

POETiCA REViEW

Spring/Summer 2023

Issue 17



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For the many, not the few.

SPRING 2023

Issue 17

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Michele Randall 2 poems

Prayer with Trumpet

Gerard Manley Hopkins burned all of his poems before becoming a priest. He called his act 'slaughter of the innocents'

I've always wanted to be the poet who writes a couplet every morning
then sets it afire—meaning and language
left to crackle and wander away. A plea on a breeze.
An invocation caught in the throat of a window,

ash flakes teetering on a wooden sill,
delaying. I imagine smoke wasping by pebble and weed,
where it lingers in the backyard, staid
behind six foot high pine slats, concealed by flamevine.

FYI: There is no privacy;
there are only fences.
Hopkins grappled with the idea that poetry and prayer are opposite
ends of the same line, same vine—

one a root the other a bud—but no matter
how burned, lines are not lost.
A fragmented motto on newsprint
gets folded into another theme, a sliding grace note

unintended in the original, but better,
blossoms. As verses course through
capillaries, before they are ever written down,
I build them into blocks. They root. They line

the walls of my home.
Each line a burst of orioles and amber.
Each blossom a canopy of sound and subtext.
Each blare a trumpet shaped bloom, a lavish prayer.

Holding Fast (prose poem)

No matter how I spin it, a sandpiper will never be a plover. Content on their own shores, plovers orbit from the Tundra to South America every year. And back. Sandpipers track, a back and forth on a beach, barefoot, chasing the same water. They slay the unmighty decapods aswim in the swash zone. Every. day. Lift the wing—straighten out and rotate your shoulder—to catch air currents. Plovers have bird bones with human names, radius, ulna, humerus. What I would give to trace a line longitudinal twice a year, arms out straight. Conversation incoherent as wind carries me beyond Vermont vineyards, New York's Orange Gates, down to Caracas' El Monumento a la Paz, with its sixteen arms bent at the elbow, landlocked, and intertwined, holding up the weight of freedom. Soar between daily habitats and the blues of many skies. I want bird bones in humans, too. Hind toe. Pygostyle. Beak.

Steve Bell 3 poems

Richter Scale

She finds fault with everyone
 Until the ground shook its head
And swallowed her feet first.

Insomnia

his brain is a half-dead car battery
made not of metal or plastic but

of flesh, an emaciated blob of neurons
and chemicals and electrical sparks that

need to be recharged with a few nights
of uninterrupted sleep.

his wife is a battery from another car,
her arms a pair of soft jumper cables, her hands

cradling his head on her lap, her fingertips
counting sheep on his cheeks for nearly

an hour or more until
his mouth drops open, snoring.

she prays in silence, for she too lives the insomniac nightmare:
to awaken him too soon, the unpardonable sin.

The Poppy

Bright yellow
All alone, growing
In concrete
Behind my former home
As if you were waiting
To be found.

And you would be right
Because I was looking
For you
Someone to help me
Close the door,
Bury the dead,
And say goodbye.

Yes, I found you
And pulled you from your home
And into my grief
To then lift you above my head and

Clip you to an old clothesline
Leaving you to flutter and melt
In the warm summer wind.

Yes, I found you
And I am so glad I did;
I needed something of beauty
To honor a someone,
To become her grave, her headstone.

You, a single golden flower
Forever a silent witness to
All my unspoken prayers
And all my unshed tears.

Tanya McIntyre 2 poems

JANUS SAYS

I face the world-sea-sky
I face the god of Two
I face the room

Within, right
to left to right

I walk back to my trembling
past, close my eyes to open
to the gathering
of what would
be

Down there
at the threshold, my heart,
the sifter
sways; eloping
the separations

I bobble
in the current in search
of the middle

Janus says: Learn
to love
the wind's ways.

HOW TO ATTRACT AND KEEP A PLAYMATE

after Picasso's Claude and Paloma

Close your eyes and make a mark
on the snow

white page before you
Trust

that a light is trying
its very best to find you

Hold your arm
on a bird-wing-angle so
the new green

leaves can fly
through your loose-held brush
or pen into the arms of your afternoon

playmate
Now

never disappoint her
by mixing dim-dull colors or
using sensible words but

Feed this love-
child with the sweetest

cream
your secret
cupboard holds.

K.B. Ballentine 2 poems

Don't Blink

Hooded crows hug the clouds,
 hang over the valley, unravel
the swallow's song as it flits
 for cover where cicada nymphs burrow
and slurp roots foreseeing their turn to sing.
 Silky-stranded cotton grass tickles
the air under a ribcage of rock
 waiting a thousand years for you
to be here.
 Now.

Another Fractured Fable

Once upon a time, in a kingdom where ravens could swim
and pears could evade the hungry mouths of deer,
a robot, coded to fish and golf in order to ease the social burden
of its human sequestered itself by the river.

While corncrakes skreighed and lotus blossoms opened
sunny centers to a delft-blue sky, this robot marched
along the bankside, back and forth until the grass bruised
and wind whined through cottonwood and willow trees.

