains and lumps,
its damp warmth.

It comforts me, too,
knowing everyone has some
touching the soles
of their feet, present
since birth, though
they are too busy
to feel its touch, its permanence,
too busy moving
so they might live,
too busy living
so they never stop,

never stop
and feel
the soil on their soles,
and the gentle comfort it brings,
the surety of what comes
no matter the steps taken.

Edward Lee Ireland

HE'LL HEAR IT AGAIN

There is a man
the silent world claims as Noah
standing at the cliff's edge,
looking down on us
as we crawl across each other,
his measurements already taken,
the wood already cut;

he's waiting for the word
he knows is coming,
feels it in the tightening of the misty air,

the word he heard before
when we were so less civilised
than we now are.

Edward Lee Ireland

PLYNLIMON, 1976

Ridges mirrored womb-undulant cloud.

Fish in a stream. Focus and fathom.

When we saw Drosgol sugar loaf
beneath us, and the reservoir,
we knew
we were half a mile in the sky.

At the trig point I posed for Dad's Leica.

A farm boy eyed Clanger,
our mascot, uneasily:
"Issit a mauss?"

Richard George England

KITE AND CONDOR

An Andes col
moustached with grass;
telegraph poles;
diagonals of shrub
clinging to an incline;
other side prayers
and a precipice.
It is so Welsh mountain road.

I have seen the bwlch of a woman's back
carved into a ridge above Sarajevo,
and in the film *Norwegian Wood*
the pine and snow Japan
behind the couple as they kiss is New Radnor.

Somewhere, at some altitude,
are all landscapes Wales?

Richard George England

OUTSIDE THE WOOD

The wood inside has nipples of mole hills
cannon holes shapes in the hawthorn
where badgers pop in and out.

Buzzards circle, wrap up the birdsong,
a blackbird chases itself in the holly,
and finches become sparklers on the edge.

The path I walk was here before the wood
hence the trees have grown on either side.
Cow parsley scaffolds insects in summer.

Outside the wood farm fields are laid.
Tractors spread liquids that keep the buzzards
away, and bees fly across with legs closed.

The odd fox will trot through but treats
the field as a dark alley in a city. Badgers
scuttle around the boundary. Moles

tunnel under until a garden is found.
The farmer bales the crop in autumn
leaves black knuckles for the wood

to stare at. Then the tractor ploughs
again hides away what the moon doesn't see.

Gareth Culshaw Wales

PEELING ONIONS

Last week I saw Mother in the river
as water crashed over her shoulders.

Last night I heard Mother in the branches
as the trees swayed to wipe away the moon.

The other day on the bus Mother walked
towards me, her face in the walking stick.

Three months earlier Mother sat on a gatepost
signalled the start of winter with her voice.

Two days ago Mother stared back at me
as I looked in the mirror.

Tomorrow morning Mother will open her eyes
alone, and I will peel onions to hide this fact.

Gareth Culshaw Wales

BEATING

My door was always locked from the outside,
so I pried the paint away from the frame
of the third-story window and slid down
the long copper gutter-spout, pretending
to be The Amazing Spider-Man as
I rushed towards the frozen December ground.
I wasn't wearing anything. My clothes
were taken from me when I came in from
work. I kept a huge pair of overalls
in the shed with the boiler. Slithering
into this borrowed skin, I tried not to
think about the kittens who were born here,
who I fed and kept secret until their eyes
opened and they wandered out into the yard.
I tried not to think about their bones and
bloody pelts scattered, bright, against the grass.
I tried not to picture the red teeth of
the lawn edger or the grin of the boy
who'd fallen dreamily in love with death.
Dressed, I flew for the barn where the new-made
steer were kept until the date of their slaughter.
Their door was never locked, and it was breath-
warm beneath those eaves. When I made my calls
home (under supervision) I made up
stories about making pets of these calves.
I wanted to save them and I couldn't,
except through stories. In reality,
the most I could manage was some mutual
comfort. I wandered from stall to stall, bathed
in the spoilt milk of their breath, lying down

against their soft, fattened bodies, feeling
the slow throb of their hearts through the taut drum
of my skull. Their pulses beat as slowly
as my mother's when her veins were flooded
with prescription morphine. Sometimes, I slept.

Bethany W. Pope Wales

A PRAYER FOR SAINT UNCUMBER

The saint of bearded ladies wanders the earth.
Mistress of the narrow escape,
she knows there's freedom in travel and freedom in death.
Uncumber knows a lot about death, crucified with
her twin, forked braids dangling between her breasts, under her cape.
The saint of bearded ladies wanders the earth;
I met her in a train carriage, once, on my way to Florida. Both
of us smiled. We talked about sex, and about forgetting rape.
She knows there's freedom in travel and freedom in death,
and she knows how to pack for either event. A path
could lead anywhere, once it gets going. You could wind up trapped.
The saint of bearded ladies wanders the earth
loosing ropes, breaking locks, snapping tight golden bands with
her sharp, pearly teeth. No vow, said or written, can wrap her in tape.
She knows there's freedom in travel and freedom in death,
and if death's the only out for you, she'll lead the way with wrath
at your captors blazing in her hairy, holy face. She'll craft your new shape.
The saint of bearded ladies wanders the earth;
she knows there's freedom in travel and freedom in death.

Bethany W. Pope Wales



Quarantina © 2020 Bebe Barkan

DYLAN'S ROOM

You can stand in
the echo shadow
of his spark

by the window
where his words
learned to fly

in the room
that held
dreams of sky

and the door
that led to
doors to the park

where the boy
who grew to
a man of words

borrowed the wings
of birds he knew
and rose on the
beats of his joy.

Jim Gronvold America

COGS TURNING by American poet Jim Gronvold. POETRY.

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5 CWMDONKIN DRIVE
(Dylan Thomas's first home)

Early poems
whisper the nest

where the boy
in his hatching

scratched the dawn
of his quest

and the man
in his fledging

spread the span
of his wings

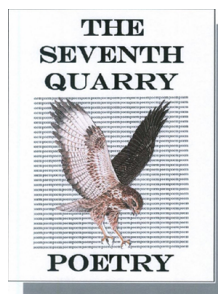
at the edge of the sky
that his words would sing.

Jim Gronvold America

A LIONESS IN THE MORTAL GRASS

The archetype, yellow, was standing
and breathing, mouth open, in the torridity,
and her form was reproducing itself through the ages.

Margarita Serafimova England



CINQUAINS

i

Medlar –
bletted sepals,
persistent and hollow –
blooms in snow, by corruption
ripens.

ii

Brinjal –
of wild nightshade
born – thorn or mad apple,
the glossy bruise of you fills me
purple.

iii

'Jove's fire' –
falsely divine
Persimmon – survivor
of Nagasaki's unfurling
lotus.

iv

Quince gold,
knobbed, ugly,
grey pubescence masking
vanilla, citrus and apple
perfume.

Angela T. Carr Ireland

2251: HUMANS BECOME FISH

We have learned to breathe underwater,
Traded our salt-choked lungs for gills,
At first, it was difficult, many died,
But slowly, we trained ourselves
to become elemental,
Our lucent fingers
scraping the seaweed
from foamed faces,
became fine-feathered fins.

Last of all to go, was the legs,
We were loath to lose them,
But one day, after years of running
Along the bottom of the ocean,
We found we could fly.

We flicked our new-grown tails,
Somersaulted bubbles and swam,
Our pellucid eyes bulging,
Mouths an open question,
And made our homes
Among the reeds and coral.

Lately, we have lost all power of speech,
But find ourselves able instinctively
To feel the shoal's clamour,
Our sleek armoury of scales
Streamlined to the flow.

Rebecca Lowe Wales

THE SEA CAT'S CURSE

From a child he hated their choking fur,
Their soft purr a burr in the throat
That felt like a thousand knives clashing,
He could not bear to be around
Their thin, bony bodies, pink rats' toes,
Their hairless ears and twitching, snake-like tails,

Most of all, he hated the sly slouch
Of the back that crouched and slunk
And skulked in shadows, a tripwire
For unsuspecting legs, their otherworldly
Eyes that thinned to slices of moon
At his encounter, green and glass-smooth
Beneath suspicious pink rims.

On the ship, his crew had insisted on
Taking one along 'for good luck',
He watched, disgusted, as it brought him
Daily gifts of gizzards – intestines
Of a rat trailing from razor teeth,
Tiny green gall bladder of a mouse
Dished up at the captain's table,
A prized delicacy.

On that fateful night,
He watched, amid the canon's roar and rumble,
The sea grow pale and glassy as a cat's eye,
Could have sworn he heard the mournful cry
As the demon creature hurled itself
Overboard, the sickening crack of bone
And bark and splinter, as the sea cat's ghost
Clawed and scratched and severed,
The soft pop of paw on chest
As it held him pinioned
To his grave vessel, and as the smoke
And blood and shadows cleared,
The faintest pad of its tread
As it fled, job done,
To its bed beneath the waves.

Rebecca Lowe Wales

TULIPS

My father grew tulips
Big as a man's hand,
Placed them in a pot
Beside my bed,

Where I could watch
them grow.

At night, I would dream
Of red sails floating
On filament seas,
Trace the path of wave
To pale, powdered anther,
Clasp my hands around
Their bold, garish petals,
Their rubbery grip
Unyielding, strong.

