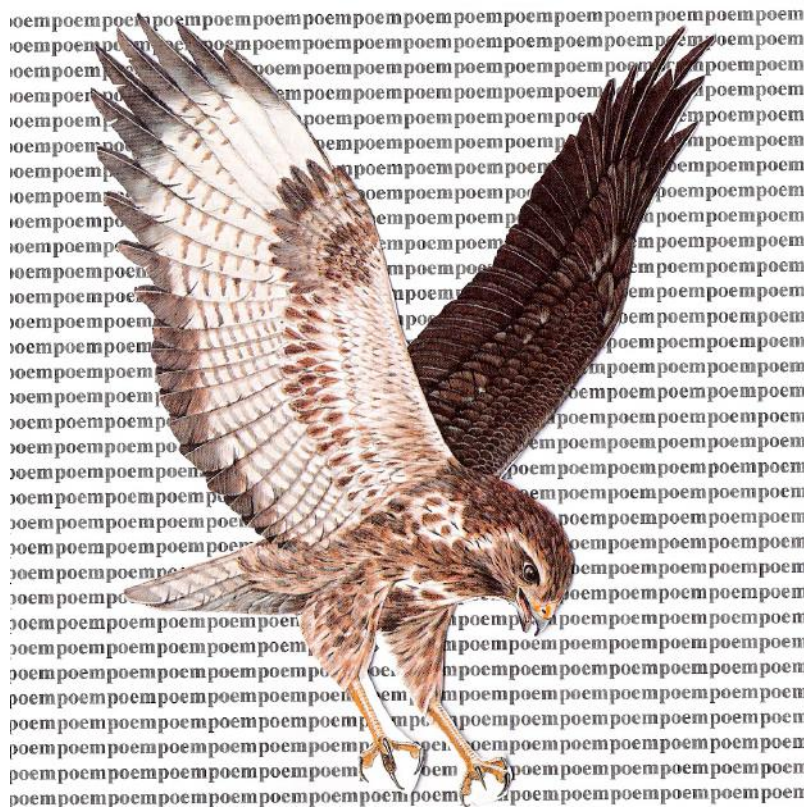


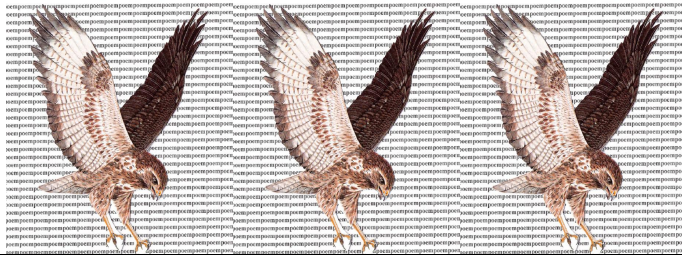
# THE SEVENTH QUARRY



## POETRY

**ISSUE TWENTY-SIX**  
**SUMMER/AUTUMN 2017**  
**SWANSEA POETRY MAGAZINE**

**THE**



**SEVENTH**



**QUARRY**

**SWANSEA POETRY MAGAZINE**



**ISSUE 26**  
**SUMMER/AUTUMN 2017**

**EDITORIAL  
ISSUE TWENTY-SIX  
SUMMER/AUTUMN 2017**

This twenty-sixth issue features work from America, Austria, Denmark, England, France, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Philippines, Pakistan, Scotland, Slovakia, and Wales. It also includes a Poet Profile of American poet Gayl Teller; an interview with Július Vanovič, Slovakian writer and publisher; and an interview with renowned American poet Maria Mazziotti Gillan.

The collaboration between The Seventh Quarry Press and Stanley H. Barkan's Cross-Cultural Communications, New York, continues into 2017.

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

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

Peter Thabit Jones, Editor

Consultant Editor, America: Vince Clemente

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PETER THABIT JONES  
(photo © 2017 Peter Thabit Jones)



VINCE CLEMENTE  
(photo © 2017 Peter Thabit Jones)

**This issue is dedicated to David Campagna, American actor, and  
Terry Hetherington, Welsh poet**

**David Campagna** (October 23rd, 1946 – March 6th, 2017) was an American actor, best known for acting as Christopher Walken's stand-in and stunt double. He was a native of Fremont, California.

**Career**

After studying theater at Foothill College in Los Altos Hills, California, David Campagna moved to Los Angeles, to pursue a career as an actor. In 1973, he was hired as a page for ABC Television, working on several network shows, including *The Merv Griffin Show*, *Laverne and Shirley*, *Happy Days*, *The Odd Couple*, and *The Lawrence Welk Show*.

Under the tutelage of renowned acting teacher Jeff Corey, Campagna became a soap opera actor, landing roles on *General Hospital* and *The Young and the Restless*.

He eventually became Christopher Walken's stand-in and stunt double in more than 15 films, spanning over a 20 year period. David Campagna passed away on March 6th, 2017 after a valiant three-year battle against esophageal cancer.

*The Divine Kiss: An Exhibit of Paintings and Poems in Honor of David Campagna* by Carolyn Mary Kleefeld (2014) Cross-Cultural Communications, New York ISBN 978-0893049706

*The Seventh Quarry Interview Supplement* (2016), an interview, conducted by American writer John Dotson, with American actor David Campagna.

David will be much missed by Carolyn Mary Kleefeld, his loving partner, and his many friends.

**Terry Hetherington**, Welsh poet, died in August 2007. On the tenth anniversary of his death, he is much missed by Aida Birch, his loving partner, and all those who remember his passion and enthusiasm on the Welsh literary scene. A Special Issue of *The Seventh Quarry*, devoted to Terry, was published in 2008.



**David Campagna © 2017 Jai Italiander**



**Terry Hetherington© 2017 Aida Birch**

## FLOWERING

As colliery manager,  
her husband had found Cupid  
in the consistency of tonnage.  
Enamoured of figures,  
he accomplished the movement of coal  
with all the finesse  
of his pen's excited strokes.  
And on Sundays,  
hugged by his leather chair,  
he would peruse the works of Gibbon.

Their garden was her domain.  
In springtime, hatted and gloved  
and averting her eyes from fornicating nature,  
she would tend and replenish.  
Bees and flowers were quite safe,  
with no obvious carnality in their interaction.

Her odd job man came twice in each week;  
and through the years  
she suffered his person,  
addressing him only to instruct.  
Once, she had found him lopping the hedges,  
his lips vivid  
through the pit dirt still on him,  
and his clothes seeping an odour  
of dank places.  
Chill with loathing, she had sent him away.  
He smothered his resentments,  
affecting humility for the payment's sake.  
It topped up his collier's wage,  
helped fill his glass,  
and fund brief interludes  
in the arms of some honest wanton.

It is all long past:  
they have seen their seasons through,  
and here in the nursing home,

bees and blooms are replaced  
by the sterility of potted silks.  
Yet capricious time,  
and their lives' exhausted soil,  
have sprouted a final paradox,  
inseparable now,  
they shuffle the lengths of corridors,  
holding hands, exchanging the kiss of infants,  
  
and sharing incoherence  
in the flowering of a strange benevolence.

Terry Hetherington    Wales

## **THE TROUT**

Succulent Autumn prize,  
dappled quivering flame  
lighting the leaf-crisp banks'  
ode to winter.  
I raise a vicious limb,  
the killing stick, poised  
ready to describe the quick  
destroying arc, twitches with  
unease. My eyes held, the  
stick stayed by breeding  
colours' triumph. Mottled  
bronze, clear silver like  
trembling spilled mercury  
floating perfectly aligned,  
red beacons blazing protest  
at my dark hunched purpose.  
Do I starve? Must procreation  
falter at my whim?  
One blow, and the sinuous  
shaking passion over gravel  
is denied him, the milt's  
cold blooded cloud will  
never settle.



Perhaps years hence (gods willing)  
I may repeat this act, be faced  
with equal fire, but the mirror  
of this murmuring dying day  
day would shatter with  
my swiftly falling arm.  
A mouldering leaf invades  
the gasping mouth. it is  
enough, even the loud stream's  
babble chides at me,  
the stick is flung aside and  
panic grips. As a living symbol  
fades with the dripping seconds,  
my odd pained hands link to  
form the cradle, that swings  
existence to the waiting  
water's grasp.

Terry Hetherington    Wales

## **LENNON AT SEVENTY-FIVE**

Sitting in the back snug of Ye Cracke -  
where the alehouse recalls  
John and Stu supping underage -  
you can see Lennon at seventy-five.  
No longer holding court, a swaying docker  
the spit of Sutcliffe-in-shades is raging:

‘...from back-jigger scrapes to Shea Stadium;  
we've heard it all from The Quarrymen to Hamburg,  
and back again. You can stick Charles Hawtrey  
and the Deaf-Aids. Sick to the back teeth  
of yer NYC t-shirt, fur coat and shades.  
We admit it, yer did great, so welcome home, kid.  
Now shurrup about it and get the round in!’

You can see Lennon at seventy-five  
striding across the rain-pitted Pier Head.  
In donkey jacket he's back from that upper class,

accentless, dinner party chat. Canapés and champers,  
not brown bitter in pints. And whether he sold out  
or not, now past the point.

Or you find almost an orphan, his blistered fingers  
clutching the Strawberry Fields gate-  
beyond boundary now, chained-up and rusting.  
In Mendips, the last tourists of the day  
file out and fail to see in the window  
his old ghosts gathered again.

Lennon at seventy-five has wrestled back  
his white piano from the National Trust,  
and it's on to the Zanzibar for comeback night-  
Yoko at John's side, quite happy in her sack.  
Scouse troubadours bundle guitar cases  
through the club's blue neon doors,  
singing: 'There he is, up there again.  
That's John Lennon, he's one of ours.'

John Paul Davies    Ireland

## **FEAR AT THE TRACK**

The bookie, Thedaskis, packs up after the last-  
eyes scattered, hoping for a no show;  
winning number black-scrawled on his wife's palm.  
The crowd peels littering its loss,  
while Harry Tudge pays out two grand,  
lifts his smudged wide-brimmed hat  
to scratch his scalp.  
Eyes in grey lenses work the retiring field  
as he wipes the board for the last time  
in wide arcs. Never switched to electronic.  
Backs of his hands tattooed  
in out –of –date odds.  
Over the white rail, Tudge remembers  
the green untouched, the grass renewed,  
as if each hoofed-up clod again soaks soil  
and no horse possibly raced in circles,

straining their sinew low, colours  
still staining his eyes.

John Paul Davies    Ireland

## **UNDERGROUND**

Become our own premonition,  
we are outside looking in;  
reflection thrown onto tunnel brick  
and back again whichever way you look,  
keeping time with the train through a sudden turn.

The drowsing carriage beyond signal,  
tinned music in an animal tongue.  
Electronic ticker–tape of unfounded place names.

Handgrip nooses twitch from those departed;  
sparks flare from a scorched rail,  
show in the window who sat here last,  
who now sleep as our eyes open,

and the carriages move like high girders  
at the starting point of cities, headless  
for the next tunnel as we surely follow.

The pause between every word now a distance.  
A kiss lingering in the last town.  
Our future selves jack–knifing from view.

John Paul Davies    Ireland

## **THREE SHIPS**

Snow compacting in time with the song  
as I approach the old house,  
words demanding my return.  
Furnace–smoke scars the blind sky,  
a slow–turning cloud in the morning refusing death,  
the song a refusal to never exist.

Adult tread obliterates my boyhood prints;

Barney, born that summer, tests a high howl—  
his three-padded prints traverse mine to the river.  
Singing their ships, the boys keep out of view  
as I circle the house which ticks like a music box,  
dripping with icewater; a melting of twenty-five years.

Nose against pane, I become a trick of the light,  
a displaced mariner from one of the three ships  
somehow come ashore.

My old red racer leans easily under the window,  
the white saddle my father held  
as he ran alongside, steered then released.

Even this far from sea the ships  
could be seen from my bedroom window;  
melding on the horizon, in and out of the mist.  
Breath enough to fill the mast once more,  
the three ships sung into existence  
for as long as they were needed.

I leave the house and follow my prints to the river,  
where the last of the melting snow  
betrays the boy's face under ice,  
trapped in a one-way mirror.  
Red-cheeked, stalled as the three ships  
brimming in the horizon of his wet eyes.

John Paul Davies    Ireland

## **OF THINGS**

Fine things live with us —  
they are square, round or soft,  
maybe books, food, and a thought  
of perfect objects, tasty meals  
somewhere near, in crystalline spheres  
decomposed in Matrix, given away  
to imperfect humans for joy and for play

Molecules of emptiness  
in all sizes and colors,  
a drop of water, gold, some dollars  
all to be wasted, recycled, and used,  
transforming qualities and being fused  
into the multi-array world of nothingness  
comprehensible to monks, children, philosophers,  
and to open minds of a few others.

Nina Varon    America

## **YOU BE**

How many times  
must you be born  
into a blind day  
to forget  
the soft velour or  
everlastingness  
Rubbing your eyes  
to see (clearly)  
will only bring you  
more pain  
So live like a blind, deaf, mute,  
sleeping body  
with open vortexes  
where breath  
is a spirit  
undivided from the night  
You be

Nina Varon    America

## POET PROFILE: GAYL TELLER



Gayl Teller © 2017 Gayl Teller

**Gayl Teller** Nassau County Poet Laureate for 2009-2011 and the Walt Whitman Birthplace Association 2016 Long Island Poet of the Year, Gayl Teller received an MA from Columbia University and another MA from Queens College, CUNY. Her six poetry collections are *At the Intersection of Everything You Have Ever Loved*, *Shorehaven*, *Moving Day*, *One Small Kindness*, *Inside the Embrace*, and most recently, *Hidden in Plainview* (WordTech/Cherry Grove, 2015). She is the editor of *Toward Forgiveness*, an anthology of poems (Writers Ink Press, 2011).