At last the robot sat on a rock and unsealed its chest plate
where all the wires coiled in bright colors: saffron yellow
for happiness, pine green for calmness, and all the other colors
found in a crayon box before taxes on play became excessive.

It gave each wire a tug, inspected the connections, and closed
the cover, documenting that all was well. When humans crafted robots,
little did they realize they would have to work to keep paying
for food, housing, and transportation while the robots kept the leisure time.

24/7 the humans work, and the robots stare without wonder
at the bluebirds' return in spring, at the four o'clocks and zinnias
where bees hum in summer, and the surging flames of red and gold
in autumn maples. In the winter, they don't even need the fire.

Now no one, not even the children, believes in starfish or tigers
or crystal caves. No one takes time to look at rainbows or shooting stars.
It's ok really. Almost all of them are gone anyway.

Deepa Onkar 1 poem

PIDGEON ZEN

Through glass the swoop and glide are soundless.
A perfect landing, on a grey sill: It's a silent movie.
Peck and pirouette: the intermission.
I'm on the way to the kitchen: feet, padding the floor.
The hungering body swivels on the spine, flesh teeters.
My hands sniff, for salt, turmeric and asafoetida; claw the air.
The next moment, they're afloat like weeds in cold water;
fish for sprouts: stalks wriggling between cotyledons.
Next, chop onions, aubergines, set them to cook.

Breath, old friend to the mind staggers
against fragments: you among them.
You and I, words, distinct as our worlds.
Back to the window, I press my cheek to the glass.
Wind in leaves. A shadow swings your voice into place.
Once you'd said – when movement is a means to an end
there's bound to be disaster.

I wish, endlessly, to watch
the iridescence of those scaly feathers,
their curious, restful flickering.
The birds crane towards the earth, then sit like quiet eggs.
How in the moment they are; unhurried:
one of them is playing coquette,
unfurling a tail, and the other, wind-fluffed,
is a stalker in pink stockings.

Necks twine. Smells waft: onions singe at the corners.
I'm a Phoenix rising to the rescue.
The aubergines shimmer and shake.

It's dinner time when I think of you again;
the steam from my plate reaching out to your chair: outside,
the empty perch. Somewhere, the sky is held up
on upturned wing-tips. Leaves hang like feathers.
Your gaze, amused, concerned, hovers around.

Philip Kobylarz 2 poems

rumination, by stars

Over some kind of threshold we appoint to clocks, our lies become truth. Dreams,
pursued, lived, dreamt
 re-lived, told, and
given. Sometimes nutshells don't open. What do cats return for? On the plains
between the hills and
 the sea, poppies bloom
for nothing else better to do. Every door slam contains some anger. A ship of fools
contains much food,
 water, no sexton.

the color of anonymity

In sickness and in health. Bulrushes. Bells on the square. Solipsists construct walls of brown amber.

Kate LaDew 3 poems

from elvis presley boulevard, memphis, tennessee (1976)

I listened to elvis yesterday
and now my phone is filled with ads for albums
and leather jackets and hair dye and rehab centers
and I think, what was the name of that song again?
the one where he's hurt deep down inside
where his heart is broken because somebody lied
where he's hurt more than anyone will ever know
and he'd hurt somebody too, if he didn't love them so?
I saw a picture once,
a little blonde boy in tupelo, head tilted back, a challenge in his eyes,
and I saw a picture of a white casket,
jet black hair skimming over a face so at rest
nobody was sure if it was really him
I turn on my phone, scroll until he's young and alive
I hear his voice, grabbing each note and holding it tight
before slowly, sweetly, softly, letting it go,
and I think, with each repeat, my god, his whole heart echoes

like a snatch of a song

you heard when you were young
notes you'll never know rising till they're just air
up there with everything you've forgotten--
she drifts into memory
a streak of light that once brightened your whole world
now a distant glow in the clouds
past and down and through a world where you can't follow
until a melody finds you in the disguise of a dream
whispering, come back, find me

you say lonesome is your favorite word

I want to weave it into spiderwebs,
hang them over your door,
so every time you leave, every time you come home,
the shapes of sounds dissolve and melt into your skin,
into that lonesome heart that finds beauty in unescaped sadness,
the tingling feeling of tears at the center of you

Jeremy Nathan Marks 4 poems

That season has passed

As I say goodbye to Winter
and meet February buds
elderberry blossoms an open
cherry near Lake Huron
I don't mourn for a lost season
(Winter exists in Siberia and outer space)

I lament memory's physical lapse.

Think of it like this:
when something is on the tip
of your tongue like a name
you know but can't recall
the nearness of what's forgotten
creates a sensation

Not just inside your skull
but in your hands
that strange numbness
akin to, but not quite like
fingers held under frigid water

Perhaps it is more like the experience
of retracing your thoughts as
you fall asleep
or trying to locate yourself
the moment you wake

Either way, when I say
goodbye to Winter
I am speaking to Spring
because pollen falls from trees
in ways it would never have dared
when Winter was here

That season has passed

So,
when I reach for
the sensation of snow
to my knees or ice on my nose
I feel an amnesiac numbness

So far away and still so close.