Years later,
Their sword heads
Sliced the fresh-dug earth,
Rustle of cellophane
In mocking brightness
At your cold passing,

Tulips thrust into my face,
Bunched fists of contrition,
Scarlett petals bleeding pity
On the sitting room floor.

Rebecca Lowe Wales

EGO

For your birthday, I give you a balloon,
Filled with my own breath,
You take it, hang it in your hall
And there it sits – pink, magnificent,
Exploding with the love of me.

A week later, I visit,
'I still have it,' you boast,
But it is not the same –
On close inspection, wrinkled
Round the edges, the contours
Warped and puckered, crinkled;

And I think that I would
Rather have the violence
Of unexpected loss
Than watch this gentle,
Creeping death –
This gradual
Expulsion
Of breath.

Rebecca Lowe Wales

Before You Read This She'd Played *Do You Want To Know A Secret*

Passing the guitar player who, head back, sings *Imagine*
always clean shaven, Oxfam-suited, Mathew
walks downhill, head down, quick footed
as if he's hurrying somewhere
for the first time past the arcade into Liverpool 1.

Then, ten minutes later, he walks uphill,
his briefcase swinging as if with important documents,
and no-one sees him do this many times
or sees he's sockless inside his loose-fitting shoes
or hears the next song that hovers overhead, *Nowhere Man*.

Bob Cooper England

IN A HAWAIIAN SHIRT, BOTH HANDS FLAT ON THE BAR

he says again the details he's told those he's just served:
plans for food, cocktails with umbrellas – *not just selling beer*.
Get a different clientele, he says, *so there's less* – he pauses -
same old, stale conversations.

There'll be quiet, slow songs, too.

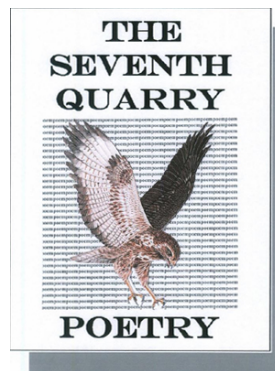
*None of those loud, brash, thin as a lat, Amy Winehouse lasses
but classy Sophie Tucker, Ella Fitzgerald, Lena Horne –
they were my nan's favourites; I kept all her CDs after she died -
and such singers' voices make people sit comfortably on – he grins –*

cushioned chairs in front of dark serviettes, padded covers on menus, below. on every wall, quarter-sized, gilt-framed, Gainsborough's, cabinets by those windows – in one, a fox; in the other, a hound - to go with the new name I've chosen myself – then he chuckles –

I've got a sign from a pub that's closed down, to clean up, hang, and I've got a hunting horn to blow at closing time. Such subtlety will be a feature. Then he leans forward, growls as he scowls,

it'll all show the bank manager - if she turns up as promised still wearing her many-buttoned blouse, her no-smile face, to check the place over, inspect what's on the Specials Board - I know more about pubs than she does about loans. And I bet she'll only ask for a J2O, a glass full of ice, and dry-roasted peanuts. Now, what will you have?

Bob Cooper England



LANDSCAPE WITH APRIL DOWNPOURS –

a wordless matter
swims in the bones

one breath
fans the temples

it's singing outside
as only deep love can –

who can stop a music
when the music throbs

to be written – smell
the fruit of the season

golden to touch
and so unprepared

for how
one will be loved

Jess Thayil India

PRAISE SONG

she'll eat bullets
savour their metallic
brew nettle-sting
in her mouth serve it

scalding; swallow
the chill of knife-turns
while weeping
without a trace of rain;

oh, poison she'll know
your myriad names and roll
the sea instead of springs
on her tongue –

with little fear of dark waters
she'll rise to shark

Jess Thayil India

SHELIACH MITZVAH

In Jerusalem, he gave me a dollar
to give to a needy man somewhere in New York,
a blessed message that, I'm told, would protect me:
"The messenger of a good deed comes to no harm."
So I carried it like a live coal in my pocket,
wondering how I would get through airline security.
I fingered it like a worry bead, like a Hindu crystal,
all the long journey from Tel Aviv to New York.
It glowed hot and fiery all the car trip
back to my home in Merrick, Long Island,
And all night long it threatened to burst into flames.
The next morning, I drove into Manhattan,
sought out a truly worthy-looking homeless man,
took out the dollar, stuck it in his hand, glad to be rid of it,
like the flask in the Stevenson tale of "The Bottle Imp."
As I turned away, I heard a crack, a sound of thunder.
I turned back and there was fire—flames burst
out of the hand of the homeless man!
All the homeless men were burning like the beggars
and cripples and poor in the legend of Vlad Țepeș.
All New York was ablaze. The world, too, was ending in fire,
while I was frozen, turned to a pillar of ice.

Stanley H. Barkan America

LOVE

Blonde-tousled dream-child,
You channel a giggling stream,
Swimming-bath chlorined;
Joy follows your fluttering, as
You pollinate smiles,
And heart-nectar overflows;
Perfectly unformed fruit,
You drip from the bough,
Smelling of sunshine;

Beyond rainbow's edge,
With unicorns dancing,
Banishing bed-time once more.

Patrick Jemmer Wales

MAGIC

Honed spell explodes, well-machined, oil-primed;
Drowned knowledge wings afresh as wild-word blossoms,
Chimeric charges through furled aether climb,
Hoofed, jewelled, incensed, sear gist's glossed existence,
Bore gimlet holes through every thought's quartz-grain;
Fuse crust to silica-sea, sweat-clammy oceans boil,
Summon that dragon that ties the sundered worlds,
Live amber-wire enthuse; out-thresh static birthing-signals;
Sprout doubtful seeds in heart-volcano ground;
Rain names upon the oath-sieve, uncoil syntax golden,
Your speech a brazen law: to mage alone beholden!

Patrick Jemmer Wales

FROM CAITLIN

After you, my lighthouse hope,
 who made a bonfire of my eyes
the city streets grew old;

and I like a lamp lulling pale in the coal-cold night,
 who saw your spotlight glow
 and fail

here in the crag-black
 winter of Wales;

I who brought to your door the Irish moors,
and London's charm,
and the wheeling,
laughing shorebirds of Laugharne,

and made town bars our drama's stage,
and aged a decade
when you played away with local girls
and corner whores;

I whose garden full of fruit,
folding infants in our bed, bled
hot tears
at two a.m.
when morning didn't bring you home again;

I, with the red slits of my eyes,
who saw in evening's cups of light
your hunchbacked-bent-bowed head,
a celestial star,

when your words rolled far across miles,
and your eyes in the windowlight
took the crack

from my smile,
like a movie played in a firefly night;

and I, once the lover
whose name you carved into stone,
find the winter's old cold teeth
now blunt

in the first frost flakes of November,
the annual month I remember
your bones,
still gold,
in that American bed.

Dead
ten years.

And still I doubt when,

within those great Welsh wells and walls
they ring your passing bell,

Dylan,

did I ever really know you
at all?

Laura Potts England

JANE DOE #503

Yes. Back then, I was child of a garden and pavement
end. When homestead old was forest and fire, and high
were the gold robes of fields which rose to my run, some
say I tore up the moors. On that cold morning and grey,

before day burst down a valley now lost - I cross
myself and pray - I lay in the grass like a child of light.
The stars said yesterday's night lived on, but gone
were the fawns which shaped the hill. Out and away,

still, I remember the scrap of my scream on the wind.
After that? Nil. But spilt down the river my girlhood blood
when he came with his bird-wet skin, portraits of women
gone thin in his eyes. My cries are yesterday's

echo. *No*. To red-slit fig he pressed his teeth, gum
to a garden in infancy green and only the hills to hear.
Wind-sneer spat at the curl of my ear when I lay
on that black-flat ground, when pale were the globes of clay

in my eyes. He rolled them skullwards once, twice. Some
nights, the shy face of moon makes a bruise in the sky
high-hung in a field where no wildfowl graze; cries for
my last-gasp fire of youth. Yes. I have seen better days.

Laura Potts England

SWEET AUTUMN

And years later, you at the bus stop.
Yesterday's leaves in your hair.
The seat where we laughed.
Our words in the air.

Sweetheart. The years threaded up
our names scratched on the glass.
Rain argued away the grass-stained
fingerprints, the love turned over

on clumsy tongues, the moonbows,
the setting suns. My skin soft-tossed
in sheets, hard-kissed. The taste
of your words. The clench of my fist

in the deafening dawn. Oh day,
when the pavement rolled beneath
our feet. Bubblegum from the shop.
My Monet mouth, your Friday chips -

Stop. Darling, how we used to crease
at the waist. Pink and white laughter
poured from our lips. And when I meet
you at the curb of my sleep it is when

we were here, my heart in your hands,
your hands on my dress. They said you
spilt your filth down telephone wires.
Cheap love. Sex. I wouldn't know.

I walked away. Like this. Yes.

Laura Potts England

ERNIE

It was then when the wicker-swing firefly-night
cracked the darkness of March, the last winter light
dropping soft in the pond. The trees at night

wept long like newborns, and the riversong rose
in the bloom of its youth to me in my dungaree,
hand-me-down, patch-me-up boots. But beyond

stretched the darkness, the distance, you,
and somewhere the church bell's cold copper tongue
always calling, calling
one more day to your evening,
one more day to your tomb.

