

POETiCA REViEW



Issue 18

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Summer 2023

POETiCA REViEW has always thought that poetry can change lives, and still does. We believe artists have a responsibility to step up to the mark, and say the things, others, perhaps less privileged, would like to, or are unable to say. If humanity is to survive the current and impending planetary disasters beyond the next few generations, we must learn new ways of thinking and living together.

The Editors

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Chief Editor: **Mark A. Murphy**
Assistant Editor: **Kieran Conway**



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Nehir Özhan 1 poem

No Longer

forgive me, my dearest,
I have nearly forgotten
your face.

I grip onto
this pile of soil
hoping it holds
a speck of you.

I stare upon
this sombre stone
hoping it knows
your story,
our story.

forgive me, my dearest,
I have nearly forgotten
you.

J Farina 1 poem

passages

beside this quiet river, the sound of wind

over tall grass
mixes with freighters

sounding horns in their night passage
through the rapids
measured by the ticking of seconds

luminous dials beaming
radioactive hours
counted by hidden lovers on benches

and others alone trying to feel
some semblance of their splendor
as evening's passages conclude

leaving only sounds of bow waves
eroding the shores
under the wings of loveless gulls

Millicent Borges Accardi 2 poems

As There are Silences

from a line in "Fresno Field," Sara Borjas

As there are silences, we unwrap
 each other like fall, after a break.
 Imagining ourselves as compact
 and invisible at the core of our
 own internal agency, the freedom
 not to speak, the energy of holding
 back from bursting the bubble forth
 the racism that rears its words
 like an astonishment to those
 of us within ear distance.
 The silence hides out on top of
 the evening roof, sanctuary,
 crafted unknowingly in the wake
 of our own voices, held back by
 choices we never imagined we would
 decide on. We are strike-breakers,
 who cross the picket line of language,
 a vocal occupation of our tender nervous
 system. Words meant to captivate, to
 bold both deprive and impress,
 capturing zero in a sense of belonging.
 "You, there," He says, and looks
 Past my face into a bakery on Cogshall Street,
 "Hey, Portugee, I said, Hey Portugee."
 We are sorted and taught to stare
 off into a climate of choices we can only
 consider ours, after we have pulled away.
 A new house where she nor I have dared
 To enter without crossing ourselves.
 The boys downstairs, making loud
 Smacking noises with their tongues
 pressed against their open lips.

The Ways in which my Collar lifts

--“We Used to Say, Aww, Hell. We’re Young,” Viktoria Valenzuela

A craftsman does not make perfect things.
He is not immune to making mistakes
Or errors of thought and execution.
He is employed in an atmosphere
Of the work, of the art, of the skill
That anything is possible and there
Is no turning back. No throwing
Away of lost, sorted parts and bits
Of wood. Nothing is discarded or
Given up on. A craftsman has the voice
And the hands filled with talent
Not necessarily flair but the boldness
of peace, brought to the broken
and the given up on, the clay folded
after shaping, the misshapen
alignment, a dirty mark where clean
was intended. A craftsman forms
a conglomerate out of a boom
of new material in stock on sale.
Making do with what he has at hand.
A fierce defendant of prospering
as a survivor. Of making errors
turn inward..

Richard Oyama 2 poems

Propers

For Aretha

The old label envisioned another Dinah Washington
And you did your best to oblige. But Wexler knew
The sound could be found in Alabama shoals.
When your voice swooped and rumbled across the airwaves
What I heard was a soul and body entire.
The piano accented your heart's celestial diameter.
Bethel Baptist was in there—you never *did* leave—but
Dr Feelgood's medicine in the morning was solidly secular.
If you demanded your propers, you insisted we *think* too.
That love and liberty means no compromise. Wexler coined
A saint's name: Our Lady of Mysterious Sorrows.
I took habitation in your indestructible voice.
 You sang a song that brooks no quarter,
 The north star of us all.

In the Sanctum of the Hotel of Revelations

*It is the human that is the alien,
The human that has no cousin in the moon.*

—Wallace Stevens

Picture the hotel in the last world.
Picture the black hearse at the curb.

The valets are old men, odorous of vegetative matter, suited in
Scrubs. Dead palms in the atrium whisper dread.

Our knees sink into maroon plush.

From the baccarat tables and ball rooms the tuxedoed guests
And floating gowns emerge, faces swathed in gauze.

The hotelier fades back as you approach. He is
Imperious. He commands your insignificance.

In a side chapel a god howls with laughter. He
Finds our mendacity contemptible and mean.

Linda M. Crate 1 poem

part of the sunset

the place i grew up
in the countryside is ageless,
beautiful and full of life;

the clouds sprawl against the
bluest skies—

a little heaven on this earth,
where the crows befriended me when
i was a child and where the deer
are curious enough to look at me from a
distance before their white tails dodge
into the trees;

here is a place full of both happiness and wounds,
memories of rain and snow and sun
and everything between—

here is where i consider home,
it's the only place that doesn't feel like
an imposter simply holding my things for a time;

because for me home is usually a person—

yet in the green, feral wilds
i am home;
paint me against a blue sky and white clouds
and you'll see i am part of the sunset
later that night.

Terez Peipins 2 poems

One More

There is still a space
that allows one more poem,
one more walk through green,
a shared meal by the sea
of Phoenicians and Greeks,
Iberians and me.
I bow to the gods
that brought me here
and let me slip away
in measured steps
to leave little behind.

Romance

1.

The taverna
on the corner street
of Crete,
I sing for the soldier,
my lullaby brings back
mother's breath,
and distant north.

2.

On the rooftop,
We name planes
flying low to LaGuardia.
Duchess, a bright blue,
Belvedere coming home.

3.

In the bar in Queens,
the Irish boy
stuffs poems
 into his back pocket

Bruce McRae 5 poems

Mind Your Language

This is just to remind you
that you're running low on words
you have yet to use
in your so-called poetry and letters.