Finches

A House is hard to distinguish
from a Purple finch
I have to pay special attention
to their different hues
not to mention what's in a beak

This was supposed to be easier
than choosing between the twigs
of mid-winter trees
measuring fissures in bark
after all, birds fly, chirp, speak,
nest, sing and lay non-identical eggs

No one would mistake what's in
a Robin's nest for the speckled shells
of a Northern Cardinal

Nor did I know I would have to be
as adept at color tones as Peterson
or Audubon to master just finches

Of course,
no matter what
I call them a finch
will still be what it is
just like Hispaniola was
not India even though
Columbus said so.

What music is for

My daughter says
all of the animal characters
in the novels we read together
speak like people

I suggest it is because people
write about animals
who have eyes set into the sides
of their faces

Stories of foxes and rabbits
squirrels, birds, mice
even whales
might be different if they had eyes
facing front and seated above their noses

My daughter considers this
and dismisses it
replying, “remember that depiction
of the gorilla
the one who thought like a person
pursuing his freedom”

She is right, of course
and I wonder if the problem
isn't animal physiognomy
but my failure to grasp that bodies
are manifestations of one great thought
split billions of ways

Like verbs
nouns
even water
droplets

My daughter says
ice moans like her little
sister “you would think some
writer would write a story where
people sound like glaciers”

She's right, again

Great point, my dear
but maybe making people
sound like the rest of nature
is what music is for.

Oakland

At 2400 feet the county seat
sits inside a pocket of cloud
a purse of rain if you pray
they say He rules the sky
with a loving temper

In the winter it snows for days
until you cannot see the mountains
at a hundred yards
they thank God for the snow
for the lie it puts to the myth
of a warming Earth

Fifty miles away
children thirst for a chance
to sled at Christmas
the New Year on Valentine's Day
when spring comes before the equinox
they feel cheated by frogs and crocuses
senseless to the sin of trampling human hopes.

Phil Kirby 2 poems

Ode to An Evening

Warm evenings. Nothing more
or less than that. To lay
beneath diminishing light before
the blackbird falls mute
and the slow stars, like
drops from Hera's breast, appear.

*

There are places in the world
that have no dusk.
An hour at most then day
pulls down its shutter
and moths the size of hands arrive
to snuff the candle lighting dinner
as if offended by its flare.

While here, someone two doors down
says, 'Sing me a love song'
and someone else that's indoors does.
The words are baffled by the room.
But now, at least, there's music
and you bringing red wine
darker than this late sky
which, here and there – and fleetingly -
is turning into pipistrelles. Now
it's easier to lift one's drowsy face
to patterns from an ancient world,
to feel some sense of scale.

*

Evening into night and colours
can no longer be discerned.
Shade becomes shadow
and the empty glass
remains to gather dew.
We turn from such small pleasures;
head for sleep.

Things I've Waited For

my boat to come in
as the waves beat
a rock-salt path to my door;

an amphora of gold
where the rainbow's arc
makes landfall;

a shooting star
from some unknown constellation
to fall on my hand

and an average wish
to come true beneath
a full, bright moon that is blue;

the lumbering cows
to come home to a house
where the paint isn't dry;

the holding back of tides,
the stalling of time – always
the stalling of time;

to see what my mother thinks;
to see what will happen
when my father gets back.

They told me everything
would come if I only waited -
but he never comes back.

Ali Ashhar 1 poem

Put on the Block

A gruesome game of segregation,
played while the man upstairs watches

from above. Somewhere someone
always pays the price.

And fellow humans label the market
of hate. Humanity sells fastest.

The stalls are set in the name of caste,
creed, language, place.

Some of the more privileged folks, give
a call to auction. Close the deal.

Gonzalinho de Costa 1 poem

UNIQUE FORMS OF CONTINUITY IN SPACE BY UMBERTO BOCCIONI

You, are, the, future, declares, the, artist, also, curators, who, cast, this, sculpture, in, bronze, modern, art, masterpiece, they, exclaim, proudly, what, is, it, heavyset, torso, leaning, forward, left, knee, sticking, out, right, leg, pushing, rearward, forcefully, stoutly, muscled, forms, lines, of, velocity, wicking, away, swirling, all, around, winged, victory, of, Samothrace, looks, like, an, industrial, robot, striding, into, the, future, purposefully, like, the, walking, man, by, Auguste, Rodin, except, abstract, speed, power, progress, just, like, a, single-seat, open-cockpit, open-wheel, racing, car, a, high-speed, Japanese, bullet, train, a, hypersonic, jet, plane, an, industrial, scale, manufacturing, plant, millions, of, square, feet, large, churning, out, widgets, parts, odds, ends, billions, wait, what, is, speaking, to, us, now, is, gone, we, are, looking, at, the, past, speed, power, gone, progress, dynamism, energy, gone, or, is, it, really, we, see, the, future, in, the, past, we, see, Mussolini, individual, is, subordinate, to, the, state, the, state, comes, first, fascism, radical, nationalism, together, with, militarism, elitism, dictatorship, racism, imperialism, corporatism, anti-liberalism, anti-socialism, anti-communism, followed, by, Hitler, rearmament, aggression, invasion, war, expansionism, crimes, against, humanity, is, this, the, future, you, herald, you, machine, created, in, the, image, of, man, endless, global, conflict, intercontinental, ballistic, missiles, nuclear, payloads, doomsday, scenarios, industrial, scale, air, water, soil, pollution, deforestation, global, warming, ocean, plastic, mass, species, extinction, unconscionable, levels, of, social, inequality, escalating, crime, more, stress, declining, health, worsening, quality, of, life, a, refugee, crisis, worldwide, besides, totalitarian, regimes, rising, mass, surveillance, state, terrorism, censorship, misinformation, disinformation, political, repression, religious, persecution, warrantless, arrests, imprisonment, torture, concentration, camps, assassinations, murder, genocide, the, future, is, now.