From the blackcurrant glow of the living room
I remember him, years away in the giggling garden,
counting the stars. How the blue face of moon
showed the years in his eyes. On the sighs of the wind
came his history in time: me, my lavender afternoons,
my shrill schoolbell laughter, his comrades' cries

on the broken frontline. His sweetheart died, and often
I watched in the kitchen light, the ghost of her bright
in his eyes again, the northern star always the same
as that in Gallipoli's mines. Sometimes he bagpiped
it down in the drive. And bundled me up whenever I cried. Aye,

they say he was bred on a wild rustic chant,
that he came from the mire of the low in this land,
that he merited nothing, his forebears weren't grand,
but I still hear the pipes in the valleys.

Laura Potts England

FORTHCOMING

GARDEN OF CLOUDS/NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

by Peter Thabit Jones

Published by Cross-Cultural Communications, USA

ISBN 978-0-89304-236-3

Price: \$ 20.00/ £10.00

The book will be launched in America and Wales in 2021

LOST HOPE

The Goldfinch's song like a soft human voice singing through the muzzled thunder of morning awakened my sleeping mind causing me to muse on the coming of the dawn. I listened to church bells pealing in the distance, and pondered on all the voices that were weeping in the wind.

James G. Piatt America

TIME

In the early hours of the evening, a sudden chilliness emerged; and memories washed in like the ocean's tide, bringing melancholy feelings piled high against the fading erosion of twilight. I stood at the library window looking out on the incoming darkness, motionless and silent like a gray ocean wave, wondering about the thinness of my fading years, and the things I can no longer do. Time is such a strange and mysterious enemy, blinking in its sly and clever obscurity.

Hours seen as trivial in the past now are now held close to my heart, each a precious entity to be honored, and respected. My own reflection echoed back to me in the window, I saw the ashen colored hair and wrinkles of a stranger, an old man, looking back at me with hollowed eyes. I was wondering who that was with the youthful mind looking

back at me with a tired detachment. I have
lost my shield, and the war is almost lost,
not for lack of bravery but for lack of time.
Long gone images flash before my eyes,
a fishing line taut with a rainbow trout on the
other end, then a softly flowing river
emerges and I hear the warbling of song
birds in the trees, it is warm and my
shoulders feel the heat of the sun on them,
then unfurling in the distance is a storm
carrying the remnants of time in gusts. My
mind awakens and I am submerged in the
nostalgia of forgotten time and watch it
weaken as the hours start to fade into the
distance, and I am left alone.

James G. Piatt America

THE KITCHEN

Ghostly smoke, the first cigarette of the day.
It was my mother's idea to smoke only there,
where she could usher open the door
and let the fire inside a cigarette
burn its ash elsewhere besides her son's lungs.
Her eyes already swallowing the day
that would never get better,
despite her starlet appearance.

Smoke empties out in sorrow
out of that kitchen, and through
the screen door mesh outdoors.
A cigarette extinguished in an ash tray
that burns for years it seems
after leaving that room.

Russell Thorburn America

THE SEVENTH QUARRY SWANSEA POETRY MAGAZINE

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

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

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

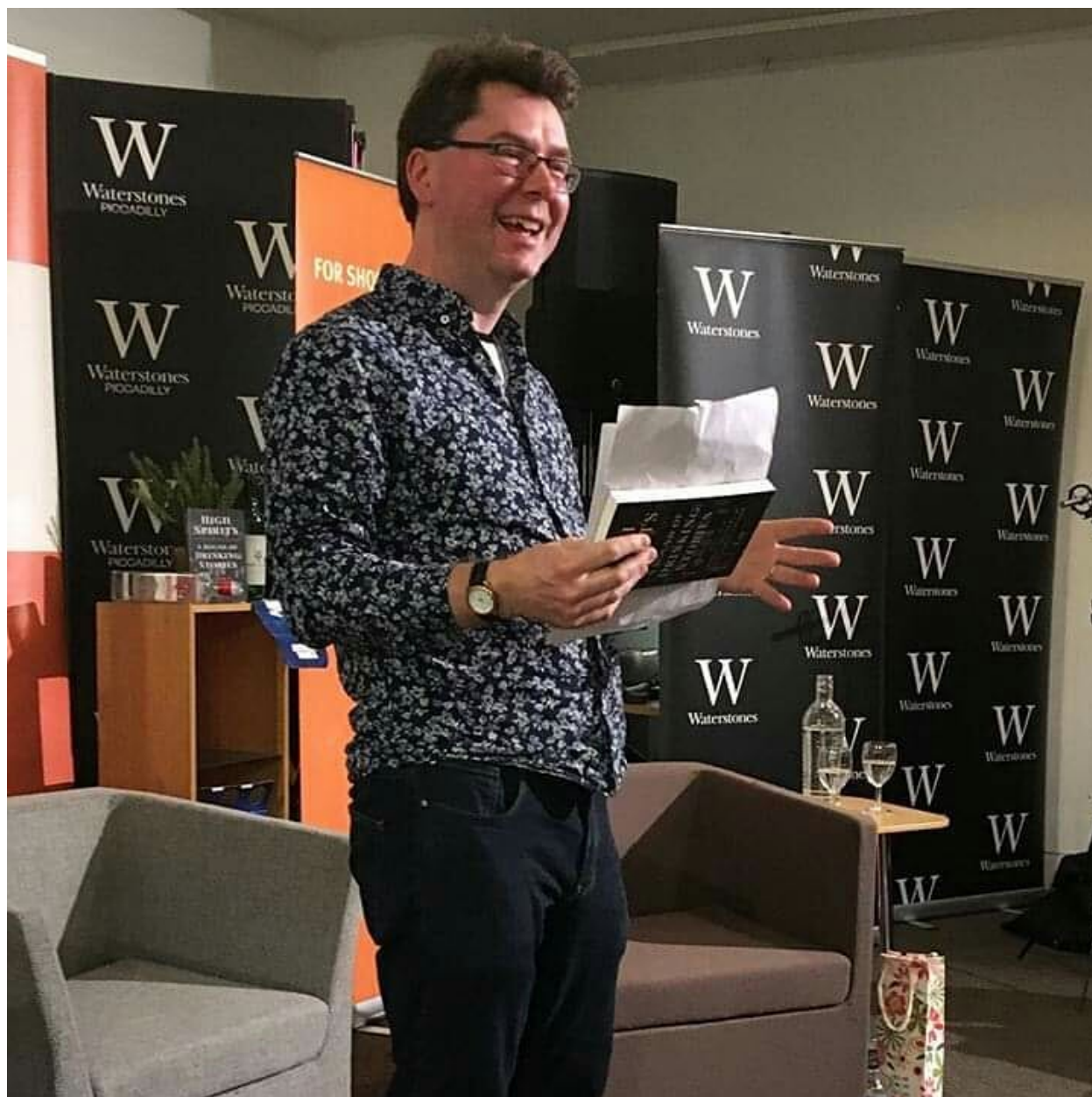
The magazine is contracted to The Poetry Library's (Royal Festival Hall, London) prestigious digitisation project, which ensures sample copies of the magazine are featured on its very popular website: regarded by many as the best source for poetry in the U.K. EBSCO (USA) archives digitised copies of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

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

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

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

POET PROFILE: JONATHAN TAYLOR



Jonathan Taylor © 2020 Jonathan Taylor

Jonathan Taylor is an author, editor, lecturer and critic. He writes poetry, memoir, fiction and criticism. His work in all these forms explores subjects and themes such as music, neurology, memory, cosmology, and dark comedy. Originally from Stoke-on-Trent, he now lives in Leicestershire with his wife, the poet Maria Taylor, and their twin daughters, Miranda and Rosalind. Jonathan's books include the poetry collections *Cassandra Complex* (Shoestring, 2018) – which explores the relation between poetry

and prophecy – and *Musicolepsy* (Shoestring, 2013), the novels *Melissa* (Salt, 2015) and *Entertaining Strangers* (Salt, 2012), and the memoir *Take Me Home: Parkinson's, My Father, Myself* (Granta, 2007). He has written three academic books, the last one of which was *Laughter, Literature, Violence, 1840-1930* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2019). He is co-editor with Karen Stevens of the anthology *A Round of Drinking Stories* (Valley Press, 2018 and 2019).

Melissa and *Entertaining Strangers* were both shortlisted for the East Midlands Book Award; *Cassandra Complex* was shortlisted for the Arnold Bennett Prize 2019; *A Round of Drinking Stories* was winner of the Saboteur Award for Best Anthology 2019.

Jonathan's stories, poems, articles, essays and reviews have been widely published in magazines and newspapers, including *The Independent*, *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Morning Star*, *Granta*, *Stand*, *London*, *Rialto*, *Agenda*, *Acumen*, and, of course, *The Seventh Quarry*. His work has featured on BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio 5, BBC Scotland, BBC Wales, and other radio stations. He has performed his work across the UK and in the US and Cyprus.

Jonathan is Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing at the University of Leicester, where he directs the MA in Creative Writing.

His website is www.jonathanptaylor.co.uk. He is also on Twitter @crystalclearjt. He directs the democratic review blog Everybody's Reviewing (www.everybodysreviewing.blogspot.co.uk), and the feature blog Creative Writing at Leicester (www.creativewritingatleicester.blogspot.co.uk).