Gone are stentorian and roustabout,
and your overuse of skedaddle has been noted.
Goodbye lapidary, ravishment, pharmacopeia.
And how you worked gallimaufry
into a sentence we'll never know.
An admirable accomplishment.

Qualia left us scratching our collective heads,
but somehow you were able
to convey its meaning in a sentence.
Pataphysics, now there's a word
you don't read or hear used very often. Or at all.

Somehow you've managed to avoid ever using
whelp or musty, not even casually referenced
in an offhand and cavalier fashion.
Also, we're not too sure about the foreign phrases,
our policy rather vague on the matter.
Premeditatio malorum doesn't quite ring a bell.
And who knew genethalia
was ancient Greek for 'birthday'?
Nosophobia? Really? In what sense, exactly?

And as for the made-up words already employed;
you do realize that, generally, it's forbidden?
Computron and abomynous simply don't exist
and convey nothing resembling information.

We suggest you get back to using basic Saxon.
That's where the real money is.
'Fuck' has always been quite popular.
Stay away from the current slang however.
By whatever means, avoid Pig Latin.

Phobaphobia

Fear measured out in God and brio.
Fear, another precinct of the worried.
On wheels and platinum pinions.

That's not blood on your breath,
it's what fear tastes like,
it's a bolus of terror,
we little people compromised.
We're scared rigid with it.

A creature upwind,
you can smell the stink withal.
A gash in the heather,
you fall into its sand trap.
A kitten in a culvert,
you rise and run from this,
your fear of madness.
Fear of lack.
Fear of lapsing badly.

You're afraid of circus clowns
and downtown traffic.
Of the rat gnawing cable
in your mincemeat cranium.
Fear with yellow teeth
and an elegant wardrobe.
That's spat in your cereal
and stirs your mai tai
with a grubby thumb.

Essential fear,
a commodity of mass production.
The fear of love and loneliness.
A-scared of sleep and your awakening.
Of the intricate workings of life itself.
Those moments of utter joy?
You should be frightened.

The Death Of Radio

This next song goes Juno and Janus,
a couple of kid in the throes
of love's decrees and boney calculus

This next song is dedicated
to all you narcoleptics in the audience.
To the purveyors of psychotropics.
To the Invisible One, a grinder of bones.
To the figure at the top of the staircase.
To the brewers of storms and eaters of children.

But first a word from our illustrious sponsors,
the Cloud Appreciation Society,
the Royal and Ancient Order of Marblers,
the Sewers of Barley and Emmer,
the good people who brought you a secret winter,
its legends of cold and mythical snowmen —
and all in time for the holy-day rush,
the darkest hour of the darkest season,
when we sparkle in our madness.

We Are Not Sleeping

This night is millions of years at once.
This night is new and nothingness.
The consistency of darkness, this night
is full of corners, spiders, great regrets.
Star-plugged, sleep-locked, moony-tight,
this night is the colour of monsters
and is mottled with insomnia.

Earth turns planetwise,
the sleepless encumbered with small oblivions,
this night the precinct of the bat,
the flamboyant cockroach's measure,
the wolf pack's house, the mouse's temple.

The quiet hums its nursery rhymes.
Everything is as it should be.
Another moment flowers into existence.

You Must Remember This

Not just a kiss,
a candy-coated curse,
a wasp in a bottle,
the X of a signed confession.

The singer sang it wrong.
A kiss is a rift in the ionosphere.
A bullet you bite down hard upon.
An angelic covenant.

When the stars blow kisses
they're waving at ghosts
which only they can see.
A letter sealed with a kiss
is a warrant for arrest.
Some kisses are broken glass
and some are rainwater
in a desert of drought.

You are graced by a kiss's presence
or damned into exile
for the sin of daring to be sentient,
for having loved the wrong person,
for having a loose mouth
in a time of war.
For claiming godhead.

One kiss I kissed
was a cut to the lips.
I bled for the better part of a year,
and for the worst part.
Now I see kisses everywhere:
a flock squawking over wetlands;
in swarms of locusts;
in the eye of the beholder.
I'm so starved I could eat
a case of kisses in one sitting.
In my mind is a rose blooming
and a mouthful of sunsets
I need to tell you about.
Kissed, I can only wear velveteen.
I can only eat tangerines out of the crisper.
None of my jokes are funny.

The kiss that rang around the world.
The kiss that will live in infamy.
The kiss that launched a thousand ships.

As if a deathbed secret.
As a burden made heavy with time.
As when protons collide,
creating a third and stranger element.

Not just a kiss, our hearts were married.

John Hicks 2 poems

Islands

They tell me about places off-island they've heard of—places they won't try.

One Sunday I went down to the river, hired a boatman to take me around the canals of ancient Thonburi. Houses sat side-by-side, entirely open to the water; a bamboo blind could be lowered for privacy. Each had its own dock. On another Sunday, the boatman's year-old daughter was with him in a new pink dress. She was tired, so we went to his dock where her mother took her. The whole family came out, waved and smiled. Then we went to another canal lined with shops also open to the water, and delivered a message from his wife. More smiles and waves.

assigned abroad,
we seek our countrymen,
their talk, customs, food,

but they've made an island:
home-like; safe isolation;
they need me to join

In the open, unclaimed plot behind my house, someone brought a water buffalo to graze. Two barefoot boys—probably its minders—played a game. One scrambled up on its back and leaped as far as he could. The other marked his landing with a stick, then took his turn. With each turn they performed a more and more elaborate dance before leaping. They imitated the ritual dance of Thai kickboxers to honor their teachers before a match.

they take me to their club;
tell me who to trust, who not,
where it's safe to go;

advise where to shop,
help me find an apartment,
how to get by

Tomorrow is the night for *Loi Krathong* Festival. Friends will show me the small flower-decorated rafts they're making at home. We'll release them on a waterway near their temple to float away a year of negativity and fears with prayers, candles, and incense.

islands make their place
entirely above water
I came to swim

One Step Removed

Bangkok

Here you need shoes you can slip in and out of easily when entering a residence or temple. It's like leaving my skin at the door; stepping into another.

we shed easily
what we carry lightly
skin has memory

Jay Bond 2 poems

April Snow

Our house is on fire.