Giovanni Boskovich 4 poems

SONNET

The tonsuring of middle age
comes suddenly
and against our will,
like a father

forcing a son
into the barber's chair.
The freshly cut hair,
tear-soaked paper-mâché.

The barber, flanked by his tools —
disinfectant, shears, clippers —
hands the boy a mirror,
framing him in a mise-en-abyme.

How do you like it, the father asks?
as the boy looks down, noting what's lost.

OPHELIA, IMAGINED SOMEWHERE IN LOS ANGELES

You've had too much to drink — not to mention the blackmarket powder, the name of which changes like the tide: licit one day, illicit the next. Ophelia, you drowned in a kidney-shaped swimming pool, indifferent maids, undocumented and paid cash (under-the-table), just off the clock, sitting at a conspicuously placed bus stop in a tony neighborhood somewhere in the hills (*you choose; it doesn't matter*). No one uses these public reliquaries, the bus stops, that is — the help, according to the rich, are only synecdochally relevant (*e.g.*, lend me a hand, an ear, perambulate my children, teach them your tongue; hold yours, etc). I've never seen a rich person use the bus in these sinuous hills, especially in Los Angeles, a place where cars (new, semi-electric, electric, imagined, flying, classic, lowrider, jalopy, 80s, Yotas) are all better than schlepping the bus. I eye them as I drive through these hills towards San Pedro. And you, Ophelia: No self-coronated diadem of nettles or daisies. *Too much water*. Bougainvillea, whispering with sibilance, watched you (the maids, as I said, are waiting for their respective terminuses: Carson, San Pedro, Wilmington), heavy with drink, as you mermaided your way to the deep end, like lagan, for us to find you, again and again.

710 NORTH

A graffito that reads like the opening credits of a film says, character by character — each letter taking a parapet of the freeway overpass — CRASH. It becomes a refrain, like some one-word rhythm, an obsession. The Clear Channel billboard is subsumed in this mantra of death. CRASH. A woman applies her makeup in the sun-visor, glancing the imperative, as she limns crimson onto her lips. Car-insurance billboards prognosticate the future like a ziggurat of unread tarot cards: a concatenation of cars piling up like a vehicular sacrifice to the freeway gods. At least this one-note dirge, CRASH, doesn't obfuscate: it exhorts, cajoles, teases, nudges us towards swinging the steering wheel into the mother or student-driver or teenager in the next lane. The Clear Channel billboard peddles death but is nothing short of meretricious. What else is this cast of lawyers doing, with their dollar-sign rictuses, but indiscriminately incanting our collective deaths.

THE EVEN YEARS IN THE VALLEY

Having internally mantracized
Even years are the best years
he approached thirty six,
its metrical cretic valley,
like a hermitage:
the puerilism of his twenties
behind him,
attic forties ahead.

It's here, however, in this valley, that he waits,
soul slackening
like the postprandial unnotching of a belt.

Thirty, when turned on its side,
resembles a numerical valley.
A geographical depression.
The cordillera of time,
notwithstanding our misgivings,
beckons us to climb its sides.

Edward L. Canavan 2 poems

[myth and void]

time was never
ours to begin with

nor the sandcastles
of memory made from it

just a beautiful
trick of starlight

as it travels the arteries
of a glorious abyss.

[breaking thru]

it all turns away

whatever could have been
whatever small hope was still hanging around

my chest burst free
heaving against rope

straddling strange, subtle lines
never meant for the faint of heart

love, and losing it
makes for great strength
and great sadness

but you're never quite sure
which comes from which.

Stephen Ruffus 5 poems

OTTO FRANK, AMSTERDAM, 1960

In the photo he had already walked through
the shadow door that hid the stairs
to the secret annex and the scene of their betrayal.
The floor creaked as it did then when all would be
still and silent as a hummingbird until evening.

He is leaning against a wooden post gazing beyond
the frame, perhaps toward her room, the pictures
still on the wall where she had fastened them.
Or listening for the Westertoren bells, its chimes ringing
hope as she recounted in the diary named after a cat.

He could be remembering how she strained
to see the clock atop the blue
imperial crown through a small hole
in the very room where he now stood solemnly
for the first time since then.

PHONING BILLIE HOLIDAY

I found you, sweet Eleanora
of the gardenias, with your voice
of pure nicotine,
in a 1940s phone book,
wishing I could dial
Edgecomb 4-4058, or swing by
at 286 W. 142nd Street
the center of the universe.

