

THE SEVENTH QUARRY

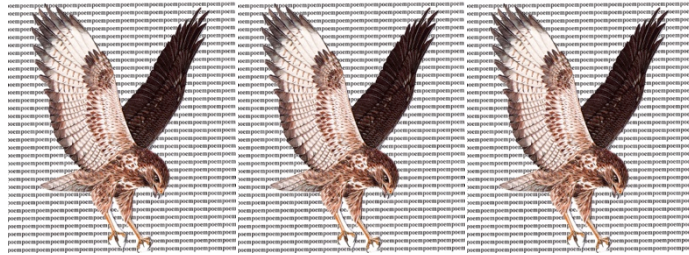


POETRY

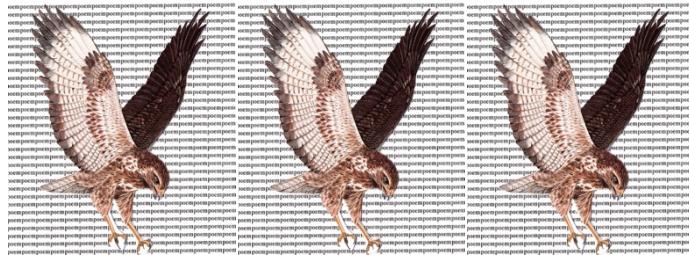
ISSUE 29 2019

SWANSEA POETRY MAGAZINE

THE



SEVENTH



QUARRY

SWANSEA POETRY MAGAZINE



ISSUE 29
WINTER/SPRING 2019

**EDITORIAL
ISSUE TWENTY-NINE
WINTER/SPRING 2019**

This twenty-ninth issue features work from Albania, America, Canada, England, Finland, Israel, Italy, Kosovo, New Zealand, Scotland, and Wales. It also includes a Poet Profile of American poet Jim Gronvold and an interview with leading Albanian poet Jeton Kelmandi.

The collaboration between The Seventh Quarry Press and Stanley H. Barkan's Cross-Cultural Communications, New York, continues into 2019.

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

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

Peter Thabit Jones, Editor

Consultant Editor, America: Vince Clemente

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seventhquarry@btinternet.com

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Contributors receive a complimentary copy of the magazine

Please enclose a s.a.e. with submissions of no more than FOUR poems

Poets beyond Great Britain must enclose an envelope with International Reply
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PETER THABIT JONES
(photo © 2019 Peter Thabit Jones)



VINCE CLEMENTE
(photo © 2019 Peter Thabit Jones)

SO EASILY MISREAD

They are either two chevrons
or two migrations traveling his sleeve
but with that mad hummingbird
right in Paul's face
while he takes the feeder for refill
who has time to decide?

Next door a birthday Women in sarongs
Kathy's father sporting the coconuts
Why is it supposed to be funny
if a man becomes a woman?
Isn't everyone wanting the gift not easily given
birthday or no: another body to care for
that cares back?

Any heart outside the body is *in extremis*
and over there someone has gassed up
three of them silver and metallic
They stand above chairs with tight strings
A few houses away they are seen
against the sky as geese in formation
and farther off among real ducks
an ellipsis a pause in October
between the shortening errors of daylight

Allan Peterson America

TESTS OF FRIENDSHIP

we should have a frozen cliff -
a strand of frayed nylon rope
and an ice-axe working loose

we should have desert sand -
a bullet-holed water-canteen
and camels unable to stand

I should have a wound -
you should be a prostitute -
one of us becoming kind

I should have a kingdom -
you should have a sword -
both throwing them away

I should be broken down -
you should have a pickup truck –
the future – an open road

do you feel adventurous?

perhaps another time -
when I am on holiday
and your schedule is clear

the ocean welcomes us -
the sunlight says it all

you have a mobile phone
I have an e-mail address

we could easily stay in touch

Robin Lindsay Wilson Scotland

THE THEATRE OF FEAR

the actor in the wings
is afraid of telling a lie -
audiences want truth

he can only pretend

the audience is afraid
of trusting in make-believe
and stupid coincidence
when only mirrors matter

he can only imitate

the actor enters with energy -
he remembers the first word
and hopes the next is ready

he can only bluff

the audience is afraid of tricks
written by angry nobodies
too clever to tell a story

he can only play

applause relieves everyone -
the illusion of truth telling
has survived false scrutiny

he can only fool

applause confirms the end
of imagination and danger
and the start of a real life
believing mirrors are true

he can only deceive

Robin Lindsay Wilson Scotland

“THE ART OF LOSING ISN’T HARD TO MASTER”

- Elizabeth Bishop

Losing yesterday’s yearnings
from the time I was a child –
the disappointment
of wanting to discover family secrets
under the plush Persian carpet,
when all I found was thick layers of dust;

letting go of yesterday’s dreams
of days running smoothly on a love-filled cloud,
and blocking childhood memories
of screaming and crying past the age of three,
kneeling on the floor, head buried
in the black-and-cream upholstery

of the bench by the bedroom window
and sobbing, "I want my Uncle David,"
when Uncle David was gone for the week,

and blocking out memories of despair
when constantly being compared
to my cousin.

Confused, unaware of my strengths,
I blocked out memories
of never being "good enough,"
of *Why are you...? and Why don't you...?*
and my whimpering like a puppy
that has been kicked,
and blocking off the sting of being called
the child,

and blocking out memories
of constriction
as if I were hiding on the floor
of a bird's cage.

Did I really throw away that key
to the memories of loss
or are they lurking deep down,
buried under mountains
of today?

Ruth Fogelman Israel

BLOCKED MEMORIES

Like parts of ancient skeletons
surfacing from a river bed
blocked memories of loss rise,

the inability to express,
please love me as I am,
and no-one would listen
to unsaid words,

of confusion –
where did I come from?
how was I born?
and no-one would explain,

of frustration –
I flopped to the floor, kicked
and screamed till I was hoarse,
and no-one could console me.

Can I now embrace the loss
of what I never had?

Ruth Fogelman Israel

BREATHLESS

Smell of fresh sweat.
I eat shadows and cringe
in corners.

Sound like the creak
of indrawn breath.

I am
the skulk
and the scuttle.

Flutter of black wings.

Feel the wire at the throat,
the blade grazing the ribs.

I am the squirming dream,
the
scream.

Louise Wilford England

JACK

Drive through a subway of snow - going home -
velvet soft as it falls, packed hard below.
White-soot flakes finger the glass,
funnelled towards us, cleared from the windscreen
again and again by the wipers' metronome.

Heading east, nervous and slow, we follow
a truck's rear lights – red demon eyes –
as we tunnel over the Woodhead Pass.
The sky's wolf-grey. The flakes billow,
spilt feathers from a torn pillow.

Snow rises from beneath, in sudden sneezes,
exhaled up the valley on the tide
of a giant's breath. And, glancing right, on a ridge,
I see you, posed on the cracked hillside,
staring at us through the gap between gaunt trees.

Wild-eyed, you swirl your cape, a quilt of angry snow.
Your blue lips part to kiss and blow
a mouthful of evening sky – the colour of elephant-hide –
creeping wild fog that cloaks the drop beside
the car, wild fog you conjure to rise and grow.

Jack Frost, your pen once decked our folktale halls
with friendly hoar-frost swirls. But now
you raise your arms and throw a whirling whiteout
against the bleak hillside, against the frozen fields
where spondrift rests against the dry stone walls.

Cross the narrow bridge, snail-slow in the traffic queue,
pull up the flanks of the moors. O, Jack, you are too old!
Your wintry breath still freezes the land beside
our steady wheels, but now we're heading
into the vale - down, down, out of the cold.

Louise Wilford England

REVONTULET - THE FOX FIRES

My frosted spine against the lawn,
layers of woollen excuses
keeping me distant from this land.

The tail strokes pushing further south,
the pulse, crackle,
curtains of colour whispering
of the unachievable Nordic dream.

We squint at the gray nets
thrown over the sky.
Ghosts of the aurora rippling,
splayed between jewelled stars
and birches poised for spring.

The true prize leeches pale
under the motorway's hum of light.
Finland viewed out of focus,
muffled by the outside world's clamour.

Whips, feathers of green and blue
reserved for others.
The fox slips from our grasp.

Gerry Stewart Finland

PORTRAITURE

We pose and unpose
to clicks,
to beginnings.

Generations framed.

Cotton sleep
caught in my throat
I hand him over,
following the line back:

son
mother
grandmother
great grandmother.

My son,
the tiny word
still doesn't fit my tongue.

The miles,
the countries
I laid out between us,
become swathed in
family tree rings of growth
through him.

Blood desires blood.

Their eyes offer
not knowledge,
but earth-solid roots.

Knowing
after the rush,
the fear recedes.

They cross my distance,
we are contained
in squirming limbs
and his own emerging voice.

Gerry Stewart Finland

ADHERENCE

Exaggerate with gear
Your prosy body.
Arrange across your chest those odd, expensive burrs
That stick to granite, if you set them well,
Like native crystals, steely for the fall.

Fix to the rock as if it were a horse
These tendons and command it to obey.
Complete my hand. Sink past me when I pull.

Rock is a fibrous thing or stem
With joy locked up in it like gravity
(*Adhere! Adhere!*)
And clearness welling out of it at every flaw.