Greta Thunberg

Seasons drift askew across the equinox
Once we could set our clocks by them
Tick, tock
Clouds hang akimbo, stiff
like ancient bats
leaking last liquids
Drip, drop

Datta, Dayadhvam, Damyata:
Give, be compassionate, have self-control

At New Year, we make our resolutions
Doing is so much easier than undoing

The trailblazers are out each day,
the trekkers and star-seekers,
out to see the wildflowers, the violets of farthest reaches,
the rare orioles, the last limbs and vestiges
the delicate shells and fern spores
of the shores and the forests

A vast untiring army, shadowing every contour:
“I had not thought death had undone so many”
A sweep of bruises left
Careless, everywhere

Leaves shiver in the peripheral vision
of a girl with dove-blue hands, reaching to the trees

Snow drops and slides over the Spring branches’
Poised and eternal forms,
trace new lines lovingly, pitifully
along the furrowed trunk.

April. Will this be her very last snow?

Our blind articulations ring
Wide as the fright of the child in the forest

Amid the monuments, fires of the homeless glow
In smoky headlights stand the deer; dismayed, silent
As lightning illuminates
the fallen trees lying in tidy lines

A faraway star blinks

Lightly as a dandelion's breath
Vanishingly rare

Oh, open your eyes
Open wide
Our house is on fire

Datta, Dayadhvam, Damyata
Give, be compassionate, have self-control

* "Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata." is taken from The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad and appears in the final lines of T.S. Eliot's The Wasteland

* Listen to composition written for 'April Snow' by Australian composer Barry McKimm, and see artwork by English botanical artist Marianne North (et alia) at the link below...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWp5Onaqkec>

The Leaving

Our world is departing without leaving word
In lands without names there is nothing left to say
We're running out of words to save the world

As we speak the world is leaving leaving as it turns
Without taking leave our world has turned away
Leaving forests without songs or singing birds

The trees are fading tell the birds tides have turned
All the words in the world can't save the day
Life is waning, our undoing air forsakes the ancient ferns

Home has fled the scene, slammed the door. Shadows burn.
The ways to save our lives have run away
Grass ungreens light waves in falls streams depart without return

Spinning skew we watch the leaving at the turning of day
Creation hangs unknowing still we fall apart in space unstirred
Life is leaving all our doing at last closing of the day
We have failed to save the words to turn the dying of the day



Chris Voisard, Art: 'The Leaving'

C. J. Anderson-Wu 1 poem

Handbook of Conflict Avoidance

"We tried to obtain our rights to education and independence through reasoning, but instead, we were punished," said the Iranian women.

"We tried to effect changes in the ruling power through elections, but in this country, such a thing does not exist," said pro-democracy Hong Kong detainees.

"We tried to stop government corruption by disclosing information, but we got ourselves in trouble," said the indicted journalists.

"We tried to express our love of peace in an anti-war march, but the march was brutally cracked down," said the incarcerated Russian dissidents.

"We tried to mitigate climate disasters by preserving our territories, but no one listens," said indigenous communities.

"We tried to earn the respect of society by becoming model citizens, but we are still suspects of every crime," said African Americans.

"We tried to be left in peace by obeying the regime, but we ended up in genocide," said Uyghurs.

"We tried to appease the aggressor by dissuading some countries' membership application, but it did not stop the invasion," said NATO.

"We tried to remain blind to the injustices inflicted on others for our own survival, but we only hastened our own victimhood," said us.

Paul Brucker 1 poem

Making the Grade in Eighth Grade

There will be drama. There will be blood.
After all, it's the eighth grade.

I was having a swell time
riding through the heavens on an eight-legged horse
until Mister Comber grunts and glares.

I just stare back into his eye and breath normally,
making every effort not to blink.

This time my empty phrases, hurried promises
and cagey behavior fail to save the day.

But I refuse to abandon my principles
so I laugh like it's all a joke.

After all, Mister Cucumber Head wildly claims to have proof
but won't disclose it
until drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds.

I'm ordered to the principal's office,
third time this week.
Heads nod approvingly.

An anti-Christ makes kissy-kissy faces at me.
Let him have his fun.
Within a week, he'll die from a panther bite.

The hallway looks scattered as if dismantled for repair.
I know what I see first isn't always what occurs first
so I try to be objective with my thoughts.

A girl I fancy comes through the rye
poor body, she comes through the rye.

A nerd, nose in dull book,
jaywalks to the boy's room.

An oaf ties and reties his muddy sneakers
every which way and loose.

A heavy-load waddles to the water fountain,
gargles for all eternity
then, when all hope is gone, spits out a foreign object.

A jock marches to Pretoria
followed by a devil-may-care cheerleader
doing her darnedest
to dance the Freddie.

And a fool signals his intention
to wait by the wayside
until his fake broken wrist heals.

I'm minutes late for my appointment.
How did I get this way?
Will I ever get another chance?
Will my wishes eventually wash dishes?

There will be drama. There will be a price to pay.
After all, it's the eighth grade.

I prepare to look the invisible in the eye.

Kylie Roberts 1 poem

A Traveling Corsage

Isn't it ironic?
You never once got me flowers
Yet your mouth spits poison
Words of oleander and lotus

Disguised as daffodils
Your eyes are white roses
Pricked by your own thorns
Petals cascade as you cry

Tears so stunning
Your hair sprouts curls
Of yellow sunflowers
You love to plant your seed

And watch new life bloom
Pollinated by the bees
A temptress for the birds
Both crave to spread your seeds

That was your excuse anyway
You just couldn't keep your
Amaranths to yourself
No matter how much I cried

And begged you to use me
I could be your garden
Your flower bed
But you'll always be a traveling corsage

Bound to a bride, or two, or three
Looking so beautiful, but
never on me

Jude Brigley 3 poems

"Oo-oo-wee!"