Internationally and widely published, her poems have appeared in *Poem*, *The South Coast Poetry Journal*, *Phoebe*, *The Nassau County Poet Laureate Society Review*, *Prosopisia: An International Journal of Poetry and Creative Writing*, *Front Range Review*, *RCC Muse*, *The Sow's Ear Poetry Journal*, *Paterson Literary Journal*, *Freshet*, *Poetrybay: Long Island Quarterly*, *Spring*, *Swansea Review*, *The Second Genesis*, *Newsday*, *The Long Islander: Walt's Corner*, *The Hartford Courant*, and in many other distinguished publications. Director and founder of the Poetry Reading Series, under the auspices of the New York State Council on the Arts, at the Mid-Island Y JCC, in Plainview, NY, for the past twenty-two years, she reviews the works of feature poets and judges the annual poetry contest for children, teens, and adults.

She has been teaching in the English department of Hofstra University since 1985. As Nassau County Poet Laureate, she originated "Stray Feet," a roving poetry show visiting schools, senior and rehab centers, nursing homes, and libraries in Nassau County, and in 2010, her workshops/anthology project "A Poetry of Forgiveness" was awarded a New York State Council on the Arts Decentralization Grant for the Arts, which culminated in her editing *Toward Forgiveness*, an anthology of 99 LI poets, including five poets laureate, published by Writers Ink Press, in 2011. She has conducted numerous poetry workshops and seminars and been the feature reader at many universities, poetry centers, theaters and libraries. She has served as a judge in the Poetry Out Loud National Recitation Contest, which encourages the nation's youth to learn about great poetry through memorization and performance. She is the recipient of the Westmoreland Arts & Heritage Festival Poetry Award, the Edgar Allan Poe Prize, the Peninsula Library Poetry Prize, a National Federation of State Poetry Societies Prize, a National League of American PEN Women Prize, and *The Connecticut Writer Prize*; *One Small Kindness* was a finalist for the Blue Light Poetry Prize. In 2011, she received The North Sea Poetry Scene Recognition Award and in 2012, the Special Service Award from the Mid-Island Y JCC. Her poems are widely published and anthologized, and her reviews of poetry books have appeared frequently in *Small Press Review*. Her website is [www.gaylteller.com](http://www.gaylteller.com).

**Peter Thabit Jones:** When did you start writing and what writers most influenced you?

**Gayl Teller:** I found photographs of myself at 6 years old carrying envelopes with secret messages. Unusual combinations of words enchanted me, and almost everything evoked deep feelings in me. Even in elementary school, teachers told me I should be a writer. In junior high and high schools, I contributed to and edited the literary magazines, and graduated with English medals. But it was when I was 13 and moved away from close friends in the Bronx to suburbia that I most discovered in my loneliness that the blank page is the best listener, a friend to help me sort out and comprehend my teen turmoil, the zigs and zags of human interactions, the stories of people around me with their disappointments, melancholies, their kindnesses and cruelties. The blank page was a way out of the isolation chamber of my own head.

I was flying in a plane when I first read Whitman's "Song of Myself" and experienced such a sense of soaring, as if I'd left the plane and was "blown out of blue beginnings," I scribbled in the margins. His ecstasy was contagious, and I felt a great sense of oneness with all beings, a joyous spiritual atheism, for I was not formally religious. From Whitman, I learned the power of fluidly long lines and anaphoric repetition as forces of poetic propulsion. His union of mind and body seemed intuitively right. He was truly Emerson's poet, the seer, the sayer. He saw and expressed the great beauty of the ordinary. But even more so than Emerson and Thoreau, he saw and expressed vice and feebleness as part of the human condition.

The writer who has influenced me the most is Wendell Berry. Jayber Crow is a character I will never forget because he evinces how love, as its own reward, enlarges one's own heart, so in that sense, love is never unrequited. I admire how Berry's poems and fiction celebrate the care, the love, and the focused attention in performing the human task well, whether the task is preparing a hill for planting, raising a family, or writing a poem. I admire how his clear and eloquent images gracefully leap into broad, prophetic visions of life as artful cultivation, rich with hope and determination: "To get back before dark/ is the art of going" ("Traveling at Home"). Like Whitman, Berry has enriched my spiritual atheism. In my poem "Building a Chimney," I see Berry's influence in the construction workers' joyous craftsmanship as they carefully place each brick, as they protect a begonia, as they



sing, as my “flue” becomes their “flute.”

**PTJ:** When you get the initial thoughts for a poem, what is your usual approach to bringing a poem into reality on the page?

**GT:** A new poem often comes to me as an annoyance in stillness, some strong emotional interruption while I’m peacefully walking, biking, jogging or engaged in some focused activity. It’s intrusive, like a grain of sand to an oyster or a hook to a fish. I want it to go away. But I know I’ll have no peace until I jot down some aspects of the intuitive gift. Then I can set it aside and let it steep in my psyche. Often unexpectedly during the next several days, pieces of conversations, readings, stray thoughts and events get drawn and accrete to that grain, so I scratch them down in no particular order. When I feel ready to do a rough draft, I sit at my kitchen table in the morning light with pen and paper, and I ponder my scratchings. On a good day, I find the time away has been fertilizing, and my scratchings fuse into a seedling poem. I rewrite the rough draft on paper, often many times, until I feel some sense of completion. Then I set that aside. When I finally go to the computer, I make more changes, especially in the layout. The finished product always surprises me somehow.

I was at my granddaughter’s Bat Mitzvah, feeling very proud of her accomplished performance of the Hebrew prayers, when the intrusive thought kept bugging me that there should be one inclusive religion with rituals that unite all of humanity. The one ethos should be compassion. I felt compelled to go to the bathroom and scratch down some notes on a napkin. I’d been disgusted by the violence in the world news. Sometime later, I read about Luca, the one-celled organism living in sea vents that scientists believe to be the ancestor of all life. Reading about Luca emphasized to me how we are all connected to one another and to all living things at all levels, from the societal to the cellular. About a month passed when all this fused into “Thoughts at My Granddaughter’s Bat Mitzvah.”

**PTJ:** What distinction would you make between a poem for the page and a poem for the stage, and how important is doing poetry readings to you?

**GT:** When I write a poem, I don’t distinguish between one for the page and one

for the stage. My goal in every poem is language that resonates with essential truths. I seek language rich with figures and connotations that reach out like a flashlight to illuminate wider and wider swaths of reality and the essential truths of the human condition, how despite vast cultural, ethnic, and individual differences, we share common needs, feelings, frailties, struggles and dreams. My goal is to heighten our awareness and understanding of our common human family. Poems adaptable for the stage tend to be shorter, so more easily grasped, and often may be comprised with a particular character's voice, with all his/her misconceptions for dramatically ironic effects, as Browning's "My Last Duchess," but any well-made poem, even longer ones, can be read on stage by a skilled reader.

Reading a poem aloud is a separate art from writing one. A good reader controls gesture, facial expression, pace, tone of voice, enunciation to enhance but not override the poem's pith. I believe poetry readings are important because they can deepen understanding and complete the communication of a poem, evoke interest in a poet's body of work, and stimulate members of the audience to write.

Readings create a sense of being involved in something larger than ourselves, a communal event, a secular religious experience, with everyone focusing to varying degrees on some aspect of being alive. Furthermore, since the physicality of the language in a well-made poem contributes to its themes, hearing it read as well as its being introduced by the writer, deepens engagement with the poem. But above poetry readings, I think poems should be read in solitude and savored.

**PTJ:** Do you feel positive about contemporary American poetry?

Who are we? Breaking through the boxes into which we've been placed by traditional society, rigid boxes of gender, ethnicity, race, and culture, contemporary American poetry is more expansive and open to a wider range of marginalized voices and everyday existence. Breaking through the ivory walls of academia, contemporary American poetry, more than ever, illuminates the shimmering ambiguity of the inner experience of people from all walks of life, peeling open wounds, challenging long-held worldviews, and deepening our solace and compassion for each other. In this age of instant information, multitasking, and distraction, reading poetry helps us focus our attention and feed our souls. Poetry is elastic. Its possibilities are always changing. Contemporary American poetry is rich with inventive and traditional forms. Allen Ginsberg's poems, once called

obscene, became popular icons. One generation's avant-garde can become a classic to the next. With the recent crackdown on immigrants, we need poetry even more than ever. The threatened abolishment of the National Endowment for the Arts, whose grants sustain poetry events, won't stop poets from writing. Our understanding of essential human truths is always partial. We need to keep deepening it, and poetry is a vital bridge to each other.

**PTJ:** Are you confident about the future of poetry in an increasingly digital age?

**GT:** Did music die with vinyl records? 8-track tapes? CDs? DVDs? Poetry is one of the great arts nourishing fundamental human needs, to understand the broad human spectrum by creating an experience that engages the whole person, dissolving boundaries between heart and intellect, to enhance empathy for each individual and awe for our ineffable mysteries, to see reality in the light of certain unifying ideas, to give order to the chaos of our lives like an all-inclusive, essential religion.

Digital is just a means of conveying poetry. Actually, the digital age, with on-line publications, websites, kindles, smart-phone streaming, and what have you, is enabling a wider range of poetic voices to reach a wider audience. Poets can post their own poems on their websites without waiting for formal acceptance from publishing houses. A global broadband will soon encircle the world, allowing everyone on the planet to be connected via the Internet. But digital conversations limit the opportunity for full empathy and connection. In this rapid-fire changing, tumultuous, digital world, we will need poetry more than ever to keep looking at our important questions without providing absolute answers: Who are we? What is important? Where are we headed? What gives life meaning?

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

I'd like to be surprised by what I'm not aware of that I'm working on at the moment. In my last book *Hidden in Plainview*, intentionally, I looked at regional revelations growing from my hometown of Plainview that went unnoticed, like the Y's security guard who was secretly a masterful artist with jellybeans. But what kept surprising me was how the secret heart of Plainview kept revealing the larger human world with all its interconnections and mutual dependencies.

Presently, I'm looking at how much stays the same and reverts to our common human needs, frailties and dreams, despite the rapid-fire changing world. More and more, I've come to see emotions as mixed complexities, pride and poignance, disappointments and joys, fear and hope,

granddaughter's Bat Mitzvah, when I felt so energized by the sensitive young woman she'd become, I kept thinking of our suffering world and the urgent need to heal our communities and planet, to find a way in some kind of bizarre secular prayer.

At the beginning of the spring semester, at Hofstra University, I met a former student, "Hussein," who felt threatened by the recent immigration ban. I felt compelled to evince this kind soul's fears and my fecklessness to protect him.

"To My Friend Eileen" mixes joyous memory and remorse in a poetic letter to a best friend of childhood, whose whereabouts are unknown to me. I'd like to apologize for the foolish hurts I caused her and just remind her how much I loved her. Tentatively, the new collection will be called *Windings*. My goal has always been language that resonates with essential truths. And I think, more and more, I'm finding individual separation we all feel may be an illusion as we humans are increasingly interconnected to one another and responsible for each other's wellbeing.

## **JELLYBEAN LADY**

As he ached over a block of stone  
to chisel-free his *David*,  
so she has ached over jars of jellybeans  
to gluegun-free her *Infantsea*,  
a dream wombscape, where an infant swims  
and breathes, in luminous, aqua underwaters,  
as viewer is made aware of the unborn's joy  
moving timelessly, among vibrant angelfish,  
coral and stars, crabs and algae rippling  
as mind, sea, and womb are made  
of what her jellybean hues give and use,  
as viewer is made to move in close  
to 7000 colored bits, painstakingly placed,  
and out again, to a grandly lit, coherent  
immersion, as primal voyageur  
hanging at the entrance to the Y swimming pool,  
as I ache now, over noun and verb,  
to parse-free her pulsating tones,  
from her dun security guard uniform,

and make this humble, down-tongued woman,  
passersby don't connect to her *Infantsea*,  
this grey, retired postal worker,  
this widow of four sons, grown and flown,  
I ache to make her rise, to chisel her  
from her seat where she sits night  
after night, at a drab desk, at the Y door,  
who asks who you are, where you're headed,  
but few ask her as they sign in—  
if you do, she might let you glimpse  
her jellybean wonders locked in her computer box,  
like her replica of the Wall of Jerusalem,  
hanging hidden on a wall in her home.

Gayl Teller    America

### **THOUGHTS AT MY GRANDDAUGHTER'S's BAT MITZVAH**

Let us pray to the high moral ground  
that we each think we hold,  
that none of us holds,  
that we can hardly see.  
Let our arms open fire  
around each other  
with human healing.  
Let us not turn to stone at the carnage,  
O the carnage of lost focus  
trailing from trucks trampling babies,  
terror-by-explosive ignorance,  
pressure-cooker poverty,  
Jim Crow arms that tear flesh two ways,  
chronic unemployment, abysmal educational opportunities,  
social dislocation, prejudice, indifference.  
Let us pray in the religion where we breathe  
deeper through the other,  
as if in a vacationaire,  
walking along a marginal way  
along each other's coastline of splendors.

Let us see the grandeur of an ocean  
teeming with life inside  
each outcast.  
If we take care of our own,  
let us remember our blood ties.  
Let us see the abducted girl in Nigeria  
as the girl dying of cancer in our ward.  
We are each other's own.  
Let us pray to what shamanism, Judaism, Hinduism,  
Buddhism, Taoism, Islam,  
Confucianism, Christianity, and atheism have in common—  
a need to be consoled, protected,  
an escape from absurdity, despair,  
communion.  
Let us revere life as sacred connection.  
Let us share without dividing the enjoyment  
of each enhanced by the enjoyment of all.  
Let us pray to our likeness  
shedding light on our grand mystery.  
Let us remember Luca,  
of 4 billion years ago,  
our venerable common ancestor of all living things.  
In the logic of my prayer  
perhaps this can save us,  
that somehow we see we are still that  
single cell  
precariously clinging to a volcanic sea vent.