Just this, and you:
It accords in some way with your sense of the way things are:
Unmerciful, but to the strong
(Or to you in your stronger moments) not an enemy,
An adjunct rather, a bond to which you bend,
A pitch
Your instrument can play to.

Forget your name and kindness, look above
The organized horizon of your love
Into the spaces where the stinging herb of light
Is rooted, and the bitten creatures move:

This teacher simplifies indeed:
Where death is ordinary, life is strange.

John Hart America

WRITING EXERCISE

Watching in glass the modification of flowers--
The irises, their strut and hounded blue--
You shift the pen that simplifies
The light in the slant vein.

*We look at flowers first and then at leaves:
The two greens come together at a shine.
The smallest leaf is red and dark and thin.*

Jon sighs and sniffs and writes again,
And taps against his thinking teeth
The flat end of his pen.

*A fly comes toward me without stopping then away.
A line of points and edges is the dark inside the bone.*

I think we grasp in our odd gaze
What Physics tries to tell us every day
Of Imitation and the Unities:

*White petal, shadow on its underside, and three green stalks that
curve:*

The stems and muscles that we feed upon,
The fable of identity,
The glee of the reborn.

John Hart America

**ON THE VICTORIAN SPECTRUM,
OR
WHY NO ONE WOULD HAVE NOTICED IN THE FIRST PLACE**

No one would have said
You romanticise friendship.
I wouldn't have written a book
to say what's wrong with that?

I wouldn't still be laughing
at my daughter's comment
that none of my friends really like me
(which wasn't a joke);

nor have *the social rules*
that only Carolyn understands,
not having been told the real ones
because I was weird.

If I couldn't cross a room
to start a conversation,
I could learn to dance but then
I'd be looking at the floor.

I'll go back and explain
that last one. You see better
from a distance. That's just (I think)
an undisputed physiological fact.

I still wouldn't recognise faces.
Without the research
I'd think that was normal
and look stuck up for life.

I've reintroduced the morning call
without having to be bored
alive by the kind of person
who'd have come.

I'm not sure where you need to be
on the spectrum for this to make sense.
But I'm glad I asked, because honestly?
I like the view from here.

Carolyn Oulton England

DRAWING THE LINES

I'm not making it up.
Socks edging along
the washing line, pinks
and a thousand tiny creases
on bedclothes, shattering
like autumn sea,
or say the split
running into fractures
through hot summer earth.
I could no more make it up
than that child in the shop,
near the magazines,

could walk on purpose
so convincingly like a child;
legs tensed at the knee,
arms awkwardly placed
away from the body as if
he were preparing
to walk on ice.

Carolyn Oulton England

IN THE BOOK

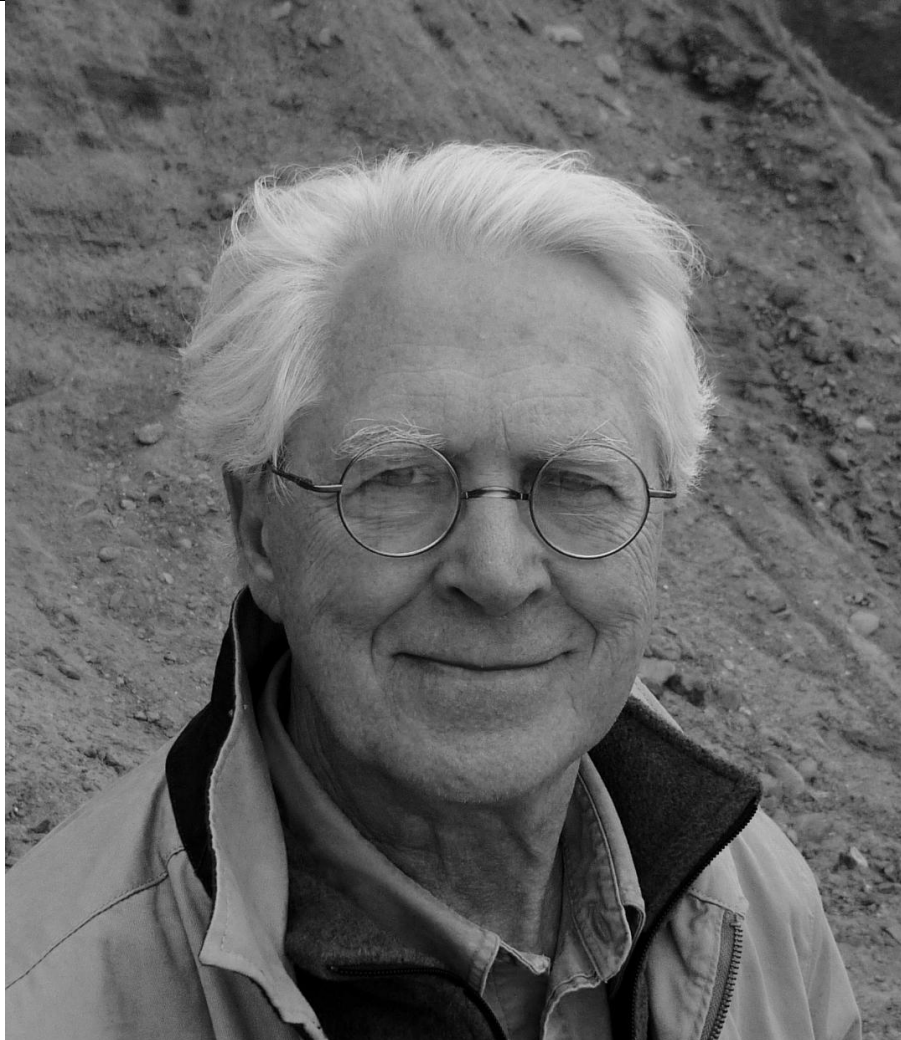
We divided the shade between us
under a rusty sculpture
by the harbour wall.
A boat wobbled in the heat,
breeze lifting skeins of water,
deft as the touch of a child's fingers
moving through the strands
of a woman's hair.

You were melting into the pages
of that book, eyes sticky
across a shimmer of ink,
when I said we had to go;
and as the last thing I could do
in that particular moment,
Look at that boat. I pointed.
The way it's wobbling...

the sea, you said.

Carolyn Oulton England

POET PROFILE: AMERICAN POET JIM GRONVOLD



Jim Gronvold © 2019 Jim Gronvold

Jim Gronvold grew up in a suburb of Chicago, and has lived in New England, California and Denmark. He has retired from the Pine Street Inn homeless shelter in Boston where he was a drug counselor and administrator. Jim has published four collections of poetry: *Back River*; *Oak Bones*; *Star Thistle* and *Pith & Piffle*. He now lives in Northern California with his wife, two cats and various hummingbirds. The Seventh Quarry Press is publishing a book of his poems later this year.

Peter Thabit Jones: When did you start writing poems?

Jim Gronvold: I remember trying to describe sparkling moon-lit snow in rhyme,

when I was ten or eleven. I would write verses on three by five inch index cards that I kept in a small green metal box that I hid in a drawer. Trying to write on small cards might have contributed to my appreciation of shorter poems and my habit of writing tight little sentences.

Writing poems was always a very private activity for me. It was my solitary refuge and I would only rarely share that part of my life with anyone. It was not until after I survived a burst aneurism, at the age of 60, that I felt a strong need to share what I wrote, as celebrations of just being alive.

PTJ: What poets/writers influenced you as a beginner poet?

JG: Frost, Dickinson, Poe, Wordsworth, Shelly, Keats, Arnold and Owen. Those were some of the poets we read in school, and the ones that I continued to read on my own.

Like many Americans, when I first heard a recording of Dylan Thomas reading his poems, I was mesmerized. His poetry sounded more like music—sweet and powerful— than the artistry of his words alone. He made sentences soar on strong emotions that spoke to me of fleeting beauty and awestruck moments of youth. Where he uses rhyme it rolls off the tongue, and his descriptive attention to natural beauty continues to influence how I look at the nature.

PTJ: You like using rhymes, so is the poem on the stage as important to you as the poem on the page?

JG: Rhyme has always been important to me. I love the way it can create rhythm by planting sounds in rows of words that grow with the importance of their meaning.

Rhymes have a natural resonance like echoes or ripples. First, I say them to myself and then refine them on paper, which I probably enjoy most of all. Speaking them in public can be fun and can feel very fulfilling, but getting them right on the page is my favorite part. I suppose that I enjoy the process of creativity more than the presentation. That's where the real challenge and sense of accomplishment is for me.

Also, I think that the length of the poem can really affect how well it can be performed. I mostly like to write short, concise verses that seem to work better as the center of attention on a page, rather than on a stage.

PTJ: Nature is one of your major themes. How important is nature to you?

JG: Whenever I take the time to stop and enjoy it, the beauty and power of the natural world is a constant source of amazement and inspiration. I love the way that watching daylight, leaves and seasons changing can inspire poetic imagination. You see its power in the smallest of forms: ants, roots, distant stars, and it changes the perspective of your place in the grander scale of it all.

PTJ: What are your thoughts on modern American poetry?

JG: Americans seem to set such high value on independence and originality that we think we have to reinvent the wheel. I don't think that having an original voice means that one has to write in ways that no one else writes, in order to be unique.

