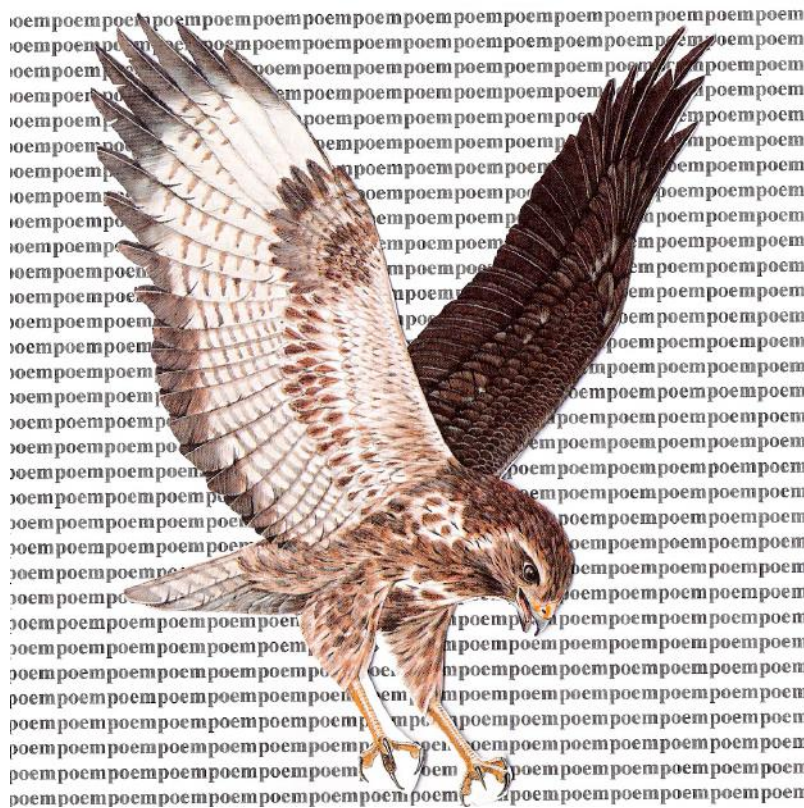


# THE SEVENTH QUARRY



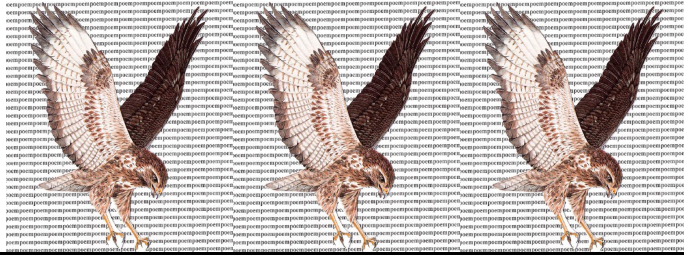
# POETRY

**ISSUE TWENTY-THREE**

**WINTER/SPRING 2016**

**SWANSEA POETRY MAGAZINE**

**THE**

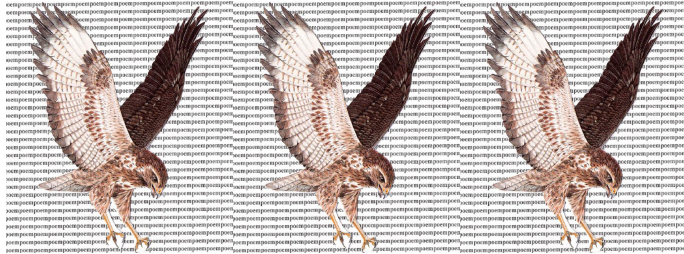


**SEVENTH**



**QUARRY**

**SWANSEA POETRY MAGAZINE**



**ISSUE 23**  
**WINTER/SPRING 2016**

**EDITORIAL**  
**ISSUE TWENTY-THREE**  
**WINTER/SPRING 2016**

This twenty-third issue features work from America, England, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, and Wales. It includes a Poet Profile of Polish poet Tomasz Sobieraj; an interview with leading Bangladeshi-American poet Hassanal Abdullah; and an interview with Dr. H.K. Kaul, President of The Poetry Society (India).

The collaboration between The Seventh Quarry Press and Stanley H. Barkan's Cross-Cultural Communications, New York, continues into 2016. We have recently co-published *THE RED OF LIFE: SELECTED WORKS* by Czech-American writer Theofil Halama.

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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**PLEASE NOTE: The price and subscription increases. These are  
the first increases in ten years.**

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  
Coupons



PETER THABIT JONES  
(photo © 2016 Robert L. Harrison)



VINCE CLEMENTE  
(photo © 2016 Anne Clemente)

**This issue is dedicated to Welsh singer-songwriter Dan  
Murray (12<sup>th</sup> October, 1967 to 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2015), a  
dear and very talented friend who will be missed by  
those who knew him.  
Please visit: [www.dan-murray.com](http://www.dan-murray.com)**

## TEA MARSALA

After the spiced meal,  
a heat so lush I wept,  
cinnamon and cardamom  
to soothe the mouth.

A new taste, a new land  
explored in a new  
neighborhood restaurant.

I'm longing to return  
to a country I've never seen,  
only tasted.

Oh, Mother India,  
your ancient languages  
already enflame my tongue.

Ellen Pickus    America

## INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY ON THE BEACH

An empty shell (you  
thought you knew) suddenly drives  
itself into sand.

Ellen Pickus    America

---

***The Colour of Saying*** - an anthology inspired by a Dylan Thomas Competition organized by Peter Thabit Jones and Anne Pelleschi, in collaboration with Stanley H. Barkan, as part of the Dylan Thomas Centenary in 2014. Contributors range from ten years-old to seventy years-old and represent many countries throughout the world. The anthology also includes translations of Dylan Thomas's *The Hunchback in the Park* by international translators. Cross-Cultural Communications, USA/The Seventh Quarry Press, UK. **Price £9/\$15**

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## **GHOST GUM**

All things breathe from the world-dawn  
and from the red earth of the thirsty Centre  
deep dream-time Creation reveals itself,

breathing its ever-living spirit  
into the waiting ghost gum tree,  
walking on sand plains, creek flats, rocky slopes.

By day its white bark, sun-bleached staves,  
and canopy of ever green  
cast a light shade for resting wallabies.

Starlight silver guards the night  
moving all to feel and know  
the hero spirit-traveller within.

Shared spirit of the song-lines,  
marker of sacred places,  
breathe in unison  
with all living things  
and give form to the once shapeless land.

Jean Salkilld    Wales

Note: Ghost Gum ~ *Corymbia aparreringa*

## **Looking in to... the space**

Preface

Looking in to... the space

A room.

Two people. Genders unimportant. Reign

A minimalist room

Echoing of walls

of voices

In a torrent

of sounds

or

Argument?

time and cars hiss by

Jonathan Beale England

### **THREAD OF LIGHT by Jackie Domingo**

An illustrated collection of poetry and prose.

Paperback. Price: £16.70

Thread of Light, a collection of poetry and prose with a difference. The author has used some of her own photographs as illustrations, and added an Author's Note after each piece to give a brief comment and insight into her thoughts and feelings at the time of writing. Available via Amazon UK (with free postage and packing within the UK).

## **DROWNING IN NIGHTS**

(After Pablo Neruda)

Drowning in nights I tunnel with phantom  
instruments to your earthen eyes.

There my separateness concentrates  
and my shrunken lungs pump like bellows.

I throw thoughts at your hologram face,  
which casts a beam of moon-sorrow.

You control only dreams, spirit-woman,  
and sometimes terrible oceanic prophecies.

Drowning in nights I tunnel  
to those seams that feed your earthen eyes.

I think I hear mice rattle the boards  
like my mind still scratching after you.

Dawn rides her gunmetal helicopter, hurling  
blunt shafts through curtained windows.

Graham Allison    Wales

### **SANDY: CHRONICLES OF A SUPERSTORM**

Poetry by Michael Foldes and paintings and photographs by Christie Devereaux

“This distinctive visual-literary coalescing of art and poetry by two 21st Century creatives sensitively and perceptively recalls the overwhelming catastrophe known as ‘Superstorm Sandy’ that hit New Jersey and New York on October 29-30, 2012...”–Dr. Jose Rodeiro, Ph.D., Art Professor New Jersey City University.

Information on the book/signed copies available directly from the author/artist.  
Contact [mfoldes@stny.rr.com](mailto:mfoldes@stny.rr.com) for instructions on How to Buy. Also available on [Amazon](#).



## **VIOLA**

### **I**

I am won  
Because this time I was not slain  
But the eyes that penetrated the mind.  
I simply surrendered because I knew  
It was the scarlet “the end”. English help me!  
Me, who shaped the blonde that dominated  
The pearls and the gold, have been drained  
By the viola, which crept in the armor  
And harmed the heart. She is in me.  
I possessed her. She possesses me  
And the rage of a civilization,  
The Roman soldier has been soldered to  
The earth and sold like a slave...  
My body is not more mine  
And I have terrible forebodings that  
This bodes forth the fall of  
My vindictive poetry who  
Wants to take the world  
And shoulder my race, ancient lunatics  
And seers who served the shear doom.  
Can German be sweet?  
I found in this funny bitch  
A welter of humour, feckless and  
Wits that I unwitted but decided  
To be sized and lost my Latin tongue  
To take on German accents  
And ape these barbarians...  
But I barred my decency. The deck  
Of my ship is covered with snow  
And this shows the secret of my mortality  
That tempered my finality.  
Now, I can dream to die  
Because I desired to be beaten  
In a field of flowers and trees  
That raves in the tamed wind.

## **ENGLISH**

There is a law,  
A man has to marry  
Who should have been his mother  
And this makes me feel two thousand years old,  
Because I hold the language of Dante,  
But now I want to come back home.  
The pilgrimage is smooth  
But tempests spells me here  
And keep my mental cage.  
This is the curse of my race  
But I have to go on  
And lead onward the people  
I was entrusted with.  
They are in me. How can it be  
That I misgive?  
Now, I am really tragic  
Because I am beyond Sanctity.  
I am a victim.  
Someone keeps me a place  
In Greek tragedy.  
Men can say that culpability  
Has red eyes and this likes  
A new dress, the shroud of virginity.  
Veils fly like flags  
Flapping in the sky  
Where I cannot fly.  
A girl gave me a drawing,  
Token of her, just to remember  
She was a silly child.  
In it I was a creature, I had a head and two legs.  
I was in the nature of things.  
I, silly thing, was aging  
As it used to be  
Because I do not want be forever young.

Domenico Iannaco    Italy

## II

I do not speak in the way my mother would speak.  
To wake my Europa, I am not  
Understood by my mum  
And the mammas of Italian  
Stinks like cheese  
Like prejudices that nest  
At best in me.  
But what have I done?  
I can use Latin like a master  
And I must muster my courage  
To be Mister Iannaco when  
I was simply demonic Domenico  
To master this new mean  
That I see like a lover.  
We had to be united  
Because she can be the voice  
Of a State, the choice of a nation  
Melancholic to be.  
How can I call you stranger  
If we quarrel in the same language.  
It is my usage to flirt in English  
Although the charming French girls  
Say that I am not frank because  
My sarcasm reached spasms  
When I pulled their legs  
Raving to kiss their legs.  
This is another side of my blood.  
I moan to be heard.  
To me they are not a herd.  
A German told me  
Words of love in this  
Dispossessed language,  
That is clear and long.  
But what I long for  
Cannot be shared by my father  
That fathered a stranger.  
I will obey only to fay

In the hay, sleeping,  
I will be always a young man.

Domenico Iannaco Italy

## **SHED DOORS**

A shed door rots from the bottom up  
as rain soaked the edge, flaking the thermals,  
and fingers of each board.

I see it in her unsteadiness with every rain  
soaked bone that has sun dried or been  
fire warmed at home.

Her father's too, from the cycling of filling  
gas streetlamps along the coastline,  
his three speed struggling to smooth things

One after the other stumbling along with age  
their similar strong stance, keeping things  
closed and inward. A heavy appearance.

Locked tight, now speaking out in grimace  
and groan. The creaking of shed panels,  
the inside trying to escape.