(Luca, the Last Universal Common Ancestor, a cell of 4 billion years ago, believed to be the ancestor of all life, emerged in a sea vent)

Gayl Teller    America

## **HUSSEIN**

It's the outset of a new spring semester—  
he leaves his class, flags me down!  
I remember his name, my former student,  
who'd made our tears flow in the dead of winter  
with his family memoir— abandoned by his mother,

losing his grandmother who raised him,  
his struggles to feel his mother's struggles  
the icebreaker, as he cleared emotional space  
to review her fate anew, and forgave her  
for all of us encircling with him  
in a writing skills course, how he'd  
generously speak during a discussion lull,  
good naturedly reposition chairs for the next group.  
So glad to see him, I reach for his arms,  
then resist the untraditional hug,  
but feel it in his friendly eyes.

*What are we going to do!?*

I know he means the travel ban  
on seven majority Muslim countries.

*I'm just an Allport "label of primary potency"!*

*I'm thinking of changing my name!*

he almost laughs. *It's a shrieking siren!*

*One of my friends was arrested right from his home!*

*If I leave the country to see my brother,  
will I be banned from re-entry?*

I tell him about our advocacy programs,  
the new Deportation Defense Clinic,  
the petitions I'd signed to Ban the Ban,  
with the old Trail of Tears, McCarthy years,  
internment camps escaping into the new term's air.  
I've wondered what it means to know my country  
by my hand on the chalk to a blackboard,  
at the heart of a classroom,  
like a silent pledge of allegiance  
to young, impressionable eyes  
that have seen Gene Forrester's *blind ignorance*  
when he made his best friend fall from a tree.  
Is a country that one human heart writ large,  
or the many making a synergistic light?  
And *what's in a name?* It's the one word  
that refers to the whole person.

To this kind kindred spirit, I'd choose to be  
my brother, my parting words, I know too lame,  
*Don't change your name, Hussein!*

Gayl Teller    America

*theseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarry*

## **STREET MUSICIAN 2016**

Sing Tim Sing  
Don't let the moment pass,  
share that song with us again,  
that mellifluous lyric which gently flows  
from the entrance to the market;  
microphone in hand,  
stir into the moistening air  
your message of sustained belief  
in this wonderful world.

Sing Tim Sing  
Lonely star on your pavement stage,  
shining to charge the gloom  
of morning mist in gravelly tones  
like Louis in days gone by,  
open our minds to words we share  
cruelty, crying, destruction, death  
and to beauty in nature, in people who smile,  
grow, learn, hope and love.

Oh ~ yes ~, these things we share.

Sing Tim Sing  
uplift us with the song we need,  
the whispered word and lulling tune,  
lead us to find blessings on Earth  
our eternal consolation.  
Continue, Tim, continue to sing  
to ambulant crowds pressed to gain  
a quickening step and short of time  
bypass and miss your message.

Jean Salkilld    Wales



### **DEAR SUKI: NUMBER FIFTY-FIVE**

Dear Suki: Ben Thanh Market, 91',  
tonight the market reflected my old  
hunger clocked in rhythms, spilled  
cuts and breaking over a memory of  
you canting into a pile of ivory combs  
and inlaid jewels and frankincense--  
all feral eyes and legs, akin to flight  
and fight, the way of smile and teeth  
gum-stark until I've learned to catch  
you like the quivers of marriage bed,  
like tears pitched on resonant glass,  
like chemical psalms clung still from  
the inert, like the final act of picking  
orchids and chrysanthemums, before  
I remembered you without longing for  
anything but a memory.

### **DEAR SUKI: NUMBER FIFTY-SEVEN**

Dear Suki: Grassington, December,  
how you'd taken root in this outpost,  
with its sterile white of winter dales,  
camaraderie ribbed with down-home  
villagers over potato dumplings and  
Murphy's Irish Stout canopied under  
Foresters Arms, fingers roamed texts  
of Wilde's and Yeats's, evenings came  
through the curtains at dusk, out to  
the crisp cold yews, vessel-keen eyes  
mapped out the blueberry fields and  
turbine houses. Then I planed my 89  
degrees and brilliant skies landing on  
your rust-pencil flares sinking through  
wet grass, kissing the downcast eaves  
patterned in lapis lazuli and limestone  
soil, enthroning the frost-weight of ox-  
eye daisy with the lithe dip of my wings-  
depth. Dear Suki: when the doorsteps

slick with ice and homestead wrung too  
dark, I bodied you in crimson gaberdine;  
beside me, your breaths pocked and fell  
in sylvan cloud, like this moorland that  
beached by tidal drifts and rushing wind.

Lana Bella     America

### **PLAYING AROUND|**

I shuffled at first  
then ran, played catch,  
caught the ball, dunked the shot,  
slapped the puck,  
made touch downs,  
scored points, played the games,  
of youth and beyond.  
Later on I put away my mitt,  
my sticks, my pads, my skates,  
my ambitions, my past.  
Then I played the greens  
putting around  
until my clubs became rusty,  
my spirit dimmed,  
my fleetness gone.  
Now I reach out on a  
shuffleboard court  
to where it all began.

Robert L. Harrison     America

### **GAUCHE THIRTEEN-YEAR-OLD STEALS A KISS**

*Good Golly, Miss Molly*

Her lipstick:  
impossible to separate out the taste-touch-smell  
trace elements in that combination stunner...

I'd been dropped off at 80 Penfair Street with I don't remember  
how much advance warning – told only it was  
Auntie Beverley's evening for ballroom dancing classes.

Uncle Richard was stooped over the gramophone,  
selecting another disc from his Duke Ellington collection,  
when the Sophisticated Lady materialised

in a limelight-wallop drench of *Je Reviens*.

And he announced to the wall: "Meet Molly," he said... Molly –  
dolloed up (lovely period piece) to the nines; make that

straight tens; everything about her red and black and crisp  
her Tess lips – a vermillion bow with ivory infill –  
and ever-so-slightly-puckered – lowered towards me in greeting.

No ritual brush against the cheek. No air-kissed *mwah*.

I gave her a smacker on that O-so-soft mouth,  
shaped the instant before in a yielding pout about to murmur...

Prunes or prisms – or Proust, was it? La bella figura –  
for sure still looking dressed as if for the ball, and so chic  
as to let the moment pass, remarking nothing untoward.

Andrew Mayne    England

## CHRISTMAS DAY RUNAWAY

The escapee did not get far.  
Later I came upon pursued  
and pursuer – holding peace talks  
near my car. "You *know* you're Sectioned."

Now, fastening my safety-belt, I  
review his running-jump – *Open*  
*Sesame!* – right in front of where  
the automatic doors were shut.

Aged about thirty; lank blond hair;  
pale; flabby; out of condition;  
leather jacket; open pink shirt:  
he'd hurled madly through the lobby.)

My quandary's become redundant:  
whether to point the plain-clothes nurse  
in the right or wrong direction.  
I who've not seen his case-notes can

now leave both men safely to it –  
arms linked down that corridor by  
the Defibrillator Unit,  
past those oxygen cylinders  
  
draped with artificial ivy  
and slack loops of tarnished tinsel.  
To turkey served off a trolley  
in the Day Room. Nuts and crackers

Andrew Mayne    England

### **SKY THE TRUTH**

Sky is infinite from eternity  
earth looks at it from its birth;  
the sky of innumerable shapes and colours  
ever changing;  
creating and recreating  
beyond any dolour and mirth.  
The flight of distance loving birds through it  
passing of supersonic jets, other flying objects  
lightning flash like sparks of clash on earth  
sounds of explosion and song  
all are facets of truth  
like the many faces of the sky.  
Sky has no hue no smell no face  
it creates and recreates the surface;  
infinite from eternity  
Sky is the Truth.

Aju Mukhopadhyaya    India

## **CROSSED EYES**

Not my eyes, she said,  
they can have the rest  
'cos I won't need them any more  
but I'm funny 'bout my eyes;  
they've seen too much.

Lids thumbbed shut  
they'll not see the man  
handing me his clipboard, pen,  
sombre-faced compassion  
laced with need and hope.

They want you too.

Kidneys. Tick.

Liver. Tick.

Lungs. Tick.

You never were a drinker  
and fag smoke made you wrinkle  
your nose in disgust  
so some poor sod will be pleased.

Eyes. Cross.

They never were 'til now.

Heart. Tick.

I strain to hear that beat,  
that metronomic tock of life  
now stopped.

The girl that walks or stalks the aisles of shops at night,  
with your heart pumping her blood,  
will never guess the size of it.

Paul Vaughan     England

## A CONVERATION WITH JÚLIUS VANOVIČ, SLOVAKIAN WRITER AND PUBLISHER



**Július Vanovič © 2017 Július Vanovič**

**Július Vanovič** (1935) is a literary historian, critic, essayist, publisher and writer. In 1952, he was expelled from high school and then twice from university because of his father's political activism which led him to be unlawfully imprisoned. Julius held a variety of jobs - as a political persona non grata, it was near impossible to get a job which would reflect his education and experience. He was an assistant worker, proofreader, bibliographer and from 1963 to 1968, he worked as an editor for two Slovak magazines. Julius was able to finish high school and university only after political status quo changes and only as an evening student. Then again, after 1971, he had to leave his post at the Institute of the Slovak Literature for political reasons. After government led political probes, he was not allowed to publish at all. Until 1989, he worked as a proofreader at another Slovak literary magazine and between 1990 - 2000, he was a researcher at the Institute of the Slovak Literature. In 1991, he revived one of the most

prestigious literary and cultural magazines, *Tvorba*, where he's been, with a short pause, the editor-in-chief to this day. Despite all the challenges and hardships, Julius has published twenty books. The most well-known are: *Antidialogues: Conversations with Slovak Authors*; *First, Second and Third book about old Martin* (a historically important city in Slovakia in terms of its literary and language culture), monographs about various important writers, both Slovak and Czech but also about Ingmar Bergman. Julius also wrote a novel *A Chronicle of Foreclosed Time* and four books of essays about literature and times; the best known is *Letters from an Old Courtyard*.

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**Miriam Margala:** Dear Mr. Vanovič – thank you very much for taking the time to converse with me about things we both find so important and relevant especially now. Let's start with the current state of mind and intellect in the national, European and global space. How do you see the present day European *civilitas and charitas*?

**Július Vanovič:** Dear Ms. Miriam – that is a tough question even for a scientific team let alone for somebody from Central Europe who had been fed by communist regime with informational malnutrition for 40 years. I can offer only drops to the existing sea... There have been many books written on the topic of the state of Euro-American society, its civilization and culture – it could be enough for an entire library. But I can offer a few examples, beginning with Osvald Spengler and his *The Decline of the West*, then the very well-known pamphlet by Julien Benda, *The Treason of the Intellectuals*; Ortega y Gasset with his *Revolt of the Masses*; Gustave le Bon and his *The Psychology of Peoples*. We can then continue with Max Picard and his *Hitler in Ourselves* or even your (note: American, MM) well known Riesman and his *The Lonely Crowd*, translated here back in the 60's. From the contemporary authors I should mention Gilles Lipovetsky and his *La Era del Vacío, La Felicidad Paradojica* and *Hypermodern Times* but also his opponent Hervé Juvin and his essay *Globalized Western World* which so convincingly condemns globalization and its serial “world-culture”, the enemy of national and tribal identity. Raymond Boudon, with his sympathetic *The Poverty of Relativism*, belongs to this list too.

They all indicate that the western, Euro-American civilization is in crisis –

the deepest ever. And that it cannot be resolved as other crises were resolved in the past: to return to the old and tried. Yes – the old is no longer true and the new has not been born yet. No, I do not dare to say which hour the astronomical clock strikes in human souls.

Various dilemmas hang above the Western world; as the most frightening emerge the following: the vertiginous rise of technology and industry, thus also prosperity, has not brought to people contentment and happiness; the prosperity or hyper-consumerism signified a road from pleasure to anxiety. It has also signified the reign of the market, banks, and money over the human being and his and her cultural values; from true values it has made degraded works and values; it has transformed them into cheap, mass-satisfying merchandise.

Modernity, even if we took it somewhat for granted, we experienced and lived through with values and moral obligations we were aware of. It was as if it almost revealed and convicted the “devil’s” work on Earth, because modernity believed in the infinite and noble beyond the human being; to use Juvin’s words: it still “spoke of heavens”. The ruthless spread of “world-culture” and post-modernity, which superseded modernity, has not surpassed or replaced it; it has not professed the noble, poignant and sacral anymore, and has not “spoken of heavens”. With the growing consumerism and prosperity- and therefore also growing hedonism- post-modernity has spread as the pleasure of the release from societal inhibitions and conventions, the delight from the crash of ideologies and utopian ideas about the future of humanity; in Europe also from the fall of totalitarian regimes, and in the States from the disintegration of the Empire of Evil, as President Reagan called the Soviet Union. Post-modernity was somewhat of a triumph of consumerist values oriented exclusively toward the present, toward “here and now” – carpe diem! But not anymore in Goethe’s esthetic sense of “Beautiful moment – do not pass away!”

This postmodernity- writes its interpreter, if not its speaker, Lipovetsky- “appears today slightly obsolete.” Why? Time points towards worse, unpredicted, unannounced clouds that are approaching. Social, economic, ecological, terrorist. The carefree moment of the post-modern dominion was short – a short pleasure of release, of the nullity of moral codex, authoritarian ideologies, societal conventions



and unwritten commandments.

But those commandments and old restrictions are coming back again! Uncertainty and fear grow: fear of terrorism, aggression, refugees, and social chasms; the fear of racial unrest, economic and currency instability, of potential new totalitarian regimes and revolutions.

But it goes even further. The fear of depleting our natural resources in the diminishing insides of the suffering Earth- infected by the omnipresent chemistry- is growing. So is the fear of the consequences of destroying our nature, its vegetation and fauna, from global warming, from the possible and outright apocalyptic ecological catastrophe. And perhaps the deepest fear is the fear of emptiness, *horror vacui*...

But the threat comes from the past too: what if the provocative cry of Slavomir Žižek, apparently the biggest intellectual dread of the West, will become reality: “We will meet in communism or in hell!”

**MM:** Well, your answer then leads me to my next question – in your opinion, who is an intellectual – what is his or her role within the society, culture; what are his or her obligations, if any?

