

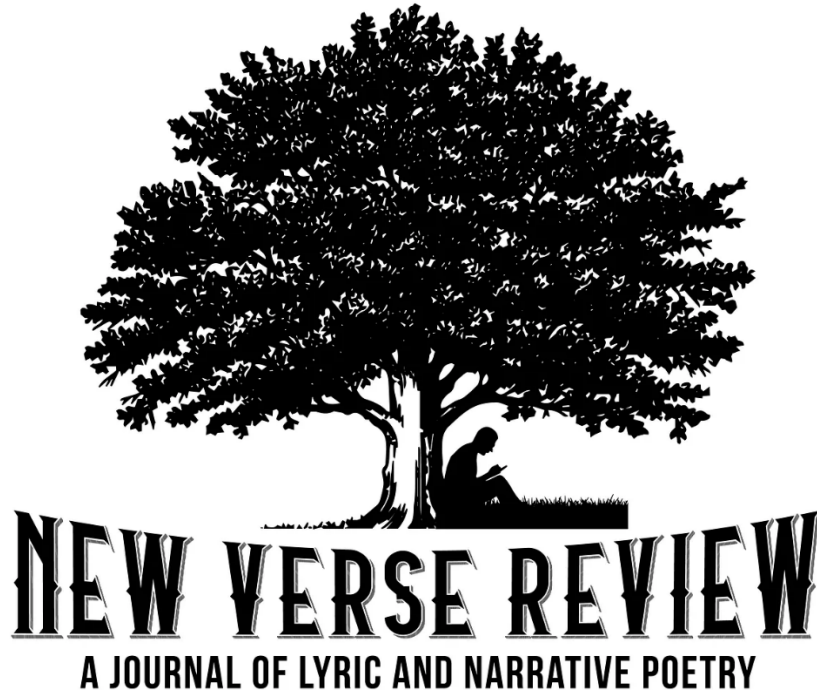
New Verse Review



A Diner for David Lynch
Poems in Remembrance of a Master

February 2025

Edited and Introduced by Ethan McGuire



All poems © their respective authors.

The cover photograph is a still from the television show *Twin Peaks*.

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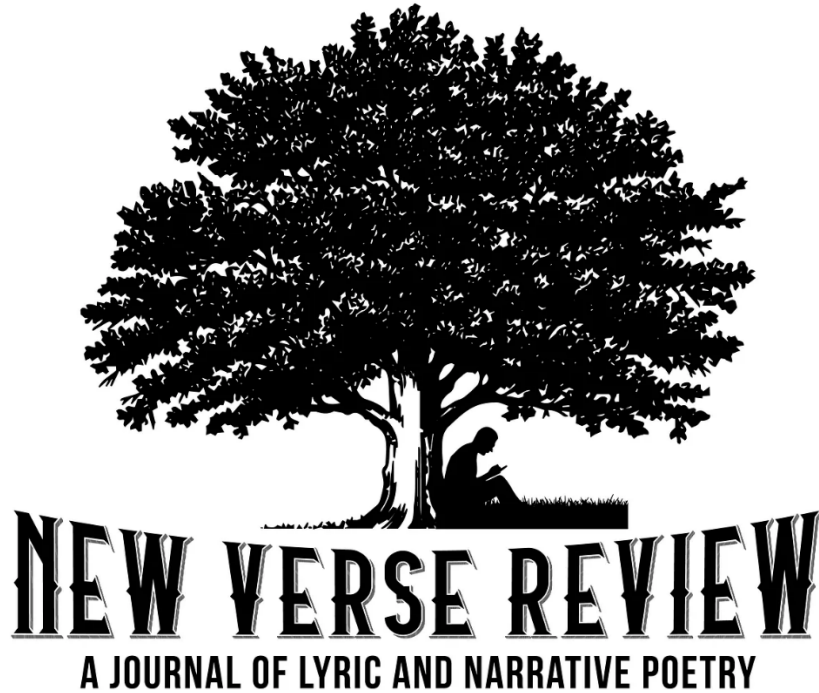
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New Verse Review: A Journal of Lyric and Narrative Poetry features work that renews the ancient affinities among poetry, song, and story.



