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Yvonne Morris



Yvonne Morris is the author of *Mother was a Sweater Girl* (The Heartland Review Press, 2016). She has been published most recently in *The Bengaluru Review* and *The Galway Review*. She was featured as a Poet of the Week on the Poetry Super Highway website in 2019. She grew up in the Midwest, but now teaches and tutors at a community college in Kentucky.

Calli makes a call

Yvonne Morris

A recent study revealed that the average person spends 90 minutes a day on their phone. That adds up to 23 days a year and 3.9 years of a person's lifespan. (source: mobileinsurance.com)

Hey, it's me. Well I called him last night.
And I was like—and he was like whatever—
and I was like uuuhhhh.

Seriously, say anything you want to me—that's why I called.
It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter if you get to Philly—
It does matter if you get to Vegas. Seriously.

I can't believe they're letting her teach the summer program. I've been
saying that I wanted to do it since last year. Yes, last night. Can you believe it?
He acts like he wants me to give up my life for him. I have a family to think about.

But kids have a life of their own. Yes, he calls me a couple of times a week.
We're not serious. I don't want to get remarried—but he's fun and he's company.
That's all—we're just having fun. And I know that's all I want—which is fine.

Previously published in The Tipton Poetry Review

Ordinary Gift

Yvonne Morris

How familiar is love, rare yet regular
unplanned, it opens no ordinary gift,
but confers a feel for granting wishes

sighs heeded and unheard, soundly curved
toward the ache, the arc of adoring—
warm to the everyday, common repeated

touch, skillful and biddable, absolute
in its strangeness—the mystery of all
that is known in another yet unsolved

Is it any wonder why some as a sum
of two cannot become accustomed
to being one

Paul Callus



Paul Callus, married to Sheila nee Ackland-Snow, was born in Hal Safi, Malta. He is a retired teacher, and has been active in the literary field for around 50 years. He writes poetry, short stories, and lyrics (for songs, hymns and oratorios). His preferred mediums are English and Maltese. His work has been published in various anthologies, magazines, newspapers, and online sites, mostly in Malta, England and America. In recent years, apart from a poetry ebook, he wrote and published both historical and children's books. He is also a proof-reader and translator. His main hobbies are reading, painting, swimming and travelling.

Days of my Youth

Paul Callus

From the top window of the tower
I surveyed my vast kingdom
sprawled far and wide,
a patchwork quilt of
rubble-walled fields
adorned in vibrant hues
matching the glow of my soul
and the glint of my regal sword.
An introvert at an early age
relishing the sound of silence
leading imaginary friends into
battle against foes and dragons.
Time had little or no meaning...
till grandma's shrill voice
spiralled upwards, shattering my
daydreaming and, reluctantly,
I shed my thoughts and armour,
then hungrily followed the aroma of
her cooking down the winding steps
of grandfather's windmill.

The Materialist

Paul Callus

He lives for the moment
A pleasure seeker pursuing
The urge for self gratification
Reaching for the heights of
Satisfaction, until the bubble
Bursts and the hedonistic thrill
Turns into painful disillusion.

Duane Anderson



Duane currently lives in La Vista, NE. He graduated from Augustana College located in Rock Island, IL and worked at Union Pacific Railroad for 37 years where he retired from in 2013. After his retirement, he started writing poetry again after too long of an absence. He now volunteers with the American Red Cross as a Donor Ambassador on their blood drives. He has had poems published in Poetry Quarterly, Fine Lines, The Sea Letter, Cholla Needles, Wilderness House Literary Review, Adelaide Literary Magazine and several other publications.

Elevator to the Moon

Duane Anderson

Your mouth was open
so I walked in
and took the elevator to the top floor
hoping you would join me,
so there I stand waiting,
lost somewhere in your mind.

A Face Looks Down

Duane Anderson

A face looks down at the floor
staring

at what?

a crack
a knot hole
the grain
an ant crawling
dust
a crumb

two eyes from a face
looking down
concentrating
at the many things that
could be there
picking one or more

a face looks down at the floor
staring and thinking
of a world lying at its feet.

David Francis



David Francis has produced six music albums, one of poetry, *Always/Far*, a chapbook of lyrics and drawings, and *Poems from Argentina* (Kelsay Books). He has written and directed the films *Village Folksinger* (2013) and *Memory Journey* (2018). His poems and short stories have appeared in a number of journals and anthologies. www.davidfrancismusic.com

Funeral

David Francis

“Music is dead”
is what they said.
Though I was sick,
they made me go.
I don't mind funerals,
especially if there's someone
that you know.
They are more relaxed,
more human than weddings.
After all, when it is over,
it's more comfortable,
without high expectations;
people understand this.
A gray day, post-drizzle,
unresolved,
waiting outside with the
hearse drivers and passersby.
Inside, the foyer is quiet
and, entering the chapel,
down in the front pews
sit a few wet-eyed mourners
but no one wailing
in the back room.
This death was not sudden.
The waiting is boring
but there is no impolite comment.
More participants file in.
At least, there is no late bride.
It is like a large class
where you don't know anyone.
At last, the minister wanders in.
He is very old and you wonder
how he was contacted
to fulfill these duties.
He starts up with the peculiar
sermon directed at the audience,
unsolicited in that one came
out of respect not for that,
or him, but for him
lying in the casket, and his family.
Words, phrases, generalities,
evasions follow
in captive succession.
Silence around the edges of
his sedgy voice,
one's own thoughts.
Reminiscences, plans, suppressed coughs.

