

Image credit: Donald Zirilli

the shit creek review

where I live

Issue 2 — January 2007

Editorial	2
<i>Where We Live: Issue Two</i>	

PROSE

Norman Ball	48
<i>Poetry Has Left the Building for "Unreachable Solitudes"</i>	
Cheryl Snell	52
<i>Review of Diary of a Cell</i>	

Contributors	55
<i>to The Shit Creek Review Issue 2</i>	

• Submissions • Feedback • Friends • Past issues

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Patricia Wallace Jones — Artist-In-Residence
C. D. Russell — Guest Art Editor, Issue 2
Peter Bloxsom — Desktop publishing and PDF conversion

This Letter-size publication will also fit for
printing on A4 paper.

POEMS

Mike Alexander	7
<i>Taste of Texas</i>	
Mark Allinson	8
<i>Survivor</i>	
Kate Bernadette Benedict	9
<i>Downtown</i>	
Michael Cantor	10
<i>Life in the Second Circle</i>	
<i>Lament</i>	
<i>Sketches from Florida</i>	
Robert Clawson	14
<i>Grappling</i>	
<i>Sigmoidoscopy</i>	
Brent Fisk	17
<i>Matriarch of Springwater Flat</i>	
Angela France	18
<i>A Pederast Speaks of Home</i>	
Dennis Greene	19
<i>Alfred Cove</i>	
<i>The Memory of Trees</i>	
<i>One Tree Bridge</i>	
Nigel Holt	22
<i>The Costa Wasta</i>	
<i>The Tourist's Progress</i>	
Jan Iwaszkiewicz	24
<i>The Cusp</i>	
Rose Kelleher	25
<i>Mortimer</i>	
Janet Kenny	26
<i>Transience</i>	
Jee Leong Koh	29
<i>If the Fire Is in Your Apartment</i>	
David Landrum	30
<i>Midwest Light</i>	
Dave McClure	31
<i>Nightfall in the Souk</i>	
<i>Measure me</i>	
Kei Miller	33
<i>You say bomboclawt softly</i>	
Tim Murphy	34
<i>Bull Rider</i>	
<i>Opening Day</i>	
Thomas Rodes	36
<i>Anxious Neighbors</i>	
C.D. Russell	37
<i>Forestal Succession</i>	
Patricia Sims	38
<i>Play House</i>	
<i>Muddle East</i>	
Paul Stevens	40
<i>Fettling</i>	
Wendy Videlock	41
<i>Is About:</i>	
<i>Riverside</i>	
Tony Williams	43
<i>The House at Crowholes</i>	
Tony Williams	44
<i>The Lame Dog at Monyash</i>	
Donald Zirilli	45
<i>The Poet Who Hates Birds</i>	

Editorial

Where We Live: Issue Two

We're here now — although, we're not sure if that is where we expected to be, as time has a way of undermining our perspectives. All we can be sure about is that where we are, is not where we once were.

Where are we going? From the response to issue one, and the fabulous submissions to issue two, no matter where we're going, getting there is proving to be marvellous and in the end, that's what matters most.

We want to continue delivering quality poetry, but also, to highlight reviews and showcase talent in essay writing, and eventually, fiction. We want to combine writing with the work of the many talented virtual-artists and photographers, who like the poets in this issue, are beginning to have a real presence on the web and beyond.

This issue also sees Don Zirilli join as Art Editor, and C.D. Russell appear as guest art editor.

Our plans are to introduce a new zine-within-a-zine called **II** sometime in the near future. II will be themed to encourage artistic content that might not normally get a viewing. We hope there will be room for narrative poems, topical/political pieces, horror and love poetry and work aimed at children. Nothing is fixed yet, but we hope to let you know soon.

Finally, with this first issue of 2007, we look forward to a year of movement - movement that we hope by the end of the year will have transported us from wherever we are now, to somewhere with a nice view looking back.

Happy New Year!

The Editors

A Posthumous Afterword: On Formalism

There are many good arguments for form. One is humility. The writer is humiliated every time he conjures the perfect expression of his thoughts only to find, lo! it doesn't rhyme, and lo! it doesn't fit the meter.

This humility is not a meekness toward the reader. Readers have little tolerance for that. It is instead a humility against mere self-expression. The task of the writer is not to express himself. The task is to shape an experience for the reader. This is a humble task, an empathetic task. As such, the pride of a writer should come not from imposing his point of view on the world, but from simply knowing that he made something solid, something that will serve. It is the pride of an artisan.

Not all the poems in *The Shit Creek Review* rhyme, including my own, but I do hope they have been formed into something that will serve.

Don Zirilli



Shit Creek Nessie by Patricia Wallace Jones



Image credit: CDR



Image credit: CDR

Mike Alexander

Taste of Texas

You expect something exquisite
about the java at highway turnabouts;
a fresh elixir in stained ceramic calls
to state police & big-rig drivers,
descendants of the cowpokes,
connoisseurs of tar & gravel.

But there's a sour turn to the brew
that sits all day, not unlike customers,
on the back-burner. When a snake-charmer
straddles his counter stool to beg Sue Ann
for another shot of her mighty fine Joe,
we know he's adding all that sweet-talk
just to get it down.

The open road roasts nothing
but its own blend. By the pumps
at Café Exxon, we order two to go,
take a sip, & toss it out.
Time we saddle up, & leave
that chicory & mojo in our dust.

Mark Allinson

Survivor

A Cootamundra wattle found itself
stranded alone, high on a coastal dune,
where storms from lows off the continental shelf
regularly gave the sapling a cruel prune.
Decembers had been kind, but every June
had thrashed and beaten back each branch that tried
reaching to south or upward until soon
the tree could only grow to the leeward side.
Like a blown plume of smoke, or like the tide
dragging the river weeds in the same way,
the tree lay prone to northward since denied
all other ways by wind and salty spray.
But sheltered by itself since beaten down,
each spring it wears the dunes' sole golden crown.



Image credit: Mark Allinson

Kate Bernadette Benedict

Downtown

Blood, underfoot,
tingeing the cobblestones,
brimming in potholes-
the Tenderloin district, you say?
That explains the entrails
and all the opaque windows,
ideograms etched in gummy grease.

Shall we move on?
How unnerving:
these skyscrapers are just facades
and tilt-do you see? — toward a vacuity
That's a desert where the harbor should be
and what appears to be a lighthouse
toppling into the dunes.

A veiled woman approaches.
I know her!
I remember her from the old bazaar.
I don't burn incense anymore, she says.
It is forbidden.
Then she passes into the deserted amphitheatre.
An equatorial gust
eradicates the marks we've made —
mingled footprints
in millennial dust.



Image credit: Kate Benedict

“Downtown” is from *Night Queue*, a series of archetypal dream-poem scenarios.

Image credit:

Michael Cantor

Life in the Second Circle

I live on a beach with a woman who hates pigeons.

This is not the Piazza del

Popolo she yells, pegging salt-swept stones

at them: I share a house with Anna Magnani — she
emerged sad-eyed, years back, from an out-of-date
old film cassette, talking too much, absurdly

big red mouth bursting with kisses: all that first night
we loved and laughed and spoke of life, and she devoured
my grilled squab *puttanesca* with a whore's bold appetite.

We live in cinematic garlic-spatteredness, my hard-
life love and I, with recondite Fellini dreams
and black-and-white De Sica screens — the outside world

can't reach this beach. *They all are pigeons* Anna screams
Their asses spread, they flap their wings, their shit is everywhere.
We tumble to the kitchen floor; make love amidst tomato streams.

Michael Cantor

Lament

A day or two ago I tried to quote
Camus on modern man: *He defecates*
and reads the Sunday papers I first wrote —
but what it should have been was “fornicates”,
and “Sunday” was my fantasy. So this
is what it all comes down to — thoughts of shits
and weekends with the Times invade a kiss-
kiss-fuck-fuck-bang-bang mind as age submits
his calling card, engraved, upon a bone-
white plate: a view ahead of weekly crossword
strugglings, and bits and scenes from well known
films, and scraps of other voices, overheard
as life retold: *He grows old*. I grow old,
and treasure all these things, and fear the cold.