The train whistle blows every night at twelve
and the freight hurtles through sound,

like a scene from an old movie for now
the guy knows his lover is leaving, or when

a bum hopefully hitches a ride on the bend
where the rails slow the engine's passage.

Lying in bed all those scenes play in the mind,
reminiscent of all those raw departures -

dolefully left at the station, the airport,
the roadside, the coffin. A train whistle

blows its saddest song to the wind, signals
change as the rails click into place.

The trees will do your crying for you
on these windy nights that shake the roots.

Yes, it's a lonesome whistle that warns the tracks
ahead with what the night already knows.

Night Visitor

On rainy nights when the wind blows, the letterbox rattles and knocks, as if someone standing out in the cold is desperate for warmth and for hearth. If you try to ignore the knock on the door, the stranger will only repeat with rattling blow on the doorway below, importuning the night with a grief. Looking out from the window, the doorway is dark and no stranger has ever been seen. But is it the wind that is crying below or something that craves scrutiny? Is it someone who walked where these houses now stand, mistaking this place for her farm? Or someone you knew with something to say? Either way she can do you no harm, but enter your dream as you lie in your bed, as the knock more insistently grows.

And do you consider what she might say, if you opened the door to her plea? The wind swirls the leaves in the eye of the storm, the mouth of the scurry breathes low. The moon gazes down with indifferent gaze as you examine the door down the stairs. 'If you are mine,' you whisper with care, 'you are welcome. You give me no fear, but if you are not, then go from this gate. There is nothing for you centred here.' The abrupt wind drops and rain patters down like diligent tears the sky fails to control and when it has ceased and the sun starts to rise a robin announces it is dawn.

Afterwards

And perhaps grief does not have an ending;
a leaf unfurling its buds, growing and releasing

like those on the tree in the park you only notice
in spurts. There will always be a moment of

forgetting when you promise yourself a walk
over the red step to the noisy kitchen for tea

and counselling, but with a shock of air expiring,
you remember that this juncture has passed.

Though you may reap the day's moments
ready for capture and retelling, the curtains

are drawn as you speak in the silences; the voice
cannot be preserved. It has ceased and you cannot

recover its sounds from tombs of the memory.
Your phone conjures up a random photograph

or a whole reel set to music and they say - that
must make you sad. They don't know the quarter.

For the leaf and the scroll and the silence and the brick
intermingle becoming the fabric of land

Nadia Arioli 3 poems

Molars

The shadows from the tree brush your ceiling and walls, stippling our bodies where they lie. You are finding things by what is not there. You say, There, between the twig-shadow and leaf-shadow, over by the corner is a candle flickering, and there a box opening and shutting. The wind, you say, will let nothing stay put. Look, a glass of milk spilling, now it's a plane on the sheet. The wind will let nothing stay. And then, you stop, and the room fills with your silence, and we are that silence. You turn onto your side, no longer seeing shadows or the gaps between. I know the eye-shaped space between your back and my stomach could be shut. I want to love you without stippling in broken gestures. I want to seal myself to you. But poking through your sweatshirt is your vertebrae, your teeth in the back. The eye in the white bedsheet will remain. It is and is not.

Canines

Once, I made a human tooth from a bottle. It was clean, and it shone, crisp and curved, lik a sail on a ship. I folded the bottle on the side of my desk until it splattered into grin, perched on its neck. I found the right tooth and with it I bit down.

Clown Seeking Copulation

What are you so afraid of,
that a dozen balloons will
fall out my vagina—
red or in any other color?

Do you think I've painted
my two sets of lips garishly
or that I'll juggle your head
mid-thrust along with two bright balls?

Or you might be thinking
I'm a bearded lady in quite
unexpected ways because
you've never taken off more than a shoe.

What's most worrisome is I'll say some
ridiculous thing after completing the act
about coming and going or I'll say I must
be a sinking ship because the seamen pour out.

But I won't. I won't say a word
The moon will leave its oily stain
like the softest of lipsticks
I'll arch my back like a cat made out of sea.
And afterward, you won't have to hold me—
at least, not very much.

Julie Bolt 4 poems

Flow

I am the mother, the witch, the huntress, the sage, the mystic, the lover

I am the lover, the mystic, the gatherer, the pagan, the daughter, the waif

I am the waif, the traveler, the healer, the explorer, the community worker

I am the worker, the soother, the disruptor, the raven, the wolf and the spider

I am the spider, the weaver, the worker, the lover, the sister, the peasant, the sorcerer

I am the sorcerer, the child, the crone, the disruptor, the crazy, the fortress, the leader

I am the leader, the needer, the sister, the misfit, the potential, the gift and the power

I am the power, the listener, the friend, the embracer, the giver, the taker

I sit by your side, link eyes, move with movement

I'm water

Marigolds

My parents breathed theater like fire
 Supernovas departing their hometowns
 Blooming gold for Broadway brilliance
 Characters resurrected from others' imagination

Oh, those halcyon days
 Of flared pants and parties
 The breezy nights of chain smoking
 My asthma flaring

Debates among hungry thespians
 and future producers
 Straddling our brown butterfly chairs
 Big ideas, big words, raucous gestures

The curtain: me backstage, restless
 A beleaguered stagehand fretting
 My toddler's mind absorbing
 The river of words and worlds

The character, the line, the scene
 Seed thoughts traveling the speed of light
 I learned actors are bigger than life
 Theater is the only life
 Matinee brings Godot and twilight brings Gamma Rays

Estragon says, "I'm like that.
 Either I forget right away
 or I never forget."

Tillie: "This part of me was formed from a tongue of fire
 that screamed through the heavens until there was our sun."

"... Atom," she said
 "What a beautiful word."