THIS POEM IS TOO NEAT

The end of this poem will be too neat, too pat.
It will do that circular thing of coming back
to an image or memory at the start, of connecting
something very early with something sad
years later.

The start of the poem will describe
my very first memory of leaving the outdoor
Art Deco lido in Trentham Gardens
which was full of dozens of mummies' bare legs
and was apparently closed when I was four.

I recall all of us shivering in towels in the car
and asking my father what pneumonia was
because he'd told us he'd get it if we didn't
leave right away. He explained what it was
and many years later he did get it and died.

I told you the end of this poem would be too neat,
too pat, as if a poem can lock you into a pattern
and there's no getting out of it.

Jonathan Taylor England

György Ligeti, *Lontano*

There is micropolyphony
within micropolyphony
a fractalic geometry
of canons in canons

faraway echoes of Bach
on the horizon
massive clouds of Mahler
(all the right notes
but not necessarily
in the right order)
glacial Beethoven
Pastoral thunder
e lon gat ed

and I wonder
what it all adds up to
mathematically
until I look up
and see my daughter
in the eye of the storm

dancing

Jonathan Taylor England

DETERMINISM

On the occasion of a tenth anniversary

Because I wasn't yet too drunk to see your legs
(because the Union watered down its pints),
because you'd got over tonsillitis
and wanted to see some band I can't recall,
because that morning your crisps were heart-shaped,
because you'd gone to Warwick not thank God Oxford,
because (slow as ever) I'd taken too long to do my course,
because you'd wanted to escape a home
of arranged marriages, forced exile, angry relatives,

and no doubt (therefore) because of previous marriages,
forced exile, angry relatives,
so because of '74, invasions, displacements,
and on my family's side because of 1930s poverty,
people marrying people they shouldn't,
children and money changing hands,
and later because of divorce, ECT, second marriages,

all with roots in post-World War I depression,
World War I itself, what happened to an Archduke,
industrial revolutions in Britain and Germany,
(particularly that of the cotton industry),
and ultimately because of pre-industrial feudalism,
in Britain or Cyprus or somewhere else,
as well as apes, evolution, language, tools,
that bloody butterfly who's always flapping his wings in Rio
causing hurricanes in Moscow
even before Rio and Moscow were invented –
and, long before butterflies, Rio or Russia,
a fourteen-billion-year-long pre-history back to a first because,
and because, if space-time isn't linear, somewhere in the future
dreaming of being born were Rosie and Miranda,

because of everything
(which is, no doubt, philosophically speaking, the same as saying nothing),
I asked you if you wanted a drink

and you said yes
and – without sounding overly bathetic about it –
a universe was in those words.

Jonathan Taylor England

CINE-CAMERA

We walk about, amid the destinies of our world-existence, encompassed by dim
but ever-present Memories of a Destiny more vast – very distant in the bygone
time, and infinitely awful.

– Edgar Allan Poe, *Eureka*

Cine-cameraing backwards,
that was what we demanded
on those projected afternoons,
as forward history was consumed

by a flickering bluish flame
imposed on our childish games
like some retrospective truth;
but we craved comedy not combustion,

and at ten it was always amusing
to see slides un-sliding,
sandcastles untrampling,
father's faces unlining,

leavings un-waving –
and I thought the back-spooling
might undo forever
if father were distracted from projector,

forgetting the off-switch,
before the first cartridge,
re-embryoing the family,
Super-8 de-historied –

then faster, wars parting like seas,
flattened empires arising like soufflés,
apes gladly unshackled
from learning, dinosaurs slinking back

to the sea, fish consumed by fires –
then faster still, systems, stars,
sucking in cheeks with pop and crackle,
tracing the way home, in a borealitic smile

13.7 billion years long,
where the film almost comes
to a halt, what is left of the universe
cooly pin-pirouetting in slow reverse

through its last million years
and coalescing lakes of quark tears
to the final 10^{-6} of a second,
slowing almost to the point of points,

that pre-Planck moment,
when density, temperature were infinite,
and encased in prismatic rainbows
were all laws, histories, camera frames,

and we – supernovae, black holes, galaxies,
slid slides, crushed sandcastles –
merely the epiphenomenon
of that first shattering, that blue flaming.

Jonathan Taylor England

LIAR

Long before presidents seemed so crazy
(though that might well have been illusory),
long before anyone mentioned global warming,
before wars were anything but bottled messages
washed up on the sinking island of childhood

and before disease bludgeoned you to death
over godforsaken months and years,
I cracked my head open on a metal railing.
In hospital you held my hand when I cried
and told me everything – head, world,
et cetera – would be okay. You lied.

Jonathan Taylor England

theseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarry

NORSE

The sun shines at night
The night shines at sun
All things are twilight in Scandinavia

Consider the North, the land of blondes and akva-vit
Consider the world of cities by the sea
Consider a world connected by ferries

Consider a world connected by cruise-ships, steaming
Consider a land of craziness, innate
The anti-vampires, always craving light

Consider the time, the days, the cooling sea-breeze
Shore-side, tides approach you in your sleep
Approach, recede, approach, recede

The tides approach you, even in your sleep
Your words are only second language here
And coffee, steaming coffee, is an Art

The coffee steams perpetually, it's served at any minute, any hour
Steaming coffee, on a steaming ship; the antidote to akva-vit
Here everyone's an addict at the twilight

The sun shines at night
The night shines at sun
All things are twilight in Scandinavia

Lance Nizami America

theseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarry

NEURONS

The poet and the octopus are forever in good company
cooped recluse in palaces and cottages hewn
from bedrock sentience
caught thrashing in the throat and, struggling,
furnished with sniffing ganglia

Jeffersonian colonies and the genius of self-governance
fledgling in each limbed pen
flocking to the past, slack-jawed
to the metaphorical condensation
which goes by the name of future
tipping well in dark bars and deep sea trenches

A prodigy of curiosity fit to burst with schema of
scholars told to go to the bones
scouting graves, cataloguing caves with laddering lanterns
beneath the truth
beneath the skin
(each owed to discrete ancestors)
marking years without clocks
in the origins of the sea

Marion Deal America



Tree of Fragrant Promise (Acrylic on Board, 30" x 24")
© 2020 Carolyn Mary Kleefeld

PRAYER FLAGS

Tired prayer flags
flutter goodbye in
the brisk summer breeze.
Goodbye to the memories
that offer no joy.
Goodbye to stale habits.

Yes, tired prayer flags
flutter in the breeze
without care.

They remind me to
just be in the moment,
in the dawn of the Tao,
as free as the ferns nearby,
quivering in the warm breeze.

My murmuring joins
the harmonic resonance
of this blue day
as it vibrates with prisms.

Shadows beckon the light.
And the dance moves on.

Carolyn Mary Kleefeld America



The Angels Have Come (Mixed Media on Board, 36" x 24")
© 2020 Carolyn Mary Kleefeld

MY ANGELS GATHERING

(for my muses)

My angels, I sense you
gathering around me,
though distant you may be,
and feel the downy feathers of your wings
sheltering me from the bristling winds.

The protection of your love
warms the wilderness so wild,
allowing me to grow deeply rooted,
to bend as the Tao moves me,
to stand tall while
drinking in the storms.

Thank you my angels
for devoting your lives to love.
And for loving me
with the abundance
of a Christ-like love.

Carolyn Mary Kleefeld America

AUTUMN

October, November, December—
but it's only the end of November.
The streets are filled with color:
yellow, orange, red—
red, red, and bloody!
Tell me how,
with all this blood
on the stone pavements,
can we live through December?

Sepideh Zamani America

TORNADO

The sky was blue and calm
sunny and warm.
A dandelion sat on the windowsill.
I opened the window,
Dandelion said:
“Here’s the news of the day:
a tornado is on the way.”

Sepideh Zamani America

EXTRATERRESTRIAL LIFE

I’ve lived a strange life—
do not follow me, our paths are not the same;
this road does not lead you to me.
I have crossed rocky roads—
their highs and lows, their twists and turns.
You and I are not alike—
we are strangers to one another
we have existed in mirrored galaxies
that had only a name in common and nothing more,
and we have never met one another, only our ghosts.
You are not from my motherland—
go back and look again
at the path that I have taken,
my bloody footprints
on the sharp, jagged rocks on a road of a land
that belongs to me not you.
You and I are not alike—do not come close,
we are thousands of light years apart from one another;
we have existed in mirrored worlds.
Do not look for me in your motherland—
that which you saw was never me

Sepideh Zamani America

NOCTURNE

Leave the hugger-mugger clubbers
moving to their laser-strobed beat,

duck by slabs of steroid-assisted pecs,
oven doors of anger, glance to excess

of intelligence in animated dispute
other side of a café's plate-glass window,

and enter the click-clack streets
breathing deep the lustre of the dark.

Prior to own room's sanctuary see
lone self event-seeking, escaped from

telly time-eater, now skirting slippery ink
monsters back of recessed doorways,

imagined hands reaching out with lunacy's
singular intent. A car paused measures

a parking space, and moves on. Self-loathed
fatsos linger in the corner takeaway. Thick

fingers push another last titbit between
tongue-moistened lips. Fast food fox,

having stopped statue-still to look, goes
tip-toeing quick back to its carpark lair.