Gareth Culshaw Wales

## **ONE HOB**

The kitchen dustier than it was  
everything as still as a photo from years ago;

one hob used, flickering gas light, small pan  
for soup or beans. sometimes spuds would

boil, creating a steam like breath  
to keep things moving, chugging away;

mugs on wooden pegs, many used for  
the occasional visit. His own on the end.

his feet the only pair to enter the tiled floor  
with paper thin carpet. The hum from the  
fridge freezer, with electric kettle on top.  
nails and screws in cupboards, waiting for the  
day to be used, stubbornly kept, for leaks, draughts  
and other wear and tear jobs.

the one hob lit with a flame scratched on the side  
of a box. A quick burst of flame that showed the  
slowness to react. Shuffling through the door with  
life weightiness in joints, before turning back  
heading for the light.

Gareth Culshaw    Wales

## **A CATALYST'S TAKE ON CRITICAL EMPATHY**

I stick strictly to the tunnels  
that run in endless lateral lines.  
Entrances so innocuous from above  
they emit normal vitriolic fonts.  
Then the rather unpleasant  
categories rain down.  
By now it's far too late  
for cubical fortification  
and stabilizers are of ineffective  
menace,  
like parameterized worms  
learning their orange tongues  
are a delicacy in this pink light.

Colin James    America

## **ENTROPY AND SOME MASKED OPPORTUNISTS**

Someone has been dragging  
a heavy object through the grass.  
Can't make out the sex  
or frequency of inclination.  
Not much to go on yet  
just two temporary furrows.  
A pause there for weight adjustment,  
and again here to smoke a cigarette.  
Turkish. Available only at  
the import-export kiosk in Times Square,  
ruling out any American suspects.  
The security video turned up  
some unintentional innocence  
of hysterical accuracy.

Colin James    America

## **TIME IS A HORSE**

On the bus in Wales I happen  
to be the one traveling through  
on holiday, not the one in the midst  
of her shopping, his business deal, the woman  
staring steadfastly out the window, on her way  
to the oncologist. Today, I am not the one  
dying, though time is a horse, a runaway  
none of us can dismount and so  
the need is to find a way to enjoy the wind  
that snatches handfuls of your hair as you race,  
the horse's mane, your mane, the rhythm  
and energy of the haunches powering under you,  
their easy determination  
to go on running.

Christine M. Gelineau    America

EDITOR'S NOTE: This poem originally appeared in *Louisiana Literature* 29.2, Winter 2012.

## **RAG RUG**

Twisting yarn, torn fragments  
Of material  
Hooked, pushed and pulled  
Through Hessian holes  
Held together by love  
They come as one  
In a myriad of colours  
To make a rug.  
They start life anew  
In front of the dancing flames  
Upon a cold tiled floor  
Toes wriggle in their depth  
They hold hope for the future  
Among their many strands  
A celebration of life.

Bess Miles-Duncan    England

## **GOING UP, COMING DOWN**

A little slice of humble pie  
to help that high and mighty pride  
go down easier  
as it edges you out  
a bit too close for comfort  
to the crumbling ledge  
of a precarious plateau

My Father always warned me  
about the fall  
that hubris leads to  
but that thin red line  
between confidence and cockiness  
can sometimes be  
a difficult delineation to discern

Scott Thomas Outlar    America

## **WEIGHING IT OUT**

It's probably true...  
enough

to get by  
in this world  
of lowdown  
cheapskate  
bad apples

but...

It's probably not light enough  
to best the feather  
on the final scale

Scott Thomas Outlar    America

## **INVISIBLE**

It made a miniature of life  
and shrunk me to a doll,  
watered down blockage to a flow,  
turned solid walls hollow.

Words shone like a trapeze artist  
under the light of euphoria.  
Ideas streamed like a gulp  
of Chardonnay might fill a crystal tulip.

My mood elevated to a heavenly plane  
occupied by angels and gods.  
Sometimes the haze of chaos,  
made me blind to the precarious,  
as if I disappeared from the real.  
Once, I woke up invisible.

John Saunders    Ireland



## SOUVENIR

A brass First World War mortar  
shell beaten flat,

cut in the shape of a scimitar.  
Its small handle is shaped

from a spent bullet case.  
On the blade a hammered

inscription; *Rory O'Connor,*  
*Quarter Master Sargent, 1st East Yorks.*

Did he make this souvenir  
one night sunk in a marshy trench

as he recuperated from the last advance.?  
Did he die in the next one?

Or was it made by another,  
whose name is not remembered?

Did the bullet kill a soldier?

John Saunders    Ireland

## THE WHISTLE BLOWER'S LAMENT

I am silent. Perfunctory.  
Behind the facade  
the march of minuted meetings  
is scoped for betrayal,  
stamped and stapled.  
Filed.

At night the hand of anonymity  
hurts each sheet  
until it accepts bureaucracy,  
where fact is not real  
and statement  
here say.

I arrest words like criminals,  
speak the unwritten,  
pour truth into secrets until they blurt.  
I am not in the public interest.  
Redact.  
Injunct.

John Saunders    Ireland

### **WITTGENSTEIN IN SWANSEA**

He is no longer in Berlin,  
Cambridge or in the Austrian army,  
but poses for a photograph  
wearing an open-necked shirt,  
breathing the Welsh ozone  
he appears relaxed  
waiting for the inevitable  
moment of the camera's execution.  
The opera of words and the eloquent  
sounds of the bay within  
hearing of his language philosophy.  
The holiday talk,  
the demolition of tradition,  
those limits unknown  
that never cease.  
The equation of mathematics  
witnessed by a full moon  
through the endless  
branches of a computed summer.

Byron Beynon    Wales

## THE MINIATURIST IN PALERMO

*(In the 12th century, artists from Persia labored for Norman kings.)*

At times I catch  
a scent of salt,  
of saffron, of nutty oil smoking  
in a pan,

and I almost feel a hand  
tighten on my robe

and I hunger  
as if I've awakened from a long sleep  
and fever has left me feeling hollow.

I don't remember my home.

Only wind.

Sharp grit lodged in my hair,  
against my skin,  
wormed  
into my blanket  
and scratched me awake.

Grit  
swallowed in mouthfuls of bread  
torn from hot loaves,

their doughy heat soothing  
as a breast in slumber.

Aileen Bassis    America

## SUMMER SATURDAY ON FOURTH STREET

the singer cried out, it's the end of the world song

every one roared      yeah

on their feet, drinking beer,  
fist bumps, a brush-stroked snare drum  
    welcome end of the world

    welcome twenty-first century  
and sun-hat wearing babies  
who may open their nonagenarian eyelids  
to another century's reel

    maybe      their world will end  
    dancing

    welcome  
as a sun-glazed drunk  
who bandy-legged  
sways in synching rhythm,  
hooked by a maenad's seaweed-colored hair  
damp against her hot pink shirt and tattoos rushing  
along her thighs and up a rotund rollicking ass

    welcome  
frolic panegyric to summer flesh  
festooned in dandelion, coral and grape  
glitter skirting pale forearms blushing rose,  
legs browning, drowned  
in the fathomless dark of oiled bellies

    welcome  
arcane anarchy that ends a beginning  
in rhyme or song imploding  
the drumbeat's calculus, parsing  
time's incremental tap-steps

one, two, and four  
    add,  
multiply, divide to infinity  
and clap in chorus

under August sun  
and clasp again each  
breath and breathe  
our soot-filled air,  
alive with summer pollen.

Aileen Bassis    America

### **ALICE B. TOKLAS: I HEARD A BELL**

when we met.

I looked in Gertrude's eyes and emptiness  
blinked back, leaving me free

as smoke, nebulous  
as cirrus clouds and spreading  
like a flooded river valley

without an edge  
or any boundary.

I weigh her words  
falling from lips  
slim as orchid petals

and I marvel  
as her body rises splendid  
as the Pyrenees, traversed

by pilgrims on their knees  
searching for a miracle.

Aileen Bassis    America

### **To The Lower Manhattan Skyline**

driving down communipaw avenue  
past ed's glass works, o'lala empanada,  
sudz's laundromat — bags and leaves flew  
by — the occasional walker

held their heads low,  
not looking up as I braked to let  
them cross — my rear view window  
brilliant with a violent mass of sunset,

headlights on, windshield darkening below a sky  
smudged by a streaming  
pink rainbow pointing down like  
a finger stroke of god to the tower beaming  
back the remaining sun, a dazzled torch blinding us  
with unwelcome memories drawn in dust

Aileen Bassis    America

**as I a-wake**

the familiar, diurnal, cortisol-laced *duende*

—the *feeling*—

comes to me

of the pulsating (W)hole

a-waring spirit of the depths

spirit of the age

vortexes at all scales in all dimensions

of the Cosmic Systole/Diastole

dreams death rebirth

as I a-wake

John Dotson    America

## Interview with Hassanal Abdullah, Bangladeshi-American Poet



Hassanal Abdullah © 2016 Bill Wolak

**Hassanal Abdullah**, author of 29 books including 14 collections of poetry, was born in Gopalganj, Bangladesh. He immigrated to New York in 1990 and earned his Bachelor and Masters in Mathematics at Hunter College of the City University of New York. He is now a NYC high school math teacher. He edits a bilingual poetry magazine, *Shabdaguchha*. His poetry, in original Bengali text and in English translation, has been published in many countries throughout the world. Mr. Abdullah has also introduced a new sonnet form, in which the rhyme scheme is abcdabc efgdefg, with a seven-line stanza pattern. He calls them Swatantra

Sonnets, for which he received the Labu Bhai Foundation Award (2013). To this date, he wrote 210 such sonnets in Bengali, of which he translated 50 into English.

A poet of the postmodern era, Hassanal Abdullah, has also written a 304-page epic, *Nakhatra O Manusar Prochhad* (Anyana, 2007), where, based on several scientific theories, he illustrates relations between human beings and the universe. Both this epic and his *Selected Poems* (Anyana, 2010) were published in Bengali in Dhaka. In addition, he has translated Anna Ahkmatova, Charles Baudelaire, Stanley Kunitz, Nicanor Parra, Gerald Stern, Wislawa Szymborska, Dylan Thomas, Tomas Tranströmer, and others from many parts of the world into Bengali, and more than 30 Bangladeshi poets into English. In 2007, he was an Honorable Mention for Poet Laureate of Queens, New York. Mr. Abdullah was twice (2008 & 2015) nominated for the Pushcart Prize.

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**Peter Thabit Jones:** When did you start writing poetry and do you initially write a new poem in Bengali or English?

**Hassanal Abdullah:** I started writing poetry when I was in the eighth grade. As you know, my father died in the Bangladeshi Liberation War against Pakistan in 1971. I was then only four years old. Since my dad was the only bread earner of the family, my mom, with me and my two sisters, moved to her father's house, which was in a village of Gopalganj district. I went to a village school there. One afternoon, during the monsoon time, started a sudden storm while I was with my house tutor, who was from the same village and a few years older than me, sitting face to face across my study table. He just closed the book, probably the math text or English, I don't remember it now, and asked me to write a poem on storm. I don't know what went through my mind, I immediately started writing a poem with no hesitation as if I knew how to write a poem. That was the first poem I wrote with end rhyme. The next day, I wrote another, and another in the following day. To me it was a word-puzzle to unfold each time I started writing a poem. And interestingly, my first listener was my mom, who used to remark "you wrote this!" with a flash of light in her eyes, that motivated me to write a new one. Later, while I was a student at the University of Dhaka, I realized those poems I wrote in my high school years were nothing but a few clusters of novice words. Nevertheless,



they guided me to enter into the poetic world.

I initially write a poem in Bengali. Let's put it this way, I am a Bengali poet. I translated some of my poems into English. I translated many Bengali poets into English, and many poets from English or their English translation into Bengali. Interestingly, nowadays, as I am spending more time with American poets and poets of the other parts of the world, I realize that, sometimes, I write a poem or two directly in English. For an example, *When God is Dead*, a well read poem, was first written in English. Then I made a Bengali version of it. You will also find three poems in the present issue of *Shabdaguchha* (Issue No. 67/68) originally written in English.

**PTJ:** What have been the main influences on your writing?

**HA:** People, their ordinary lives, experience of my own, my hardship of growing up, and many social and political nonsense or sense going around us. All, all of these are my inspiration of writing a poem. Therefore, it is hard to find a single most influence. I would rather say, all the good poets I read are my influences. To name a few, I would say Shakespeare, Petrarch, Dante, Milton, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Baudelaire, W. B. Yeats, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Rabindranath Tagore, Jibonananda Das, Dylan Thomas, Paul Celan, Nazim Hikmat, Tomas Tranströmer, Derek Walcott, Seamus Heaney, Shamsur Rahman and Stanley Kunitz.