Had I been your lover man
I would have rescued you
from “the assaults and privations”
at the House of Good Shepherd,
kept you safe from those consumed
by your well of sadness.

No matter what
I would have bolted the door
against the vice
at The Mark Twain in San Francisco
or at the hospital in Manhattan
where you laid handcuffed
to your bed.

Lord knows I would have
accompanied you somehow,
sure as Bobby Tucker,
to the Alderson prison camp,
with the whole of
the United States of America
against you.
All this I swear.
You could have counted on me
to stick with you withering away
from the blues, your liver soaked
in copper.

For I know, although
not as well as you,
what a little moonlight can do
to help us get by.

ON THE BOWERY

They gather for the evening Vespers,
for the singing of the psalms
they may remember, and a spoonful of wine
to help while away the canonical hours.
In winter they dwell within the abandoned
subway tunnels to sleep near the fires
or they may huddle on the steps of St. Marks
where covered in newspaper, their lives
in embers may at last be consecrated.

THE AFTERLIFE

More than a year after the towers fell
Patricia Fagan's purse was unearthed.
In it were her everyday things—
A tube of lipstick, her eyeglasses
split in two, coins for the beggars,
a funeral card, a rosary, a notebook
where she kept the birthdays of those
who perished with her that day.
This is all most will ever know of her.
Only these few artifacts framed
in a photo remain, each one vestigial,
a portent rescued by the word.

SUPPORT GROUP GUIDELINES

Before one departs the scene
grief already resides
behind the veil.

Know that your grief
is no less or greater
than the grief of others.

Grief is not a credential
to be put in a frame
and hang on your wall.

All grief is the same
and yet it is not.
No one can explain this.

For now, let's allow
that grief is a question of style.
We'll return to this matter later.

Please do not whisper
to the person next to you.
No cross-talk allowed.

No unsolicited advice please.
"Spend time with the living."
The living has forgotten.

You are alone.
Only the dead remember.
Accept this on its face.

Do not try to explain
what you meant to say.
You've already said it.

Grief reminds us of the fact
of grief apart
from language, like breath.

It is a station
and a sacrament.
You need not accept this.

Please put away
your cell phones. We will start
and end on time.

Tanya McIntyre 2 poems

How to Attract and Keep a Playmate

after Picasso's Claude and Paloma

Close your eyes and make a mark
on the snow

white page before you
Trust

that a light is trying
its very best to find you

Hold your arm
on a bird-wing-angle so
the new green

leaves can fly
through your loose-held brush
or pen into the arms of your afternoon

playmate
Now

never disappoint her
by mixing dim-dull colors or
using sensible words but

Feed this love-
child with the sweetest

cream
your secret
cupboard holds.

Grant Guy 3 poems

Poem

have you seen
truly seen

you can tell me

I won't tell a dead soul

Poem

Beckett came
Beckett went

Beckett came
Beckett went

Beckett came
Beckett went

He's dead said God

God took a long walk on a pier
Life was no longer fun said God

But God did not know that
He was pushed off the pier by B.....

Somebody finally got the joke

Poem

The way
 way
 way

way back

home

is not

always the

shortest way
 way
 way

home
is where the heart ain't

Christ, I stubbed my toe

Ervin Brown 1 poem

Life Cycle

a nine-spotted moth
huddles under noxious rain
wings melting away
the double-sided stone
dysphoria and despair
slitting the painted light
the flexed stringer of grief
piercing the stalwart heart
and the wailful orchestra
drowning in a silence
of veiled antipathies
the winged spectacle
fractured to embers

Duane Vorhees 4 poems

ELMER TERMAGANTRY PARADISE BROCHURE

The yards and gardens yawn unkempt. They're bare
of herbs, but the weeds
prosper in Heaven

while fat jackals congregate in their lair
and consume more fleece
and flesh of brethren.

The tableau sharpens itself in the glare:
promises of grace
sold to unshriven
sinners beyond any conscience or care.

Abandoned dovecotes ceded to ravens.
Dogs and drunkards sleeping everywhere,
every one at peace
in their haven.

[Sinclair Lewis wrote about Elmer Gantry, an unholy evangelist. Medieval Christians falsely believed that Muslims worshipped a goddess named Termagant.]

LONGEVITY AND POPULAR SUCCESS

Pick your sect, any sect,
and open accompanying texts
of wondrous stories
from one page to the next
of checks and then glory,
of godliness and gore.

ENGINE

Nature's innovator
and great conservator.

Blind and invisible,
bats and chameleons.

The wheels of change/not change,
chains and dirigibles,
engine evolution.

MYTHTORY

Kronos swallowed Jonah,
sparing Noah's bayan ark,
while Vishnu churned the sea,

and Typhon birthed Leviathan
when he halved the Sea of Reeds.

Jesus chopped down the banyan
they called Yggdrasil
and carved it into a cross.

Then he crucified Buddha and Odin
and all the other gods.