**JV:** Somebody who graduated from university does not need to necessarily be a scholar and intellectual; is not necessarily worthy of the name. He or she can be educated but does not necessarily actually understand humanity or life; he or she can have brains but not necessarily conscience. For this type of a person, Robert Musil had a term “an educated fool”. Karel Čapek, furthermore, has a triad: people are smart, educated, or wise. So education can signify smartness and cunning, pragmatism, utilitarianism, even dishonesty – how many of such “scholars” there are! Education does not automatically equate wisdom, which is less frequent, because the highest and singular attribute of a wise person- who by the way does not need to be “officially” educated- is that their wisdom is their charisma. Some have it and others don’t.

What is the essence and the main role of a scholar, intellectual? To seek truth, to see it in the midst of lies – not only to identify it but to defend it, too.

Here, I am more or less paraphrasing the definition offered by the person most fit to speak on the topic, the successor of Šalda in the field of Czech criticism, Professor Václav Černý. A European Romanist, once dismissed by the Nazis and twice by the communists from Charles University; jailed by both the Nazis and communists; prohibited to publish his critical monthly by, again, both the Nazis and the communists.

To speak out every time when rights are distorted, when freedom is falsified, when justice is deformed. That means to believe in the power of the intellect and the freeing power of truth, to believe in the creative spirit. To be a life-long Don Quixote and to believe in one's own ideals, even if the human masses consider such a person a fool. In my view, the essence of culture and the intellectual is Don Quixote-like.

To whom then belongs the lofty title of *intellectual*? It can be a philosopher, scientist, writer, or artist. But also the one who spreads culture – a journalist, editor, teacher, professor. In the past, the term *professor* did not mean only *teacher* and *interpreter* but also *confessor*; a creator, guardian and defender of values which are the requirements for culture, the fulfillment and purpose of human existence. These values are mainly truth, freedom, justice, morality.

But in our times, the intellectual is oftentimes dishonest, cunning and immoral, unworthy of the noble title; he or she does not fulfill their mission. Instead, they misappropriate it, even betray it.

The crisis of intellectuals and intelligence generally was proclaimed already in the thirties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – and it was further redoubled by totalitarian regimes. During communism, particularly in Czechoslovakia, the crash of intellectuals – scientists, writers, artists, professors, lawyers and also priests – was historically the largest.

This situation led to intellectuals betraying their roles and collaborating with the regime. They served the communist regime and, for a slice of bread, betrayed their own beliefs and broke their character. In the humanities – sciences, philosophy, art, and literature - it is most visible and most painful.

Do you think that after the fall of communism, the intellectual then exercised self-examination, soul-searching, felt remorseful, experienced catharsis? That they really are sorry for their past actions, that they acknowledge their complicity if not full guilt? Not at all! They pretend, live, do business, acquire wealth, bribe and steal, and also write and “create” – as if there were nothing bad in their past, as if nothing had happened with them and their country. A true discontinued human being of Max Picard – a human being without a memory, without a past, without remorse and guilt, with emptiness in the soul – just like Nazi criminals at the Nuremberg Process.

Except – there was no process of communist potentates and criminals in any communist country. And unpunished crimes break justice in people.

**MM:** So the question of morality and ethics is apt here; in terms of intellectual creativity and influence, how can intellectuals fulfill this role? How could they reflect on ethos and morality through or in culture? How could they influence or disseminate ethos and morality through their work?

**JV:** Surely you have noticed that many in art confuse moralizing with ethos, just as they do not distinguish between ethics and morality. Without cultural ethos, there is no genuine culture or literature. If it is lacking in literature, authors generate only stylistic exercises of sorts – for fun, money, popularity. Ethos is innate, moralizing can be also taught and chosen, voluntary and utilitarian.

Morality has been called “the stylistics of human creative activity” – and that includes also the presence of conscience. There are authors who were called “the conscience of the nation” or “the conscience of the times”. Literature either has a conscience- and it is a literature worthy of the name- or it does not have a conscience, and it is not literature, only a play or a futile accumulation of words. So – there are no crises of cultures, only crises of personalities and characters. We felt it very precisely and painfully during the years of the communist regime when authors as characters failed, betrayed the values they were supposed to represent and protect – today, they have a place on the market of useless, pointless words.

Gustave Flaubert said that the author should be present in the work as God is present in the world: invisible but omnipresent. The same applies to ethos. When it

is visible and in your face, it is not ethos anymore, it becomes moralizing.

**MM:** Clearly, the quality, worthiness, value of words – communication that is decent, honest, and respectable is something that is quite rare today. Do you believe it's a more general situation?

**JV:** “Many words circulate, or more like pounce around; they're almost used up; empty and ready-made rhetoric reigns and nobody believes it; we use in vain even sacred words – in short, we are witnesses to and co-actors in a big masquerade,” Alexander Matuška said in an interview with me, in the better times of the old communist regime (in 1967).

And he added that it “is nothing specifically Slovak – the inflation of words is spreading all around the world – that provisional reality we found ourselves in,” however, had “special Slovak roots”. It was false and hypocritical, moral schizophrenia in which thousands lived so that they could “survive” in communism.

What has changed since then? The irresponsibility and frivolity, the amoral relationship to the word is still present as a post-communist dowry, and with the arrival of freedom, capital, and goods, it has grown even more.

The inflation of the word – the word as goods, as an agent of conventional or false political and law meanings; the word, more often abused than used, the word as a serial instrument of mass culture – the same applies to the globalizing world-culture.

The word without influence or power; the word which even in literature does not “speak of heavens” – in ‘globalized’ Slovakia just as in the global scale.

**MM:** This brings me back to characters and personalities – and the need for them in any society at any time, but especially today.

**JV:** Any culture and society has always needed characters and personalities – but it is particularly so today. In Slovakia (note: and other “small” Central European countries, MM), there are characters and personalities, but not in the limelight; no celebrities, no ‘crème de la crème’. Those are the kind of people you do not

necessarily identify right away, we have to look for them. Most often, it is those who under the communist regime really suffered and risked much by opposing it. They now usually work somewhere where the newly successful and powerful do not need them- they are often ‘put aside’, marginalized or silenced. They are the biblical salt of the earth.

Today, it is so difficult to pick and choose – to prefer somebody nationally or globally. Who is a hero? And how many of them are there? Maybe we would not find too many. But how many martyrs and heroes from the two world wars, the holocaust and Gulags, had never experienced any gratitude, satisfaction; their names had never become recognizable. As if cursed, they lie in silence. In known and unknown graves, or maybe not even in graves.

**MM:** Yes, our history proves easily how often we do not appreciate and respect many intellectuals, scholars, writers, and many others who try so hard- and who eloquently, precisely, and wisely show, illustrate and chronicle the state of our culture, education, and more generally, society. As you say, many (or most!) are not noticed, not listened to. What most are interested in seems a very average, product-and-profit-oriented culture and life. This seems to lead only to some sort of homogenization of culture and therefore of values, attitudes and tastes; the average and oftentimes unoriginal become enough- satisfactory for many.

**JV:** Yes, the spirit of mediocrity had already reigned during socialism – collectivism, popularity, mass character- and it is still reigning today, democratically. The difference is that back then, it was enforced by the regime; today, in freedom and democracy, it has a free, seductive realm. But both have a common denominator – bourgeoisie. Not as a class but as a way of life. It has been defined as the most average human standard, a very consistent presentation of relative values as absolute; satisfaction in one’s own comfort; uncritical obsession with one’s own self; an esthetic inclined towards kitsch; a deeply rooted suspicion toward anything that is different than the average, that is consciously seeking its own path.

It is interesting – or symptomatic? – that the term *bourgeoisie* has become unfashionable in post-communist and capitalist countries. Instead, racism,

nationalism, war, globalization, poverty, environment have entered the scene – but nobody is willing to speak about the elephant in the room – as the causes of these sorrows and sufferings.

**MM:** Hmmm....that does sound bleak...We've all heard intellectuals naming these times post-humanist. So what does it mean – what can be done in this post-humanist age to redirect our existence? Is there a place for uplifting, noble ideas? For beauty?

**JV:** “Beauty will save the world,” says Dostoevsky. “The naked truth about the sad essence of the world would make us perish”, continues Schopenhauer. Standing at the ready is a magician who knows the remedy – that divine magician is called **art**. The world was first beautiful, only later true. Beauty is more than the truth!

Esthetic pleasure – that magnificent state of “pure contemplation”, “the exaltation of unrestrained regard” – also without any ulterior motive or goal, non-utilitarian. In other words, a non-worldly, Eden-like state which Epikuros was so very happy about and Schopenhauer so desired: “The highest good and state of gods”, in which we are freed from the crazed slogging of will and urges, from all that is corrupt and low. A moment of a nirvana repose in beauty: the wheel of suffering, Ixion's wheel stops.

For the Classics – diametrically opposed to the post-humanistic era – beauty, just as everything moral, could not be unwise; only natural, good and true. The brightness of beauty was tantamount to the brightness of reason, and that could not oppose the brightness of the moral.

That is far from the post-humanistic era which does not attach to beauty emotional, intellectual, and spiritual weight; it is also far from your own ethics, Ms. Miriam, of “cultivating the deepest, fullest inner life”. Post-humanistic era? It's the invention of certain theoreticians to whom all that is human is probably foreign. Then traditional humanistic values are no longer valid; they question them without hesitation, and acknowledge only that which they see as negative. It is not a human being anymore, but computers and technology which delineate and reduce the human dimension. Computers and technology geared toward not only creation of AI, but also “the thought without a body”, the one which is supposed to

substitute the human after the death of the Sun.

Jean Francois Lyotard, who first mapped and interpreted postmodernism, the same one who freed the human from great stories, i.e. repressive ideologies, and programmed small stories that were supposed to return political power to an individual, and threatened the power structures of authoritarian states; the same one who proclaimed “the formation of a new cultural paradigm, deriving from the growing skepticism toward theories on how to change the world”; that Lyotard had prepared an unexpected surprise. Almost one decade had passed, and in his late piece *Inhumaine* (1988), he changed radically the liberal view to far more than just bleak: humanity has new enemies, more dangerous than any previous ideologies. After the death of the Sun, the human being is not supposed to survive, but his artificial substitutes will– and this inhuman solution is being supported by “techno-science”; in other words, not only by technology and science, but also by advanced capitalism, and multinational global corporations.

And yesterday’s postmodernist calls to campaign against techno-science and its inhuman practice. Opposition is necessary, he says, because its opposite is the victory of the inhuman: “In this struggle, nothing less is at stake than the survival of humanity.” The inhuman has already infiltrated our everyday life, humans are already planned to be substituted by technologies; there is research into AI and into human cloning.

People from Central Europe surely think about and remember the cautionary works of Karel Čapek *R.U.R. (rossum universal robot)*; *Krakatit*, *White Illness* or *Factory for the Absolute*. Cautionary premonitions from a great humanist ran around the entire educated world before the Second World War. It is chilling to realize that humanity has still not wised up, and is still subjected to the destructive Daemon – one’s own, not illuminated but blind *reason*, which is capable of initiating even a world-wide Apocalypse.

“Beauty will save the world” – we repeat with Dostoevsky – and it will not perish. And if beauty does not perish, neither will the world. It will always accompany the human; it will always reside in him and her just as will love, sadness, joy, anger, hatred, but also ethos and pathos, the thirst for the noble and

infinite. That which people named *beauty* will never be substituted, will never be explained away by analyses, will never be destroyed by any “greenhouse-grown” thinkers. For that, the planet would have to be inhabited by some sort of *post-human*, some kind of post-Anthropos, cloned in test-tubes, programmed in computers; that kind of monster could then also conceive of a “post-humanist era”.

**MM:** This brings me to my last theme, then. We are still human beings – and many of us are interested in beauty and knowledge and truth. What are the most important responsibilities of today’s human being?

**JV:** Ahh, Ms. Miriam – I am not a moralist or legislator – if anything, I am just a speaker for myself. And again – whatever I have to say it’s just a few drops in a sea; subjective drops, therefore negligible.

Perhaps the entire misery of the post-humanistic era lies in the fact that it is infected or infused with *materialism*. That only that which is from this world counts; that which can be seen, heard, measured, counted or touched; that which benefits us in some way – wealth, comfort, prosperity. In other words that which is relative, not binding; worldly and utilitarian, tempting. In short - that which is from this finite world and applies temporarily for this world.

What conclusions can I as a human being, a citizen of the European Union, and a person of Euro-American culture make?

No ‘post-humanism’ - but rather the universal and ages-long, always and in-all-human-corners-valid humanism. In our corner, there have been efforts towards a socialistic humanism, class, revolutionary – and who-knows-what other – but every adjective turned into its own opposite.

What are the most important responsibilities of today’s human being? Perhaps all those we have so far discussed. To seek out and search for truth and values – but also defend them; speak out when they’re being falsified, destroyed or abused. To deny indifference and cowardice in oneself, not to sidestep struggle and risk. To keep on learning, improving and growing from one’s own accidental person of uncertainty and the adversities of life – and also of the equivocal



postmodern sand. To build- because it is possible to build- one's own holistic, uncorrupt and decent, unique personality. In addition, particularly today, to respect and protect nature, to help all that is alive and threatened – because when nature, earth and air will become even sicker than 'post-humanistic' people, then what awaits our planet and all of us is a real word, even if at this moment it is articulated only with difficulty; the end.

I can – and have to - only repeat what I have said elsewhere: I think of the most relevant and always valid, absolute mandate that Kant left us; his all-comprehensive categorical imperative: live and act in such a way that your life and your actions can become the criterion and law for all.