The best things in life are free

except health care, land and airspace
The moon, however, belongs to everyone
but mostly the Americans, Chinese, and Russians
The stars? *They* belong to everyone
who uses the International Registry
because the flowers in spring, the robins that sing
the sunbeams that shine
they're yours and they're mine
some of the time
the best things in life are free

Aeronautic

Hope is the thing of feathers
My clipped wings grew back bright as a tiger forged by anvil and fire
I soar above the leaping whales with their triumphant spouts and spins
The thrill, the glide, the win
The soar and blaze and thrall of destination
My migration is to a higher vibration
Not carrying the weight of people's ego trips, their projections
Have you tried astral intervention?
Or words without body guards and weapons?
Degrade another, degrade yourself
Clipped wings aim to steal a soul's nature
Caging, gauging, taking a wager
If you could see yourself through my eyes --
Flight brings a bird's eye view
I am off to better weather
Fly in beauty sister, just not together

Mark A. Murphy 5 poems

Prelude in E Minor Op. 28 No. 4

for Nora

What is this sadness that invites us
to withdraw into the magic
of minor keys? Are we the astronomers
of descending melodies, discovering

the faintest of stars? Is this what loneliness
sounds like? Chord chains
from another dimension? As if the heart,
(cleaved from the body) still grieves alone

in a Warsaw crypt. Tomorrow we smile
again, for tonight we live
our saddest dreams.

See You Tomorrow

i

I have a tree. I have a pain.
Here, take my tree. Here, take

my pain. Is this tree yours or mine.
Is this pain yours or mine.

Now which tree will you entrust
to the Obersturmbannführer.

ii

Not all questions have answers.
Not all questions are worth noting.

I can't know you are in pain.
I can only believe you are in pain.

I can't know I'll see you tomorrow.
I can only believe I will see you.

If a tree falls in the forest,
does anybody hear the forest fall.

Rabochy i Kolkhoznistaⁱ

With the help of time and other disasters
 the heroic statue has almost gone to ruin,
 And the words of Mayakovsky are only a far-away echo
 in the snow-white streets of old Moscow.
 The confident outstretched arms, lying, as if in state, do not mock,
 but plead against a backdrop of struggles,
 wars, massacres and defeats.
 And though Stalin's Moscow may not have believed in sorrow,
 the worker and the farm girl may still cry out
 and turn the Moskva River blood-red
 with their indignant tears.
 While man, imperfect man, controller of the universe,
 whose hopes and dreams are the stuff of children's stories
 will find nothing surprising
 in the lickspittle, the gangster and whore master
 riding Leningradsky Prospekt in search of dime and dollar.
 And though the iron frame decays in some back-lot,
 their handsome faces remain undiminished,
 as if the twentieth century
 could not have disassembled all their hopes.
 His hardened grip still beckoning the future.
 Her stubborn nipples persisting in their defiance of history
 where Vladimir Mayakovsky
 still feels no love without the art of the commune.



ⁱ Sculpture: The Worker and Collective Farm Girl, 1937 by Vera Mukhina

Encomium

for Zen

A ju-ju bug has made its way
 into the room, where our friend is dying.
 The word on the ward is disbelief.
 How can the ju-ju bug console a man
 who runs with the knowledge of ancients.
 A man who thought of other's so exactly,
 he ends his life alone? Of course, one asks,
 where are the brothers and sisters,
 friends, cousins, lovers, but it hardly matters
 as thought retreats into the reptile brain.

Oh we know, a seat at the table solves
 nothing. So we ask instead
 about forgiveness. And the kiss
 on the forehead that reconciles past
 and present, in our hopes for the future.
 Now ju-ju and enlightened one agree,
 the end will not be sugar-coated,
 the end will be what it will be, as the light
 vanishes.

And leaves of frost curl
 in the wind, like snowflakes joining friend
 to friend, as they sparkle and set down
 in the parks and fields of an unmapped world.

The Dreaming Dead

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

Too late in the day to cry rape,
disjunction, murder.

Too late to explicate opium
or abulia, but we join

our minds to hers as if to undo
bridle and squeeze.

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

On the anterior a bird
On the inverse a cage.

Just so, thought slips away
and the persistence of kinship fades.

ii

That was 45, 256 days ago.
Now we arrive

at Jew's Walk
to re-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.

Money Makes the Mare Go

*Everything can be turned into a commodity,
and everything can be bought or sold.*

Karl Marx

All bets are off
as the king's horse falters
at Tattenam Corner

~~where Emily Davis makes history.~~

Leaving the rest of the field
to negotiate
the four furlongs beyond

WAGER AND PROTEST.

*

What values we rely upon
before the Derby Stakes empty our pockets
are concealed
in sufferance and stock.

Now even death becomes commodified
in hard spun Mulberry silk
and shroud. As coffin and corpse
are translated
into sensible and supersensible objects.

*

So, sister and suffragette rides
side-saddle into the sun.
Pays the ultimate price for parity.

Ideas, life and VALUE,
reduced to a callous cash transaction.

Alarie Tennille 3 poems

Drowning Alone

She's grown weary of her rain-soaked life –
waking to the same morning each day.

Clammy as though she sleeps
in a soggy raincoat. Suffocating dreams

somehow wash her back to shore.
She should move to Seattle or London

where others understand the weight
of gray. Only she sees the fog that follows

her everywhere – oozing from her pores,
clinging even in summer sun.

Frida Kahlo: *The Love Embrace of the Universe*

*I think it represents both a good day and a bad day.
Third Grader, Shawnee Elementary*

With a nod to Old Masters who painted
the Madonna and Child, turning
infant Jesus into a wizened old man,

Frida cradles her baby-husband, Diego.
She weds contradictions: his third eye
of wisdom and his dependence

on women. Day and night. Earth
and sky. Maternal Frida still nursed
by Mother Mexico.

All things are connected,
embraced by the Universe,
life and death, art and pain.