How long can it go on—
the attempt to stave off emptiness,
the monotony, the futility
of trying to solve the riddle of existence?
This drama in the routine
of days, years.
Nothing learned in the changeable:
no sphinx, no oracle.
Just the flatness of the middle class
with their buildings and business.
An ear to the conch of the departed.
The roar of silence.
The finale is postponed
for form's sake.
Really, for appearance.
He has another funeral in an hour.
Scan the pews for an old
girlfriend once kissed.
Silence. Silence.
The benediction.
But who is this sitting on the organ bench?
Some figure who is not
in the group portrait.
The silence is too raw, unfinished.
They cannot bear it!
And yet they sit tight—
no one cries out or protests...
it is understood, all on the
same midrange wavelength.
No, no, hymns, anything
is acceptable but this silence.
Then—through my otherworldly
sick consciousness,
resentful of this charade,
angry, haughty to live!
staring at death—
started up the Music.

Old and Young

David Francis

A very old woman
with a cane

bent over

looked me

full in the face

—I could not meet her

gaze but craned

studying

(she had on a very smart black

trench coat)

details:

cane, trench coat, chestnut hair

as

across the street came

the young erect woman

in hay, maize, sun ringlets

like a medieval calendar

emblem of Old Age and Youth;

but on observing, closer,

her face got blanker.

Diana Rosen



DIANA ROSEN is an essayist/poet/flash fiction writer published in dozens of print and online journals including Rattle, Tiferet Journal, Zingara Review, Ariel Chart, Dime Show Review, The River!, and Poetic Diversity, among others. Her anthology contributions appear in print and online publications including Mizmor eAnthology, The Poeming Pigeon: Love Poems, Altadena Poetry Review, and Far Villages, to be published by Black Lawrence Press in 2020. Other forthcoming work includes poems in the art and poetry anthology, Book of Sighs, poems in The Reform Judaism Quarterly, and a compilation of her flash and poems, Love & Irony, from Redbird Chapbooks. She welcomes comments at DIANALROSEN@GMAIL.COM

Poetry Reading

Diana Rosen

Inside the theatre, all black square shapes on the walls
like a Louise Nevelson sculpture, the performance
of poetry begins. Shadow and light peek out
from behind the speakers who entertain us.
One after another poets read their poems, and those
of others from the anthology they are here to promote.
The host struggles to find the right pages,
one poet trips on the microphone cord,
another grasps for water to slake his nervous throat.
It matters not, for they make us hum aha! to ourselves
with each recognizable image of place, each similarity
of moments, painful or sweet, crystallized on the page.
The voices: low and soft, crackling and sardonic, dramatic
(complete with arm/hand gestures) with only one professorial
dullard talking to some inner muse in need of levity in his life.
A latecomer, (a doctor-on-call), arrives harried, cloaked in
urgency. He grabs hold of the podium, recites his poems
-- from memory -- with a rich basso that takes us into his heart
quickly, cleanly, like the good surgeon he is.
Friends, fans mingle with their poets while others of us walk
into the cool autumn air, like renewed, refreshed believers
leaving the sanctuary after a weekly service.

Geoffrey Heptonstall



Geoffrey Heptonstall is the author of a novel, *Heaven's Invention* [Black Wolf 2017] and a Poetry collection, *The Rites of Paradise* [Cyberwit 2020]. A number of his plays have been performed, workshopped and/or published. He has published about thirty stories and over one hundred and fifty poems. He is currently gathering a selection for publication. He has written for a number of American, British and Canadian publications, including *The London Magazine*, *Montreal Review* and *Poetry Pacific*. He says of his work 'I find that oceans and rivers recur in my creative imagination [though not in my conscious life]. I was brought up in a small port where the surrounding farmland was often flooded. So the impending changes in climate are very real to me.'

THE CHILD EPHEMERAL

Geoffrey Heptonstall

Like many fond parents I have in my heart a favourite child.'
Author's Second Preface to David Copperfield

Such words as these unlock the door.
He shall find freedom inscribed
on a prison wall.
Against such walls a love is found,
all human life embraced
in a sentence without end.

To watch at the window,
a nocturne composed
for want of company.
His mind is cursed by contraries:
to satisfy itself,
or the fools he fears?

Moons make shadows move.
He is moved by moonlight
to write what he remembers.
A mind made of memories.
The child he favoured arrives.
He opens the prison door.

Nels Hanson



Nels Hanson grew up on a small raisin and tree fruit farm in the San Joaquin Valley of California, earned degrees from U.C. Santa Cruz and the U of Montana, and has worked as a farmer, teacher and contract writer/editor. His fiction received the San Francisco Foundation's James D. Phelan Award and Pushcart nominations in 2010, 2012, 2014 and 2016. His poems received a 2014 Pushcart nomination, Sharkpack Review's 2014 Prospero Prize, and 2015 and 2016 Best of the Net nominations. He lives with his wife Vicki on California's Central Coast.

Night Walk

Nels Hanson

This dusk the sea looks old, a memory,
black and white from a '40s film noir,
Venus an unblinking lighthouse's eye

luring lost spacemen toward a wrecker's
coast. The distraught woman wades out
to die, Joan Crawford in "Humoresque,"

stunned John Garfield without his violin
barefoot in cold sand. We wait for a full
moon rising east of us, crossing the sable

sky and watching stars to sink westerly,
reveal a silver corridor, rainbow bridge
bled pale as rocks set down carefully in

lines before we named ancient acolytes
Indians, Nazca Plain in southern Peru.
Runway for ships from foreign galaxy

unimpressed and streaking off again?
Only chosen astronauts rise far above
our Earth and who can walk on Pacific

waters where the open eyes of whales
try navigating deep fathoms, confused
by sonars submarines emit like vapor

trails of missiles? Here is gone, heaven
still distant, NASA rockets searching
for Shangri-La light years beyond blue

Neptune and its 13 moons. After Albert
Einstein ether curves to gravity, clocks
turn relative. Ghost constellations sent

starlight seven million years ago when
they resembled other animals and man
tried standing on two paws. Tonight in

tennis shoes on moonlit beach we lift
a spiral washed-up shell. Each holds it
to a hungry ear: azure surf exploding,

Spanish Main on a tropic isle? A gold
hoop earring, bandanna a knotted hat,
daring and addicted Errol Flynn grips

a cutlass between his teeth and swings
on a long rope in the klieg light's glare
to board the galleon sailing for Cádiz.