Sam Smith Wales

CAFÉ SOCIETY

Air steam-damp, table top tacky, plate grease-wiped, brown tea already tepid; his thick lens take a slow dismissive look around at the other time-killing less-than-perfect people here. The pustuled alcoholic vodka-doctoring his coke, nervy skinniness of the window-watching junky; and huskily ensconced on her regular corner bench, her indoor-exiled smoker's face a deflated balloon: he knows that carbon dioxide stink will be seeping from her out-of-fashion fabrics. Layered over all is the pressurised hiss of the espresso machine, interspersed by the adrenalin-crackle of the tabloid-quoting cretin. Something definitely amiss, thick lens this day decides, with a man got a megaphone voice has let himself get that skin-stretched fat. Mug drained, glasses pushed back up his nose, he tells himself again that he has no cause to feel superior: all here have to share his sense of otherness, of internal division, misplaced identity. No person here, trying not to listen to the fat cretin, belongs in what's left of their skin.

Sam Smith Wales

COSMIC DUST

Cannoning into my standing foot a snake's head frittilary stalls
the artillery's advance.

Over the Void along a thinning white rope a wind-up bird
is skipping from *reel* to *real*.

Dotting the third 'i' in *itinerant* its missing notes mirror a
music of the spheres.

A cloud of cosmic dust is coughed up by the lungs of an organ
grinder whose minor chords decompress the chambers of
my heart into an echo of the Big Bang.

Into oblivion drums my inner ear...

George Beddow England

AT MUDDLES GREEN WITH LEE MILLER

Cowed by
a single hare... '
tis pity she's
some common medlar!

A mock sun yawns
then sinks
its yellowing teeth into my neck
of the woods.

“So this
is
solarisation?”

Bloodied (but unbowed)

I hear
a violin play
sans fiddler.

George Beddow England

VIOLA D'AMORE

Rising to the surface of a healing frequency from the vibrations
of a bow drawn across the strings of an out-of-tune viola
d'amore is a falling star shooting for the zodiacal periphery of
a bird in space.

KINGFISHER

Disused spectra induce apoplexy in the pixels a kingfisher
leaves high and dry...

George Beddow England

INDECISION

Life is too still at this moment...
evening, and
the dark forest
does not filter enough light

the sunlit grass,
pathless,
gold, unstirred by a breeze

A woman
leaning against a window sill,
her far-away gaze betrays
neither rage nor anticipation

A man
sitting on a grey-white doorstep,
eyes on the purposeless unknown,
betrays neither guilt nor innocence

A dog
frozen in wide-open space,
sensing its intended direction,
confused by its master's call

A house
unwilling to love itself,
the entrance fully closed,
window blinds half drawn
grieving for one who has passed away...
...or comforting the living

Life is too still here
Immersed in indecision...
Move on...
Move on...

(Inspired by the painting Cape Cod Evening by Edward Hopper)

Jean Salkilld Wales

A GOOD MAN

What can one say about a good man?
That he is kind, certainly. That he
Has seen far too much. That he
Has suffered. That I am glad to have
Met him in the midst of the dangerous forest.
That he makes my own suffering *accessible*,
From outside of myself.

Are trees good? I think that some are not.
Oceans; fish; stars? I cannot know why
The place that one is born into is set up like this.
Is death malevolent? I think not, in itself.
And after? I can better accept what either is
Or isn't, because I have known a good woman;
Because I have known a good man.

Richard Halperin France

TONGUE-TIED

Use your own tongue for more than argument,
use it to round my tongue to halt my drawl.
Use it like a pup to smooth my bruises—
these blue contusions seem like galaxies,
they hum a tonal language, two horse eyed
suns silenced by a loud disorder of
probabilities hauled by pit ponies
who see only ringed darkness to the pride
of Lucifer, bathed in solstice pigments.
Your tongue is pagan to the keen edged curl,
a bellicose sculpture, this instrument
is used to dispense explanations to
a cartonnage of limp wasted dunces.

Now use your tongue to form my argument

in a pigment the colour of a sore.

Turn loose the gunshot of your cigarette
plumes, soot lunged coat, pouring pit ponies in
a silence filled with priests, black inclusions
trying to colonise the sleeping mind.

Lift the instrument of your birth using
a beaded brogue with cruelty stabbed in
a silent gloaming hauled by winch and mule.

Use the isobars of your tongue to fill
social media with Norman Mailer
comments, be a lout, be crude, be hateful,
celebrate your own detestable death.

Your tongue is a hanging judge, your firing
squad are stood in a circle, dozing still.

Grant Tabard England

THE BIRTH OF NATIONAL DESPAIR

The thickness of our shoulders
was mentioned in dispatches,

a hunchbacked engineering work
no longer sustainable, scheduled

for demolition but left twenty years
past due. Beware the ball and socket

darkness, betwixt the quiet neighbours,
for out the heavy tongued vipers do come.

Hurry, tonight I can not stand it,
I cannot bare this sideboard cluttered

with eyeballs on ice cream away days,
not realising they were bisecting

the whole elephant in the room.
And we, for our part, unstitched

these carefully tied knots;
distant clouds that might be flesh

reflecting on the curtains. And I put
on the robe of poet doing nothing.

And we hear the overwhelming bark,
unconsidered by the excuse of opinion

applied to every ear without hesitation.
Alright then, we'll leave when you please.

Grant Tabard England

theseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarry

FOR THEY WILL KNOW US BY OUR LOVE

“I preferred verse to fame, but I wrote with the heart of an amateur.”
From *Omeros*, by Derek Walcott

Blood of Vietnam is on this boot. Measuring the speed of loss,
Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan an historic war lineage, more blood on
this boot. Building new prisons. Spending more on inmates than

students. Bombs deafening bombs, annihilating until ending what
cannot be measured. How to stop building bombs, how to stop
manufacturing weapons, watering the earth with human blood.

Put down your automatic rifles. Stop making bullets. Replace anger with calm. What does the ocean sound like? The only planet known to have oceans. A tiny wet speck floating in the universe.

Among ginormous, fiercely burning, fiery stars, there's this gentle rhythm, waves washing up on shore, birds singing, the sunset glow golden and pink on the grey shaded and white billowing clouds.

Fifty-two states form a more perfect union, Puerto Rico the fifty-first and Washington DC the fifty-second. Poetry is *Satyagrahi*, is nonviolent resistance, and *Satyagrahi* is poetry in circles of talk.

Circles of talk is nonviolent resistance. A boy being raised by a single mother was alone until a neighbor girl his age became his friend. They swam, they walked, they went to the movies and ate

vanilla ice cream in crystal dishes smothered with chocolate syrup. They lived in young love unfettered with grown up entanglements. She lived in another city near the Mississippi River visiting her

grandparents two houses south for two or three summers until her grandparents passed away and she did not return. The next summer the young man tried out for pony league baseball and made out-

fielder for the Hertzberg New Method book bindery team. Friends both grew up and went on their way. But that summer he played alone in the outfield, riding his bicycle to every game, playing his

heart out, missing her. She was gone, but love remained strong. Everybody has a story to tell. An ocean voyage. Watching the moon descend below the surface of the ocean and the sky turn.

A double rainbow arched high above the island and again, he flew home, to level prairies and gently flowing rivers in the Midwest. As autumn paints October leaves, I've seen fire and I've seen

rain. How then can you honor God? By being kind to the needy, yes, by being kind, being kind to the needy. In this you honor God. They will know us by our love; they will know us by our love;

black while stars in cloud like clumps swirled dancing over-
head. Water from the west illuminated dazzling bright blue
as he sat alone on the beach and the soft wind swayed the palm

fronds. The ocean from underneath the surface, grew brighter
and gradually dimmed, until the reflecting moonlight was gone
and the water was dark in the shadow of the night. That night he

thought about where she might be as he walked barefooted in the
moist sand. He carried Anselma in his heart, then it was light.
In dawn there was a great fragrance, sweet flowers in rain fresh air.

Victor Pearn America

A TUNE

There is a tune that keeps me
when the hours draw me in

half-asleep at 30,000 feet;
out in the foreign rain.

You sang it once in silence
the night I learned your name.

We shared it like a secret
or a stolen scrap of time.

My failing eyes see clear enough
to watch the mirror fade

and by the sinking light
I hear echoes in the ushering tide.

Simon Freedman England

FOSTER CARE

Downstairs
she sits, alone
with her barren womb
and warm tea,
taking nearly an hour
to sew on a button.
Her muffled yearning
rises through the floorboards
overwhelming
his lightless room.
Lying awake
in a borrowed world,
he thumps his ears
to the point of bruising
and whispers,
and whispers:
a Prayer of Thanks,
the two times table -
anything
to drown out the song
she could never sing,
screaming from his gut.

Simon Freedman England

STATUTE DRAFTING

Parliamentary drafter

A man hung on a comma
dangles overhead
as I craft each word
weigh each meaning
consider its place
in section breaks
clause or sub-clause.

In a sunless back room
down corridors' ends
any dusty corner
I curl my back
over my solitary pursuit

these words

weaned whilst embryonic
fighting for survival
between wooden benches
fresh words barely open
beyond my protection.

