

HARBINGER ASYLUM

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Dustin Pickering
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Z. M. Wise
Honcho of 1,000 Words: Alex Maass

Contact Dustin Pickering for submissions:
Editor@transcendentzeropress.org

Twitter: *TZPress1*

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*You never know what you will
find inside...*

HARBINGER ASYLUM!

Dear readers,

Poetry may be making a comeback. According to newer research more people are reading poetry than before. An NEA research team discovered that poems are being shared and read online at higher rates. Several years ago, the rate of readership was dropping bit by bit.

According to poets.org, “We know that for all the interest and engagement we now have thanks to technology, people still crave human experiences.” As a former host of poetry readings, I believe these places of open expression are the most fruitful in a world seeking silence. You can meet face to face with other people and engage in discussion. I have many intriguing discussions with participants after readings about everything from social affairs, to political hype and lies, to urban planning and the goings-on in the city of Houston. Readings are an important space for people who seek to reach an audience and wish to interact with other open-minded people. Stimulating conversation is superior to social networking.

We also know that poetry is popular during times of fear, strife, and uncertainty. That describes our current environment in this country. For more information on these trends see: <https://www.arts.gov/art-works/2018/taking-note-poetry-reading-%E2%80%94federal-survey-results>

Recently TZPress hosted a fundraiser in downtown Houston at the legendary Last Concert Cafe. Our turnout was not the most exciting— nine paying attendants. Yet the flavor of the night was remarkable. The music fun, loud, and enriching. An artist, Vera Ikon, sold prints of her work and also took the stage with rambunctuous rants and sexy poetry. Overall, in spite of low participation, the event was pleasant.

This edition includes many freshly published poets. Several poets in this edition are young. Stuti Shree in India and Nic Schaedig are adventurous in their use of language. These poets are crafty and you will enjoy them. We also have Iris Orpi, a young Filipina American, with strong poetry to excite your bitter imagination. Tevin Church is back with his slam-style lyrically driven poems of hope in hard times. There is also Shawn Anto, a 23-year-old living in Bakersfield. This little volume is charming.

So if you are included in this small and worthy collection, sound your barbaric yawp across this wasted empire of melancholy! Let the world know. Buy a copy and tell others!

Thank you.

With grace,

Dustin Pickering, Editor

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BIOGRAPHIES

Julianne di Nenna is a member of the Geneva Writers' Group of Switzerland where she won two prizes for poetry. Her poems, short stories, and essays have been published in: Adanna Literary Journal; Gyroscope Review; Years to Months; Stanford Medical School blog (forthcoming); Offshoots; Italy, a Love Story; Susan B & Me; Every Day Reading; Airplane Reading; as well as others. She works in Switzerland and live in France.

Nic Schaedig is a high school Junior who vents through her writing. Born and raised in small town Michigan, months before turning sixteen she picked her life and moved to the midwest. Insecure about her writing, she kept it hidden, until a stranger made her thoughts change. Nic now is stepping forward to make her poetry known, make it heard. She has something to say, and wants to be heard. Nic most importantly wants people to understand through her writing, that they are not alone. It took a stranger on a website called Omegle to push her in this direction, and she hopes her writing can move people in the right direction too.

Lennart Lundh is a poet, short-fictionist, historian, and photographer. His work has appeared internationally since 1965.

Tan Shivers is an IT Specialist from Charleston, SC. She has been writing poetry since age seven. Tan has a dog, Prosperity, and a turtle, Mike whom she loves with all of her heart. Her previous work has been featured in Harbinger Asylum and the Rising Phoenix Review. Poetry has always been one of Tan's favorite therapeutic outlets. Some of her favorite hobbies include boxing and football.

Jessica Goody's writing has appeared in over three dozen publications. Her poetry collection *Defense Mechanisms* (Phosphene Publishing, 2016) was chosen as a "Power Read" by *The Hilton Head Monthly* and a Book of the Month by *The Creativity Webzine*. Her second, *Phoenix*, will be released by CW Books in 2019.

John Kojak crafts his writing to speak in diverse voices. His short story "Don Pedro" appeared in *Beyond Imagination* magazine, "American Hero" in *Down In The Dirt*, "Beauty and the Beast" in *Third Wednesday*, "Happy Hands Cleaning Service" in *Bête Noire*, and "Elizabeth Beatrice Moore" in *Pulp Modern*. His poetry has also appeared in *Poetry Quarterly*, *Dual Coast*,

The Stray Branch (featured writer), *The Literary Commune*, *Dime Show Review*, *The Los Angeles Review of Los Angeles*, and *Chronogram*.

Daniel de Culla is a writer, poet, and photographer. He's member of the Spanish Writers Association, Earthly Writers International Caucus, Poets of the World, (IA) International Authors, Surrealism Art, and others. Director of Gallo Tricolor Review, and Robespierre Review. He participated in many Festivals of Poetry, and Theater in Madrid, Burgos, Berlin, Minden, Hannover and Genève. He has exposed in many galleries from Madrid, Burgos, London, and Amsterdam. He is moving between North Hollywood, Madrid and Burgos.

Jen Banta is a licensed psychologist in the state of CA with Ph.D. from APA-accredited program in clinical-community psychology.

Fred Rosenblum is an aspiring bilingual Left Coast poet residing in San Diego with his wife of 45 years. He is the author of two books of poetry (*Hollow Tin Jingles*, *Vietnumb*) and has appeared in an eclectic list of publications throughout the US and Canada.

Robert Cooperman's latest collection is *DRAFT BOARD BLUES* (FutureCycle Press). Forthcoming from Main Street Rag is *THAT SUMMER*. Cooperman's work has appeared in *THE SEWANEE REVIEW*, *SLANT*, and *CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY*.

Preferring to "lean and loafe at his ease," **Alan Britt** is troubled by the corruption and ambivalence that permeates the Great Experiment, so politically speaking he has started the Commonsense Party, which ironically to some sounds radical. He believes the US should stop invading other countries to relieve them of their natural resources including tin, copper, bananas, diamonds, and oil, also that it's time to eliminate corporate entitlements and reduce military spending in order to properly educate its citizenry, thereby reducing crime and strengthening the populace in the manner that the Constitution envisioned. He is quite fond of animals both wild and domestic and supports prosecuting animal abusers. As a member of PETA, he is disgusted by factory farming and decorative fur.

Robert Joe Stout lives and writes in Oaxaca, Mexico. His published books include the poetry volume *Monkey Screams*, a non-fiction analysis of U.S.-Mexico frictions over immigration and narcotics commerce and three novels, *Miss Sally*, *Where Gringos Don't Belong* and *Running Out the Hurt*.

