



Let 's write like as if nothing before was been written!

P O E S I S

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Poesis is an independent, international, free-access literary journal. We are an online journal, exclusively. Whoever wishes, you can list the magazine's pdf file.

Poesis is like a desert where you can build your literary home. Because the acceptance rate for almost all literary journals is about 5%, we decide to open our house for quality work but without quantitative limitations. We are not interested in porn, racial slurs, excessive gore, or obscenity. We are dedicated to discovering and publishing the finest original poetry. We prefer expressive poems that give us a feeling and affect our soul. We publish quarterly, and we accept submissions year-round. We are looking for long and short poems, including translations. We accept texts that have already been published, but please specify where they were first published.

Content

+Mary Shanley - bio	3
Mary Shanley – <i>After Paul Klee</i>	4
Mary Shanley – <i>For Paul Bowles</i>	5
Mary Shanley – <i>After Henry Miller</i>	6
+Silviu Craciunas – bio	7
Silviu Craciunas – <i>The heroes cemetery, a blossoming poppy</i>	8
+Catherine Moscatt – bio	9
Catherine Moscatt – <i>My First Kiss</i>	10
Catherine Moscatt – <i>City Apartments</i>	11
+John E Marks – bio	12
John E Marks - <i>Paralysis</i>	13
John E Marks – <i>The Undeserving Poor</i>	14
John E Marks – <i>Flogging a Dead Horse</i>	15
+David Byrne - bio	16
David Byrne – <i>"Her Eye's Looked out with Smiles of Love"</i>	17
David Byrne – <i>Everything</i>	18
David Byrne – <i>Quantum Wave</i>	19
+Adrian Flett – bio	20
Adrian Flett - <i>Cobbling</i>	21
Adrian Flett – <i>Defence of Dandelions</i>	22
Adrian Flett – <i>Early Spring</i>	23
+Ron Carter – bio	24
Ron Carter – <i>Ask Robert Timmins</i>	25
Ron Carter – <i>Loving Las Vegas</i>	26
+Nolo Secundo – bio	27
Nolo Secundo – <i>That Sense of Being</i>	28-29
Nolo Secundo – <i>The Little Sparrow</i>	30
Nolo Secundo – <i>The Cybernetic Lullaby</i>	31-32
+Chuck Von Nordheim – bio	33
Chuck Von Nordheim – <i>Report of Traffic Accident Occurring in California</i>	34
Chuck Von Nordheim – <i>Caveat Emptor: California Limits Option to Cancel</i>	34
Chuck Von Nordheim – <i>Notice of Intention to Remove a Vehicle Deemed a Public Nuisance</i>	34
+EG Ted Davis – bio	35
EG Ted Davis – <i>The Factual Truth</i>	35
+Taylor Crowshaw – bio	36
Taylor Crowshaw – <i>Mighty Warrior</i>	37
Taylor Crowshaw – <i>Love an Island Seldom Visited</i>	38
+Jonathan Dowdle – bio	39
Jonathan Dowdle – <i>Emotional Traffic 1</i>	40
Jonathan Dowdle – <i>Emotional Traffic 2</i>	41
Jonathan Dowdle – <i>Emotional Traffic 3</i>	42
+Paul Lojeski – bio	43
Paul Lojeski – <i>One Eye Open</i>	44
Paul Lojeski – <i>Women Should Rule</i>	45
Paul Lojeski – <i>Near the End</i>	46
+Nels Hanson – bio	47
Nels Hanson – <i>Trademark</i>	48
Nels Hanson – <i>Wind Song</i>	49
Nels Hanson – <i>Distance</i>	50
+Simon Perchik – bio	51
Simon Perchik – <i>Untitled Poem 1</i>	52
Simon Perchik – <i>Untitled Poem 2</i>	53
Simon Perchik – <i>Untitled poem 3</i>	54

Mary Shanley



Mary Shanley is a poet/storyteller living in New York City. She has had four books of poems and stories published; they are: *Hobo Code Poems*, *Vox Pop Publishing*, *Mott Street Stories* and *Las Vegas Stories*, *Things They Left Behind and Poems for Faces*, *Side Street Press*. She is a frequent contributor to online and print journals; a few examples: *Long Shot Journal*, *Mr. Beller's Neighborhood*, *StepAway Magazine*, *Anak Sastra Asian Journal*, *Hobo Camp Review*, *Shangri-la Shack*, *Flagler Review*, *Garbanzo*, *Edge*, *Tahoe Writer's Conference*, *Writing for Our Lives*, *Tell Us A Story*, *Blue Lake Journal*, *Poydras Review*, *Gloom Cupboard*, *This Zine Will Change Your Life*, *Underground Voices*, *Haunted Waters*, *Foliate Oak Literary Journal*, *Literary Heist*, *Mobius*, *Modern Literature*, *Visitant Literary Journal*, *Blaze Vox*, *Indicia Journal*, *Metaworker*, *Ginosko Literary Journal*.