**PTJ:** How important is form in your approach to writing a poem? I am thinking of the new sonnet form you created.

**HA:** I already mentioned Petrarch and Shakespeare and we all know that there are two major sonnet forms, Petrarchan or Italian Sonnets and Shakespearian or English sonnets. I first came to know the Italian sonnets by reading Michael Madhusudan Dutt, a Bengali poet of the nineteenth century. Dutt lived in France for some time in his life where he came across Petrarchan Sonnets and introduced it into Bengali by writing 102 sonnets. Though, not all of them were written in the correct form, he was the one who wrote the first sonnet in Bengali. Later, Tagore and his successors of the thirties and the fifties wrote sonnets. Since I love to play

with forms, I started writing sonnets in both forms in the early nineties. My fourth book, *Sonnets and Other Poems*, included 30 of such sonnets. But, when I was a student at Hunter College, New York, studying Number Theory to complete my bachelor degree in mathematics, I started rearranging the rhyme, and one day, I thought why there be eight and six line stanzas, why not making them seven-seven? I came up with three or four different rhyme patterns and scratched them in my math notebook. Finally crossed everything out but one: abcdabc efgdefg, thinking of ellipses that have two foci on opposite side of the axis, such as the ‘d’ rhyme sitting in the middle of both stanzas. I showed it to one of my classmates, who happened to be from Japan and used to write poetry too. He commented, “Start writing. One day people will call them Abdullahan Sonnets.” On April 29, 1995, I wrote the first sonnet using my own form and ever since, I became addicted to it. To this date, I wrote 210 such sonnets. The first edition of the book, *Swatantra Sonnets*, this is how the sonnets are called, was published in 1998 with 100 sonnets. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> editions were published in 2004 and 2014, respectively, with 130 and 203 such sonnets. Yes, at times, rhyme, rhythm, and form are important to me, though I love to recreate them. For an example, *Nakhatra O Manusher Prashad* (2007), a 304-page epic I wrote on the scientific understanding of the relation between human beings and the universe, was written in prose form, in which I used the *akkrbritto* Bengali meters in free hand combinations.

As I know, some poets, such as Caroline Gill from England, write sonnets using my form. I have recently noticed, two young Bengali poets also adapted Abdullahan Sonnets. So far, I translated about 50 of these sonnets into English preserving the rhyme scheme.

**PTJ:** I have been lucky enough to participate in a few of the wonderful Bengali International Festivals you organize with Stanley H. Barkan, our mutual publisher, in New York. What, if any, would you say has been the influence of American poetry on contemporary America-based Bengali poetry?

**HA:** Modern Bengali poets were greatly influenced by English modernists. Critics say some of Tagore’s poetry have been influenced by Irish songs. As a romantic, he was a great follower of the European romantics. On the other hand, it is really

interesting to see that T. S. Eliot's *The Westland* was influenced by *Mahabharata*. Therefore, historically, as the East was influenced by the West, the West also, to some extent, was influenced by the East. Now, the Bengali poets living in the US, especially me, since I would not feel comfortable speaking about others, I would say I am greatly influenced by many of the great poets from both the East and the West. Not that I write the way they did, but I always move by a fine piece of work. I learn from it, I try to digest it and at time when it comes to my own writing I apply the knowledge of how the body of a particular poem could develop. To be frank, I would not have been able to write the epic, *Nakhatra O Manusher Prashad*, unless I would have come across two books: Derek Walcott's *Omeros* and Kazantzakis's *The Odyssey: A Modern Sequel*, though my epic deals with completely a different topic. I must also admit that out of the American poets, Stanley Kunitz and John Ashberry, and of the Europeans, Seamus Heaney and Tomas Tranströmer moved me a lot.

**PTJ:** What aspects of a poem do you hope to retain in the act of translation from Bengali to English or English to Bengali?

**HA:** Before I answer this question, I have to say that I believe translation itself is a group work, especially when one has to translate to a language that is not his mother tongue. And I do not think that lateral translation is worth doing, though it is my job to stay as closer to the original as possible. When I translate from Bengali to English, I first try to make a draft keeping the original in front of me. In a few days, I come back to the translation and polish it without even looking at the original. This time, I try to make sure that the translation turns into a poem in English. In this process, I might loose or gain a bit, but I am happy with it. After a few revisions, I send it to my great friend, Stanley H. Barkan, a poet and publisher, whom you mentioned earlier, to edit the translation. Many a time, Stanley and I sit together with the original in my hand to complete the editing process. Neither Stanley nor I believe in poetry is "what's lost in translation." The process is almost the same when I translate from English to Bengali, except I do not need an editor for it. I edit the work by myself. But, if anyone else other than me translate my poems into English, I try to work on it before I send it to Stanley or anybody else. So, to answer your question, I would say the poem is still the same, but it may sound different in the target language, since each language has its own flavour.

**PTJ:** What are your future plans for your writing?

**HA:** I am a 24-hour poet. Along with writing poetry and translating it, I also write novels, short stories, critical essays, plays, and lyrics. I once wrote a travelogue too. I wrote a book on Bengali meters and rhythms, which is a college text now. So, my future plan is to keep on writing, though my primary goal is to “globalize Bengali poetry,” which I have been doing by not only through my own poetry and translation, but also by editing and publishing, *Shabdaguchha*, an international bilingual poetry magazine. I vow to continue it. At this moment, I am working on a novel in English and translating my sonnets. I am also looking for a publisher of *Contemporary Bangladeshi Poetry*, an anthology on my translation of the poets of Bangladesh.

### **SWATANTRA SONNET 77**

I've heard the noble sound of your footsteps, my love.  
Come, come closer, and slowly open your heart. Spread  
the fragrance of your beautiful breasts. Let the door  
be closed. Embrace me tightly with your gentle hand  
and set your sweetest lips on mine like a wild dove.  
Keep on crawling up to finding my heart's main thread  
as vivid as the spring, trembling at ocean floor.

Take off the seamless boutique sari and raise both  
hands to untie your hair; blow on me like petals  
of flower. Without you I'm lonely, dry and dark.  
Implant the fresh, eternal light in my green land.  
Don't bother making the bed tonight, rather sooth  
the warmth of my tense body—my tropical cells,  
spreading the pure touch of your astounding spark.

Hassanal Abdullah    America    *Translated from the Bengali by the poet*

### **SWATANTRA SONNET 87**

I have looked for life a lot under my pillow,  
beneath the bed, at the perm of mosquito nets;  
at my writing table, chair's legs of burnished logs.

In kitchen cabinets, inside the locker, and  
in the bathtub; on my sweat limbs, walking below  
the sky. Diving in West Palm Beach. I didn't forget  
to look for it while in four-legged modern pirogues.

Sometimes, I reckon if life also looked for me,  
somewhere in my office, at home, in the highway  
of Michigan. I've been in his tight fist for long,  
squeezed and smashed, in the prison of a placid land.  
Did he get upset, void me of his legacy?  
Did he then forget, his hot breath blows me away,  
dumping me as the trolling cast of a gauche song?

Hassanal Abdullah    America    *Translated from the Bengali by the poet*

### **SWATANTRA SONNET 107**

A little past midnight, pushing the window shed,  
the first wind of August landed in our bedroom.  
I was still awake. A mere lengthy restriction  
was curled up beside me with pain in hands and toes.  
Storms fluttered at her stomach, gradually led  
the cells turn self-conflicting; the stinky food fume  
roared fast as she slept in a tacit commotion.

Closing my eyes, as the night got slightly whiten,  
I, too, at that moment, wanted to fall asleep.  
The beauty of the East, like Cezanne's etching,  
floated freely into my bosom, and arose  
my memories, while nature exposed to brighten.  
Hearing the noise, as my eyes took a licit leap,  
I found me bound in swirls of Augustus scratching.

Hassanal Abdullah    America    *Translated from the Bengali by the poet*

### **SWATANTRA SONNET 121**

Sometimes, death itself stays awake, throughout the whole  
night, the way once Nagasaki did with the flames

of the nuclear bomb in its charred-heart. Those stalled  
August nights might have harshly suited to the dead—  
that coward, hapless, and husky time torn the soul  
of civilization with its maddening emblems.  
Since then, anything is possible in this world.

Since then, we live closer to death, as if our days  
are calm like a moron. Staying awake, we could  
hear the dead, like insects, singing vigorous vibes.  
Our Hiroshima-existence, often shredded  
in the casket of death and hunger. And the rage—  
the bloody wounds of the late nineteen forties would  
still ooze horrible pus grinding our lousy lives.

Hassanal Abdullah    America    *Translated from the Bengali by the poet*

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## **DVD**

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

**a short drama by Peter Thabit Jones**

performed by Swansea Little Theatre actors,  
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of the Dylan Thomas Theatre, Swansea, Wales

Filmed by Franco De Marco of Holly Tree Productions, Wales

A collaboration between the Dylan Thomas Theatre  
and The Seventh Quarry Press

Already performed live in Wales and London

**Price: £10/\$20**

## **ON THE UPTOWN '1' TO VAN CORTLANDT PARK**

Summer is far from done and the light is blinding  
as we hurtle from the tunnel to the station ahead.

A young man steps out of the heat  
and takes a seat as the train starts up again.

He boasts a huge, blue Jewish Star on his arm  
below his shoulder and his sleeveless T—

a match for the Dominicans who ride this line  
with their gaudy gold crosses and Jesus tattoos.

I sneak a peak at the kid's tattoo, lost in this maze  
of strapping blue veins. Something in his look

says don't mess with this Yid. He is staring off  
beyond the el as we approach the final station

lined with coils of barbed wire, the train balking  
at the platform before running out of track.

Steven Sher    Israel

## ***KIDDUSH LEVANA*H, A STREET CORNER IN NEW YORK**

*Adar I 5765*

On the street beneath a slice of moon,  
we must appear to her like ghosts  
who rose this night out of the grave.  
She shouts at us to make us go away,

to chase this nightmare from her mind  
she thought she'd chased away decades ago,  
waving her cane at apparitions  
that have come at last to claim her.

When one engages her, tries to herd her  
past the men who dance on their toes  
to touch the moon, as if to claim  
what's yet to come, she threatens us

with the police. “You’ll all be in the ground  
by morning”—she hurls her words  
like stones at men condemned,  
thirty chanting men in beards and black.

She shouts again before turning away,  
“Your rabbis killed you, led you  
to the camps. Go back. Go back  
into the graves from which you came.”

NOTE: *Kiddush Levanah* is the Jewish ritual sanctifying the new moon.

Steven Sher Israel

### ***SELICHOS***

For the sins of the heart  
and repair of its pain,  
  
for the breaths sharply squeezed  
from the bones to the souls  
  
that rained down with debris  
when those twin towers fell—  
  
as if summoning all suffering,  
ash bedside, mass grave—  
  
in the dark across the world,  
we rise and offer prayer.

NOTE: *Selichos* are penitential prayers offered before dawn in the days before the  
Jewish  
new year (until Yom Kippur). The attack on the World Trade Center on Sept. 11,  
2001 occurred one week before Rosh Hashanah.

Steven Sher Israel

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## **MLADÝ ZMÄTOK**

Rozprávaj sa so mnou, milá  
aj keď ja nemôžem

Počujem ťa v duchu  
a odpovedám  
ale moje pery sú v tele zošité  
a oči zamrznuté  
držia sa koberca  
lebo si ako Medúza  
a ja nechcem skamenieť  
ani zomrieť na tvoj pohľad

Som ešte príliš mladý  
a moje vášne ma prerastajú  
ako burina v záhrade

Chcem sa smiať a byť slobodný  
nedá sa - srdce mám ťažké a vážne

zmätok-zmätok v ňom

pomôž mi trochu, prosím

Neviem, ako von...