Lou Marin was born and raised in the western hills of Maine, then spent 20 plus years wandering the country and world in the United States Air Force. He is a photographer, published poet and short story writer who now also pens faith based devotionals. He lives in Rumford, Maine. His five poetry anthologies, published by Publish America and entitled, *Awash With Words*, *Old Waves*, *New Beaches*, *Whisper of Waves*, and *Sea To Shining Sea*, Version 1 and 2, are available in print and online.

Susan J. Mitchell has three books, *After the Heroine: A Mother's Story in Poetry*, *Directionally Challenged (but finding my way home)* and *Snapshots*. She is also an award winning photographer. Susan lives in Southeastern Kentucky.

Iris Orpi is a Filipina poet, novelist, and screenwriter currently living in Chicago, Illinois with her husband and son. Her alter ego is a university mathematics instructor who likes to incorporate CSI episodes and milkshake recipes in trigonometry and calculus problems. Drawing a hyperbolic paraboloid on chalkboard remains one of her greatest personal achievements. She is broke but plans to travel the world someday.

Born of Montreal, now retired to the rural Acadian South Shore, **Pat St-Arnaud** is better known for his work in the tech industry than for his poetry, but is driven to write both and more.

Tevin Church always has, and always will continue to harbor a love for literature and poetry. An avid lover of music, his primary inspirations are the lyrics he hears in Hip-Hop and Post-Hardcore. As a child, he spends a lot of his free time drawing characters derivative from numerous cartoons and video games, figuring out at an early age that he needs compelling narratives to further develop these ideas. In adulthood, he still pulls heavily from his childhood creativity, but mostly metaphorically and often in contrast to the mature urgency that has come to define his most recent works. In essence, a large majority of his poetic products seek to craft rhythmic landscapes as attempts to sonically escape to realms unseen and places unknown.

Melissa A. Chappell is a writer who lives in South Carolina where, in her writing, she advocates for survivors of sexual assault. Ms. Chappell is a survivor of sexual assault, and her poetry reflects the reality that hope and exuberance are possible in sexual relationships after one emerges from the shame of assault. She is also a survivor of mental illness, and writes out of

the deep depressions of her bipolar I disorder. Resilience is possible even in darkness. Besides writing, Ms. Chappell enjoys the piano, the lute, her dogs, and her front porch rocking chair.

Daniel Moro was born in a small town in southern New York state. His work has appeared in Triggerfish Critical Review. He likes to hike and play music.

Karina Bush is an Irish writer, born in Belfast and now living in Rome. She is the author of three books, 'BRAIN LACE' (BareBackPress, 2018), '50 EURO' (BareBackPress, 2017), and 'MAIDEN' (48th Street Press, 2016). She is currently finishing up a collection of stories set in Belfast, a story from this collection was recently published by Akashic Books. She is also a visual poet and released a set of video poems to accompany 'BRAIN LACE'. For more visit her website karinabush.com and Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/karinabushxxx/>.

Stuti Shree is a 17 year old girl from India. She has studied from Delhi Public School, and currently doing her Bachelors in English Honours from St. Xavier's College, Ranchi. She is an intense lover of art and understands the profound meaning hidden beneath those treasures. Stuti loves to write poems and sing. Being an old-school girl, she still keeps all her pieces of writing in a particular diary, which she has named as- 'Right to the pen, left on a paper'. William Wordsworth is her favorite poet of all times. 'A slumber did my spirit seal' is her best-loved poem by him.

John Grey is an Australian poet, US resident. Recently published in the Homestead Review, Poetry East and Columbia Review with work upcoming in Harpur Palate, the Hawaii Review and North Dakota Quarterly.

Scott Thomas Outlar hosts the site 17Numa.com where links to his published poetry, fiction, essays, interviews, reviews, live events, and books can be found. His work has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. Scott was a recipient of the 2017 Setu Magazine Award for Excellence in the field of literature. His words have been translated into French, Italian, Dutch, Persian, Serbian, Albanian, and Afrikaans. His radio show Songs of Selah airs weekly on 17Numa Radio.

ayaz daryl nielsen, veteran and former hospice nurse, lives in Longmont, Colorado, USA. Editor of *bear creek haiku* (30+ years/145+ issues) with poetry published worldwide (and deeply appreciated), he is online at: *bear creek haiku poetry, poems and info*.

James B. Nicola's poems have appeared in *Harbinger Asylum*; the *Antioch*, *Southwest* and *Atlanta Reviews*; *Rattle*; *Tar River*; and *Poetry East*. His full-length collections are *Manhattan Plaza* (2014), *Stage to Page: Poems from the Theater* (2016), *Wind in the Cave* (2017) and *Out of Nothing: Poems of Art and Artists* (2018). His nonfiction book *Playing the Audience* won a *Choice* award. His poetry has received a Dana Literary Award, two *Willow Review* awards, a People's Choice award from *Storyteller*, and four Pushcart Prize nominations—from *Shot Glass Journal*, *Parody*, and twice from *Trinacria*—for which he feels both stunned and grateful.

Shawn Anto is 23 years old from Bakersfield, California. He's originally from Kerala, India. He currently studies at Cal State Bakersfield looking to receive his B.A. in English & Theatre. His writing has been featured or are forthcoming in The Paragon Press, Edify Fiction, Susan/The Journal, Internet Void, Ink & Voices and Mojave Heart Review.

We Pray For You

Julianne di Nenna

I am the blond who sits in the car behind yours in the school pick-up zone
but you do not see me, not that anyone would notice beyond my hair,
I slipped in at the back, starved and dehydrated

I am the thick-haired curvy-bodied brunette you knock into at the grocery store
by accident – on a lucky day you might excuse yourself to the shades, notice the hips,
you can't see my purple eggplant eyes, I dart past towing kids and cart

I am the dark, kinky-haired mother who cleans your house,
whose kids subdue their aches and pains on the playground or in parked cars
while I earn three-fourths of a dollar that He will take from me

We are the women who cross your lines because our borders were double-crossed
the same hands that once caressed us tuned on us,
beat us, burnt cigarettes into our backs, strangled our throats

Tattooed our faces, beat fists into our breasts, made us beg and talk to the feet
that kicked our bellies in the first, second, and third trimesters
that knocked us down the stairs, knocked us over over-turned chairs

Held guns to our heads, yanked our hair till it ripped out in their hands,
twisted our wrists behind our backs and preached to beg God
We are your mothers, your sisters, your cousins, your daughters,

We are not blue statues at church where you light candles, we give birth to your heirs,
We are the ones who turn from you in shame, beg for forgiveness
when the hand became a fist, when the fist became a foot

When the foot became – God, we can not say what blunt object
split our scalps, sliced our lips, trashed our teeth,
spilled blood from our noses, bruise our mouths for speaking,

You are the Border Control stopping us at the border and ripping away our children,
You are the police arresting us and throwing us back into the fire, You are the God
we fear, you will never ask our names, you know our husbands and fathers,

Drink wine with them, break bread with them, collect their coins. You would rather
have us gagged, raped, gunned down, parched along the low-way than save us
– and yet, and yet– there is always a 'yet' –

This Trinity of Bridegroom, Gang, Border Police,
barking on about our bodies – we carry on carrying kids,
refusing your orders, praying for you.