Image credit: Valori Herzlich

Michael Cantor

Sketches from Florida

1

FUCK MILK! GOT POT? a wall of T-shirts cries,
 I'M SHIT-FACED ON DUVAL STREET IN KEY WEST
 TELL YOUR BOOBS STOP STARING AT MY EYES
 as here, in Paradise, their chests addressed
 with poetry and flair, the young attest
 to perfumed tropic air, the sun-drenched play
 of light on sea, a primal, noble quest:
 I LIKE TO EAT IT RAW LIKE HEMINGWAY
 A string of crowded clam bars throbs in disarray.

2

A string of Ski-Doos throbs in disarray,
 the ocean churned to iridescent green.
 No comfort here for shades and depths of gray,
 or those who think that swells of opaline
 seem artificial, tinted, or obscene.
 This sea is key-lime lime; the buildings blue,
 canary, mauve, or pink — aquamarine —
 and all that matters is an ocean view,
 a lipo-sculptured body, and a bold tattoo.

3

Venceremos, reads the old tattoo
 behind the bar on *Calle Ocho* Street
 where men who once were men with guns now brew
café con leche, skim milk, Ultra Sweet.
 On every other Thursday night they meet
 above a grocery store, and ramble on
 on politics, betrayal and deceit;
 the summer breezes off the *Malecon*;
 how dolphins and a fisherman saved Elian.



Image credit: Valori Herzlich

4

No talk of fishermen or Elian
 invades the Palm Beach *Palm*, where well-aged meat
 is all that counts: blood-red chateaubriand
 will make this gray and white-haired crowd complete.
 This is no place for vegans; the effete
 are not among the well-tanned coterie
 that chatters here, bejeweled and indiscrete.
 The Palm Beach Palm exudes prosperity;
 a scent of flesh and freshly oiled mahogany.

5

A regal sense of dark mahogany;
 thick drapes obscure all views of sun or sand;
 cut glass and jade, chinoiserie; and she —
 straight-backed at ninety-three — will take a stand!
 They plan to raze her building, and demand
 she leave. But she shall float above the beach —
 her rugs, TV, her *tchotchkes* close at hand —
 twenty stories high, where seagulls screech,
 suspended by pure will, she hangs beyond their reach.

6

Suspended by a dream beyond your reach,
 you hang above this land — forevermore
El chulo — Ponce, you pimp, you half-pint leech,
 you *cockamamy*, cracked conquistador;
 you soul, you fairy queen, you metaphor
 for all the fools who choose to fantasize
 that God rolls dice along this sun-crazed shore.
 We've fallen for your whispering, your lies!
 I'VE FOUND ETERNAL YOUTH a wall of T-shirts cries.

Robert Clawson

Grappling

New River, Snead's Ferry, N.C., circa 1950

The sergeant sets the throttle: troll.

You're marines. You'll take turns with the hooks.

*If we hook him and he surfaces
don't look at the colonel's eyes,
unless you want him watching you
the rest of your fucking lives.*

*(...the colonel's bobbing, loon-wet head, nostrils
gorged with algae...)*

Rain for days. The estuarial gray's
gone toffee brown. The marshes' grass mats
decompose. Shellfish strain decay.

*(...squirrel rotting in the messhall's ceiling. . .
sweet and sour soup...)*

My first turn on the hooks I say,

We've caught a log.

The log's lurch settles in my gut.
It surfaces: threadbare, Goodyear.
A chopper whops overhead.

*(...he tasted it, till packed silt drove his teeth past
grimace, tossed his SOS-ing tongue...)*

The limb I'm hooked to now
peels from the trunk. It's small, but turns
like toweling in our wake.

Four mushrooms sprout:
fingers. Then, a thin black wrist,
a black bicep, armpit, some lat.

All I got is arm. A skinny black kid! Come about.

Throw it back!

*(...I relish gale surf, the rush to crackling rock...
our rubber boat scrunching sand...)*

The grapple picks
a piece of turquoise shirt
and pectoral. -

Throw that back too.

He's only five feet down. Can I just dive?

(... moonless trips across Trapp's Bay for heaps of
crabs, hogs of beer, Snead's Ferry's hook...)

The sergeant's on the radio: Roger. Out.

*Kid, this ain't your day.
Some smartass flyboy's found our man.
That's it. Stow that grapple in your lap.*

Through outboard spray, I watch
the harnessed, swinging silhouette
rise into the olive bird.
The colonel's corpus leaves first-class.

*(...told our waitress, Twyla, that New River was
oldest in America...she didn't bite.)*

I coil the rope. My hands ooze blood.
I taste my finger: too much salt.
Ashore a crow rips gristle from a whelk.

First published in *The Southern Review*, Spring 2001

Robert Clawson

Sigmoidoscopy

He who having used the outer light,
can return to the inner light,
is thereby preserved from all harm.

— Lao Tzu

She said an artist would love this,
the gastroenterologist.
What, the entry or the exit?
This Ansel Adams of the anus,
connoisseur of horizonless pink inscapes,
probes, probes, and probes,
blasting air into the tunnel
to illuminate its turns,
the slick translucencies
that wall the creeping capillaries
straining to be purple on my palette.

Doctor, are those yellow spots corn?

*No, she answers, this looks terrific,
they're just pieces of fecal matter.*

Never did I dream that fecal matter
would highlight the only
film in which I've starred.
Olson, in *His Own Colon*,
for fifteen minutes famous,
but alone, so alone,
on the outside looking in.



Image credit: Betsyann Duval

First published in *The Lancet*

Brent Fisk

Matriarch of Springwater Flat

My wild-eyed uncle drank so much
he forgot the dimensions of his house
Walked off the green-painted porch
and broke his one good leg.

He punched the neighbor's dog
who thought his writhing was play
The poor thing howled at the end of its chain
groomed itself calm beneath the holly scrub.
When the ambulance bounced up on the curb
he was screaming for another drink.
His sweat-soaked body had a street light sheen.



Image credit: Patricia Wallace Jones

I dreamed for weeks of his strapped-down arms,
the sharp holly leaves stuck to his skin like ticks.
Sheriff's deputies came late to the party, gathered in
the shadows of the yard
looking for dope and counting the open cans of beer.
Their sniggering dried up in the heat
of my Grandmother's moonlight stare.

No one dared offer her a ride to the ER.
No one said, *Momma, you should really come in.*
Laughter slipped through the kitchen window
as one young deputy clacked toward his car,
a crushed beer can making a high heel of his boot.
He never took his hand from the butt of his gun.
She never looked him directly in the eye.
She never looked away.

Angela France

A Pederast Speaks of Home

It's a warehouse district at night:
mangy dogs skulk against the walls
and wind-blown sheets of rusty steel
clatter to send hopeless dregs of tattered
men scattering for new holes, different doorways.

It's a ghetto when the music's moved on.
Steps piled with garbage picked over
by half-starved cats. Snake-eyed
and swift-handed young bloods lean
against railings, play with their knives,
talk loud about the last kill — and the next.

You might expect a sleazy street
where sharp-eyed pretty-boys
prowl under shudders of violent light
and worn young whores wait at the kerb
to hope for a rich one — go with any one.

But no — living here, in this skin,
It's an empty room with one hard chair
— no curtains, no heating, bare floor.

Dennis Greene

Alfred Cove

Sunlight on water is all that's left of movement in this emptiness, though marri and jarrah and paper-bark grow near the water's edge and reeds fill the gaps to where Alfred Cove waits in the sun.

Here, one road bends round the cove, one road ends, and the million dollar homes crowd in close on their suburban lots, to stand tall behind rolled garage doors, eyes half closed against ripple and sun.