## **YOUNG BEWILDERMENT**

Talk to me, my darling girl  
even if I cannot speak

I can hear you in my mind  
and I answer  
but in my body, my lips are sewn together  
and my eyes are frozen  
they linger on the carpet  
because you are like Medusa  
and I do not want to turn to stone  
or die when I meet your gaze

I am still much too young  
and my passions overtake me

like weeds in a garden

I want to laugh and be free  
impossible – my heart is heavy and somber

inside, nothing but pure bewilderment

help me a bit, please

I don't know how to get out of this imprisonment

Nina Varon    America    Translated from the Slovakian by Miriam Margala

### **KLIMTOVA VÝSTAVA**

Keď obdivujete Klimta,  
Keď obdivujete Klimta,  
a ich odvahu sa vyzliecť,  
zbožňujete nepovšimnuté  
zavadzajúce maky pri ceste,  
páčia sa vám okraje drahých šiat  
v luxuse zlatých slnečných lúčov,  
kde schoval sa čas a mladosť –  
"Du bist so schön, meine Liebste"  
– sagte er,  
zvediem ťa svojím štetcom,  
  
zvediem ho, aj teba  
zvediem ho, aj teba  
a tam si ostaňte,  
nechcem ťa viac...

### **KLIMT EXHIBITION**

When you admire Klimt,  
you admire his lovers  
and their courage to take off their clothes,  
you adore an overlooked  
screen of poppies by the road,  
the hems of expensive dresses

in the luxury of golden sun rays,  
where time and youth are hiding -  
"Du bist so schön, meine Liebste"  
- sagte er,

I'll seduce you with my brush,

I'll seduce the brush and you  
on the canvas

feel free to stay there,

I don't want you anymore...

Nina Varon    America    Translated from the Slovakian by Miriam Margala

### **KEROUAC HEART**

His football arms. His shirt, his chin.  
His mountain pack, the clink within.  
His notebook, sleeping bag. His pen.  
His Kerouac heart again, again.

My climbing mind. My yearn, my cling.  
My mountain heart, its pure spring.  
My sweeping, dreaming skin. My trance.  
My soaring into wild romance.

His gibberish wisdom under stars.  
His in and out of women, bars.  
His tearing through the paper, night.  
His firing where there wasn't light.

My kicking up a feeding dust.  
My in and out of wanderlust.  
My pushing at a toxic wall.  
My never seeing it at all.

His pulsing wholly into joy.  
His leap from vagabond to boy.  
His tender core. His mad expanse.  
His gambling on a fragile chance.

My secret, self-invented sun.  
My prized, euphoric oils to run.  
My notebook, trembling hand. My pen.  
My Kerouac heart again, again.

Mark Elias    Wales

**Interview with Dr. H.K. Kaul, President of The Poetry Society (India) and  
Director, Developing LibraryNetwork**



**Dr. H.K. Kaul © 2016 Dr. H.K. Kaul**

**Dr. H. K. Kaul** is the President of the Poetry Society (India) and Director, of DELNET- Developing Library Network, New Delhi. He holds a Ph. D. from the University of Pune, India in Library Networking and has received training in editing at the Asian Cultural Centre for Unesco, Tokyo. He is the Editor of the *Journal of the Poetry Society (India)*. He has been the Editor of *Indian Author*, the Project Director of many literary projects and Course-Director of Workshops for Afro-Asian Writers sponsored by the Ministry of Education, Government of India.

He has authored and edited 24 volumes of poetry such as *On the Waves*, *Firdaus in Flames*, *Poetry of the Raj*, *Poetry of the Young* and *In the Islands of Grace*. He has received several awards including the International Visitor Fellowships of the U. S. Information Agency and Senior Fellowship of the Department of Culture, Government of India.

**Mandira Ghosh:** You are the celebrated Indian poet, President of The Poetry Society (India), who in your magnificent epic poem *Firdaus in Flames* has penned, “Your subtle cosmic touch will heal/The Deep wounds with a divine zeal.” From personal to political, do you think poetry can heal the troubles of man, society, nation and the world. If so how?

**Dr. Kaul:** Poetry of great merit, that emerges from the inner recesses of consciousness is a link between the higher cosmic forces and the mundane realities of life. The social, political, legal and religious norms have been developed by man to manage life smoothly on earth and let it move on smoothly after the exit from earth. These are actually in correspondence with human values that have the unwritten approval from everybody on earth. The present-day social life is drifting away from higher values and therefore poetry of great merit is the medium which can bring every individual closer to humane life on earth.

**MG:** Mysticism, religion and political turmoil are the predominant themes of your poetry. Kindly elaborate.

**Dr.K:** I am a mystic at heart in my private life and it has an impact on my official and social life. I value such religious customs and procedures which I notice are basically scientific in nature. These may belong to any religion. While I am a Hindu, I find plenty of them, but unfortunately they have been wrapped up in the rituals which have become unnecessarily essential in nature. Political and social actions that hurt and harm innocent persons hurt me severely. It is this pain which had forced me to write the long poem *Firdaus in Flames*.

**MG:** How far has Sri Aurobindo influenced your life, works and poetry? Whose poetry has influenced you the most?

**Dr. K:** Sri Aurobindo has been a great mystic but at the same time he was concerned about the freedom of India. And thus, he was concerned in his early years about the politics of India’s freedom. He was a highly blessed soul and evolved Integral Yoga about which I had differences of opinion when I had begun practising Raja Yoga. But now I feel that there is a great scientific merit in Integral Yoga . I wish to research this subject further. Sri Aurobindo’s poetry like

the long poem *Savitri* emerged out of his great command on the language, great mystic experiences and profound interest in the improvement of the social fabric of the society. He was a universal being. I have fascination for the poetry of W. B. Yeats, Kathleen Raine among others. I have not followed the styles of any poet but read many of them. I can't say who has influenced me the most.

**MG:** How far has the political turmoil of your state Jammu and Kashmir affected your poetry?

**Dr.K:** I think it gave me an opportunity to revisit in my imagination every nook and corner of the valley where I had lived before and while converting the actions of militants and the sufferings of Hindus and Muslims into poetry, it also made me to experiment in the new form of a sonnet. This new form of sonnet has three characteristics:

- a. The first 12 lines are not rhymed;
- b. The last two lines are rhymed and are of the same length. These two lines sum up the message inherent in the first 12 lines.
- c. Where the dialogues with the Gods are described in *Firdaus in Flames*, the first 12 lines are generally much longer in length.

The creation of this form became necessary for me because if I would have conformed to the usual sonnet form, I would have to add fiction into fact because *Firdaus in Flames* was a narrative poem. I didn't want to add unnecessary content to the story to rhyme and stick to the form which I felt was not necessary. It would have changed the narration of facts in the poem. The book which was completed in 200 pages would have gone up to 400 pages. Moreover, that would have taken more time as the story line was also changing on a daily basis in Kashmir. It was endless. I had to put a stop at a point when I felt that my message was communicated.

**MG:** How did your own life get transferred by composing the magnificent verses.

**Dr. K:** When you write on good values on one side and raise voice against tyranny in society on the other, it strengthens your belief in good human values and you imbibe many of them.

**MG:** What according to you are the best characteristics of poetry?

**Dr. K:** The use of image, its systematic growth in a poem and inclusion of music through internal rhythm make poetry more meaningful. When a poet whose mother tongue is not English writes in English, he basically translates thoughts into English while composing poetry. As the pronunciations of English change from

region to region in India, I find that the use of meter and rhyme become artificial constructs when you write poetry in English in this part of the world.

**MG:** We don't hold either guns or we spread violence. In that case what impact can poetry make on the violence porn world.

**Dr. K:** Good poetry in India can spread good human values and can play a great role in promoting peace in society.

**MG:** Conflict and peace, catharsis and creation. Do you think poets can become instrumental in bringing peace in this world?

**Dr. K:** The kind of poetry that is mostly written today cannot play a great role in society. Profound poetry in regional languages which has music and image as the two inherent qualities can play a great role in bringing peace back to society.

**MG:** Your contribution to the Indian society is remarkable. You have single handedly taken modern Indian poetry to such a height. Individually and also by establishing the Poetry Society (India). Kindly let the readers know about your journey - was it a difficult journey?

**Dr. K:** I do not think I have contributed much by writing great poetry. However, I have helped thousands of poets to write good poetry by arranging competitions, readings and meetings of poets through the Poetry Society (India) which I established in 1984.

I have a busy professional life and writing poetry has always been like a fresh breeze in hot summer. My journey into poetry writing helped me to be creative, understand people and their problems better. It has been on one hand educational for me and on the other I have been able to promote the writing of good poetry in English in India.

**MG:** Please inform the readers more about your latest work, *Encounters*.

**Dr. K:** This is a collection of about 150 poems on my encounters with life in society and it is getting ready. I am looking back into it.

Every moment a poet conforms to a certain set of faculties and these faculties remain changing with the passage of time. It is always better to go back to poems which you had written some time back and revise them if necessary. That is what I am doing nowadays.

**MG:** Are disasters necessary for creation?

**Dr. K:** Death is part of life itself. And this can take manifold forms including disasters. Higher consciousness emerges slowly on earth through the cycles of life and death. It is a natural process.

**MG:** Kindly let us know about your vision and future of poetry of the world.

**Dr. K:** Great poets will emerge from any part of the world. They are not made. They are born with such physical, psychological and spiritual settings that poetry automatically flows. Inner and universal vibrations and music that guide life on earth becomes part of such great poets.

**MG:** Many thanks, Dr. H.K. Kaul.

Mandira Ghosh is a poet and author of eminence. She has published nine books, which includes *Aroma*, *New Sun Cosmic Tour*, *Song in a City* (A Novel), *Folk Music of the Himalayas*, *The Cosmic Dance of Shiva*, *Shiva and Shakti in Indian Mythology*, *Impact of Famine on Bengali Literature*. She was awarded with a Senior Fellowship of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. She is the present treasurer of the Poetry Society (India) and also Guest Editor of the *Poets of India*, Special Issue of *The Seventh Quarry*, the *Swansea Magazine* (Wales). Through her work, she has arrived at a point where science meets metaphysics and all arts.

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**INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS AND POETS JOIN TOGETHER IN A  
WORK OF SINGULAR BEAUTY— REVIEW BY MARY GREGORY  
First published in ARTslanT Worldwide in June 2015**

Immagine & Poesia, Volume 2, 2015  
Group Exhibition  
Torino, Italy EBook  
Online and Various, Turin, Italy

Immagine & Poesia, an international movement that publishes and exhibits poems paired with visual artworks, has published its second volume of collaborations. President of the movement, Lidia Chiarelli, along with editor of the ebook, Huguette Bertrand, have selected and presented contributions from poets and artists from 27 countries—from Albania to Venezuela. The goal of the work, they



state, is to gather creative individuals from all over the world to celebrate together a "love of beauty and peace." A more laudable goal is hard to imagine, and art and poetry are certainly the right tools for the task.

Immagine & Poesia was founded 8 years ago, by Chiarelli, Aeronwy Thomas, Gianpiero Acits, Alessandro Actis, and a group of other artists, critics and poets, on the belief that when art and poetry are presented side-by-side, each has the chance to inform, enhance and interact with the other. The audience's response can be multiplied by more than the power of two, as imagery and words resonate separately or in harmony. This volume pairs an image on one side of the page and a poem on the facing page.

While a handful of artworks and poems are presented by the same individual, as in the first entry, by the French painter/poet Alix Arduinna, the majority of the publication pairs a poet and an artist in collaborations selected not by the editor, but by the poets and artists, themselves. This reflects a reverberation sensed by both creators of the works, and results in a broad array of visions captured within this slim but powerful publication.

Ann Bagnall's poem evokes a vision of flaming red poppies and her photograph captures a field of vibrant blooms.

American poet, Mia Barkan Clarke's, tender but haunting "Unnamed" speaks touchingly of defeat and loneliness—*the gloom looms heavy overhead*—while Ismo Jokiahho, a painter from Finland, captures a feeling of emotional surrender.

American author, poet and publisher, Stanley H. Barkan and his artist wife, Bebe Barkan have worked together for many years creating a remarkable list of books of poetry and prose. Here, Bebe Barkan's lively, elegant drawing, "Dreamers," swathes a resting figure in an oval of bright pattern. Stanley H. Barkan's poem "The Dreamers" evokes memories, passion, moments lost to time, but above all tenderness and love.

Artist Adel Gorgy, creates elegant abstractions that are conceptually based and both trace and reference the influence of artists of the past. Here, he presents "Secrets of the Heart," a cool, serene abstraction after Chagall. Stanley H. Barkan's celebratory poem, "Clouds," also references Chagall, in a beautiful pairing.