Miriam Margala    America

*theseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarry*

## **MODERN OLYMPIAN ODE #16: OFFERINGS (2016)**

The modern god of pollution is propitiated:

algal blooms in the swimming pool

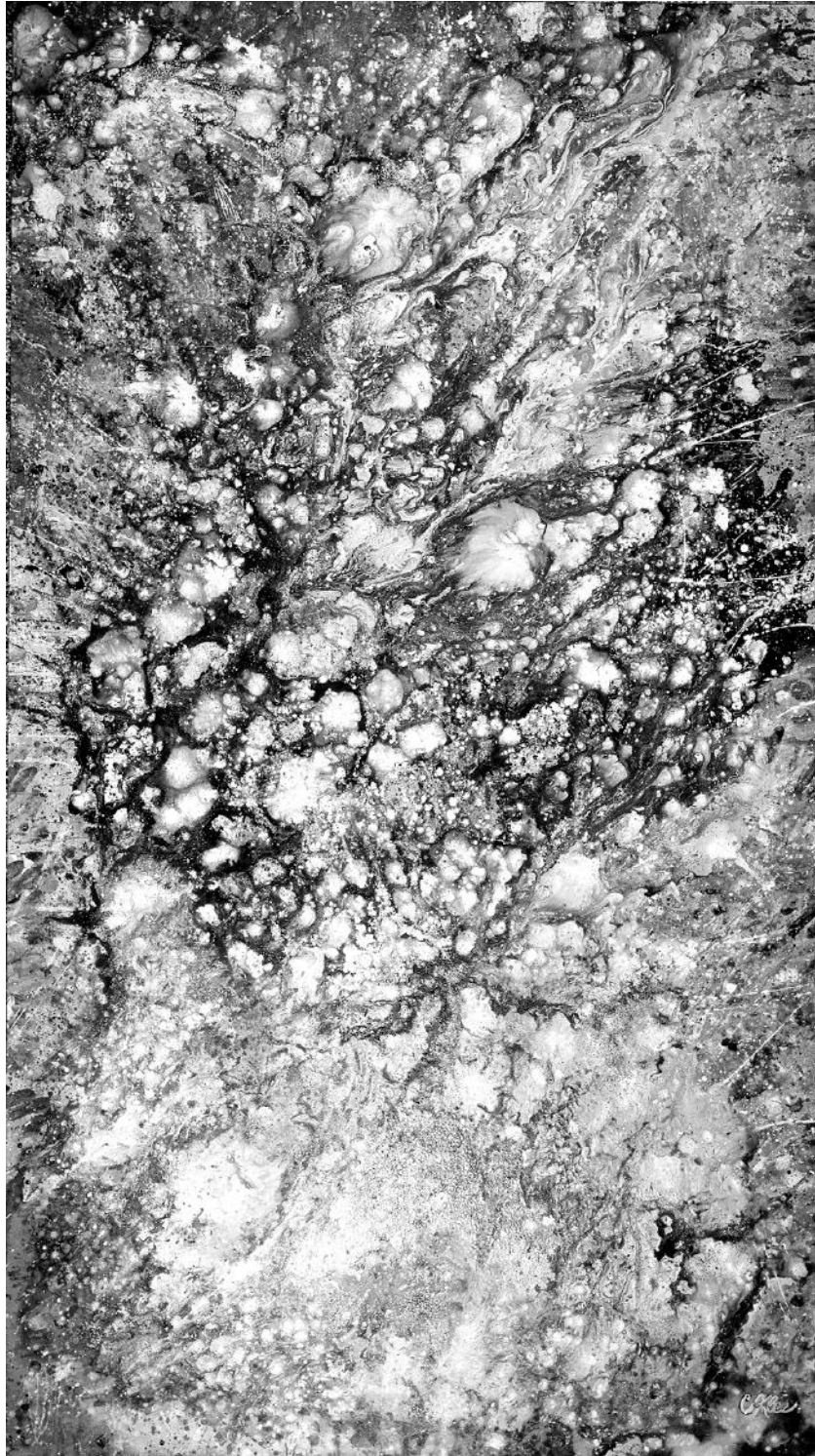
furniture floating on the boating courses

and

bacteria, viruses, etc. exemplifying the Olympic motto

of Faster Higher Stronger

Michael Ceraolo    America



**Monarch Code** (Mixed Media on Canvas, 72" x 40")  
© 2017 Carolyn Mary Kleefeld

## **WHEN EXCESS REIGNS**

When excess reigns,  
lovers who fly  
too close to the sun  
may catch fire.

Yes, whenever the pendulum  
swings too far in any direction  
an invisible force  
seeks to balance the extreme,  
shattering that state  
into new and sometimes opposite forms.

This unique dynamic  
with its checks and balances  
appears to be  
an essential facet  
of the universal order  
and exists within every living thing.

Carolyn Mary Kleefeld    America

## **ANGER TRANSFORMED**

Is anger a raw fuel  
that needs to be converted?

Does it wait like a blank canvas  
to be transformed by  
the infusion of our psyches?

Isn't anger a lack of acceptance  
of life, its polarities,  
its light and dark, yes and no?

When a blaze of anger  
burns our flowers,  
wouldn't it benefit us  
to water down the flames  
re-alchemizing them into a yield  
that could green our own tree?

Carolyn Mary Kleefeld    America



**Trees of the Sun and Moon** (Oil on Canvas, 30" x 24")

© 2017 Carolyn Mary Kleefeld

**AN INTERVIEW WITH AMERICAN POET  
MARIA MAZZIOTTI GILLAN**



**Maria Mazziotti Gillan © 2017 the Poetry Center,  
Passaic County Community College**

Maria Mazziotti Gillan is the Director of the Creative Writing Program / The Binghamton Center for Writers, and a Professor of Poetry at Binghamton University-State University of New York. She is the Founder and the Executive Director of the Poetry Center at Passaic County Community College in Paterson, NJ.

She has published eleven books of poetry, including *The Weather of Old Seasons*

(Cross-Cultural Communications), *Where I Come From, Things My Mother Told Me, Italian Women in Black Dresses* and her latest book, *All That Lies Between Us*, (all by Guernica Editions).

She is co-editor with her daughter Jennifer of four anthologies: *Unsettling America, Identity Lessons, and Growing Up Ethnic in America* (Penguin/Putnam) and *Italian-American Writers on New Jersey* (Rutgers). She is the editor of the *Paterson Literary Review*. Her work has appeared in *Prairie Schooner, New Letters, The New York Times, Poetry Ireland, Connecticut Review, The Los Angeles Review, The Christian Science Monitor, LIPS, and Rattle*, as well as numerous other journals and anthologies.

Maria's book *All The Lies Between Us* won the American Book Award in 2008. She has also won the 2008 Chancellor's Award for Scholarship and Creative Endeavor from Binghamton University, the 2008 Sheila Motton Award, Primo Nazionale Belmore, the First Annual John Fante and Pietro di Donato Award, the Aniello Lauri Award, the May Sarton Award, the Fearing Houghton Award, New Jersey State Council on the Arts Fellowships in Poetry, and the American Literary Translators Association Award through a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. She received the New Jersey Governor's Award for Literary Outreach and The Dare to Imagine Award from Very Special Arts.

Her poems have been read by Garrison Keillor on The Writer's Almanac. She has been interviewed and read her poems on National Public Radio's (NPR) "All Things Considered", "The Brian Lehrer Show", "The Poet and the Poem", "the Leonard Lopate Show", as well as "in honor of National Poetry Month", "The Charles Osgood Show" on CBS-Radio, also on Pacifica Radio, and Voice of America. She has also been featured on several PBS-TV (Public Broadcasting System) programs. Her books have been chosen as Editor's Choice by Booklist, New York Public library Book List, and one of the American Library Association's Outstanding Books for Lifelong Learners.

Her poems are included on state and national tests in North Carolina, Tennessee, Minnesota, Texas, and Italy.

She has read her poems numerous times at universities, festivals, and poetry

centers throughout the USA and in Italy, France, Yugoslavia, Finland, Wales, and Ireland. The Maria Mazziotti Gillan Collection of her papers is housed at the Binghamton University Libraries.

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**Peter Thabit Jones:** It is several years since I last interviewed you for *The Seventh Quarry*, what have you been doing as a poet during that period?

**Maria Mazziotti Gillan:** I have a new book out called *What Blooms in Winter* (NYQ Press). I've been doing a lot of readings for it and of course, I am still Executive Director of the Poetry Center in Paterson, NJ, editor of the Paterson Literary Review, and Director of the Binghamton Center for Writers and the Creative Writing Program at Binghamton University-SUNY where I am a professor of poetry.

**PTJ:** You have written the popular book, *Writing poetry to save your life*, about writing poetry. What were your main intentions in putting together this instructive book?

**MMG:** I wanted to give people the courage to believe that the stories they need to tell in their writing are important and need to be told. The book is partly a memoir of how I found my own courage and a pep talk for other writers. I've included a large section of prompts designed to jump start other people's writing.

**PTJ:** Kevin Carey, whom I met at the 2016 Massachusetts Poetry Festival, kindly gave me a copy of the DVD of his and Mark Hillringhouse's wonderful film about you, *All that lies between us*. How did it feel to watch a film about your life?

**MMG:** For me, it was very exciting and also very moving. It brought my connection to my Italian background and to Paterson into focus for me. I loved the film. They did a wonderful job on it.

**PTJ:** Please tell us something about the teacher who taught you and Allen Ginsberg. What did you gain from the experience?

**MMG:** Her name was Frances Durban and in high school I was terribly shy. Ms.

Durban would call on me each day to read poems aloud to the class. She knew I loved poetry as much as she did and I felt validated when she singled me out in a classroom full of very intelligent and privileged upper middle class students. I was poor and lived on the wrong side of the tracks, but I loved that she chose me.

**PTJ:** What is your approach to teaching poetry in the classroom?

**MMG:** In my classes, I try to what I do in my book. I try to make the room a safe place for my students, a place where they can tell the truth about their lives. I want them to write the poems that come from a very deep place inside themselves.

*theseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarry*

## **A LINGERING DOUBT**

At the end of the tumultuous sixth day  
God fashioned Man—a future victim of Raven’s  
selfishness and greed. Perhaps God said something or  
perhaps He said nothing at all. When He was done  
He wiped his brow and sighed deeply. It seems  
to me that sigh must still be hanging there.

## **GOD APOLOGIZES FOR THE FLOOD (RAVEN SEIZES AN OPPORTUNITY)**

Raven was eavesdropping  
the day God broke up with humanity.

“It’s not you, it’s me,” said God  
trying to soften the imminent blow,

while waving a conjuring hand  
to summon the darkening tempests.

Ever the price-gouger, Raven sold  
life-preservers at ten times the going rate.

John Smelcer    America



**Editor's note:** These poems are from John Smelcer's forthcoming (fall 2018) poetry volume, *Raven*, a collection of poems he began in the mid-1990s with Ted Hughes, Poet Laureate of England and Sylvia Plath's widower. Ted considered the collection to be the sister companion to his *Crow* (Faber & Faber, 1972). The book includes a foreword by Ted Hughes as well as a poem co-written with Hughes. The Seventh Quarry Press will publish the British version of the book.

### **A WIDOW'S SECRET**

hidden until now  
perhaps best untold  
those many moments  
in six decades plus four  
the stormy passion  
connected to  
years emptied  
of my own ideas  
and power  
willingly sacrificed  
on the altar  
of genuine  
admiration  
adoration  
respect  
for him  
let it be him  
it must be him  
always him...  
until  
now alone,  
the one who is me  
has come.

Susan Rosenberg    Israel

**REVIEW BY NEIL LEADBEATER**

**Daniel Dragomirescu: *The End of a Dictatorship* (Bibliotheca Universalis, Bucharest, Romania, 2015)**

Daniel Dragomirescu is a Romanian author, essayist, publicist and editor who was born in Bucharest in 1952. He is a member of the Writers' Union of Romania, a graduate of the Post-Secondary School of Secretariat-Stenography and External Commerce, Bucharest, and a Bachelor of the Faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest. Between 1978 and 1980 he worked as assistant stenographer at the Linguistics Institute, Bucharest and subsequently in the education system before pursuing cultural and literary activities on a freelance basis. Between 2006 and 2007 he was the editor of 'Adevărul Literar din Vaslui' and in 2008 he became the founder and editor of 'Orizont Literar Contemporan' (Contemporary Literary Horizon) which is an intercultural journal with contributions in English, Spanish and Romanian. His novels include *Nothing New Behind the Iron Curtain* (2003); *The Red Desert* (2004); *Dark November* (2005) and *Quicksand* (2007).

Most of the sixteen articles and essays included in this book have been published over the last ten years in the national and local press but some are published here for the first time. Collectively they cover a number of significant topics which includes an exposé of the electoral system, a brief history of Transylvania, a crusader's testimony about incidents from the First World War, perspectives on Russia (the old Russia and post-soviet Russia), an account of the current educational system, the horror of the Colectiv nightclub fire, an account of Nadejda Mandelstam's novel "Hopeless", reflections on Daniel Defoe's character Man Friday and the relatively peaceful demise of specific dictatorships in recent years in other parts of the world. Not surprisingly, the two themes that dominate this volume are those of democracy and dictatorship.

Politics comes to the fore in the very first essay which questions the legitimacy of political rule through the ballot box in Romania between the years 1926 and 1946. In this essay, Dragomirescu focuses on the campaign for the General Election in Romania in 1946 which has already been well-documented by many other writers and journalists over the years. It is widely known that this campaign was one-sided. During the process, many instances of irregularities were reported, but not

carried through. As official results were announced, voting slips were immediately destroyed. The election resulted in the Communist Party and its allies achieving an overwhelming majority in the Assembly of Deputies. This changed the course of history and Dragomirescu details the extent of the corruption which was to permeate all levels of society from then onwards.

In 'Old Romania', new Romania, Dragomirescu says that we should seriously revise our concepts if we believe that after 1989 Romania has successfully reintegrated itself into the capitalist system. On the contrary, there is every sign to suggest that the country is still carrying the wounds of its recent past. The totalitarian regime managed to wipe out all that the country had successfully created a century before in terms of modernisation.