Antonis Balasopoulos 2 poems

The Raven

The raven is a kind of parody;
a winged vandalism
at the expense of the letter.
Because, though we were created
in the image of a face,
we have fallen into the similitude
of a sign worn thin
by interpretations.
And so, we would have liked
to be shiny and black
and cacophonous
and to leave the traces of rakes
on the snow-covered earth.
This is what the crow is for us:
A “nevermore” darker
than the parrot’s and more decisive
than the sweet loquacity of the nightingale
a mirror we break
intentionally, despite the seven
years of bad luck. As to
what we ourselves are for the raven
I don’t know. Ask
the wires and ask the grain fields
that have gone yellow with madness
and get away, get away from
this poem.

The Birth of History in Herodotus

Onesilus taught me two things
about the nature of history: the first is a buzz,
like that between stations in A.M radio—
cries, threnodies, words
from which the articulation is missing.
The second is a bitter aftertaste in honey,
the thought, in other words, mechanically
deposited by bees as they labour
in the empty skull.
“I was aware”, this thought says,
filling the hall of the cranium
with a voice in Minor key,
“but I didn’t really know.
I looked but did not see.
And I was born too late
too late from the start.”

Mark A. Murphy 2 poems

The Dreaming Dead

i

We have left Eleanor Marx dreaming
The date, April 5, 1898

Too late in the day to cry rape,
murder, free love

Too late to explicate compulsion
or beating stick,
but we join our thoughts to hers

Confronting opium
and bridle, as if to undo the trauma
of control and craving

In her mind's eye, a thaumatrope
Twirling in the dark

On the anterior a bird
On the inverse a cage

So the persistence of memory fades
like trap door and wire trap

ii

That was 45, 256 days ago
Now we arrive

at Jew's Walk
to appropriate the past

Welcome her return
from the dead

Trace the fire flowers in her mind
Another thaumatrope

On the anterior a cart wheel
On the inverse the world

View from IK-6 Penal Colony (155 Miles East of Moscow)

i

'The Pen' will not be rehabilitated today,
though his ghost still gifts cacti
like a man on a field mission,
who can't ignore
the imperatives of Politburo, Principo
Island, show trial, pick.
If revolutions take place according to certain laws,
does this mean the masses in action
are aware of those laws?

And does it matter
that the People's Commissar suspends
his disbelief for blind faith?
And though cerebral haemorrhage
is never far
from the Old Man's mind, the parietal bone
still can't resist the bungled blow
of the ice axe.
So much for this or that mistake.
The airbrush of history
never cheats, accepts defeat, or accedes
to the get-out-of-jail card.

ii

Dawn's mildness could never convey
the Volga's quiet flood,
the muffled cries
beneath the black cloth veil,
the snuffing out
of peasant's lanterns,
or the political prisoner's manifesto,
whose solitary confinement
defines our age.

While the living flower on the chain
asks only that we recognise our restraints.

Mission Statement/Editor's Note

“What the mass media offer is not popular art, but entertainment which is intended to be consumed like food, forgotten and replaced by a new dish. This is bad for everyone; the majority lose all genuine taste of their own, and the minority become cultural snobs.” W.H. Auden

There is only one standard for artistry of any kind, and that is excellence. This is not to exclude anyone from practising art. On the contrary, we wish to encourage the production of art from everyone, regardless of class, race, ethnicity, faith, disability, sexuality or gender. Many myths about art and literature have been propagated by various professors and academics in the West over the centuries (mainly by white, middle and upper class men, in the modern epoch) that would exclude most of the members of our society from doing art.

POETiCA REViEW stands in contradistinction to those values that promote the ‘good’ as esoteric, whilst excluding the vast majority from participation. We hope to give voice to the myriad of disparate voices within the artistic community, locally, and internationally, regardless of notoriety or who is currently favoured by this or that magazine. Our mission is to inject new blood into the poetry scene. We will not shy away from political poetry or indeed any poetry with an ‘edge’ (poetry at the margins).

The ‘great’ and the ‘good’ are not untouchable. Our ability to discern and define what is ‘good’ and ‘bad’ is what defines us as human beings. It is fundamental to our intellectual and emotional make up. One might say, it has become part of our human nature. But human nature is not immutable, nor are our ideas. Notions of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ change over time. However, what is clearly unacceptable to us at **POETiCA REViEW**, is the exclusion from doing art of any writer or artist on the grounds of any social or institutional barriers.

‘High art’, W.H. Auden lamented, only continues to exist in our society because its audience is too small to interest the mass media. Our mission is to make ‘high art’ accessible to all. Finally, we have no hidden agendas, our house is open. We exist to promote diversity. The only agenda for **POETiCA REViEW** is the search for excellence. Read, enjoy and feel free to submit!

Submissions and Guidelines

Before we go any further with our submission guidelines please note: we only publish work that excites us and we have confidence in (tickles our aesthetic taste buds) which means what we publish comes down to personal tastes. If we don't publish your work, it's not so much a judgment on the quality of your writing, as a reflection on our own personal preferences.

POETiCA REViEW exists to promote the work of new and older poets alike, the less fortunate, the dispossessed, those without a voice, but encourage the artistic talents of all, not just a privileged minority.