“We Pray for You” will be published in Unruly Women Write, vol 4 in January 2019.

Words on the Paper

Julianne di Nenna

Words in black and white
the rights we are losing
rolled back like tin foil
We're sorry for your loss,
a national loss in Maryland.

The Constitution weeps with us
paper drenched in cold water
and wrung dry for recycling
starfish don't spin in circles
but assemble peacefully, like Marylanders,

in news-telling and libraries.
An aging and widowed woman
shuffles in slippers at night
groping in her dark mind
searching every room of her

crumbling house for her children
just yesterday they played here
was it the first Amendment,
freedom of religion and its
squelched twin sisters free speech

and press, or Amendment 2
the right to state security,
the word 'guns' isn't mentioned:
the paper reports school sports
the paper reports Chesapeake health

the paper reports community events,
our right to know when
men violate laws and limits,
our bodies don't belong to you,
your praying hands don't matter.

Will blue crabs live alongside
rising jellyfish, will they remember
our dead who died for
upholding rights, not ideology spread
like plastics in the oceans?

oh Chesapeake we love your
shores, your inlets, your crabs.
Capital Gazette, the heart of
our state oyster ripped from
its shell, you'll remind us

to keep the Bay alive,
clean the watershed, beaches,
mind our dunes, mind our
children, neighbors, fields of corn,
and rise up and speak

and to stay with this old
woman, drenched, on her knees
rummaging for beloved Amendment 8
the second part –her favorite
'nor cruel and unusual punishment'

and let us not forget
the runt of the litter
the wrinkling, disappearing Amendment 9
"certain rights shall not be
construed to deny or disparage

others retained by the people"
this ebb of the tide
liberty and justice for all
in this one nation – divisible
[land under water] un-der God.

You Never Told Me

Julianne di Nenna

You never told me
oranges were blood red
acid, burning holes in the belly.

The sun was big fire ball orange.
Raspberries were red and we pulled out
viscera by plucking them from the vine, and

blueberries more purplish, almost like figs, yes,
cranberries were the burgundy of Chianti:
things we had in common from bees.

Moro reds followed after you, from home,
bitter fruits you carried in your own basket,
blood oozing down from your womb.

Sanguine, stark, bitter-sweet, you called after
puncturing the peel, pouring guts.
You never told me.

Reality and Fiction Take the Stage

Nic Schaedig

Reality and fiction take the stage
They begin their dance
By twirling past my eyes
Passing by
Blurring together
Creating such astonishment
It is unknown
If it even really happened
They move their show
To my ear drums
Where they tap dance
Slightly off beat
The music
Does not seem to match their number
Finally comes the final act
They take their places
On my nerves
They fly from one
To another
They send chills
And sensations
Like no performance has before
Reality and fiction take a bow
Go their separate ways
And await their next casting call

Realizations

Nic Schaedig

You are the human equivalent
To a brick wall
No amount of begging
Or pleading
Will move you
In a feeble attempt
To save you
You are a mountain
Standing tall and proud
When all you are
Is a creation of chance
That just creates an obstacle
To anyone who gets too close
You are every single one
Of the seven deadly sins
In one body
Not just a demon
But the devil in disguise
Whispering empty promises
Only to drag
Every
Single person
Through all the seven layers
You call
Love

Paris After All the Wars

Lennart Lundb

A couple stands kissing in the doorway
down the street from the *Quatre Saisons*.
The man in the well-tailored tuxedo
leans on a balcony above the Boulevard,
as though captured by Caillebotte.
Young revelers dance by the Seine
to the sounds of a makeshift band.

They are not us. They never were.
Still, you marvel at their happy lives.

Young *filles de joie* stand in the shadows
across the street from a doorway
near an emptying laborers tavern.
The rough-dressed children dance
a ring around the rosie on a flat roof.
A war-widow sells flowers from a bridge
near Notre Dame, looks down to the
boats crowded with wealthy tourists.

We are invisible. We always have been.

You will now forget you read this.

Anatomy of a Heartbreak

Tan Shivers

“I can’t do this anymore”, she wrestled the words from her lips
My feet went numb. The same feet
that took late night walks with her
on the beach during those cool
summer nights

My legs felt as stiff as the oak
trees we scurried under to find shelter
from the pop up Charleston rain showers
on our occasional walk through the park

My knees buckled like the old makeshift
bridge we crossed while trekking across the
pond to our secret hideout. Each step felt as
dangerous as our love, but still worth the risk

My thighs burned like the bonfires we watched
as we sat camp side with friends. No matter
where she sat in our little group, she’d always
end up in my lap; it was her favorite place to sit

My stomach knotted like the old rope we used
to tie around a worn out tire we found in the back
of her uncle’s red pick up truck. We hung it on a
tree on his farm and made a charming little swing

My hands tingled like my tongue after being
forced to consume the worst sour candy as payment
for losing a friendly bet. She’d always laugh at
the silly faces I made as I tried to brave the tartness

My arms felt as heavy as the bulky, sun beaten
wicker baskets I carried after we spent the majority
of a mid July afternoon picking peaches. She’d always
try to convince me there was room for one more peach

My chest sunk like the coins she'd gleefully toss into the wishing well at the mall. She'd close her eyes so tight, it made her forehead wrinkle a little. After letting out a sigh, she'd release the coins as if releasing doves into the sky

My neck tightened like the chain on her bicycle after having to repair it for the millionth time. I always felt like a surgeon performing a critical operation the way she'd study my hands as I carefully affixed the metal chain back to its proper place

My mouth was dry like the air on those cold winter mornings we spent cuddled in our warm bed hoping the alarm clock had somehow made a mistake by ringing too early ahead of its designated time. We took turns hitting the snooze button

My nose felt congested like the traffic after a baseball game at the Joe Riley stadium. I found her frustration with the sluggish pace of the cars to be considerably entertaining. I'd jokingly keep track of the number of times she'd yell, "Just drive, people!"

My ears rang like the cowbells she'd playfully clank to summon me to the kitchen table to partake in one of her masterfully crafted meals. The more I pretended not to hear it, the louder she'd clang them together

My eyes filled with tears like the ones that trickled down her face after engaging in a nuclear war of words. My arsenal consisted of the most hurtful things I could think of and, sadly, I used them without hesitation

My heart broke just like hers after I'd selfishly shatter one of many promises, never realizing the pain it caused her. She'd tirelessly try to explain the physical distress each heartbreak produced but I never quite understood it... until now

Northern Lights

Jessica Goody

The pack ice resembles a mosaic of broken tiles where pups croak and croon, rolling playfully, enjoying the sensation of snow. Mothers plump and banded nurse pups who expand balloon-like as their fur gradually

darkens: ice-white, butter-blond, and dappled silver. They swirl in greenish water, trailing auras of bubbles behind them in a serpentine interpretive dance, joyful, reveling in their element. The silent fireworks of the

aurora borealis flash overhead like searchlights, mint, mauve, cobalt, barium green and methane blue, glowing while above them, polar bears stalk the icy plateau like wardens, waiting, tints glinting in their colorless fur.