Mirrors of Rain

Nels Hanson

1

Some Sufis believe
we cross 70,000 veils,
one, then another and
another, half of them
light, each one losing
a fraction more light,
and half of them dark,
slowly growing darker,
grays to final black
until the baby is born
crying for a lost world.
That's why children
sometimes wake at
midnight weeping,
unable to speak but
remembering where
a golden rain falls
some Sufis believe.

2

Some people we say
are crazy have the same
illusion: the moon isn't
the moon but an artificial
replacement to fool
the gullible who can't tell
genuine from counterfeit.
The great tree isn't a tree
but the slender double
planted and growing
at night while we slept.
The wife isn't a wife,
the husband a husband,
but facsimiles pretending
while the couple go on
loving elsewhere. Where
do these ideas come from?
A bad storm in the brain,
connections failing like
anchors of a wind-struck
cobweb? This morning
all the world appeared
a stage set painted to
take us in. This noon I'm
the only one who knows
the real world left us.

3

The great book tells us
the savior will come at night
like a thief. Once that was
true and may be again
since the thief hasn't come.
Or has he? What if the robber
entered the house, from room
to room looked for jewels,
for crystal goblets, porcelain
jugs of burgundy, a silver
mirror that hidden in a locked
safe still reflects blue sky?
The intruder rifled the house
as we slept and didn't wake.
Finally he leaned close
so his breath touched our
dreaming faces. He lifted
shut eyelids in his search,
put his ear to our rising
and falling chests to see
if the heart held a treasure
but there was no gold or
rubies. Now it was getting
light, dawn was coming
and the thief stole away
to another city, another
house where all the riches
waited in plain sight.

4

Did you see the blue
river, she asked, running
deep and pure, unhurried,
never slowing? I caught
a glimpse, I said, only
a moment or two. My
face was not reflected,
my hand couldn't cup
the water though I was
thirsty. Was there a boat,
she asked, blue with blue
sail? No, I said, no boat,
no sail. One will come,
she said, blue as the blue
water. When? A dream
already is sailing to reach
you. How will I know?
You'll be confused, not
sure if you're bending
now at the bank to drink
or the blue sailor, sail,
the boat or bluest river.

5

A rumor circulated, from
one neighbor to another
that our world was ending.
The air was growing
darker and hard to breathe,
dwindling wells gave scarce
water that didn't taste
like water anymore, days
the sun was hotter than
any sun we remembered.
And sudden hurricanes,
deserts flooding while
green valleys parched to
fiery tinder. Ice blinding
white ten million years
melted to a brackish sea
mermaids couldn't drink.
We didn't know what
to do and then the story
spread from ear to ear,
that an insane neighbor
in a world gone crazy
wasn't insane but really
wise and he was working
on something wonderful,
a hidden Noah. And so I
went to find him, looked
everywhere, nearly gave
up, sure hope was a fable,
a lie, until in the distance
I saw a great barn large
enough for many arks,
for many spaceships to
fly to other better worlds.
The door was open and I
saw the timbers laid out,
the rungs like ribs for
a boat that wasn't a boat
but a simple ladder and
I could see that upright
it would reach a little
higher than our heads.

6

Since he's a billionaire
ten times over why shouldn't
he be president? The most
beautiful woman on Earth
deserves to clasp in her
passionate embrace
the first visitor arriving

from Alpha Centauri.
Rain after drought
rightly falls on the king's
estate until his crops
are soothed, with leaky
buckets we're free to scoop
the runoff. A richest tabby
won't lap from any bowl
but a golden one. The best
must rule on thrones and
only odd saints wear shining
halos. At the ending of
the world the righteous,
those chosen few less
numerous than residents
of a smaller city, rise up
like swans and wingless
we can't follow. That's
the way things are, meant
to be we're told, the blessed
or lucky say and leave us
to a fate any pair of horns
in a herd of wildebeest
understands. A trillion
silver drops a brilliant
scientist plots on a lecture
screen flood homes and
valleys. Our mirrors are
pools of water after
storms, reflecting stars
we'll never reach, though
stop and look: at noon
dawn breezes still, ripples
disappear. We see our
perfect savior's presence
you recognize at last as
you recall your face.

Januário Esteves



Januário Esteves was born in Coruche (1960) and was raised near Costa da Caparica, Portugal. He graduated in electromechanical installations, uses the pseudonym Januanto and writes poetry since the age of 16. In 1987 he published poems in the *Jornal de Letras*, and participated over the years in some collective publications. Recently published in the Brazilian magazine *Musa Rara* and in the American magazine *EIGHTEENSEVENTY.POETRY.BLOG*.

Habitat

Januário Esteves

Buildings shimmer on blue satin
At the time the neighbor is violently
Beaten by her husband, because the neighbor coveted her
In an insane drive
From electronic alienation, searches only ended
When there was nothing to solve, except for
Compliment because the smell does not allow
That the social difference that
The feeling of approximation in reason
From the shared love to the enemy who as soon as
May it replace us in life since we are many and
We are not in extinction despite every day
To die by thousands in a series of techniques
What do we use to entertain them? I do not know how many
Who settle into the pyramid of food
And amazingly the canines verberam in
Agglutination of enzymes that are incorporated into the gaze
Disloyal with which they watch the street through the window.