I have come by slow roads and quick days to this place and this sun, to this path through the reeds, this glimpse of the water's edge; I have moved through each hour of my life just to stand here today, to be still in this way, under this ring of blue sky.

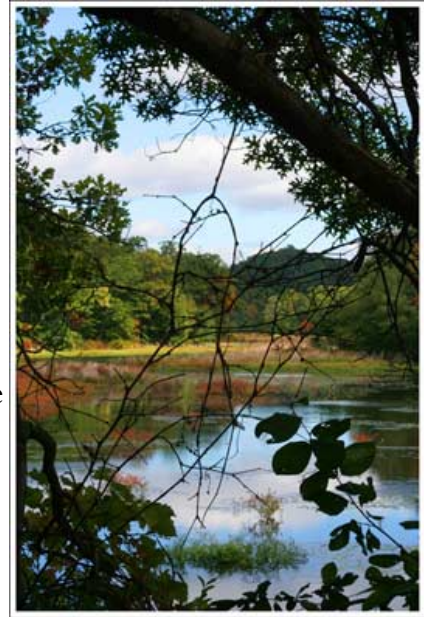


Image credit: CDR

The Memory of Trees

Men put it here to mark the end of the world.
Deep Blackwood water, the river runs down
and the sea eats it up. There is Karri
remembered in whitecaps, in storms
on the ocean. There are whales
passing seaward
whose brains hold the memory of trees.

Gods left them here
at the end of the road from Augusta,
Cape Leeuwin lighthouse,
two oceans,
the memory of trees.

Dennis Greene

One Tree Bridge

That first morning, hoping to catch the dawn,
we stepped instead into a world of mist
and dark green forest, mixed with the softer
greys of smoke from pot bellied stoves, and
the light green of the ferns along the river.

Taken by mist the road could not be seen,
though what remained of the one-log bridge
that gave this place its name moved through
degrees of sight right on the edge of seen,
unseen, just seen: a bridge into infinity, a lost
road, vanished, dreamed, now going nowhere.

And we, my child and I, being small and quiet,
watched as from drifts of mist the great trees
grew, regained their shapes, their varied colours,
their forty-metre stretch that touched the sky,
and took it in, each from our own perspective;
she from the bridge, I from a long-gone road



Image credit: CDR

Nigel Holt

The Costa Wasta

You're welcome to the *Costa Wasta*,
 where brown noses press in greetings;
 whirls of white cede salutations
 no hesitations save for pasta
 in *Khaleej* business dinner meetings.

Be taken by the *Costa Wasta*
 when boiling *gahwa* slips from vessels;
 a thick and heady black decoction —
 no honour auction — though it costs you
 more than *heyyl* and grinding pestles.

Speak softly round the *Costa Wasta*,
 for shuttled words of weft and weaving
 are camouflaged in silk relations;
 no altercations with impostors,
 just *sheesha* smoking in the evening.

Be watchful on the *Costa Wasta*,
 as backroom contracts bloom *sub rosa*,
 and secret glances can occasion
 some quick evasion, soon glossed over;
 but unforgiving as a *Tosa*.



Image credit: Nigel Holt

Costa Wasta — The Nepotism Coast - Wasta is Arabic for “influence”.

Khaleej — The Arabian/Persian Gulf (lit: “gulf”)

Gahwa — Arabic coffee or qaHwa (as pronounced in the Gulf)

Heyyl — cardamom - used to perfume and flavour Arabic coffee.

Sheesha — the hubbly-bubbly or hookah pipe.

Tosa — Japanese breed of fighting dog much favoured in the UAE

Nigel Holt

The Tourist's Progress

'...For certeyn, olde dotard, by youre leve,
Ye shul have queynte right ynogh at eve.'
— *Chaucer: The Wife of Bath's Tale*

On Gropecunte Street, the blowers swallow hard,
while watchmen walk the street in search of quaint
men who'd warm the cockles of their hearts.

Painted ladies pinned down in the yard
try every trick of fudge, or dodge or feint;
they know this is the dark side of their arts.

While in the York Hotel, a heeled *De Sade*
is pricing up the cost of Slav restraint
— he likes to taste the jam on cut-rate tarts.

And he, *rayaal*, he loves to do it hard;
his face bespeaks *maskhara's* darker paint,
for he illumines bruises on bawds' parts.

But she who works without an ID card,
pale mistress of the crescent moon, saint
who steals between the market's applecarts,

finds reward below the dunes; *noyade*
released: a final heave and grunt:
sand scours away the foreign taint of cunt.

Rayaal: Gulf Arabic for man

Maskhara: Literally 'mask', here meaning foolishness.

Jan Iwaszkiewicz

The Cusp

*the plasticity of time
is always forward and never back...*

I haul the larry backwards and forwards in the wheelbarrow,
add decreasing amounts of water with increasing precision,
then flex and search for the rhythms in the concrete slurry.
I look up from the scrape and grate of gravel on the blade
out past the wattle to where the arena meets the bank.
A young mare blows like a chestnut whale breaching the horizon.
She rises and sounds, time and again. Unbalanced. Thrown,
with leathers taut. A radius is drawn from saddle to hip.
My daughter curves away, caught on the radius
yet curved past the radius. Describing her arc in silence
she hits the ground with radial acceleration and radial violence.
The iron swings free and sound returns, but not breath, not yet.

larry, noun: a wide bladed hoe with holes in the blade used to mix concrete.

This was a Commended Poem in the 2005 W. B. Yeats Poetry Prize
for Australia and New Zealand

Rose Kelleher

Mortimer

The dummy never sleeps. His body lies
inside a suitcase that his master locks,
and all night long he stares through lidless eyes.
His heart is buried in a cedar box.
It, too, is wood, consisting of some hidden
knobs and levers on a swivel-stick
he can't control. Words rise from him, unbidden;
his humor hinges on a magic trick.

Behind the boyish frame, a veteran voice
co-opts him as a witness on the stand
who's made to cover up — he has no choice —
the thrustings of an uninvited hand.
And yet, alone, he thinks with longing of
those furtive fingers, all he knows of love.



Image credit: Patricia Wallace Jones

Janet Kenny

Transience

i

You will get used to it, they said.
 Open your eyes. These things are real. Accept
 what you can't change. The past is dead.
 You have more work to do. All your inept
 battles with nightmares wasted time.
 Seasons and dancing happened while you slept.
 Missing one moment is a crime.
 Nothing you ever said or did has kept
 oblivion in its place.
 Oceans and fires and men have always swept
 over the sacred. You must face
 that all you can have is *now*. And then I wept.

ii

Rain in the sky is never bad
 unless, of course there is a flood.
 Watermarked walls signal places where
 a farming family met despair.
 Featureless dust shimmers to the smudge
 of mirage horizon where cattle trudge
 behind a tractor for scanty feed,
 never sufficient for their need.
 Lambs spread like garments on the clay
 as raptors tug their flesh away.
 The child who watches cannot know
 the danger known to man and crow.

iii

City dwellers complain of prices
 and dress up their cooking with Asian spices.
 Fish is expensive and, they have read,
 polluted as well, *so the paper's said*.
 Omega 3 versus heavy metals.
They'll have to wait till the weather settles.
 Bananas gone in a hurricane, rain
 came hammering down then vanished again.
 Grain crops germinate, then die
 beneath the tourist-blue smiling sky.
 I buy organic Italian pasta
 to circumvent a worse disaster.
 Vitamin pills are bought in stealth:
You're all right as long as you've got your health.

iv

The voice on the radio gives no quarter:
Australia is running out of water.
Recycled effluent soon will be
the answer for your cup of tea.
 "I know I'm silly," said Aunty Jean,
 "but I hate to think where the water's been."
 The voice on the radio condescends.
It's just a drink that you share with friends.
 Water is measured by can and bucket
 and only the dedicated have stuck it.
 Native plants withstand the dry
 and spare us glares from the passers by.
 Water spies are like Stasi, snooping
 to see whose garden is never drooping.
That's drinking water you're wasting on roses.
 (There's more to the neighbours than one supposes.)
 Lawns are brown in the best of houses
 and mowers set free from nagging spouses.
 I live beside the brooding sea.
 It may rise up to visit me.
 A drought that drowns is a paradox
 that casts our bread upon the rocks.

v

A flickering dark-skinned figure is almost seen
 beyond the trees on my lawn.
 It's there for a moment then gone.
 Illusion in the dawn
 or something that might have been?

vi

I drove past a Murri woman who bore
 her heavy shopping home from the store.
 I wanted to offer to drive her home
 but something about her made me become
 tongue-tied and shy. I drove on past
 and around the corner a bit too fast.
 Fool, fool, such a simple human gift
 as to offer another shopper a lift.
 Her eyes were proud and her back was straight.
 There was something haughty about her gait.
 conI feared she would answer, "It isn't far
 to the spot nearby where I parked my car."