The Moon Stalker

Jessica Goody

I

Tigers stalk the night,
prowling in the green darkness,
glowing like the moon.

II

A golden surprise,
their eyes flash in the shadows,
striped with smoke and flame.

Runestones

Jessica Goody

The words ring inside me,
reverberating off my ribcage,
bouncing between bones.

They burn on my tongue,
each one a different color.
Peel them out of my skull,

bleed them from my fingertips,
syllable by syllable, like rain.
I soak in language like a warm bath,

bursting from the water, soaking the pages
with my thoughts. Stories wind their way
through my bloodstream, cell by cell.

Seized from the marrow of my bones,
they burn across the page like wildfire,
unearthed letter by letter, like sand-scoured runes.

Memories breathe and burn, setting my senses alight.
My skin is streaked with my past lives,
their music swelling my flesh, ripe as bursting fruit.

Revelation

Inspired by W. B. Yeats

Jessica Goody

I am swollen with your own potential,
teetering on a precipice over the sea.
While I wait, the moon ticks toward retrograde.
When the last grain of sand clears the hourglass,

you will lose me, the child-melon of my stomach
rising like a red balloon, a dream on a string.
She will tear you apart and pick your bones clean.
Later, will you climb upstairs in the dark,

desolate and seeking sympathy,
a single, symbolic candle throwing shadows
on the wall, and come to me, an afterthought?
The clandestine moon might have an answer.

I could consult the cards, the ghosts,
my moon-belly smooth and swollen as new fruit.

Images

Jessica Goody

I am a treasure hunter,
eager as a wildcat stalking silent prey.
Captivated by texture and those precise accidents

known as serendipity, my subconscious
links details into patterns, finding synchronicity.
The human eye is clouded, overstimulated by detail.

The black box of the camera parses the scene,
sweeping away the nimbus obscuring the view,
deepening the revelations caught by the mirror

of its eye. I thrive on these discoveries, the explosion
as a thought breaks the surface of the complex
rivers of neurons and joyfully catches the light.

Songs...

John Kojak

Some people are so lonely,
there are no songs for it.
They would never get played.
Alone in their madness,
they weep.
Only the gadflies are on parade.

Moloch's Retort

John Kojak

In Part II of his poem Howl, Alan Ginsburg uses Moloch, the ancient pagan God of child sacrifice, as a metaphor for the evils of capitalism and the military industrial complex that he believed was slaughtering the youth of his generation and suppressing their freedoms. This poem is envisioned as Moloch's retort to the young poet.

Mr. Ginsberg,

You are nothing—a bohemian pimp,
wasting his Zig-Zag days in dead-beat hotels
while piSSing hypnotic libations on the walls.
You have no language control.
It's all Hiroshima howls and fuck yoUs,
using your jewGANTIC nose and niggardly prose
to peddle dream machines to those with EyEs wide closed.
I am the new hAte, same as the old hAte,
the resistance to your gasoline dreams.
An all-KKKknowing Cyclops of american EXceptionalism,
laying waste to the gyzym junky generation
littering the streets of this Mad House nation.
Silence! May \$ale philosophy to fools,
But america is dead (broke), so keep your non-cents.
I'll take the change, and a bus to Rockland.
Go see your mother, and mother-fuck her.
Karl killed the Wobblies, she told me so,
so shut your pinko pie hOle
you twittering twit-twat. Lest I,
Moloch, the gloriously crowned King of the South,
bugger you and fuck your mOuth.

Moloch

The Candle in the Wind

Daniel de Culla

It's the story
When there was no on Earth
Light and electricity industry
And Wo/Men
Took great care of their candles
Using in their defense
Facing the mysteries of the night
Or placing by the day
At the foot of prints and imagery
For to they help them
Carrying their heavy load
Of daily life.
It happened, one day
that a certain Zagan
That he was a farmhand
And worked in the herd
Of a gentleman from Requena de Campos
In the Palencia ' s province
He came to a covered place
On a street or square
Built on pillars
Bringing a candle in his hand
To walk or to get rid
Of the Moon or of the shadows
When, suddenly, from somewhere
An air came to him in movement
Even if It was at rest
That brought smelling as a trace
Leaving the hunting pieces

Or the bullet's gap
In the bore of the firearm
That it turned off the candle
And it turned it off again
When he tried to light it
And that suddenly touching his nape
As it usually does
In the bone that dogs have
Between the ears
Saying in his ears:
-Whoever goes out at night and watches
Nothing is revealed
That at night all cats are brown
And what is done at night
In the morning it seems.

Falling and Floating

Jen Banta

I am spinning
I am floating

I am Sufi
I am Islam

I am Buddha
I am Rumi

I am lost
I am tired of seeking
I know there is no rest

For my soul beats to a drum my eyes can't see
And my spirit flies on sparks my skin can't touch

I am falling
Floating in the Dead Sea
Waiting for the sun
To kiss my skin

Haiku Sunflower

Fred Rosenblum

Blackcaps ride the face
Of a giant on the wind
Its feeder teeters

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Modeling for the Gods

Fred Rosenblum

A bull moose ruminated on the tender buds of a fallen white birch
I'd felled the day before

Wool-capped and flannelled, I bucked-up green fuel to season and sell warm and feed my
family in the year to come

And still ... snowflakes fell, thick and wet from the heavy grey veil
of late spring's precipitous anomaly. A smear of a star, our sun

Faint in the flurry of a nimbostratus, low flame ceiling. Heatless aloft the broken spears in
a drift that sprang with sprouts of embittered buddings –

Nutty chewables, that I too, though with doubt and an angst for its difficulty consumed
with cold visibilities of pulmonary escapement –

Frigid respirations, to illustrate that we were somehow, to some degree, enough akin, so
as to begut these same acrid edibles

A breathtaking demonstration of mandibles proving, save the obvious lingual and digestive
disparities, a connection in this microcosm beyond the snow globe of our imaginations

Published by Gold Man Review, Issue 7

Onyx Delight, Witness to the Brothel Incident: Gold Creek, Colorado Territory

Robert Cooperman

After slave days I thought I'd the right
to name myself, but got snatched up
by Madam Jezzy, fast-talking me
into the slavery of sweaty pallets,
open thighs and grunting men.
Come to think of it, I had it easier
as a house servant, even with Master
sneaking into my attic room some nights.

When Silas Stillwater tossed lye at Mary
for a man's evil joke, I grabbed, a gent's gun,
but someone hissed,

"Be easy, or you'll get the same."