Selfie

Januário Esteves

Scented with rolling eyes & general melting & anti-kiss lips
The dilettante tries to seduce innocent little girls who are not innocent at all.
Seeking to satisfy ego & squeeze
All in full body wandering around the
Room in the most attractive pose that one can
Imagine as followers ejaculating drool
Through the nostrils in an extrovert gesture of
Capitulation & to the sound of any rap
The depths of the soul twist in binaries
From Analog Equivalent's Carpentering the Feast
One night stuck in the emptiness of existence

Julia Cirignano



Julia Cirignano is a writer from Boston Ma. She graduated from Endicott College with a BA in English with a Creative Writing Concentration in 2017. Soon after, Cirignano self-published a book of poetry titled *White Wine & Medical Marijuana*. She has several articles published by *Limelight Magazine* and *That Music Magazine*, and poetry published in *The Endicott Review*, *The Endicott Observer*, *Mad Swirl*, *The New York Literary Magazine*, *Red Wolf Journal*, *Scribe Base*, *The Somerville Times*, and *The Wire's Dream Magazine*. While working on her second collection of poetry, Cirignano currently runs a book review blog that focuses on poetry <https://juliasbookreviews.wordpress.com>.

Writer

Julia Cirignano

I exploit myself
with these
explicit obsessions.
I cleanse myself
through these
poetic confessions.

Abuse

Julia Cirignano

save your rage for me
let me hear your outbursts
let me feel them
in the pit of my stomach

let me enjoy your body and mind
to the fullest degree

let me suckle on your goosebumps
like me lick the blood from your wounds
let me hear you say you hate me

I'm somewhere between a sucker
and your loyal lady
and I'm happy as could be

Jack Harvey



Jack D. Harvey's poetry has appeared in *Scrivener*, *The Comstock Review*, *Bay Area Poets' Coalition*, *The Antioch Review*, *The Piedmont Poetry Journal* and a number of other on-line and in print poetry magazines. The author has been a Pushcart nominee and over the years has been published in a few anthologies. The author has been writing poetry since he was sixteen and divides his time between his home near Albany, New York and his plantation in South Carolina. He is retired from doing whatever he was doing before he retired. His book, *Mark the Dwarf* is available on Kindle. <https://www.amazon.com/Mark-Dwarf-Jack-D-Harvey-ebook/dp/B019KGW0F2>

Ann

Jack Harvey

Come to me, Ann,
put on your old brown shoes
button up your coat
close up the house
and come to me, Ann.

Suns can rise and set
Catullus said;
that same old wonderful line
comes back
one way or another,
time after time;
we know it to
be true and don't care,
don't pay it no mind,
share and share alike
that wretched wisdom.

The weather changes,
the king dies, the tyrant deposed,
revolution, fire, burning,
the comings and goings,
but we don't care,
not for a moment, not nohow,
for now is our only island,
our rock, our well of hope.

Come to me, Ann;
you may as well
leave it all behind,
let it all go and
take your chance;
we can love, can lose,
will lose it all
to the brigand time,
lose it all in the end,
our lives, too,
but for now
take my hand, my heart;
forget the final pitiful loss
of everything and let us
kiss the sacred crown
of flowering May,
make our vows,
and be here now.

Fancy Woman

Jack Harvey

Fancy Woman

Naked, the hatcheck girl
brings us
beyond haberdashery
to new coatrooms
of delight.
Against the boom boom
of thunder we
see the catacombs
of ancient sin
brought to perfection.

Theodora, you whore;
even the geese were
overpaid, pecking the
grain off your privates,
while generals watched.

That day the Hippodrome
was quiet:
the pantomime mocked
the glorious noisy chariots,
the noisy birds in cages.

Theodora, rant and rave:
your singing voice
nothing but your
stupid skin
shown off in broad daylight.

But the nightingale
is not much
on daylight;
the darker, the better
he sings.

John Marks



John E Marks. born, lives and works in Manchester, UK. John is the father of five grown up children and grandfather of three; he retired from the Open University in 2017. His first collection, "Sound Bites" was published by ENVOI, 1992; "Lifting the Veil" was published, by New Hope International, in 1997; "Shadows and dust" and "A Waste of time" were both published, by Amazon, in 2017. John enjoys reading novels and poetry, walking his 12 year old black Labrador, watching snooker, following cricket, travelling, craft beer, music and good company. John advocates for the cause of the Yazidi people of northern Iraq who were murdered and enslaved by Daesh barbarians in an attempted genocide against the Ezedi people, beginning in August 2014. Their suffering continues.

CALL IT DREAMIN'

John Marks

She knew from the very beginning
the kind old sun would know
how to teach me to cast my eyes to heaven.
She said cloudy days are sacrifices;
to compensate we have the living green:
water worlds, tall trees, dappled sunlight.
Some would like the world to be clean again;
I would like that very much.

.....

She knew from the very beginning my heart was tender
Easily broken, bruised. There is no balm for the earth's hurt.
There's no point fooling around, pretending. Time is short,
Wounds sometimes heal if we cure ourselves, and if we pray.

.....

She knew from the very beginning
that I couldn't live with eyes closed,
mind and senses anaesthetised,
Permanently marooned on the barren island of self.
developing a dryness of manner, being clever.
alienating those forced to endure a closed life of repetition.

.....

Simple used to be a high compliment, as holy fools attest,
denying the whole complex vortex of progress and skepticism.
Today we walk in shade and tomorrow bask in sun.
We lay out a platter of dreams,
walk towards these dreams. Sometimes, so tired
from all the walking and thinking, that we miss the dawn.
We live too much at night , seek a cure in dreamwords;
Oh! it is time to give gifts of love, beneath the holy sun.

GROWL

John Marks

A true poet makes the difficult easy
Can turn water into wine, in a half-truncated line;
Growl with the full force of a Jesuit priest.
Whine like a man who's out of time.
Poetry's more about wine than whine,
Set out to express the inexpressible
No complaining about how difficult it is.
Caesuras can soar, in irredeemable words.
Poets learn how not to compromise,.
How not to be respectable,
How not to people-please
How not to be hindbound by hypocrisy:
Pull out his eyes! Pull out his eyes!
Apologise! Apologise!
Never apologise for beauty nor truth.
If it cost you your life. spit in the face,
Of all the stupidities of the human race.
Sniff out intelligence, growl with glee,
Shift the shade into the heart of darkness;
And break free, from this all-abiding stupidity.