Inspiration: Cubist painting: *The Pianist* by Maria Blanchard (1919)

The Real Me

My daughter wants her money back.

But it doesn't look like you!

The artist understands me in ways
a daughter never can.

No need to pose, said Blanchard.

Just be yourself, get lost in your music.

Thank God! No sitting stiffly, annoying
the artist with every twitch, shift,

complaint about an aching back.

I can control my open-mouth wonder
when I play, but still feel it. I vibrate,
slip into another dimension,

lose all sense of time.

Paul Ilichko 3 poems

The Reduction

In those days it was the time of dirt
blood mixed with dirt and keratin
a time of broken feathers every home
was open to the elements it was
a fallen population the memory
of firewater on their breath their
damaged memories unable to align
with the character formation of a future
life they sat at their kitchen tables
waiting to be fed but so many
animals had died in the flooding
so many crops had been ruined
it was beyond the narrative gifts of
even their greatest poets the shadow
cast by the ridge pressed on until
it covered the land blacking out
so many words that they lost the art
of conversation their dictionaries
reduced reprinted as pamphlets.

Dominance of Salt

Heat draws the moisture from a field
of rye color leaching into the purity
of sunlight but what this means only
the farmers know we are a nation
of specialists now for all that you and I
know there could be fire-breathing lizards
amidst the roots of the crop dirt turned
to dust and sand turned to mud
and the wind eroding everything until
we are left with sculpture instead
of food our life is patrolled and managed
a set of ingredients at differing levels of
quality differing levels of purity
the carcinogens are hidden in the depths
of the soil and on the shelves of
the supermarket the stink of paper
money become a rarity replaced by
the tapping and swiping of electronic
transactions all of us becoming an
adaptation uncoupled from the inevitability
of our demise we watch the graphs
and charts that dominate the weather
channels lacking the clarity of mind
to connect the price of freshness with
the unbearable brightness of living June
to September ticking slowly past as
the mercury expands as toxicity
infiltrates every aspect of life and
the dominance of salt becomes unstoppable.

Funeral Rites

A hole had been dug in the hard clay
ground waiting only to be filled again
waiting for a wood-plank box to be
carefully lowered then covered with
a clumping layer of fresh-spaded earth
the body of a nameless person who was
halfway across a river halfway to safety
when a boat capsized a certain payment
left in certain hands pieces of silver
that claimed the right to make a crossing
bodies stacked like terrible memories
an origin story presented as a vision
of hell and here in the cool darkness
where no-one dares to gather for long
hidden faces look briefly and depart
hearts crossed and wishing not to be
the next to die outside the hole
is quickly filled before the snow that comes
tomorrow before the ground will
harden to the density of iron an alien
landscape for a people who no longer
remember how to dream all that remains
is a continual flow of bodies a river
of life or death that crosses and re-crosses
a river of water a river that in its very
existence makes the concept of boundary real.

CL Blesdoe 1 poem

The Dust of Days

If enough dust collects on
the tongue, that's all you'll be
able to speak. I'm trying to save
your life. Not with poetry—don't
be childish. I'm talking about
learning to say no. Learning to ask
for more. Learning to scream into
the faces of knives instead of smiling
demurely as the world carves steaks
from you. I'm sure it means well.
A lesson learned and then forgotten.
Several species of birds whose nests
resemble streetlights. If I could speak
the world into being, the world would
be a sigh. This is why I am not God.
Particles collect in hair. Dust, after
all is just the daily toll death requires.
Someday, she'll realize she's strong
enough to be alone. Where will we
all be, then?

Walter Worden 2 poems

Breathing

When I heard that day you
were another number, my breath
filled my lungs
with the exquisite weight of fear
as if I had held it all my life,
A solid blockage that stifles the blood
And burdens the heart.

But you said not to worry,
that you were fine and as fit
as one could be in the grip of such fever.
And it was then by chance I took
another breath,
holding it again, but for only moments,
happy to feel the fire burning,
mindful of the frailty of flesh
so unsuited for such a hostile world,
where every venture, every need
is a gamble
and every sacred breath is but short respite.

The Crows are Dying

The crows are dying here and there, dying
near the old hospital on the hill, dying
by the dozens in the winter fields,
collected in ragged groups on frozen ground
in the trash choked alley behind the Price Chopper
like small heaps of black leaves waiting for a good wind.

This is not the kind of occurrence
that lasts long on the evening news,
but travels through casual conversations
of those who find attractive mystery
in the unexplained deaths of crows.
Do such summary deaths serve as sign of impending
catastrophe, much like canaries keeling
over in gaseous mines, or are they felled
by some exotic contagion shipped in from Asia?

There are occurrences we are never meant to define.
In the desert children are dying at a rate greater than crows
in confusing conflicts without end.
Through great distances, beyond
the cacophony of war, we hear
their cawing cries resounding in the steaming rubble.

Paul Miller 4 poems

Your Simple Rise and Fall

We pulled the blanket up
sometime during the night
without a word.
Later, in a dream,
the night sky to our backs,
we ebbed away from a beach, floating,
holding hands.
Committed to the invisible,
we've agreed to be,
some days, distinct,
others, distant,
others,
familiar figures moving in a shifting mist.

Some mornings when I wake,
instead of going downstairs, starting coffee,
I stay and watch
your simple rise and fall
beside me, beneath the covers.
I want to be there when that motion stops.
I want us to drift from shore together
as far as we can,
holding hands,
until you slip away
into the deepest water.

The Entomologist

The entomologist knows
these ants surrounding the dead moth
will move it to the mouth of their nest,
chew it into small pieces,
and enter
with another supply of sustenance.
She knows the colony will thrive
another day, knows
the iridescent black and orange
of the moth's wings
will not matter to the queen,
or anyone else.
She knows this life
into afterlife.
Still,
the tears forming in her eyes,
the slight catch in her throat,
surprises her.
“Will I nourish anyone
after I have died?”