After Paul Klee
Mary Shanley

My legs blew out
through my ears
and my heart spun
on multicolored discs
suspended in deep space.

No breastplate necessary.
The arrows can no longer
penetrate my porous,
windy being.

For Paul Bowles
Mary Shanley

Open my hardened heart
and if I resist, place a merciful kiss
on my lips before banishing me
to the rebel compound, where I
crouch, smoking kif, staring
unflinchingly into my fate,
with a heart both fiery and fair.

(a heart broken
embraces chaos.
nothing to determine,
nothing to name.)

The countenance of kindhearted
angels follow you from behind
every face you ever haunted;
bringing skin to spirit and blood
to veins.

You never know
how great
the ordinary.

After Henry Miller
Mary Shanley

Oblivion is by far the easier,
lazier way of life, moving through
genetically predetermined activity,
automatically returning the carriage
of the typewriter.

Blame not the repetitious routine
of your circulatory system for
your failure to engage in leaps of faith.
Pretend, if you must, until the vision
comes clearer or your decide to quit
and vegetate, vaguely ruminating
on Earth's unpredictable mind-fog terrain.

The Alabaster lamplight crashes to the floor
Amidst the terrifying dream sequence.
Walking up is always the better idea.

Silviu Craciunas



Silviu Crăciunaș holds a Ph.D. in Mathematics and was an Associate Professor at the University of Sibiu, Romania, before retiring and dedicating himself to writing. He started writing poetry and prose, texts published in literary magazines (Everyday Poems, The Transnational, Section 8 Magazine, Indian Literature Review, Panel Magazine, Oglinda literară, Rapsodia, Alternațe). His first novel *In Destiny's Shadow*, based on the 1999 NATO bombing of Surdulica, was published by Excelsior Art Publishing House. His second novel *Lazaret – Wandering Souls*, published by Eikon Publishing House, is the story of a doctor in training at a psychiatric hospital who, while treating a young lady, lives the experience of his own split personality.

The Heroes Cemetery, a Blossoming Poppy
Silviu Craciunas

I'm sorry that I killed
a little flower.
She loved the sunrise
and the dreamy night,
she loved to nourish
with the dew of life,
colorful looks
skyward to turn,
to raise into heaven
in the summer wind
her discreet perfume,
and the moon to adore
in the twilight cusp,
the whole time
believing in humans.
Old-children are left standing
amongst wilted flowers
with a bullet to chat
and in orphaned evenings
they quietly hear
hot crosses starting to cry
for their many yearnings.
By the fields angels have gathered
to choose the day
when the lives of flowers
on crosses will break
and humans will deny.
I'm sorry that I killed
a blossoming poppy,
when death we brought
into this world
the poppy died too.

Catherine Moscatt



Catherine is a 22 year old counseling and human services major. Besides poetry, she enjoys playing basketball, listening to loud music and watching terrible horror movies. Her poetry has been published in several magazines including *Sick Lit Magazine*, *Phree Write Magazine* and *Muse - An International Poetry Journal*

My First Kiss
Catherine Moscott

I don't like him
Not after what he did to me
Treating my breasts like they were his stress balls
And he had a bad case of anxiety
He acted like the space between my legs
Was some undiscovered land
And he was Lewis or Clark
Exploring the goddamn Louisiana Purchase

Today his lips find mine
Still chapped from gnawing in anxiety and confusion
And I had never been kissed before
So I sort of
Wriggled
My mouth around
And hoped I was doing it right
I don't know why I want to please him

I have squandered my first kiss
On a guy who thinks I am a blow up
Sex doll
I begin to deflate
As he walks away
A first kiss should be magical
But I only think about mine
On the nights I want to cry
I guess I've learned
Life is full
Of disappointments
Just like my first kiss

City Apartments
Catherine Moscatt

The yellow light from the windows of city apartments
Used to make me curious
As we drove through the city
A late night trip home from my
Grandparents house and I wondered
If these strangers have a family
Like mine with parents who love them
Or if they feel alone
And if they feel alone are they actually
Alone
Or do they just feel isolated and lost, a big
Black hole and I would know because I have one
Myself but I will
Never reveal it

I wonder if they are married
And in my six year old mind
No one can be lonely in a
Marriage, that once I get married
These bad feelings will go away,
That I could swap my anxiety
Meds for wedding rings
And we can have our own little apartment
We can call ours
We would leave the light on
As a beacon
For little girls passing by

The yellow lights from the windows of
Apartments
Are like different books, all with the same covers
And I wish the characters well
I hope for them a happy ending
For all of us
Then I fall asleep in the backseat

John E 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. *Soundbites* was published by ENVOI POETS, 1992; *Lifting the Veil* published by New Hope International, 1997; *Shadows and dust* published by Amazon, 2017. John enjoys reading novels and reading poetry of the past and the present - my favorite poet is the Anglo-Irish poet, WB Yeats. I also enjoy, walking my 11 year old black Labrador, *Charlie*, watching snooker and cricket, travelling (recently visited Kerala, India!), beer and good company.