LB Sedlacek



LB Sedlacek has had poems published in publications such as "Arcturus," "Lone Star Magazine," "The Broken Plate," "Crab Fat," "The Sandy River Review," "Bindweed Magazine," and "Branches." Her latest poetry books are "The Architect of French Fries" (Presa Press), "The Adventures of Stick People on Cars," (Alien Buddha Press) and "Words and Bones" (Finishing Line Press). She enjoys reading, swimming and playing the ukulele in her free time.

Mimeograph

LB Sedlacek

echo
hollow
Plato
Aristotle
reproducing your
artistic theory
reality
step
up
step
here
duplicate yourself
photocopy yourself
step
behind
the
hollow
echo
mime your pose
set your expression
warming
your
imagination
might
collapse
under the weight
of lust and
honesty
and
it might be
slightly weird to
see
two
of
yourself at once

Flotsam, Jetsam, Lagan

LB Sedlacek

Shipwreck
 found
off the coast
FLOTSAM
 deadly debris
cast off like
 our TV, my computer
your notes
 my books, your clothes
your engagement ring
young couple
 becomes old
to trade off
 trade in
 at a yard sale
for couples
newer model for him
and you left alone
wondering what you
could've thrown overboard
to save
 yourself

Stephen Mead



A resident of NY, Stephen Mead is an Outsider multi-media artist and writer. Since the 1990s he's been grateful to many editors for publishing his work in print zines and eventually online. He is also grateful to have managed to keep various day jobs for the Health Insurance. In 2014 he began a webpage to gather links of his poetry being published in such zines as Great Works, Unlikely Stories, Quill & Parchment, etc., in one place: Poetry on the Line, Stephen Mead For links to his other media (and even merchandise if you are interested) please feel free to Google Stephen Mead Art. Currently he is artist/curator for a Historical LGBTQI site in progress, The Chroma Museum, <https://thestephenmeadchromamuseum.weebly.com/>

His Grace

Stephen Mead

Regal even amid those tubes,
the urinary, the fecal,
serene & elegantly gentle still
through the good night's badness
I condemn
for he only whispers, without venom,
of some small complaint
huge as acid leaking
through his intestines eaten away,
he, gold glasses on, a choreographer
designing yet his care, his will,
pure as garnet, the hardened shiny
mustard seed of life's dictum,
his facets so angular, so thin now,
also so soft, luscious as any valentine,
amazingly surviving this Dante' sojourn,
or so we pray

(Poetry-art hybrid also available)

Michael Estabrook



Michael Estabrook has been publishing his poetry in the small press since the 1980s. Hopefully with each passing decade the poems have become more clear and concise, succinct and precise, more appealing and “universal.” He has published over 20 collections, a recent one being *The Poet’s Curse, A Miscellany* (The Poetry Box, 2019).

Rotator Cuff Repair Blues

Michael Estabrook

Thanks for checking in
the shoulder thing has been a long grind I do not
recommend
breaking your shoulder any time soon
and for any reason
Monday I check-in with the surgeon
see if I can do away with the sling and stop sleeping in the recliner
trouble is it's hard to tell if the damn thing is healing as it should
I'm hoping the fancy-pants hotshot surgeon can determine that
been doing the best I can on the poetry front
everything takes twice as long
because
I can only use my left hand
but I do what I can
juggling trying to move forward on 7 projects
my head a wellspring of projects
hopefully
one of them will jump out
and take charge of the situation
but really I shouldn't be such a complainer
remind myself it can always be worse
my beautiful wife
hasn't yet run off with that hunky UPS guy!!!

Visiobibliophobia- Fear of Social Media

Michael Estabrook

Herb

Doesn't have a computer, iPad,
or old-fashioned cellphone.
Never needs those contraptions
frightened he'll get sucked into
the social media void
never get out again

Detailman

Decades ago I took care of my customers without
laptops, cellphones, iPads, email, voicemail, and texting
by using a pay phone in the Howard Johnson's lobby.

24-7

Texting back in the sixties
would not have helped me
hold onto her
but rather given guys on her campus
instant access to her 24-7

Loneliness

Leaving her Sunday nights
was awful
driving into the darkness:
no cellphones, email, texting.
If she found another guy
would be weeks before I knew.

Time Waster

Cutting back on social media: check Facebook
and in no time an hour's shot. Nothing lasting
ever comes of it, like sending smoke signals in the wind.

Naila Rais



Naila Rais is a young girl from India currently studying in Aligarh Muslim University .She loves to pen her feelings through poetry& essays and hopes that readers will be motivated and go through deeply on current burning issues like ^women empowerment, failure is the key to success^ etc. Thanks naila4rais@gmail.com

Bewilder heart

Naila Rais

When all the dentils of her sorrows
Were fragmented into shallow sobs
And hovering darkness depressing her dreams
To trover all happiness gone.

In the misty, on the foggy night
Beside the demos on the countryside
She calls the prayer of her unsaid words
But who cares about her silent screams.

In the casket of my heart

Naila Rais

In the casket of my heart
There little ferries row
And sunlight goes to make them shine
As fishes lay with sorrow

At midnight when my soul cries
There ghost freaks and shout
And moonlit waves that touch my ferry
Make my heart sprout

In the deep vein of my heart
There little candle glow
And words go to make it glaze
As charming breeze blow! !