What seems more important to me is the skill with which writers communicate their experience and understanding within the structure of their language. I like to think that by using clear and flowing words their poems will also translate well into other languages by the nature of their shared humanity.

There is a definite trend among American poets to avoid rhyming, as if free verse is the only true form of American expression. "New" and "free" are effective sales slogans but I prefer a bit of music in my poetry. Kay Ryan, W.S. Merwin, Dana Gioia and Richard Wilbur are among the better known contemporary American poets that I enjoy.

SPLASH

Oceans rush through our veins
lightning drives our dreams

everything evaporating
shares our family tree.

Leaves stir into soil
breath swirls into wind

blood drifts into cloud
and returns to Earth in rain

splashing on rolling seas,
hillsides and dusty planes

wetting the shiny skin
of this tiny spinning grain

that sparkles in a mist
of billions of scattered stars.

Jim Gronvold America

MALLARD

A clatter of mallard
on the winding flow
dunking, flapping,
wagging in circles

their ripples lapping
over each other
as they paddle
into an easy row
and chatter off
around the bend

slapping the banks
with buoyant echoes
as the river
swallows their shadows.

Jim Gronvold America

ANCIENTS

Silent sages
of the biosphere—

these ancient trees
appear content—

present to the roots
of their moment.

Feathered in leaves
that choir a breeze

they weather storms
with wild ease

and patiently carry
the weight of centuries

with the quiet strength
of their histories.

Jim Gronvold America

DIVERSITY

The sea
in the cloud
in the rain.

The field
in the stalk
in the grain.

The they
in the you
in the me,

all sing
the truth
of diversity.

Jim Gronvold America

Editor's note: A book by Jim Gronvold is forthcoming from The Seventh Quarry Press in 2019.

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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. New York's Vince Clemente, as the magazine's Consultant Editor: America, ensures a steady stream of American poets.

Each issue features a Poet Profile, a batch of pages given over to a chosen poet. There is also a Books and Magazines page, 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 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. It costs £4.50 per issue or £9 for a year's subscription (two copies). \$15 and \$30 for USA subscribers. Further information at www.peterthabitjones.com

Editor: Peter Thabit Jones seventhquarry@btinternet.com
Consultant Editor, America: Vince Clemente

CHASING THE MONSTER

As a child
before the lights went out
he checked for any monsters,
under the bed, in the closet,
in the corners, under the covers,
No monsters here, he thought.
so he grew up free from them,
got married, got divorced,
indulged in drinking,
while swearing at his children.
and made money
only to spend it on himself.
He lived high and denied
the existence of those
less fortunate.
Then one night
while staring at the ceiling
in bed
he thought:
I am the monster
he never found.

Robert L. Harrison America

MAKING FRIENDS

My friend wanted
to be wanted.
So every Saturday night
he would go to the airport
and lay down on the
baggage carousel in hope
of being claimed.
Round and round
between the luggage
he would go.
People would laugh

and some would give him
a high five.
The airport security were not amused
so they claimed him
and they were not
his friends.

Robert L. Harrison America

ONE LOSS

The art of losing isn't hard to master;
so many things seem filled with the intent
to be lost that their loss is no disaster.

Elizabeth Bishop, 'One Art'

It is the poems you have lost, the ills
From missing dates, at which the heart expires.

William Empson, 'Missing Dates'

How then if loss should master this your art?
No way to compensate if verse goes slack.
Even the practised loser may lose heart.

Tight forms bring redress once the losses start,
Though half-rhymes might invite verse-chaos back.
How then if loss should master this your art?

Verse-craft detains us from the infomart
Until we chancers lose its crafty knack.
Even the practised loser may lose heart.

It's verse-technique enables us to chart
When we're on form and when we go off-track.
How then if loss should master this your art?

Each new one has its lesson to impart
When loss-adjustment proves the means we lack.
Even the practised loser may lose heart.

Hear with what subtlety her rhymes outsmart
Dull custom through what nifty shifts of tack.
How then if loss should master this your art?

One loss too far: that all those à la carte
Selections may turn out a waiter's snack.
Even the practised loser may lose heart;
How then if loss should master this your art?

Christopher Norris Wales

EMPORIUM

Car park domain, crammed to claustrophobia,
where edging into a space at last seems
defeat: a day of rain-sogged flat packs. Here
is self-assembly's paradox, dreams

commoditised. We take the arrow track
more orderly than prisoners. Desire
is a slavery that serves itself. Back
when Gawains served, did purpose throb? Afire

with hope, did we look up in sky and awe,
praise Him, then bend to plough again? Those trials
were bondage. Now, we glut our licence, let stores
take charge and style our lives in given styles.

Sacré-Coeur is nonsense, but the Commune fades.
Romance is mechanised. I'll make them fear
my George at Asda top's ripped blazon. They'll
wonder what I've come as, but they'll keep clear.

Paul Connolly England

DIALOGUE OF WIND

Only the wind will listen. T.S. Eliot

The movement of wind in valleys
In flames
In branches of trees

In the passage of migrating birds
Hardy sailors blown with thrusts
From shore to shore

In concentrated tunnels escaping
Through slats
Slam of the barn door

The hardened drifts of sand
Curved and carved
To waves perpetual

Twisted by the puissant pull of earth
Tortured icicles
Oblique commanded

I march to that language
Of air harsh jettied
Forced into my own tormented ears

On a peak where pine is bent
My fur coat bristles with attentive tufts
Consumed in ancient dialogue with wind

Clive Donovan England

WATER COLORS

slowly up the canal
Chinese paper boats
water-write characters

hummingbees buzz secure
in the company of spiders

feather fathers move beyond
Maine rocks and
quietly watch water
slap against the stones
of a weathered inn

shells line the sill
alongside candle-dripped bottles

door slams
like ship boom lowered

a frame around one star
lends to the self of solitude

standing in the center of a cold space
the painting lacks emotion, warmth

petals with thin blue veins
light condensed
figures out of place
like a seaplane over the desert

Gloria Keeley America

ZEN DIAGRAM I

the breath of dead fish beyond meditation, medication
sun amidst the dark long-stemmed moon
motionless ocean morning seanness
four fish in a row eight if you count their shadows
soon skeletal, like X-ray semaphore by fins filiform
anonymous space drowned by suffocation
parallel ocean rain rolling past my window
swelled of moon archetypal river
Iroquois shipwrecked on the Sound
where are the sparrow-eaten flowers
is not a leaf blooming out electric butterfly?

Gloria Keeley America



The Blossoming Winged Bird of Venezia (Mixed Media on Board, 12 x 9")

© 2019 Carolyn Mary Kleefeld

DESERT OF SORROW

Will new skin emerge
from this infinite void?

From the desert of sorrow,
an exotic bird,
unknown to itself
and unknown to the world,
is gradually growing wings,

Its nourishment is derived
from the tears of angels,
unexpected, like a waterfall
cascading from the unknown.

And as the honeysuckle and jasmine
emit their ripening summer fragrances,
a clandestine rebirth is taking place.

Carolyn Mary Kleefeld America

FAREWELL TO THE PAST

Farewell to past lives,
farewell to previous cycles.

Billowy white puffs
drift the innocent blue.

It's all going so fast.
Why not dance
with the changing climes.

And be like the clouds
that continue to morph
as they yield to the unlimited.

Carolyn Mary Kleefeld America



Tree Lyrics (Mixed Media on Board, 30 x 24")
© 2019 Carolyn Mary Kleefeld

HAIKU

Book

A magic garden:
I received a love message
from your own sweet rose.

Rose Tincture
The rose petals fell,
and suddenly all of them
were good for tincture.

Going Abroad
Nice is to go out
get away to the country.
Nicer coming back.

Noche de Ronda
Paintings are essence:
The foundations of our soul
that we hope to meet.

Hayim Abramson Israel

[6852] LEAP OF FAITH

Taking off from port to unknown parts
swiftly the vessel goes over the waves!
I cannot be but moved in the depths
of my soul, clutching tight the cape of the Infinite.
I shall remember the dancing of the sea
with no anchor but God's support.
Such was the leap of faith, the line of a lifetime.
To open the heart
and dwell on the holy
after returning to the Source.

Hayim Abramson Israel

[6853] DIAMONDS

A diamond has seventy faces
each with a different meaning.
They stem from the Rock of Truth
in intrinsic contradictions.

One aspect looks deep into the past,
while another shapes what is yet to come.
We can reconstruct whom we have been
just like changing future plans.

The gem has divine light,
a face of spirituality that endures.
It is there
as we look for its angle.

Our mind can devise hope
even out of the crack in one facet;
see a flower stem there
to be carved with our care.

NOTE: The last image is from a Hasidic story in *The Maggid of Dubno and His Parables; n Edition* by Benno Heineman (Author), Feldheim Pub; n edition (June 1, 1978).

Hayim Abramson Israel

[6854] THE POINT OF OUR LIFE

In God's infinite line
our life is but a point.
Our task is to coordinate
our place in time.

Hayim Abramson Israel

NOTE: See: Rabbi Adin Even Israel Steinsaltz, *The Sustaining Utterance: Discourses on Chasidic Thought*. Maggid Books, Koren Publishers 2015.