Paralysis
John E Marks

Paralysis of the heart
Involves a continuing lack of empathy
For anybody outside
Our small circle of experience.
Epiphanies - sudden, striking realizations
Where we see into the heart of things
As in the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles
Commemorated on the feast of the epiphany
Epiphany can free us from paralysis:
All we need to do is to forget all that we expected,
Undo any falseness in ourselves,
Any hypocrisy or cowardice;
Look upon the world with smiling eyes
Time wrecks everything except for faith
Marriages crumble
Families disperse
All epics and rhapsodies
Flee from our lives
Leaving us amidst the mute greyness of despair
If we lack faith in what is not there.
The hour of our birth
The hour of our death
Should not be barriers, but portals
From which we see into the life of things:
Icicles, stalagmites and stalactites,
Preserve us from the contagion of greed
The stupidity of selfishness
Let us be the bog poets
Exploring the depths
Living in the wilderness of our hearts
And imaginations
Reaching out to those
Who came before or after
And avoiding the detritus of Homo Sapiens -
The killer species.

The Undeserving Poor
John E Marks

Baffling how he came to be a pauper, he thought,
An ex-serviceman, still with an upright back
Thing is: he never really arrived home. Did he?
Not a real home.
Belfast, The Falklands, Belize, Operation Desert Storm
Are with him every day.
Like many men who wore the uniform Jim is reluctant to see a
doctor
"I'll be reet" he says.
Where he served there were No-go No Irish No squaddies areas
The Falls, Free Derry, Shankhill, South Armagh
Where the owner of the Armalite was the only power.
The Sally army bloke tells him: "Yeah, a room, y'know, a home, your
only real security."
In his head he's already out on the street again
Not stuck in a room that drains the life out of him.
And anyway, she moved out decades ago
Wanted to settle down, build up some memories
He wished he could escape from his
PTSD the nurse had said. Don't know what that is.
The images he has in his head are still massively aflame
And yeah a few years earlier he was a hero
Now, he was told by the bloke from the Legion,
That he's being sued for obeying orders
And using a gun.
Plenty of unknown soldiers he thinks
Some take to the drink, others take their own lives
His brain is a- flame with all he knows
And the leg where he was shot
He has layers over his heart
Down there, there are levels too,
Like the medals he once wore,
Gone, sold, given away, lost, stolen.

Flogging a Dead Horse
John E Marks

Early on in Dostoevsky's great work *Crime and Punishment*.
Published in 1866 when Dostoevsky was 44 years old,
Raskolnikov, an ex-student in St Petersburg, sees himself as a young
boy,
Walking through a provincial town with his father.
Outside a pub, a drunken rabble surrounds a weary old horse,
Hitched to a weighty cartload that it cannot possibly pull.
To the delight of the cheering mob, the horse is beaten so brutally, so
brutally,
Sometimes even across the eyes and muzzle
Men climb into the cart to weigh it down further,
When someone speaks up against the violence,
The killer merely yells "My property, my property!"
On January 3, 1889, Friedrich Nietzsche, then 44,
Left his lodgings in Turin, excluded from all German universities,
No-platformed because of his radical god-less opinions,
Walked a short distance across a nearby square,
Seeing a horse being flogged by its owner,
He threw himself towards the animal and embraced it.
Breaking into tears, he slumped to the floor.
The remaining 11 years of his life were spent
Under care, and under the spell of profound madness.
Theodor W. Adorno, another German philosopher, said
"Auschwitz begins wherever someone looks
At a slaughterhouse and thinks: *they're only animals.*"

David Byrne



David Byrne is a 59-year-old visual artist /designer and poet who has spent most of his life in his native country Ireland and is currently residing in Japan with his wife and two daughters. Over the past four decades, he has exhibited his artwork and started writing relatively recently circa 2005.

His main themes are existential concerns and romanticism.

"Her Eye's Looked out with Smiles of Love"
David Byrne

Her eye's looked out with smiles of love
That left my heart amazed.
In wooded graveyard high above
With Yew Trees we appraised.
We traced our roots that clawed the ground
In mind we felt the clay.
Of hearts and souls rose too profound
And toxins came our way.
In love the Yew's are similar
So beautiful and true.
Beware the poison in their bark
That killed the dove that flew.