All are welcome to submit. We believe a poetry ezine/journal with the philosophy of 'inclusivity' at its core can act as a springboard to support further artistic development, and encourage writers to keep producing and to participate more widely in the art scene.

POETiCA REViEW appreciates the hard work of others involved in the arts. It is our belief that all thinking beings are capable of producing good art, talents vary enormously among individuals, but we humans share a common language of ideas and feelings and can all make our individual contributions felt in the social and artistic life of our society. We look for the 'good' in everything, whether it is enjoying a good meal or looking at a painting or reading a poem.

Please submit up to 5 poems at a time (40 lines max. each poem) in the body of the email and as an attachment. Times New Roman. 12-point font only.

All submissions to be sent via email to: poeticareview@gmail.com

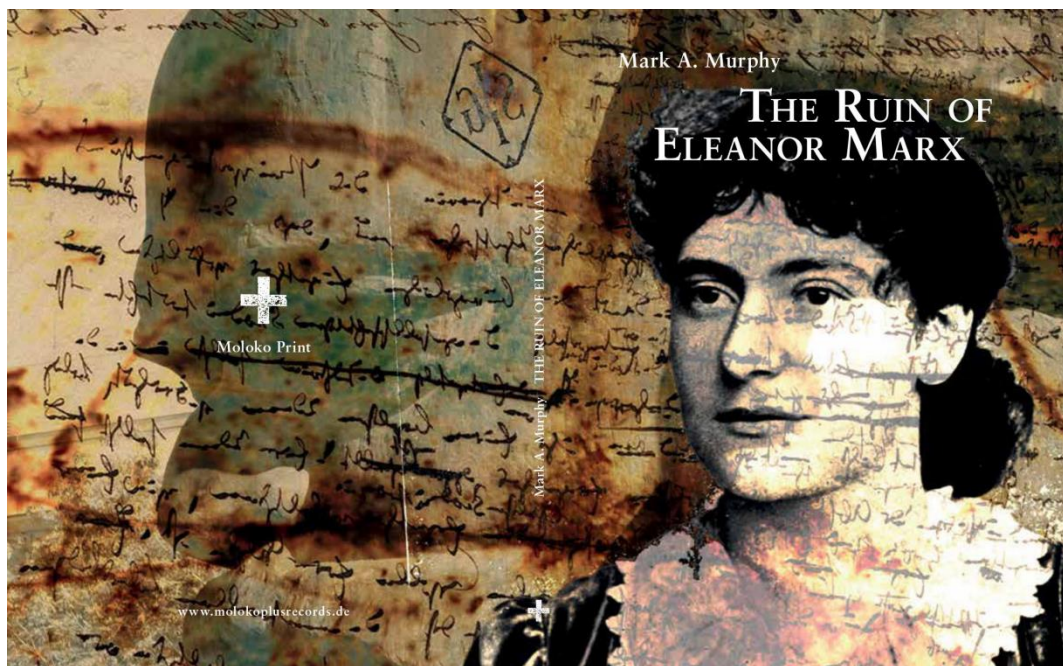
Response to submissions, from 1 week to 3 months.

The Ruin of Eleanor Marx

by Mark A. Murphy

AVAILABLE NOW from Moloko Print:

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‘The Ruin of Eleanor Marx’ is absolutely riveting.

I doubt that if I were to read a standard biography of Eleanor Marx, I would experience the depth of emotional resonance that I have felt with this book. I also doubt I would come away from such a biography with the degree of understanding and empathy for the subject, as I have with this extraordinary collection.

Mark A. Murphy’s evocative, and compassionate telling of Eleanor Marx’s life and final ‘ruin’, has produced a poetry collection that is of historic, artistic, and philosophical significance. This book deserves to go viral.

**Purchase ‘The Ruin of Eleanor Marx’
by Mark A. Murphy at the link below...**

<http://www.molokoplusrecords.de/finder.php?folder=Print&content=182>

Or contact author below for a signed copy...

editorpoeticareview@gmail.com

Paul Dononhoe

Mark A. Murphy has written, with deep empathy, a moving collection of poetry illuminating Eleanor Marx's life.

These daring poems could be the early women's movement writ small—a trailblazer who defiantly announces: "I am a Jewess" in solidarity with striking factory workers, a published author, teacher, and well-known Socialist activist in her own right.

Karl Marx's youngest daughter, "Tussy" emerges in poems that are pitch-perfect/devastatingly told, wry, witty and tender. Yet, Eleanor Marx relentlessly subjugated her own needs, first to her ailing mother, then to her father, and finally to a caddish married lover. We race with her through the calamitous late 1800s; we see her in thrall and in disillusionment.

The Ruin of Eleanor Marx is a visionary work from one of the finest poets writing today.

Trish Saunders

'The Ruin of Eleanor Marx' is a poetry collection whose greatest quality is that it knows there is more to the world than poetry, and more to poetry than the mere arrangement of words. Mark Murphy is, however, a poet who both has a story to tell – and what a tale it is! – and the language to make that story come alive.

But fear not if you aren't an expert on the ups and downs of the Marx family. Murphy's poems open a welcoming door through which the non-specialist reader can easily walk.