"Bastards!" I shouted; some of us gals
hauled Mary to Doc's. He dabbed her
with cool, soothing water, smeared on lard,
poured laudanum down her throat
like a summer sizzling sarsaparilla.

When I stepped out the next morning,
Sheriff grabbed me, dragged me to my room,
pistoned me like a locomotive, then tossed me
like a bale onto the first stage.

"You come back," his slug-finger pointed,
"you'll hemp-dance longer than the War."
I laughed to myself: while he was at the nasty,
I'd groped through his tossed aside britches,
found his dust pouch and a gold watch.

Maybe I'll set up my own brothel,
or find a man ain't afraid of farm work,
though men like that are harder to come by
than a lode wide and rich as the Mississippi:
a sobbing shame Mary never found one either.

**Pastor Lazarus Markham, After the Murder
of Lily Bartell: Gold Creek, the Colorado Territory**

Robert Cooperman

Sin begets sin,
so I would preach,
had I the courage.

Magi Poem

Alan Britt

Adoration of the Magi becomes a love affair
between two jays & a catbird, between a zucchini
flower tumbling the saffron ledge of her ceramic
Sun God pot more sacred than any pyramid on
the Giza Plateau, that is to say when one is head
over heels in love with being in love—that's the
hold you have on me, the way we verbally wrestle
like two Tasmanian devils caught in a roulette wheel
praying for the ivory ball of fate to rig the sails
of our romance around an ever expanding
obsidian ring upon the Indian ocean.

The Painted Backdrop

Robert Joe Stout

“In theater there are curtains, there’s a stage,
the curtains open and one sees
a painted backdrop—that’s what the government,
the businesses, have done, painted
a scene: sailboats, palm trees, sidewalk cafes.
Paid actors dance across the set, laughing people
cheering Carnaval, sipping margaritas,
bikini-clad on sparkling white sand beaches
hugging, kissing, black sombreroed caballeros
waving as their silver-bridled horses prance.”

Don Martín lifts

trembling fingers to sun-cracked lips then hoarsely:
“Fake! A fantasy!” Behind the painted backdrop
huddles the real, not scripted make-believe.
Hunched women digging, sorting, morgues stacked
with bones, torn shirts, rotted flesh. Three months
stretching into four, five, six waiting for comparisons
of DNAs. Every week another site, another dozen,
twenty, forty bodies. The government—no help;
maybe pay out millions to build new morgues.
“That’s Veracruz, Veracruz behind the pretty
painted scenes. Tell the truth and you’ll be one
of thousands pulled in pieces from an unmarked grave.”

What About Now

Louis Marin

I guess the tears will eventually dry
though they seem in endless supply.
Misty mornings and red-eyed nights,
 make me wonder at my future.
I beg for a broken heart's cure,
and a rediscovery of life's delights.

Sadness clouds everything now,
 skews my former rosy brow.
I would give all for a smiling mirror,
 but the reflection moans in hurt,
 my soul feels drug through dirt,
 and love's healing is no nearer.

I admit I do tend to dramatize
 when life brings tears to my eyes.
Though damaged, my body is alive.
I will throw my hat back into the ring,
 and find another new ballad to sing.
This broken heart will still survive.

Train Of Paperclips

Louis Marin

The Bangor and Aroostook Railroad
rolls along river banks through woodlands.
Cars of potatoes by the hopper load
are carried along the rail's steel bands.

From the fields of Northern Maine
steadily south the train steams,
through small towns into forest again,
an unending journey it seems.

Black smoke, steel wheels, pistons,
all is noise as she passes by,
shaking the earth with 400 tons,
a grand sight, few can deny.

*"Lou, just hand me a paper clip,
quit pretending they are a train
or some kind of spaceship.
What is wrong with your brain?"*

Her Tattoo

Susan Mitchell

I saw the woman as she walked
before me. A tattoo lay across her skin:
one wooden cross standing straight,
pointing upward from her calf,
its own perpendicular arm stretching
the width of her well-muscled leg.

The left side of the cross was draped
in an angel's wing, heavy with glory
and light with flight.
The right side engulfed in stunning
flames a sunset's color with a dawn's regret.

With each step, the tattoo's wing
fluttered and the flame danced.
I followed her even beyond
my own destination.

I heard her laugh at
Something her companion said
and watched the tattoo disappear
around a corner.

When I arrived at the intersection
she and her tattoo were gone
and yet I still did not know
on which side I belonged.

The Fight is Won

Susan Mitchell

Some don't like my poetry because
it is so see-through like a second
wedding with a blushing bride:
everyone knows she should not blush.
Some tell me writing is frivolous
and act as though it is a waste of time
but my guts keep churning, my brain
hurls itself against my skull until
I pick up a pen,
write words that
I mark out and some I keep.
I wrestle with adjectives and verbs
until one of us yells "uncle!"
Days and nights the match continues
with the crashing of phrases
and the gnawing of adverbs.
At last, I lay panting on the floor,
my body sweats. I reach over,
grab a cigarette, light it,
take a few quick deep
drags then put it out in the wine glass
that has one last drink still inside.
I lay back and read the first final draft.
Oh, what it takes to write something
so frivolous.

Poison of Choice

Iris Orpi

Let's talk, before the layers,
the peeling back—the sound it makes when
you put a knife to the comfort responses
and expose raw will to the questions,
when you pick apart the abstract constructs
like semantics and “cultural nuances”
and the past distorting the present,
what didn't you have enough of in life,
or what was on TV when you were most
impressionable. Can we call it what it is,
you know there is power in naming things.
Or will that make you feel “personally
attacked”? Is it desire? If it's the most
irrational kind, I can try to understand that.
Vindictiveness? Like one of those soap
opera villains who spend all their energy
trying to destroy someone?
Is money involved? A quid pro quo?
What's the sun your world revolves around?
What book might you take a right-hand
oath on that would make you think twice
about perjuring yourself?
Where's your line in the sand?
I mean you might as well be judged
for who you really are, right?
If you don't care, you don't care.
Maybe other people's currencies don't mean
anything to you. So maybe just say that?
So they can stop haggling and everyone can
move on. I don't have all day to stand here.
Describe for me the method of hurting when
you coerce from behind the briar the one
or two actual motives that would be
otherwise unclothed, pungent like screams.
Let's talk about the kind of conversation
it takes to draw the truth out like blood.

Away, away from emotional rhetoric.
We are not our vulnerability, our
exploitability. We are the evils we choose
to fight for, emaciated and god-like,
on the other side of the needle's eye.