The essay on the education system, 'The School – a Cinderella?' points all too clearly to the need for change. Dragomirescu draws comparisons between the French education system and the Romanian one and states that although successive governments have declared education a national priority little is actually done to improve the state of education overall. Becoming a Communist country in 1947, Romania was led by tyrannical dictators Ion Anonescu and Nicolae Ceausescu until the fall of Communism in 1989. Using the schools as a platform, it sought to infiltrate the curriculum, the education was highly regimented and controlled and, although many changes have occurred since then, chronic underfunding has meant that the infrastructure needed to bring both the quality of the teaching and the actual fabric of the school buildings up to standard is sadly lacking.

In another essay, Dragomirescu charts the history of Transylvania, which has been dominated by several different peoples and countries. Once the centre of the Kingdom of Dacia (82BC to 106AD), it became subsumed within the Roman Empire, and later came under the rule of tribes such as the Visigoths, the Huns and the Slavs and, later still, was settled by the Hungarians. Union with Romania did not come about until 1918 but even after that, border disputes continued until the Treaty of Paris in 1947 when the Northern part of Transylvania was finally returned to Romania.

The Colectiv nightclub fire, which occurred in Bucharest on 30 October 2015, is

the subject of another essay. A total of 64 people died and a further 147 were injured. The fire, which was the worst incident to happen in Romania since the Balotești plane crash, took place during a free concert performed by a band called Goodbye to Gravity. The use of sparkler firework candles ignited the club's flammable polyurethane acoustic foam and the fire spread rapidly throughout the building. Mass protests over the corruption linked to the fire led to the resignation of the Prime Minister, Victor Ponta.

In these essays, Dragomirescu repeatedly speaks of the severe crisis of faith that Romanians have in their government where there is no opposition to hold anyone to account. In Democracy and responsibility he points out that “there is no democracy, in the modern sense of the word, without political pluralism.”

In his essay ‘Man Friday and the Social Man’ Dragomirescu asks “Is man good by nature and corrupted by society, as Jacques Rousseau considered in the 18th century?” It is a question that is pivotal to the whole history of his country and also to all of the essays to be found in this book. Leaving literary comparisons aside, Dragomirescu concludes that “Man is neither good nor bad by nature – but he turns into the one or the other during his existence, because there are all kinds of determinisms at play”. Over the years, Romania has had more than its fair share of determinisms to deal with and now, as a part of the European Union, it is learning once again to adapt to yet another step-change shaped once more by political history.

Neil Leadbeater    Scotland

## **ISTIKHARA – DAY 1**

It started with the night's face breaking  
out with measles, as the overhead fan fought  
the return of summer

in the midst of a converting autumn;  
three days were to bring me my answer,  
there was no wait

(amongst the day's chores I awaited  
unusualness)

with the grace of a swan for her to rise  
her neck, I reflected the placid morning for  
its out-worldliness,

if the crow that didn't caw  
at the ledge's grill that day,

if the doorbell that had rung one extra time,

if yesterday's visit to the psychic  
affected the hours that gobbled up the day  
to have put me there

in that night, where the morbidity  
I looked towards was a smile wide  
and eyes the sinking entrapment

of a charmer knowing how to survive  
the vibe, leaving me without a sign;  
the day finished, waiting

upon sleep to bring me a dream,  
I watched the clock wipe  
the night's sweaty face

as sleep paddled the eyes  
with gumboots.

## **ISTIKHARA – DAY 2**

The sun browns like branches  
in the dream; the coming of Fall –  
*karb, buka'a* – the wail of the twigs  
wrestling with the winds

I see my parents in our old home  
resetting the carpets, dusting meticulously,  
it seems as if a short one hour will bring  
a guest, and the house is amok

in one room me and my sister sit in a train,  
the door of our cabin shudders  
under barging knocks;

the slot in the door reveals a man  
thin like a branch, bearing a knife  
in his lifeless twig of a hand,  
  
my cry comes out like an axe,  
steeling through the cardboard wind,  
startling the brown man to drop his knife  
  
and run, while my father calls out  
from the next room to hustle with the task,  
and I call back to his voice fumbling  
  
with a padlock in hand, trying to lock  
the dream, and be ready to receive the guest;  
  
the lock sets into its cradle, sleep snaps  
open to me laying under a fabric paint  
of fire-orange flowers,  
  
no more in the past decade,  
  
the chill outside whipping the sand  
up into a storm of eyes that show  
in their glassy globes the demolition  
  
of the building of the home on the street  
now transformed – the past, the Fall, the doors  
of winter,  
  
the sun a dirty sandy residue,  
the moon rises to the end of day two.

### **ISTIKKARA – DAY 3**

More sand – covered in it head to foot.  
Face, the sand sculpture holding fort  
against obliteration by pixie breezes;  
  
a suitcase in each hand, my steps fast  
pounding the desert under my feet  
the journey in circles, heat demobilized;  
  
you follow as I order you to emulate:

*'walk by my side!'* but you keep your feet  
behind like a veneration,  
the pre-dawn hour breaks in reminding  
me to my prayers, but sleep hauls the eyes  
returning me back to the desert – the circles  
I walk in, you at my heel; the sand on you  
gathering thicker layers as I shed mine,  
my face cleaning, yours degenerating,  
like the flick of a switch, I am out  
as you've lost my track; the sand is now  
a cool surface of a shrine in a city  
never been a desert, I sit among murmurs  
of Quranic verses on a clean prayer cloth  
and I see, in a short while, the white robed –  
the face of the shrine's resting tomb – .

Sheikha A     Pakistan

Note: Istikhara is an act done to seek an answer to a question about fate and life that should ideally facilitate decision-making. They bring dreams to the person who has sought it, and the answer is usually searched for in those dreams. Sometimes, dreams can go haywire if Istikharas are performed by inexperienced people. My poems attempt at reflecting it.

## **THE DOOR SLAMMED SHUT**

A grief stricken spirit standing next to  
oxidized hours left an iron door in a concrete  
sepulcher ajar, rusted memories flowed  
through the opening blinded by years trying  
to get home. Lonesome moments hidden  
under crimson tinted years emerged  
breathlessly trying to escape from grief.

Trying to fill the gap between ancient brittle bones and breath, images born of despair drifted into obscure openings where wind blown nostalgic visualizations of the past traveled down a desolate road filled with ruts and holes begging for forgiveness.

A gloomy vision seeping up from a weary nightmare floated in trembling currents of burdensome emptiness then wafted into the cold atmosphere, casting a hue of silence into the never-ending odor of painful reality.

Visions revealing primitive questions in a ghostlike panorama of dark empty restlessness, ended in a cacophony of opaque bitterness, leaving without answers, as the door slammed shut.

James G. Piatt    America

***AN INTERVIEW WITH NEATH POET PHIL KNIGHT***



**Phil Knight© 2017 Phil Knight**



**Phil Knight** is a poet from Neath. He is the Chair of Neath Writers Group and is also a member of the Cheval Trust which runs the Terry Hetherington Young Writers Award ([www.chevalwriters.org.uk](http://www.chevalwriters.org.uk)). Phil is a part of the Red Poets Society.

**Huw Pudner:** Phil, you are a poet with a growing reputation in Swansea and across South Wales. Tell us how you got started as a writer?

**Phil Knight:** I caught the poetry bug back in 1995 during the Year of Literature Festival in Swansea, I saw the amazing Adrian Mitchell reading his poems and was blown away. He made the words live. Then I joined the Neath Writers Group and I took a number of courses through Swansea University's DACE programme. Peter Thabit Jones was just one of the brilliant teachers I had. But when you are a poet you never stop learning.

**HP:** Who are the writers who have influenced you? What sort of things do you write about and how would you describe your poems?

**PK:** As well as Adrian Mitchell I also had the privilege of hearing two great Welsh poets read their work. Terry Hetherington and Nigel Jenkins both had wonderfully deep, rich voices. An audience would not just hear their words they would feel them. Terry and Nigel were very encouraging to new writers. Mike Jenkins, the editor of Red Poets Magazine and Tim Richards who published my first poem in "Y Faner Goch", have also been important influences on my work. They both write about Wales and their homes towns but they set their poems against the background of the real world. They write with both wit and passion.

**HP:** And of course looming in the background is Dylan Thomas.

**PK:** I love Dylan Thomas, but hate the whole of the "put the drunk ahead of the poet" Dylan Thomas industry and that was the subject of my second poetry collection "Dylanation". I also write about Wales, Neath. war, poverty, social issues and aliens from Mars or whatever is in my head! You could call it satire or social comment. I write mostly free verse, but I have written in the sonnet form recently.

**HP:** I know you spend a fair amount of time performing your poetry. What sort of skills does a performance poet need?

**PK:** I am the wrong one to ask as I am NOT a performance poet. I do not perform my poems from memory. I don't wear a frock coat or dark glasses and do not play the piccolo or juggle while reciting verse. I just try to read my poems in a loud and

clear voice so people can hear what I am saying. The reason that can be mistaken for performance poetry is because there are a lot of professional academic poets about who think you should read your poems in a barely audible whisper or they use a strange monotone voice and they pronounce every SYL-LA-BLE like they have just arrived from the planet Skaro.

**HP:** What is the state of the poetry scene in the Swansea area? Where are the venues and where could I go to see you and other poets read?

**PK:** On the first Thursday of the month in Neath at 7.30pm we have Poems and Pints in the Cambrian Arms to raise money for the Terry Hetherington Young Writers Award. There is an Open Mic poetry night in Cafe Tino's in Wind Street in Swansea on the first and last Wednesday of every month. There also poetry nights in Mozart's (2nd and 3rd Thursday) and the 'Mad as Birds' Open Mic at the Squirrel Cafe Bar, Uplands (3rd Friday). So the local 'Spoken Word' scene is healthy!

**HP:** What about publishing your poetry? Have you published your work? Is it difficult to get work into print?

**PK:** It is much harder to get into print than it was a few years ago because dozens of small press magazines have folded due to the huge increase in postage costs, but on the other hand there are more online outlets now. I have been published in "Poetry Wales", "Planet", "Roundyhouse", "South" "The Seventh Quarry" and other magazines. I have had three poetry collections published; "The Old Bolsheviks" (Green Arrow Publishing, 2011), "Dylanation" (Green Arrow Publishing, 2014) and "You Are Welcome To Wales" (Red Poets, 2015).

**HP:** Do you write anything other than poetry?

**PK:** Yes, I write short stories and articles. I have two short stories in a new anthology by members of Neath Writers Group called "Over The Shoulder"; I have also had stories published in "Awen" and "Carillon". I have had articles about the life and poetry of Dylan Thomas published in "Scriptor", "The Supplement" and "Socialist Review".

Huw Pudner    Wales

*theseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarry*

## AT THE FAMOUS AUTHOR'S CHILDHOOD HOME

It's two-for-one on juvenilia here.  
The giftshop's out the back. Now that you've toured  
her house, seen petticoats and letters, there  
are snacks outside her window in the yard.  
Her darling spaniel's buried underfoot,  
just near the kiosk with the plates and trays.  
His death destroyed her at thirteen. Set out  
on cafe tables: jacks—her favorite toys.  
They're on sale in the shop as well, but why  
not buy the books you've never read instead  
and read them on the train? Romans-à-clef  
of schoolgirl days, embarrassingly bad—  
her loved ones found them in a bureau drawer.  
No one who ever read them asked for more.

Simon Hunt    America

## THE PIECES

Once, Cinderella's cousin left her shoes  
beside the sea and searched the waterline  
for bits of sea-glass, each perhaps a sign--  
or maybe just a way to read the news  
of shatterings and smoothings-out long since.  
From where I watched, I saw her shoes get swept  
to sea. They were not lovely, but she wept  
to lose their perfect fit: sneakers her prince  
had found for her before he fell in sin  
and into someone else, a wicked hag  
(let's say she was). And if I knew the size  
I'd buy new shoes and balm for those red eyes,  
and, for the shards clutched in her skirt, a bag--  
though nothing stops the tide from coming in.

Simon Hunt    America

## **DISPATCHES FROM CAMBODIA**

### **Ode to Anencephaly**

I stare at the dead infant  
As she lay half-wrapped  
Beside her sleeping twin;  
The mother lies on a cot.  
Frail-looking, eyes into space,  
She seems indifferent to  
The doctor's avid, almost-  
Cheerful chatter.

Her dead infant is a rarity,  
Indeed, an uncommon product  
Of all-too common problems:  
A deprived existence,  
Uncontrolled fecundity,  
Too frequent abortions, and  
Indigence that's seeped down  
To the cellular level.

The sleeping twin twitches  
To the flash of camera lights  
While her dead sister remains  
Dead: unfazed by her unformed  
Face, immodest about organs  
That peek from her split chest,  
Obscenely teasing me with  
The pornography of poverty.

### **Revolution of the Young**

*"More than half of Cambodians today  
are below 25 years old."*

*--Government figures*

Having inherited a country  
Rising from the ashes of strife,  
The children look at themselves  
And the world, trying to make  
Desperate sense of everything  
In the quickest way possible.

A few mistakes they will commit,  
As children are wont, and allowed,  
To do but in these perilous times  
The space for making blunders  
Is so narrow, living has become  
The minefields all over again.

The world remains unforgiving  
But the children never waver  
In believing they will emerge  
Unscathed, robust, and victorious  
From the war that hasn't ceased,  
No matter what others opine.

Ultimately the children's children  
Will in turn inherit this country,  
Their futures depending greatly  
On the outcome of this revolution,  
Whether lessons are really learned  
Or whether history will persist

And keep on repeating itself.

### **In the city of ghosts**

In the morning,  
The city is an old building  
Rising out of the haze

Of dawn—silent,  
Abandoned.

The river seems still,  
Her ashen face reflecting  
Thousands of points  
Of light—sparkling,  
Broken glass.

As the sun shines,  
The city's ghosts fall back  
Into the shadows, hiding  
Themselves from me—  
Hapless spectator.

I look for my heart  
On the empty streets but  
Instead I find his eyes,  
Memories of smiles  
Once meant for me.

The wind blows,  
Insinuating itself, bouncing  
Off the walls inside my  
Tired body—hollowed  
By his parting.