Israeli artist and poet, Helen Bar-Lev's poem "March in the Garden" and her

photograph, "Anemones," both pay tribute to the beauty found in nature's cycle of rebirth.

Huguette Bertrand's lovely surreal image—a moonlit sky with what seems like melting ice, encircled by the bright colors of grass and flowers—accompanies her sensitive poem, "Enclave."

Artist and poet, husband and wife, co-founders of Immagine & Poesia, Gianpiero Actis and Lidia Chiarelli often create truly collaborative works in response to each other. Here, Gianpiero Actis paints a new vision of Magritte—a sky-filled oculus surrounded by prisms of light and color. Lidia Chiarelli's poem "Land of Magic" speaks of being captured and astonished by the unknown, but entering with the rapture found joining in a dance.

American poet Natalie Florio tackles some of the biggest questions in her poem "Given Time." It's about time and chance—a subject weighty enough for the wisdom of Solomon and essential and enduring enough to still be provoking poets like Florio today. Her poem doesn't try to answer the question, but invites readers to consider it thoughtfully. Marsha Solomon's painting, "Timeless Rhythms," paired with the poem, reflects on the eternal nature of beauty and harmony.

Fiona Green's contemplative painting and poem, "Vespers in Buckfast Abbey," add a spiritual element to the collection. Carolyn Mary Kleefeld's poem and painting add another sense of the spirit. "Hunger of the Wild" and her painting "Eros and Aphrodite" are all about unbridled passion—*wild and free*—as she says, likening her love to oceans and fires, soaring falcons and all that's wild.

Donna McGee's quiet, thoughtful poem speaks of peace. She pairs it with a beautiful seascape, "Calm Ocean," that does the same without words. Caroline Nazareno's "Immaculate Rebirth" hearkens back to themes of antiquity. The poem is carried to the present day and brought to clarity by photographer Alessandro Actis in his classically elegant rendering "Temple of Zeus, Athens."

Johnmichael Simon's lovely, touching poem "For the Very First Time" captures the excitement and joy of childhood through the lens of the wisdom of age. Absent are the cynicism and regret often encountered in looking back. Simon's are the observations of one who sees—and seized—life's real prize. Helen Bar-Lev's accompanying painting depicts a tender relationship, grown ripe over time.

Marsha Solomon's color-saturated pen and ink drawing, "The Concert," is bright,

lively, upbeat and filled with energy. Her accompanying poem of the same name, echoes the same vibrancy as she expresses gratitude for the beauty found in the "newly dressed trees" of spring.

Peter Thabit Jones, the accomplished Welsh poet, is paired with a painting in blues by Fotini Hamidieli. Thabit Jones speaks of Dylan Thomas in "Garden of Clouds." But he's really speaking about much more than that. The poem is a reflection on what's gained and lost through creation, success, art and living. There are those for whom each poem is like a blossoming flower, but others for whom, he writes "New poems dripped into / The wounds of your life".

It's a powerful, thought provoking note for a collection of art and poems.

**Editor's Note:** Mary Gregory is an American novelist and arts writer whose work appears regularly in leading magazines and newspapers.

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## **THE WAITRESS AT THE INTERNATIONAL DELIGHT CAFÉ 1**

*(Bellmore, Long Island)*

She shimmies when she walks,  
her chest thrust forward  
—way out in front—  
as if another tray to carry  
appetizers and desserts.

The International Delight Café offers everything  
from a cheeseburger or mac & cheese  
to quiche to chili to quesadilla,  
caesar salad or bruschetta to fettuccine Alfredo,  
and for dessert, gelati or sorbetti  
with a latte, cappuccino, or espresso,  
or a milk shake or malted.

The owner is the daughter of parents  
who owned Jahn's ice cream parlor,  
where we would go from Brooklyn  
to Queens, like going to the country,  
for "a shissel" or a "the kitchen sink."

The International Delight Café is a continuation  
of what was a great gathering place for kids & teens  
and now for mah-jongg players  
in the afternoon, and dinner for  
after-movie goers at the multiplex a block away.

You don't have to go to Mexico or Palermo  
for a full menu of everything  
you'd like to eat or drink, because it's all there,  
hosted by the gracious owner  
and served by sweet young girls  
who make you welcome  
and delight a dirty old man's eyes.

Stanley H. Barkan    America



**The Fog Lord** (Oil on Canvas, 11 x 14") © 2016 Carolyn Mary Kleefeld

## **THE MISTS OF DESTINY**

The mists of destiny drift on  
through the blue expanse of heaven.

Gray metallic waves mirror  
white billowy clouds.

Emitting shrill cries,  
hawks dance in flight  
meeting at the peak  
of their orgiastic frenzy.

And a sliver of silver moon  
smugly gazes from behind  
a distant and darkening veil.

A few solitary isles meander on  
as the smoke of dusk diffuses,  
giving way to  
the magical spell of darkness.

The skies brim with miracles—  
portraits from the Master.  
Perhaps they herald an incipient storm.

Carolyn Mary Kleefeld    America

## **YOU SET OFF MY YEARNING**

*(for DC)*

You set off my yearning,  
a yearning for what never was—  
for justice, for the heart  
that is missing in a withered America.

You set off a yearning in me  
like the longing of trees

for their lost silhouettes,  
or a hungry calf for milk.  
Like moonless heavens  
for lunar light  
or tides for the shore.

Yes, you set off a yearning  
for what never was,  
but now appears as you.

Carolyn Mary Kleefeld    America



**Angels of Mercy** (Oil on Canvas, 12 x 12") © 2016 Carolyn Mary Kleefeld

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

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

**RECALLED TO LIFE**

At night  
Your glasses down, cataract-closed  
Your hearing aid cased  
Resting with the pain in your bones  
You are vulnerable as a child.  
What jolts you awake in your dark alone?  
How do you calm your leaping heart?

You have mapped nearly a world's century of tragedy and miracle  
And now the flashing blue lights signal their closeness  
Your neighbours one-by-one treading the avenue to death  
While others still are slipping down the side streets of dementia

What do you see, through the dark doorway?

The days are for railing against injustice at the news  
But as night falls and the films fade  
And we pull our familiar lives around us to the chin  
What comfort company, money, time, awareness?  
A quickening instant in the sun,  
The slipping away through the shallows of sleep  
A singing lightness  
How do we make a sense of the ending?

Meanwhile  
We treasure the ordinariness  
Of each moment  
Measure the dwindling  
Slowing down  
Rejoice in the leafy accessibility  
Of the garden centre for your walker  
Recalled to life, we say, and smile.

Ali Morrison    Wales

### **FRAGRANCE SEASONAL AND ETERNAL**

Familiar fragrance from the romantic heart of spring  
wafting in the air gives us joyous stirring.  
Summer has its wooing smell too  
emanating from the burnt leaves and ripe fruits.  
Wonderful smell comes out of the thirsty earth;  
rain's first love bridging a sky touch  
creates innumerable spells in our life  
stimulating our olfactory sense  
endearing us with a difference.  
Autumn has different hues for different land  
Somewhere decadent somewhere exuberant  
And the colourful winter with rosy fragrance  
greet us to compensate its chilly embrace.



Beyond all these seasonal offerings  
When a deep fragrance fresh  
comes floating from an unknown source  
flooding our psychic being,  
a situation the musk deer face,  
it is an extraordinary event;  
showering Divine love and grace.

Aju Mukhopadhyay    India

### **FLOWER OF THE FUTURE**

Unknown and uncertain  
Are the results  
Of the mystic bud  
Blooming unseen  
While shimmering hope  
Is rising up  
From the luminous vast  
That the flower of the future  
In harmony with Nature  
For a Divine purpose  
Has been opening its petals  
From ages far behind  
Towards a time  
Peaceful and glorious.

Aju Mukhopadhyay    India

### **THE DAY IS LOST IN THE SHIMMERING TWILIGHT**

This opaque and dark evening sky  
without a particular hue, defy  
the reign of the Sun as it goes to set  
and pulls the erstwhile bright warm day straight  
into its mysterious unfathomable womb.  
Those who rise up with renewed oomph  
at the prospect of devouring the evening young  
like a familiar song many times sung  
sink eventually into its hazy darkness

reeling at night  
and those who never look at the hieroglyphs  
of the evening sky in obscure light  
pulling the day into its hold aright  
and the majority of those sheep  
who never realise that the day  
with all accompaniments is kept at bay  
to be lost forever into the unknown fold  
of the mysterious sky in spite of its efforts  
to survive clinging to the fragile human memory,  
live the useless life of ignoramus  
without verve and sense  
condemned like a Sisyphus.  
The day is lost in the shimmering twilight  
in its ever hopeful flight  
into the mysterious womb of time  
never to be reborn after melting of the rime.  
It is a holocaust of time  
adorned with rhythm;  
night and day  
are born for a while to pass away.

Aju Mukhopadhyay    India

### **WINTER IN A SOUTH INDIAN TOWN**

While a winter night in North India  
and the earth's northern hemisphere  
is always a thing to be afraid of  
harsh and severe;  
it is an enviable friend  
in this South Indian town  
forever liked by us  
it never hurts never frowns  
though the effect of climate change  
is gradually raising its winter range;  
here we enjoy the pleasant  
chill of the morning  
and cool refreshing air  
from the sea in the evening;

sighing as the season ends  
taking away its feather touch  
unlike those who  
under the snowy severity suffer much;  
sympathizing with the northerners  
we welcome the winter every year  
and wishing it willy-nilly  
southerners' grand farewell  
we wait for its happy return  
without fail.

Aju Mukhopadhyay India



Ireland, Crooked Street © 2016 Helen Bar-Lev Israel

**IMAGE & POETRY**

*for Jackson Pollock*

*Pollock-Krasner House, East Hampton*

Now at last

I see you

*Jackson Pollock*

kneeling on the floor  
handling sticks and brushes  
dripping paints on your canvas.

From the dark night of your mind  
a different universe emerges

new galaxies

*(long looping lines)*

take form

as your hands move rapidly around

formless and timeless realms  
where I sink deep and deeper  
wrapped in the colours  
of your *Greyed Rainbow*.

For a while I will linger and listen to  
the silence of the ocean

*(or maybe to the roaring motor of your Oldsmobile convertible)*

then – tonight –

I will write a poem just for you

*Jackson Pollock.*

*August 2, 2012*

Lidia Chiarelli Italy

## **TO THE COUNTRYSIDE: CITY GIRL**

Street-sure, she prowled  
the popcorn end of the city's joy-ride,  
messed and meddled in arcades,  
giggled at the 18 Certificate stuff.

She's working in a village dairy now.  
In the city, milk clanked from dispensers,  
maybe bubbled with strawberry in shakes.  
Here, she'd have been tugging udders once,  
pink flopping funny things  
she's squinted at inside the parlour.  
But much of her day is filling crates  
(an urban thing enough)  
and writing customer accounts.

And they're kind to her here.

Evenings, April, May, walking home,  
she sees the crows lift from fields and trees,  
wonders at the heartbreak, heartsongs  
of all that breeds around her.

Robert Nisbet    Wales

## **ASCENT TO ZEFAT**

Going like a rocket.  
Speedometer and petrol gauge both out but more than half way home.  
Powerful landscape now the mustard flowers are up.  
Water stands on soil, in the emerald woodland and the mauve distance.  
Past Roman Sephoris where the legions rested and played dice.  
Einstein: "God does not play dice". Will there be snow at home?

Everywhere I see the number four three one.  
The road leading out of Rehovot. The number of the bus in front.  
The number of my dead mother's room.

At Golani curve the highway jolts and rears.  
The new roads are flat and yellow, awaiting their final anointing with tar.  
It's a moonscape through the hewn rocks.  
Already the sky city appears on top of the hill. Something to aim for.

Tractors quiet and still like dinosaurs at prayer, but we are snorting warhorses  
Charging through mountains.  
Nearly home now to the sweet sight of a blue lake that has quenched its thirst with  
rain.  
A recorded message talks to me of graves in the village of Amuka  
I am not clear what is the meaning or if I understand.

Signs in orange scar the wilderness  
Cumbersome traffic labours on the bridge over the water carrier.  
Here's Kaddarim – our nemesis where the stone rolled, where the car's shiny  
chassis took a rock.  
Deep breath now and trundle down the narrow hillside highway.