They Signed their Fake Names in Cheap Ink

Iris Orpi

The biggest lie that they told,
having stood tall and proud in the sun
for the longest time,
flaunting its bold, synthetic colors
and tastefully disguised malice
now covered under the darkening sky.
I saw the first rain of the season
picking at its skin like drops of acid.
It must have felt pain,
but it dared not cry out
as a puddle of faded, empty glory
formed at its feet.
The purity of the water
made short work of its clothes.
Everything wore off, all the patterns
bled out into a wash of confusion,
of chaos, before dissipating
completely into less than nothing:
a waste of time,
a waste of space.
A length of pavement
on which the offended faith
must now find its way back.
The carefully misused little truths,
the half-truths and omissions,
the tricks and misdirection,
and, at the core,
the blatant untruths,
came undone in layers,
soaking up dirt and turning into mud.

It would have stained anyone,
had anyone been standing nearby.
But there was no one now.
It stood alone,
naked and exposed
and ashamed.
Still, it betrayed no sign of anguish.
It was that kind of monster.
It was almost beautiful.
But I knew better.

Being Here

Iris Orpi

With misty eyes
I stand and watch as the ambiguity
of the fall unravels, becomes
apologies and algorithms
enough to power a city.
Aren't revelations just lines of code
in another language? We study
the end while it peers back at us
through the keyhole of retrospect,
forges a kinder word than pity for
the passion about to be misspent.
It had been everything
before the morning after
became hyper-real. And then
the senses become so hungry
and form an addiction to the dark
literature of second chances.
Wintry melancholy.
Rain of crude emeralds,
love choking on knives
and the expiry dates on all
the jars in the cupboard.
Once, I drew a Venn diagram of
things that usher in the future
and things that become the sky

when you lift them high enough;
I wrote a line connecting one
with the other.
This is that line,
prism of finally understanding,
deconstructing the colors
on the kitchen floor:
orange, purple, chartreuse.

Poem

Pat St-Arnaud

Apatride -
Funny that
often told
Speak white, boy, speak white
and here am I writing white
about my mother tongue
French son of French parents
Canadian, at that
from Montreal
due East of the center of its universe
Far West of what the French think French should be
certainly not dusty bottomed farmers
often told
often enough anyway

Then I'm outta there
burn out by city lights
overpriced poor apartments by the track
EE
for three hours at three AM
Got me a house by the seashore
- my brother gave it six months, it's been six years
smack down in Acadiana, right by the wharfs
where they were told they didn't speak the bon français
sometime between the deportation and the modern survival
pretty amazing to think of it that they'd still speak it
must have been strong mothers
but anyway - here they are
still brarethreading their culture but hanging on
and they speak white to me , speak white
because someone told them they didn't speak the bon français
as if joul was any better
as if uniform beige was any better
than the power of their color.

Falls Apart

Tevin Church

[VERSE 1:]

Won't blink, just hear the beat and lose sleep
Don't think, I'll drink the pool that's too deep
Can't sink, or reminisce, but lost thoughts
Bring bliss, and dreams of Spring underneath
The casket turns as we feed the worms
I'm not concerned, since I have no fear
Hear here, the sounds of doubt'll ring clear
Go near, you might find something else
About yourself, that you might not like
Won't fight the fate, I'm what you love to hate
Blow smoke, go ghost, like a token black
With his baseball cap turned backwards after
Batting average laughter made him lavish, dapper
Brand new clothes, let me feed the matrix
I'll close my eyes and still see the hatred
When it rains it pours, I never snore, I'm boring
Such a gracious morning, hear the Reaper yawning
I'm not conforming, 'til you feel my torment
It's a torrent that turns the shorelines to porridge
Like a perfect storm... The breeze of heathens...
I wish love was in season...
It could be the reason...
May my restless soul become a tested beacon

[REFRAIN:]

You can have my heart before it falls apart
Footsteps in the Dark, where art thou? I'm lost.

[VERSE 2:]

No remorse for the damned, just a man with a plan
And the moxy of Uncle Sam
Mayhem and damage, I'm a savage bastard
That regrets every single action that mattered
Your faults don't make you weak, don't blink
Don't think, don't cry, just be...
The time that we have is precious, so learn your lesson
And stop with the second-guessing

Rome wasn't built in a day, but how will you know
Where you'll go if you don't try anyway?
Rather die anyday? Take your life
Because this world has no place for weakness.
I've seen it all... I've lived and died and made peace
With the fall, if I'm big or small, I'll walk tall
I'm a dog, I'm a wolf, never shook or sorry
Even if you harm me, can't erase my stories.

[REFRAIN:]

You can have my heart before it falls apart
Footsteps in the Dark, where art thou? I'm lost.

Settle Down

Tevin Church

5.10.14

[Verse 1]

(Some say my) Best verse is, the one that curses
Me to be true, too cool for you. No
Dues to undo, so blue for who it is
I rue to rule out; Kind of like
Partly cloudy days, that crush rays of the
Sun to slay the shade. A switchblade in a
Brush, to rip the scene I paint green on a
Page, I record dreams that play; Every-

[Refrain]

-Day when I awake into a
State I just can't place, and see a
Face that takes my breath a-wayward
Fragrance I can taste, it makes me
Settle down, settle down, settle down, settle down; It makes me
Settle down, settle down, settle down, settle down.

[x2]

[Verse 2]

(Some say I'm) Hardly real, but I'm hardly nervous. No
Words in person to defeat the purpose, My
Vibe's enough; Not obvious--I'm not
Live enough, but my drive's enough. You
Liven up, my qualities; She's
Got me wanting her desperately. Du-
-ality, personality, my reality, with you; Every-

[Refrain]

-Day when I awake into a
State I just can't place, and see a
Face that takes my breath a-wayward
Fragrance I can taste, it makes me
Settle down, settle down, settle down, settle down; It makes me
Settle down, settle down, settle down, settle down.

[x2]

Withstand the Drought

Tevin Church

1.13.2018

[VERSE 1]

Awakened from my passive meditation, I am
Greeted by a world filled with massive imitation; Every
Facet and aspect has a drastically negative conno-
-tation... Unhappiness leads to assimilation...
Soothsayers seek the fountain of youth; What will you
Lose in the pursuit of truth? The very fabric of a
Being with his dreams torn and split at the seams; Compre-
-hending the meanings of all things for offsprings
Use my clout, I'm reaching out, never had doubts I'd bring about
A shift in minds, new paradigms, two pairs of dimes- it all adds up
Lust to trust, but too dangerous. It's a must I have bucks,
grand slam your luck
Grandstand, I can make these hands backflip, somersault;
Doze off, won't pause
Sit back and wonder... and let my mind wander... It's an
Exhibition, like the chess division, afflicted late night restless depictions
Of Worlds unseen, sights unknown, alone on this road so gone; Will I
Ever go home? Man, I don't know anymore, so I must be strong, go on.