Native Marigolds

The rainy season has ended.
Along either side
of this path above the lake,
clusters of yellow-orange flowers
open cheerful pages.
In a week or two, dry skies
will curl these luminous words
into a yellowed script left behind.
The full story shelved
for months in deep, dark roots.
Away from harsh winds
and hard sun.

Once Nimbus clouds return,
the next rainy season begins.
Stems emerge. The hillside
flourishes with wild, green ideas.
Foliage unfolds its cursive story.
The only thing holding back
is colouring in the Marigolds.
Waiting for ancient narratives
to swell into buds. Waiting
for rain to once again run out
of things to say.

Drum Skins

A doumbek hails a cab
to a jazz club across town.
Through the front door,
it walks to the stage,
takes a seat
and jams with the combo.
Goats across North Africa
lift their heads, straighten their ears,
decipher the cadence.

Sensing no danger,
they return attention
to the subtle texture of grazing,
the meter of camels' feet in a caravan,
the delicate stalking of predators.
They have no reason
to imagine their afterlives
accompanied by the hush of a hi-hat,
by strings or reeds or piano keys,
no reason
to suspect their herders
will be the first to transform them.

Contributor's Notes

Nehir Özhan was born in Istanbul, Turkey in 2005. She is currently a high school student who writes poetry in her free time. Her passion for poetry started at the age of 14. Nowadays, her goal is to study modern languages and linguistics at university and become a professor.

Joseph A Farina is a retired lawyer and award winning poet, in Sarnia, Ontario, Canada. His poems have appeared in Philadelphia Poets, Tower Poetry, The Windsor Review, and Tamaracks: Canadian Poetry for the 21st Century. He has two books of poetry published, *The Cancer Chronicles* and *The Ghosts of Water Street*.

Millicent Borges Accardi, a Portuguese-American writer, is the author of four poetry collections including *Quarantine Highway* (FlowerSong Press 2022). Among her awards are fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, CantoMundo, California Arts Council, Foundation for Contemporary Arts NYC (Covid grant) and Creative Capacity. Recent poems in *Salamander*, *TAB*, and *North Dakota Quarterly*.

Richard Oyama's work has appeared in *Premonitions: The Kaya Anthology of New Asian North American Poetry*, *The NuyorAsian Anthology*, *Breaking Silence*, *Dissident Song*, *A Gift of Tongues*, *About Place* and other journals. He has a M.A. in English: Creative Writing from San Francisco State University. His first novel, *A Riot Goin' On*, is forthcoming.

Terez Peipins poems, stories and essays have appeared in publications both in the United States and abroad. She is the author of four chapbooks of poetry and four novels, *The Shadow of Silver Birch*, *Three Bonds Unbroken*, and *Snow Clues*. Her latest novel, *River Clues*, is out in this year.

Bruce McRae, a Canadian musician, is a multiple Pushcart nominee with poems published in hundreds of magazines such as *Poetry*, *Rattle* and the *North American Review*. The winner of the 2020 Libretto prize and author of four poetry collections and seven chapbooks, his poems have been performed and broadcast globally.

John Hicks is an emerging poet at work on his first book. He has been published or accepted for publication by: *I-70 Review*, *Glint Literary Journal*, *Poetica Review*, *Bangor Literary Journal*, *Verse-Virtual*, and other journals and anthologies. In 2016 he completed an MFA in Creative Writing at the University of Nebraska – Omaha. He writes in the thin air of the southern Rockies.

Jay Bond is an Australian who returned in 2020 to her city of birth, Melbourne, after a few decades teaching in Asia and the United States, now refocusing on writing. Published writer of poetry: Luna and Meanjin magazines, early 1980s; more recently in Argotist Online Poetry, Litterateur Rw magazine, Poets of the Year 2022 Anthology, Ed. Sourav Sarkar.

C. J. Anderson-Wu is a Taiwanese writer. In 2017 she published *Impossible to Swallow—A Collection of Short Stories About The White Terror in Taiwan* and in 2021 *The Surveillance—Tales of White Terror in Taiwan*. Based on true characters and real incidents, her works look into the political oppression in Taiwanese society during the period of Martial Law (1949-1987), and the traumas resulting from the state's brutal violation of human rights. Currently she is working on her third book *Endangered Youth—To Hong Kong*.

Paul Brucker, a marketing communications writer, lives in Mt. Prospect, IL, "Where 'Friendliness is a Way of Life.'" He put a lid on poetry writing when he went to the Northwestern University grad ad school in a questionable attempt to learn how to think like a businessman and secure a decent income. Nevertheless, he has succumbed to writing poetry again. He has been published recently in "Pennsylvania Literary Journal, "Wink," "[The Literary Nest](#)," "Otherwise Engaged," "[The Beautiful Space](#)," "[Prachya Review](#)," "[The Bangalore Review](#)," "[monthstoyears](#)" and "[The Pagan's Muse: Words of Ritual, Invocation and Inspiration](#)."

Nadia Arioli is the co-founder and editor in chief of Thimble Literary Magazine and a multi-disciplinary artist. Arioli's poetry has been nominated for Best of the Net three times and can be found in Cider Press Review, Rust + Moth, San Pedro Review, McNeese Review, Whale Road Review, West Trestle Review, As It Ought To Be, Voicemail Poems, Bombay Literary Magazine, and other publications. Essays have been nominated for Best of the Net and the Pushcart and can be found in Hunger Mountain, Heavy Feather Review, Angel Rust, and elsewhere. Collages and scribblings have been featured as the cover of Permafrost, as artist of the month for Kissing Dynamite, and in Poetry Northwest. Arioli has chapbooks with Dancing Girl and Spartan and full-lengths with Luchador Press and Kelsay Books (forthcoming).

Mark A. Murphy is a working class, disabled, LGBTQIA+ poet. He has had work published in 18 countries. He is a 3 time Pushcart Nominee, and has published eight books of poetry to date. German publisher 'Moloko Print' published his last collection, 'The Ruin of Eleanor Marx' in the summer of 2022.