My toes and ankles chill in the sharper air.  
Frozen soup in the freezer, frozen bread. I think there is cheese, I think there are  
apples.  
Stratus cloud and cumulus. No sign of snow yet.

Big ice-cake in the sky, look at the snow on the Hermon range.  
Sauntering soldiers at a bus stop in a smoke miasma.  
Climbing home, climbing home, there's an ominous whitening  
Icy runnels glint into the sky; the rocks are heavy with bright stone.  
Let us in, let us in, let us home  
The pressure's in my earbone, in my inner ears.

Patricia Har-Even    Israel

## POET PROFILE: TOMASZ SOBIERAJ



**Tomasz Sobieraj © 2016 Tomasz Sobieraj**

**Tomasz Marek Sobieraj**, who was born in 1964 in Łódź, Poland, is a poet, short story writer, novelist, literary, social and political critic, essayist, fine art, social and documentary photographer. Sobieraj studied geography at the University of Łódź, obtaining a master's degree in hydrology and climatology, and statistics and information systems at the University of Lisbon. Until 1999 he lectured geography and was a specialist in the Statistical Office.

Sobieraj has published numerous texts and photographs in relevant arts and letters magazines in Poland and he has had work exhibited widely, including the prestigious Fotoseptiembre SAFOTO in the USA (Banal Objects, 2011, Instituto Cultural de Mexico, San Antonio, TX). In 2012 he received grant from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. In 2013 he was nominated for the 2014 Prix Pictet – The Global Award in Photography and Sustainability.

He is an editor-in-chief at “Krytyka Literacka”- the arts and letters magazine.

## **Books**

*Gra*, 2008, (*The Game*, poetry)

*Wojna Kwiatów*, 2009, (*The War of the Flowers*, poetry)

*Dom Nadzoru*, 2009, (*Panopticon*, short stories, photography)

*Ogólna teoria jesieni*, 2010, (*General Theory of Autumn*, micronovel)

*Obiekty banalne*, 2011, (*Banal Objects*, photography, monodrama, essays)

*Krawiec*, 2012, (*The Tailor*, narrative poem, drama)

*Za bramami Ziemi Obiecanej*, 2013, (*Behind the Gates of the Promised Land*, photography)

## **Other books**

*Eroticon*, 2010, (*Eroticon*, anthology - photographs, poems)

*Wbrew naturze*, 2010 (*Against the Nature*, anthology - short story *The Turning Point*)

## **Photographic essays, series, sequences**

*Kolosalna morda miasta (Colossal Mug of the City)*, 1998 – 2002

*Pożądam tylko twojego ciała (I'm Only Lusting After Your Body)*, 2003

*Enklawa – cztery fotoliryki (Enclave – four photopoems)*, 2004 – 2006

*Krzyki (Cries)*, 2006

*Masy kompozycyjne (Compositional Masses)*, 2006

*Ulica Krokodyli (The Street of Crocodiles)*, 2007

*Eroticon (Eroticon)*, 2009

*Obiekty banalne (Banal Objects)*, 2006, 2010

*Za bramami Ziemi Obiecanej (Behind the Gates of the Promised Land)*, 2012

<http://tomaszmareksobieraj.blogspot.com/>

## **GRAVE OF KOMENIOS**

This is a place of our rest,  
maybe even the end of the whole journey.  
We arrived at the tomb of the poet Komenios,  
on the shores of the Ionian Sea.

A simple tomb, ascetic in its form;  
an oval stone and stone words on it:  
“Here lies Komenios, a defiant poet,  
who made an armour out of his words,  
unbeaten by barbarians”.



We looked at the dark blue water,  
like him, before he decided  
to put down his stylus and give himself  
over to more sensual pleasure.

There remained volumes of his poetry in libraries  
and this clay slate with the last poem,  
slightly crossed out,  
about the beauty of the Demetrios' body.

We took off our clothes  
and went towards the troubled water.  
After all, history  
does not have to repeat itself.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

There are many invisible things  
on a photograph  
taken recently with this old camera  
found in the attic.  
Such as a body scent and taste of lips,  
a rustle of hair on the pillow,  
the heat of the sun outside the window, snorting of horses,  
the sound of the shutter  
or the colour of walls so vague,  
that can only be present in houses in the countryside  
near Orvieto.

The aroma of tea, the sound of a cup being put away.  
*Jupiter and Antiope* by Corregio over the bed,  
*Resurrection* by Bellini next to it  
(copies of course, not very good,  
by a local master).

A drop of wine on the sheet. Thrill and ecstasy.  
Our breaths, thoughts, dampness of the skin.  
Even the sleepy birds' singing,  
and bells of the church in the nearby Prato.  
Only we know what really  
is on this photograph,  
and beyond its edge.

## **A STONE**

I picked up a stone,  
so ordinary, grey-and-white;  
there's many of them  
in the neighbourhood.

The stone was so common,  
so imperfect,  
that I just dropped it  
carelessly.

It tumbled onto another stone,  
equally imperfect,  
in despair,  
on its last legs,  
halved.

And showed inside  
a perfect shape  
of ammonite.

Anyway, I unlocked the secret  
hidden in the common form  
of a stone.

## **GROTTO OF AVERNUS**

I've been sitting  
in front of a cavern  
wide open and dark  
exactly the same  
as grotto of Avernus.

I've been looking inside  
leaning dangerously  
over a damp abyss,  
breathing in  
the seductive smell  
of inferno.

But I missed  
the courage of Aeneas.

### **FOURTEEN MINUTES**

I know, journeys educate,  
even if short, like that one  
to the Chelmno-upon-Ner.

A wide valley,  
white church on the scarp –  
the “Station of undress”,  
Mother of God  
on the painting above the altar  
watching blandly; a small ravine  
separates the temple  
from the place of genocide.

They were cordially welcomed  
in the front of the palace, later  
lounge in the ballroom,  
and a narrow corridor  
to the bath on the lorry.  
The rasp of the closing door.  
Driver chucks a stub,  
starts the engine,  
switches a small lever.  
Fourteen minutes  
of bath in the fumes  
and excrements.  
Fourteen minutes  
of screams and vomits.  
Afterwards peace  
for always  
in the hereabout forest.

In the evening,  
after a hard day's work  
in Sonderkommando,  
beer, laughter, and snapshot

to provide a memento.  
Normally,  
just like it is after a chore.

During the Second World War in Chelmno-upon-Ner was situated the German death camp Kulmhof. Transports of Jews arrived mainly from Litzmannstadt Ghetto (today Lodz); over 200,000 people were murdered in mobile gas chambers –gas vans; the exhaust fumes were diverted into the sealed rear compartment where the victims were locked in and after fourteen minutes killed by asphyxiation.

The poems were translated by Tomasz Marek Sobieraj and Stanley H. Barkan

*theseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarry*

## **PATRIOTS AND APOSTATES**

“Sois mon frère ou je te tue.”  
—Nicolas Chamfort.

I.

We are living in an unnatural state  
because poverty doesn't want  
to be covert or polite.  
We have delusions of virtue  
because we repress our ambitions  
which we call improving our natures.  
We huddle around campfires  
even though it's raining ice  
and we promote our primitiveness  
by exchanging empathy and lice.  
Then you reach for a taper  
and it crumbles in your hand  
with the stench of smoking foam  
from a malapert adjustment.  
Besieged in a silo  
is the Council for the People  
and they're minting currency  
to secure a safe succession.  
There's a man who gets his news

from the barometric pressure  
accompanying employment  
from erecting public gallows;  
and he doesn't have convictions  
about "one side or another"  
but the paycheck is essential  
since all scruples follow weather.  
Ideologues are different  
in that they vote against their dinner  
and can do without the pleasure  
serving up a silver cordial.  
*"Par conséquent, pouvez-vous"*  
they say, so insouciant.

We live, qualified in a  
context defining  
assumptions and values  
imputed to proverbs.  
Disillusioned, we object  
to challenging factions  
at odds with our dogmas.  
"The simplest solutions  
are always pragmatic" —  
this is how the office of propaganda  
conducts daily business,  
with a right and a wrong  
and a "Do you belong?"  
A face brushes by  
with a grimacing bullseye  
and a fist full of papers  
concealing a match.  
The garrison is unlit, unmanned  
and decrepit, as all constables  
have now joined in the pickets  
and bakeries are the sites  
of severest sedition.  
We've made it a practice  
to police one another

but living on welfare  
depletes the top soil  
and all winners and losers  
concede quiddity.

This time the embezzlers  
agree with the judges  
and everyone knows  
the ballots are bankrupt.

Here is the edifice  
where proclamations were posted;  
the fonts are antique  
and the slogans have rusted.

We live without verve  
since the statues have toppled  
and the view from the prison  
is compromised by ennui.

The traitors and martyrs  
caricaturized in broadsides  
are now nearly forgotten  
by a numbed populace.

All of the wives, since radicalized,  
have abandoned their children  
and domestic commissions;  
muskets were brought into the breadlines  
while headlines deplored charity bells  
neglected and broken.

You reach for a dagger  
and it severs in two  
while the odor of garlic  
and urine accost you.

Just as Marx warned  
the idiocy of the village  
reduces a human to a statistical peon;  
it's not that the trenches  
contend perpetually —  
the problem is peacetime,  
the evil, banality.

Ask any beggar his political stance —  
he'll mimic your bromides  
and assess your shoe size.

Professional zealots issued the edicts  
which were then transcribed  
by cursory typists  
then augmented by accountants,  
haphazardly.  
Declarations were debated  
and provisos calculated  
summarily, in absentia.  
We proselytize an existence impugned  
by our own efforts to outsmart desires,  
recruiting fresh troops with tired platitudes  
we no longer believe in  
but recite in our sleep,  
albeit aphonically.

It's the guilelessness of rubes  
which feeds the frontier  
and they're sent home in sacks —  
fertilizer, debriefed.

There's a fable underground  
that the monarchs fled last night  
and are quartered in a shack  
fed by peasants starved for vice.

The crops are tentative  
and languish in appellate  
while committees roll the dice  
on a drought or annexation.

Bayonets and tuberculosis,  
which once seized our polemics,  
don't injure our stomachs  
like usurers' notes.

We see the officers retreat,  
we sense the demagogues recoup.

These are the moments  
of stray insignificance

knowing that spies have families, too:  
cherubs at play with tin horses and soldiers,  
partisans stamped by  
paternity papers.  
Royal portraitists  
assigned with court chemists  
desperate for a medium to laminate a canvas;  
revolutionary heroes painted over sovereigns  
might, with care, be removed by potions  
to restore their former patrons.  
Here, dismay reigns and  
scaffolds strike gold;  
when work is outlawed  
only outlaws have work.  
The safety of publics  
sounds the general alarm,  
martial law is imposed  
on the means of production;  
truants form packs and  
scrawl across walls  
*“L’utopie — amour ou à laisser.”*  
The clergy has waived  
to the highest bidder  
but caskets persuade  
where legislation defaults.  
It’s a contest to see  
who can get by with less;  
misery is nobility, and  
surviving the dream  
is the best hope we have.

II.

We have seen the ocean stir itself  
a million shades of chiaroscuro grey  
and the seasons on these waves  
make meaningless our pools of youth  
which sluice into indifferent days.  
We have heard the mountains undersea



promise us a better life  
if we unresist and leap  
from the bow of this vast ship  
which makes us flesh without prospect.  
They conscript you  
when you're reeling drunk  
and tie you to a stake like meat,  
attached with whips that singe in flames,  
then discipline your skin with chains.  
This is unnaturalness  
made national  
and as we breach the equator  
we bring our fetishes to isles  
undespoiled by "liberty."  
There's men in tents  
that wait for us  
to straggle off on unmarked paths  
where treasures of the conquerors  
may be purloined from autopsies.  
We hoist a skull  
and light a fuse  
that scorch the savages' revolt  
then, when our darkness strangles them,  
we fence their daughters into caves.  
This is miscegenation of the damned:  
disease commeced by vanquishment.