Nolo Segundo



The poet is in his 70's now and has lead a peaceful life since his marriage almost 40 years ago. But his 20's-- the time he came of age-- were more like Dickens' '...the best of times, the worst of times...'. At 20 he went to England to do his junior year abroad. A couple years after college he suffered a major clinical depression; he almost drowned in a Vermont river and had a near-death experience, one that shook his former agnosticism to the core. He was opposed to the Vietnam War yet for some reason, still rather inscrutable to him, he went to teach ESL in the war zone of Phnom-Penh, Cambodia, in '73-'74. There he developed a deep affection for the Cambodian people, and though he heard stories about the brutality of the Khmer Rouge towards their own people, he could not believe they would have been capable of the genocide of the 'killing fields'. After the war forced him to leave Cambodia, he spent over a year teaching ESL in Taipei and later Tokyo. A year after he returned, he met the woman he would married. Some of his poems are about the strange thing called aging and its paradox of wearing down the body while gradually-- or so it seems to him-- freeing the soul. The rest try to explore that inexplicable Mystery permeating each one of us and that seems to manifest Itself every so often, in ways subtle or strange. At times the poet has felt that life is just one long dream, and he has dreamt such dreams many, many times before.

The Poet And The Doctor

Nolo Segundo

The poet and the doctor became friends late in life--
as old men they looked back on the past in similar ways,
wishing their youth never ended, their work continued,
their lives again resplendent and filled with promise
as the one healed the body and the other the soul....

But Time is always Life's master till Death frees both,
and so the doctor sent his patients away and the poet
lost his words, the words he tried to heal with, words
that sang and danced and played like carefree children.

The poet told his friend, the doctor, how he found his soul
whilst in the blackest part of hell, utterly alone, in pain far
beyond any pain the the doctor ever treated, the forgotten
soul the poet found again when he tried to throw Life away.

The doctor listened to his friend, the poet, but could not or
perhaps just would not believe, for he could not see any
existence beyond mortality, nor purpose beyond chance....

The doctor was so wise as to be foolish, thought the poet,
and I, so foolish as to be wise ? he wondered to himself.

Come and Draw Strength From Me

Nolo Segundo

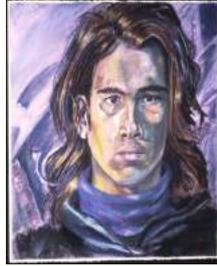
Come and draw strength from me
as I build strength from you.
Pay no attention to the flashes of
my ever-rambling mind, all paltry
upstarts next to a single heartbeat.

There is death across the land,
dead faces on every corner
but you and I, if we choose to,
can avoid it and create life-- life
full and rich like creamed milk....

We are not perfected beings, we sing
not the notes of heaven but of earth.
So my heart gropes in the damp night
for yours, listening to its beats like
raindrops splashing on a windowpane
(life's beauty lies in love's sounds).

Ask not why my heart seeks yours--
if I had to guess, it's an act of God.
I suspect, heartily and with reason,
all life and things of life are born in
love, itself a beauty molded of two
constant hearts--as all misery then
is from love denied-- so come now,
come and draw strength from me
as I build strength from you....

Mark Parsons



Mark Parsons' poems have been published in Chariton Review, Contemporary Verse 2, Iodine Poetry Journal, subTerrain, Emerge, Mad Hat Lit, Wisconsin Review, and elsewhere.

Voix Acousmatique Overheard By A Pilgrim With Skin In The Game

Mark Parsons

A kindred soul you meet
half-way
to who knows where,
easy to recognize when it happens
because there's always two of you, a partner so
both of you can be at
the mercy of the other's character defects:
you may not know you're meeting the ghost of your destiny
on the last leg of his return.

Relationship To The Mysterious Object Of Desire Expressed As A Configuratio

Mark Parsons

So I either like all women the same, I mean a lot,
or I hate cute, defenseless animals,
like the baby harp seal
on an anti-fur poster, its flat charcoal eyes and nose
stuck on the pinched off end of curving white loaf like a soft serve turd.
The latter inference
helpful in quiet
subject to transformation,
like carpet whorls
making the shape of a Midwestern state.
Always the same state—
no matter where I go, I can't escape.
The state
grows wheat and oil derricks.
Wheat grew your large buttocks, which then grew big in tight denim
until you pushed the denim down
over your hips, your thighs, around your ankles and stepped out of it.
We call that exporting.
You export denim and dreams, dreams
I dream of spanking you
with a clear Lexan paddle drilled with ten bevel-edged holes
equidistant,
arranged in a triangle,
dreams of spanking you I import.
The denim made me keep importing dreams,
more and more dreams, even after the market was glutted.
Now in repose on the thin wooden slats
that straighten around an axis of spring eleven times a day
like the hands on an analog clock,
winding me tighter and tighter until you are
all that remains where the luxury cruise liner deckchair
you reclined on,
at your leisure, for my pleasure,
used to be: jelly-back of your cottage cheese
Rubens flesh
heaved off cast iron grate
to show pink of meat market grill marks,
the cage bars desire makes.

Xavier Pimentel



I am an aspiring lgbt poet from Spring,TX. I have not published any of my works as of yet but am trying to. I strive to write daily and whenever I have the free time to do so. I also belong to numerous poetry Facebook groups that I like to participate in.

The Blackbird and His Song

Xavier Pimentel

The blackbird sang a somber song
To an even sadder tune
I couldn't help but sing along
In the fading afternoon

It sang until the day was dark
The clouds all cloaked in blue
It said a sad goodbye to me
And then away it flew

I wish it were here singing still
Here by my good side
To help me by the windowsill
A silent friend and guide

But the day is darkened now and I
Am cold and thinking only
Of the blackbird and his song
Strangely comforting but lonely

Sandip Saha



Sandip Saha is a chemical engineer and doctorate (PhD) in metallurgical engineering from India. He has got three awards for his scientific work and 33 publications on his scientific research work including three patents. He is a winner of Poetry Matters Project Lit Prize-2018. He has published one collection of poems, "Quest for freedom" available in amazon.com. He is published in many poetry journals including North Dakota Quarterly, Peregrine, Poesis, Door is a Jar, Better Than Starbucks Poetry Magazine, Pif Magazine, The Cape Rock: Poetry, Las Positas Anthology-Havik, Pasadena City College Inscape Magazine, Shot Glass Journal, The Wayne Literary Review, Tiny Seed Literary Journal, felan, Oddball, Door Is a Jar, Snapdragon, The Ghazal Page all USA, in VerbalArt, Phenomenal Literature, Tajmahal, The Criterion, India and in The Pangolin Review, Mauritius.