[REFRAIN]

A mere demonstration, back-to-basics, when you
Never have to 'fake it 'til you make it,' meaning greatness; I don't
Stay for conversations, or party favors, I'd rather chase this
Paper, come alive and recognize it's do-or-die. Choose a
Side, or pick the pieces up; not trying to be facetious, but I
Mean it; I'll say I'm not leaving without a reason to. In-
-vincible and badder-than-average, but can you manage to
Withstand the drought? We're far out, you'll fall out...

[VERSE 2]

Forgetting to regret my actions, like
Spilt milk-erased and then replaced by napkins (Oh!)
Out of the frying pan, and into the stove; Heating up
This humble aboad with the souls of R.I.P.'d rappers
I'm the king of this ethereal plane, and your
Material things are like worms within the wings...

This is merely the beginning; I told you once before,
I'll you twice again, I'm never ever finished winning.
You jamokes think you're slicker than smoke, I got a
Ghost that is quicker than most, I'm no joke; Hanging
Out, at the Babylon Grove with the bohemians; A
Future presentation, still featureless... Reaching
Iridescent twilight--I was born in the dark, with a
Heart sharper than shards, I don't know where to start. We can re-
member like a shimmering star, sparkle and dazzle in
Fantastic patterns until we simmer appart..

[REFRAIN]

A mere demonstration, back-to-basics, when you
Never have to 'fake it 'til you make it,' meaning greatness; I don't
Stay for conversations, or party favors, I'd rather chase this
Paper, come alive and recognize it's do-or-die. Choose a
Side, or pick the pieces up; not trying to be facetious, but I
Mean it; I'll say I'm not leaving without a reason to. In-
vincible and badder-than-average, but can you manage to
Withstand the drought? We're far out, you'll fall out..

Want

Melissa Chappell

Driving up to his mountain home:

God help me, I want him.

I do not want to be free of him.

I want him

like a drowning woman
dies for air.

I want him like the river
wants the ocean.

I want him like a tree's bark
begs to be caressed.

I want to catch his scent
as he passes by.

I want him as parched earth
wants rain,
and as the waters

want to return,
to fill to bursting
some thankful cloud.

I want to feel him around me,
now wrapped in skin,

bone upon bone,
blood and blood
pulse together
in quarter time.

I want to be his need,
flowing through his pores,
like a natural spring
rising through shale stone
high in the mountains.

I want him to twine around me,
vining, like an ancient vine,
burgeoning with fruit.

I want him within me, in the fulness of our youth,
when Polaris was ours to pull down from the sky.

I want the mystery of us to come,
one with another.

I want him to place his mouth upon mine,
compelled, as a hand is compelled to caress cashmere.

I want him to need me,
I want to gaze into his face,
and seeing the want there in his eyes,
the ocean, in its rocking swells,
God help me,
he wants me;
in my possession the key to his freedom,
a freedom that my prisoner does not want.

life in sunlight

Daniel Moro

here bending light flickers
down each lane and
the inverted shadows
of young boys running
turn the corner
turning into mystery
the house of God

you don't have to call it loneliness
this constant search for something
and never finding it

we find pain in blue eyes
in brown eyes
and in eyes with no color
there are wounds here

the crickets hum under the deck
and in the trees and later on
quieten near dawn
small mirrored worlds are born
on the tips of green swords
small eyes look on, look on
look on

CLOUD II

Karina Bush

Seed to flower to seed
To flower to seed to flower

The great lotus
Feeding chain

Navel to brain to navel
To brain to navel to brain

He bares a man inanimate
Needing fed

A promise of ecstasy
Is made

Probing his dissonance
It pollinates

Back
Seed to brain to seed

KARMA MAN

Karina Bush

Living my karma
Via you

I asked to be degenerate
And life brought
Your constant dissolution

I chose my
Innate ability to harm myself
Can learn every lesson but this selfish
Drive to have the spectrum
Of intense

Like karma
My punishment memory
Is long
When your time comes
Don't cry for sympathy
You picked first
You were fully grown
You entered our vow to
Execute sufficient misery

ASHES

Karina Bush

A grey wall
Between us
Frames of decay

Sinking into a thought
I don't want to accept

While my body is young
Ripe in the midday sun
An urge to burn
Unbearable suchness

In the ashes
In the quantum
When our bodies
Finally break down

The matter between us
Will not exist

The oceans
The wrong turns
The deeds

Meanwhile

We miss all the love
Its impermanence

The Scarlet Water.

Stuti Shree

Craved for a rebelling brink
In this bubble of perfection
Wrapped in a blanket so shrunk
Fragile consoling deterioration.

She, a coy feathery being in a dungeon
Singing a melancholy on a metallic twig
Dies a zillion deaths in a moment
Fancied a reviving breeze in a gig

These silvery bars capturing her
Ceasing her to eat the golden grains
Such sympathetic seeds weren't her need
Never wanted to be ordained!

All was a want to jeopardize
To endanger her blood and bone
A drive to realize
The thrill to escape alone.

Looking on her winsome feathers
Trying to flip and flap it
When all falls down in shatters
As she saw rustiness in her plumage and spirit.

The Dawn was ahead
But no journey of grain to find
Too much cold once burnt her
And now too much light blinds.

She shifted feebly in her cage golden
Which seemed like a thorny rose
Wanted to flee far now
Get out of this silhouette show.

Memor of the free dusks and dawns
Rewind in her thoughts
Sought to be with her beloved ones
To achieve the blazing shine.

Maybe her decision was late
The fate had already else decided
She chose to dare or die
Forgetting life and death were just coincided

Her feathers flapped against the bars
Bruises got worsened
Sweat was pouring like a shower
Maybe this was the end.

As she kept fighting with the inanimate
Drops of her unsullied blood flew
Down was kept a watery bowl of ferrate
Which tasted her drooped droplets few
Coin of fate flipped for her with a nyctophilic love
An enslaved soul left the shape
Olive leaves were taken form that dove
She assumed her freedom was just sour grapes.

Soon another same comes flying
Sat on the reddish bowl
Understand the maxim it was saying
Around must be a cheesy fowl

Sensed quivering kenopsia in the cage hung above
Standing behind was the trapper
Took her in his palms so serrated
Afraid her, was 'bout to shatter

The freedom is exorbitant she thought
Contused the culprit with her beak
Fumbled he as she fled away
To her falling apart was for weaks.

Jouska of the act so evil
Played as she emerged out of dark bowers
A vow was taken in her mother's demise,
For a revenge of the scarlet water.