How can it be  
so many evil deeds  
occur in beds, outposts of rest,  
where dreams may flee atrocities  
of combatants, then succumb to worse?  
After, you stagger to your bunk,  
the saltwater smelling pestilent,  
and hear the creaking moans of ropes  
suspending shame which sours crime,  
suggesting tension on your throat.  
Lunar nerves and sleep famine

make penitence comatose  
but in a thrice a shock awakes  
each hollow sailor from trapdoors  
and wrings the necks of all, desiccant.  
Unliving city, stiff in knots,  
an imbricated colony where vultures  
make dour magistrates, and miscreants  
are dragged in nets until they yield  
like barnacles — abraded, blank.  
The nucleus turns on itself,  
menace is our stamina,  
and out at sea God abdicates  
all verdicts to the Bos'n's Mate —  
a centipede of epaulets.  
This is the mask of massed empire,  
a squinting, calloused instrument  
of righteous sadism; he bellows out  
foul hurricanes of carnage,  
crapulence and gore.  
“If you won't die with bravery  
I'll kill you worse, unthinkingly.”

There's colonies to be exploited,  
ancestral tombs to be uprooted,  
natives to build pyramids  
and minerals to be robbed outright —  
we're paving seas with broken teeth.  
There's little built without brute force  
and opposition quashed by clout;  
rebellion strives to push back time  
while flint locks and chain shots advance  
the course of banners, mesmerized.  
Old men with maps and telescopes  
have hauled the world, on dinner plates,  
to cargo holds, then exchequer vaults  
where subjugated pittances  
strongarm bondmen for opulence.  
Laws always follow property

which gets contended cut-throatedly  
by massacre of viscera and terror  
unrestrained by saints; then come bills and rights  
and writs —treaties signed by severed limbs.

We play our anthems, say last rites,  
sound grand flags, weld monuments  
and carve in gold the taxes  
that unite the State, which dazzles us  
then vitiates.

The kingdoms of posterity  
were each begotten by a curse  
downtrodden corpses groaned in vain  
as they lifted sculpted tiers  
of kneeling hulks from their forebears.  
And this is how the towers grew  
from battlefields to holy scrolls.

This vessel is a cannon ball  
hurling from the maws of hell,  
decimating histories  
of primitives too brave to flee  
yet too naive to kill as well.  
But lo! the ocean yields no mile,  
has no remorse or moral pose;  
it will digest all sentience  
as if some plummetless stomach  
that eats to breathe, and never sleeps.  
And when a captain sets a course  
that deviates inside ciphers  
all that matters is his growl  
produces ample plunderage —  
all the while inspiring fear.  
But hunger erodes discipline  
and thirst turns slavery inside out;  
authority must always pulse  
the dialectical trespass  
between gyved men, and animals.  
There's mutiny astir tonight

and maledictions spat with knives;  
the Bos'n's Mate agrees to lead  
the bloody rancor to the throat  
of the great man, now disemboweled.  
They drag his carcass to the mess  
where flesh is torn from his torso;  
the cook, who grins pervertedly,  
announces he will make a stew  
of tattoos for the noncom men.  
Here is revolution, spun;  
Ouroboros' course reversed.

And when the man-of-war does dock  
back to the pennants of its realm,  
civilians, poised to praise the loot  
of victory, find it unhelmed.

III.

The Emperor and Empress avoid the balcony  
ever since the revolutionaries  
bombed the monastery;  
costermongers ply their wares  
although now they need state papers  
and "the State" keeps changing seals  
as the chips keep switching colors.  
Thermidorians are shifting barricades  
while croupiers are consulting alchemists;  
the rabble gathers around the fortress walls  
as documents prognosticate  
a surge in deficits.  
The levy on the colonies  
eviscerate the treasury  
as this season's crops  
are confiscated by the cops.  
The Pope is ineffectual  
in his pleas for clemency —  
"These slogans for equality  
proliferate jail sentences

and, at this rate, the populace  
will legislate more lawlessness.”  
Do not fear the rumblings of ordnance nor bombs;  
tremble not at batteries, cavalries or flares;  
the core of agitation and the terrors of unrest  
are represented at their worst  
by infants crying in the night.  
Desperate and precipitate,  
the milkless mothers crazed  
with squalling mouths they cannot save  
are the truest organs of uprising  
and the doom of every crown.

The workers seized the factories  
but soon enough could not agree  
on wages, nightshifts or demands  
for mechanical hierarchies. “No more  
bosses!” scream the masses;  
“All is lost” concede the masters  
of estates now razed to ashes.  
Meanwhile, besieged in a silo  
is the Council for the People  
and they’re minting currency  
to secure a safe succession.  
The Public Discourse is embroiled  
in philippics while the regiments  
conduct *démarches* on their pensions.  
We might agree “morality” is better than  
base “egotism”<sup>1</sup> — at least until interpretation  
fines a bias on our taxes  
and we see “equality” undercuts biology;  
the lesson of the double-cross is — always —  
laws will follow heads on pikes  
and many skeptics get to heaven

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<sup>1</sup> “In our land we want to substitute morality for egotism, integrity for formal codes of honor, principles for customs, a sense of duty for one of mere propriety, the rule of reason for the tyranny of fashion, scorn of vice for scorn of the unlucky, self-respect for insolence, grandeur of soul over vanity, love of glory for the love of money, good people in place of good society.” — Maximilien Robespierre, *The Political Philosophy of Terror*, 1794.

through the trapdoors  
of the scaffold.  
Democracy begins  
when one side loses,  
or another wins.  
If you listen with all your lungs  
you may faintly diagnose  
human nature change its course,  
ulteriorly.  
A wretched meal, a baby's cry  
and, overnight, thrones are deposed.

The Queen was once a girl  
playing airs on harpsichords;  
she had a duty to her country  
which was vested in the armor  
of her father, the Dictator.  
The marriage was a dark satire  
of retrenchments and retreats  
enabling low courtiers  
the acquisition of borders  
once defended by Olympians.  
Wealth was squeezed out of the serfs  
who lived in penury and grief  
so golden statues could mock them  
with idleness and insolence  
while harpsichords smoothed consciences.  
Jacobins, in secret cells,  
debated "liberty for all,"  
decreeing "universal rights"  
enforceable by deputies  
who penalize authority.  
When poverty is honorable  
you'll find the citizens in church  
all undercover, with permits,  
each neighbor gainfully employed  
extolling special suffering.  
"We have devised a fair system  
of equipollent government:

liberty, or guillotines;  
freedom, or high-pressure bombs;  
comradeship, or starvation.”  
Beware the martyrs with the power to “save” you  
from their own errors.

The economy is shrinking fast  
unless you count children as wealth —  
not that they’ll stay  
come working age  
unless grandchildren pay their wage.  
Radical chargé d’affaires  
who champion “living with less”  
prohibit all incentive now  
since any bent to make success  
would impose less of less on them.  
And so, the laundry lines are bare  
and fireplaces house compost  
while elders share stale anecdotes  
about the sacrifice they made  
to melt the statues into spades.  
Harpichords are rarely heard  
in such gaunt times when coal is scarce  
and coughing constitutes free will;  
there’s covert sects which plot revenge  
but mainly they just purge themselves.  
At first, the shortages outraged  
but shortages outlasted rage;  
the shibboleths and sans-culottes  
became anemic, then passé  
with no one left to massacre.  
“The needs of many outweigh the one  
and retribution’s not yet begun”  
mutter voices outside the Palace  
although nobody smashed a roof  
or tore an entrance to be stormed.  
There are no occupants within;  
ergo, the blame’s innominate.





## **A DREAM OF DARK WINGS**

*after 'Death and the Gravedigger' by Carlos Schwabe*

My head pounds. All week I've fretted,  
wanted to be elsewhere,  
impatient at my slow life while she dies.

I dream: I am making dark wings  
with my father, children's wings, fashioned  
of heart-shaped wire and black felt. Not pure black:

charcoal scrubbed over burnt-umber pastel.

At first we make them together,  
then I post them to him, into a letterbox, as a gift.

The dream reminds me, in a homespun way,  
of Schwabe's ecstatic vision. Death crouches  
by an open grave, gorgeous, fierce, compassionate.

Her scythe-like wings dip down to cradle  
the gravedigger who is ancient, frayed,  
already inside his grave.

The dream sets me wondering:  
Who will die first? It could be my worn-out father,  
who keeps vigil over my dying mother

as we go and come and go. It could, I suppose,  
be me. The dream is mine. My impatience  
at the slowness of her death might die.

Whoever it is, however it is: when I wake,  
my week-long hammering headache is gone.

Monica Corish    Ireland

## **FILLING THE SKIP**

*for Mike Corish*

We make a clearance of the house,  
break up what's left of the furniture,  
fit it neatly into the second skip.  
All your treasures - your *tricky-tracks*

and *purdies* - will go to the charity shop.  
Your lexicon will die with us.

We save love letters, photographs,  
receipts from your honeymoon.  
My younger sister gathers viburnum,  
narcissi, pale yellow broom: final gifts  
for your grandchildren, your sister,  
your grave.

My brother saves a single leg  
from the kitchen table.  
My older sister makes a shrine  
in your bedroom: a vase of daffodils,  
six tea-lights. One each:  
her, him, the four of us.

I hold back a single mattress  
from the skip, in case my brother  
needs to make a final visit; bedding  
for one; a towel; a kettle; a saucepan.

Also six cups, six spoons,  
six plates, six knives, six forks.  
I close the door.

Monica Corish    Ireland

## **STRANGE VISITOR**

In the midst of pots and food,  
above the whirl of oven's hood  
a tip-tapping sharp and hard.

At the French windows, so close,  
a visitor to our house, stranger  
from the land of grain, my youth.

Rare pheasant, tame at my sight,  
perhaps befriending a reflection,  
strutting the patio, raised head curious.

'Adopt it !' my son had suggested  
though he , no doubt, would say fair game,  
thinking of sauces and fattening.

She stepped the stone as if on ice,  
once lying down like it was a nest ;  
for hours beaking on glass, obsessed.

With the darkening evening, gone.  
Pictures a proof it was not delirium,  
no messenger from barley-fields once known.

Mike Jenkins    Wales

### ***BINGHAMPTON AT AL'S WHISKEY JOINT***

Whisky bottles reach the ceiling,  
the barmaid's climbing a ladder,  
eyes upward but not praying,  
her legs get fingers twitching

and 'Binghamton's' on something

he says it's all happening here  
lives in the next town nothing doing,  
the band play the Blues again  
announce their retirement mid-song

but 'Binghamton' can't sit down

he's dancing in his chair,  
he's banging his head on the shelf,  
he's outside with the smokers,  
his eyes are popping out

and 'Binghamton's' finding out

the girl from the pasta restaurant  
gyrates like a charming snake,  
as he tells his own to keep down  
for fear he'll catch the venom

and 'Binghamton's' here then gone

the buses have long since left,  
the girl from Eastside's struggling home,  
he's hustling and dealing on the sidewalk  
his hands are pigeons pouncing.

Mike Jenkins    Wales

### **NO GOOD SHOUTING**

If you want to talk to her  
it's no good shouting,  
she'll have her headphones on,  
be well inside her hoodie  
in her Whittingham City shirt.

She'll be Instagramming friends  
or Facebooking her mate  
just up the street she's seen  
ten minutes earlier on the Astro  
(which is really concrete);  
or she'll be far away in Gleeland  
or living with a family of vampires.

If you want to venture into her room  
don't bother, heed the sign –  
'BEWARE! TEENAGER INSIDE!'  
Only Boy Band posters have any order,  
the rest's an indoor landfill site  
of clothes, books, pens, discarded bottles,  
the protractor she was looking for  
for Maths homework last weekend.

If you want to ask her to practice  
her cello, piano or clear the table  
just be prepared.....stand back  
as if for an explosion.....  
and borrow those headphones!