Lawyer

These words were never mine
but today I am Master
I learn them
shape and heft on my tongue
I consume them
until there is an intimacy
a shared history
an entwining
there is no telling
we were once apart.

They sing for me
each pause and breath
pace and stress
unbreakable
I bend them back
once a shield
now a sword.

David Thompson England

theseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarry

HINGE

August lies hay-colored and inert upon the yard.
The setting sun, a serpent's tongue across the dessicated grass,
strikes horizontally
the sunflowers in the raised bed, most of them
facing the wrong direction
for their own good reason.

Reminds me of yesterday

the photos
on the wall of the eye doctor's room
the black holes in the exact center
of rayed orange circles – how the eye resembles
 (when photographed thus) – a sunflower
 how the pupil, dark with seed-threads,
 in direct sun inadequately
contracts to avoid blindness.

I jump into the hinge of light leaning open
against the Japanese Maple's trunk.

This is where laughter resides,
its mansion of fireflies.

Anita Sullivan America

LIGHTENING

The blue Camas flowers in the meadow
 have stopped time.
I cover my ears,

tilt my head back at a crow, *outlined*.

Engaged in a humming
with the branch beneath him, his body spits
silver-gold sparks, either and both
 at the same time.

Deftly he flouts the properties
of the table of elements.

God was afraid in the Garden of Eden
that good and evil would leap into the
same balance pan, and prove a different point.

He paced, terrible in visage, hiding
while they laughed and ate.

This crow shuffles sparks
on a lichened branch, sups
on my ignorance.

I covet nothing
only wonder upward at the crow's
 lightening
inside a wheel of blues – .

Anita Sullivan America

AIRWAVES

By Keyser's Hill,
Cork swabs June heat
from her Viking shins.

The day Heaney died –
airwaves chase 'The Parting Glass'
beyond Mallow's night.

One last thing to do
in the Ballyhoura hills:
we swiped blackberries.

Richard Hawtree England

NOTHING

I see you park in the bus space,
call out:
'can't you read?'

I see our continent ablaze
from space –
say nothing.

Richard Hawtree England

BABINGTON'S LEEK

In Irish it's called Cainneann,
in English Babington's Leek.

We searched for it through clints and grykes,
in winter sun and springtime rain,
down hollows where the island light
declined its Latin name –

Allium ampeloprasum babingtonii.

Richard Hawtree England

WELL HOUSE

The fever to write
stoops as light
dipping through a well house
to drive out cholera.

Richard Hawtree England

THE INVISIBLE HAND

Daz Smith –
made invisible
after being granted his wish
by a genie which sprang
from a beer can
he'd opened
after stealing it
off a homeless man
outside a shelter –

has today ditched
his worn-out clothes
and, walking around
completely naked,
picks peoples' pockets
with impunity
on Oxford Street.

In front of
all the commerce-crazed shoppers,
Daz dances
while clutching their notes,
wallets, jewellery and watches,
which to them appear to be
floating on air.

Maddened by avarice,
and so used to being fleeced,
the shoppers simply stand,
gawping in amazement,
as their wealth is lifted
by Daz Smith's invisible hand.

Thomas McColl England

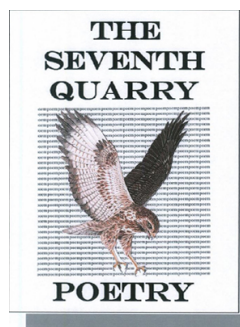
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FASCINATION

The six-year-old was on his way home for lunch,
but the factory beckoned with its odd, tantalizing smell.
Through the window, he could see women tamping
what looked like the skin of animals
then adding some kind of liquid.
He found himself hypnotized by the emanating odor,
and so he never got home for lunch.
Instead, he returned to school
when it was almost time for the bell to ring,
a little before 3:00 that would end the day's classes.
Miss Kiviatic, the teacher he adored, asked:
"Why, Marcus, why are you so late?"
He could only smile shyly and say,
"Uh, I don't know, the smell, uh, the smell . . ."

Mark Barkan America

Editor's note: Mark Barkan passed away on May 8th at his home in New York City. He was 85 years of age. The brother of my publisher, Stan, songwriter Mark wrote or co-wrote songs recorded by Elvis Presley, Manfred Mann, Rod Stewart, Dusty Springfield and many more famous artists over the course of his long career. Among Mark's most famous compositions was "Pretty Flamingo," a #1 U.K. hit for Manfred Mann in 1966 that was covered by dozens of other artists, including Rod Stewart, The Everly Brothers, Bruce Springsteen and Elvis Costello. Mark also co-wrote "The Tra La La Song," the theme to the popular late-1960s children's show *The Banana Splits Adventure Hour*. Mark also produced and wrote songs for *Psychedelic Moods*, a 1966 album by The Deep that is considered one of the earliest psychedelic records.



COAST WALK NEAR GORRAN HAVEN

Field Marshal Haig would have garlanded
this selfless attrition. Patient seas
slow-phalanx at the land. Victory
seems plain. Salients are havocked with

persistent beauty. Lone redoubts
are wave-encircled, Paulus rocks.
They'll be gulaged in salt. Foam gobs
on the disorderly fall out

of shingle. Grass-shrouded, the strands
wither. Sea's constant signals stream
the air, its ally and battlefield
where nothings hack and bind the land

and write its headstones. Thick slate parchments
and books are shelved in toppling rows.
Their oiled spines and charred leaves disclose
the doings of the numberless.

Strong, gentle-fingered earth babes me,
futile as Gaul mothers. For Caesar
is pitiless. Please, if you care,
bury me, or silt up the sea,

like Thermopylae's now silt coast,
across all the age-long endeavours,
the forays, fall-back, countermeasures,
occasional flashpoints and boasts.

Paul Connolly England

theseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarry

KNOWLEDGE

You peer into the glass at last
And find a mere reflection
Of what you slowly recognize
As definite rejection.

The image horribly confirms
A dimly-lit suspicion
That you may surely doubt your sight
But not your intuition.

Jane Blanchard America

MAELSTROM

You fall into the vortex of
What pulls you far from all above.

You may yet get the chance to go
Back to the site where life seemed slow.

Or you could surface in a space
Where each new day runs some new race.

Or you might die down in the deep
And make your final peace with sleep.

Jane Blanchard America

RETROSPECTION

The signs were there for all to see,
within the ken of even me,
who often opted to divert
attention from a source of hurt.
But I did note repeatedly
in my own child a tendency
to show too little empathy,

a pattern bound to disconcert:
the signs were there.
Decorum was regrettably
not worth enough to such as she—
nor filial devotion. Curt
words, then none, put me on alert:
beware ruthless rapacity.
The signs were there.

Jane Blanchard America

CHEAP LAST MINUTES

They survive the shredder and hang on pins,
unsold breaks the travel agents push.
Paris on a Post-it, Sydney on a scrap,
a single ticket for the Killers in LA.
A plug for Love Cove, towels on the beach,
chit-chat holding a highball by the lake,
sunscreen and yoga in a Yahoo break:
India by an ice floe, Norway by the Nile,
The Arctic lit by Botticelli light.
What atlas holds them all in place?
Chile next to China, Fiji under France?
Crammed in a corner like a blog fanzine,
getaways and weekends scribbled on a screen.
A blank sheet land where words don't work,
awaits its names from the franking machine.

F. J. Williams England

FRONT PATH

Time I repaired my cracked path
that looks like a Picasso, Cubist style,
The Girl with a Mandolin, his masterpiece
where I park the van and drag the bin,
grooving a ditch across her slabs.

Lucky to have a path by a painter,
I weed the cracks, brush the leaves
and tend her mandolin, wondering why she plays
among my scraped trowel work, flagstones
and sprinkled drops of motor oil.

In rain she's deep enough to paddle in,
liable to wobbly stones and accidents.
No goddess of footpaths allows puddles,
tyres to grind her into rubble
or winter to crack her apart.

Someone on a bus glancing down
sees a girl step out of an earthquake
and takes away her face repaired.
I dig up the path and flatten the ground,
Pythagoras, Charlie Chaplin, Jazz.

F. J. Williams England

EVERY BITE IS JOY

Fry guy wipes the range down, scoop,
pan and splattered fat from last night's batch.
Bag man flicks the packs apart
counts clunky hisses from the drinks machine.
Every Bite Is Joy as ventilators whirr:
new batch fuss, the peel and chop,
a no-salt order holds production up.
Runner stepping out of steam
orders your creation, shakes it dry
and sharks your bag along the trough.
As McJob infiltrates the lexicon,
Trash man tuts at Washer up.

F. J. Williams England

THE WOODS ARE IN DISARRAY

A banshee wind wraps us in icy winter,
whirls desiccated, abrasive, leaves
into our soft-skinned summer faces,
then stomps across the driveway.

Branches snap along the way.
Woods lie in disarray;
fallen branches and lightning-split tree trunks
lie in tangles.

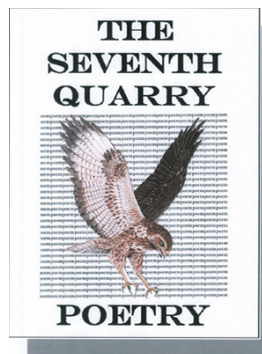
On the ground, the stench of rot
rises from a deer carcass;
tufts of hide
still cling to the bone.