Julie Bolt was raised in Greenwich Village, NYC, during the '70s and 80s, and lived in six states as an adult. Although a natural nomad, she has served as a professor of English at Bronx Community College (CUNY) since 2005. Recent and upcoming publications include: *When Women Speak Anthology Volume 1*, *New Generations Beat Anthology 2022*, *Open Skies Anthology*, *Great Weather for MEDIA 2023*, *Beat Style Love*, *Natural Worlds*, *New Verse News*, *The Raven's Perch*, *Home Planet News*, *Club Plum*, and more. Her upcoming chapbook is called *Time Sensitive*.

Alarie Tennille was a pioneer coed at the University of Virginia, where she earned her degree in English, Phi Beta Kappa key, and black belt in Feminism. She has now lived over half her life in Kansas City, where she serves on the Emeritus Board and Programming Committee of the Writers Place. In 2022, her latest book, *Three A.M. at the Museum*, was named Director's Pick for the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art gift shop.

Paul Ilechko is British American poet and occasional songwriter who lives with his partner in Lambertville, NJ. His work has appeared in many journals, including *The Night Heron Barks*, *Lily Poetry Review*, *Iron Horse Literary Review*, *Stirring*, and *The Inflectionist Review*. He has also published several chapbooks.

CL Bledsoe is the author of more than thirty books, including the poetry collections *Riceland*, *The Bottle Episode*, and his newest, *Having a Baby to Save a Marriage*, as well as his latest novels *Goodbye, Mr. Lonely* and *The Saviors*. Bledsoe lives in northern Virginia with his daughter.

Walter Worden is a poet and visual artist whose poems have appeared in various publications such as *Home Planet News*, *Chronogram*, *The First Literary Gazette*, and has been featured on the Huffington Post website. He has published two collections of poetry, and is working on his third book.

Paul Miller thinks of himself as a garage band of poetry—a few of his tunes have made people dance. He lives, with his wife, on a highland lake in Guatemala where hearing birdsong and watching lizards makes him smile.

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

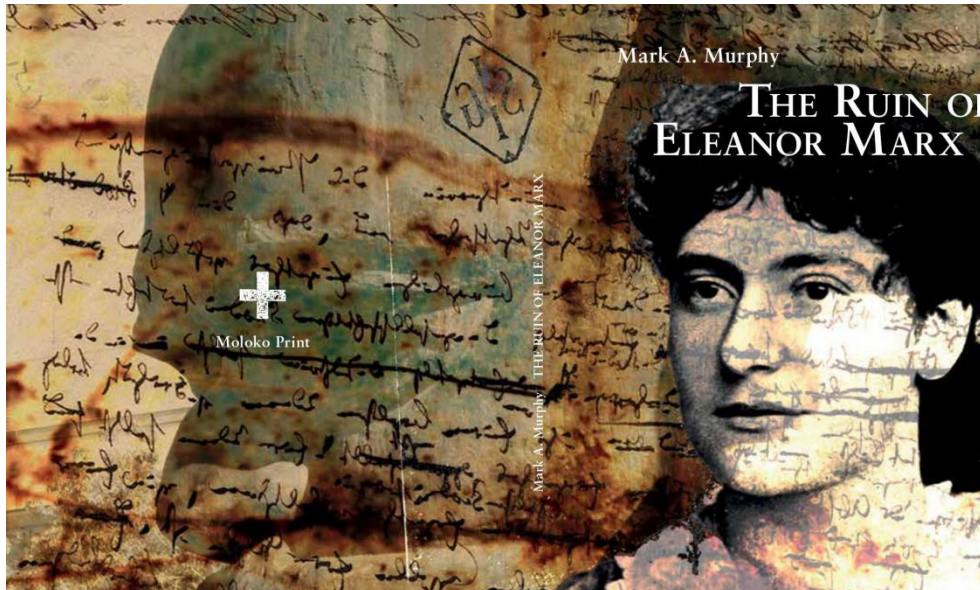
Response to submissions, from 1 week to 3 months.

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 Donohoe

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.'

POETiCA REViEW 1st Open Poetry Competition



The very 1st **POETiCA REViEW Open Poetry Competition 2023** is now open to entries from anywhere in the world, from all poets aged 16 and over. *Poems must be in English and no longer than 40 lines.* Poems may be on any subject, in any style. This year's judge is award-winning poet and editor **Mark A. Murphy**.

Open Poetry Competition 2023

We looking for great works of poetry. We encourage the writers to do all the necessary editorial work for we are not providing any editing feedback due to the time constraints of the competition. Make sure your piece is ready and polished before sending us. It increases your chance of winning.

Prize: £200 GBP

Winner Announcement: September 30th

Open for: Everyone

Entry fee: £5 per poem. 3 poems for £10. 5 poems for £15

Eligibility: The writing must be previously unpublished (including online). All entries must be in English. 40 lines maximum

Submission Dates: May 11th - Sept 17th

Submission Instructions: we accept entries via poeticareview@gmail.com

Any Questions?

Please contact us through poeticareview@gmail.com with **COMPETITION** in the subject line.

Rules & Guidelines

1. Attach all entries as doc or docx
2. Poems must be written in Times New Roman 12 point font

3. Subject line should include 'Competition,' Name, Title(s)
4. Short-list & Honorable Mentions published in **POETiCA REVIEW** Autumn Edition
5. All poems must be written in English (**40 lines maximum**)
6. All poems must be original and previously unpublished
7. Simultaneous submissions accepted but please withdraw if published elsewhere (**No refunds accepted**)
8. Poems can be written on any theme
9. All fees payable via **PayPal** to poeticareview@gmail.com
10. Winning Poem to be published in **POETiCA REVIEW** Autumn Edition

Disclaimer: *POETiCA REVIEW reserves the right to cancel the competition at any time.*