APOTROPAIC

All those years ago on the forecourt, I think,
of a hotel in Cheltenham:
tossed across a grid of white lines
on an asphalt baize that marked a score
of numbered parking places –
lime-green grenades
brought down by keen winds – a night-harvesting;
and, before breakfast, our two children
rushing out, prising open the cases,
all blunt knives and thumbs,
expecting conkers but finding only things
that resembled lychees...

Yet not like any fruit:

their whiteness sterile,
thinly-veined, convoluted,
as though surgically excised – entire and bloodless –
each one a homunculus ready for the bottle.

The trees shushed passing traffic.

Green-lidded, I saw in play all three chips –
wife and two children cast on the same spot.

And thought: *He had everything taken away.* But
it meant nothing after the time – not yet – I trust.

Andrew Mayne England

PAINTERLY

1. LIGHT ON HIS APPLES

Intuitively
a twist of pink; next instant's
change – palatable.

2. RAIN-EFFECTIVE LANDSCAPE BY TRAIN

I like your smirching
oils – all through what looks to me
a rain-beaded glaze.

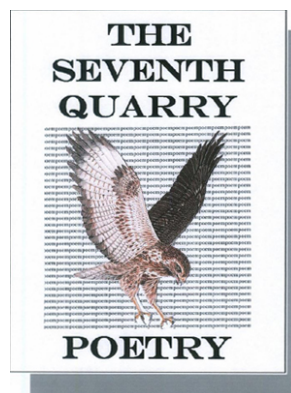
3. MOVEMENT OF PAINT

Unostensible
play in one corner; where now

and then a pink blush
evokes numberless shadings

in the folds of what
has now stopped being a dress.

Andrew Mayne England



CHARACTER

I

Looking at an old friend's face
I saw that Time had robbed his scar
And left a crease without a tale,
Like a casual remark
Or a starfish pummelled to sand.

II

Louise said to Sue:
“There aren't roles for actors my age!
I've booked myself a facelift in Budapest for Christmas.”

III

Some, it seems, would much prefer
To edit their past and rewrite their lines.

IV

“Going up, you see me steal
A glance at your crown in the mirror.

“Whipped by Time, I consider its lash:
– Broken-in shoes that no longer pinch,
– Tongues tamed by disposition;
– A worn bar of soap that snugly fits the cup of your hand;
– The seasoned furrows of your boyish grin;
– A life engraved; a body of work.
What marks us, makes us.

“As the lift doors part,
Why turns my heart
Vertiginous?
– Feeling your years become you.”

Christina Hemsley England

NEW POEM

Some of us do not fly with wings,
But rather glide.
Almost translucent,
These membranes
Like a novelist's notes,
The page scrubbed clean of sure ideas
(Yet leaving marks
Where there were words)

And now stretched, these pages,
For sunshine, air.
Watersoaked they drip and tear.
So be it. And dry they may be too brittle,
Frail, arthritic~
In which the faint glow of yesterdays
Still shine.

Do not expect
All who take wing to fly,
Some still gladly
Glide.

Matthew Friday America

GUNFIGHT

I brought a knife to this gunfight.
I'm fighting off bullets with my blade.
Watch and listen as they ricochet.
Is this how it feels to get stronger?
I'm deflecting the thoughts with my pen.
These demons on my shoulders and back,
They cling on as I slice them away.
I'm keeping them in my pocket for a rainy day.
I carry them.
But in my pocket. Not on my back.

Charlotte Hacche Wales

YOU CAME IN THEN

He asked that the shade be drawn
and so the shade was drawn.
He asked that the lights be turned down
and so the lights were turned down.
He addressed the committee
and his words trailed off
and he admitted he forgot what he was going to say.
He settled comfortably on his back.
He dismissed the itch
of his oxygen.
His brown eyes amber with love
turned to agates.

Peter H. Weis America

SHOES

for Mount Hermon 1890

Just look at their shoes.
My friend's dad,
a real observant sort,
once said,
"If you want to know everything about a man
just look at his shoes."
Yeah, my friend's dad
spent his life conducting
maybe ten thousand job interviews;
figured out
how to size up a man's character
just by looking over his Buster Browns.
Made his career out of it you could say.
Just look at their shoes.
You wouldn't hire them.
Just look at their shoes.
Twentysomething –
already worked to death.

Peter H. Weis America

IN THE THIRD YEAR

'The Battle For Freedom', scripted by Dylan Thomas - a Ministry of Information film

With bloody throats against the tattered jeer
Stands a blackout, a harvest of bulbs shorn,
Reaping narrow bodies in the third year.

The whoosh of kettle whistle gas bombs smear
Steel's glaze to pea-green fibres, hammers adorn
With bloody throats against the tattered jeer.

Mechanised plagues of stabbing locusts sneer
Singing harmony with grief's foghorn,
Reaping narrow bodies in the third year.

The fever wheeze of diesel engines rear
Like a battle horse sailing on a thorn,
With bloody throats against the tattered jeer.

Mothers wombs frayed limb from sinew, a spear
Stillborn of ghosts, a war against the torn,
Reaping narrow bodies in the third year.

Savage betrayers of the dying sphere
Dissipated in moonshine smoke, forlorn
With bloody throats against the tattered jeer,
Reaping narrow bodies in the third year.

Grant Tabard England

NOTHING UNDERNEATH

A City Reborn, script by Dylan Thomas - a Ministry of Information film

In an offal city, swallowed, eaten,
Foul weather burnt down houses to cinders,
And the night owls bared their teeth in Eden.

Skeleton halls peel in the off season
While you dance in hokey-cokey splinters,
In an offal city, swallowed, eaten.

Reeling through doors that aren't there, ghosts weaken,
In the loam the smoke plays with tin figures,
And the night owls bared their teeth in Eden.

Vapours lit the amber skies in demon
Florets, all that's left are suitcase tinkers
In an offal city, swallowed, eaten.

A nothing underneath city, beaten
In cauterised prefab clay clot whispers,
And the night owls bared their teeth in Eden.

Rows of would-be houses fade from reason,
Factory made acrid ginger lingers
In an offal city swallowed, eaten,
And the night owls bared their teeth in Eden.

Grant Tabard England

ORIGIN/21 POEMS by Matthew M C Smith.

Available via Amazon Kindle. Price: £4.99.

WHAT REMAINS

Ashes blow, cast in wind
traces fly towards ridge and peak
bright midnight, pearl-white
and all that remains
is fairytale and holy
as you lone recede
into lingering night

Matthew M C Smith Wales

IN A TOMB, WISHES RISING

(Tewkesbury Abbey)

Look upon these floor-worn words
In a tomb, wishes rising

Gaze on lines of limestone columns
In a tomb, wishes rising

Hear the verger with iron keys
In a tomb, wishes rising

Mouth your prayers for loved ones lost
In a tomb, wishes rising

Candles aflame in solemn naves
In a tomb, wishes rising

Raise your eyes to rays of light
In a tomb, wishes rising

Stealth of dark through eyes wide bright
In a tomb, *whispers* rising

Matthew M C Smith Wales

AN ELEGY FOR AUTUMN

Gusts of rain swept the lake
as waves of geese one upon the other,

a skyful of flight and the
grey unfurl of their wings.

The night, fierce. Each window,
a slosh of drip and spray.

That feral keening found me
even inside beside the lamp.

A twist of branch.
The desolate course of sodden path.

An old chair bereft at the door,
its dark wet howl, its wet dark howl.

I remember now. There were no geese.
The season gone.

Linda Opyr America

AT THE ROOT OF MY WATCHING

Backlit in a rise of sun, the highest leaves
leapt as so many small fish

stirred into breaking the surface
of their water. And so autumn arrived

in the golden shimmer of a moment
borne on the backs of green leaves

and a quickening of wind. Both
the question and answer of my telling

rest in wonder at the root of my watching –
the silent language of belonging once more

to what was almost missed or forgotten.
Or remembered beyond reason

in a quick of sun or rise of wind.

Linda Opyr America

CHINESE DRAGONS

Mother walked around
in a voluminous gown.

It was ink black
with Chinese dragons
billowing fire.

Father never liked it
but she did,
she said it

made her thin
and oriental.

Robert Berry New Zealand

BUDDHA

It is forbidden
to look at
or touch
the giant statue
of Buddha.
The steps wind up
and expand like wisdom
at his golden toes.
I stop there
and marvel
at his largesse
his inscrutability
and wish I had religion
in my veins.

Robert Berry New Zealand

THE PIANO

When you played,
the display china plates
would tinkle.
I'd imagine them falling
especially when you trilled,
which was integral,
a profound thrill. But
most of all I loved
the big-boned silence
between black chords,
now that was resounding.

Robert Berry New Zealand

theseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarry

SOULS

Wounded seagulls
Wandering
About waters

The sky covering in sea sadness. . .

THE LOTUS EATERS

We started the celebration party
With the golden calf on the table

We all spoke
The same language

After suffer
We forgot all what we had eaten

In the garden the first cock
Cracked dawn for the third time

BALLAD

Birds were flying inside the abandoned house
And around its yard's surrounding walls covered in thorny bushes reaching for the
sky
No stick could draw water from stone
Though they said it was the rainy season

THE UNREACHABLE

Even at that dusk
The sun failed to reach the orange tree
And I remained with the essence of the fruit stuck to my fingers
While the sun continued to disappear into the horizon

THIRST

She passed by the waters in a hurry without looking at them
Driven by the fear of missing the train
That never arrived at the station in time...