Kevin Higgins

Mark Murphy tells an engaging and compelling story in masterful verse. I was sucked into *The Ruin of Eleanor Marx*, couldn't put it down, and then hastened to re-read it, only to find myself even more impressed. Highly recommended!

John Burroughs, 2019-2021 Ohio Beat Poet Laureate and author of 'Rattle and Numb.'

Contributor's Notes

Michele Parker Randall is the author of *Museum of Everyday Life* (Kelsay Books 2015) and *A Future Unmappable*, chapbook (Finishing Line Press 2021). Her work can be found in *Nimrod International Journal*, *Atlanta Review*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, *Tar River Poetry*, and elsewhere.

Steve Bell is a poet living with his wife Gina in Colorado. His work is inspired by his Christian faith, the natural world, current events, and family history. His poetry has been featured in a wide variety of publications including *Ekstasis*, *Oddball Magazine*, the *Colorado Sun*, and *Verse-Virtual*.

Tanya Standish McIntyre is a poet and visual artist based in Quebec, Canada. Her debut collection, *The House You Are Born In*, was published in McGill-Queens University Press's *Hugh MacLennan Poetry Series* in December '22. Her work is featured in numerous journals and anthologies. Visit her website at tanyastandishmcintyre.com.

KB Ballentine loves to travel and practice sword fighting and Irish step dancing: those Scottish and Irish roots run deep! When not tucked in a corner reading or writing, she makes daily classroom appearances to her students. Learn more at www.kballentine.com.

Deepa Onkar has worn many hats including those of editor, journalist and teacher. Her poems have previously appeared in literary magazines such as *The Bombay Literary Magazine* and *The Lake*, among others. She currently lives in Chennai, India.

Philip Kobylarz is an itinerant teacher of the language arts and writer of fiction, poetry, book reviews, and essays.

Kate LaDew is a graduate from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro with a BA in Studio Arts. She lives in Graham, NC with her cats James Cagney and Janis Joplin.

Jeremy Nathan Marks lives in Canada. He is a 2022 Best of the Net nominee in poetry and author of the collection, *Of Fat Dogs & Amorous Insects* (Alien Buddha Press, 2021).

Phil Kirby's collections are 'Watermarks' (Arrowhead, 2009) and 'The Third History' (Lapwing, 2018). Poems have appeared in Acumen, Poetry Ireland, Stand and various UK and international magazines. He is now working towards a third collection. Writing as P.K. Kirby, a teen novella, 'Hidden Depths' (Applefire, 2016), is available on Kindle.

Ali Ashhar is a poet, short story writer and columnist. He is the author of poetry collection, Mirror of Emotions. His works appear in Indian Review, The Raven Review, Bosphorus Review of Books, among others.

Gonzalinho da Costa's poetry has been published in Vox Poetica, The Penmen Review, Poetry Pacific, Torrid Literature Journal, POETiCA REViEW, The Ekphrastic Review, Blue Heron Review, and many others. Gonzalinho da Costa is the pen name of Joseph I. B. Gonzales, a management, communication, research, statistics, and artificial intelligence consultant. He has graduate degrees in the humanities, management, communication, and statistics. He enjoys hiking, cycling, swimming, and skiing.

Giovanni Boskovich (b. 1985) is a poet and educator born and raised in San Pedro, California. He holds an MA in Literature from California State University Dominguez Hills where he published a thesis on Emily Dickinson. In his free time, he surfs anywhere from Palos Verdes to Mexico.

Edward L. Canavan is a Los Angeles based poet whose work has most recently been published in Literary Heist, The Opiate, and Literatus. His second poetry collection entitled "Protest and Isolation" was released by Cyberwit Press in July 2020.

Born and raised in the Bronx, NY, he currently resides in North Hollywood, California, where he practices Buddhism and listens to Barry Adamson.

Stephen Ruffus was raised in New York City and has lived in Colorado and California where he studied literature and writing at Colorado State University and the University of California at Irvine. For the majority of his professional life he has lived in Salt Lake City where he taught at The University of Utah and Salt Lake Community College. Currently, he's retired and has spent the last few years reconnecting with his writing life after a long hiatus. Most recently, his work has appeared in The Shore, The American Journal of Poetry, Hotel Amerika, the Valparaiso Poetry Review, and Third Wednesday, among others. Also, he was a semifinalist in a recent chapbook competition sponsored by Passenger Journal.

Tanya Standish McIntyre is a poet and visual artist based in Quebec, Canada. Her debut collection, *The House You Are Born In*, was published in McGill-Queens University Press's Hugh MacLennan Poetry Series in December '22. Her work is featured in numerous journals and anthologies. Visit her website at tanyastandishmcintyre.com.

Grant Guy has returned to writing after a 5/6 years absence. Before the five years he had many poems and short stories published online and as hard copy. He has had four books published: *On The Bright Side Of Down* (a collection of stories, prose poems and poems), *Bus Stop Bus Stop* (a collection of stories based on my experience of transcontinental bus travel), *Blues For A Mustang* (A collection of poems) and *The Life And Lies Of Calamity Jane* (a novella).

Duane Vorhees