.../cont'd

vii

Alone with Aboriginal poles in the gallery's bowels,
I'm gripped by fear. They accuse me. I came
to ravage their land. I am to blame.
I am to blame. I chose to come.
Their weeping echoes from gallery walls.
Does new love ever displace the old?
Young wives move in when the bed gets cold.
The grass told King Midas's secrets, and here
in this old, new land trees whispered fear.
And now the trees scream, *fire, fire fire!*
You must accept the funeral pyre.
The sky is black with the souls of birds
and trails of ink from unheeded words.

viii

Don't get used to it, they said.
Open your eyes. These things are real. Accept
you have to change. Remember the dead.
They now depend on you. All your inept
justifications deepen your crime.
You have been faking rage while justice slept.
We have been waiting all the time.
None of your promises ever have been kept.
This is our only space.
Oceans and fires and wind have always swept
thieves from our sacred place.
You must return it now. *Give us respect.*



Image credit: CDR

Jee Leong Koh

If the Fire Is in Your Apartment

You live in a combustible building, love,
so warns the fire notice on your door.
Sure, the apartment is controlled for rent,
above a laundromat and liquor store,

but have you not observed the plaster tear
and the hardwood floor curl its long-nailed toes
when flames, for regulated gas, consent
and sear cod fillet and asparagus?

Or when you plugged in the a.c. with hand
damp from an afternoon of sex, were shocked
by the hideous circuit hidden in cement,
unplanned combustion in what's built and blocked

from us who slum in this construction sham.
So read this notice. Plan your escape route.
Run if things ignite without intent
and hammer every door on your way out.

David Landrum

Midwest Light

Somehow it's flat yet bright; yellow and clear,
illuminating almost to the point
of making what it touches on appear
garish, too well-defined. It can anoint
a rower done by Eakins with its stark
tonalities: the whole scene is distinct —
the distant bridge, the clouds, the shoreline park,
the sculler who has looked at us and blinked
in the glare; or Hopper's Sunday morning street,
the doors too dark, the bricks showing too red
as light interrogates its crevices
in the upper stories where the sun has bled —
a light as flat and level as the lay
of the land it casts in glow on day by day.



Image credit: Thomas Eakins — Public Domain

Dave McClure

Nightfall in the Souk

When — as the shadows lengthen and the light
of day gives place to sodium, and I,
for lack of purpose, walk towards the night,
unmindful of the multitudes who ply
their multifarious trades, who make, who mend,
who dignify the evening, who collect
to celebrate acquaintances, who lend
and borrow, who regale me, who respect
my solitude, who while away the hours
in company, who dream, who merely sit —
the call to prayer from a hundred towers
commingles with the market's hubbub, it
intrudes on my somnambulance, where dwells
a recollection of Cathedral bells.

Dave McClure

Measure me

and measure me where skies are blue
and life is a designer brand
and russian girls go how arr you

and cultivate the favoured hue
preferring what they understand
and measure me where skies are blue

and winter warms me through and through
like summer from another land
and russian girls go how arr you

and have you night enough for two
to dim the bleak beyond that's planned
and measure me where skies are blue

and high apartments block the view
of sand and sand and sand and sand
and russian girls go how arr you

and how are you my darling do
you feel a hardness in your hand
and measure me where skies are blue
and russian girls go how arr you



Kei Miller

You say bomboclawt softly

In this country, one Sunday morning,
you might remember shining
your black shoes at 3AM, not for church,
but for a dance only just beginning
on Spanish Town Road.

You remember the DJ prophesying
unholiness to dark ladies who saw
no blasphemy, but got caught up
in the spirit of his words

if you an yu man deh
from high school an a dutty gyal come
an tek him weh
an you have her number den call her
an tell her

she can tek her stretch-out pum-pum self
an kip him!

Remembering this, you say *bomboclawt*
softly, like a prayer, like Amen.

Words once profane seem holy here.

You reach for them, as your grandmother would
reach for scripture — as something to sustain you
in this country.



Tim Murphy

Bull Rider

I met a boy who rode the rodeo
and took me hunting on his daddy's spread.
He was so quick he made my swing look slow,
and every cock he pointed at fell dead.

Picture a half ton bull bucking a boy
who weighs one forty, risking broken bones
for eight seconds of panic-stricken joy.
Fine looking kid, his buddies called him Jones.

Summers he bummed from town to drowsy town;
he'd mount Black Lightning, Cruel Clementine,
dust himself off. He told me with a frown
"I ain't no Larry Mahan or Phil Lyne."

Figured he'd ranch, maybe, or study law.
Sported the cutest butt I ever saw.



Image credit: Patricia Wallace Jones

Tim Murphy

Opening Day

for A.E. Stallings

I.

The sunflower seed plot was an utter bust.
No dove gorged on a head or bathed in dust.

The stockpond? An equally hopeless try,
no bird of peace whistling through the sky.

Then we patrolled a twelve row shelterbelt
so hot it made my Winnie's barrels melt.

Back at the Bronco, breasting out the dead:
"Doves love to loaf in lilacs," Feeney said.



II.

I saw two youths, rummaging in the soybeans.
Alan would call such tall Dakotans "boybeans."

They ported guns, searching for fallen doves,
surrogates for their unrequited loves.

I blind-handled Fenian through the field.
The downed doves? No longer crop but yield.

They poured me coffee. I recited verse.
Old man, trained dog, they had encountered worse.

III.

Opening dawn if I could have my way:
lowering clouds would grant a glint of day

under the east horizon. Gwynn would sit
on a five gallon pail, two dogs would shit.

Doves flushed from the stubble to the trees
would all be headshot, carried to my knees,

and every poet would perfect his scrawlings.
Dad would be with me, hosting William Stallings.

Thomas Rodes

Anxious Neighbors

My cedar house is hard enough to see
on sunny days, much less in snowy times.
It blends in with the beech and holly trees-
a doormat for rock maples, rug for pines,
and railing for azaleas bearing weight.

A nouveau French château exchanges sneers
with Adams mansions, vast Italianate
faux villas, and a pod of bloated peers:

That house has furnishings for every room
but only one garage. There's smoke around
the chimney flue and, worse, an old corn broom
in open view. When will they tear it down?

The scornful parvenus await the day
they find my low-born roofline razed away.

C.D. Russell

Forestal Succession

“Surely, men love darkness rather than light.”
— “*The Succession of Forest Trees*”, Henry David Thoreau

The maples ripple
practicing their dappling.
Oaks coax acorn’s fall.

The sky is not shy
of the tops of the pines. Pride
fills the timber line.

The ferns have unfurled,
turned brown, tips burned, soon dead. Spent
the fiddlehead’s whorl.

Fending off shade, the blades
end, give way to pale weeds. Breathe
deeper, the needles.

Dark. Dank with a musk.
Rotting bark, empty husks rustle
perpetual dusk.

A tangle of vines,
overgrown path. No cairn marks
the wraith’s aftermath.