Spiritual salvation versus self imposed extinction

Sandip Saha

Whatever created is going to be annihilated.
From insentient matter to human,
nobody is exempted from this inevitable.
To overcome this, human seeks salvation.
Spiritual enlightenment is well known;
but self imposed extinction is my discovery.
This has given me the crest moment of my life.

Religions have engendered enlightened saints;
but their number is ridiculously small
as compared to the vast population.
These could never drive away evil altogether
or establish good forever.
Prophets preach only to docile people to become divine,
but they could never slay devils permanently.
Science is progressing, religions are preaching,
but rape, murder, oppression , deprivation
are going on unabated.
They have no answers to the endless brutal atrocities of nature.
Tsunami, earth quake, super cyclone, epidemics...,
there are innumerable ways, the nature has,
to kill innocent living beings;
pitifully though, they are not born by their own insistence.
Sentient beings are always kept on toes to abide by
what is imposed upon them by the Supreme Power.

Self imposed extinction of mankind is a well thought out plan.
Humans can decide themselves how long to live and enjoy
by restricting the birth of offspring;
having only one child per woman.
The less is the number of heads in the earth
the lower will be the miseries,
as there will be plenty of resources.
Maintaining a population
which the mother earth can hold easily,
humans can avoid fight outright among themselves.
When humanity feels sick of the world,
it can further reduce birth rate
to enforce its own extinction
without shedding even a drop of blood;
unlike in the above case
when only handful of privileged sages
will attain spiritual trance
and enjoy super-consciousness
when rest of all will die
in natural mass destruction resulting to extinction.
Here, no austerity, dos or don'ts is to be followed
as prescribed in religions,
other than following the simple principle of live and let live.

Existence, Knowledge and Bliss absolute

Sandip Saha

God is 'goal or destination'
that is, in short, my perception.
It has no gender
out of love we call It father or mother.

It is infinity, without beginning or end
present in all, but not at all bound.
All forms are the reflection
as It makes Itself appear in all creation.
One sun appears to be thousands
in water droplets
as same God reflects on
matter, plants, animals and man.

Whether we believe in It or not
It is the real existence, foolish to forget.
We are like bubbles in water, come and go
It is the only permanent being we must know.
We are suffering due to isolation from It
our struggle of life is for our own benefit.
Time will come when we shall feel one with It
the existence, knowledge and bliss absolute.

Silviu Craciunas



Silviu Crăciunaș is professor at the "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu, PhD in Mathematics. He started writing poetry and prose (Everyday Poems, The Transnational, Section 8 Magazine, Indian Literature Review). He publish also two novels: In umbra destinului (In the Shadow of Destiny) and Lazaret-suflete ratacite (Lazaret - Wandering Souls).

Riemann Sphere - The Universe

Silviu Craciunas

Do not ask yourself
What the universe looks like
trust in mathematicians
they have already postulated
it is a Riemann sphere
which God
has failed to perfect
by leaving it
without borders
in his infinite thought

Dedekind's Cut - Rational Death

Silviu Craciunas

A whole number
is still rolling
over my body
in the form of
gathering
seconds
minutes
hours
days
years
entities that refuse
to obey
Dedekind's cut
stealing my pleasure
to the irrational
and I will die
rational

Steve Cavin



Steve Cavin grew up in a small town in southeast Michigan, about an hour north of Detroit. At the age of 17, he began camping out in the backyard, testing out his tent, sleeping bag, and stove. At 18, he left home with fifty-seven dollars, and began hitchhiking west around the world. Four years and 30,000 miles later he returned, with eleven dollars and a Chinese fiancée. Mr. Cavin has worked many different jobs, crewing sailboats in California, picking fruit in Australia, teaching English in Hong Kong, fishing in the Israeli desert, and packing coffee in England. He now write books and poetry aboard his sailboat in the harbor at Eureka, California. He practices archery, runs meditation retreats in the mountains, and attends an open microphone in the local coffee shop, where he tells stories and reads his poetry.

Fibonacci Haiku

Steve Cavin

A
Single
Word, becomes
Many, and it grows,
Becoming a whole idea.

The idea brings new thoughts, encompassing the past,
Building upon the impressions,
Of those who gave their
Voice, but now,
Are gone.

One,
Can only
Think for one.
But many can, at least,
Combine their experiences.

Once recorded, an idea lives, self-sustaining,
Carried upon the river Time,
Lending its power,
As needed,
To all.

So,
The young
Believe, that
Their thoughts are brand new,
Made fresh, on the spot, from nothing.

But a tree is rooted, in the soil from which it sprang.
Its branches, though many, come from
The same trunk, the seed
Planted long
Ago.

For The Love Of Gravity

Steve Cavin

Amidst dust and stars,
Spinning, swirling in the dark,
A nuclear flame is kindled,
And a light sparks the heavens.

Light-years from here,
Far away from me.
Yet the universe and I,
Are here, and now, and one.

An explosion so powerful,
That space-time came into being,
Uncounted discreet masses,
Pulling on each other's tail.

Planets orbiting stars.
Stars orbiting galaxies.
Clusters of galaxies, dancing across,
The vast, empty floor of space.

Each molecule of my body,
A galaxy of elemental atoms.
Each atom, a solar system,
Of sub-atomic particles.

All together, falling endlessly,
Falling freely toward each other.
The unseen hand of gravity,
Ties the laces of the cosmos.