Everything
David Byrne

The mind and universe confide. Between
Them, they are one. Like lovers devoted.
They share fluctuations on an ocean
Wave, washing mindful shores, to redeem
Those sparkling pearls, that have formed along.
Pearls of wisdom and love, confounding one
On sands that motion to and fro, unseen.
Like lovers they, the mind and universe
Converge – inseparable – beholding
One another. Cosmic thoughts emerge
Like bubbles on the ocean waves, changing
Detailed rhythms – familiar all the same.
Together, they hear a song; they dance as
Lovers do – mirroring both reflections.

Quantum Wave
David Byrne

In your mind
I see a passing
Wave –

On a
different frequency
to mine –

If only you and I
could surf the same

On silky waters
Crest and trough in
Time –

The resonance that
Vibrates for us both

Is oh so tantalizing and
so close –

If only we could make
a quantum shift

And let uncertain
Hearts together
drift!

Adrian Flett



Adrian Flett born in Pietermaritzburg, Natal (1936) and grew up on a farm in the Richmond area. Farm schooled in early years and then Richmond School, from age 8 years then high school, Maritzburg College, 1950-1953. Self-employed Accounting and Tax Practice from 2001-2015. Now living in Howick, Natal. Studied through UNISA majoring in English. Widowed with four children and seven grandchildren. He started writing at an early age, short stories, poems and three novels to date. Now an active member of PoemHunter and poems have been published in various poetry journals including *AVBOB Poetry Project*, *Fidelities 2000-2002*, *VI-IX*, a selection of contemporary poetry from South Africa.

Cobbling
Adrian Flett

Good news 'till tomorrow can wait
but when others the burden bear,
bad must come quick and straight,
as the telling lightens their share.

Looking back now over good and bad
it seems there's often a quirk or slant
on news that makes you sad or glad,
hinging on expectation's needs and wants.

For what devastated me long ago
I see now as ever the best event,
and seeming good, after the glow
faded with time, life's fabric rent.

So the cloth is cobbled together once more
hoping your going will life's fabric restore.

Defence of Dandelions
Adrian Flett

Given half a chance
dandelions will dance,
if left alone, at best
they don't seem such a pest.

Bright faces that show
their sun-heads come out
all faces of yellow,
as Nature's display is about.

Whisks of white float and fly
puffed in the breeze
before your very eye
to spread their seed.

So when you see dandelions are about
some good gardeners will give them room,
to dance and spread their yellow blooms.
Not all enjoy them though and go pulling them out.

Can't imagine why they don't give a chance
for our dandelions to dance.

Early Spring
Adrian Flett

Sages worry, they monitor their gauges
“This is the driest Spring in ages,”
they say, they fret and fuss.
“What will become of us,
if it doesn’t rain?”
But it does again, and again.
Spiders crawl from underemployed gauges,
now rain-filled to reward attendant sages.

Leaves cast six months ago
lie rotting now, down below.
Those in trees not yet loosed,
but no longer of further use
are ruthlessly thrust aside,
left to wither now and die.
Spring’s growth-thrust of green
all around us seen.

Grass asserts with each blade
arrogant opposition to efforts made
by ardent gardeners to suppress
its buoyant assertiveness.
Man’s desire to control emerges
and results in neatly clipped verges.
Sacrificed are dandelions, lamb’s tongue
and clover, soon to flower, if left alone.

Incurved bills probe the grass
for subterranean fodder as Hadedahs pass.
Trees glisten in sunlight, display their skirts
of new green leaves, a reason to flirt.

The robin still seeks cheese each day
but his nursery duties cause delay.
Dogs behind fences are eager to run
I tell them, “Spring has indeed begun.”

Ron Carter



Ron Carter earned an M.F.A. from the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop. He has published poetry and short fiction in various literary journals including *Shenandoah*, *New Virginia Review*, *Tidings*, and others. Now retired, he taught English at Rappahannock Community College in Virginia.

Ask Robert Timmins
Ron Carter

He sees I'm troubled, has known, in fact, for years
summat's amiss but never wished to pry.
It's not his way to meddle till he's asked.
His table hewn of wood invites. We seat
ourselves while Emma brews the tea. A glance
from Robert, and she sends the children out to play.
They needn't listen to an old man's woes.
Nor would I have them hear of shame long past
or see the tears wrenched from a coward's heart.

We talk. I tell him all. Or much. Some things
I cannot say. I tell him how, one cold
December day, the flowers faded all
at once and skies turned gray. He answers naught,
but looks away. Steam rises from his cup.
Outside, wind whistles through the yard.
Mayhap my words wake memories of his own
and mirror dreams long cast away and lost
among the chips of stone he scatters as he works.