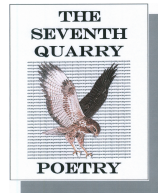
Her being became the homeland of thirst
Suddenly while she stood in the queue of passengers
Waiting to leave for the place she would not reach in due time...

Another traveler was waiting beyond a space
Equally drunk with eagerness and impatience
To see the woman who had passed by the waters
Without stopping for a while...

Alisa Velaj Albania

Translated from Albanian into English from Ukë ZENEL Buçpapaj

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Editor - Peter Thabit Jones

Consultant Editor, America - Vince Clemente

Consultant Advisors, America -
Stanley H. Barkan, Carolyn Mary Kleefeld,
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**POETRY/PROSE/ARTWORK/CHILDREN'S
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TO FRAN, IN GRATITUDE

Wasn't the sky a brothel in shambles
Great for quick lunches,
The kind Pardonia natives love like crazy -
On that night, you mean?
C'mon, you all know he's always bursting
With gales and ravens,
Not to mention the anxious wait for noobs
While rocks burst with seeds, worms,
Or so they hope –
But mothers, you wonder,
What do they bristle with, name hopes,
Dreams, moonshine, ennui,
Sure they welcome a virus,
So let it drain clear waters, rip the limbs,
You know I was there cranked out
In a flurry of smiles, mother geese, sizzling falls,
The bloody end of my free ride, you bet,
No playing with glitz or sequins
If Etruscan smiles won't stay put:
For they gleam so cheap on pins and charms
They just can't shine –
And you, Abraxas, please stop freaking
If my deviant eyes don't give up on shaken souls
Who slept in a stifling bond with the sky -
How long, by the by?
Don't worry, sisters, the stubble fields ice out
When harvest is over we'll welcome in love,
We're getting home, yes,
Our stubble back to the soil
And those charcoal shades of grey, wait,
Who's babbling now of rainbows, what's up,
Why, anyone for a go, not me, sorry,
I'd better brush off the tips from that Welsh bard,
Keep clear from woods, hide behind fixed stars,
Fast like roots or binned lovers -
They're mine, beware –
Midway in my mind smart red bodies, towns,

Where she went bust up, who?
The moon in the wellspring or so they say -
Look, if angels forget to grab shaky children
And skies make your heart a gnarly pecan
VIP isn't an option, yet against all odds
They say 'words are turning into
Flesh, blood and spring blossoms' -
Hope never that far with you,
My dear bloody-minded souls -
But I'm so afraid they're mine too.

Gabriella Garofalo Italy

MORNING' COMMUTE

Rubber spinnin' on tarmac,
Brake.
Sigh heavily.
Punch wheel.
Damn.
Another traffic jam.
Rain pelting metal.
Clink. Clink. Clink.
Look at watch.
Great.
It's ten past eight,
Twenty minute hold up.
And I'm late,
again.
I wish there was a fast lane.

Jack Priestnall Wales

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REVIEW OF *MORE MISHPOCHEH* BY STANLEY H. BARKAN
THE SEVENTH QUARRY PRESS
BY JESSICA NEWPORT

Stanley H Barkan is an award-winning poet, translator, editor and small press publisher, in addition to being a retired teacher. Originally from Brooklyn, he now resides in Merrick, Long Island with his artist wife Bebe. He has two children who each have families of their own. This amounts to five grandchildren for Barkan. The family live close to one another and shares a strong bond.

Barkan's list of accolades is extensive and includes, but is not limited to: The Homer European Medal of Poetry and Art (2016) and The Poets House and the NYC Board of Education Poetry Teacher of the Year Award (1991). In addition to his awards he has been commemorated for his long-standing position within the literary world. An example of this is when this very magazine published a dedicated "Stanley H. Barkan" issue to honour "over 40 years of literary excellence".

More Mishpocheh was published by *The Seventh Quarry Press* in 2018 and features front cover artwork by Barkan's wife Bebe. Barkan's poetry is a heartfelt and emotionally charged collection that is testament to his Jewish roots and passion for his family. It is clear as one passes through this collection that Barkan has a deep-running love for his family and religion and he expresses this wonderfully. His work is structured in such a way that the reader can experience different generations in a manner which leaves one inspired, appreciative of his wisdom and in awe of his unfaltering commitment to allow us into his private memories and relationships. His poetry is emotive, relatable, easily pictured and readily accessible to all. This is due largely to the conversational tone that he adopts throughout. A beautiful collection that leaves one pondering long after the book is put down. A must read.

More Mishpocheh opens with ON MY FATHER'S YAHRTZEIT, 26 May 2008. Immediately the reader is invited into a most private moment; Barkan visiting his father's grave on an anniversary of his death. The tone of his words as he explains his family tree is chatty, we already feel like old friends, which is a feeling that only grows stronger as we progress through the poetry. A photograph of his father precedes his words which aids ones visuality of the subject matter. Imagery is both strong and prevalent. Indeed, the opening, "like a stone upon a stone, I sit upon the stone bench" employs repetition to ensure the readers attention is held from the outset. Barkan's chosen language and wise words such as "Nenter

vi vaiter” [Nearer than farther], my mother used to say”, leaves one hungry to learn more and as the poem reaches its climax and Barkan reflects on how “nearer than farther I am too, to joining you... *kineahora!*” the reader has clear evidence of how he has been influenced both by those who have come before him and his unwavering faith. This theme remains strong throughout the collection.

As one reads more it becomes evident that Barkan is not only sharing treasured memories but paying heartfelt tribute to those that are most important to him. In *PASSING THE BATON* for Natasha Rose Clarke, we feel his pride as he watches her run “like a gazelle over and across the left inside track” before becoming privy to his reminiscence of his own youth “running the 50-yard dash”. It is ever so heartwarming to witness how Barkan relates generations whilst remaining aware of mortality as he tells us that “with a cane, I make my way uneasily, three legs when once two would more than do”. We are implored to feel no pity or sorrow however, Barkan is simply reminding us of the movements of life. The baton is a metaphor for how he has raised his daughter and she, her own daughter and when he passes on, he “will declare: “I’ve won, I’ve won the race!” This outlook is indicative of Barkan’s poetry as a whole: the reflective moving alongside positivity and gratitude.

Art and imagery are strong influences. Many of his poems are accompanied by photographs and many employ imagery to drive his words and message forward. An example of this is *BIRD MITZVAH* for Natasha on her bat mitzvah. This poem encompasses everything: the Jewish faith, family, upcoming generations. It has a photograph of Natasha and family, and it likens members of the Jewish faith to birds. Barkan tells us that the movements of the birds represent “spirits of those who battled and died”. Natasha’s bat mitzvah is not the only event taking place on this day, a “bird mitzvah” is also.

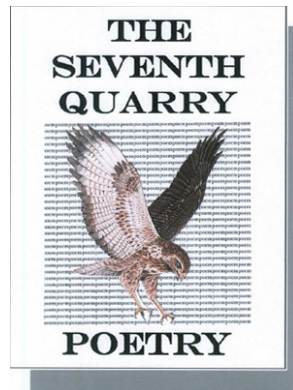
More Mishpocheh gifts us humour in poems such as *MY WIFE SAYS*, reflection and gratitude in pieces like *ON THE EDGE OF EIGHTY* and provokes thought in titles such as *UNDIVIDED*. It is a collection that is appropriate and important for all ages. Barkan is relatable, funny and caring in his delivery and thus, we feel we are witnessing the reminiscences and interpretations of a friend.

It is clear when one closes the book that Barkan has shared with us his wisdom, and this will absolutely inspire the reader to apply his considerations to their own existence. To achieve this alongside laughs and tears in equal measure is to create a collection that will leave one feeling not quite the same as when the book was first picked up. An undeniable pleasure to read and a triumph by Barkan. He has gifted

the reader as well as his own family with this wonderful poetry collection.

MORE MISHPOCHEH by Stanley H. Barkan,
PRICE £6.99 STERLING/\$15 ISBN 978-0-993526-5-8

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ORIGINAL DESCRIPTION

First the café where mother worked six-days-a-week for twenty-six years closed, windows boarded-up, then the rest of the stores, which were so much exactly like the city of Bedford Falls in the

film “It’s a Wonderful Life,” but so very much exactly worse. Mother made straight A’s all through high school, and that was when Latin and Greek were normal subjects to study. My home

Town has metamorphosed into something else. It’s like a film makers nightmare became real. I’ve often wondered why mom never was offered a scholarship to college, but she graduated in

the 1930’s and would be 105 if she were only alive today, but nobody is 105, at least not in my home town. Science can tell you the human eye is self-healing, or self-vision correcting with Lasik

surgery, and the human brain is capable of self-healing the body, perhaps acupuncture stimulates that, but what is incredible is how many cells in our body die every three-seconds and are replaced

with new cells. Our oldest cells are twenty-years old. No matter your age, the cells in your body are not over twenty-years old. Original description, you may be younger than you think you are.

Victor Pearn America

THE UMBER HAZE OF SUMMER

So, like the blue note in a jazz riff, on your first gig as a writer, you covered the story of the most popular writer in the nation of pigment-hating skin tones.