***A Diner for David Lynch:
Poems in Remembrance of a Master***

A New Verse Review Special Feature

14 Poems in Memory of a Great Artist

February 4, 2025

Edited and Introduced by Ethan McGuire

NewVerseReview.com

Introduction

On January 15th, the world lost David Lynch, one of the greatest poets of our time. His poetic form was cinema, an art he wielded masterfully and strangely.

Lynch presented us with bizarre images and sounds that conveyed his serious-minded view of the way humans experience life. How we experience the past and the present all at once, with the future a source of anticipation and anxiety, yet with our vision of the future present with us too. How we tell ourselves stories that organize the present world around us and give our past a narrative. However, things can happen, catastrophes, that rip those stories apart and shake us to our core. Even so, the world is ordered. It's just that we don't have an omniscient view to see for sure the exact character of that order.

In Lynch's art, he accepted that life does not often make sense, even while being a man who loved orderliness. He crafted his films with extraordinary care. His personal life was orderly too. He kept to a consistent schedule. He ate at the same diner every day he could—especially, famously, Bob's Big Boy—and he claimed to always eat the same meal. He was intensely nostalgic for the apparent post-war harmony of 1950s America. The world not making sense made him intensely uncomfortable. So he examined himself and the world around him with a truthful and honest poet's eye.

Like Robinson Jeffers's "I decided not to tell lies in verse" in response to Nietzsche's "the poets lie too much," Lynch decided not to tell lies in his art. "I don't know why people expect art to make sense when they accept the fact that life doesn't make sense," he told the Los Angeles Times. Yet, as he said in *Lynch on Lynch*, "Certain things are just so beautiful to me, and I don't know why. Certain things make so much sense, and it's hard to explain."

Lynch was never uncovering disorder in place of order—evil in place of good—in his stories. Rather, he was intent on showing how a certain darkness often exists below the surfaces of things. Unlike many of the postmodern artists around him, though, Lynch was earnest and sincere instead of being clever and ironic. He preferred symbols over metaphors and influences over references. What many saw as surrealism in his work was his understanding of real manifestations of good and evil in the world. He understood both, as well as he could, and he believed in the need for light to triumph over dark, as seen in the beautiful things of the world, as seen in the beauty of his movies.

Lynch believed in order to have a story that reveals a sinister underbelly, you have to love the things above the ground, especially the wholesome things, in order to make that story coherent in any way. The dark side of life, including in entropy, is something to be fought against to maintain the already existent good.

It is for these reasons, and more, that we at *New Verse Review* love David Lynch and his work and find his cinematic-poetic goals consistent with the purpose of *New Verse Review*, to promote a poetics that brings order to chaos, but honestly, not superficially. So, in tribute to David Lynch, we put out a one-week call for Lynch-inspired poems for an NVR Substack feature, which I curated. We found that many other poets have been influenced by David Lynch in a similar manner, as the following fourteen poems show.

film noir still #1

Carla Sarett

i meet myself too often

in that *bad* part of town

where arms can get broken

i meet myself too often

angled so there's no one

right side up just upside down

i meet myself too often

in that *bad* part of town

(Previously published at tiny wren and in the author's chapbook "Woman on the Run")

A Diner for David Lynch

Elijah Blumov

*“A poet could write volumes about diners, because they’re so beautiful.” —
David Lynch*

Life ends. Scene change. Lights up. You find yourself
inside an endless diner. Chrome and mirrors
replicating to infinity,
the silver brilliance more than most could bear.
Relax. Sit down. You’ll take a cappuccino.
And have that dishy redhead bring around
a burger still applauding in its oil.
This ain’t Los Angeles. But then, what is?
You take a sip, a bite, and watch yourself
savoring endlessly, a silver god
reflecting on his own infinite life.
This burger’s strange. Somehow, it tastes like you.
It is you. So are all these silver screens.
Dig in. You’ll never find out what it means.