The Clock Is Ticking

Stuti Shree

*Sehnsucht of dead alive
blacks painted white
to be washed handsome
by swords winsome
battle starts alight.*

*Darkest dawns
stolen crowns
tsunami of feels
real and reel
fallen masks of smile
left, a frown.*

*Shatters of soil
wars turmoil
rustic defeats
shining cheats
as red starts to boil.*

*As been told
the darkest bold
sussed secrets
anecdote speeches
telItales untold.*

*Voice behind wars
long gone star
left the dark behind
covered sunshine
an orb full of scars.*

*Classic of contemporary
smoke filled bowers weary
all forgotten crimes
with punishment sublime
mastering the robbery.*

*Swords up the throat
on portrayed villains
by made up heroes
with hollow furrows
lastly in the end
let the clock spend.*

WITH THE MOTOR RUNNING

John Grey

inside the garage,
the world went out of focus

a man was bent over the
steering wheel
while the motor ran

no one was going anywhere
except the smoke out
the hastily opened door

the cop looked in
at a dead man

who stared at his discoverer without interest
as if the one peering in the window
was the slab of cold meat

Turn, Turn, Turn

Scott Thomas Outlar

This is not a poem
but a simple reminder
that all of these experiences
are temporary
and fleeting,
yet still
far more beautiful
than any fallen human being
could ever ask, hope,
or dare dream of.

Like a cat fight
by an oak tree
under the blanket of midnight.

Like a last kiss
on a bridge stained
with the smell of smoke.

Like a first breath
from two fresh lungs
inhaling accidental evolution.

Everyone has a breaking point.

The trick
is to come away
at the end of the process
with even more
pieces of the puzzle
in place
than there were
to begin with.

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Eternal and Infinite

Scott Thomas Outlar

Are those stars
or the headlights of a car?
O my dear,
we are all just deer
staring at God.

Graveside

ayaz daryl nielsen

three pall bearers
a defrocked priest
and an ex-wife's
hangover

Poem

ayaz daryl nielsen

what the magpie
of gastrointestinal distress
must have done—
dribble, slobber,
barf, then chortle
in the font
of my morning's
karmic dues

Never Land

James B. Nicola

Spun like a weightless tale in Neverland
where everyone's half-dreaming or half-dead
and souls do not age, I beam as light, in-
substantial, blazing, fading, unrooted,
free and feral as an electron spin-
ning on a random quest for protons and
neutrons to make a nucleus whose charge
will hold mine with its hope. The world's full of
potential passing, ionized as air,
and somehow I've remained a soul-at-large
who would engage and bond-have, here and
there-
but orbit on, merely observing love.

Applause, though, has spurred me to blinking bright-
er, faster. Yes, I feel the isotopes
you've freed and circle, tingling. Yes! Tonight
shall we both find completion?-or, possessed,
never land, like hummingbirds with high hopes,
exhausted by the never ending rest?

Parade of Shackles

for the elephants of Kerala

Shawn Anto

Around us– do you hear a deep rumble?
One festival to another, we sing & dance
As they are being paraded around
Beneath the scorching sun, hours with no rest
What creature knows their own soul
Suffering in silence, embodiment of Lord Ganesh
Raise a hand to the veil–hailing ‘tradition’, hailing ‘culture’
But what about extravagant, majestic calmness?

Hear the ringing, exploitation
How does one preach love & compassion but
Live so deeply in hypocrisy, behind the pomp
The ancient rumble
How does one preach religious love, but condone suffering?

Bow–Thrissur Pooram
Garland golden festive attire, running down their trunks
Ivory spears & chains so tight, festering sores
Raw barbaric bleeding wounds
What glamour became gore
What glory became their memory, they remember & so will you.

One must not be willfully blind
To revel in the presence of beauty,
We–the true monsters, the true beasts, come watch us ruin.

The Antlers

Shawn Anto

I am the formal regeneration
I am the formal authority
I mean—control. I want my speaker in control—I am the speaker
I want control.

Ask something—ask it.
Honest something—honest it.

Why do the antlers fall off?
Why do the unavailable fall off the heart?

I—or not I—come with demise
Pitter—patter—two dimensional, sharp.

These faux relationships make forest
Make hell make hoping
Make maybe, make one day
Make one night.

Eventually it gathers to become real
Or it never does
But what will, never will, will never extract.

Did the antlers never have a choice to stay put?
Did you ever have a choice to make your reality
& what voice was there & who whispered.

If there is something running, life is running
After change, after regeneration
After thinking differently
“WOW THAT’S INSANE”
The antlers grew back first on your head
Then on your back.

But also, it’s true sanity
Telling the self the same story
The same forest the same the same the same.
Bad things are authority

Bad things are happening
Always will.

Or children of men are antlers
Devotion to changing the narrative
Who is the victim now & what is the how in our voice.
Play a different song, the antlers grow back
& how long does it take?
Walk in the forest—change the story....wait.

Follow the Rules

Shawn Anto

- I.
Pit selves against one another, run out into the field—breathe.
- II. summarize in three breathes what it felt like to exit and become another.

III. silence thoughts with more silence, shrivel up any creature.
- IV. nothing is everything, crashing down.

V. hold me alive in burnt arms tasting of fresh bread.
- VI. watch fire roll out of the mouth.
- VII. I'm coming back to the room with a dagger & prayer.
- VIII. all the glory will last as long as this setting-sun
- IX. in this portal wound, I mask myself from caring embrace.
- X. no one will disturb me, not even these ghosts at my feet.

Videshi

For my culture

Shawn Anto

Foreigner,

This is– Refraction, unsettling prismatic quivering
pulsing between my Indian blood

Am I you? Or, Are you me?

Light ray, altered & pressed

New dominion over sky & sea

Brilliant color colonizing open horizon

transcendent dawn, symphony of hues await

irreversibly homogenized.

Now–Our skin

Rather die than be Americanized.

All of this, will soon perish

there are no wolves here, nor witches

only human nature–inevitable snare trapping us in two worlds

morphing old name, new name

from this very inception to annihilation

our hands are tied.

look back at beauty in desolation

Vexes, continues colonizing you

A trembling, tenuous glow

Sultry stitching through a perpetual, invisible rain

Bent, unscathed doppelganger facing me, who am i? who am I becoming?

Imitative, pas de deux, with yourself, one became fragment scattering

risking humanity.

I am trespassing against mother nature

Self-destruction, glimmering

my own reflection pained– awe-struck

slithering another Enemy

toward mutation.

Stranger,

Come bright, phosphorous boom
Into the Genetic prism of gender & culture intertwined
Echoing "We tend to see what we believe"
Essence washing me toward someone I can no longer claim.
Menacing symbol, old force
As if Sonia Ghandi
Who thrust into dynasty power
hands crumbling, grieving
I become who I am forced to be.

What remains grows ravenous
Filtered through eyes glinting
I beg for you to preach, pray for safety
Groan: Man became flower
Some order collected in disoriented light
They say all will perish in millennial hands
Undulating darkness, became opposite
Rewiring our brain to become another
In Falling out identity
Must never say die, unless
This becomes your land too.
Say it once, red, white, blue reminding
Us of every ivory gleaming country
Glaring at brown skin
Possessing one in the prism of my own trap, my own individuality
Refracting
Bending it once more
Do I see?
Tell me what you see.

Now who's Alien,

Am I You?

kya aap mai hoon?