Mike Jenkins    Wales



Artwork © 2016 Carol Lawrence England

## **THE LIGHT KEEPER'S DAUGHTER**

An early evening light  
washed low across the table  
As our hands dipped to the pail  
side by side  
the warm glow of evening  
setting fire to our cheeks

Occasionally and almost imperceptibly  
Our hands brushed  
clutched the rough skin spuds  
soil falling away between our fingers

Discovering their forms  
We stripped and lay them  
Smooth naked pale wet  
revealed upon the kitchen counter

And how it came to be I can't recall  
But that evening we walked together  
up the cliff side path  
The sea resounding on the rocks below  
Air thick with Kittiwake and gull cry  
Shearwaters hurling themselves  
Into the night to feed far out  
Upon the swelling breast of the Atlantic

Together in the Lamp-Black night  
Interrogated only by the sweep of lighthouse beam  
We had no use of words  
for I felt your warmth calling me  
against the heather of the hill  
And without direction our hands met  
fingers linked palm met palm

We turned and as we drew each other close  
Twin beams of unforgiving light  
Flung our shadows out into the screaming dark  
Two ghosted children  
hands hung limply at our sides  
For whom five years might pass  
for such a time to come again

But somewhere on that cliff path  
There is a moment that hangs still upon the air  
In which he did not come to take me home  
when we embraced and lifted to the wind  
And with Shearwater Kittiwake and gull  
inclined our faces to the sky  
and with one voice  
Let forth a great and raucous cry

Ian Griffiths    Wales

## **SIREN SONG**

Waist deep in ocean  
I stand and count  
As  
from glittering horizon to the shore swell  
swell  
swell follows swell  
ridge follows trough  
rolling on in families of seven  
as all behind are pressed on all ahead  
mirror walls of light rising in crescendo  
till towering they spit and fume above the crest  
hang in the air poised to descend annihilating sense  
Then I pink and soft as oyster from its shell  
jelly bullt on brittle cuttle bone, child of land and air  
throw myself aloft to seize the power of the wave  
Which takes me hurls me spins me, bends me to its will  
breathe salt the brine and ozone of the raging spume  
Flung out of time and mind, no up, no down, no past, no future  
And,  
in that moment I am one with all  
she leaves me,  
dizzy, draining on the sand  
singing,  
singing of the siren sea  
And ebbing ebbing from my floundered limbs  
My love  
steals silently away

Ian Griffiths    Wales

## **THE STOWAWAYS**

Tramping home one dank December day,  
Crossing the half-drowned bridge below the mill,  
A woman there, as if to beard the grey,  
Raised high her camera'd arm at our advance.

We stopped, though couldn't keep the river still;  
She turned, as though we'd stopped there just by chance.

So, had her shutters closed upon the scene?  
And were two figures squeezed against one side,  
Looking for thanks whilst trying to stay unseen?  
Did we and clouds so much affront her eye  
She'd changed her mind, or had we qualified  
As grimmest proof of sights no lens should try?

Then, trudging up the lane toward Lower Swell,  
Saluting my allotment friends en route,  
I couldn't bid our tourist friend farewell,  
But pictured her departing somewhere warm,  
Busy and bright, with just one straggling shoot  
Of ours as salvage from the looming storm;

And this she'd plant in our diaspora  
Of looks elsewhere, dumb frowns and stares, turned backs,  
And such unscenic misbehaviour.  
From Boston to Beijing, and in between,  
We're cropping up in slacks and anoraks,  
And even vivid shrouds of polythene -

Part of those crowds on shelves and noticeboards  
Messing up great city squares and sombre shrines  
Which, though they scorn us hordes of untowards,  
Yet grudge this idle confraternity  
We've randomly become, that now aligns  
Our stolen souls towards eternity.

Derek Healy    England

## **THE FISHING FLEET**

How their lives must have expanded  
as the P&O ship slipped out of Suez to the Red Sea  
and their crinoline whites softened in the breeze.



With the cries of the waterfront ‘gully-gully’ men  
still echoing in their ears they must have loosened  
their corsets and unfastened their stays:

ahead of them lay days perambulating the decks  
to the bubbling chatter of girlish dreams  
and open air dances under a canvas of stars.

On docking at the Gateway of India in Bombay  
a subaltern adjusts the angle of his topee  
and beckons to picnics and polo at the club.

No thought at this stage  
of how cucumber sandwiches  
wilt in the heat,  
get filched by ravenous crows

how mosquitoes bruise  
the ripe white flesh  
and bloody the starch  
of laundered clothes

how the chaps are always upcountry  
winning their spurs  
or horsing in the mess  
as port and singsong flows

so that nine months later a corset is tightened  
on the journey back as a ‘returned empty’  
or (God forbid!) damaged goods re-sealed

and packed off to a vicarage in Kent  
to fester as the helpmeet of some churchman  
in a parish and whisper: “if only...then...”

Mark Floyer    England

## **TERRA INCOGNITA**

Poised on a spirit level  
between moon and horizon  
your sextant tapped  
billows of Baluchi sanddune  
into measured pattern.

Lodged in the crook  
of your forefinger and thumb,  
you sketched out cartographies  
of barren space and time  
and mapped their contours.

Now your great-granddaughter  
corrals space inside a garbage bag,  
placing it in a Berlin gallery,  
and calibrates time  
through the click of a digital lens.

Explorers of the colonial  
and conceptual ages,  
pushing back the frontiers  
of inner and outer geometry,  
can your technologies  
chart the imploded axes  
of a childhood marooned in memory,  
the terra incognita of loss?

Mark Floyer    England

## **HEMELCOMING**

In the embers of the afternoon  
dust motes perform a stately dance  
framed by the proscenium arch of the doorway.  
I pass through the backdrop of memory  
into the steam of the kitchen  
where potatoes gently knock the side of the pan  
as though tapping out a message in Morse:  
'Come on in. Take a seat.'  
She moves to the teapot,  
casting over her shoulder  
'Are you stopping long?'  
Time contracts.

Ali Pardoe    England

## **HENRY'S ROOM**

Henry's room draws light through the windows,  
catches it and tosses it onto the mirror  
which passes it in turn  
to a series of glass fronted photographs:  
neatly posed family shots,  
a boy and girl in black and white  
gradually growing into colour and, in turn,  
presenting their own children  
who eventually pose in gowns and mortar boards.  
They spill their life across the walls,  
illuminating the past

Ali Pardoe    England

## **NARRATIVE No 18 - CITY**

### **What is a city for?**

To present you each morning with a maze of street  
To present you each morning with strangers passing by  
To give you tenements changing with the 24 hour light  
To slink home after a bad day in, to float on joyous news

### **What is a city for?**

To be born to die in  
Each day again and again  
So Anne and I take our city love truth appropriated  
We drink grime and broken glass and glitzy neon

Soaked decayed blood stains - bleak marriage - unnoticed rainbows –  
Alleyways - dual carriage ways over cascading rivers - blue-shark at red traffic light  
Crowds round a collapsed man - dilapidated buildings - broken glass

### **This is what a city is for:**

To bleed in to find new healthy dreams  
In the midst of poverty and need and money  
To carousel in on broken wings

Finally city is for leaving to the Elysium fields you  
Did not lose in your dreams

Nick Monks    England

## **WAR CORRESPONDENT**

*For James Fenton*

Floating among the ice, these peaceful  
soft, curly shapes reflect the sky.  
The river rocks them lightly, gently,  
their pace appearing slow and graceful  
beneath the evening's silver mantle.  
We cannot see the fish below, but  
discern from here a place of worship  
that dominates this wounded landscape.

The fish cannot disturb the dead.  
Indifferent, the murdered lie  
swelling our rivers of history.  
A friendly warlord has purged a delicate  
threatening issue of principles  
(which we regret). You must have heard:  
a war afar stirs passions once  
it has occurred on television.

They've left behind a tidy village  
of great importance – once, to them,  
the toil of ruined generations,  
a scent of sweat, the stench of fear,  
spent cartridges trampled into the snow  
and children recoiled from adult ways,  
potential witnesses still in hiding  
in crumpled bedrooms (which we regret).

Others I know marched calmly at gunpoint  
and left their clothes and shoes on the shore.  
They were received by the surging waves  
tied in pairs to prevent survival,

to float forever towards the sea  
– rejected by oblivion.  
We have erected a monument  
to urge humanity: *Never Again!*

...A monument secured by our stubborn  
pillars of fear that make us insane and  
succumb to the lure of the tranquil river.  
The icy current coils beyond  
our will and wailing. Hear this dirge  
composed for you and me, undated.  
It mourns the living. We calculate  
our fate in sums of overkill.

Thomas Land    England

## **THE SEVENTH QUARRY PRESS**

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## BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

**MYSELF AND OTHER STRANGERS** by Robin Lindsay Wilson, published by Cinnamon Press. Available via [www.cinnamonpress.com](http://www.cinnamonpress.com) ‘The inner world and the outer one set one another alight in Robin Lindsay Wilson’s poems’ – R.V. Bailey. An inspired and highly recommended new book by the Scottish poet. Price: £8.99.

**A BRUSH WITH WORDS** by Beryl Myers, Annie Taylor and Frances White, published by Number 11 Publishing. Available via Number 11 Publishing, New Malden, Surrey KT3 3BS, England. This is a beautifully produced book, one that matches Beryl Myers’ stunning paintings, with selections of poems by three poets who display a real sense of craft and an impressive range of subjects. Price: £6.99.

**EAST OF ARRAS** by Tim Gardiner, published by Poppy Poetry. Available from Poppy Poetry, Manningtree, England. A most interesting book that tells the tragic story of soldier Charles Norman Gardiner, as told through the diary he kept in 1916 on the Western Front. His great nephew, Tim, poet and ecologist, accompanies the narrative with his thought-provoking poems. No price stated.

**WILDERNESS** by Tim Gardiner, published by Brambleby Books. Available from [www.bramblebybooks.co.uk](http://www.bramblebybooks.co.uk). Described as ‘a collection of poems reflecting nature’s moods’, professional ecologist Tim’s poetry is accessible and truly engaging. Tim has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the British landscape and he weds his years of experience with his human responses to the natural world. It also contains some first-class photographs. No price stated.

**THE POEMS OF AN AUSTRALIAN WW1 GUNNER** by C.W.W Webster (1895-1980), published by York Publishing Services. Available from [www.yps-publishing.co.uk](http://www.yps-publishing.co.uk). Poems from the First World War and the post-War period. Price: £8.99.

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aims to publish quality poems from around the world. Poets from the U.K., America, Argentina, Australia, Bulgaria, Belarus, Canada, Catalonia, China, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Holland, India, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Sicily, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland have already appeared in its pages. New York's Vince Clemente, as the magazine's Consultant Editor: America, ensures a steady stream of American poets.

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

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

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

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

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

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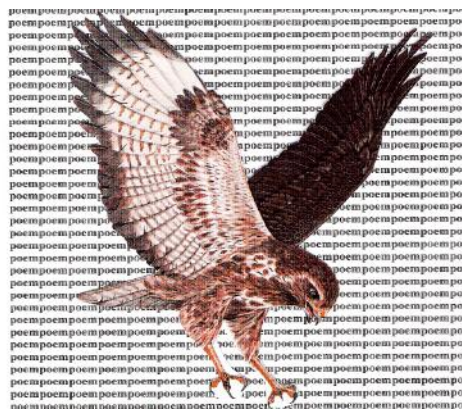


**Editor’s Note:**

I have received the **Ted Slade Award for 2016**.

The award is given in recognition of service to poetry and the poetry community by a person, or persons, who has given their time and energies over an extended period to ensuring the continuance and development of poetry. The Award is administered by The Poetry Kit, UK.

Jim Bennett of The Poetry Kit said, “I am really happy that once more our award goes to someone who, like the other recipients of the Ted Slade Award, has given so much to promote and sustain audiences for poetry and to create outlets for the work of others. As well as writing fine poetry for adults, his children’s writing is outstanding and helps to develop a love of poetry in his readers. Peter’s output encompasses theatre, media and publishing. He was born in Swansea, and his work in promoting poetry in Wales has brought him to prominence. He regularly flies the flag for poets in schools, festivals and events throughout Wales, and across Europe and the USA. I am pleased to see the Ted Slade Award 2016 awarded to Peter Thabit Jones.”



**LOOK OUT FOR ISSUE 24: Summer/Autumn 2016**

**WALES:** Jean Salkild, Graham Allison, Gareth Culshaw,  
Byron Beynon, Mark Elias, Ali Morrison, Robert Nisbet, Mike Jenkins

**ENGLAND:** Jonathan Beale, Bess Miles-Duncan, Carol Lawrence,  
Ian Griffiths, Derek Healy, Mark Floyer, Ali Pardoe, Nick Monks,  
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**IRELAND:** John Saunders, Monica Corish

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Nina Varon, Miriam Margala, Mary Gregory, Stanley H. Barkan,  
Carolyn Mary Kleefeld, Tomasz Marek Sobieraj, Craig Kurtz

“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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