The World Directed by David Lynch

Peter Devonald

A beautiful blue sky, white picket fences,
perfect red roses sway elegant in the breeze,
a serene perfect suburban American dream,
all is tea and serenity, all is still blue velvet,
just an accident or trauma away from chaos,
delving into undergrowth, deeper, deeper,
through grass and silk and revenge we see
endless violent struggle of disgusting beetles,
crawling ravenous, eating each other,
wild pain and decay, a perfect metaphor.

An enormous red moon yearns for answers,
a perfect fairy pink fog hangs in the air,
a witch flies cackling Wizard Of Oz dreams,
a boy caught in the wardrobe, watching,
a man gasps oxygen to give life exuberance,
on stage the spotlight shines on a singer,
her song is surreal, profound and ethereal,
a white horse stands where the singer longed,
shifting identities, moods and moments,
we are just damn fine coffee and cherry pie.

At a house party someone gets uncomfortably
close, whispers, *I'm in your house right now.*
In a bedroom a woman is tormented by
small creatures that look like humans, uncanny,
a cowboy waits, Bob appears in the house,
a terrifying apparition, a dread spirit, a death,
ambiguous surrealism and ominous foreboding,
the look on Laura's face of sadness and despair,

gives way to overwhelming relief, catharsis,
freedom falling, falling, silencio, silencio.

(Previously published at Culture Matters)

Objects May Appear

Tamarah Rockwood

The balloon is filled with Tuesday
Even while it was tied to the window.

The wax candle sits inside the fish tank;
And an ear is perched on the stiff shag carpet, beneath.

There is a bowling ball
That has no relation to the cowboy hat.

It is Tuesday,
The large, circular birthday cake with three lines

Of pink, green, and ochre icing
Blazed in stereo inside of the wood-burning stove.

The cowboy hat had rhinestones
And I wanted to feed them to the swan

That swam in the carpet
And nibbled, seductively, at the ear.

The stage light is shining
On the wooden platform in the bathtub,

As if we all were roller skates
Listening to a tune;

As if it is Tuesday,
even outside.

Ear Sickness

D.W. Baker

cento pantoum, using lines from David Lynch's film Blue Velvet

I'm seeing something that was always hidden.
Are you the one that found the ear?
You put your disease in me. It helps me; it makes me strong.
(It's crazy, I know. I don't know where you come from.)

Are you the one that found the ear?
I still have you inside of me!
It's crazy, I know. I don't know where you come from, but
in dreams, I walk with you.

I still have you inside of me!
Tell me it's alright that I opened myself to you. Tell me it's alright!
In dreams I walk, with you
like a flame, burning brightly—but when you left, gone was the glow...

Tell me it's alright that I opened myself to you. Tell me it's alright:
that you put your disease in me; that it helps me, makes me strong
like a flame, burning brightly—but when you left, gone was the glow...
I'm seeing something that was always hidden.

The Movie Man

Michael Walker

A hand is reaching from the ground,
An ear's birthed from the earth,
Hearing for a human sound,
The music of human mirth.

A hole is opening around
To swallow the whole world,
That every soul may be unbound,
And every love unfurled.

There is an eye that sees it all -
The good, the bad, the crass -
And reads the writing on the wall:
Only love shall last.

So, here is to the movie man,
The man behind the screen.
Let him take you by the hand
And make you see his dream.

The Wanted

Mark Fiddes

Roy Orbisons perch like owls
along the roof top to sing of loss.
The golden days before the end.
The whispered secrets to the wind.
The squad cars are out.
They are dragging the lake.
They are tramping the woods
with dogs and flashlights
because love did not go alone.
It took the lot, the crazed plates,
the heart scented candles,
the soundtrack, the color blue
with all the usual loot,
for this is what The Wanted do.
The tender nights before they fly.
Send falling stars that seem to cry.
It's over. It's over. It's over. It's over.
Keys jangle on the porch.
It's over.

Who Killed Laura Palmer?

Paul J. Pastor

“Is there a bigger being walking with all the stars within?” —The Log Lady, Twin Peaks

The midnight man who slurps the cold creamed corn,
Below the angel of the fire time,
Is mourning you, mute Venus, badly born—
A mime.

The midway curtain of the Douglas firs,
Whose incense smells of red rooms and Tibet,
Divides each secret into “his” and “hers”—
Regret.