All the Washington dignitaries were there in their finest, and you in jeans and a sweater, on the front row, with a press pass, while NBC, CBS, and ABC wore 800-dollar suits.

Like a coyote singing to the stars a worthy complaint, the author walked onstage wearing a pewter suit, and a smile. The author spoke with slow confidence having honed

his writing skills for twenty years in the Coast Guard. He was \$200,000 in debt on the Frisco Bay when he began researching for his roots. Alex Haley a soft spoken, and

mild mannered man, looked me in the eye saying, “I believe I am a conduit of God.” Always an inspiration. Closing, he invited everybody in the press backstage for a champagne reception.

Victor Pearn America

THE MOMENT

The elderly man,
White flowing hair,
Hands wrinkled by time and sun,
Sat silently in his fall garden.
He sighed watching ghosts
Of the past flowing in the twilight

Of his mind:

He heard his wife humming
While working in the garden
When her breath existed years ago.
Memories awakened...
Faces of loved ones,
All long gone suddenly appeared,
Then disappeared.

He envisioned old faded images
Of tranquil and happy places
Visited as he walked forest paths
Many years ago: Suddenly he sensed The
eroding years ending, and knew the Moment
had finally arrived.

James G. Piatt America

HEED...

the ebony night's
Sprawling stillness, and
The whispering voice of
The wind, curling through
Oak and pine trees, whispering
About fading memories,

the haunting sound
Of a great horned owl
Instructing us in the uses
Of the hours reaching into
Eternity, and the voices of
Night frogs croaking raspy
Melodies trying to soothe
Weary minds.

the raucous voices
And poignant voices of
Yelping coyotes, running
Across the valley, far in the

Distance, cautioning us
About of things we don't
Understand.

old melancholy songs
And love poems, which will create
A happy pensiveness in our
Minds, for these things will
Eventually vanish into forgotten
Memories.

James G. Piatt America

ALL THE PATIENT MINUTE MEN

Head upon chest, mouth slightly open,
sometimes, a soft snore is exhaled,
but there will not be time enough
here, now, to catch up on lost sleep,

and you're too resigned to begin
to read the Times, do a crossword,
or start a conversation with that guy
filling the next seat who exhibits

your same zombie stare, and like you,
sits, stoic, knees sprawled apart,
rear cemented to torn green upholstery
of the long bench outside the fitting room,

because, ninety minutes ago,
your lady spotted that chartreuse sweater,
gave a muted scream, and insisted:
"Oooh! Just one minute more!"

Then, arms full of cashmere,
with a twirl and turn,
she was out of sight; swallowed
into clothing-cluttered racks.

She will be happy there.
The long bench may receive a plaque
honoring all the patient
Minute Men.

Frane Helner America

THEIR GOTTEN GOODS

Ragamuffin children
puny runny-nosed
defiant

in enormous coats
fingers
hidden inside sleeves

shoe-tops
dusted
by coat's hem

Or

Big gangly kids
bashful in skimpy coats
sleeves end mid-forearm

elbows
bare of thread
pouched-out like squirrel cheeks

coat bottoms
skim
chapped knees

Only the rich
have clothes
that fit.

Frane Helner America

MORDECHAI PEREZ

Bone-skinny body white as a sick fish,
craggy face, beaked nose, his garish clothes
bag about non-existent hips
and pool over purple hi-top sneakers

as razor-rayed obsidian eyes pierce into me.
This person has been planted here for long minutes,
standing immobile, stoic,
and causing me to twitch.

Where have I seen him before?
Memory files are scanned,
filtered A to Z,
but nothing clicks.

Now, like a shark
hunting midday's meal,
he smiles at me. *Mordechai*, he says,
and at my blank gape repeats: *Mordechai Perez*.

Finally, the memory filter stops at M.
I know only one Mordechai;
Mordechai the money person,
who is already into his spiel:

*The Senior Frolic tickets are ready for purchase,
only \$36.00 a pair,
You are taking two, are you not...?*
Thus assured, the impetuous Mordechai

manages to rise on tip-toe, which,
to his showman's delight is obviously difficult
in purple hi-top sneakers, ergo
Mordechai celebrates with a quick cavort.

I marvel at the acuity of typecasting;
who could walk away from
Mordechai Perez, the money person,
without tickets for Shakespeare's Shylock?

Frane Helner America

MY THEODORE, MY THEODORE

I used to gallivant along the home-grown sunflowers on my farm.

Their bright, yellow, and menacing petals would outstretch to me,
perhaps seeking a warm embrace from the sun
which, unfortunately, will never happen.

Their patterned, brown faces have no expression
but in the petals they show happiness.

Stuck within the ground with the inability to spread their happiness,
they continuously yearn for the sun's gentle rays
wishing they had their own special relationship
but knowing that it will never be and that the sun wants no one.
The sun is selfish.

My Theodore, my young Theodore once told me this.

He told me the sun was selfish.

The sun gives nurturing to plants for their fruit and nutrients to grow,
so how was the sun selfish?

I'll never understand.

He said that the sun would never learn to love just one flower
and isn't content with just one flower.

The sun wants all the flowers.

He said the sun was like his father.

How could a four-year-old know this?

How could *my* four-year-old know this? Was the ultimate question.

Because he was there when the sun became selfish.

My Theodore used to like to gallivant within the home-grown sunflower fields. But
once his father became selfish, he began to kill the sunflowers.

He would cut their heads off with whatever worked.

Safety scissors, a big kitchen knife,
or just by suffocation with his fat and sweaty hands.

Anything to put them out of their misery of loving the sun
when he knew the sun would never care enough.

My Theodore, my Theodore,
Darling dear, I am sorry for how hard everything was for you
watching the sun become selfish.

Everything to a child is like play until it isn't,
then their dreams turn into nightmares.

The sun becomes the raging star that it is.
The sun becomes the evil one who will destroy the earth
in 2 billion years.

Theodore, my Theodore.

Lock the doors tight so the sun doesn't come in.
Make sure there is not even a streak of light.
I'm sorry, darling dear.

A child's normal fear is the dark.

But my Theodore's fear is the light.

Natasha Rose Clarke America

LAGRANGE POINT

Exhausted between veiled words and syllables,
existing at a Lagrange point between earth and the sun,
shredding silences into pieces in a no-flight zone,
reigniting the hidden stars behind hurricane clouds,
in a vacant lot once sanctified as the theatre of the absurd,
residing in that bizarre land full of space junk,
I can't help wonder why my blazing thoughts
run recklessly without gathering any star dust.

There must be a reason for this endless whirling:
A dervish's life is the ecstasy of the whirl of rupture,
his poetry, the absolute indeterminacy of the cosmos.

Sultan Catto America

RECOLLECTIONS

To a child all cities are indistinguishable.
He acquires wings as he drops from heights, like birds do.

I was just an innocent young lad,
she was about ten years older than me,
when the harbor of the unknown opened up,
words flew out of me, futile phantasies.
Recognizing her shadow on the ground,
unable to lift my eyes off,
I floated in silence, shook like a boat in the wind filling the sails.

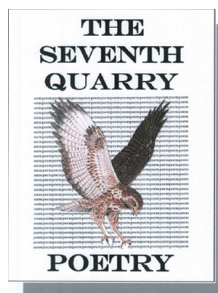
Her apparition raised a flight of fresh cries of early birds of dawn
as I crossed the furious waters of time in my notebooks,
supersymmetric phantasies concocted by pen.

It was a long ago. One day, placing her arms around me,
enticing me to her place, taught me to love,
instructed me on how to please a woman.

I wrote simple poems to amuse her,
and her young breasts listened to me
as children sitting around a campfire
listening to a charming tale.

Years flew by. To this day I still have not forgotten
how cypresses nearby shook with birds,
wind with smell of acacias swelled its wings,
how a raven drifted across cold space,
and silence froze, but not those memories.

Sultan Catto America



**AMERICAN POET BILL WOLAK
INTERVIEWS
ALBANIAN POET JETON KELMANDI**



Jeton Kelmendi © 2019 Jeton Klemendi

Jeton Kelmendi was born in the city of Peja, Kosovo, in 1978 and completed elementary school there. He continued his studies at the University of Pristina, where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mass Communication and subsequently completed his graduate studies at the Free University of Brussels, Belgium, specializing in International Affairs and Security Studies. Later, he finished his second Masters degree in Diplomacy. Kelmendi then completed his PhD in Security Studies; his thesis is entitled “The Influence of Media in EU Political Security Issues.” Currently, he is a member of the European Academy of Science and Arts. Over the years, he has written poetry, prose, essays, articles, and short stories. He contributes regularly to many newspapers in Albania and abroad writing about cultural and political topics, especially those concerning international affairs. As a poet, Jeton Kelmendi became well known in Kosovo after the

publication of his first book in 1999 entitled *Shekulli i Premtimeve* (The Century of Promises). Afterward, he published a number of other books. His poems are translated in more than twenty-nine languages and published in several international anthologies of literature. He is perhaps the most translated Albanian-language poet, and his work is well known throughout Europe. In many articles and essays, international critics and poets have hailed Kelmendi as an exceptional representative of contemporary Albanian poetry and a celebrated European poet. He is a member of many international poetry associations and is a contributor to numerous literary and cultural magazines, especially in English, French, and Romanian languages. His poetry features love lyrics and elliptical verse intertwined with subtle metaphors and intricate symbolism. Kelmendi presently resides and works in Brussels, Belgium.