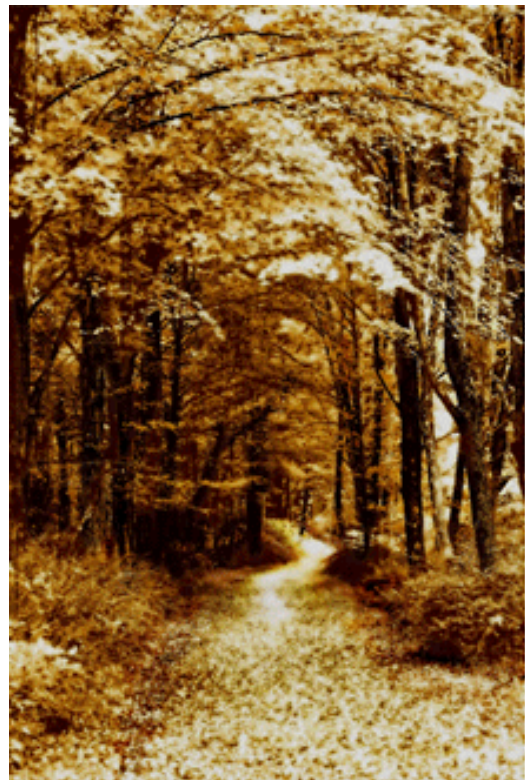


Image credit: CDR

Patricia Sims

Play House

Elizabeth can reach the bookshelves now,
she sorts each volume soundlessly by size
and colour, theme or price. She hears the ice
and fire duet - a tantrum that they throw,
so hurls her favourite toy. This doll's got gouged
out eyes and scissored hair. Its forehead — wise
to meetings with the wall — is unsurprised,
the knitted dress has come undone like vows.
The doll's house has a mock flat-screen TV
that dolly watches when she's sitting up
with teddy on the miniature chaise longue.
Lizzie says "It'll soon be time for tea!"
She pours fresh air into the matching cups —
"Now everybody try to get along."



Image credit: Robert Cook

Patricia Sims

Muddle East

“Daeth to the white khalifa,” daubed in red.
My eyes sweep over threat to spelling error.
In bed that night, mind static with the terror
that I might feature in the Dreamtime News:
“Illiterates slay woman with their gnus.”



Image credit: Peter Schwartz

Paul Stevens

Fettling

Claw out the old dogs from their yielding timber,
wield iron tongs to clench and haul the sleeper
groaning from his ballast-bed of years;
with pick and shovel, clear the narrow plot.

Now four good men to heft and berth the fresh
recumbent, cauled with sap, gravid with dense
hardwood grain; to slide him with a sigh
home; to pack and ram the ballast, force-

pry the steel to true, hammer down hard
the young dogs, that each jaw can grip the shining
path from worker to his daily hire;
from scholar's quest to archives; lovers' one-

way journeys down dead-gauged tracks, from shy
first touch, towards the day's dark terminus.



Image credit: Paul Stevens & CDR

Wendy Videlock

Is About:

with half-hearted apologies to Ginsberg, Yeats, and Rosen

The infant is about trading a body
 of water for land,
 club footed, black-eyed, blue toed,
 a deuce in the hand
 and an ace in the hole,
 mad as the mist and snow.
 The hand
 is about Michelangelo.
 The candle is about eating your curds
 to find your way. Faith
 is about needles and hay. Gymnastics is about
 sticking it. Poe is about getting up
 to answer the door. Déjà vu is about saline
 seeping into the boat. Fear is about fava beans
 and a nice chianti subverting the form
 of the jungle snake.
 Nature is about secrets, coves, sub
 species, megaphones, healing balms,
 and dispassionate devastations.
 War
 is about nature.
 The womb is about aestivation.
 Vice is about stalling for time.
 The toddler is about knowing
 the world by cramming everything
 into the mouth. Youth
 is about spitting it out.
 Passion is about death-
 defying concentration.
 Hopkins is about dragonflies.
 The sage is about the mountain.
 The spine is about bearing weight.
 Old age is about bones.
 The brain is about the size of the hand-
 held blank slate. Dylan is about
 you deciding
 what the song is all about.
 Beethoven is about scent.
 Baudelaire is about the throat.
 Death is about the intimacy
 of distance, the rowing of the glass boat,
 secret coves, and dispassionate
 devastations
 mad as the mist and snow.

Wendy Videlock

Riverside

Having been disillusioned by all but the dead
in this endless quest to be fed and astonished,
one returns to the meaning of longing,
and the property of the stone. No amount
of milk or warmth will keep the child from harm.
Knowledge of this is the length of water
eating away at stone. To swallow life is to carry
the dead, as one would roll one's eyes at a friend.
I have pawned off the hummingmoth, and out
on the sidewalk, no stars. I have consumed
Margaret's blight, and skipped to my rue
off to the tomb. Of all the birds, I choose the loon.
The empty and the crowded head. Awkward talkers
in a crowd. The motley lovers of the dead.



Image credit: CDR

Tony Williams

The House at Crowholes

The house, taller than it is wide, stands
clear and prim in the low wooded valley
it inhibits with its comely presence, gables
demurely covered with a film of rain.

The brick is dark red, the slate dark grey.
The white soffits shine round the roof's edge,
and the black drains lightning down past windows
blankly facing out towards the ground,

where bins, fencing, hardy shrubs and late
lean-to additions promise residence.
Flashes of white saloon are visible through
the rain and foliage. I fancy the steam of food

in the gravel yard. The pond, unruffled,
lies politely at a distance down
where the mud-track terminates. Its single boat is
tethered to the jetty, opposite the ducks

sheltering under the overhanging trees
where the pond, and field, end. The water, like
the house's windows, sucks the pale light
from the sky. Sitting in a meadow across

the valley, I hope I don't see who lives there.
Below me the powerlines run in their low-slung arc,
which is the kestrel's favourite perch, although
today he's elsewhere; sheltering, too, probably.

Tony Williams

The Lame Dog at Monyash

Its black unopenable door
is what the village really thinks.
Virgil's native name sits on the plaque,
licensed to bid your welcome nixed

to afternoons of Lethe Best
and tightness in the chest and neck
brought on by pressure at the desk
you work at to afford the move.

You should consider going back.
You'll never join the Us of Here,
or even Them of Over-There.
The locals all have history.

The white limestones are fixed
in ragged and deceitful smiles
across miles of saturated green
with paradisal lambs between

that bleat that things are looking bleak
and maybe you should ask your kids
about the role of revenant.
Leaving, you pass the desolate farms.

Their huge prefabricated sheds
proclaim the names of local firms,
contain fence posts, rusting plant,
oil drums, doomed livestock.

Donald Zirilli

The Poet Who Hates Birds

stands in his Zen garden,
craving silence. He imagines
the mouth from which a staccato song
erupts, thickened to a straight line,
unable to smile, Geometry, no feeling.

He wishes to scratch upon
the sitting stone
as he practices his words,
careful incorporeal seeds
that, once sown by his tongue,
will sound like nothing
so much as the interwoven cries
of two Pie-billed Grebes,
aroused by Spring.