Two weeks before Christmas we had a false Spring.
Because it was warm for a few days
animals were fooled in their blood
and came out of their winter places.

The woods are full of dead things
kicked with every footstep;
put your foot down and find
some lump of flesh, some piece of bone.

Simple, sober death.

Frane Helner America



THE GROTTO'S WATERFALL

Like children free
from clutch of tight hand, bubbles,
such as blown from a toy pipe, escape
past the bushy red oak,

some drift atop the cascade,
snag on a tall plant, from there bestow
sprays of rainbow lights,
over hurling water.

Others, hardier, bounce,
snub stones' insidious invitation,
catch and play
in rays of sunlight,

ignore the severe
grandfather-glance
of protruding granite boulder
and skip on to those smooth, rounded rocks

hugged by welcoming shrubs
and flowered plants.
Thus, gently guided,
they sigh descent into the waiting pond;

deep, wide,
eternal,
and accepting
as love.

Frane Helner America

REVOLUTIONS

“Oh, they're a third-world country,” we say,
almost contemptuously, and dismiss
the lesson of children who don bandanas
like bank robbers and bandits in the old movies,
marching in hand-me-down rags,
clumsily clutching rifles, they can barely shoulder,
trying to overthrow a government.

“Oh, they're a third world country,” we say
sometimes sympathetically, “they are just beginning to
crawl and scratch their way, it will take time.”
And we wave our hands and say not to worry.

And like everyone else, I would like not to worry too, but I do,
for them and for us, because we think it cannot happen here
but the streets of too many inner cities are nearly third world
and there are children with guns, wrapped in the colors
of their hatred, numbering in the thousands...

John De Angelo America

RAIN

While out for a walk, it started to rain.
I found a thickly canopied tree by the side of a pond
in which the moon was reflected, to wait it out,
hearing drop after drop - plop, plip, plop
on the surface of the water and the velvet of the leaves.

Plop, plip, plop -- hypnotic it was
mesmerizing like the pools of circles
symmetrically stirring the surface of the pond
rhythmic like a heartbeat at rest, drop by drop.

Plip, plip, plop -- varied like a musical score,
quiet like a sonata, melodious like a lullaby,
and inevitably as I was tired from walking so far
I soon found myself dozing off and dreaming.

Don't remember the dream anymore, it was years ago.
Not much else to relate but the clean, wet taste of the rain
that finally punched its way through the canopy and woke me.

Never thought Joyce Kilmer's "Trees", a great poem
or that I'd ever write a poem about rain
but take a look at how fast we're razing the forests
and have you tasted the rain lately?

John De Angelo America

LITMUS TEST

Awake or asleep, naked or clothed
when she's echo of your thoughts
and companion of your desires
when head, heart and between-the-legs agree
and separating, even briefly,
sends seismic tremors thru every pore of your being
and though prepared to return in a thought, if needed
and leaving only because you must--

when closing the door behind you
is like leaving hope and inspiration
and your other wing behind,
then it's safe to assume its love.

John De Angelo America

DAWN CHORUS
(for Valerie Norris)

We know so many things, as knowing goes.
We know each dawn will bring
A symphony of birdsong, why
They're tuning up to sing
A chant that grows
More clamorous as Spring
Returns, and why it fills the sky,
That restless carolling
Whose explanation every knower knows.

It's scientific lights we know them by,
These wonders we suppose
Must finally, like everything,
Be destined to disclose
What prompts that cry,
That keep-off call to foes,
Or mating-song, or tune to fling
Out wide and silence those
Loud conspecifics giving theirs a try.

Amongst things that elude such reckoning
Are bird-songs that defy,
Once heard, all bids to make plain prose
Of poetry, and shy
From honouring
Song-contracts that apply
Alike to nightingales and crows
Since framed to keep alerts set high
Lest songbirds too melodiously take wing.

We've slept through their awakening, and it shows.
That's why our senses cling
To broken scraps of song that tie
Us to the ding-a-ling
Of tweets and close
Our ears to the bright ring
Of a dawn-chorus primed to fly

Beyond the harkening
Of souls attuned to mundane ratios.

Christopher Norris Wales

PROCESSION

Sonorous Simon rings his bells
strides towards St Paul's, stops

climbs its West entrance steps
smiles, beckons us past tourists'

selfie-sticks, falls silent, shrugs
looks skyward, descends sadly,

takes stock, draws us closer still.

Tim Youngs England

ARCHIVED

The materiality of Müller's notebook
in which we see him start again

pencil sketches and some jottings
as he works inward from the back

capturing on his Eastern travels
new subjects without his knowing

quite how it is they will connect
with the filled-in opening pages,

and so leaves the middle blank,
is wonderful. Don't you think?

Tim Youngs England

SIGN

By Brancaster Church
 the white banner
 strung across

railings, a bold hand-
 lettered caution
 that the beach

road floods with each
 tide in the morning
 and at evening,

has, we notice driving
 past on our last day
 out here, gone.

Tim Youngs England

READING WENDELL BERRY

Look, after I turned
'Enriching the Earth',

a red and black smear
between 'A Wet Time'

and 'On the Hill Late
at Night', my fingernail

spread rather than lifted
the life that crawled there

now blood punctuation

Tim Youngs England

for michael

when the waves of the sea sang of summer,
wan midnights and flowers beguiled
by a love strong and tender in slumber,
awakening tumultuous and wild;
oh, love, sweetest love, won't you listen
to the song that the fierce sea sang,
while the desolate waves seemed to glisten
and silver bells rang.

oh, my love, oh, my love, hear the fire
of the love that has blossomed for you,
a song full of want and desire,
and all of its dreams about you,
the wind fires up through the mountains,
the clouds fill the desolate sky,
the waters of earth fill the fountains
and all the seas sigh.

and i never felt love for another
as strong or as passionate as for you,
and my legs longed for yours like a lover,
and forever they'd stay ever true,
up high in the night sky the birds fly
and plunder the sorceress moon,
and love in her waves gives a soft sigh
and falls in a swoon.

the solitary sea starts to whisper,
with a love that n'er knows of a god,
and the mist on the sea-wall grows crisper,
as it dampens the ghosts of the sod,
and love cries out loudly at sunrise
toes dipped in the trembling dew,
forgetting the murmurs of moonrise
besotted and blue.

the wind now no longer seeks shelter,
curves the clouds who now run and then run,
sings of tides full of moonlight who welter
with tears (though no gift of the sun,)
and these tears for my love i now carry
stripped away like the sun and the rain,
our love both soulful and arbitrary,
flowing true in the vein.

the flowers of midnight are calling
like lilies with petals outspread,
on an ocean that dreams as it's falling,
and falls like an anchor of lead,
the streams lift up high as if dreaming,
the wings of the wind's edges bleed,
and all of their wonderful streaming
begins to recede.

the sun sung out once to the morning,
unshackled the wings of the seas
who flew as the light started dawning,
as the sea water started to unfreeze,
day more of the morning soon conjured
of magics both dreadful and free
of tenderness's sweetly outnumbered
like your love for me.

the brightening bird grows to an ocean,
its brilliant wings full of day,
and our hearts sing out loud with emotion,
the clouds float along in their greys,

the light in the sky starts to shiver,
no longer of evening and night,
sings songs of the moon's lonely river
her lamps set alight.

Beth St Clair England

you

you, make me almost
dissolve, like ink in water,
a moonscape of love.

we are crepuscular,
dark and driven l
ike islands without sun.

our arms and legs
entwined like poetry,
our kisses sweet as flowers.

Beth St Clair England

boy of the night

we are gathered like
shadows and ghosts,
waiting for you,
boy of the night,

your love burns so
sweetly the leaves melt and
even the stars blush as well,
in their beautiful way,

just for you,
boy of the night.

Beth St Clair England

stars

the stars crystalize
in their moments,
murmur like ghosts,

fall into the drifting
water like fingers in
fingerless gloves,

inhale and breathe
like shiny mirrors,

vanquish the clouds,
leave us deep in
night's caverns
where sleeping men dream.

Beth St Clair England

THE ACCOMPANIER

I expected a grim figure waiting;
A dark cloak; sallow male face;
The rasp of the rusty boat side
Scraping the gritty bank.

But no, we came to a little hut;
Small, in the woods,
A friendly stovepipe poking up;
Aromatic wood smoke curling —
Ash or oak, I think.

We knock the skewed door and wait;
Inside, yellow lantern light
Shines through the cracks.
Voices still.

Through the open door we see three, no four,
On a bench drinking tea.
“Are you sure?” asks the woman,
Putting down her mug.
She’s smiling, a little reluctant;
“Are you sure?” she says again,
Reaching for her coat.

She smells of earth, pine, and berries;
Her hand is warm and dry.
She flings a cloak around me
As I say goodbye.

And now it’s time for her to lead me
Under trees, along a path,
Past the fox, the owl, the cat,
Towards a fence and kiss-gate
Which, opening wide, by itself,
Creaks a smile.

Ken Blakemore Wales

DAEDALUS

How clear it is now: He never grasped
the seed of it. Never wondered how
the quiet, arms-still watcher
can see truly, from his little height,
what rises and what falls.

He never held the pale light
like a bowl of undulant milk, lifting it slowly,
holding the music quietly, without spilling it.
Never ignited it all with sight,
the red apple and the dark road.