Mark Trechock



Mark Trechock published his first poem in 1973. From 1995 to 2015 he did not submit any work. Since 2015, Trechock has placed more than 70 poems in magazines, including Red Wheelbarrow, Triggerfish, Pinyon, and Passager. He writes from North Dakota.

Tiffany Hardware

Mark Trechock

Sixty-some years after
I followed my uncle Mugs
(Who had a real name but
It was too Norwegian
Even for our neighborhood
In south Minneapolis)
Down the aisle of dozens
Of wooden bins and screws
And nails and putty knives
And dozens of other gizmos,
The wooden flooring creaking
Like the deck of that boat
From Norway, cigarette
Smoke casual and everywhere,
The occasional ding and slam
From the cash register,
The crashing sound of nails
Falling onto the scale.
I held my uncle's hand
And sometimes a sack of peanuts.

Yes, and long after that,
Shopping with my love,
She armed with a list found
On line, for a store to buy
Something to give spirit
To our living room, and one
By chance gave an address
Close to my childhood home,
So that when we stepped in,
Despite the dressed-up
Salesperson's way of labeling
Castoff doodads as pirate treasure.
I knew where I was--my
Neighborhood hardware store,
Where I belonged, my mind
And body themselves
Approaching the antique.

There was more to see
Downstairs, the proprietor said,
As unctuous as a funeral
Director, and my love
Looked at abstract paintings
Upstairs while I descended,
Ran my hand across the brick
That made up the back wall,
Original, I thought, but washed.
The stairs, narrow and steep,
Landed me in front of a
Hydra-headed silver-colored
Avant-garde Tiffany lamp,
So passe, we had to buy it.

Cemetery

Mark Trechock

South of the lake that didn't used to be here,
Along the highway named for the return route
Of the expedition to see whose nations
The new nation had bought
From others who never owned it,
I have lingered on occasion
At the misspelled graveyard sign,
And the rows of stones chiseled
With names from another hemisphere,
The one my forebears left behind
For places like this.

Would the Greeks with their five nominal
Declensions have quibbled, or the English
Lexicographers at the novel spelling
Of the phony moniker, "A Sleeping Place,"
As if the dead with dust in their eyes
Might yawn and stretch and ask
For breakfast? Or would they shrug,
Familiar with the euphemisms
For the dead of dying--not
To mention genocide.

So much of our lives and histories
Are contrived: names; legends;
Landscapes; origins; destiny;
Friends and enemies; kin;
Land ownership; language;
Grammar; context;
Spelling.

William C. Blome



William C. Blome writes poetry and short fiction. He lives jammed between Baltimore and Washington, DC, and he once swiped a master's degree from the Johns Hopkins University Writing Seminars. His work has seen the light of day in such fine little mags as Poetry London, PRISM International, In Between Hangovers, Fiction Southeast, Roanoke Review, and The California Quarterly.

Winter Gardens

William C. Blome

Not worrying a hoot about time-of-year or the time within a given day, she moved plants and fixtures around the winter gardens in Manhattan and left my spaces configured in such a way that they seemed continuously foreign and puzzling even to regular visitors, folk that ranged from grimy partisans to skillful, stereotype-smashing, skinny swan-like bakers.

You see, she was the female custodian here in NYC, yet she never did quite get the hang of modestly shoring up her swinging baguette breasts as she went about her labors, and I finally had no choice but to buy her a one-way ticket to somewhere far from here. (Constant media pressure (o constant salvoes of commentary!) was such that I was forced to take action.)

So I chose for her the winter garden in sun-splashed Sheffield, England, and I held out the phony promise that if she worked and worked it but didn't take a liking to holly-jolly England, she could certainly radio me, and I'd wire her land transportation money to a third winter garden city, to the one up in Glasgow, but I then made it plain that I was not going to ever again vouch for the quality or challenge of employment opportunities in (and/or the general management of) any other winter gardens anywhere.

Yon Forests

William C. Blome

O what to do with all these foxes when incentives
for their change or obliteration are so woefully puny
that now (unlike history itself, with the fake
bonuses and bounties that become your nations,
your wars, your heroes, there's always a power
or a force hanging around to camouflage the foxes
a sky-blue hue or miniaturize the mothers out
of sight, or, best of all, pierce their dusky ears
with a stainless-steel straw, thus enabling folk
like you and me to suck out, swallow, and digest
their vaunted intelligence), but you must notice
not a single taker comes forth to volunteer a scheme
for reducing the inventory of foxes. And then you
make the mistake of positing my opening query
(that very first line up there) a second time out loud,
and you keep screaming you're within the imagined
borders of democracy as you posit and posit away
your apprehensions about the foxes, but, see, sweet-
stuff, it's goddamn wizard-time all over again,
and dozens of replies pelt down on me and thee.
O so many suggestions now sting our hide,
yon forests overflow with foxes come to hide.

Ben Crawford



Ben Crawford is a writer, editor, and proofreader by profession. I have a self-published book of my early poems on Amazon (Early Poems and a Haiku). I enjoy traveling and writing about those experiences and the events around me. I play baseball, tennis, and practice drumming and yoga in my spare time.

Fuck It All

Ben Crawford

Bomb the shithole countries,
Fine by me, I would sign off,
Remember Philly, maybe the Alleghenies
My ancestors patented the Caddo Cough,
Blame the British for money and soot.
So with mustard and nukes, don't pussyfoot.

We pay to watch commies fight,
Try our best at destabilizing bravado.
I see no reason, the human blight,
Cannot agree on inclusion in the afterglow.
Maybe the cunts toe the line,
So Livy the cockroach won't opine.

We should vote on pressing the button,
I want to scream, "No," "Peace,"
Before being shown my skeleton,
Melting onto canvas as isotopic cerise.
Imagine those on eleven second delay,
As they sniff the purified human purée.

Clouds stretch the world over thick,
Above the virus playing real politick.



Monet Rose