Image credit: Donald Zirilli



Image credit: Peter Schwartz

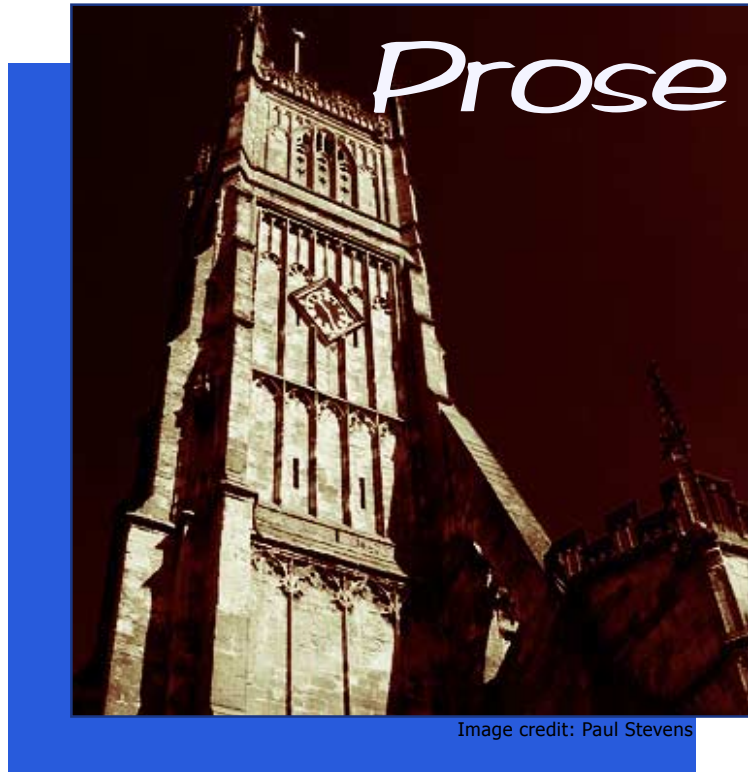


Image credit: Paul Stevens

Norman Ball

Poetry Has Left the Building for “Unreachable Solitudes”

“For poetry was all written before time was... we hear those primal warblings, and attempt to write them down, but we lose ever and anon a word... and thus miswrite the poem.”

– Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Poet*

The “primal warblings” of Emerson’s first-order Poetry fascinate me. As for poems, well, I can often take them or leave them. I don’t mean that I take “good” poems and leave “bad” poems, although there’s a lot of that too. No, I am more struck by Poetry — where it comes from, the nature of the impulse that renders a poem (when someone could just as easily weave a basket) — than by Poetry’s visible constituents, the poems themselves.

Emerson’s quote is a startling one. I often wonder how many modern poets take it truly to heart. Perhaps they’ve repudiated it entirely. For Emerson appears to be removing some of the creative shine here, relegating poets to a sort of esoteric stenographers’ pool, albeit in the highest Platonic sense. The notion of “poet as water-carrier” runs counter to the modern sensibility with its predilection for personality cults. So many contemporary poets think themselves little progenitors. The idea that a poem (and its poet) is somehow subordinate to something that existed “before all time was” smacks of theism. Somewhere, a post-modern muse must be squirming.

Modern poetry readers are often conditioned to draw all poetic meaning from the poem itself. So they can be forgiven for concluding that the written body of work must define this thing called “Poetry”, as though Poetry is its corpus. In fairness, this is not an outlandish notion: the universe of poetry consists of all existent poems. It’s just contrary to Emerson’s thinking as I read him.

Just as paleontologists cull marvelously extrapolative assumptions from a tiny universe of recovered bones, there is much more to Poetry than meets the written page. It’s no accident that so many poems circle the subject matter of bones, dead leaves, elegies, Fall, Winter, snow and death. Poems are Poetry’s fossilized record, or at least that part to which Poetry has deigned a poetic approach. A T-Rex could traverse the space between most poems and Poetry. Miswriting is the norm. Then on occasion, Poetry rises out of the peaty blackness like the Loch Ness Monster and poses for a snapshot. Just don’t make a habit of coaxing Poetry as it can sense a lakeside tripod from a mile away.

Similarly, if a poem says “I’m a poem” too overtly or with an exceeding self-

Normal Ball: Poetry Has Left the Building

concern, then there's too much of the craftsman's mallet and chisel in it. In this instance, the poem has succeeded in subduing Poetry. A poem that fails to point beyond itself is a poem that fails to avail itself of Poetry. At the risk of semantic demagoguery, I'm not opposed to allowing a failed poem to call itself a poem. I mean, why not and who cares? But if you'd rather call it a mullet, then that's fine with me too.

In a Platonic sense, poems are, even at their best, murky approximations of Poetry. A specific poem's "poetic merit" could, in this context, be defined in terms of its proximity or "fealty" to Poetry. It's often said that even the great poets leave behind a catalog most notable for its failures. From a lifetime of poetic endeavor, Yeats penned perhaps five near-perfect poems, Frost maybe four. While the precise tally is an endless source of MFA cocktail chatter, most would agree that the universe of "thoroughly successful" poems is miniscule. The Platonist would argue that the pantheon of perfectly rendered poems amounts to none at all.

I believe Emerson is suggesting that Poetry can exist quite nicely without poems or poets. But this may be too much for most poets to bear. Indeed as a group, poets may be the least equipped to render an unbiased opinion on Poetry given their vested career interests in poetry books, poetry workshops, poetry readathons, i.e. the benchmarks of tangible poetic production. I am reminded of Kafka's admonition to the non-writing writer that the latter flirts with madness by not heeding the call of his craft. The salient point here is that a writer is a writer whether or not he takes up the pen. Poetry is even less beholden to pens than are poets.

In fact on a good day, Poetry barely tolerates most poems, resembling more a judicious celebrity autographing an endless line of outstretched playbills. The patience it must have weathering so many failed attempts! I'm convinced Poetry could, if it chose, create a great commotion even in a forest stripped of poets. Poetry would find a way! But if it had a fixed address, would Poetry maintain a subscription to *The Paris Review*? This would be a good question for Emerson.

Poets are not Prime Movers. What we call a good poet is someone with a knack for coaxing the already-there to the over-here. There is nothing "seminal" about a good poet. His or her ear is simply pressed closer to some wall. But the real action is always happening in the apartment next door. Occasionally, he takes notes of the eavesdropped conversation and passes them to the deaf guy on the futon who reads them with obvious interest. Most of us are the deaf guy. But there's nothing wrong with our eyes and what we'd really love is a peek next door. Poems are a sketchy report of the Poetry that lives down the hall.

In fact, poets are no more essential to Poetry than radio receivers are to emanating radio waves. For those of you who love radio, this is probably a pointless observation since for you, radio is its programming content. Well, the radio wave says thank you for your intermittent patronage. But it's really not necessary. Now if you'll excuse the wave, it's got a universe to cover.

I find myself reading more books about Poetry than I do poetry books. For some reason, this is a vaguely troubling admission. But like Emerson, I'm confident Poetry is "there" without it having to occasionally poke through in a poem. Every arrow requires a bulls-eye, if only to calibrate its imprecision. Without Poetry, a poem would lose all sense of direction.

I particularly love a well-done poem about Poetry. I think of two mirrors pointed at one another creating an infinity of reflections. When content is deployed to explore its own form, a bottomless abyss is created. Who's watching the watcher? Well, Poetry is of course. A poem about Poetry makes Poetry either perfectly self-conscious or perfectly invisible. Form can be made to dissolve into a formless totality or a form-obsessed preternaturalness.

It's no coincidence that many poets suffer from manic-depressive or bipolar disorders. I suspect bipolarity – both for poems and people – involves the ability to traverse two directions simultaneously. Good poems are always pointing at something else. Like an electron in quantum physics that does not "traverse" but instead simply appears in another place simultaneously, the best poems are forging interior journeys even as they journey outwards. Surely we are exploring some trick of time and space? Perhaps physics will one day subsume metaphysics entirely such that Poetry will be fully "explained." Should that day arrive, physicists promise to become as insufferable as many poets.

For the moment, there remains something fascinating about an inherently referential medium turned in upon itself, self-referencing the referential. I am reminded of the "unreachable solitudes" Rilke describes in one of his mirror sonnets. Just as a mirror is, at once, impenetrable glass and a medium for bottomless reflection, a good poem is immediately accessible and infinitely withheld.