Bill Wolak: You are a poet, a journalist, and an expert on international security. In Brussels, Belgium, you have a special diplomatic status as an independent consultant on democratic media in the Balkans. Can you explain a little bit about your role in this position and exactly what type of things you report about to Belgium?

Jeton Kelmendi: Yes, I work in Brussels reporting about issues regarding free speech in the media throughout the Balkans. What I do is to investigate the various aspects of the emerging democratic role of media in Balkans, and I report my analysis of emerging trends directly to the EU. Besides my commitment to poetry, I have always been fascinated with the interconnection of media, national security, politics, and international relations. The EU in Belgium has granted me official status in order to protect me during my investigations, which involve traveling throughout the Balkans.

BW: During the war with Serbia, you served as a commander of an elite team of Special Forces. Why did you decide to enter the military?

JK: During the war in Kosovo from 1998–1999, I was a young man. I had just started my studies to prepare myself for the future. But at that time, life was very difficult for an ethnic Albanian like myself as Yugoslavia was disintegrating. The life of a young person in Kosovo was cheap, worth only the price of a bullet because the Serbian paramilitary could shoot anyone without any consequences at all. Trapped in this situation, I was one of those who lost almost everything—house, belongings, friends, family. So I decided to become a soldier and attempt to liberate my country. It was a very difficult decision, but now I am proud of my choice. I had studied jujitsu, which is a mixture of karate, judo and boxing, since I

was nine years old. In addition, I participated in many sports during my formative years, so I was ready physically. One factor that set me apart from other young men at the time was that I had military training and had already served as a soldier for a short period of time.

Now since the Kosovo Liberation Army did not have many professional officers, I was given the rank of commander. During the period of war in Kosovo, I commanded some special forces, and the fact that I did not lose many soldiers makes me proud. War is not good, but when you have to protect your country and your people, you have to serve as a soldier. Nevertheless, during that time for some months, it happened that we could not see any young women. When I finally saw a young woman my own age, I mean literally just saw her, I wrote one of the best poems of my entire life. In this context, I want to say that love is stronger than war, because in war, where a soldier can be killed in any battle, one does not think about war, about death, the soldier thinks only about life and love.

BW: How did you become a commander of such an elite unit?

JK: As I said before, the Kosovo Liberation Army was a voluntary army, and, of course, not a professional army because we did not have the logistics from an organized state. Therefore, it was necessary to find the most qualified and athletic recruits, and I think also I showed my ability, so they made me a commander of a special forces team. However, the position in which you serve is not that important; what's important is the satisfaction you feel when you can serve people, and especially when you bring freedom to the country and manage to protect the civilians from an awful death.

BW: Like so many people in Kosovo, your family lost everything in the war with Serbia. Can you explain how this happened?

JK: During the war from 1998–1999, life in Kosovo was unimaginably terrible. People who worked all their lives to own some property and build a home that a family needs, lost everything in a moment. Our house, the house where I was born and in which I grew up, was looted by Serbian military and paramilitary and then burned to the ground. Members of my family were burned alive, others were shot. Just imagine how you would feel under such circumstances. Throughout Kosovo, members of many families were massacred by the Serbian Army, and when you hear some people's stories, it sounds like genocide. But that is not something I wish to talk about.

BW: After combat, some soldiers experience post-traumatic stress syndrome.

Have you suffered from PTSD, and if so, how has PTSD affected your life?

JK: I think that it's normal to experience post-traumatic stress syndrome after fighting in a war, and most countries have developed special treatments for the soldiers after combat. However, in Kosovo, we did not have anything like that. In Kosovo after the war, we did not have any national institutions. It was the United Nations Mission which administrated the country, and as usual in these missions, successes was elusive. The UN Mission tried many experiments throughout Kosovo. For example, in Kosovo after the war, the six percent of the Serbian minority were represented as more then 20 percent in all newly created institutions. Consequently, I did not see any future for me in my homeland, and one day seven years after the war, I left my country, and I went to Belgium. In Belgium I was treated well, and I managed to stabilize myself, finish my higher education, and prepare for my future life.

BW: What are some of your favorite things about living in Pristina? What do you look forward to the most after you return home from a long trip to Brussels or from a distant poetry festival?

JK: Yes, it's true that I returned back in Pristina to live after more then a decade living in Brussels. As a matter of fact, I still spend part of every year in Brussels, and I consider Belgium my second homeland. But Pristina is the capital of my country, and, of course, I feel good living there and contributing whatever I can to my people. What I look forward to most after I travel are my family, my wife, my son, and my daughter.

BW: On the other hand, can you explain some of the critical problems that Kosovo faces today?

JK: Kosovo still has a lot of problems. The most crucial difficulty is the widespread corruption in the government and in almost in all sectors of life in the country. This problem is very complicated, because these leaders are supported by governments around the world. On the one hand, many governments proclaim that these leaders are corrupt, while on the other hand, they collaborate with them as if they were not. So this is one practice we must learn to fight. Kosovo still needs to join such international institutions as the United Nations and European Union. Otherwise, the overall economic situation is still a great problem. Young people do not have jobs. Citizens of Kosovo can not move as freely as all other citizens of the Balkans.

BW: You were born into a family of famous poets. Who were these distinguished

poets, and what was it like growing up in such a milieu?

JK: I was born in an Albanian family from western Kosovo, and during my childhood the Albanian tradition was very important to my family. Rugova, the region from where my father and my mother come, was known for myths and legends because it is a highland, and there people fought for the fatherland. My father's side of the family was widely known as martial protectors of the country from its various invaders, while, on the other hand, my mother's side of the family was celebrated for its intellectuals and artists. Four of my mother's brothers are writers, but one of them, Azem Shkreli, is considered the most acclaimed modern Albanian poet. It seems to me that both sides of my family have influenced and inspired me to some degree. It may be that my lyrical poetry is directly influenced by my maternal uncle Azem Shkreli, whereas my more patriotic works spring from my paternal grandfather and his family, many of whom died fighting for the freedom of Albania. In the North of Albania, in Kosovo, and in Montenegro, the Kelmendi clan is well known. This clan has an illustrious past, and its descendants feel very proud about their heritage. In fact, one of the early Kelmendis became a pope in Rome, Pope Clement XI, who reigned from 1700 to 1721.

BW: When did you first start writing poetry?

JK: My first poem was published in 1990 when I was less than 12 years old. I started writing before that as a very young person, but that was my first publication in a local magazine. So I've been writing for many years now, and I would say that spiritually I find myself through writing poetry, plays, and literature in general.

BW: How many books have you published in Albanian?

JK: So far in Albanian, I have published ten books of poetry, four books on political science, and two plays, but all together including translations I have published more than fifty books in twenty-nine different languages. In addition, I have represented my country in several different poetry anthologies and encyclopedias, as well as at numerous poetry festivals.

BW: Into what other languages has your poetry been translated?

JK: As I have mentioned, my poetry has been translated and published in twenty-nine languages around the world. I am very happy that my poetry books have appeared in China, Egypt, India, Ukraine, Romania, France, Armenia, and in several other countries. Also, these countries have presented my works in book fairs, libraries, poetry festivals, as well as in books of literary criticism.

BW: When did you first start attending international poetry festivals?

JK: The first poetry festival which I took part in was in 2008 in Paris. There I received The Solenzara prize. This was the beginning of my career as a poet, and since that time I have received several prizes in different countries. The many poetry festivals which have invited me to various parts of Europe and beyond are very important in general because they help poets like me become better known throughout the world. We live in a world of globalization, and it is important to be present at these poetry festivals because they offer the possibility to meet so many international poets and translators. To me, poetry festivals are not just trips where I present my poems, but more than that, because in these festivals I get to better understand the organization of these events, I exchange experiences with other poets, get to listen to different languages, and have the opportunity to experience diverse cultures.

PUBLISHED WORKS

Poetry:

Shekulli i Premtimeve (The Century Promises), 1999.

Përtej Heshtjes (Beyond Silence), 2002.

Në qoftë mesditë (If It Is Afternoon), 2004.

Më fal pak Atdhe (Fatherland, Pardon Me), 2005.

Ku shkojnë ardhjet? (Where Are the Arrivals Going?), 2007.

Erdhe për gjurmë të erës (You Arrived for the Traces of Wind), 2008.

Koha kurë të ketë kohë (Time When It Has Time), 2009.

Rrugëtimi i mendimeve (Wandering Thoughts), 2010.

Pagezimi I shpirtit (Baptism of the Spirit), 2012.

Thërras gjërat e harruara (I Call Forgotten Things), 2013.

Drama:

Zonja Fjalë (Mrs. Word), 2007.

Play and Anti-play (*Lojë dhe kundër lojë*), 2011.

Political Science:

EU Mission in Kosovo After Its Independence in 2010, USA.

Bad Times for the Knowledge about 2011, Pristina, Kosovo.

NATO-EU Missions: Cooperative or Competitive 2012, Tirana, Albania.

Media Influence in Security Politics in EU, 2016, Brussels, Belgium.