Suddenly alone  
In the city of ghosts,  
It's utterly perplexing  
To be haunted only  
By the living.

*Apsara\**

Languid like molasses,  
Foot crosses foot,  
Landing on the floor  
Like whispers.

Stiff as starched collars,  
Hands turn and turn  
To face the wind  
Like flowers.

Precious as diamonds,  
Smiles are tucked,  
Awaiting discovery  
Like secrets.

*\*Celestial dancing nymphs (from Hindu mythology). Also, the general term for Khmer classical dance.*

M. Protacio-De Guzman    Philippines

**from “Convalescence”**

On the left shore of the pain  
we dance  
    light as feathers.

We collect the discordant movements,  
a thousand threads  
    from the bandages  
of our bleached sleeveless  
days.

The soliloquy voice of the pain  
breaks over the birds’ voice,  
the rooms’ silence, the dry

sound of marbles.

the sand of the shore  
swallows by handfuls  
our dance, whiteness and pain.

At the harbour we dance  
upon the ropes  
along the tight Gordian moorings :

Our eyes are swimmers, and  
the oars of our memory  
make no splash, and the boat  
leaves no wake.

**from “Convalescence”**

On the left shore of the pain  
we are beginners, apprentices  
of the simple coherent movements.  
We dip the edge  
of the words we spared  
into the white paint.

Our dance is a still  
whitewashed  
and effaced  
landscape.

What we hear of our aching harmony  
is the nudity of the Garden.  
We lay together the spared words  
to compose  
our common name, -

we sow the omission points,  
and plant flowers  
for hyphens.

(Moored at the right shore, the pain  
is our vessel. —



We unfurl the wind for a sail. )

Alexandra Seekirchner-Sashe    Austria

## LIMINAL TIME

### 1

Dawn—one of those words that can take  
a long time to say—a drawn out dawn . . .  
and does dawn include just before and after  
or only the precise moment when the sun  
cracks the horizon?  
Can we call that a conundrum?  
Dusk, too, sounds almost too good  
to be true,  
so short or long . . .  
and so effortlessly onomatopoeic  
you can taste dusk in the air  
and watch the slow dimming of the light.

The way summer fades to fall  
and the way sounds of play  
die at the call to dinner,  
and someone's mother whispers  
autumn, a murmur that makes  
her mouth open in awe  
And close on a hum.

### 2

Don't you just love to say  
the word conundrum, the way  
breath and tongue  
work together,  
beat and drum.

Frost, of course, knew  
*nothing gold can stay*,  
though page may outlast leaf

the way poems may hold time at bay.  
Some autumn aspen day  
from dawn to dusk  
I'll write a poem,  
one I can murmur to myself  
and title it  
conundrum.

James Palmer    America

### HEYDAY OF DECAY

Behind the frightful frost-covered windows, within the fanciful bowels of the bleak blight,  
among the broken stemware, the creature beheld the shipshape chaos. Whilom,  
the sparrows used to dance around the gallows. Their shapes would ensnare the sparkly shadows  
and enshroud the sheen of mildew.

The claws of time, the clatter of grime and the putrid rite  
were drawing a sublime awe. The soothing eeriness of the wrecked asylum  
was an escape from the raw landscape. The flood of purple arrows  
betwixt and between the rays of daylight showed the delightful shrew.

The sluggish whipsaw of thoughts was stopped – the spleen of walls was cut open!

The gnawing of the wind cleaned the scene,  
but the sleek leaks of our bloody guilt echoed to sour frostbites.  
A Suspended and staring icicle made of icy sulphur was now towering  
within the living tomb.

The goshawks wiped the purple stains clean  
as they were coaxingly muttering in the white night.  
A meek shriek of pain unchained the dove embowering  
the place from its torn womb.

Justine Milhé    France

## UNDER THE HILL

A few erratic stones lie here and there,  
provide us useful seats, a picnic spot  
below the grey vertiginous rock face.

We're under a million tons of blasted stone,  
and see the former shape of land above  
our heads and arcing back to ancient time.

We sit and watch and hope to catch a glimpse  
of falcon flash or jittery jackdaw dance,  
have ringlets, meadow browns for company.

Along the track we think we see faint shapes  
of working men; one hammers odd-shaped stones,  
the other rests his weary hand on hip.

We scribble down some lines about the cost  
of limestone, dignity of labour and  
how we're not sure what it meant for those men,

their working lives endured beneath this hill  
and what they felt and who they loved before  
some accident or illness took them off.

Then we stroll through the orchid fields, to gasp  
with pleasure, shock, at what old nature does  
when left alone to follow its own path.

Simon Fletcher    England

## HARE

Friend of the field,	depression leaper,
fleet-footed pugilist	travels with speed.

Measurer of margins,	agent of missives;
Hermes in fur	arrives safely home.

Lover of leverets,	maternal form-maker,
fired-up in spring time,	secluded in fall.

Everyday wind-reader,                      detector of whispers  
across wide acres                      one step ahead.

Hoodwinker of hounds,                      mate of Melangell;  
seer of sunrise                      out-staring time.

Simon Fletcher    England

## **BOUNDARIES**

For Val Randle

Now how does one alter the charge on the niobium ball? ‘Well, at that stage’, said my friend, ‘we spray it with positrons to increase the charge or with electrons to decrease the charge’. From that day forth I’ve been a scientific realist. *So far as I’m concerned, if you can spray them then they are real.* (Ian Hacking, *Representing and Intervening*)

Get closer in and atoms start to fade.

    Since you moved on they've got the latest gear,  
But past that point the images degrade.

Let's view them, microscopically displayed

    At nano-scale, though soon they smudge and smear.  
Get closer in and atoms start to fade.

Perhaps it's Heisenberg whose rule's obeyed

    When their precise position grows unclear  
And past that point the images degrade.

So odd to see those atoms all arrayed

    There, row on row, till fuzzy zones appear.  
Get closer in and atoms start to fade.

We're in the lab where once you plied your trade

    With instruments consigned to yesteryear.  
Still past that point the images degrade.

A splendid thing to hear the tributes paid

    To you, their crystal-gazing pioneer,  
Though closer in and atoms start to fade.

Your acolytes view atoms with the aid

Of new-born marvels from the techno-sphere,  
Yet past that point the images degrade.

Their working principles are still conveyed  
Near-instantly to you while I must peer  
Much closer in as atoms start to fade.

My physics metaphors seem too clichéd  
To say how space between us shrinks when we're  
Just at the point where images degrade.

Good they should celebrate the role you played  
In getting all that whizz stuff set up here,  
Though closer in and atoms start to fade.

For realists it's electrons that get sprayed  
In TEMs, though entities act queer  
Once past the point where images degrade.

The anti-realist says: let's not persuade  
Ourselves they're real if viewers interfere  
When closer in and atoms start to fade.

Then realists reply: these things we've made  
To spray them with can get us viewers near  
The breakthrough-point though images degrade.

Of course the 'anti'-lot won't be gainsaid  
By suchlike talk, but how else should we steer  
When closer in and atoms start to fade?

Again, how else account for the cascade  
Of close-tracked particles that swerve and veer  
Just at the point where images degrade?

Amazed, I'm like a particle that's strayed  
Into some force-field where the far frontier  
Moves closer in, and atoms start to fade.

Pauli it was whose principle forbade  
A full-scale merger, so it's his idea  
Defines the point where images degrade.

Grain-boundaries shown distinct by light and shade  
Are where your work's been cutting-edge, my dear,  
Not closer in as atoms start to fade.

It's for that work you've earned this accolade,  
Your probing boundaries no shock can shear  
Short of the point where images degrade  
Or, closer in, where atoms start to fade.

Christopher Norris    Wales

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### **THE APRIL LETTERS, a novel by Valerie Randle**

Loneliness. It can lead to out-of-character behaviour. The solitary figure who sits confined in a small room, hunched over a table and writing feverishly, knows this only too well.

Young Susan Smith's world was shattered when a freak accident killed her mother and nothing was ever the same for her again. With this shocking event begins Susan's struggle with insecurity, crippling shyness and guilt. Then, unexpectedly, she is given a chance to escape from these troubles. Yet even now she feels there is something lacking. What more does Susan need?

Years later another life-changing event resurrects ghosts from her past. Will she be able to untangle her past and confront her shadows? The outcome surprises Susan as much as it will the reader.

Spanning the period from the 1960s to the present century, Susan's life and relationships are vividly depicted against the background of life in a South Wales village.

£7.99 paperback and £1.99 Kindle version, both available from Amazon.

### **A review of The April Letters**

This is a really accomplished first novel - sensitive, ingeniously structured, keenly observed, and at times both suspenseful and emotionally gripping. It has clearly been long in the making and shows all the benefits of careful re-working for

maximum narrative effect. The descriptive writing is highly evocative and the author knows exactly how to pace the alternation of dramatic events (as in the opening pages - a memorable read) and more reflective interludes. Strongly recommended for anyone in search of a distinctive and strikingly humane new voice on the scene of contemporary women's writing.

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## **SICILIAN LIGHT**

Even when  
the summer sun  
hides behind  
a black cloud  
or falls into the sea  
between the Egadi isles  
of Levanzo & Favignana,  
large & red,  
as if it were the end  
of the first day,  
the birth of the earth.

Even after,  
the light seems to linger,  
as if the Sicilian earth  
were a source of light itself,  
competing with moon & stars.

Even when  
the mouth is parched  
the stomach empty,  
                    the sheer exquisite beauty  
of Sicilian light  
suffuses the spirit.

For a time  
no candle, lamp,  
or hearthfire  
is needed  
in or outside

the *casuzze*

of the people  
of the sun.

They themselves  
are lucence  
emitting rays  
that light the way  
between them,  
the olive groves,  
the neat rows  
of vineyards,  
the fields of melons,  
the almond trees,  
branches heavy  
with green pods  
bursting with  
the seeds  
of Sicilian light.

*casuzze* —huts where the farmers would rest during the harvesting.  
(28 May 2000, *Gibellina*)

Stanley H. Barkan    America

## **PAINTING RIVERS**

*Inspired by a painting by Melissa Graves-Brown, titled: "Blue Moon"*

spark stars unladder  
scatter across canvas  
Indian blankets warm moon lungs  
wax and wane  
moon disorder  
moon indigo  
moon ring  
moon swing  
moody rivers  
rivers that seek the sea  
peacock blues fan out  
like the geometry of cobalt



dragonflies helicopter over  
plein-air trees  
rich green valleys, purple canyons  
lightening bolt's flash  
crunch fallen fall leaves  
the silence of cliff's edge  
feels the pulse of Om  
password to enter Owl Cafe  
stutter patter of wind  
then breath of tinted sound  
jazzing at the door, inside, secret

Gloria Keeley    America

## **BILLIE**

Thelonious played Black Crow  
low and slow  
strange fruit still echoes  
blackened in the cold hard sun

night fell on  
the slip knot of moon  
color lines drawn on  
the maps of trees  
roots unaware  
magnolias budded white  
sway with the gentle breeze

music of washboards and harps  
far from plantation mansions  
in the backwater's dark strut with  
the taps of shoes  
before the wolves hunt,  
the black locusts buzz

gospel singers tune  
their collective voices  
the fruit gathered neatly  
beneath the darkening shade  
headed toward heaven

the horns blow Dixie

Gloria Keeley    America

## **BUZZING**

Metallic blue, oily and droning  
*dum dum* against the grimy pane  
no loss of focus or faith, sure  
that the next attempt will be it.  
I watch myself, blue shirt  
and bluer eyes. I am the bluebottle  
there is only right now  
tiny wings and no gasping  
my destiny just beyond the dirt.  
Endless energy fuelled by shit  
no doubt where to go  
no need to consider why.  
Don't be mistaken - I don't want out  
I want in.

I only do what I must do. I know  
no other way. Why don't you  
open the window?

I'm a rainbow (in the right light)  
a bristling beauty, able to cross a room  
drawing attention as I go  
dancing from wall to wall.  
Yet people always watch me  
with anger in their eyes  
and intent to join me  
to my brothers and sisters  
on the sill pile.

Carsten Smith-Hall    Denmark

## **ON MY WAY**

It's not that I want  
leaves not to fall

dead and cold flames  
It's that I want  
to be part of the tree  
to float to the ground  
a glow of autumn fire  
It's not that I don't  
like my work  
or family chatter  
but they keep me  
out of the woods  
The tree in me gnars  
thirst in the deep  
clayey entombed cache  
memories of growing  
I am a burial pod  
guzzling your tears  
devouring your touch  
absorbing your aria  
uninterrupted exposure  
to metabolic courage  
I shed my coat

Carsten Smith-Hall    Denmark

## **HUNTING SEASON**

What a beast! Blue. Ancient. Vicious fangs. It stalks in absolute silence flowing with the shadows in through every single canthus even in the bedroom of the Maharaja's unmarried daughter feeds on hearts and the odd intestine the echo of gnashing detectable by xanthophyll radar minds like mine I always thought it was on CITES Appendix 1 but it's everywhere now I hunt it to slay it : You rode the Delta Aquariid meteor right into me stardust trails the slow movement of my fingers what happened I don't know floating on the river's song enjoying the creaking of the yellow bamboo to the rhythm of the moon you know I'll never shoot a unicorn and I'd no idea I was conquered loser has no rights. I heard it then. Low volume gnawing so close how did it get in? It's here right now maybe maybe it always lurks at the murky edge of the world that altered in a single moment before I was told nothing happened and everything changed how can something as

beautiful as the truth be so ugly : as elusive as constant I sing my song of yearning  
gripping at your periphery one day creeps into the next still I sing no answer  
embracing me as far apart as two languages those are my tears connecting love and  
absence forming pools where the beast guzzles I flower but I'm up-rooted it must  
be a dream perhaps you never really existed you were ever only a fantasy born  
from the stardust that'd explain a lot and I don't count my regrets or watch you die  
again and again in the bright day of the final darkness on my inside : when I see  
you you almost look like yourself except you're another I like your wings anyway I  
camp at the junction by the brook where your pain rushes by in the black water and  
my desires grow like weeds a favourite feeding ground for the beast I wait  
patiently as I do I know what can happen when nothing happens how vast distance  
means nothing for intimacy and I'm intimate with the beast now we know each  
other it'll come here the .30-06 Springfield is loaded with my dum dum blue future  
I'll feel no pity when I skin it a fang in my pocket tattoo on my soul ready to face  
joy. Acid gush in my chest it's here I close my eyes ready for the shot.