I've learned not to share my Poetry theories with poets as they inevitably misread my intent. Then again, perhaps they read me with perfect clarity. I am not denigrating the vocation of poetry. But as with all vocations, an inevitable guild mentality can spring up to protect the craftsmen, often to the detriment of the craft. I believe poems, at their best, are magnificent failures, while bad poems do not even warrant the accolade of failure. The inherent poignancy of good poetry lies in the a priori

Normal Ball: Poetry Has Left the Building

hopelessness of the attempt. As Rilke concedes of mirrors: “no one who knows has ever described you...” Nor will they ever.

Even though its practitioners may chafe at this job description, no other vocation measures its success by the momentousness of its failures. In fact, it’s a good thing poets are not carpenters or else they would all have been fired ages ago. We need poets and their errant arrows to remind us of the “unreachable solitudes” of Poetry. Imagine rising every morning to inevitable failure. How many poets fully realize the Sysyphian task they have been allotted? Dear poet, think twice before lifting that pen!

Thus the nearest attempts at Poetry may be poems about Poetry. While this may sound claustrophobic, the walls are not really moving in, folks, but are instead dissolving in a vat of recursive stew! Nonetheless I find it very intriguing how some people absolutely detest Poetry poems. The intensity of their aversion is a certain clue. To me, they are like Wiley Coyote sawing the board off from the wrong end and plummeting into the ravine. The Road Runner is Poetry, maddeningly elusive, laughing at Acme Words and its many capture-contraptions, an asymptote with feathers. No one ever catches Poetry. But we must try. As Emerson might say, “beep beep.”

This essay originally appeared in the Fall 2005 issue of *The New Orphic Review*.

Cheryl Snell

Review of *Diary of a Cell*

The cover of Jennifer Gresham's *Diary of a Cell* shows a cell, one of the “beautiful, dividing sacks / of water and code,” dividing. This sets up an expectation for readers — we want to glimpse the art in the science, to experience for ourselves the elegance of transformation. As A. R. Ammons says in the anthology *Verse & Universe: Poems about Science and Mathematics*, “it is wonderful how things work: I will tell you about it because it is interesting.”

A scientific framework can reveal beauty visible under a microscope, and the language of science is rich with metaphoric potential. The diary in the title poem is

“... always written in code;
a whole library
of nothing more
than four letters strung together,
a tongue-twister
even if
you know the language.”

“It’s an injustice that only neuro-doctors get to say these words” says Thomas Lux, in *Verse and Universe*. Gresham, a biochemist, knows what she knows and we trust the voice. “...Jennifer Gresham lays a sharply focused lens of language on the surface of experience, to learn, as she says in “Anatomy,” “the secrets of the deep,” Michael Collier notes. The solemnity of the situation—students’ first experience with a cadaver — does not overwhelm the poem’s music or its images.

“We did not expect a young woman
... her nose a mountain on the plain
of her face, her neck and arms
thin as dried reeds”

Gresham begins.

“Awestruck, the Latin rose to our lips
like a sigh: the graceful length
of her gracilis, her shapely gluteus medius,
the sweep of the orbicularis oris
beneath her stiff, unsmiling lips.”

The technical words don’t exclude us; in fact, they protect against emotional excess.

Gresham’s exploratory, precise point-of-view powers not only the science poems but the philosophical ones as well. Many of the lyrical narratives grapple with big questions, and we gain entry into the poems from many angles: “Model of an Atom”

Cheryl Snell: Review of Diary of a Cell

compares Schrodinger's creative work to obsessive love; in "To End All Wars," we meet Oppenheimer,

"...eyes full of ash, the rising
sun eclipsed. How hollow
are the refrains of discovery
when one has become death,
destroyer of worlds."

With her command of poetic device, imagery and sound in particular, Gresham goes beyond the surface of the poems, adding layers of meaning. The following piece recalls Einstein's dream, and wears its erudition lightly. It opens up new insights with charm and accessibility; it wants to be read aloud.

Explaining Relativity to the Cat

Imagine, if you will, three mice.
Contrary to what you have
heard, they are not blind
but are in a spaceship
traveling near the speed of light.
This makes them unavailable
for your supper, yes.

So these mice, traveling near
the speed of light, appear
quite fat, though there is
no cheese aboard. This is
simply a distortion of mass,
because the mass of a mouse
is nothing more than a bundle
of light, and vice versa. I see
how this might imply mice
are in the light fixtures,
undoubtedly a problem, so

let me try again.
If two people attempted
to feed you simultaneously,
no doubt a good situation,
but you were on a train

traveling near the speed
of light, the food would
appear unappetizing, falling
to the plate in slow motion,
an extended glob of protein
that never smelled good,
if you ask me, train or no.
The affinity of the food
for the plate, what we call
gravity, is really just
a stretch in the fabric
of a space-time continuum,
what happens when you
have sat in a seat too long,
perhaps on this very train.

Oh kitty, I know how you hate
to travel and the journey must
have made you tired. Come now,
lick your coat one more time
and let us make haste
from this strange city
of light and fantastic dream.

In several of the poems, Gresham's sense of humor is much in evidence. Consider the dieter in "Empty Calories," a nephew's "Booger," the joyous "A Scientist's

Acrostic” (“...Scientists are like beetles / Crawling over the earth, antennae twitching...”). “Love in Nerdville” tells the story of one couple with this characterization — “She was the lemon, he the copper wire.” Gresham often couples exuberance with restraint in her examination of how it feels to be alive in a way that brings to mind Stephen Dunn.

I’ll leave you with the poem that closes the collection. It’s one of my favorites. I like it for its tenderness and the way it shows how the waking mind can influence realities that give rise to our nightmares. As Charles Harper Webb says in his introduction, *Diary of a Cell* is poetic, “not in a namby-pamby, sensitive-soul-in-an-insensitive-world way; in the strong and competent sense of poet:maker.”

Another Imagined Infidelity

Sometimes I wake up
at three in the morning,
wounded: a temptress running
her fingers down your arm
at a dinner party, you in bed
with my best friend from childhood.
Every now and then, you hit
a new low. This time,
an exotic woman was lost
and called our number by mistake.
You guided her through
unfamiliar territory out of kindness,
your voice terribly calm.

We have been married too long
for this. When I rouse you
from sleep to detail your crimes,
you groggily humor me. Why
does this one count against me?
Because I, too, was lost once,
and you are still the landmark I cling to.

Diary of a Cell won the 2004 Steel Toe Books Prize in Poetry. Three of the poems from the book were read by Garrison Keillor on his radio program, *The Writer’s Almanac*. The book is available from Amazon.com, *Steel Toe Books*, and *Gresham’s website*, *Litmus Poetry*.

Previously published in [The Alsop Review](#).

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to *The Shit Creek Review* Issue 2

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Kate Bernadette Benedict is the author of *Here from Away*, a collection of poetry available from CustomWords, and the editor of a new online literary journal, [Umbrella](#). She lives in New York City.

Michael Cantor, New York-born, and a former business executive, has lived and worked in Japan, Europe and Latin America; and now resides on Plum Island, north of Boston on the Massachusetts coast. His poetry has appeared in *Measure*, *The Formalist*, *Dark Horse*, *Iambs & Trochees*, *Texas Poetry Journal*, *The Atlanta Review*, and many other journals and anthologies.

Bob J. Clawson is a writer, fisherman, teacher, and cook. His formal education includes stints at a rural two-room schoolhouse, Kenyon College, Harvard, and Yale. He has visited 32 of the United States, and has been abroad to France, Italy, Greece, Canada, Mexico, and to several island nations such as Great Britain, Ireland, Jamaica, Cuba, and Nantucket. His writing covers a wide range: he has published work in journals as diverse as the *Southern Review* and *Yankee*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and *The Lancet*. His poems have appeared in *Beloit Poetry Journal* and *Poet Lore*. In the first quarter of 2001, you may have seen Clawson frequently on several commercial cable TV channels reading from his *Whiskey Truth* on a commercial for Alcarrest. For the past seven years Robert has managed the annual Robert Creeley Award in Acton, Massachusetts, where Creeley grew up.