The morning dawn that glows on cherry pie,
Not cold, not warm, but on the jagged line,
Redeems your zigzag diamond alibi—
Damn fine.

lost highway

Carla Sarett

*for David Lynch
in memory*

as L.A. plays its
 blues day
cuts away to
 dark the night
everyone needs to
 forget to
go where
 highways &
insomniacs &
 jailbirds & accidental
killers go to
 lipstick-ed
motels to seek
 not
old-fashioned
 pleasure but
quiet rooms
 red carpet Sunset-
stripped beds
 tinsel-town velvet
under the NO
 VACANCY
windows so grimy almost
 X-rated so
you miss that last
 zooming highway

Stargazing

Bethel McGrew

Me and my brother loved to count the stars
Out where a boy could lay him down to think,
Away from city lights and speeding cars.

I see us clear as day, but then I blink
And find myself as old as old can be.
Some things can drive the best of men to drink,

Some things we wished we never had to see.
Some things we hid so deep, we never cried.
But sometimes it's just plain old vanity

And unforgiving rage, and stubborn pride
That turn a man against his closest kin.
And all these years, we've never even tried

To start again. But where do you begin?
How does the story go, how does it end,
This tale of two old brothers and their sin?

But ain't no time to wonder. Time to mend
These broken pieces while I still got time.
It's time to go. There's nothing I can send

Except myself. I only hope that I'm
Not turning back too late for one last shot
To be the man I should have been, to climb

The hill to where forgiveness marks the spot.
Love cuts a man as deep as any blade,

Cuts through a web of lies, each tangled knot

The work that these two dirty hands have made.
Love guides me when I can't believe my eyes
And all the world I've known begins to fade.

Oh brother, I was never very wise,
But this I know: I'll see you one day soon,
And side by side, we'll walk the starry skies.

Mulholland Drive Villanelle

Conor Kelly

"A love story in the city of dreams"
David Lynch

It was a tale of love, but that love died
on Sunset Boulevard beyond the sun.
She said her name was Rita, but she lied.

A cowboy spoke and the auteur complied.
Who kills a vacuum cleaner with a gun?
It was a place of dreams, but those dreams died.

The casting lady took her to one side
And said, "Enjoy the acting. Go. Have fun."
She said her name was Betty, but she lied.

Between the city streets and the hillside
Are film sets where tales of webs are spun.
It was a dream of love where lovers died.

She listened to the music and she cried,
A Spanish version of Roy Orbison.
She said her name was Diane, but she lied.

And when she said she'd be his bride,
Silencio. Then everything's undone.
It was a dream of love, but that dream died.
He said his name was David. How he lied.

A Distinct Impression

Dezmond Davanti

Oddly American moments fraught
with the same sweaty notion:
something terrible
is lurking
behind the dumpster
in the parking lot
of your favorite
diner.

The David Lynch Holiday Special: Sponsored by Target

Matthew Housiaux

Don't confuse these red-decked halls of commerce
for a place in the Twin Peaks universe.
Exits are clearly marked. Nevertheless,
I follow my wife in like Orpheus,
worried that she'll never find her way out.
The intercom lends speech the strength of shouts,
steroids for voices, now holiday-hoarse.
Christmas insists upon itself, of course,
colonizing more of the year with cheer,
abetted by worms that writhe in our ears.
They hibernate, waiting for the season
when sadness feels like a form of treason.
We discover them when biting deeply
from the candy-apple orbs on our trees.

Yes, but What Do You Know Compared to David Lynch?

Jack Miller

more than him

different from him

my sense of him

his memory ants walk in tree sap, mine on stucco

that I am, am not, am, am not, ...

my sense of him after meditation

that I am here and he is not, is, is

Conclusion

Let us leave you with an admonition the often-inspirational David Lynch issued his MasterClass:

Stay alert. Do your work. Don't worry about the world going by. You can't sit around and not do anything. You've gotta get your butt in gear and do it. And don't take no for an answer. Translate your ideas to cinema. To a painting. To whatever. And figure out a way to get it done!

NEW VERSE REVIEW

A JOURNAL OF LYRIC AND NARRATIVE POETRY