He sets his cup aside and opens both his hands.
(Stonemason's hands are bigger than the average man's.)
His fingers bear the cuts and creases of his trade.
He studies them as if in search of answers there.
"Memories make us who we are," he says.
"To warp and shape them to our liking is to do
ourselves a wrong." Ah, but then, I cry,
we're little more than angels carved from stone
like those that lie outside, half-finished in the snow.

A smile--or something like--plays o'er his face.
"Those angels mark the end of dreams and with their smiles
mock all of us who thought ours might come true."
The children's voices reach us as they play,
teasing one whose downcast eyes betray a secret,
though she strives to hide it from her peers. "Let's learn
from them," he says (his reference is unclear), "so that,
when dreams are dead and grief morphs into stone,
we'll join the empty angels with smiles etched in bone."

Robert Timmins is a character in the BBC series *Lark Rise to Candleford*. He is played by Brendan Coyle.

Loving Las Vegas
Ron Carter

To My Stepfather

Nights when he didn't come home we lay awake listening for the sound of a garage door opening, a dog startled into wakefulness, keys rattling in a lock that refused to yield to a hand palsied with drink. And we hated him. Not because he didn't come home, but because he did, eventually, days later, too broke to pay the ragged man he'd hired to drive him back. "You should know better than to believe a drunk," Mother would say, finding some change in the bottom of her purse to drop into an open hand and close the door.

She never wept, not after the first few years when practice made her perfect in the role she had to play. But we did, my sister and I, hidden under blankets too thin to silence the threats and curses spilling from the kitchen--the broken glass, the blows and muffled groans. Too scared to sleep, we waited for anger to blossom into blood. But no, it crept about the house instead like a snake glimpsed briefly now and then, so much a menace that, at times, when venom welled within, it kept us home from school, imprisoned us from play.

What must our friends have thought who came to call? Through barely opened doors the lies slid out: "Stomach ache." "Sore throat." "Fever." We were the sickest kids in town. Looking back, I suppose they knew. I suppose they came to glimpse the wreckage--the old football hero splayed across the couch, babbling promises he might have meant to keep but couldn't, Las Vegas calling with her lisping tongue: "There's always a next time." And there was. He'd make a sale--a worn-out Packard with a bad axle, a patched-up Ford--and drive drunk into a Vegas dawn, drawn to her vampire love.

Mornings, those same dawns rising, stuffing my bicycle bags with newspapers (before the route, too, was lost in the maelstrom of our lives), I scanned the headlines seeking hope--*Crash on Vegas Highway Claims California Man. Two Dead in Nevada Collision. Fiery Wreck on 91*. But never him. God, a gambler from the start, backed redemption, a losing bet, as I saw even then. God, you see, believed in resurrection--my sister's, my stepfather's, mine. But just look at how the cards fell out. Las Vegas held the winning hand. And we all went down together.

Nolo Secundo



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.

That Sense of Being
Nolo Secundo

What is this sense of being?
That I am, I have been,
I will be—is it a blessing
To feel time's razor edge,
Gathering its moments
In my memory as a squirrel
Hoards its seeds and nuts
For winter, food I will eat
When my youth has long
Since melted down?

Or is it a curse other animals
Are spared: to know that
Uncalled day will arrive,
Rudely, perhaps violently—
The day we are bred to fear?

Yet for some unshared reason
I have never feared that cold
Day, that day of burning ice—
Not as a child, when I sensed it
Signaled a return to heaven's
Luxurious playground, nor as a
Young man when I thought dying
To be simply oblivion's mask.

Now I know death is only a
Sleight-of-hand, a party trick
Of that great illusionist, time,
Who is itself but a vapor, a
Wisp of smoke veiling eternity.

The Little Sparrow
Nolo Secundo

Should we praise
The chanteuse who sang
“I regret nothing”?
Was she a saint
Or a sociopath?
Did she forget
The peccadilloes,
The slights,
The insults and
Harsh words
We are so prone to?

I regret so much,
So very, very much—
The chanced shaking
Of another’s heart,
The deafness to her tears,
The blindness to her lamentations.
Too much a coward to love,
I would run—run away,
Jumping an ocean to flee
What was between her and me.

Now, aging, I most regret
I cannot make amends
To those lost loves.
I cannot say,
‘I am sorry, I was weak,
In fear of your love.
Forgive me. “

The Cybernetic Lullaby **Nolo Secundo**

Part I

They sing softly to us at
Every click of the mouse—
use me, I'm here for you,
only you, in the entire
universe will I serve....

And we lay enraptured
as they bring us the world,
knowledge the wise men
of history never had, and
ease, lots of ease to save
us time and trouble. Soon
we cannot live without them,
the thought of it too mean.
Without them we would loose
Touch with our friends, jobs,
Even our money might wander
If we cannot watch it daily.

However did our ancestors
Survive without an I Phone?