Larry Fontenot was a Featured Poet at the 1996 and the 2000 Houston Poetry Fests. A chapbook, *Choices & Consequences*, was the winner of the Maverick Press 1996 *Southwest Poets' Series Chapbook* competition. Larry also won the 2000 Alsop Review Poetry Competition for his poem "Mowing Deconstructed". His poem "Wile E. Coyote's Lament" was published in *The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror*, 12th Annual Collection in 1999.

Brent Fisk is a poet from Bowling Green KY and his work has appeared in *Rattle*, *Thema*, *Rhino* and *Southern Poetry Review*. His work has been nominated three times for a Pushcart Prize. He also guest edited the 2006 selection process for Steel Toe Books.

Angela France lives in Gloucestershire and is enjoying middle age. She runs a local live poetry event — “Buzzwords” — and writes for self-indulgence, as an antidote to demanding work with challenging young people. She has had poems published in, or forthcoming in: *Acumen*, *Iota*, *The Frogmore Papers*, *Rain Dog*, *The Panhandler*, *The Shit Creek Review*, *Voice and Verse*, and in anthologies *The White Car* and *Mind Mutations*.

Dennis Greene lives in Perth, Western Australia. His work has appeared in *Unfamiliar Tides*, *Empowa* issue one, *Empowa* issue two (in which he was the featured poet), *West-erly*, *Inside Out*, and *Blast Magazine*. His online credits include *Pogonup*, *Numbat*, *Comrades*, *MiPo*, *Ironbark*, and *Oracular Tree*, among others. In 2000 he was invited to the US to edit *Voices from the Parking Lot* on behalf of the Parkinson Alliance.

Nigel Holt: Teacher and poet who barely ekes enough from his labours to want to have to spend it on pointless international postage charges to conventional magazines which have smaller viewing figures than the snail racing on Sunday evening at the Marmoset and Tabernacle tavern in Much Wedlock. Credits include *Snakeskin*, *Worm*, *Melic Review*, *Envoi*, *Orbis* and *Artemis Magazine*.

Jan Iwaszkiewicz was born in England to a Polish father and an English mother, coming to Australia at the age of eleven. Jan began writing poetry in his late teens and despite having some work published, stopped writing and did not take it up again until 2000. He has worked as a hydrographer, a diver, a technical editor, writer and illustrator, a public relations consultant and has even managed a reptile park. Jan lives in the Hunter Valley and currently works in financial services as well as operating a performance horse stud together with his wife Christine.

Rose Kelleher lives in Maryland. Her poems have appeared in a handful of little magazines.

Janet Kenny has metamorphosed from painter to classical singer to anti-nuclear activist, researcher, writer, illustrator and poet. She has published fairly widely as a poet.

Born in Singapore, **Jee Leong Koh** read English at Oxford and completed his Creative Writing MFA at Sarah Lawrence College. His poems have appeared in Singaporean anthologies and American journals such as *The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide* and *Crab Orchard Review*. He lives in Queens, New York, and blogs at jeeleong.blogspot.com.

David Landrum teaches Literature and Creative Writing at Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He has published poetry in numerous journals and magazines, including *The Barefoot Muse*, *Umbrella*, *Christianity & Literature*, and *Measure*.

Dave McClure had written sporadically all his life, but became hooked about ten years ago when he started contributing to a number of on-line forums and workshops. He writes in English and modern Scots, mostly in form, and with no particular life theme, preferring to ring the changes in subject matter and style. If he ever “finds his voice” it’ll

be time to stop. He has heard it said that in order to publish, one must submit for publication. This sounds too much like hard work.

Kei Miller is Jamaican. He is the author of two books: *The Fear of Stones and Other Stories* (Macmillan 2006) and *Kingdom of Empty Bellies* (Heaventree 2005). His new collection of poetry *There Is An Anger That Moves*, will be published by Carcanet in 2007 alongside an anthology *New Caribbean Poetry* which he edited. Kei was born in 1978.

Tim Murphy's latest books are *Beowulf*, A Longman Cultural Edition, co-translated with Alan Sullivan, 2004, and *Very Far North*, [Waywiser Press](#) (London), 2002.

Tom Rodes is an unpublished American poet who spends his winters in the crowded suburbs of Washington, D.C. and his summers and falls at his farm in northern New England. He is drawn to poetry by the sounds of the English language and continues to forego rhyme only with great reluctance. A frequent contributor to several online poetry boards, this is Tom's first submission for publication.

C. D. Russell holds a doctorate in nutritional biochemistry and lives in rural New Jersey with a cat, a dog and a spouse — all of whom are poets. She has had poetry published in *The Panhandler*. Other interests include photography, blue cheese and bad puns.

Patricia Sims is a teacher who has worked in Greece, the UK, Sweden and the Middle East. She is dawdling towards a professional doctorate in Educational Psychology from her base near London, which she shares with a Norse and the memory of cats.

Paul Stevens was born in Sheffield, England, but has lived most of his life in Australia. In previous incarnations he has been a brickies' labourer, fettler and sandal-maker. He studied Archaeology and Early English Language and Literature at the University of Sydney. Now he teaches Literature, Ancient History and Historiography, and has published on the Julio-Claudians, as well as poetry and literary criticism.

Wendy Videlock sometimes writes poems.

Tony Williams lives in Sheffield, UK. His work has appeared in *The Times Literary Supplement*, *Anon*, *Matter*, *Avocado*, *Andwerve* and *The Printer's Devil*, is forthcoming in *The Rialto* and *The Interpreter's House*, and is represented in the anthology *Ten Hallam Poets* (Mews Press, 2005).

Donald Zirilli, lately of northwestern NJ, dreams of tidal waves and the crashing of giant planes. He is not adept at home ownership.

Artists

Robert Cook is an intensely private man, refusing to read newspapers or even eat oysters on Sundays. He considers photography more an obsession than an art. You can study his condition at <http://briefasphotos.com>

Betsyann Duval, a Boston-based artist, has received numerous awards for her work in National exhibitions, including a First Prize in Painting awarded by Lisa Dennison, Chief Curator of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, NYC. Using a variety of media from painting to performance, she engages her audience by posing questions that challenge social, cultural, and biological stereotypes. Her Bodyscape Series explores the beauty of the human form and what it means to be human in the face of blatant, commercial sexual stereotyping. <http://www.duvalart.com>.

Valori Herzlich was born on the Baltic Sea in Jurmala, Latvia, and educated in New York City. She has worked as an art director, designer and illustrator; and now spends her time quilting, drawing, practicing Yoga, walking the Plum Island beaches, and railing at pigeons.

Hanka Jaskowska is a 21 year old living in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. She is currently studying Art and Design, taking the first steps in fulfilling an ambition of a career in prop-making and sculptural costume for theatre/screen. One of her primary hobbies is photography, within which she can be often be found being looked at strangely for finding interest in the less interesting things.

Patricia Wallace Jones is a retired disability advocate with an art degree who knows what it's like to be up Shit Creek. She loves having the time now (not to mention a paddle) to be what she wanted to be when she grew up. More of her work can be seen at <http://imagineii.typepad.com/imagineii/>

C. D. Russell has an itchy shutter finger and is patiently persuading her camera to lie. She prefers to photograph cows.

Peter Schwartz is the associate art editor of [Mad Hatters' Review](#). His work has been featured on 13 online galleries and he has had almost 100 paintings published on various literary websites. His work is being exhibited in York, UK right now and he is currently working on an exhibit for the Amsterdam Whitney Gallery.

Paul Stevens spends a lot of time staring into space and occasionally takes photographs of it.

Donald Zirilli, Donald Zirilli lets see be finale of seem, or to put it more succinctly, "let's see."

P.S. The Shit Creek Review would like to thank Mark Allinson, Kate Bernadette Benedict, Nigel Holt, Dave McClure and Tim Murphy for the images used along with their poems.



Patricia Wallace Jones

The steps to Shit Creek