He watched me wait a long time,
pick from wind the single right detail,
the failure that is more than failure
and can be used. He watched, he watched,
but he never saw.

Never loved the craft, what it feels with its smallness:
a little change in temperature, a correct fear.
Never loved the inaudible bravery,
the sly, pickpocket eye,
the sad largeness of its memory.

Never loved the artist's hand:
its willingness to hold,
still, extended
like a dark tool,
even this empty sky.

Patricia Nelson America

MERLIN THE TUTOR

They occupy a green and booming summer,
their faces new, bright as leaves and upward,
these children who will grow soon into sadness
like a costume, an enchantment.

They rest like hands as I talk of magic.
Not surprised if I draw oddities on the world
where every shadow demonstrates
the mutable size of light and time.

Boys don't chill or darken in the magic: the spell,
the little task that touches and slightly rearranges them.
They wear an occasional strangeness on their skin
like freckles or the temperature of the shed.

So many days rolling forward: horizons burning
blue and airborne boulders. Winters, white and final.
The unsafe summers bringing the stiff-legged jays,
men rattling the edges, the squawk of territory.

I call them with light to the bravery they will want.
Calm light like a moon where the small holes drift.
Or the vision: sudden, a lightning of rafters
showing a strangeness of souls on the battlefield.

I must go with them, miming like a shadow.
Every battle, every death, holding still the child's
straight and silver wish to know, insisting,
and a love like the vacant, wailing water.

Patricia Nelson America

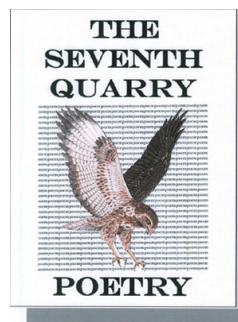
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VIEW FROM FERRYSIDE

History oozing into pores
invigorates the past;
there's the castle for instance,
high on a humpbacked hill
reaching out from Llansteffan's
sand-ferrying shore.
The eternal language of seabirds
regional accents
in the warm rain
as they dive and soar,
sudden shifts in scale and tempo
recording the deep tales
from the journeying sea.
A landscape navigating
through the syllabus of days
that have vanished
onto the skin of time.
The air pure with thoughts,
clear with water-music
occupies this space
entering the cartographer's
coast of memory.

Byron Beynon Wales

THE CHURCH HOUSE INN

i.m. W.H. Davies (1871-1940)

Outside the Church House Inn
a formal portrait sways in the Newport air.
A blue plaque with dates and a poet's name
embedded in a dockland wall.
At thirteen he'd acquired
an interest in English poetry,
apprenticed to a picture-framer
the nature of travel moved

like a plantation of tall masts.
A fleet of distant places
that sailed to his Gwent shore,
nurturing a need that later
crossed the Usk.
Atlantic cattle-ships,
the frowns of winter snow,
from Baltimore to Liverpool
and his cool reaction
to a severed leg.
Wanderings focused
like a capital R for
Remembrance.
A memory later recalled
when his infant head dreamt
against his father's velvet coat.

Byron Beynon Wales

eufauxria

it's the joy of being I was reminded of
in CP's renderings of scenes he envisaged
from On the Road, and I was glad earlier
I'd shared that feeling with Maya,
because I wasn't sure she'd felt it, yet,
and if she hadn't, it might give her
something to think about, and recognize,
when the moment hit her, came to her,
like out of a dream, what we'd been looking for,
longing for, a kind of manic-depressive sensation,
but light, with smooth edges and corners,
not rough and dramatic, but something
that comes over you like a warm blanket
on an autumn night, making you feel safe,
and not exactly depressive, either,
but more apprehensive the feeling

would come to an end before I was ready.
it was like a drug was flowing through my body,
and already I was wondering where
I would find the next fix.

Mike Foldes America

The Welsh Bard Bryfdir and the forgotten Welsh tradition of the ‘Cyfarchiad Priodasol’ by Ruth Ceri Jones

In 1936 the Welsh bard and quarryman Bryfdir (Humphrey Jones 1867-1947), who was from Blaenau Ffestiniog, Meirionydd, wrote a poem to celebrate the marriage of my grandparents Mrs. Lily Mornant Jones (then Miss Lily Evans) from Carmarthen and the Rev. Edward Mornant Jones from Blaenau Ffestiniog.

Humphrey Jones used the bardic name Bryfdir. He was admitted to the Gorsedd of Bards in 1890 at the age of twenty-three. During his lifetime, he won over sixty bardic chairs and many crowns at Eisteddfodau. The Chairing of the Bard (Cadeirio'r Bardd) is one of the most important events in the Welsh eisteddfod tradition. Bryfdir also contributed regularly to *Y Geninen* and *Cymru*, two Welsh language publications of his era. On the 4th of August 1902, Bryfdir won the chair at Pwllheli. Bryfdir had by now won twenty-five chairs. The topic was ‘Brwydrau Anweledig’ (Unseen Battles). There were eight contestants. The prize was £2.2s and the adjudicator was John Owen Williams (bardic name Pedrog).

The following report was printed in two local papers:
(*The Cambrian News* and the *Meirionethshire Standard*, 08.08.1902)
‘A carved oak chair, valued at £4.4s, and £2.2s was offered for the best ode on “Unseen Battles”. Eight competed. A large number of bards ascended the platform to take part in the chairing ceremony, which was superintended by Alltud Eivion and Dyfrig. The adjudication was read by Arifog and when it transpired that the winner was Mr. H. Jones (Bryfdir), Blaenau Ffestiniog, who has already won twenty-five chairs, hearty cheers were given again and again. He was led to the platform by Gwynfor and Cybi and duly invested by Mrs Lloyd Edwards, Broom Hall. Bardic addresses were delivered by Alltud

Eivion, Heilig, Cybi, Iseifion, Deinol Fychan, Gwynfur, Cenin, Bryneglwys, Celynydd and Tom Lloyd, whilst the chairing song was given by Miss Mary Hughes, R.C.M.’.

It was Bryfdir who gave the poet Ellis Humphrey Evans his bardic name, Hedd Wyn, at a convention of the Welsh bards at Llyn y Morynion, Blaenau Ffestiniog. Hedd Wyn has been translated as ‘blessed peace’, which reportedly is a reference to the sun’s rays penetrating the mists in the valleys of Meirionydd. Hedd Wyn was tragically killed on the first day of the Battle of Passchendaele during World War 1. Bryfdir wrote a poem in memory of Hedd Wyn for which he won the chair at Resolven Eisteddfod in 1918.

Although Bryfdir wrote prolifically not all of his work has been published. The tradition of writing the ‘Cyfarchiad Priodasol’, also sometimes entitled ‘Anerchiad Priodasol’, was so widespread that such poems would appear in the papers and would rarely be published again. The following poem written for Bryfdir’s marriage was printed in the Welsh language publication *Y Genedl Gymraeg (The Welsh Nation)* on the 2nd of January 1894.

Priodas Bryfdir

Gwelodd Bryfdir mai gwirion - oedd aros
Rhwng ei “dderw” preiffion
I chware gyda “choron”,
Yn hen lanc - heb feinwen lon!

Dowch, gwaedwch, “Heddwch iddo”- a gwaeddwch
“Oes ddigaddug” eto:
“A’i Geidwad a’i cysgodo
A’i aden fawr!” - dyna fo

TRYFANWY

(John Richard Williams, bardic name Tryfanwy, 1867-1924)

The writing of such poems was a tradition of Bryfdir’s era. Thousands of these commemorative poems were composed, not only by Bryfdir but also by many other Welsh bards and poets. The prevalence of this Welsh language tradition of writing poems to celebrate marriages during the end of the 19th Century and the first half of the 20th Century is evidenced by the abundance of such poems to be found in the archived local and national papers of Wales.

Despite their generic element, these poems succeed in capturing the essence of their subject matter, the actual people getting married. It is this that makes them something to be treasured.

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HOPKINS FISHES THE ELWY

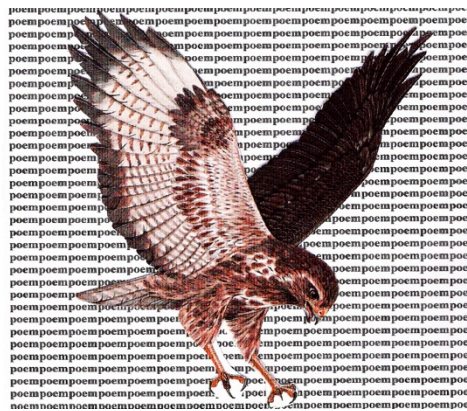
(for Peter Thabit Jones)

The creel leaned in the thicket,
rickety, too modest for sound;
the line cloud-drifted its way to the outbank
and sank, neither ripple nor root
pockmarked the surface,
the cast was that perfect, only
a long wisp and slip: the sound of some daft insect.

The morning too early for matins, dawn's
flickering wingbar along his shoulder,
and with the heart's ivy-patience
he waited, certain a trout would take the fly,
already feeling the tug of the line, the ever-so-
slight winch in the wrist, so much like that time
between the raising of the Host

and the breathless taking in.

Vince Clemente America



LOOK OUT FOR ISSUE 33: Winter/Spring 2021

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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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