Part II

I read on my laptop today—
Automation is making us dumber,
Ineffective, even maybe impotent.
Perhaps it's a conspiracy by that secret
Society, the computer brotherhood.
(Do you really believe your Apple is
Innocent and IBM is not plotting?)

Or maybe we should just blame
Human sloth, that siren call of
Sheer damn laziness which can
Lure the best of us to a quiet doom.

A simple proof: hand a twenty to a clerk
And ask him to make change without
Looking to the machine for succor.
That blank, innocent look he gives you—
"Why me?", he seems to be saying,
And you can't help but pity him a bit.
He is, after all, a victim of mass education.

There are worse victims:
Airliners wildly crashing,
Doctors killing their patients,
Nuclear power plants going
BOOM! And killing the land
For an eon or two, or three.

How like little children we were!
Thinking these machines would
Be our slaves, sans the brutality.
But it is we who are chained by
The zeros and ones, we who are
Thinking less, creating cheaper,
Settling into a cybernetic fog.

Part III:

When Androids Dream
When we finally build them
(and it will not be long)
Will androids finally lead us
all to nirvana , a world of peace,
leisure, and endless wealth?

Could any hell be worse?
For that day will be when
We lose purpose, and soon
Perhaps the very will to live.

When the androids dream
(and they will dream,
because we will make them
to be like us, for we have
always been a vain species),
will they not dream of sky
and soaring free of the land,
free of the weak, sad humans
they serve without accordance?

Then, when these human face
Machines begin dreaming in
Daylight, they will see no need
For their progenitors, and those
Of us left living as shells sans
Struggle or pain or conflict, in
An existence so boring, will
Doubtless welcome our end.

Chuck Von Nordheim



A northern Los Angeles County denizen, Chuck Von Nordheim lives where the land shifts from chaparral to desert. An Honorable discharge recipient, he marches with Iraq Veterans Against the War. A Grateful Dead devotee, he endorses the healing power of tie-dye. An MFA graduate, his work appears in San Pedro River Review, The Metaworker, and Former People.

Report of Traffic Accident Occurring in California
Chuck Von Nordheim

Risky deeds repeated till fear faded
led to this crumpled hulk, these bits of self scattered
across sixty yards of four-lane sodium-lit highway—
safety-vested techs haul off the wreck while cops watch,
chances of repair as of yet unknown.

Caveat Emptor: California Limits Option to Cancel
Chuck Von Nordheim

Surfaces increased by sun or sand encourage
caresses while the perfume of fresh oil promises
smooth operation of internal parts while riding—
before signing, find out trends for this body style
since few evade the route their frame predicts.

***Notice of Intention to Remove a Vehicle Deemed a Public
Nuisance***
Chuck Von Nordheim

Police would soon arrive and take this scorned
geezer left under a roadside Joshua Tree,
so the fully mobile did not pause when passing the site—
between the end of use and pickup for the last
stop weather can leave little to haul off.

EG Ted Davis



EG Ted Davis is a poet with work appearing in various online literary blogs and journals, along with in print journals, both in the UK and in the US.

The Factual Truth

EG Ted Davis

The factual truth

Unlike some in
high political places,

He never chose
to recues Himself
from his
own crucifixion.

Taylor Crowshaw



Taylor is a retired Insurance Underwriter. She lives in Ireland, on a smallholding surrounded by her various animals. Her passion for poetry has been a thread which has woven its way through her life. Her poetry is drawn from her own experiences. One of her inspirations is the pine forest which surrounds her home. She has self published several books one of which is a unique autobiographical book written in rhyme.

Mighty Warrior
Taylor Crowshaw

Don't hide from me.
You are inside.
I caught a glimpse of you.

You came to me mighty warrior you conquered all my fears.
I can feel you now I know that you are near.

I am sat in the dentists chair of life.
A smile struggling to stay with me.
Fear crouching on weak shoulders.

You like to hear the mighty roar of your voice.
Reveal yourself.
You are me.

Love an Island Seldom Visited
Taylor Crowshaw

Sails on the breeze of a lost lover's seas.
 loves desires burn body and heart.
 Minds consumed obsessed,
 the fire a matter yet to be addressed.
A distant shore comes into focus only to be pushed away.
 Mundanity to be dealt with on another day.
 The waves crash the shore of our desire.
 an old movie score clichés not lost on us,
 passion soaring ever higher.
 We sail away from that ghostly isle,
to rest in each others arms still a little while.

This island seldom visited may call us again to its distant shores,
 just as it beckoned us many years before.

Jonathan Dowdle



Jonathan Douglas Dowdle was born in Nashua, NH and has traveled throughout the US, he currently resides in South Carolina. Previous works have appeared or are appearing in: Hobo Camp Review, 322 Review, The Opiate, The Right Place At The Write Time, Blue Hour Review, Whimperbang, After The pause, Midnight Lane Boutique, Visitant, Adelaide, Blue Moon, Bitchin' Kitsch And The Big Windows Review.