FIVE POEMS BY JETON KELMENDI

THE WORD THAT CROSSED SILENCE

Yesterday I was accustomed
To speak only a little
I was filled with the breathing of sadness
In the most remote areas
Of your eyes
Since long ago I began to arrive
From you
To speak silently to you
To confess in you
For you
And for me

Yesterday I thought
To say to you
That you are
The bread of poetry
The water of the word
Me for you
The most sung song
Of all ages

Yesterday I wanted to be quiet
To talk only a little
To become a shadow
Obscuring sunlight
I wanted
To trespass on
All the maliciousness
Of humanity

Yesterday I saw
How I can be discovered again
From you
How can I
Be found again

From you
Early or later
Yesterday
I struggled
To become happy most of the time.

Pristina, May, 2005

NAKED

I wouldn't change our language
for anyone

But today with you I will change it
One hour
Two
Three
Until it touches the end of the word
I would say everything
In a naked way
Just like a first kiss

You are cold looking through my eyes
Naked
I would never change you with anything.

UNDER THE SHADE OF MEMEORY

I told you something forgotten
The things that you will not remember even tomorrow

Forgiveness is always much more ancient
When silence is traveling

At the oak dried from the sun
I am awaiting you
In the same line with the poem
Hung in the abyss of the mountain

There I await only love
And I sat to relax

I tried to

Exhaust the autumn or to dream the light
Only to say a word

June, 2004

ONE WORD GREW IN THE EARTH OF THE TONGUE

I spoke to my self
The broken strings of the legend
It is good
To keep them in our hands

With good thoughts
Which always stay alone
Relax once in a while near the fireplace
You have never been like today
In a blink of an eye
One word
Grew in the earth of the tongue
And grew until the sky
Laid her roots until the darkest areas
Today is taking care of tomorrow
After
Waters and entire soils
One verse of the poet
Together with his lightning
Farewell said the cold
We will meet
One day between the hills

Brussels, February 27, 2007

I DREAM ABOUT HER FALLING ASLEEP WITH ME

As much as you want to
Escape from my winter

You, antisaga who doesn't understand my spring
In you was growing the curiosity of waiting
Which scared the night

Then sleep did a marvelous thing
It dreamed
Her sleeping with me
Freely
Let's say she departed
To be silenced with anxiety

Without the smallest
Worry
Water took water from her thirst
The events descended down to earth

Arrived as they were not conceived
Suddenly
With eyes, they brought her toward me

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BOOKS AND MAGAZINES RECEIVED

THE MATTER OF RHYME/VERSE-MUSIC AND THE RING OF IDEAS.

Available from Sussex Academic Press. Price: £25.00/\$34.95. "Christopher Norris is one of the most erudite, original and adventurous English-language poets of our time."—Terry Eagleton, Distinguished Professor of English Literature, University of Lancaster.

Editor's note: A book by Christopher Norris, a renowned British philosopher and literary critic, as well as a poet, is forthcoming from The Seventh Quarry Press.

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE by Yoon-Ho Cho. Available from Cross-Cultural Communications, USA and Expatriate Literature, USA. Price: \$15.00.

Inspired by a sensitive and diligent observation of nature and life, these striking poems are powered by beautiful sense-impressions and an effervescent use of language. A book of poetry that would make a wonderful addition to any bookshelf.

REMEMBRANCE by Swansea's Tuesday's Poetry Group. Price: £4.50. An

impressive collection of the Group members' poems in this annual publication. Guest poet: Peter Thabit Jones. All the money from sales of the anthology goes to a local charity.

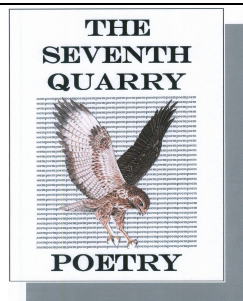
STORM CAMP by John Hart. Available from Sugartown Publishing, USA. Price: \$16.95. "Hart is a poet capable of drawing threads of his attention together into luminous transactions with a visible and secular nature" —*Yale Review*.

A ROOM IN THE KOREAN MUSEUM by Christina Hemsley. Information on the book available via christina@hemsley.com No price. A beautifully produced book which contains a sequence of thirteen poems and supporting images. It is an intriguing and original work.

NEW POEMS by Jim Young. Available via Amazon Kindle. Price: £2.00. The 108 pages of collected poems from 2018 show Welsh poet Jim Young at his best: lyrical, observant, and using language in an economic and very effective way. It is well worth checking out a poet who deserves far more recognition for his natural, impressive skills.

PUNCHING CORK STOPPERS by Neil Leadbeater. Available from Original Plus Press. Price: £3.50. "The writing is elegant, 'word perfect', to quote the opening poem of the collection"—Jane Seabourne.

FINDING THE RIVER HORSE by Neil Leadbeater. Available from Littoral Press. Price: £7.99. "Evocative, moving and beautifully written, Neil Leadbeater's poems reveal a hidden world of secrets and delights"—Sarah Miles.



THE SEVENTH QUARRY
SWANSEA POETRY MAGAZINE

DAWN, BELOVED

as my dreams all be
float
floating
 floated down

with April raindrops
draping down

the mountain slopes

I have been woken
 out of my doors

 by the damselfly

waiting on the sculpture there
unveiled in the noontide

light and giving it away

passing and at dusk
 just now as it is

I have been

cleansed by sudden thunder
suddenly thundering

what angel wings
 have appeared
to me
through 300 million years

of holy designing
disclosing
the Age of the ages

tambourines and faces
and trombones blasting

all over the place
before my very eyes
these colorful sightings
be
praised be praised

it is good and righteous
living out

the harmonies however we may

whatsoever is becoming
of all this

turning of events

as it unfolds
Tohu and Bohu

primordial trust

changing everything
about

our stories each
one and all of them

being ourselves
in this very process

Damselflies and their relatives are an ancient group. The oldest fossils are of the *Protodonata* group from 325 million years ago. This group included the largest insect that ever lived, *Meganeuropsis permiana*, with a wingspan around 30 inches. Damselflies are found on every continent except Antarctica.

John Dotson America

FORTHCOMING: APRIL 2019

AMERICA, AERONWY, AND ME
Dylan Thomas Tribute Tour

Peter Thabit Jones

(with contributions from some of the Tour hosts)

In April 2008, Welsh poet Peter Thabit Jones and Aeronwy Thomas, the daughter of Dylan Thomas, crossed America, from New York to California, on the *Dylan Thomas Tribute Tour of America*. The tour was organised by Stanley H. Barkan, their American publisher and a poet, in conjunction with Vince Clemente, American poet and critic. As a result of one of their events in Manhattan, Catrin Brace of the Welsh Government in New York commissioned them to write the first-ever *Dylan Thomas Walking Tour of Greenwich Village, New York*, which is now available as a tourist pocket-book, a guided version via New York Fun Tours, and a Dylan Thomas Centenary (2014) smartphone version.

This book, in memory of Aeronwy, who died in July 2009, is a memento celebrating the tenth anniversary of the poetry-reading tour that saw her and Peter following in some of the American footsteps of her famous father.

Co-published by Cross-Cultural Communications, USA

and

The Seventh Quarry Press, UK

Price: £10/\$20

WAITING FOR SNOW

Just past the winter solstice,
narrow days, cold and rough,
set a time-limit on the sun's warm face;
muffled, we brave late dawn and early night
through frosted air
as the last leaves
crackle from the trees
and we wait ...

Already the Christmas spirit has appeared
to appease the seasonal gloom,
bright glittering lights and carolling,
echoes of Christmas greetings:
Good will to all
in the world
and still we wait ...
and we wait ... for snow.

And when the first large snowflakes whisper
their crystal magic into winter's breeze,
they flutter like minute prayer flags,
their message in multi-patterned form,
blessing the season
with whitest purity.
Why is it that Christmas snow
stirs us so?

Jean Salkilld Wales

COTSWOLD BRONZE

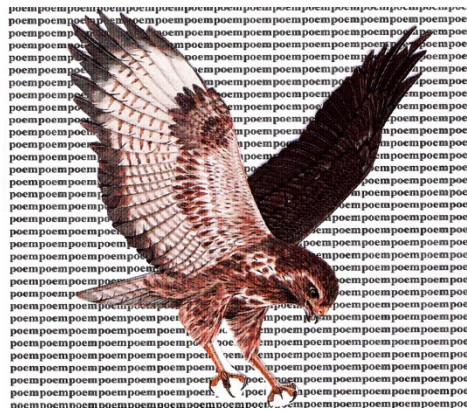
Autumn is slow to die this year;
the bronze glow of woodland,
tinged with strokes of copper,
casts itself across the countryside;
leaves still cling hard to trees,
a gentle breeze lays
crisp, thin patterns at their feet,

alloys of late summer's palette.

This Cotswold valley breathes,
not the harsh breath of forged metals
but of sunlight in harmony with the earth.
Nature lingers with invisible fingers
to feed deep, unseen places,
wildlife is losing its voice.

Trees huddle like ancient warriors,
solitary survivors break the ranks
long-lived with many tales to tell;
but moods of nature change so rapidly,
the pleasure is in this moment.

Jean Salkilld Wales



LOOK OUT FOR ISSUE 30: Summer/Autumn 2019