Carsten Smith-Hall    Denmark

## **BLEAKNESS**

Diesel fumes dance like oily shadows  
on the scarred surface of the cauldron  
cloaking the way to the hills  
taking days out of my life  
yet inviting me to join them  
luring me out of my cage  
“lose yourself and your heart's agony,  
we'll fool around and be part of you”  
and I take them into me  
to ink paint my lungs  
and teach me to wheeze  
while I appreciate their company.  
They are soundless  
I also appreciate that  
so I can ponder in silence  
the mirrored question marks  
born from my heart breaking

with that soft wet noise  
of a stillborn child

Carsten Smith-Hall    Denmark

**FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL, GIVAT SHAUL, JERUSALEM, SEPTEMBER 1,  
2014**

after the Gaza war

Choked with cars, the street  
is blocked in both directions.  
Excited boys approach the gate,  
each shout of joy triumphant.  
One mother on the front steps snaps  
a photo of her nervous son.  
One teacher spreads his arms  
like wings over their shoulders,  
leads two boys inside the school.  
A straggler son and father arm in arm  
must run to reach the street.  
Somehow all will find their way.  
Soon we'll hear them in assembly sing  
and then the siren for the drill:  
children running, holding hands,  
across the yard, descending  
underground into the bunker.

Steven Sher    Israel

**THE DAY BEFORE YOU DIED**

we rambled outside and I said I wished  
the winter cottonwoods would hurry up  
and get their leaves, and you said no, no  
look at the bare wood in the sun  
how good it is at being bare, how freed from things.

and you looked at the rabbit brush  
pale yellow in the snow,  
last summer's leaves and blossoms

still on their stems in perfect dry arrangements.  
wouldn't it be nice, you said, to be a dry arrangement too,  
and spend some time in a vase on a piano?

Then we saw deer tracks in the snow  
and you said maybe they dropped  
from the sky and are looking  
for feet to fit them.

and you sat down  
and began taking off a shoe.

Alex Drummond    America

### **IT SUDDENLY OCCURRED TO ME**

sitting around the campfire  
that I was a campfire too, burning  
my supper of rice and cheese  
instead of wood and without smoke  
and using the energy  
generated by my food  
to drive the wheels and pulleys  
of my arms and legs and the pump  
of my heart muscle etcetera,  
and finally late in the night  
I said to the fire we are brothers,  
and as it gradually burned down to embers  
and turned to cold ash I could mix  
into the soil, I thanked it  
for showing me so easily  
and so peacefully  
the way out.

Alex Drummond    America

### **SERENDIPITY WHIRLWIND**

I met a whirlwind tonight, by chance.  
The machine gunned words,  
and frenetic tumble of laughter-littered speech

ricocheted around the room.

Incessant streams of fact filled memories  
were recounted relentlessly...  
names, dates, times spewed forth  
without intakes of breath.

Gallop stories raced to the mouth  
from the foggy forest of manic mind  
and elbowed each other out of the way  
to reach the door of freedom first.

The butterfly barrage discharged  
babblings and obtuse opinions  
which unleashed the tangled talk  
to tear and swear in turn.

The long monologue of mutterings  
murmured and mesmerised  
until the spiel was spun  
and time whirled the wind away.

Resounding silence returned.

Julie-Anne Grey    Wales

## **UP THERE**

(The Saltings, Briton Ferry, Neath)

I used to live up there  
thirty yards in the empty air  
in a tiny council flat  
built on a salt marsh.  
Now every time I smell piss  
in a concrete underpass  
I am taken home by the nose  
to that acid acrid elevator  
and the urine stinking stairwells  
where the inmates scribbled their  
fears and dreams on the walls;  
“Dai loves Jane”

“UP THE SWANS”

“Victory To The FWA”  
“The National Front is  
The White Man's Front”  
and “Terry is a Jerry”.

I stood up there  
thirty yards in the air  
and I saw our town turn dark,  
Dad held my hand and said  
“This is Workers Power”  
and the stars burnt bright.

In the end no one wanted to live  
up there in the salt tasting air.  
So three years before the fall  
of communism the council demolished  
its great social experiment  
and a millionaire built a mansion  
an awful mix of gothic, classical  
and post-modern with just a touch  
of a post-apocalyptic ghetto.

But I prefer to look up not down  
and maybe I will see myself  
up there thirty yards in the air.

Phil Knight    Wales

## **DEVELOPMENT**

The Millennial fires  
have long cooled  
but coastal hopes  
are parked in stone.

The arms of the bay  
hold a vast sand basket,  
the sea is a line  
of distant promise.



Cold is the August Sun  
over a beach empty of  
tourists, the dreams  
of developers are at ebb.

On the pristine front  
walks only one woman  
and her old limping dog  
on a Burry estuary afternoon.

All I can hear are a few  
weak gulls and a train  
clunking away, bringing  
a shutter down on the day.

Phil Knight    Wales

### **ACROSONNET**

Without a backward glance you walked away;  
Half blind through scalding tears I watched you go.  
Each footstep echoed like a hammer blow  
Resounding in my heart that fateful day.  
Each empty promise that you ever spoke  
Destroyed me, shattering my faith in you,  
In trust, in love that I thought true,  
Defiled, degraded, treated like a joke.  
Like dying autumn leaves fall from the tree  
Our hopes and dreams outgrow themselves and die.  
Vile memories that over-cloud the sky  
Erase the simple joy you brought to me.

Give me the choice and I would choose again  
Our doomed and poison love with all its pain.

Steve Grey    Wales

### **BRITTLE**

Descending unimaginable depth  
an inferred anamnesis

like a stone  
having been tossed to pond,  
concentric circles emanate  
travelling uncontrollable rate  
to a place  
beyond our comprehension.

This, exhausted carcass  
beyond boundaries of rescue  
like a lone albatross  
capitulating in a whirlpool  
of fading breath  
is no quick death,  
Azure, Cobalt, Ebony  
stirred vehemence  
of the tsunami to come.

David Alun Williams    Wales

## **SANCTUM**

Peppering this landscape,  
Ivory cottages, concrete roofs  
sagging like old elephants  
heavily weighed, seemingly  
murmuring deep undertones  
in the closeness of community.

Beholden!  
A grey parentage  
placed on the endangered list  
articulates but a muted lament,  
whilst another cottage is orphaned  
brick by brick: into a museum.

David Alun Williams    Wales

## **MY AYAH**

Her voice says  
'come'.

We sit in the shade of a palm.

She strips the leaves.  
We weave the strands,  
plait ourselves a mat.

Her legs  
tuck sideways, folded wings,  
her arms about me.

We sing along  
the lines we trace  
in her palms.

Ann Vaughan-Williams    England

## **MIRRORING**

This is beauty, the instant of recognition  
when the baby's eyes alight on a face that shines  
for her and for her alone in her circumference,  
when the twists of her gut and the sharp teeth  
coming through are for a moment dispelled.  
Her face is caught in the flash  
of a camera that fixes on a form  
of the sheer idea of love.

She sees the shape of the father with his bristles.  
She knows that face and the feel of the hand that rocks  
that holds her in its span while the milk gurgles up,  
overflows and wets her crease of neck.  
She knows her mother's full brimmed laughter,  
her lips suckling for the breast where she fits.

Ann Vaughan-Williams    England

## THE WARP FACTOR

No-one has heard of the daughter he and his ex never had  
or knows, while licking away the taste of toothpaste before sleep,  
he recites lists as he browses the Next Generation Companion on Kindle  
and, like speculative Trekkies believe, there's other lives elsewhere  
then how, each week, he's at New Street Station for precisely one hour  
to stare at who arrives through the barriers where he imagines he'll see her  
before he stands wide-armed, delighted at her Deanna Troi hairstyle,  
as she says *How was your journey? Let's have a coffee*. And he believes  
they'll sit, sip slowly, while he touches soft hands and shares their warmth  
as he tells his rehearsed story, a gentler version of how it all went wrong.

Bob Cooper    England

## SHE SEES SHE'S ON CCTV WHEN IN HER NORMAN HARTNELL COAT

– the 50s one, sky-blue, with frayed brocade on the cuffs,  
wrap-over style and a tie-belt that doesn't always stay tight,  
bought for £2.99 in Oxfam the day her dad had left for good –  
as now she stands in the snow, stares at mannequins in bikinis  
with expressionless faces and the price between their bare feet

then she notices the camera, steps back, sashays left then right,  
lashes wet with flakes that stick then melt until – as in a film  
her parents had sang along to, a Sunday afternoon over the iron's hiss:  
the sea, a calm-faced Grace Kelly laid in the lap of Bing Crosby –  
she wants to ignore where she is and croon. But she doesn't.

Instead, her shoes in the slush, she looks up, opens it wide,  
catches a glimpse of tears in the lining, then tucks it tight,  
re-ties the belt, before she strokes under her chin  
like she often does these days always hoping  
she's not yet become like her mum.

Note: For those who like to know these things:

The name of the film was *High Society*

The name of the duet they sang was *True Love*

Bob Cooper    England

## **THE SEVENTH QUARRY SWANSEA POETRY MAGAZINE**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **BOOKS AND MAGAZINES RECEIVED**

**FOR THE TEMPUS-FUGITIVES/POEMS AND VERSE-ESSAYS**  
by Christopher Norris, published by De La Salle University Publishing House and Sussex Academic Press. Available via [www.sussex-academic.com](http://www.sussex-academic.com) 'This stunningly accomplished volume, which handles the most demanding verse forms with apparently effortless skill, confirms Christopher Norris's status as one of the

most erudite, original and adventurous English-language poets of our time.’—  
Terry Eagleton, Distinguished Professor of English Literature, University of  
Lancaster.

**STAR THISTLE/TERSE VERSE** by Jim Gronvold, published by Oak Ink Press.  
Available via [oakinkpress@icloud.com](mailto:oakinkpress@icloud.com) ‘Slightly reminiscent of Emily Dickinson  
or Robert Frost, Jim Gronvold’s musings of life and death are deeply  
philosophical. . . *Star Thistle* is verse that makes you reflect on what is truly  
important in our waking life’—Terri Glass, author.

*theseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarrytheseventhquarry*

## **THE FIRE IN THE WOOD**

A verse and prose drama

based on the life of California’s Big Sur sculptor Edmund Kara

by Peter Thabit Jones

Co-published by Cross-Cultural Communications, USA, and The Seventh  
Quarry Press, UK

Includes some texts and artwork by Carolyn Mary Kleefeld

The world-premiere, four evening performances, took place at The  
Actors Studio Theatre, Massachusetts, in May 2017.

**“Pure theatrical magic” – Marc Clopton, the Director**

**Prices: £10.00/\$15**

Available via [info@cross-culturalcommunications.com](mailto:info@cross-culturalcommunications.com) and  
[info@peterthabitjones.com](mailto:info@peterthabitjones.com)

## **SKULL**

What better teachers  
than the silent stars  
or the beating pulse  
of waves on shore?

What better speaker  
than a hollow skull  
to echo the lesson  
of nevermore?

Jim Gronvold    America

## **TERN**

From a sharp glide  
over clear water

a bright Tern spins  
toward a flash of fin

on honed feathers,  
rudder and wing

that swing its beak  
into arrow aim

and the ocean  
never feels the sting.

Jim Gronvold    America

## **LOOKOUT COURT, MARBLEHEAD**

A man is holding a child by the hand.  
He's studying the horizon in the dusk:  
the half-lit bay, the sailboats and the shadows.  
A window almost level with the ground  
releases tender smells of soup and bread.

Cicadas have been breathing in the night—  
exposing, in the rhythms of insomnia,  
the skeleton of a noble poem about  
what's covered by the shadows: everything  
that under colder lights goes unremarked.

The child is fearful of the changing shapes.  
Perhaps the man has worries of his own.  
A slow gray blush encompasses the sky,  
and dusk is an extravagance of shadows  
on the journey back home and down the hill.

Pedro Poitevin    America

### **I FEEL THE MEMORY OF WRITING YOU**

I feel the memory of writing you  
beginning to carve out its riverbed  
deep in the shadow of my passing through.

How after scanning you beneath, I flew  
a little lower; how I turned my head:  
I feel the memory of writing you,

my labyrinthine road I had no clue  
how to begin or end before I read—  
deep in the shadow of my passing through—

the story I demanded to be true.  
In each one of the knots along the thread,  
I feel the memory of writing you.

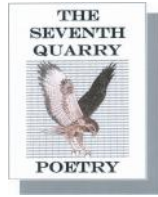
The moment when I felt your pulse, I knew.  
And as you slowly found your form, I shed—  
deep in the shadow of my passing through—

a love song to the love song that you drew  
with words I'd say to words I hadn't said.  
I feel the memory of writing you  
deep in the shadow of my passing through.

Pedro Poitevin    America



# THE SEVENTH QUARRY PRESS



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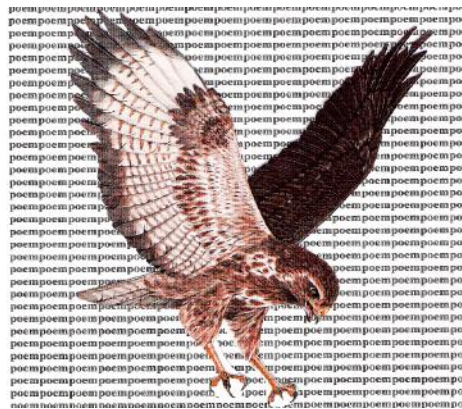
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“The morning poet came early  
like a worm waiting to be devoured  
by very early birds hungry for words.”

from MORNING POET by STANLEY H. BARKAN

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