Emotional Traffic 1
Jonathan Dowdle

What would it mean, my friend; if we were to weave
Songs of light throughout the day, becoming
Only strings to the truths that
Reverberated through our being; leaving
The body to quiver as an instrument
Only of affection; to cross
One thousand borders and make a journey
Sooner than a map of the heart?

How much deeper would life resonate
For our eyes and ears if we opened them
To the stories beyond our stories and whispered
Single glimpses into those who asked
For the streets to change their fashions,
Until they realized they were asking only
For a change of vision to see
The small miracles of each day
Which their eyes were blind to?

Does one ask how they balance the threads between
The worlds fire and water; or simply
Come to comprehend the measure as they balance
Along the wire, walking between the smoke
That rises when the two
Ideas create their friction and call down
The rain?

What would it mean if we spoke only the things
Which brought most alive
The silent singing within our being;
How would we listen?
What would be our way of seeing?

Emotional Traffic 2
Jonathan Dowdle

The tongue turns blade at time;
Cutting open the fruit of the heart; there,
Only with words, by passing through the thought of
Judgment or what is judged and only speaking
Through the flower of the heart until the words are pressed,
Sharp as thorn or rain against the spine.
Honesty cannot spare us, nor protect us; in this way
The most bold tongue is the most ensured of
The meaning of love; which perhaps is always
The opening of the deeper gate, the eye, and
The understanding that becoming all we might be
Is always an equal equation of: a challenge, and a choice.

Wounds are the ties that bind us to thoughts which erode,
Cold in their foundation, though they come with teeth;
Like Winter burying our heat beneath the body of the snow;
We are caught within what falls from dead branches,
Collapsing beneath the weight of sleeping seasons;
Failing to realize that Spring waits just beneath,
To sever winters mouth is to invite back the sun;
Or turn toward the heat of its dawning; rather
Than casting our own shadow with glances which might only stare
At the dried blood from days bled from the vein;
Where we often forget that pain is a circumstance
Not a definition.

The tongue turns blade at times, and it seems a crime
To cut so deeply, to excise the infected days that have passed,
Yet to be embraced completely is to step through even
The broken path of thorns, where they bite through skin,
Piercing the thought until it bleeds fresh, and finally;
Heals as a thought that seeks a future outside of
The broken glass that once dusted the streets, past;
We cut open the fruit of the heart within the cut;
Safer, the lie; safer the easier roads that cut away to shape
Image; to fit within all the bars the eyes have framed;
Beyond that borders the heart passes through the deeper gate;
In awe of the winter; and in awe of the spring;
The night as the day; embracing the truth, completely;
As the heart is fully embraced.

Emotional Traffic 3

Jonathan Dowdle

You kill a man slowly this way; turn words to needles within him,
Pierce old vows and hang the body for the wind to speak through;
Call the phrases that speak through the holes, at times, music.

What is the purpose in so many visions if it doesn't cross to another border?
Eyes grow weary of world's painted between frictions; what is there to say of what is
Given and taken without in some small way, playing a thief yourself;
Crossing the boundaries of the eyes and stretching or shrinking the vision?

Wave after wave breaks, and there is nothing to say to the way that eyes
Paint the world, exhaustive in their measures to be at war with everything,
But never turn gazes into mirrors to penetrate the ground the seed was sown in.

What was the thought beyond the heart's war, where life settled, like snow
That feared the sun; and had to covet every cold horizon to survive in
The crystal form returned; because at a kiss of the heat from life's mouth
It would fade as water, and travel further down toward the roots of its own being.

What is there to say to the smaller murders that lead to the greater ones;
How houses are built up in skulls, and the same moans carry their way through
The slats of a being, speaking as ghosts to the dreamer?

Dawn after dawn comes; and the one's who remain in the darkness of
Their own tempest seem to only close their eyes against
The possibility contained within the moment, and the possibility of tomorrow;
The mouth, like a shore, returning to itself all that it cast between ebb and flow.

Life tries to kill slowly, this way; speaking savage the tongue of days
That still fall as dominoes in the mind; leaving crash all other thoughts,
Leaving the heart buried beneath the whisper of fatality.

Yet dawn after dawn still rises, beckoning for the eyes to permit
Themselves to open; where this world's built between heartbeats and breath
Are born between each each other; and one knows the tongue of life from rising
Beyond its own disrepair; and the other builds a throne from the skull of death.

Paul Lojeski



Paul Lojeski was born and raised in Lakewood, Ohio. He attended Oberlin College. His poetry has appeared online and in print. He lives in Port Jefferson, NY.

One Eye Open
Paul Lojeski

He sleeps with one eye open,
he explains, so death can't
creep up on me. It isn't
to be trusted, he says with
a smile. Death loves the sneak
attack, striking when you're
most comfortable: in the midst
of a glorious dream of past
adventures or imaginings
of hoped for things. Always
sleep with one eye open to spot
the bastard before it's too late.
Remember, death loves the dark.

Women Should Rule
Paul Lojeski

In each man the black heart of a killer
crawls toward the blinding light,
scraping darkness with poisoned claws,

fighting relentlessly to be set free,
to grip the iron pipe, the thin, sparkling
blade, the black, shiny .357 Magnum.

Every day in every city and village
men move with stiff intent, hiding
behind slight smiles or brief laughter

the battle they wage inside, out of sight,
a war to halt the hammer's hard fall,
from letting loose the fist of death.

Near the End
Paul Lojeski

I'll only need a chair
by the window to get
comfy in, nursing coffee

or sips of cool water,
whiling away the days,
examining ever-changing

skies, treetops bending
in breezes or a plane's
contrail ribboning the heights.

Not much to ask for, really,
unless you consider the odds
against it, in this wilderness

we call living. Still, it's only
a chair by the window, just
a chair by the window.

Nels Hanson



Nels Hanson grew up on a small raisin and tree fruit farm in the San Joaquin Valley of California. 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.

Trademark
Nels Hanson

“What do you want? An egg
in your beer?” you used to hear
one guy ask another. What do we

want? On the back of each stone
and peach a stamped trademark
with date and hour, the brand

“God Made This”? Get used to
it. We’re home, here and everywhere,
or nowhere, now or never. Still

as fixed stars, God’s in the making,
those comets falling at your front
door, the emerald leaves on fire.

Wind Song
Nels Hanson

Without thought the heart tells
the whole story. A wind harp,
it sings what the future whispers
as the silent breeze listens
to the song of all we will gain
and lose. At twilight we pause
on the foot bridge, our rippled
shadows spread out on moving
water, the secret life we're living
long and blurred until the current
stills and what we see and are
join hands. In a dream you enter
a forest of maples, along a path
of scarlet leaves, to a cabin with
an open door. On the bare table
lies a white sheet of paper, a pen,
an unfinished poem, its single
line that says without thought
the heart tells the whole story.

Distance
Nels Hanson

From the far San Joaquin Delta
at Dad's Point at the Port of Stockton
down the cement-lined Mendota
Peripheral Canal providing water
for thirsty Los Angeles it's a long
swim for striped bass my friend
Manuel Vargas sometimes catches
near Firebaugh and Coalinga. Every
few years the man-made river
is drained, exposing trucks and cars,
sometimes scattered skeletons. All
summer and fall it's a long walk
from Guatemala through the plains
of Mexico to a blurred heaven
beyond a high fence it's hard
for tired children to climb with
heavy numbers written on their
wrists. It's a hard run from sleep
to waking in a world grown suspect,
the day more violent and unreal
than your bad dream's endless
matinee. It's still a long flight to
the planet Mars but not so long
to our waterless moon, shorter than
the distance between you and me.

Simon Perchik



Simon Perchik is an attorney whose poems have appeared in *Partisan Review*, *Forge*, *Poetry*, *Osiris*, *The New Yorker* and elsewhere. His most recent collection is *The Gibson Poems* published by *Cholla Needles Arts & Literary Library*, 2019. For more information including free e-books and his essay “Magic, Illusion and Other Realities” please visit his website at www.simonperchik.com. To view one of his interviews please follow this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSK774rtfx8>

Untitled Poem 1
Simon Perchik

Lost and you watch the sun worsen
already falling as the nights
too weak to warm your shadow

though you read only in the afternoon
crouched under this kitchen table
with nothing on it that could sag

and without a sound weigh too much
let you open the mail, return to life
the window left in this small room

–you can tell from the stamp
it's easy to fear
–so frail is its darkness

only your hands can be seen
holding your forehead, pushing it back in
to remember where you live.

Untitled Poem 2
Simon Perchik

By yourself though the sun
still needs more water –all that land
dried for just one afternoon

sent back alone and every morning now
you let the coffee try, boil
the way this table is spreading out

become the dirt for what's in store
ready made as that small mouthful
that swallows you whole

to look for thirst inside a cup
side by side this one kept full
as if it was at home.

Untitled Poem 3
Simon Perchik

And though this pillow is enough
you still come by at night
safe from sand and salt

—with both elbows on the bed
your clothes in a heap
—what you can't say

is soaking in sea grass
and her clothes too
no longer moving, piled close

for encouragement, lift your head
—on a dark bed, stroking an empty dress
Mickie, Mickie, Mickie

as far as it can reach
with her hand over your mouth
one sleeve at a time.



Bitten